

As the sand painting began, the audience could see a vivid image—the man's country had eventually become a war zone.

With the intense but smooth piano piece, they couldn't help but clench their fists and feel worried for the man.

Despite the ravages of war, the man was strong-willed and finally led his people to defeat the enemies and win the war.

As the people cheered for the victory, the man was suddenly shot by an arrow.

In no time, blood splattered out from his chest.

Meanwhile, the lady with a crescent moon mark on her forehead finally escaped from Zeus and came to the battlefield.

It was a bolt from the blue for her to see the man lying in a puddle of blood.

Bam—

An ear-piercing noise came from the piano, indicating that the lady was heartbroken and devastated.

Eventually, the sand painting became pitch-black, and the piano-playing also stopped.

Toward the end, a few words appeared in the sand painting: In the Moonlight.

With that, the entire hall fell silent, save for sobs coming from the audience.

The audience was touched by the perfect combination of the sand painting and the piano performance, feeling as though the story depicted by Arielle actually happened in real life.

When Wendy opened her eyes, she realized that tears had rolled down her cheeks.

Shocked, Wendy glanced at Arielle, who was in the limelight.

At that moment, Wendy was finally aware of the insurmountable gap between Arielle and her.

Alas, I lag far behind Arielle.

Wendy couldn't continue thinking, for her mind had gone blank. Besides, she went weak at the knees and collapsed onto the floor.

Meanwhile, beads of perspiration formed on Arielle's forehead. After heaving a sigh, she walked to the center of the stage and bowed to the audience.

“And that is the end of my performance. Thank you.”

Upon hearing Arielle's words, the audience, who had been captivated by the performance, slowly came to their senses.

Wendy regained her composure faster than anyone else,

for she had a deep prejudice against Arielle.

Clap! Clap!

When someone began clapping, everyone in the hall followed suit.

It was so loud that even those who happened to be near the hall could hear it.

After coming to his senses, Steven yelled excitedly, "Incredible! Incredible!"

Steven was surprised to listen to the live version of In the Moonlight. All the more so, he was impressed by the performance, for it was even better than the piece recorded by the most prominent pianist in the last century.

Meanwhile, two musicians who stood next to Steven also calmed themselves down. Instantly, one of them commended, "Genius! She must be a genius! Who is she? I want to rope her in as my disciple."

"Rope her in as your disciple?" Another musician shouted, "I want to become her disciple!"

"Out of my way!" Steven pushed them aside and ran toward the stage.

The next moment, he kneeled before Arielle and shouted, "Miss, please accept me as your disciple! I'm willing to do everything I can in exchange for learning from you!"

The audience in the hall was stunned.

Are we seeing things?

The prominent pianist Steven is kneeling before Arielle and begging her to accept him as her disciple?

Just then, the other two pianists also rushed to the stage and kneeled before her, for they refused to be left out.

Although the prominent pianists weren't from Chanaea, they knew it was the country's culture for a disciple to kneel before his master.

All the more so, they thought it was worthy to kneel before the talented girl.

Wendy turned pale and shivered uncontrollably at the scene.

She was shocked that Steven and the other musicians who snorted at her would kneel before Arielle.

As such, Wendy thought it was a huge slap in her face.



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Why?

Wendy wanted to vent her dissatisfaction with the unfair treatment, but she was too weak to utter a word.

Just then, Wendy noticed that Vinson was walking toward her.

As if Vinson was her last hope, she lifted her hand in the hope that he would help her up.

However, Vinson merely glanced at her calmly before he walked past her and went up to the stage.

As soon as Vinson walked past Wendy, she heard him saying, "Tsk, she wasted my Sennhein."

Instantly, Wendy blushed in embarrassment.

While Wendy was too weak to argue with him, Vinson didn't give her the chance to say a word either. Instead, he ignored her and walked straight toward Arielle.

Meanwhile, Arielle was surprised as she had been unaware that the prominent Steven and the other two musicians were there to watch her show.

All the more so, she was shocked when the three of them kneeled before her together.

When Arielle was still clueless, Vinson suddenly said, "Arielle, why are you standing there for? These three professionals came all the way to watch your performance and are even kneeling before you now, so

you should accept their request.”

With that, Steven and the rest cast a grateful glance at Vinson.

Arielle wasn't sure why Vinson asked her to accept their request.

After all, it didn't make sense for her to accept such prominent musicians as her disciples.

Nonetheless, she knew that Vinson had a plan when he asked her to do so.

Hence, Arielle stopped hesitating about it and said with a nod, “All right. Please stand up.”

With that, she immediately helped them up.

The three prominent musicians were delighted and almost burst into dance when Arielle agreed to their request.

But their stiff bodies forbade them from doing so, so they only bowed to Arielle repeatedly and began introducing themselves.

Meanwhile, the students downstairs began cheering, for Arielle salvaged not only the pride of their university but also Chanaea's pianist circle.

With Arielle's world-class performance, Chanaea's pianist circle could finally get rid of its bad reputation brought about by Wendy.

Hence, all of them felt proud of having such an outstanding college mate.

“Boohoo... I can't help but cry. Arielle will be my goddess from today onward!”

“I guess no one will oppose it if we proclaim Arielle as the top goddess of our university, right?”

“By the way, has anyone noticed her Goddess of Hunting? It's the real deal! Well, she's the only one who deserves it!”

“Those who claimed that the Goddess of Hunting is fake must feel a hard slap in their faces right now.”

“It hurts, but I love it! I'm willing to get a few more slaps in my face from her!”

The merry atmosphere spread across the hall in no time.

In a secluded corner, Donovan stood still with an unreadable expression.

Deep down, Donovan knew that he would benefit from it when Arielle's talent was recognized by Steven and other prominent pianists.

He believed that he would gain respect from everyone once he introduced himself as Arielle's homeroom teacher to the three prominent musicians.

However, he didn't feel excited for some reason.

Donovan couldn't help but punch his face to ascertain if he was dreaming.

“Hiss...” The next moment, he withdrew his hand in pain.

It hurts! I'm not hallucinating!

Arielle proved me wrong once again!

As Donovan's expression turned grim, his phone suddenly rang.



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Who is calling me at this hour?

Donovan massaged his temples to soothe his headache. Refused to see Arielle's arrogance on the stage, he left the hall and answered the phone.

