

hesitation, she shook her head to deny it. “Mr. Baxter, thank you for your generous offer, but I have the money to support myself.”

Since Arielle was a person who didn't hold grudges, she expressed her gratitude to Donovan for trying to help her.

But the moment the words left her lips, Donovan's frown deepened.

“You have the money?” His eyes narrowed suspiciously. “Don't you mean Jared or Henry's money?” he asked.

Immediately, Arielle stared at Donovan in astonishment. “Mr. Baxter, what are you implying?” she exclaimed.

Donovan scoffed as his gaze darkened. “Even at such a young age, you refuse to earn money with your own hard work. Must you swindle the money of other men? After getting kicked out of your home, do you plan on becoming a mistress by leeching on their money?”

Arielle turned pale when she heard Donovan's mocking words.

“I never took their money!” she retorted heatedly.

“Oh? I know why you didn't take their money. Their wealth isn't enough for you, right? Vinson's money is what you are truly after. I guess his family can afford to take in a disowned daughter like you. As your professor, let me give you a piece of advice. If you keep up this

stubborn attitude of yours, you will be reduced to nothing but Vinson's lowly mistress. Stop trying to ruin yourself!" Donovan countered.

"Mr. Baxter!" Arielle raised her voice in anger. "Please refrain from using such crude words to sully me. I will never become someone's mistress, and I certainly won't ruin myself!"

"Is that so? Then why are you so reluctant to fill in the application form?"

"I have my own money to support myself. I have no wish to take the position of another student who might need the student loan more than me."

Since the number of places for the school's student loans was limited, Arielle didn't want to deprive another student of their opportunity because she had her own money.

Yet, Donovan was unconvinced. "You have your own money? What is your source of income?" he asked coldly.

Arielle opened her mouth to reply, but the words became stuck in her throat.

I can't say that I'm San - the founder and CEO of Sann Group. That will expose my identity.

When Arielle could not muster a response, Donovan's harsh gaze softened. "Take my advice. Fill in the application form and study hard to get in the top twenty

ranks for this month's evaluation. If you put in the effort, you might have a chance to study at Maxwell University," he said gently.



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Although Donovan's tone was not as aggressive as before, he was clearly adamant about the application form. It seemed like he would not let her depart until she filled it in.

Arielle was caught between a rock and a hard place. She could not reject his offer without exposing herself. With a sigh, she reached out and took the application form.

“I'm glad you took my advice.” Donovan handed her a pen. “Once you're done filling in the form, you can return to class.”

As he spoke, he rose to his feet and offered her his chair.

Donovan's odd behavior went unnoticed by Arielle because she wanted to get the entire ordeal over as soon as possible. Swiftly, she took a seat and began to fill in the application form.

Donovan stood behind her and gazed down at the form in her hands.

“Leave these areas blank. Mr. Brown and I will fill it in. You should fill in the rest,” Donovan said as he leaned over her shoulder to point at the form.

Arielle merely nodded and continued to finish the application form.

Unconsciously, Donovan found his gaze falling upon Arielle.

Because he was standing, Donovan got a clear view of Arielle's perfect side profile. A few strands of her hair fell across her cheek as she bent over the desk.

Furthermore, her neck was as pale as freshly fallen snow.

No matter how hard he tried, Donovan could not tear his eyes away from her.

Although Donovan did not keep up with the entertainment industry, he knew that most famous female celebrities often posted articles about having beautiful necks. It was a feature that many people found desirable.

Arielle's neck was slim and poised like a graceful swan. When Donovan noticed her flawless skin, he had to resist the urge to run his fingers across it. Her neck must be the perfect embodiment of the feature that those celebrities like to praise.

The afternoon sun filtered through the windows and basked Arielle in its rays. At the same time, the strong light illuminated across Arielle's head created an illusion of a golden halo around the crown of her head.

Arielle's alluring beauty caused Donovan to gulp nervously.

All of a sudden, Arielle whirled around. "Mr. Baxter," she called out.

In the midst of his panic, Donovan averted his gaze and

cleared his throat to mask his odd behavior.

“Mr. Baxter?” Arielle was unaware that Donovan had been staring at her. She only wanted to finish the form. “I’m done with it. Could you please take a look at it?”

We have too many misunderstandings between us. I can't be bothered to explain them. Arielle felt herself growing restless the longer she remained cooped up in the room with Donovan.

“Okay.” Donovan refused to meet her eyes. Instead, he accepted the form without looking and said in a low voice, “You can leave now.”

Finally, Arielle could depart from his office.

Thud! His office door swung shut.

Immediately, Donovan clasped his hand over his chest as he tried to regain his composure. Yet, he could feel his pulse hammering frantically against his chest like a hummingbird.

What came over me? Do I have feelings for-

In a daze, Donovan sat back down and dispelled his thoughts. But no matter how hard he tried to clear his mind, his thoughts kept drifting back to Arielle.

“F*ck!” Donovan hissed in frustration as he swept his arm across the table. Promptly, the objects on his desk clattered to the floor noisily.

Right then, his phone rang.

Donovan glanced at his phone and saw that his mother was calling him.

In an attempt to calm himself, Donovan took two deep breaths before he answered the call. “Mom,” he greeted.

“Donovan, you don't have any lectures tomorrow, right? Why don't you pay us a visit?”

“What's the matter?”

His mother's chuckle echoed over the phone. “One of my university friends contacted me the other day. She said that she has a daughter who is around your age. She's worried that her daughter may not find the right one to settle down with and lamented her worries to me. Did you know that her daughter is a famous doctor? Since you are a university lecturer, I thought that the two of you would be a great match, so I decided to invite her over. Donovan, you aren't young anymore. Your dad and I long to have grandchildren.”



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In truth, Donovan's parents were clueless that Donovan had yet to receive a teaching certificate from Maxwell University.

They assumed that he had a successful career and should begin a new family soon. Besides, they were both retired and wanted nothing more than to have grandchildren of their own.

If it were any other day, Donovan would have rejected the offer without considering it. However, he recalled his interaction with Arielle. "Okay. I will return home after my last lecture," he said on impulse.

Alice was delighted by her son's reply. "Excellent! I'm going to head out and buy some groceries. I'll cook all of your favorite dishes."

"All right." With that, Donovan ended the call.

He looked at his door. Once again, Donovan was plagued with thoughts about Arielle.

