

Chapter 111

After Duncan took a seat, he motioned towards the empty seat across the table, asking Abigail to take her seat. Abigail, her thoughts racing and her composure shaky, hesitated for a moment before finally sitting down. She avoided making eye contact, her gaze drifting to a random spot in the room. In an attempt to calm her nerves, she absentmindedly fumbled with her collar, a nervous gesture that betrayed her uneasiness.

Unbeknownst to Abigail, Duncan keenly observed her discomfort. Sensing her unease, he leaned forward slightly, his voice gentle as he asked, "Are you okay, Abigail?"

Abigail's initial reaction was to dismiss his concern, attempting to mask her true emotions. "Me? Yeah, I'm cool," she replied, forcing a smile that didn't quite reach her eyes.

Duncan, however, wasn't convinced. He had noticed the subtle signs of her agitation and could see through her façade. "You actually look unsettled now, that's why I asked," he pressed, offering his empathy.

Caught off guard by his perceptiveness, Abigail felt a mix of surprise and vulnerability. She realized that her attempts to appear composed had fallen short. Taking a deep breath, she decided to share a partial truth, hoping it would suffice. "Oh, I see. I'm just feeling exhausted. Lately, I've been spending so much time in my hotel to observe its operations," she explained, hoping to attribute her unease to the strain of her recent schedule rather than the web of lies she had woven.

Duncan nodded sympathetically, understanding the toll that a demanding schedule could take on a person. "I can imagine. It must be challenging. Just make sure to take care of yourself," he advised, his

voice filled with genuine concern.

Abigail nodded appreciatively, grateful for his understanding. She knew that she couldn't let her guard down, especially with Duncan's keen perception, but for now, she was relieved that he seemed willing to accept her explanation.

Taking a moment to gather her thoughts, Abigail paused, wanting to articulate her words properly. "So, instead of spending time on my other business, I had some pending work brought over, and I just finished wrapping it up before you walked in," she explained, hoping to provide a reasonable explanation for her current state.

Duncan's expression softened, and he leaned forward slightly, a genuine desire to help evident in his eyes. "Oh, I wish I could do something to help. You've been such a tremendous support to me, and I want to return the favors I feel I still owe you," he expressed sincerely.

Abigail's eyes flickered with gratitude, touched by his words. "What are friends for, right?" she replied, a hint of a smile gracing her lips. She waved a dismissive hand and flung her hair lightly, attempting to divert his attention away from her uneasiness.

Leaning back in his seat, Duncan nodded, understanding the unspoken sentiment behind their friendship. As his gaze scanned her face, Abigail subtly tried to steer the conversation in a different direction. "You don't usually come to see me at this time," she remarked, hoping to shift his focus away from her own behavior.

Duncan contemplated her words for a moment, his eyes narrowing slightly. However, not wanting to press the matter further and respecting her boundaries, he decided to let it go. "That's true. Just thought I'd drop by and see how you're doing," he replied, allowing her a small semblance

of privacy.

Abigail offered a grateful smile, relieved that he didn't dig deeper into her sudden change in demeanor.

But on second thought, Duncan took a glance at the wall clock. Taking note of the time, he said, "It's just past 8 p.m., by the way. I can recall dropping by here around past 9 on a few occasions."

Abigail, trying to hide her true intentions, feigned obliviousness and adjusted herself in her seat. She looked around her office with a strange expression on her face and responded, "Oh, really? I can't recall."

"All fine." Duncan simply shrugged in response, accepting her answer. However, he suddenly remembered something and said, "Oh, least I forgot, you called me earlier today. It seemed like you wanted to tell me something important."

Abigail's heart sank as she silently cursed herself. She gulped nervously, hating the fact that he had recalled her call and was now bringing it up.

Duncan clasped his hands together and looked at Abigail, waiting for an explanation. "So... why did you call me?" he asked, curiosity evident in his voice.

Abigail sighed, realizing she had to lie again. "Sorry, it was a mistake. I didn't mean to call you earlier," she said, feeling a tinge of guilt.

Duncan furrowed his brow, recalling the tone of urgency in Abigail's voice during their earlier conversation. "But you sounded like you wanted to tell me something important," he pointed out, seeking clarification.

Abigail nodded, her expression apologetic. "Yes, it was important information I wanted to give to one of my staff members. It was after you

ended the call that I realized I had dialed your number instead of the intended person. I'm truly sorry if I troubled you earlier..."

Duncan shook his head, offering her some reassurance. "No worries, Abigail. Mistakes happen. It's not a big deal."

Curiosity sparked within Abigail as she remembered the mention of Duncan being busy during the brief call. "You mentioned you were busy at that time. What were you up to?" she asked, genuinely curious about his activities.

Duncan took a deep breath, gathered his thoughts, and began to recount the events of his day to Abigail. He told her about the discovery of his father's diary and how it had led him to start investigating Ma'am Luna. Abigail listened intently, her curiosity piqued by the intriguing story unfolding before her.

"Unfortunately," Duncan continued, "I had lost sight of the man I was trailing earlier today. But I'll try again another day. It seems that restaurant is their secret meeting place."

Concern was etched across Abigail's face as she processed the information. "Please, be careful, Duncan," she pleaded, worried for his well-being.

Duncan offered her a reassuring smile. "Sure, don't worry, Abigail. I'll take precautions and stay safe."