Immediately, a lecturer said over the phone excitedly, "Don, I've sent your mathematical solutions to a few directors of Maxwell University, and they are impressed! So, please work hard on your thesis. I heard that they might lower the standards of obtaining the certificate for you. Instead of sending three students to Maxwell University, they might lower it down to one student. So, your thesis will be of utmost importance!"

Delighted, Donovan replied, "All right, sir. I'll work hard on it!"

"Okay. Also, do you remember that I mentioned a senior who's good at advanced math? Get her help as soon as possible, and you'll complete your thesis smoothly."

"Understood!"

Donovan's hand shook visibly after the call ended.

I was supposed to send three students to Maxwell University to get the certificate. Once I pass my thesis, I only need to send one student. That's good news! However...

Donovan's countenance fell again, for he knew that he had the opportunity only because of Arielle.

Instead of feeling delighted about the news, he was inexplicably upset and even disgusted for some reason.

He had the same feelings in the hall earlier on. It was as if he had stolen from Arielle for his self-interest.

Donovan shut his eyes and took a deep breath. After regaining his composure, he slowly opened his eyes.

Arielle won't know about it anyway. Besides, who knows if she only happened to come up with the mathematical solutions?

Since I'm Arielle's lecturer, why can't I use her work? After all, my students' work is the same as mine because I've taught them.

Donovan felt a lot more relieved at the thought.

Since the board of directors valued him, he didn't have to return to the hall to greet Steven and the other musicians.

Meanwhile, Susanne was in a trance even after Steven and the other musicians left the hall.

She was deeply drenched in the melody played by Arielle and couldn't come to her senses yet.

Deep down, she remembered only one man who had superb piano skills like Arielle—Maureen's husband.

Back then, Maureen's piano skills improved tremendously with the man's tutoring.

He couldn't possibly teach Arielle because she doesn't even know him.

In that case, it's possible that Arielle is his child.

Susanne felt shocked but tempted to know more at the same time.

After all these years, Susanne didn't know the man's whereabouts and whether his family punished Maureen and her child.

They say parents would never harm their children. What if the family didn't get rid of Maureen's child but accepted her instead? If that's true, does it mean that I lost the perfect daughter-in-law?

After hesitating for a while, Susanne finally decided to give up on that idea due to her fear.

The Nightshire family is more than enough. I don't have to take the risk to build a relationship with that family.

As Susanne pondered over it, she suddenly heard Wendy's sobbing near her.



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“Boohoo... Mrs. Nightshire, I don't understand why Mr. Parker and the other musicians value Arielle so much but ignore me. Will my effort all these years turn into nothing? Am I no match for Arielle in all aspects? Am I that unlikeable? Boohoo...”

Wendy lay on Susanne's lap and began crying.

Despite her fake cry, Wendy was indeed upset.

At that moment, she could only seek solace from Susanne because she couldn't get any from Vinson.

Arielle's superb piano skills mean nothing since Susanne has set her mind on me!

The more convinced Wendy was, the louder she cried.

Before that, Susanne was conflicted and intended to back Wendy anyway. But when Wendy cried non-stop, she suddenly felt impatient.

Moreover, Susanne felt embarrassed when she recalled that Steven taunted Wendy on the stage earlier.

At that moment, a thought flashed through Susanne's mind.

Would I not be embarrassed if my future daughter-in-law is Arielle instead? There is no doubt that the answer is yes.

Meanwhile, Wendy felt slightly puzzled, for Susanne didn't comfort her even though she had gone all out to



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cry.

When Wendy looked up at Susanne, she saw her frowning. Instead of the usual endearing warmth on Susanne's face, all Wendy could see was impatience.

Wendy was shocked, and her mind went blank.

Why is Susanne reacting in such a way?

As fear rose in Wendy, her lips twitched.

If Susanne loses her fondness for me, I'll have no chance to marry into the Nightshires!

Wendy's face turned pale at that thought. The next moment, tears streamed down her face uncontrollably.

"Mrs. Nightshire..." Wendy tried very hard to regain her composure as she asked, "What is going on?"

Deep down, Wendy wanted to know what was on Susanne's mind when the latter behaved as such.

Noticing Wendy's fear, Susanne came to her senses and flashed Wendy an embarrassed smile. "I'm okay. I was only thinking about something. Don't cry. Your piano skills are better than most people. Your efforts won't be wasted. Mr. Parker only gave those remarks because he is the top pianist in the world. On the other hand, an ordinary pianist will definitely appreciate your talent."

Although Wendy nodded in response, she didn't listen to Susanne's words at all, for she was focused on reading

Susanne's facial expression.

Nonetheless, Wendy couldn't read Susanne's mind after observing her for a while.

Susanne might be slightly dissatisfied with me after Steven taunted me.

Wendy forced herself not to overthink it. The next moment, she pretended to look obedient and determined as she said to Susanne, "Thank you, Mrs. Nightshire. However, I admit that I've embarrassed you. From now on, I'll work even harder!"

After a while, Wendy added, "The first monthly test is around the corner. Mrs. Nightshire, I promise to get the first place and work hard to be enrolled at Maxwell University!"

Maxwell University isn't a place for ordinary people.

To put things into perspective, even my son Vinson devoted a lot of time and effort to be enrolled at the university.

If Wendy can study there, I can still consider accepting her as my future daughter-in-law.

Fortunately, Wendy is unaware that I'm thinking about giving up on her!

Feeling slightly better, Susanne blinked and asked Wendy for confirmation, "What do you think the odds of you being enrolled at the university are?"



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Wendy shook her head, faking confusion. "I'm not sure. But Mr. Baxter said I have the highest possibility to enter the university within the entire class."

"Excellent!"

She didn't need to consider Arielle as a risk then, with Wendy's words.

After hesitating for two seconds, Susanne couldn't suppress her curiosity and asked, "Do you know the probability of Arielle making it into Maxwell University?"

Wendy's expression froze. Her fists clenched tightly.

I knew it!

There's no way Susanne will show that expression to me. So the reason is Arielle.

She's actually considering that bumpkin, Arielle? Merely for that ridiculous song, In the Moonlight?

Dang!

At that moment, Wendy almost had a mental breakdown.

She tried her best to mask her frozen expression. Finally, she shook her head and laughed dryly. "Ms. Stone, are you joking? Mr. Baxter had warned that she would be removed from his class if she didn't make it into the top twenty. She might not even be studying in

Jadeborough University after the monthly exam.”