Immediately, Donovan shook his head to clear his head as he cursed under his breath.

I must have been single for far too long. I can't believe I felt attracted to Arielle.

Donovan decided to take his mother's advice. He would meet the woman and keep his imaginations about Arielle from running wild.

Yet, Donovan never considered why he requested a

student loan application form from Marcus the moment he heard that Arielle had been kicked out of her home.

Back at the Rocher Private Hospital, Queenie answered her mother's phone. "I can't go tomorrow. The hospital is extremely busy," she said with irritation.

"Queenie, why won't you listen to me? I've seen his picture. He's tall and handsome. Did you know that he's also a university lecturer who graduated from Jadeborough University? He has a bright future ahead of him. For my sake, why don't you give him a chance? I won't force you if you don't like him, okay?" her mother begged.

Left with no choice, Queenie agreed. "Okay, I'll leave as soon as I'm done eating."

"I'm so glad you agreed! We can go there together."

"Okay," Queenie replied impatiently and hung up without waiting for a response.

Coincidentally, Zachary entered the room. "Queenie," he called out.

"Can you take over my duty tomorrow night? I'll be going out for a meal," Queenie asked.

"No problem! I have good news. It looks like the robotic pacemakers aren't here yet. According to the schedule, they would be here if Arielle sent them yesterday night. My guess is that it would be impossible for her to deliver them on time. We can prepare to take

legal action against her,” Zachary replied with a smile.

Zachary's words soothed Queenie's irritable mood.

“Look for a lawyer then.” She took an ATM card out of her purse and tossed it on the table. “I'll pay for the legal fees and leave the rest to you. No matter what, I don't want to see anyone who is responsible for the patient.”

Although Zachary nodded in agreement, he made no move to take her card.

“How could I let you pay for it? Don't worry; I'll cover the fees. Please excuse me. I'm going to look for a lawyer right now,” Zachary said as he patted his chest with pride.

Queenie hesitated for a brief moment. “Maybe we don't have to rush this. After all, the scheduled time is before midnight. If it arrives before that, we'll be the laughing stock. Even worse, we might face litigation.”

“That's impossible! If she's truly capable, she would have shipped the machines here. Seeing how they aren't here yet, it shows that she couldn't send them over,” Zachary said hurriedly to assure her.

Queenie mulled over Zachary's words before she agreed. “I'm going to check on the patients. I'll leave this in your hands,” she said as she took a stack of medical records.



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Although Zachary made an “OK” gesture, Queenie didn't bother to spare him another glance. Instead, she strolled out of the room with the medical records in her arms.

However, Zachary didn't take her rudeness to heart. Without any delay, he called the lawyer and began to discuss the matter at hand.

Back at Jadeborough University, Henry and Jared rushed forward to greet Arielle when she returned to class.

“Boss, are you okay? Did Donovan scold you again?” Henry asked in a worried tone.

Although Jared looked like he was about to say something, only a simple question slipped out of his mouth. “Do you need my help?”

“I'm fine.” Arielle shook her head. “Although Donovan's words were harsh, he meant well. He heard that I left the Southalls and was worried that I wouldn't have the money to support myself, so he asked me to fill in an application form for student loans.”

“Student loans? That's a lengthy and exhausting process. You can just take our money!” Henry's loud yells drew everyone's attention.

Immediately, Jared kicked him to shut him up. “I'm sorry, he likes to run his mouth.”

“It's all right,” Arielle replied good-naturedly. She didn't

care about what others thought of her anyway.

Jared was relieved that Arielle wasn't offended by his brother's shouting. "What's wrong with Donovan? He used to target you mercilessly. Why is he helping you now? Could it be a trap?"

Arielle shook her head. "I don't think so. I noticed the school's official stamp on the application form. Besides, how can he use it against me? If it's a trap Donovan devised, it will only hurt him and show that he's unqualified to be a lecturer."

"Although that's true, it was odd for Donovan to help you," Jared murmured, deep in thought.

"Maybe Donovan wasn't as bad as we pictured him to be," Arielle suggested. Promptly, the bell rang, signaling that a new class was about to begin.

It was time for Ustranasion class. It was a class Arielle enjoyed because she liked Professor Sleight. After giving Jared a pat on the back, she returned to her seat.

Although the bell had rung, Professor Sleight was nowhere to be seen. The class bustled noisily. However, the students weren't chatting amongst themselves; they were all studying the Ustranasion topics Professor Sleight would cover today.

Since this was a preparatory class, most of the students were hardworking and eager to learn.

On the other hand, Henry was the exact opposite. After

reading through two pages of his Ustranasion textbook, he set it aside with a bored look.

Despite seeing his brother's lazy antics, Jared remained silent. Instead, he focused his attention on his textbook.

Seated on the fourth row, a female student by the window tugged on her deskmate's sleeve. "What do we do? I can't focus in class. You don't think they'll imprison us, do you? I'm so terrified. I want to tell my parents about it," she whispered fearfully.

The two students were none other than the students who claimed that they had a concussion.

The other student was much calmer. "Don't worry. Nothing happened even after we returned. Didn't you hear what Henry yelled earlier? Arielle is so desperate that she applied for a student loan. I'm sure Vinson was bluffing to scare us into submission. There's no way he will put in so much effort for a disgrace like Arielle!"

"Are you sure that we'll be fine?" Her timid friend remained unconvinced.

"Trust me."

"B-but, Vinson made a special trip just for Arielle. I still think that he will put us behind bars."

Her friends merely laughed with a shake of her head. "Who said Vinson came here for Arielle? He was here for the child who hit us. Don't overthink it. Just look at the difference in their statuses. Even if he takes a liking

to her, the best he can do is make her his mistress. Employing a lawyer will only draw more attention to their scandalous relationship. Don't you know that the wealthy like to keep things under wraps to prevent tarnish on their reputation?"



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The girl's confident words finally managed to calm her friend.

Yet, the student still felt her skin prickling with unease as she felt a sense of foreboding.

Right then, Professor Sleight entered the classroom.

“Dear students, I apologize for my tardiness. I had a few matters to resolve,” Professor Sleight explained as he set his materials on the desk.

Here, he paused before continuing, “Also, I have an announcement to make. Tomorrow, a professor from Maxwell University will be visiting our campus. He is going to host a talk and teach you some useful study tips. Make sure you pay attention during his talk.”

