

Scarlett's POV:

The atmosphere in the car was depressing, and the expression on Charles's face was so horribly icy. I avoided his gaze the entire time and just looked out the window. The surroundings outside blurred past us, showing me how fast he was driving.

Without really thinking about it, I grabbed on to the handrail on my door. Suddenly, the car came to a screeching halt on the side of the road. The force threw me so strongly forward that I felt the seat belt bruise my shoulder.

I screamed and turned to glare at Charles.

"What's wrong with you? I didn't ask you to pick me up. You should've just stayed with Rita if you wanted

to. Why couldn't you leave me out of it?" I said crossly.

"We're still married, Scarlett. Why are you already flirting with another man?" Charles muttered in a harsh, accusatory tone.

"What?" It took me some time to understand what he was talking about, but after a few moments, I finally got what he meant. I looked him dead in the eye and backfired, "I wasn't flirting. I was talking to a colleague. Honestly, I've had enough of your overreactions. We're as good as broken up. We're getting a divorce."

"You know we haven't gone through the formalities yet," Charles emphasized.

"What's the difference? Besides, you're not in love with me. You're in love with Rita. It's pointless for you

to try and fence me in."

"It has nothing to do with love. No man wants his wife to talk and laugh with other men."

"Then that's your problem. I have the right to socialize as I please."

After saying that, I kept my eyes fixed out the window and ignored Charles's murderous stares.

None of us spoke for a while until Charles just gave up and gunned the engine again. This time, he drove even faster.

"If you want your Rita to die without anyone taking care of her, then be my guest and drive your car like you stole it," I reminded him sarcastically as I tightened my seat belt.

Charles flashed me a death glare, his eyes narrowing into slits.

After a few heartbeats, he eased off the gas and slowed the car down. If I had known that mentioning Rita's name would stop him from acting like a lunatic, I would have uttered it sooner.

It seemed that Rita was really the only woman who easily affected him.

When we arrived at the mansion, the butler was at the door to greet us and immediately caught Charles's sour mood. He couldn't help but whisper to me, "Miss Scarlett, is Mr. Charles okay? What's wrong with him?"

"He'll be fine. Let's just leave him alone." I smiled at the butler.

The butler simply nodded in understanding and turned to close the front door.

When we entered the living room, the elders cheerfully welcomed us. I greeted them with a smile.

"You're finally here. Welcome. Let's start dinner. You must be hungry after a whole day's work." Michael Moore, Charles's grandfather, flashed me a kind smile like he always did and ushered us to the dining room.

Michael took the seat at the head of the table. Charles and I sat down to his right while Alice, Lawrence, and Christine took the seats to his left. Soon, dinner was served, and we started eating.

Like every patriarch in a prominent family, Michael was the most venerable man among the Moores. Everybody equally feared and respected him, but he had always been gentle to me, and he honored me as

much as I honored him.

Thinking about how Charles's family had treated me so well over the years, I suddenly got cold feet about bringing up the divorce.

But when I thought about Rita and Charles going shopping for wedding dresses together while Charles was still married to me, I managed to summon enough courage to open my mouth. "I'm sorry to ask this of you, Grandpa, but I would like to have Charles and I's marriage certificate, please. We've decided to get a divorce."

Everyone stopped and turned to look at me.

"We can talk about that another day, dear. Let's just enjoy our family dinner tonight. We haven't been able to sit and have a meal together in a long time," Michael replied gently but firmly. I could tell from his

expression that he wanted to avoid the subject. More than Alice and Christine combined, Michael did not want me and Charles to get divorced.

"Grandpa, I appreciate everything that you and this family have done for me, and I'm not trying to be ungrateful or anything. I just want to make this decision on my own." I looked at him with as much resolve as I could muster.

"Scarlett, are you in love with somebody else? You can tell us, honey." Seeing that I was determined to get a divorce, Christine looked at me and asked the important question.

"Where is this coming from, you two? If there's anything wrong, you can discuss it with us. Let us help you make your marriage work. Don't act on impulse," Alice added before I could answer.

"I know that our Charles hasn't been a great husband to you, but marriage is a big deal. You can't just drop it like a hot potato."

"Mom, Grandma, I'm not in love with anybody right now. If I were, I would've already brought him home and introduced him to you. Charles and I have reached a consensus. We will break up amicably."

The Moore family had been taking care of me since they took me in. They protected me like their own flesh and blood. I understood that they only wanted to make me stay, but the more they did, the more I did not want to hurt them.

They raised me and gave me a home I could call my own. Before them, I was an orphan and alone in the world. I owed them my life, and I had always believed that the only way for me to repay them was to give them my life completely and unconditionally.

Truth be told, I did not want to let go of Charles, but I did not want to stand in the way of his happiness either. If Rita was the love of his life, then I would gladly leave the picture and let them be happy.

"Look what you've done, Charles! You've hurt your wife so much that she wants to leave you!" Seeing that I insisted on the divorce, Lawrence growled at his son. Charles only averted his gaze.

He just sat there and did not say anything.

"This is our fault. We shouldn't have forced you two to get married in the first place," Christine muttered.

"No, Mom. This is my fault. I should've taught my son better about treating his wife well," Alice chimed in, comforting Christine and giving Charles a stern look.

The next moment, Charles's phone rang, making all the heads turn toward him. An eerie silence followed. Everyone just waited for Charles to pick up his phone.

Rita really had a knack for calling in the most inconvenient of times.

Michael's serene expression turned into one of indignation. He narrowed his eyes at Charles and commanded, "Let's eat. That phone call can wait."

"Rita is not in good health. I should be with her, or she will be scared and worried sick," Charles calmly declared as if he was not at all afraid of his grandfather's possible reaction.

Then, he picked up his phone and walked out.

"If you leave right now, young man, don't bother coming back. That woman may be ill, but she's not in immediate danger. All she's doing is keeping you away from your wife and your family. She's turning you into a puppy dog that she can summon whenever she needs comfort. Have you no dignity?" Michael said all of that in one single furious breath.

"Leave him be, Michael. Charles doesn't know how to cherish the right person, and he will sorely regret it soon enough. No need to stress yourself out because of him." Christine gently patted her husband on the shoulder and calmed him down.

I just sat there and kept quiet until I heard Charles's car speed away.

After a while, Michael spoke again. "Christine, will you

please go upstairs and get Charles and Scarlett's marriage certificate?"

"What? I thought you wanted to talk about this another day," Christine said in shock.

"Scarlett is a good girl. We've already stolen three years of her life by marrying her to our stupid grandson. She deserves to be happy and free, and even if she doesn't end up with Charles, she'll always be a part of our family."

"Very well." Christine flashed me a reluctant look, and then a weak smile curled her lips. She slowly rose from her seat and went upstairs to get our marriage certificate.

Ten minutes later, I left the mansion with the piece of paper I had come for. I should be elated, but I was not. Our elders had been worried about us, and I

knew that they never wanted our marriage to crumble like this.

But the inevitability of it all sent all of our worlds into a standstill tonight, and now we had to wait for time to take the edge off our sadness and grief.

As soon as I was left alone with my thoughts again, I wondered if I had made the right decision agreeing to divorce my nominal husband.

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