A sense of guilt rose within Wendy due to the warning by Vinson.

But if I don't put it that way, I won't be able to stop Susanne's thoughts toward Arielle.

She saw Susanne let out a sigh and shake her head. There was a flash of disgust in the latter's eyes.

“One's learning environment is still important.” Susanne made her point without further elaborating. She didn't continue her interest in Arielle but focused all her attention on Wendy.

The night darkened.

Arielle had barely managed to escape from Steven's enthusiasm as she tugged Vinson to an empty corner. She whispered, “Why do you ask me to take on Steven?”

Vinson's cheeks blushed pink at Arielle's closeness.

She was so close that he could even count the number of eyelashes she had.

Arielle didn't get a response from Vinson for a while. She tilted her head and asked puzzledly, “Did you hear me?”

An unconscious movement from her closed the gap between them further.

Vinson was swallowing the saliva in his mouth nervously. The thoughts of kissing her kept popping up in his mind.

“Vinson! Vinson!” Arielle called. Finally, she patted his head to snap him out of his train of thought.

Vinson's mind blanked out for a moment at the impact he felt on his head.

However, he managed to collect himself.

Taking a step back, he didn't dare to look at Arielle anymore. He was afraid he would lose control and do something to her.

Vinson coughed dryly into his fist and shifted his gaze from Arielle. “I heard you the first time. There's no need to get violent with me.”

“I'm sorry.” Arielle chuckled awkwardly and muttered, “I'm not the one that's spacing out.”

“I wasn't! I was just... Maybe I'm just suffering from a mild case of heat stroke.” Vinson let out another cough and asked, “What were you asking before?”

Arielle let out a resigned sigh and repeated. “I asked why would you ask me to take on Steven?”

Vinson shrugged. “Didn't you want the guy you're searching for to notice you? The whole world will know of you once you take Steven Parker on as your student.”

“You...” Arielle was panicking.

She didn't want the whole world to know her. What was she going to do if her other identities were revealed?

At that thought, she suddenly remembered that Henrick's matter would be resolved soon, so she didn't need to hide anymore.

Arielle sighed. “I hope the plan works.”

At that moment, Arielle's phone rang.

It was a call from Henrick.



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Arielle gestured for Vinson to be silent as she picked up the call. Her tone turned soft and sweet. "Hello, Dad? Need me for anything?"

As he observed her speedy change of tone, Vinson couldn't help but think she was cute.

Maybe when you like a person, everything about her is cute.

On the other side of the call, Henrick was unaware of the matter happening at Jadeborough University. So his tone was the usual authoritative.

"Request leave from your lecturers after your classes tonight. Tomorrow is Shandie's funeral. You need to be back early."

"All right." Arielle kept her voice sweet and remembered to inquire after Malorie. "How is Grandma doing?"

"She has recovered her appetite and strength. Bring some cookies on your way back. Your Grandma loves it."

"Okay, Dad."

Once Henrick ended the call, the obedience on Arielle's face had turned into a mask of cold.

Vinson thought that she was even cuter.

He arched his brow. "What did Henrick say?"

Arielle sighed. "He wants me back tomorrow for Shandie's funeral."

These few days in university have been too comfortable. My stomach turned at the thought of returning to that place filled with hypocrites.

Vinson noticed her displeasure. "I'll send you back later. If you find Henrick annoying, I can stay the night with you."

"No!" Arielle rejected instantly. "You don't have to come over. I can go back just fine."

Vinson was insistent in his offer.

"You will be more convenient with me being there. You don't know what to expect for tomorrow's funeral."

Arielle hesitated for a short while before she nodded in agreement. "All right. But we need to sleep in separate rooms at night. I'm not used to sleeping with someone else. I don't care what excuse you come up with."

"No problem." Vinson agreed.

After the freshman party ended, a video made its way into the internet and skyrocketed through the ranks, trending number one.

Soon, the video had reached the phones of the general public.

It was of a girl playing In The Moonlight at the

freshman party. The song elicited a sense of excitement within the listeners. Furthermore, the scene of Steven kneeling on the stage had raised the perception of Chanaean's piano skills to a level worthy of praise.

The video was spread and shared repeatedly throughout the internet and made its way overseas.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe.

A blue-eyed man was leisurely sipping on red wine with two beautiful women beside him. The women were sexy and expert at pleasing men.

But there was a slight fear in their smiles and actions.

The man sipped on the wine fed by the woman as he scrolled through his phone.

His fingers halted on a video with a beautiful piano melody.

“In The Moonlight.” The man uttered the name of the song in Ustranasion.

He instinctively increased the volume and shut his eyes as he listened intently, enjoying the pleasing tune.

The melody became clear. It was passionate at times and gentle at others as if a young girl was crooning. It lasted the entire song.

The two women couldn't help but admire. “What a beautiful song.”

“Aaron, you said the song title is In the Moonlight. Was it the song which nobody dared claim they can play it?”

“Yes.” Aaron nodded his head. He opened his eyes and glanced at his phone.

He wanted to see if Steven was the one who played it.

He replayed the song and dragged the progress bar randomly, arriving at a close-up of a beautiful girl.

“It's her!”



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He sat up straight abruptly. The grasp he had on his phone quivered with an expression of disbelief on his face.

It was the first time the two women had seen such an expression on him. They leaned in for a closer look at his phone.

They merely saw the beautiful face of a girl on the screen. Her beauty gave a strong impression, carving her every detail into their memory.

The two women exclaimed, “This girl is so beautiful! Do you know her, Aaron?”

Aaron didn't reply to them, but the corners of his mouth curled up into a smile.

He was too busy recently that he forgot about the kitten he met in Chanaea.

Unexpectedly, his kitten was proficient in diffusing bombs and piano.

Perfect! As expected of my kitten indeed!

He rose from his luxurious throne-like chair and made a call as he paced, ignoring the two women.

“That girl in Chanaea I've asked you to find out. Why haven't I received anything on her yet?”

The subordinate on the receiving end answered respectfully, “Mr. Aaron, I have sent you a copy of the

findings to your mailbox. I'll send you another copy.”

The call ended, and Aaron soon received a new mail.

The email had labeled the girl's previous resume and her latest whereabouts.

“Jadeborough University.” Another smile curled on Aaron's lips.