His announcement sent the class into a flurry of excitement.

“A lecturer from Maxwell University? I'm sure his study tips will come in handy. I'm going to bring a voice recorder so I won't miss out on any details!”

“I'm going to bring a notebook and jot everything down!”

Amidst the loud chatting, Professor Sleight cleared his throat to silence the class.

When the class finally settled down, Professor Sleight began again, “Mr. Baxter was a graduate from Maxwell University. Unfortunately, he will not be here tomorrow

and chose Wendy to help with the translation. Wendy, make sure you make the appropriate preparations. Once the class is over, come over to my office to take some notes about the school's history. You'll need to translate those materials beforehand.”

Everyone looked at Wendy with admiration.

After all, they all yearned to get into Maxwell University. Being able to act as a translator for the professor from their dream university was a viable method to increase their chances of getting in.

Unfortunately, the translator position had already been filled.

Wendy's chest puffed with pride as she preened under their admiring stares.

Unable to resist, she turned around to look at Arielle. She wanted to see if Arielle felt jealous about her position as the professor's translator.

To her utter disappointment, Arielle had her head bent as she was deeply engrossed in something else. Arielle hadn't even looked up when Professor Sleight made the announcement.

Wendy pursed her lips and looked away.

When Arielle first heard Professor Sleight's announcement, she was afraid that he would group her and Wendy together. After all, Professor Sleight had high expectations for her.

It would be fine if it were a professor from another university. However, a professor from Maxwell University might recognize me. Southhall Group is on the brink of collapse. I can't expose my identity right now.

Though Arielle tried to hide at the last row, Professor Sleight still called out her name.

Her back stiffened as she raised her head to look at Professor Sleight.

Professor Sleight beamed. "Arielle, not only is the professor going for a tour, he plans to translate some of the lesson plans from the advanced math class too. Once Wendy is done with the tour, why don't you join Professor Jones and help him with the translation?"

Immediately, Wendy clenched her jaw in anger. Why did he ask me to lead the tour but assigned Arielle to help with the teaching materials? Compared to Arielle, Professor Sleight must think that I'm utterly insignificant.

Although Wendy's heart was burning with hatred, Arielle was so frustrated that she was close to bursting into tears.

Hesitantly, she raised her hand. "Professor Sleight, I don't think I'm qualified to handle this task. Since Wendy already holds the role as the translator, you should let her work with Professor Jones instead."

Wendy's scowl deepened. Does she think that I'm a

charity case?

Before Wendy could offer a reply, she was interjected by Professor Sleight, who shook his head. “Based on Wendy's fluency, I'm afraid that she isn't up to the task. Arielle, you'll have to fill in this position.”

In a haze of rage, Wendy's hand shot into the air. “Professor Sleight, please leave this to me,” she blurted.



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Professor Sleight felt conflicted when he saw Wendy's eager volunteer.

When Donovan chose Wendy to be the translator, Professor Sleight was not keen with his choice because Arielle's mastery of Ustranasion clearly outshone Wendy's.

But seeing how Wendy wanted to translate the lesson plan, he felt torn.

Since Wendy courageously volunteered, he didn't want to decline her the opportunity and put her down.

After a brief moment of hesitation, he heaved out a heavy sigh. "All right, Wendy can handle the lesson plans. However, please contact Arielle if you meet any difficulties. Arielle, it will be your responsibility to help Wendy if she reaches out to you. All the Ustranasion professors will be busy with their classes, so you are the only help available. Please take this matter seriously; the school's reputation is on the line."

Since Professor Sleight had made his decision, Arielle could not decline. Reluctantly, she nodded in agreement. "Understood, Professor Sleight."

I hope Wendy can handle this on her own.

Contrarily, Wendy seethed in anger.

How could Professor Sleight say such humiliating things in front of the entire class? Didn't he just indirectly say that I'm not as good as Arielle? I'll prove

him wrong!

Wendy whirled around and gave Arielle a deadly glare.

When Arielle caught sight of her venomous stare, she returned it with a look of puzzlement.

Has Wendy lost her brain? I gave her this opportunity on a silver platter. Why is she still so unhappy?

Arielle shrugged and ignored Wendy before she continued to scribble something down.

The notes she'd written were the key points needed to topple the Southalls. However, she still lacked crucial pieces of evidence and individuals regarding the Southalls' mineral deposits.

If only the other side could pick up their pace. I will crush Southall Group and rebrand it to the Moore Group. This way, I can take back everything that belonged to Mom and help her get revenge.

A cold and determined look flitted across Arielle's gaze. But as quick as it came, it vanished. One would have thought her fierce gaze was merely a figment of their imagination.

I cannot lose control of my emotions. It's a luxury I can't afford. Being able to hide her emotions was one of Arielle's many talents.

By the time class ended, the sun had already dipped below the horizon. Its blazing rays stretched across the

sky and painted the clouds gold.

Although many of Jadeborough University's students stayed off-campus, they needed a signature from their homeroom teacher and principal before they were allowed to leave.

Quickly, Arielle sent Vinson a quick message to inform him that she would be slightly later today. After that, she got Mr. Brown's signature and headed toward the teacher's dorm.

Since Donovan had only one lecture this afternoon, he must have returned to his dorm already.

Arielle recalled how Donovan misunderstood her intentions when she last visited him alone and decided to bring Trisha along with her.

Although Trisha was usually introverted and timid, she was a stark contrast in front of Arielle. Like a chatterbox, she told Arielle about the incidents that happened when Arielle was on leave the other day.

“After the freshman party, Chanaean Sand Painting Association contacted me! They offered me a membership too. Since I have a passion for sand painting, I filled in their application form. My parents were delighted too. They gave me a pink Mini Cooper as a congratulatory gift. However, I'm in a bind because I don't have my driving license yet...” Trisha said excitedly.

Arielle listened intently to Trisha's rambling, nodding in

agreement from time to time.

In the blink of an eye, they'd reached the teacher's dorm.

“I'm terrified of Mr. Baxter. Is it okay if I wait for you on the first floor?” Trisha mumbled.

Arielle didn't want to put Trisha in an uncomfortable position and merely nodded. “Okay, I'll head up myself.”

In truth, she didn't dislike Donovan. She found him irritating.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Donovan had always given Arielle the heebie-jeebies. She could not articulate exactly why he made her feel that way, but she still did not want any contact with him at all.