Just as Abigail let out a sigh of relief, her phone beeped, indicating a new message. She quickly picked up her phone and saw a message from Karla, which immediately froze her in place.

"I'm at your hotel," the message read, sending a wave of shock and confusion through Abigail. The unexpected message from Karla left her

uncertain about what to do next.

As Abigail fixed her gaze on the screen, the weight of the situation sank in. She felt a sense of urgency and panic building within her as she realized the potential consequences of Duncan getting to see Karla at her hotel. Her mind raced, desperately trying to come up with a plan to prevent him from leaving and inadvertently stumbling upon their alliance.

Duncan, sensing the tension in the air, suddenly felt the need to leave. He stood up, his voice filled with a hint of unease, "Um, I need to leave now, Abigail."

Abigail's eyes widened slightly, her heart pounding in her chest. She tried to speak, to find the right words to stop him, but her voice failed her. She could only manage a nod, her mind racing to find a solution to the imminent crisis unfolding before her.

Duncan waved his hand, a casual gesture of farewell. "Good night. Take care," he said, his words tinged with a touch of urgency. With that, he hurriedly left, oblivious to the turmoil brewing within Abigail.

As the door closed behind Duncan, Abigail's lips parted in a mix of frustration and worry. "Shit, he shouldn't see Karla," she whispered under her breath, hoping against hope that he wouldn't stumble upon their secret alliance. The stakes had suddenly risen, and Abigail knew she had to act swiftly to prevent Duncan from discovering the truth.

An idea struck Abigail like a bolt of lightning, and she immediately reached for her phone to call Karla. Her fingers anxiously tapped on the screen as she waited for Karla to answer. "Fuck, pick up the call!" she groaned in frustration as Karla failed to respond.

Realizing that calling might not be the best option at the moment, Abigail considered sending a message instead. However, she quickly dismissed the idea, realizing that time was of the essence and that a message might not reach Karla in time to prevent a potential encounter with Duncan.

Another thought raced through her mind, and she hurriedly sent a message to Xia, hoping she could intervene somehow. But as she pressed the send button, Abigail's heart sank as she remembered that Xia was likely not in the hotel. She had sent Xia on an errand earlier, which meant there was little chance of her being able to assist in this critical moment.

A surge of determination surged through Abigail as she jerked up from her seat, contemplating running after Duncan to stop him. The urgency of the situation fueled her actions, and without a second thought, she dashed out of her office, determined to catch up with Duncan before it was too late.

As Duncan made his way through the foyer, engrossed in operating his phone, he remained unaware of Karla's presence. Oblivious to the fact that she was walking past him, Karla took a few more steps before suddenly halting in her tracks. A sense of unease washed over her, and she instinctively glanced back, catching a glimpse of Duncan's figure. Though she only saw his back, she was certain it was him.

Karla's heart started racing as she quickly assessed the situation. She needed to find a place to hide, to avoid any potential encounter with Duncan that could jeopardize their secret alliance. Her eyes darted around, searching for a suitable hiding spot in the bustling foyer.

Meanwhile, Duncan, sensing someone nearby, felt a subtle shift in the

atmosphere. He paused, his intuition telling him that it was someone familiar. Slowly, he turned, his gaze scanning the area, and his eyes caught sight of a lady swiftly turning into the next hallway.

A flicker of recognition sparked within Duncan as he registered the woman's quick movement. He had a hunch that it might have been Karla attempting to avoid him. Though he couldn't be certain, his curiosity was piqued, and a mix of suspicion and intrigue-filled his thoughts.

"That's Karla," Duncan muttered to himself, his belief in his instinct solidifying. Without hesitating, he rushed down the foyer, determined to catch up with her. As he turned into the hallway, his eyes caught sight of the female restroom on his right. His gaze dropped to the doorknob, which shook and creaked, confirming his suspicion that Karla was inside.

Instinctively, Duncan ran towards the restroom door and began knocking urgently. "Karla? Karla, I know it's you in there. Open the door, please!" he pleaded, his voice filled with a mix of concern and determination.

Inside the restroom, Karla's heart raced as she took a few steps backward, her eyes fixed on the door. She could hear Duncan's persistent knocking, and the realization that he had indeed recognized her struck her like a bolt of lightning. Panic coursed through her veins as she whispered to herself, "Shit, he recognized me."

The weight of the situation pressed upon Karla as she contemplated her next move. She knew she couldn't stay in the restroom forever, but facing Duncan now would expose their secret alliance and potentially unravel their plans.

As Karla battled with her thoughts, her mind consumed by the weight of her decisions, Duncan's persistent knocking on the door only added to her distress. Each knock echoed through the room, serving as a constant

reminder of the unresolved conflict between them. She paced back and forth, her footsteps creating a rhythmic pattern on the floor, as she tried to gather her thoughts and decide what to do next.

Duncan's voice seeped through the door, filled with urgency and frustration. "Listen, Karla, we need to talk. If you don't open in the next few minutes, I'm breaking this door and coming in," he threatened, his tone indicating that he was willing to use force if necessary. The weight of his words hung in the air, freezing Karla's heart with a mix of fear and apprehension.

Just as the tension reached its peak, a sudden sound broke the silence. One of the toilet doors opened, and a figure emerged from the restroom, catching Karla off guard. Her eyes widened, and a surge of adrenaline shot through her veins.

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