To his surprise, she had a rough past. She was kidnapped and sold to a rural town when she was younger, but she made her way back to Jadeborough. She is the epitome of a damsel in distress waiting for my rescue.

Aaron left his castle-like house and got in his car. However, two bodyguards stopped him before he could drive off.

“Apologies, Mr. Aaron. We were ordered not to let you leave.”

Aaron frowned. “Why?”

The bodyguards exchanged glances. “The Duke was not satisfied with the way you implemented your last mission. So, you're ordered to stay at home till the collaboration with the Duke ends, for the Duke fears you might mess it up.”

The creases on Aaron's forehead deepened.

“I'm not going to look for the Duke. I'm helping him

search for a pianist. Didn't he like playing the piano? I'll bring her to meet him.”

The bodyguards stand firm with their decision.  
“Apologies, Mr. Aaron. You can't leave.”

Aaron's face darkened.

These two have decent skills. I can overpower them and escape if I try my hardest. But the problem is I will definitely get caught.

After a brief hesitation, Aaron said, “Bring me to him. I'll talk to him myself.”

Arielle asked around and found out Donovan was in the lecturers' dorm.

She couldn't reach Donovan through her phone, so she came looking for him. She knocked on his door.

If she didn't apply for leave before her departure, Donovan would find fault with her once she comes back.

Donovan had changed into his pajamas, ready to turn in for the night in his room. He was experiencing insomnia recently. He needed at least two hours of shut-eye before he could fall asleep.

Unexpectedly, someone knocked on his door. He got up from the bed annoyingly to greet his late-night visitor.

A complicated look arose on his face, seeing Arielle

outside his door.

He didn't understand his feelings toward her.

However, he could feel something blossoming deep within a corner of his heart when he saw her knocking on his door late at night.

That feeling made him anxious and scared.

Donovan's face turned hostile. "What are you doing in front of my room so late at night?"

His words made him realize the peculiarity of Arielle's arrival.

The kind which could induce dirty thoughts.

But all Donovan felt was glee.



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Arielle didn't expect the first words out of Donovan's mouth to be so rude.

The respect she had for him was slowly reducing to dust.

Arielle frowned, wanting to explain but said nothing in the end.

A fight with that kind of person was merely a waste of time and energy.

She ignored his words as though he never said them in the first place and asked politely instead, upholding her upbringing. "Mr. Baxter, I want to apply for leave for a day tomorrow. Please approve."

Donovan wrinkled his nose irritably while a flash of disappointment crossed his mind.

He scolded. "It has only been a few days since the term has started, and you're applying for leave already. If you don't want to study, then quit. There's no need for you to use such tactics."

Arielle retorted casually, "It's not because I don't want to study. Tomorrow is my sister's funeral. Please approve my leave."

Donovan was stunned for a short second then was embarrassed.

He hadn't thought of that possibility.

But how would I know her words to be true?

Many students had applied for leave with all kinds of excuses. Many had lied, saying their grandparents had passed away. So Arielle could be lying as well.

Donovan asked coldly, "How would I know you're not lying? You can apply for leave, but you need to give me your sister's death certificate."

"You..." Anger rolled through Arielle. It was her first time encountering such an unreasonable lecturer.

However, she still didn't want to fight despite being angry. It was pointless to gain the upper hand through verbal dispute.

"Since you don't approve, then I will get it from the principal once I return."

Arielle turned to leave.

"Arielle Moore!"

Donovan hadn't thought Arielle would leave without begging him. He felt disrespected as a lecturer.

"Arielle!" he shouted again.

But her steps didn't falter.

Seeing her back slowly disappear at the stairs, he began panicking, and so he threatened, "If you dare to leave, I'll bring the principal to your house and expel you in

front of your parents tomorrow.”

Arielle's steps finally halted.

Donovan released a relieved sigh, he was about to say something when he saw her head turn slowly, and there was solely coldness in those eyes of hers. He didn't dare to meet her gaze.

Not giving him a chance to speak, Arielle turned her head back and continued forward. This time her pace had quickened. Her back soon disappeared in Donovan's eyes.

Donovan was rooted in place in shock for a few seconds.

I was shocked by the look my student gave me.

A huge wave of humiliation engulfed him.

“F\*\*k!” he cursed, anger shot through him.

He would bring the principal to visit Arielle's house tomorrow and expose her lie.

He would use that chance to expel Arielle for good so that she would finally be gone from Jadeborough University and away from his sight.

This is the price! The price for the look in her eyes!

Arielle sat silently in Vinson's car.

Even though she didn't fight with Donovan, her mood was affected.

How did this kind of person manage to graduate from Maxwell University? I graduated from Maxwell University with a degree in Education, so I'm well aware of the difficulty in obtaining the certificate of degree and the teaching certificate of Maxwell University.

He must have found a loophole.

Vinson noticed something was wrong with Arielle, but he didn't ask since she didn't say anything. He guessed it was probably related to Donovan.

When they almost reached the Southall residence, he finally asked, "Do I need to make Donovan disappear?"



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Arielle was stunned upon hearing Vinson's words. A moment later, she shook her head vigorously. "There's no need for that."

Vinson raised a brow and asked again, "Are you sure? It's not hard to make him disappear from your sight."

"I know." Arielle nodded as she turned away to gaze out of the car window. "I don't have to do much to make him disappear too, but anyway, I'm not here to study for a long term. As long as I find the person I want, I'll leave and never see him again. I can still stand him if he doesn't piss me off for the time being."

"All right." Vinson nodded. "Just let me know when you're sick of him. Don't forget that we're married now. You can always rely on me."

Arielle's heart skipped a beat as she turned to look at Vinson's face. Suddenly, the annoyance in her heart vanished.

"Okay." She nodded. Her gaze softened.

So, this is how it feels like to have a backup.

Subconsciously, the corners of Arielle's lips curled into a smile.

Soon, they arrived at the Southall residence.

Arielle headed straight into the living room while Vinson went to park his car.

The living room was brightly lit.

Right then, Malorie was enjoying her tea in the living room. She looked very different from how she was a few days ago. She was energetic, and there was not a single sign of sickness on her face.

Coincidentally, the effects of Arielle's drugs lasted for only a few days, so they were going to wear off soon.

“Grandma.” A warm and obedient smile appeared on Arielle's face.