That was why she had dragged Trisha along with her.

However, in the end, she still had to face Donovan all alone.

Arielle soon arrived at the door of Donovan's dorm.

She raised her hand and knocked on the door.

Knock, knock!

Donovan opened the door as soon as he had heard the knock.

The figure standing in the doorway had hair that reached her slender waist.

It was none other than Arielle.

Donovan's heart began to beat rapidly at the sight of Arielle. However, he tried to act nonchalant and asked in a cold tone, "What's the matter?"

"Mr. Baxter, I would like to request your signature here," Arielle said, handing the application form over to him.

Donovan's expression darkened when he saw the application form.

“Arielle!” Donovan's voice was tight with anger that he did not even know he harbored. He lowered his voice and said, “Have you already forgotten what I said to you this afternoon? Do you really want to be a kept woman? Do you really want to be living with another man?”

Arielle's lips parted in shock and confusion. After a long while, she finally realized that there had been a misunderstanding.

Donovan had wrongly assumed that she was staying with Vinson.

With a frown, Arielle explained, “I live alone. I'm not living with a man, nor am I someone's mistress! If you call me names again, I'll report you to the principal and the police!”

Donovan visibly relaxed upon hearing Arielle's words.

After a short pause, he asked, “Where did you get the money to pay rent from?”

“From my deceased mom,” Arielle replied with a shrug.

Donovan was a little stunned to hear her answer. He cleared his throat awkwardly and said, “It was my mistake, and I apologize for that. I'll come and take a look once you've moved. As your homeroom teacher, I should know the living situation of my students who are staying off-campus.”

Arielle looked at Donovan with furrowed brows. What

does he mean by that?

But Donovan's head was bowed, and he was signing the form. Hence, she did not say anything else to him and merely took the signed form before she headed back downstairs.

“Hold on,” Donovan called out suddenly.

When she turned, Arielle caught Donovan's eyes staring at her bare neck.

“Your neck...” It needs a necklace.

However, Donovan did not complete his sentence. He shook himself out of his daze, cleared his throat awkwardly again, and said, “Well, go on, then!”

Arielle threw him a confused glance and continued on her way.

Trisha, who had been waiting at the bottom of the stairwell, rushed toward her and asked, “How did it go? Mr. Baxter didn't make it too difficult for you, did he?”

Arielle shook her head and smiled lightly with no intention to talk about Donovan. “Once I'm all settled in my new place, I'll invite you and Jared over! I'll make you two dinner!”

“That sounds great!” Trisha nodded happily.

The two ladies chatted as they walked, and soon, they arrived at the university gates.

Outside the gates, a bright blue sports car was parked by the side of the road. All of the students who were passing by could not help staring at it.

Right then, Vinson climbed out and leaned against the car door, waiting with his arms casually crossed.

The crowd of students buzzed with excitement when he emerged from the car.

“Is that Mr. Nightshire? He's so handsome!”

“Hold on! Why isn't Mr. Nightshire in a suit today? He's usually in a suit. Why is he in overalls today?”

“Well, it looks great on him! He's so handsome; he can pull off anything! If any of the boys in our class had worn those overalls, they would look like a janitor!”

The first thing Wendy saw when she walked out of the school gates was Vinson dressed in a pair of light blue overalls.



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Wendy was on her way out for dinner with some friends. She had not expected to run into Vinson as soon as she walked out of the school grounds.

Meanwhile, Vinson had lost the domineering aura that usually accompanied him in his usual suit. In his overalls, he looked attractively wild and rebellious. It was difficult for anyone to pull their eyes away from him.

Naturally, Wendy stood rooted to the ground as well. She had come to a complete stop as soon as Vinson entered her vision.

Her face grew warm at the sight of him. However, when she recalled the way he had treated her, her expression turned cold.

“Wendy? Come on! Why are you stopping here?” The two girls who were walking with Wendy turned back to look at her with frowns on their faces.

Instantly, Wendy snapped out of her daze, smiled faintly at the girls, and hurried to catch up to them.

As the two girls followed Wendy's gaze, they could not help but feel nervous looking at Vinson standing by his car.

“Should we go out through the back door?” the taller girl suggested.

“What are you scared of? Half a day has already passed, and nothing happened so far! Mr. Nightshire must be

even more frightened of us. Let's just go! There's nothing to be scared of!" the other girl replied with a smirk.

With that, she grabbed their hands and dragged them past Vinson.

Wendy and the taller girl kept their eyes fixed on the ground. They were afraid that Vinson might notice them and confront them after recalling what had happened earlier that day.

Luckily for them, Vinson did not even glance up as the three girls walked past him.

"What did I say, huh?" the shorter girl said gloatingly once they were out of his earshot. "There's no way he would confront us over such a trivial matter. You two should stop worrying about it!"

The taller girl exhaled in relief and beamed, "Well then, shall we go celebrate with pizza? My treat!"

"Okay!" the other girl replied cheerfully.

On the contrary, Wendy could not bring herself to even crack a smile.

I walked right past him, but he didn't even notice me! He really doesn't give a sh*t about me! If he did, he would have been able to spot me in the crowd!

Feeling rather irritated by the turn of events, she trailed behind her two friends in silence.

From a distance, Arielle noticed Vinson leaning against his car outside the university gates.

Trisha caught sight of him, too. After all, Vinson was impossible to ignore.

She did not want to come between the two of them, so she bade Arielle goodbye and went her own way. “See you tomorrow, Arielle!”

Arielle caressed her head and reminded, “If you're having any problems living alone, let me know, okay? I can come back anytime!”

“Sure, don't worry about me,” Trisha said with a smile.

Pleased, Arielle gave Trisha's hair one last ruffle and let her go.

Trisha blushed a little and hurried away with a wave.

Seeing that, Arielle could not help smiling back at her. Then, she turned and walked toward Vinson.

Meanwhile, Vinson was staring intently at Arielle. It was as if the entire world had fallen away, and they were the only two people left in that space.

However, he had noticed the interaction between the two girls, and it had made him feel rather unhappy.

Arielle had never caressed his head like that before.

Is it because I lack hair, or am I not as likable as that

girl?

As soon as Arielle approached Vinson, she could sense the dissatisfaction emanating from him. It was as if the temperature around him had dropped a few degrees.

Confused, she looked at Vinson. His eyes were icy, and his brows were knitted together. He could not have made his feelings any clearer.