As soon as Malorie lifted her eyes, her eyes turned cold. She stared at Arielle sternly and asked, “Where is it?”

Arielle was confused. “What do you mean?”

Just then, Henrick walked out of the kitchen with a bowl of soup. He looked at Arielle and asked, “Didn't I ask you to buy Grandma's favorite cookies? Where are the cookies?”

It was only then Arielle remembered about that matter. She had forgotten about it just now after what had happened with Donovan.

“I'm sorry, Grandma!” She immediately apologized.

However, Malorie refused to listen. She struck the ground with her cane furiously, yelling, “Rick, look at your daughter! She doesn't even have a place for me in her heart! Why did you bring her back in the first place? She's just as disrespectful as her mom. You should let

her stay in the village forever!”

Arielle lowered her head. A murderous expression flashed across her cold eyes, but she tried her best to suppress her anger.

Frowned, Henrick walked toward her. “Sannie, I've asked you to buy the cookies. Why would you forget it?”

Arielle did not lift her head. “I'm sorry.”

“Sorry? Do you think you can get away with that?” Malorie snorted. “I need to teach you a lesson, so you won't forget about what the elders say next time! Go and kneel in front of Shandie's memorial tonight! Don't even try to sleep!”

“Mom...” Henrick found Malorie's words unbearable, so he tried to advise, “Sannie still has classes tomorrow. What if her legs hurt tomorrow? How about I ask the housekeeper to go and buy the cookies for you now? As for Sannie, come over and give your grandma a massage, okay?”

“No way!”

“No way!”

Two voices piped up at the same time.

One of them came out of Malorie's mouth while the another echoed from the doorway.



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Subconsciously, everyone in the living room turned around to look in the direction of the doorway.

Henrick froze as soon as he saw Vinson. He was surprised and terrified at the same time. I wonder how much Vinson has heard from the conversation just now. What if he gets annoyed because he wants to protect Arielle? Will he get angry with me too?

As soon as he tried to greet Vinson, Vinson broke the silence with a cold voice, "Why does she have to massage for that rude old hag? Henrick, is this how Arielle spends her days in your house?"

Malorie furrowed her brows as she looked at Vinson.

The next second, her eyes suddenly glinted.

That was the most handsome young man she had ever encountered before. Moreover, Vinson exuded a noble aura that was similar to Maureen's. Malorie happened to like that temperament a lot.

She then replied with a voice of displeasure, "Who are you calling an old hag? Who the heck are you? Can you stay out of our family businesses?"

Henrick's face turned pale. He rushed over to hold her down. "Mom, that's enough. H-He is Mr. Nightshire. Mr. Nightshire, I'm deeply sorry. She has just recovered from her illness, so she's still in a bad mood. She's not like this usually..."

"Rick, why do you have to explain to him? Mr.

Nightshire? Who's that? Jadeborough is your turf. You have nothing to be afraid of in your own territory! Chase him out right now!" Malorie ordered haughtily.

Malorie had not seen much in her life. Besides, Henrick was prideful and liked to boast a lot. Hence, Malorie thought that he was the most powerful man in Jadeborough.

Henrick broke out in a cold sweat. That was the first time he regretted bringing Malorie over to the mansion.

Terrified, he turned around to gaze at Vinson.

However, Vinson remained expressionless. Seeing that, Henrick was even more horrified.

Meanwhile, Malorie was still urging him to make a move. "What are you waiting for, Rick? Chase that ridiculous man out!"

What's going on? Why is that young man trying to chime in our family issue? Malorie fell into her thoughts. A moment later, she finally came to her senses. There's no way that anyone will appear all of a sudden to stand up for Arielle unless he has something to do with her!

Malorie slapped her thigh and shouted, "You little vixen! How dare you start seducing men at such a young age! You even brought him home to create a fuss, huh? I can't imagine what kind of woman you'll turn into in the future. I won't let you get away easily today!"

Then, she stretched out her arm, trying to give Arielle a slap.

However, as soon as she raised her hand, two other hands took her wrist in unison.

Malorie lifted her eyes and noticed that Vinson and Henrick were trying to stop her.

“Rick, what are you doing?” Malorie stared at Henrick in disbelief. She did not understand the reason why he stopped her from hitting Arielle.

Henrick was utterly frightened. He could not bear to let her stay there any longer, so he turned around and shouted at the butler, “Alfred, Mrs. Southall needs some rest. Bring her back to her room now!”

With that, Alfred instantly called for two bodyguards. They walked forward to drag Malorie up to the second floor.

“What are you guys doing? Let me go!” Malorie struggled with all her might, but the bodyguards' grips were too strong.

Soon, she lost all of her energy. Before heading up the stairs, she turned in the direction of the living room and matched up Arielle's eyes.

Although her gaze was dark and calm, it was icy-cold. The sight of it was terrifying.

Malorie could not help but tremble in fear. What's

wrong with her gaze? Is that how a child from the countryside behaves?

Before she could look at Arielle's eyes again, the bodyguards had already brought her up to the second floor. They brought her into the room and locked her up.



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After going back to her room, Malorie was still in a state of shock. Arielle's gaze was too terrifying! That looks so much like Cindy's.

Suddenly, goosebumps crawled all over her body. She also decided to chase Arielle away as soon as possible. That little minx! I can't let her stay any longer in our house.

As soon as Malorie regained her sense, she rushed forward to the door to knock on the door intensely. "Open the door! Open the door! I want to see Rick! I need to talk to him!"

The bodyguard who guarded outside the room stuck his ear to the door and said, "Mrs. Southall, please don't make this hard for us. According to Mr. Southall's order, you're not allowed to go anywhere now."

"I'm his mom! If you don't open the door now, I'll fire all of you!"

However, the bodyguard only responded with a short sentence, "I'm sorry."

Malorie started to panic and paced in circles. She had left her phone in the living room, so she could not contact Henrick right then.

Had Henrick lost his mind? Why did he lock me up for Arielle and that uncivilized man? Malorie was utterly confused.

"Hey! Open the door..."

Meanwhile, Henrick lowered his head with an awkward laugh. Sweats appeared on his forehead as he pulled Arielle over. "Sannie, tell Mr. Nightshire that your Grandma isn't always like this. She has been treating you nicely all along."

"Treating me nicely?" Arielle stared into Henrick's eyes.

Feeling a little guilty, Henrick turned away to avoid her gaze. "Sannie, don't put me in a difficult position, okay? You can't deny that I'm always nice toward you, right?"

Arielle snorted under her breath, but she continued to put on an obedient expression. She looked at Vinson, letting out a sigh. "Vinson, forget about it. Grandma is old now. I don't want to blame her, so don't you take that to heart too."

In other words, she was hinting that Malorie did not treat her well. With that, she could also get herself some benefits.

Vinson instantly understood what she meant. He turned around to glare at Henrick with a frosty look.

"Mr. Southall, Arielle is always a good girl. Because of her personality, she always gets bullied by others. I thought that you would protect her since you're her father. Unfortunately, she gets mistreated even in her house. How can I not worry about her if this is the case?"

Henrick's heart dropped upon hearing how Vinson

addressed him.

After all, Vinson had not paid him for the renovation cost for Southall Group yet.

Henrick got so panicked that his face flushed red. Nervously, he asked, "T-Then, Mr. Nightshire, how are we going to settle this?"

"That's simple." Vinson raised a brow. "Just prove to me that you'll take care of Arielle properly in the future."

Henrick was puzzled. "How am I going to prove that?"

Vinson tilted his head toward the direction of the backyard. "From what I know, you gave ten percent of your shares to Shandie when she was eighteen. Now that Shandie is gone, and since Arielle doesn't have any shares with her yet, how about..."

Henrick replied before Vinson finished his sentence, "I'll go get the agreement to transfer Shandie's shares to Arielle right now!"

However, Vinson shook his head in a displeased manner. "Isn't that too little? Arielle is also your biological daughter. Even Shandie gets ten percent of company shares. Don't you think you should give her another ten percent in that case?"

Henrick's face darkened upon hearing that. If he gave another ten percent of the company shares to Arielle, she would have twenty percent in total.

Twenty percent is not a small amount! He gulped.



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After all, even Cindy got only twenty percent of the company shares.

If that happened, Arielle would have the same amount of shares as Cindy.

Henrick was reluctant to do so. After all, Arielle was going to get married and leave the house in the end. However, her wife's shares would still belong to him.

Suddenly, Vinson said with a cold voice while Henrick was still hesitating, "You seem reluctant, huh? Does that mean that you don't care much about Arielle? If that's the case, the cost for your building..."

He did not finish his sentence, but Henrick clearly knew that Vinson would never pay him if he refused to transfer twenty percent of the company shares to Arielle.

That was Henrick's weakest spot, so he had no choice but to give in. He gritted his teeth and responded, "Okay! I'll give twenty percent of the company shares to Sannie!"

"Great. Let's sign the agreement now," Vinson ordered.

He was worried that Henrick would change his mind later since the latter was a petty man.

In fact, that was what Henrick planned to do. However, he had no choice but to do it immediately since Vinson had already mentioned that.

After pondering for a moment, Henrick thought about Cindy. I gifted her twenty percent of the shares when we just got married. Well. It's time for me to take it back now.

He rolled his eyes and said, "I'll transfer Shandie's shares to Sannie tonight. Then, I'll bring Cindy here after Shandie's funeral tomorrow so that I can take the remaining ten percent out from Cindy's shares. So, can I transfer Cindy's shares to Sannie tomorrow?"

Vinson's expression was grim. "Mr. Southall, I'm not bargaining with you."

With that said, an imposing aura from Vinson washed over Henrick like waves.

Henrick's legs went weak upon hearing that. However, he was really obsessed with his company shares, so he mustered up the courage to defend his point. He turned around to Arielle and said, "Sannie, can you try to persuade Mr. Nightshire? I'll definitely give you the shares. After all, you're the only child left. Of course that I'll treat you like a treasure!"

Arielle looked obedient, but she was impassive in her heart. She pulled Vinson's sleeve and said, "Forget about it, Vinson. He cares about me a lot. Grandma is sick these days, so Dad has no choice but to take more care of her. Moreover, he already said he'll give me the shares after Aunt Cindy's back tomorrow. Right, Dad?"

Henrick nodded. I'm glad that Arielle's not a smart one. She's not the aggressive and pushy type of person.

“See? Dad has promised to do so. Let's not talk about it anymore.” Arielle pulled Vinson's sleeves again, but harder this time.

Vinson knew that she was telling the truth, so he had no choice but to agree with that.

Soon after, Henrick came back with the contract. Arielle and he signed the agreement together.

With that, Shandie's shares will be transferred to Arielle.

After making sure that there was nothing wrong with the contract, Vinson said, “All right. Transfer the rest of the shares to Arielle after the funeral tomorrow. It's late now. Arielle, let's go back to the room.”

Henrick immediately replied, “Yes. Go and get some rest. You guys still have to wake up early tomorrow.”

Then, he pushed Arielle to the stairs while Vinson followed behind them.

As they arrived at the bedroom door, Arielle realized that Vinson was going to sleep in the same room as her again.

She lowered her voice and asked, “Why did you follow me here? Go and tell my dad that you're sleeping in the guest room tonight!”



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Whenever Vinson slept beside her, his presence made Arielle slightly uncomfortable. At the same time, there was an indescribable feeling that swept through her. I can't let Vinson sleep beside me!

“I was planning to sleep in the guest room.” He glanced at Arielle before explaining, “I just obtained the shares for you, so it would be suspicious for me to sleep in a separate room. Or else, your father would get suspicious about us.”

Upon hearing that, Arielle hesitated for a brief moment.

What Vinson said was true, as Henrick was a sensitive man. Surely, Henrick would sense something was off if Vinson slept in the guestroom and would probably go back on his word.

Well, that does make sense. However, I still feel uncomfortable sleeping together with Vinson.

“Besides, this isn't the first time of us sleeping together. Sooner or later, you'll get more comfortable with this. By the way, we should wash up and go to bed soon. I'm feeling sleepy.”

Finishing his sentence, Vinson naturally made his way to the bathroom.

Arielle bit her lip and murmured, “We can sleep together, but not in the same bed.”

“Okay.” Vinson nodded as a response.

Afterward, she reluctantly gave in and grabbed her toothbrush.

The air was so still in the bathroom as both of them quietly brushed their teeth.

Arielle stared at their reflections in the mirror and noticed that they were moving strangely in synchronization.

It was at that moment she felt her heart pounding furiously inside her.