“What's wrong?” Arielle asked.

“What do you think?” Vinson replied, glaring at her.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Why does he always sound so aggrieved? What did I even do to him?

Arielle tried to guess what she had done to upset him and said, "Sorry, I didn't mean to be late. I had to get the principal and my homeroom teacher to sign the form for permission to live off-campus. I didn't mean to keep you waiting. Please don't be angry!"

Vinson's eyes twitched.

"Do you really think I'm mad because of that?"

Arielle blinked at him, her confusion deepening. "Why else would you be mad?"

"Ah, forget it!" Vinson retorted with a scowl. "Let's just pretend that's the reason I'm mad. Just give me your luggage and get in the car."

With that, Wendy climbed into the passenger seat, still frowning in confusion. She knew there was another reason for Vinson's irritation. But what's the real reason?

The silence in the car was palpable as they drove toward the residential area. When they stopped at a traffic light, Vinson finally turned to Arielle and said sullenly, "Don't forget that we're married. You shouldn't go around petting other people's heads. We signed a contract."

Arielle turned her gaze to Vinson in astonishment. "Are you talking about Trisha? She's a girl!"

Vinson snorted and said in a low voice, “She's lucky that she's a girl!”

“Huh?” Arielle did not know what he meant by his remark.

However, Vinson did not explain himself. The traffic light turned green, and he started the car again. They finally stopped in front of an old residential building about ten minutes' drive from Jadeborough University.

The appearance of the bright blue sports car attracted the attention of the few elderly people who were going about their morning walk in front of the gate.

Getting out of the car, Vinson shook his head disapprovingly as he took in the rather rundown building in front of him. “This place is so old! Why don't you live with me in Maple Mansion? It's only half an hour's drive from the university. It's really not that far.”

Arielle recalled how Donovan had called her a 'kept woman' and shook her head vehemently. “No, I want to live alone.”

Hearing the firmness in her tone, Vinson did not try to persuade her any further. He silently started looking for her unit number.

Arielle was staying in unit number 2 on the sixth floor.

It was an old building, and there was no elevator. Hence, Vinson had to climb up six flights of stairs while

lugging Arielle's two large suitcases behind him.

She had wanted to offer to carry one of the suitcases, but she saw that Vinson had managed to climb up to the fourth floor without exerting much effort. Since he's so strong and doesn't seem to have any trouble carrying the bags, I'll let him do it all by himself then!

She was panting by the time they finally reached the sixth floor. On the other hand, Vinson looked perfectly fine despite having carried two heavy suitcases up with him. Arielle could not help commenting as she unlocked the door to admit them into the apartment, "I didn't know you were so fit!"

Vinson raised an eyebrow and smirked. "I'm fitter than you think. You can try me if you'd like."

"Try you?" Arielle asked, puzzled. "What do you mean?"

As soon as those words left her mouth, Arielle realized that Vinson had been teasing her. She blushed furiously. "Oh, come on, Vinson! Don't be indecent! Just because you're dressed like a Chad today, it doesn't mean that you can act like one!"

Vinson smirked at her again. "It has nothing to do with my style today. I've always been this way."

Especially when I'm speaking to you, Vinson added silently to himself.

Rolling her eyes, Arielle turned her back to him and

focused on unlocking the front door.

The doorknob was rather difficult to unlock, and Arielle fiddled with it for several minutes before a click sounded, and the door finally swung open.

As soon as they entered the apartment, a musty smell and a cloud of dust accosted them.

Arielle sneezed and coughed several times as the dust tickled her nose and throat.

Vinson stepped in before her and said, "Wait by the door. I'll open up the windows first. Let the air circulate a little before you step in."

For a moment, he did not seem like a CEO at all. He walked straight into that musty apartment without even flinching.



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Arielle had always noticed the small details, and she did not miss Vinson's gentlemanly behavior. Her heartbeat quickened at his gallantry.

However, she was also a sensible person, so she quickly forced herself out of her moony-eyed daze.

She had been a fool too many times before. Hence, she did not want to put herself in that awkward situation ever again.

We're just friends!

Arielle insisted to herself.

After Vinson had cracked open all the windows in the apartment, his phone suddenly rang. The screen lit up with Jordan's name.

Vinson answered the call. Before he could even open his mouth, Jordan had already started speaking in an urgent tone, "Vin, I've just broken up with a girl without knowing that she is the daughter of my dad's friend! Well, my dad found out about it very quickly, and he canceled my credit card! I'm broke! Could you lend me one million? I need the money right now!"

"I have no money," Vinson replied coolly and promptly hung up the phone.

On the other end of the line, Jordan yelled in frustration in the washroom cubicle where he was hiding.

Heartless ass*le! Am I even a friend to him? How

could he treat me like this? How heartless!

Arielle walked in just as Vinson was finishing his call and could not help asking, “Did you say 'no money'? Are you short of money, Vinson?”

Vinson glanced at her suspiciously.

“I have quite a hefty sum of money in my bank account. If you're in need of cash, I can lend you some. I won't charge you any interest,” Arielle continued.

Vinson looked at her with interest as she spoke. A playful glint shone in his eyes.

The very next moment, Vinson put on a pitiful face and said with a sigh, “Although the problem with the coffee shop is now resolved, Nightshire Group is still suffering the consequences. Now we're having some cash flow problems...”

“I'll lend you some money!”

“No need for that,” Vinson said, shaking his head. “I'll have enough cash if I sell Maple Mansion, but if I do that... I won't have a place to live!”

“Oh no! How did it come to this...” Arielle frowned in concern. “Since the problem was resolved, I thought your sales would be even higher than before...”

Vinson sighed loudly and looked despondently out the window. “It looks like I'll be sleeping on the streets tonight.”

“Well, you can still go back to the manor!” Arielle reminded him.

“I thought of that, but my mother is getting older, and I've lived on my own for a long time. If I suddenly go back to my family home now, she'll know the company is in trouble! I don't want her worrying since she's old and not in good health...”

“Well...” Arielle bit her lower lip, her brows knitted together. “If you don't mind, you can stay here temporarily. Once you have your finances under control, you can buy another house to stay in.”

“That seems to be my only choice. Would you mind, though?” Vinson said solemnly.

Arielle waved her hand dismissively and said, “No, of course not! I'll be at school all day anyway. I can't do much to help you with your troubles. This is the only way I can help you. It's nothing!”