Wait... Why is my heart racing?

Subconsciously, Arielle placed her hand over her chest, attempting to calm herself down.

Vinson shifted his attention to her with a strange look on his face.

Noticing Vinson's gaze on her, Arielle left the bathroom hastily with a flushed face.

After she left, Vinson let out a sigh, causing a spasm of nervousness to cross his face.

As a matter of fact, Vinson had no idea that he liked Arielle and only managed to comprehend his true feelings much later.

I finally get why I would unconditionally help Arielle and also marry her. I did that because I like her, not merely because she saved my life before. I wish to

spend the rest of my life with Arielle, brushing my teeth together with her every night.

As thoughts prowled through Vinson's mind, he could not stop himself from giggling.

Why do I have such thoughts? I'm such a shameless man.

Soon, Vinson was done washing up too.

When he entered Arielle's bedroom, Arielle had already set the bed on the floor for him.

Not uttering another word, Vinson switched off the lights. He used his old trick by tossing and turning, attempting to make a rustling sound to distract Arielle.

There was no response from Arielle, nonetheless.

Curious, Vinson got up to take a peek at Arielle.

As he got up, he saw the moonlight shining softly on Arielle's beautiful features.

Vinson sat on the edge of the bed, unable to take his eyes off her, and later saw the earplugs in Arielle's ears. He also found a therapeutic candle on her bedside table.

No wonder she was not affected by the noise.

Upon his realization, Vinson heaved a sigh and lied down.

I wish I could sleep beside Arielle, but I should also respect her as a woman. I should let things happen naturally between us instead of forcing her to do anything with me.

Perhaps it was because of the therapeutic candles, Vinson slowly felt his eyelids getting heavier by the minute, and he soon fell into a deep sleep after suffering from insomnia for several nights.

A series of knocks woke Arielle up the following day.



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Hearing the footsteps from a distance, Arielle instantly sprung up from her bed.

Meanwhile, Vinson moved even faster than her. He rapidly shoved the bedsheet on the floor into the wardrobe and climbed onto Arielle's bed to lie beside her.

“You!” Arielle got a shock and wanted to get up.

“Be quiet!” Vinson whispered before wrapping her into her embrace. He went on, “Newlyweds don't wake up this early.” With that, Vinson reached his arm behind Arielle's head and pulled her closer.

The footsteps were getting closer and closer, and Arielle dared not to move an inch. As she controlled her breath, she could smell Vinson's strong masculine scent.

Concurrently, Alfred pushed open the door from the outside, barging into the room straight away, only to see the whole room in a mess. Glancing around, he saw one pillow on the ground, and the couple was cuddling lovingly with each other on the bed.

Seems like the newlyweds had a great night yesterday!

As the thoughts filled Alfred's mind, he could not hold himself back and started to chuckle slightly. He then cleared his throat and voiced, “Ms. Arielle, Mr. Nightshire, it's time to wake up!”

With a sleepy look, Vinson turned his body and asked with a hoarse voice, “What time is it?”

Judging from his deep voice, he must be exhausted from last night.

Alfred's lips curled further into a crooked smile. Suppressing his laugh, he responded politely, "It's four o'clock. Both of you should get up now to get ready for the appointment at six o'clock later."

"All right. You may leave now," Vinson replied casually.

"Sure," Alfred said.

With that, he left the room and headed to see Henrick without delay. "Mr. Southall, I've done everything as you instructed! Both of them were sleeping together when I walked in, and their room is quite messy," reported Alfred with a beam on his face.

Upon hearing what he said, Henrick grinned along too.

"That's good!" Henrick smoothed his shirt in a good mood and continued, "Get the breakfast ready for the newlyweds. Don't forget to send the breakfast over to Mrs. Southall too. Meanwhile, I'll go to the backyard to burn some joss papers for Shandie."

Maybe Shandie could bless Arielle and Vinson with a happy marriage. Hopefully, the couple could have a lovely baby soon! As long as they have a stable marriage, I won't have to worry about my twenty percent shares. Moreover, I'm now related to Nightshire Group because of their marriage. My life will be smooth sailing from now onward!

That thought alone made Henrick smile widely. Apparently, he was not one bit sentimental about Arielle getting married like the other fathers.

After Henrick left, Alfred headed to the kitchen to make the necessary arrangements as instructed.

Meanwhile, Arielle ignored Vinson and went downstairs.

What had happened earlier sent her pulse racing at once.

Ugh! What's happening to me? My heart is beating crazily! Could it be that I have dirty thoughts about Vinson? No, Arielle! What are you thinking? Stop!

Arielle pondered over it in frustration and patted her head lightly, trying to shake off the thoughts. I should stop overthinking and focus on revenging for Mom. Furthermore, Vinson probably doesn't feel the same way as me. One-sided love could get me in trouble. I must keep my feelings under control.

Feeling helpless, Arielle took a deep breath and picked up her pace to go downstairs.

Meanwhile, for some reason, Vinson found Arielle's behavior amusing when she quickly escaped from him after what had happened. Immediately after that, the corners of his lips curled into a smirk.



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During summer, the sky was already bright, though the sun had not risen at four in the morning.

It had been the eighth day since the passing of Shandie. Henrick was in the backyard burning joss paper for Shandie as he mumbled, "Shandie, I've come to burn some joss paper for you. You can rest in peace now. Please guard over our family when you're up in heaven. Help me earn a big time. Make sure that Arielle and Vinson have a peaceful marriage. As for your mom, I'll send someone to bring her over for her to pay you her last respect."

Right then, Alfred came over.

"Mr. Southall, breakfast is ready. The car to the crematorium will be here half an hour later. You should go have some food first."

"All right." Henrick nodded before he asked, "Is Mrs. Southall almost here?"

"She should be here soon"

Just when the butler replied, a housekeeper came running over to report, "Mr. Southall, Mrs. Southall is here."

Even before Henrick could reply, Cindy's cry was heard. "Oh Shandie, my dear daughter!"

Henrick turned his head over and saw Cindy in a hospital gown.

Nonetheless, her complexion looked much better as compared to when she was just admitted to the psychiatric hospital. Even though Cindy had no makeup on, she was radiating positive energy.

Though the sisters of the Moores were born to the same mother, Maureen was much prettier than Cindy.

Even so, Cindy was still pretty.