“That's the plan then! I'll get Rayson to sort that out for me while I help you clean up and settle down here.”

“Okay.” Arielle nodded before she went to inspect the rest of the apartment.

Hence, she did not notice the corners of Vinson's lips lifting in amusement.

Arielle is a smart lady, but she really does trust me too much! She didn't even blink at anything I said! Well, what else could I do? I'm responsible for her safety,

after all.

As Arielle toured the apartment, she was quite satisfied with it.

It had one bedroom, one living room, and one bathroom. Although it was a rather old unit, all the electrical appliances worked perfectly, so she could move in that very night after cleaning up the place a bit.



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When Arielle walked out of the master bedroom, she noticed that Vinson had opened one of the luggage.

In fact, she had been thinking about it just now. She wondered why Vinson brought two pieces of luggage up when she only had one.

Feeling puzzled, she leaned closer to look at the luggage. It turned out that there were a lot of tools and equipment for cleaning inside.

Arielle glanced at the luggage. There were even tools to clean the windows inside.

Then, Vinson laid out all of the tools. There were so many of them that they took up half the living room.

Arielle laughed under her breath upon seeing Vinson taking out a broom in his work uniform. It feels like I've hired a professional cleaner.

“You have a lot of professional equipment with you. I'll give you a raise in your salary later.”

“Thank you, boss.” Vinson bowed politely toward Arielle.

Seeing that, Arielle could not help but chuckle.

Not long later, they started cleaning the room.

To Arielle's surprise, Vinson was efficient at cleaning. The dusty room turned sparkly clean in less than two hours.

Arielle opened the air conditioner, and the moldy smell in the room dissipated gradually.

Then, she turned around to Vinson and said, "I'm going to make the bed now. You can throw the rubbish downstairs. Then, we can go get some groceries for our dinner tonight."

Vinson made an OK sign with his hand before carrying the garbage down.

Staring at his back, Arielle felt the empty holes in her heart fill up instantly. She did not know how to explain the complicated feelings within her heart, but she had to admit that it was, indeed, a good feeling.

After Vinson left, she went into the bedroom to make the bed.

Suddenly, she noticed a photo under the mattress, so she leaned over to pick it up.

As soon as her gaze fell on the photo, she was stunned.

Vinson came back a few minutes later. He noticed that Arielle was not in the living room, so he headed inside the bedroom to look for her.

Right then, Arielle was staring at the wall in a daze with the photo still in her hand.

Vinson could not help but ask, "What are you looking at?"

Arielle immediately regained her senses upon hearing that. She lifted her head to look at Vinson. She was so excited that her eyes began to glimmer with tears.

Vinson frowned slightly. Subconsciously, he reached out a hand to wipe away the tears at the corners of her eyes.

There were calluses on his fingers. Arielle felt like an electrical current shot through her body as he rubbed her face with his rough fingers.

Suddenly, her heart began to beat faster. She froze for a second before taking a step behind subconsciously.

With that, Vinson's hand stopped at the mid-air. His gaze darkened, but he soon recovered from it. "What's wrong? What are you looking at?"

Arielle coughed, trying her best to calm herself down. Then, she handed the photo to Vinson. "Look at this! I found it under the mattress just now. It must've been left by Mom back then. Henrick moved all the valuable things away, but he had never touched any furniture. That's why this photo is still here!"

Vinson took over the photo to look at it. Maureen was smiling sweetly in the picture. The man who stood beside her wrapped his arms around her as he looked at her affectionately.

That man was very handsome-looking. He had perfect facial features. Every corner of his face was well chiseled. His eyes were dark, and his nose was

beautiful. Moreover, his look exuded a domineering yet elegant aura.

Most importantly, his facial features were very similar to Arielle's.

“This man...” Vinson widened his eyes in surprise.

Arielle knew what was on Vinson's mind. She nodded and said, “I think he might be my biological father.”



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Arielle's voice trembled as she said that.

Words could not explain how excited she was. After all, she had been looking for that man since a long time ago. She tried to search for him after visiting her mom and Susanne. Moreover, she also asked her subordinates for help, but all her efforts were in vain.

She had no single information about the man, including his name and appearance. The global population was nearly eight billion, so there was no way that she could find him in that situation.

However, she finally found out how that man looked like now.

It's all thanks to Dad for kicking me out and giving me the house! Arielle was beyond excited.

But then, she was a little lost at the same time. Should I be happy about this?

Vinson stared at Arielle's complicated expression as he asked in confusion, "Now that you have found the photo, it'll be so much easier for you to find your biological father now. Why are you making this face? Aren't you happy?"

Arielle smiled wryly. "But he didn't show up after what had happened to Mom, even after her death. I don't know whether he has anything to do with that, and if he does, I won't let him off even though he's my biological father. I have to avenge Mom. That's why I don't know how I should react to that."

Vinson reached out a hand to pat her head. “Don't overthink things for now, okay? You'll find out everything after meeting him. At least you're one step closer to the truth now, right?”

He leaned closer to her. The refreshing scent of cedarwood wafted in the air, overwhelming Arielle.

She looked up and met Vinson's gaze. His dark eyes were soft, glimmering with adoration.

Arielle's heart began to pound faster as her face flushed red. Awkwardly, she pushed Vinson's hand away and coughed. “Yes. That's a good thing, after all. I'll ask my men to try the face recognition function in the database room. If his information is in the database, we'll get to find him within one or two days.”

“Okay. Give me a copy of the picture. My company has a private global faces database. That should make our work easier.”

“Okay.” Arielle nodded, trying hard to calm herself down.

As soon as they finished discussing the photo, they headed to the supermarket nearby.

“What do you feel like eating? Ravioli?” Arielle asked while pushing the trolley.

“I want to try some of your other dishes,” Vinson said. “I can be your assistant.”

Arielle recalled how Vinson turned the noodles into a cursed dish, so she shook her head immediately. “Forget about that. You can help me to clean the dishes.”

Vinson smiled helplessly. “Why do you sound so disdainful? Are my culinary skills that bad?”

Arielle shrugged. “Pardon me for being straightforward. You're quite bad in that.”

Vinson tucked both of his hands into his pockets and smirked mischievously, “In what? Bed?”

Arielle's smile froze as she blushed.

“You're crazy.” With that said, she pushed the trolley and walked toward the vegetables section.

Vinson followed behind her. As he passed by the household supplies areas, he stopped to pick a few matching toiletries for both of them.

He chose two similar towels, two toothbrushes in the same shade, and two rinsing mugs that were black and white.

Meanwhile, someone stopped Arielle while she was picking the vegetables.



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Arielle raised her head to look at the man in front of her.

He was tall and slender. His short hair was colored grey.

Strangely, he wrapped every part of his body even under such hot weather. Moreover, he wore sunglasses and a face mask to cover his face.

Why is he dressing up like that on such a terribly hot day? Could it be that he's a crazy man? Subconsciously, Arielle stepped back and asked warily, "What do you want?"

Upon realizing that he had frightened Arielle, the man explained, "Don't be scared. My name is Jason Sleight."

Then, he took off the face mask and sunglasses.

A handsome face appeared the moment he took them off.

His facial features were exquisite. It was too perfect that anyone would stop breathing when they saw his face.

Jason stood still as he waited for Arielle's response.

However, Arielle frowned as she shot him a glance bewilderedly. Upon making sure that she did not remember his face, she shook her head and apologized, "I'm sorry. I don't remember knowing you. May I know who you are?"

Jason was stunned. He pointed at himself and asked, "You don't know me? I'm Jason! Jason Sleight!"

I'm one of the most famous influencers! How can she be unaware of my identity? Soon, he took his cap off.

Immediately, several women rushed over to surround him.

“Jason Sleight, is that you?”

“I'm your fan! Can you take a picture with us?”

“Can I get your autograph?”

Finally, Arielle came to her realization. Oh. It turns out that he's a celebrity. But I don't remember interacting with any celebrities in Chanaea. I wonder why he stopped me just now.

However, as she was unbothered about him, she pushed her trolley away to continue with her grocery shopping.

Not long after, the trolley was filled with fresh vegetables. Vinson walked toward her as he asked, “What did that man say to you just now?”

“He just wanted to know whether I knew him. Let's go. I'm done picking the vegetables. We should get some meat.” Arielle was not even bothered by what had happened just now.

After all, she did not understand why Jason appeared out of nowhere to introduce himself.

However, Vinson understood what was going on. That guy is just trying to hit on Arielle. Luckily, Arielle

doesn't have many experiences in relationships, so she doesn't know anything.

He turned to glance at Arielle. I wish I can stick a “Married” label on her forehead so that no one will try to hit on her.

However, he could only keep that wish at the bottom of his heart.

As soon as they paid the bills, both of them carried two shopping bags each and returned to the house.

Vinson continued to clean the house while Arielle started to prepare their dinner in the kitchen. Although they did not interact in the process, both of them would glance at each other from time to time. The atmosphere in the house was heartwarming and harmonious.

Back then, Vinson thought that life after marriage was bored and troublesome. However, he started to find it interesting now. He even thought of spending the rest of his life like that.

Arielle was skilled in cooking. Not long after, she brought six different dishes and a soup out and arranged them neatly on the dining table.

Vinson could already feel his stomach growling as he looked at them.

“You're good at playing piano and chess. I didn't expect you to be this skillful in cooking too!” He shifted his gaze from the food to Arielle's face.

Arielle replied effusively, "I'm fast when it comes to learning things since young. I think I've inherited that from my mom."

Suddenly, she noticed that there was no cutlery on the table. She stood up and walked past Vinson to the kitchen.

Vinson was sitting down around the dining table with one of his legs stretched out. Arielle did not notice that, so she tripped over his feet and fell toward him.



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Everything happened so fast that Arielle did not even have the time to stabilize herself.

Right when she thought she was about to fall badly, a hand grabbed her wrist all of a sudden and pulled her to the side.

The next moment, she fell into a warm and firm embrace that smelled like cedarwood.

Vinson was also startled. Fortunately, his reaction speed was fast enough. As soon as he pulled Arielle over, he immediately spread his arms open to catch her.

The chair moved back a little due to the inertia.

Vinson's back knocked on the corner of the table. He could not help but let out a deep groan of pain.

Suddenly, a middle-aged woman opened the door abruptly with a bag of fresh fruits in her hand.

She froze upon seeing Vinson groan with Arielle in his arms. Her mind went blank, so she stood still and looked at them in a daze. Are all the youngsters this open-minded? How can they do that in the dining room?

Immediately, Vinson noticed that woman. He held Arielle and asked, "What's the matter?"

The woman regained her senses upon hearing that. "I'm one of the residents from the downstairs. I came to say hi because you guys just moved in. Unfortunately, I

came at a b-bad timing...” She put the bag of fruits on the floor as she laughed awkwardly. “You guys can continue now. I didn't see anything just now!”

With that, she turned around and left immediately. She even closed the door for them.

Arielle realized that the woman had misunderstood them. Her petite face immediately flushed red with shame. She struggled, trying to free herself from Vinson's hands.

However, Vinson did not plan to let her go. He continued to wrap his arms around her waist tightly and smiled, “Seems like she misunderstood us.”

Of course I know about this! Arielle frowned. “It's all because of you. Why didn't you close the door just now? A-Anyway, l-let go of me first.”

Vinson ignored her words. He could feel the sensation of Arielle's body through her clothes.

Her skin was too soft and firm that he was reluctant to let her go.

Ignoring the shameful expression on Arielle's face, Vinson bent forward to her ears and whispered, “In fact, she did not misunderstand anything. We're a married couple, anyway.”

As Vinson talked, his warm breath fell upon her face.

Her face was so red that it became redder than the red

glow of the evening sky. She was utterly embarrassed, and she felt like her brain was going to explode soon.

Having no choice, Arielle struggled with her strengths to free herself from Vinson's arms. Finally, she finally escaped from his embrace after exhaustive efforts.

Then, she backed off immediately to keep a safe distance from Vinson. Her eyes were blazing with anger and shame as she scolded, "Why didn't you let go of me? Are you a pervert?"

"Pervert?" Vinson tilted his head. The corners of his lips curled into a devilish grin. "I'm not a pervert."

After all, he was just hugging his own wife.

Arielle felt even more uneasy upon seeing his face. She could still feel the warmth of his hands on her waist, and that made her feel like her whole body was burning.

Finally, she turned around and walked into the kitchen, ignoring him.

There was only a set of cutlery in her hands when she walked out of the kitchen.

"Where's mine?" Vinson asked with an innocent look.

"Go and take it yourself!" Arielle did not even look at him. She sat down around the dining table and started eating.

She was too embarrassed that her face hung low, close

to the plate. Seeing that, Vinson reached out a hand to adjust the position of her head.

However, Arielle immediately leaned back into her chair as soon as she felt his touch. She looked up and glared at Vinson furiously.

Vinson shrugged and answered in an even more innocent voice, “I’m just worried that your hair might get dirty.”



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Vinson blinked his eyes twice as he said this and it made him look harmless.

“Um,” Arielle couldn't get angry for some reason when she saw his actions and just lowered her head to continue eating.

Vinson shrugged before going to the kitchen.

Arielle couldn't stop her gaze from following his figure but soon snapped out of her daze. Patting her cheeks, she reminded herself to ignore Vinson for the whole night.

Vinson returned from the kitchen not long after. Arielle didn't turn to look at him and kept her head low as she continued eating.

Vinson wisely refrained from letting his hands wander again this time and attentively sat opposite her to eat.

Arielle cooked a common dish but it was delicious and tasted like something he never had.

He took a few more bites just to make sure that it really wasn't him playing favorite as he felt that Arielle's cooking was better than top chefs.

His thoughts wandered.

Arielle had shown extraordinary skills in hacking, piano, chess, and a lot of other things.

Maureen was also powerful and smart but not to

Arielle's level of skills. The man in the picture is sure very exceptional.

It seems that I really need to talk to Mom. She and Mrs. Moore used to be close friends. Maybe she knows something.

Vinson frowned almost immediately as he thought of Susanne.

Arielle, who sat opposite him, had already finished her meal and got up to return to the bedroom.

“Arielle,” Vinson called, but she ignored him and continued to walk away.

“Sannie,” Vinson tried again helplessly.

Arielle's footsteps halted before answering blankly. “I'm done eating so I'm going back to my room and rest.”

“Good-” Arielle had entered the bedroom before Vinson could even say “night”.

“Tsk.” Vinson wore a troubled expression. Girls are hard to coax.

He then got up and went to the balcony a few minutes later to call Jordan.

Jordan answered the call quickly and he sounded aggrieved. “Why are you calling me? I'm about to starve to death and you don't even try to save me. You're inhuman!”

“I've transferred five million to your account. You can check.”

Jordan's scolding tone instantly turned into an incomparably flattering one. “Oh, look at me, always saying the wrong things. What I wanted to say was you are the very handsome, very bold, very distinguished, and very elegant friend of mine!”

Vinson directly said, “Stop. You've already received the money so you're under my jurisdiction now.”

“What is it? You gave me five million... There shouldn't be any mortal danger, right?”

“Just answer my question.”

“Uh... What question?”

Vinson glanced at the master bedroom before asking in a whisper. “The girl is angry. How should I coax her?”

“Cough, cough...” Jordan on the other side of the call choked on his saliva.

He was ready to climb over mountains of blades and swam across seas of fire after being paid five million. In the end, it was... It was just this?

Jordan couldn't comprehend what was going on and he was speechless.

Half an hour later.

The girl in question was slumped over the desk.

Arielle bit the pen cap as she struggled to do her Old Chanaean Literature homework.

Old Chanaean Literature was quite difficult for her but she still gained a lot of understanding after carefully studying it. She could easily solve questions that involved common words provided that she had them memorized.

But she had been somewhat flustered today so she couldn't do this medium-difficulty level Old Chanaean Literature homework.

The door was pushed open at this moment...



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Arielle knew it was Vinson so she deliberately ignored it and didn't look up.

The next moment, however, she jumped away on reflex as she felt an icy cold sensation on her cheek.

She looked up in respond when the cold sensation was gone.

She saw Vinson holding two cups of iced milk tea in his hands before bowing to her in a casual manner with a flattering smile. "Sannie, don't be angry, okay?"

Intentionally or not, he dragged the word "okay", which effectively made it sound romantic and sexy. Vinson himself had a kind of abstinent temperament so this combination was unspeakably evoking.

Arielle was rendered speechless again.

She couldn't do anything but listen to Vinson talking as he put the cup on the desk and helped insert the straw in. "Blake said you like to drink grape tea smoothie of this brand. I made a special trip to the shop across your university just to buy you this. Please have mercy on me and drink this, okay?"

He asked Jordan for advice but the latter didn't know a thing about Arielle so he only told Vinson his method of coaxing his girlfriend. And it was to buy whatever she liked.

He remembered that Arielle was drinking milk tea when the accident with Blake happened. So he made a trip to

the milk tea shop across Jadeborough University to buy a cup of grape tea smoothie.

Arielle stared at the cup of grape tea smoothie Vinson was offering and her hand clenched around the pen tighter without her noticing.

Her heart might be... faulty.

“Just have a sip and don't be angry anymore, okay?” Vinson once again spoke in that affectionate tone from earlier.

Arielle couldn't stand it anymore so she reached out to take the cup without looking away. “I'll drink it. You can go out,” she said.

Vinson didn't leave but leaned closer to her ear instead. “You're not angry anymore?” Vinson asked.

His breath brushed against her ears and her temperature rose, dyeing her ears red.

Arielle leaned an inch backward before covering her ears and said impatiently, “I'm not angry anymore! Please go out!”

Vinson finally stood up and said in a contented manner. “I'll go out, then. Study well and sleep early. I'll send you to class tomorrow.”

“Yeah, I got it... Can you go out quickly?” Arielle urged.

Vinson would definitely see her blushing if he didn't leave at that moment.

“Okay.” Vinson answered her with a smile before walking away.

The light in the bedroom was quite dim but he still saw Arielle's blush.

It seems like Jordan really has some skills and I didn't spend those five million for nothing.

Arielle immediately covered herself with the quilt as soon as Vinson left.

Her heart was beating so fast that she felt as if it was about to jump out of her throat.

“No, no, Arielle... You have to keep calm!” Arielle rolled around the bed while attempting to calm herself.

Arielle kept at it for a long while until beads of sweat appeared on her forehead.

She swore in irritation before sitting up.

She didn't understand what had happened to her right now. Am I ill?

Arielle had never been in a romantic relationship. She was usually busy with all kinds of studies and wouldn't pay attention to that kind of thing so she didn't know what was going on with herself right now.