Henrick had not seen Cindy for a very long time. His heart leap a beat at the glance of her now.

He gave a cough to recompose himself and went up to help Cindy up. “Stop crying. Shandie will be upset if she was to hear you cry. Please be mindful of your health as well.”

Cindy nodded in reply. With tears welling up in her eyes, she tilted her head and leaned it against Henrick's shoulders.

Shortly after, tears started flowing down Cindy's cheeks as she said, “Rick, Shandie has left us. I only have you left.”

Cindy's vulnerable look softened Henrick's heart.

With an arm around her waist and another holding her head, both of them leaned against each other harmoniously.

Arielle, who just arrived in the backyard, almost vomited her breakfast out upon seeing that scene.

Seeing the two of them, where one was full of suspicion of others and another evil-hearted, hugging together disgusted Arielle.

Vinson, who came after, was filled with contempt upon seeing that scene too. He then turned to Arielle and said, "Let's go greet Aunt Cindy."

"Okay." Arielle nodded and went toward them with a smile on her face.

"Aunt Cindy."

Cindy, who was about to pay her last respect to Shandie, was stunned when she heard Arielle's voice.

That was because Cindy had mixed feelings toward Arielle, where she hated and feared her. However, the moment Cindy saw Shandie's memorial tablet, she did not feel any fear toward Arielle. Instead, her heart was left with hatred only.

Cindy forced herself to squeeze out a smile as she turned to see Arielle, who was walking toward her, and said, "Sannie. You're here."

Seeing Cindy's good complexion with blushed cheeks, Arielle smirked.

Seems like Matthias has been taking good care of Cindy. I guess he has been delivering supplements to her every day. I can't believe Matthias is so caring.

Arielle's face remained emotionless as she forced a

smile out and replied, “Aunt Cindy, you're looking great today! I was even worried that you will lose weight because of Shandie's passing. Seems like you're handling it well.”

Cindy could not bear to put on a fake smile anymore upon hearing Arielle's sarcasm.

She had no intention of continuing the conversation with Arielle further. Hence, Cindy merely brushed Arielle off and left toward Shandie's coffin.



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Just when Henrick was about to follow after Cindy, Arielle tugged his sleeves and asked gently, “Dad. After Shandie's funeral, will you be sending Aunt Cindy back?”

Henrick shook his head subconsciously. “Nope. It seems like she has almost recovered. Hence, there's no need for her to remain in the hospital. After all, staying in a psychiatric hospital is nothing to be proud of.”

Henrick paused for a moment as he studied Arielle for a moment before continuing, “Sannie, can I ask you a question? Do you hope that Cindy will not be back?”

Arielle smiled and replied, “How is that possible, Dad. She's my aunt and is your current wife. If she can come back and reunite with you, I'll definitely be happy. But...”

“But what?”

Arielle then shook her head, forced out a smile, and waved her hands. “It's nothing much. It's just some rumors. I think it's better that you don't hear them.”

However, Henrick got more curious about it and asked with a frown, “Tell me. There's nothing that I can't take on.”

With that, Arielle bit her lips and said uncomfortably, “I think it's better that I don't tell you, Dad. The doctors and nurses were probably too bored that they start spreading rumors. Please don't take it to heart.”

Upon hearing Arielle's reply, Henrick did not further question. However, his brows tightened further.

He secretly made a memo of this in his head and walked toward Cindy casually.

After seeing Henrick leave, Vinson then walked toward Arielle and whispered, "What plans do you have now that Cindy is back?"

Arielle stared at the scene of Cindy and Henrick walking away side-by-side. She then turned toward Vinson and asked, "The psychiatric hospital belongs to Carter, right? Can you ask him to do me a favor?"

"Sure."

Arielle then nodded and whispered a few words to Vinson's ears.

Vinson could not help but laugh upon hearing her and remarked, "Your plan is indeed brilliant."

Arielle merely shrugged and replied, "Well, I have no choice. I've pondered very long on how should I inform Henrick about Matthias and Cindy. In the end, I've concluded that it will not be appropriate if I was the one who told Henrick about it. Hence, it will be better for him to investigate it himself. After all, Henrick is so suspicious about everything. I only need to hint to him slightly, and he will investigate it himself."

Just when Arielle finished her sentence, Cindy's wail could be heard.

Cindy had been feeling much better after constantly being comforted by Matthias. However, she broke down the moment she saw Shandie in the coffin with her own eyes.

Arielle arched her brows at that scene. Though Cindy was wicked from inside out, the motherly love she had for Shandie was still overwhelming.

Right then, Arielle thought of her own mom, and her expression darkened.

Vinson, who was by Arielle's side, noticed her change in expression and comforted, "You still have many people by your side. You have me, your step-parents, and Henry. Sannie, you're not alone."

Vinson seldom called Arielle "Sannie." Hence, she was startled when she heard it.

"Thank you." Arielle curled up her lips and thanked Vinson earnestly.

"Tsk!" Vinson shook her head. "You've forgotten again. What should you also say when you thank someone?"

Arielle lowered her head helplessly and replied, "You're so childish, Vinson."

Vinson did not refute but nodded. "Well, I guess so."

If I was mature enough, I probably will not need to do my research every day to find out how to pursue Arielle.

Not long later, the car heading to the crematorium arrived.

Arielle followed behind those who were carrying the coffin.

The weather had been very hot recently. Besides, Shandie's body had been in the backyard for over a week. Hence, it had started to smell.

Arielle was afraid that Vinson, who had been living a comfortable life, could not take on the smell. Hence, she whispered to him, "Vinson, you can head on to do your own stuff. I can handle the matters over here."

"It's all-" Even before Vinson could finish his sentence, he received a phone call from Carter.



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Vinson thought that Carter called him to talk about something regarding the psychiatric hospital. To his surprise, Carter blurted out the moment the call was answered, “Vin, come over quickly! We've found Blake!”

Arielle, who was by Vinson's side, had her eyes lit up when she overheard it.

She quickly urged Vinson, “Go quickly! Sasha will be so happy to hear this.”

Nonetheless, Vinson still hesitated. “What about you?”

“Don't worry.” Arielle shot Vinson a smile and reassured him, “Today is Shandie's funeral. Cindy will not hope for any hiccup to happen. Besides, Mason and Yvette died in a car accident. Hence, they will not cause a scene here.”

Vinson felt relief slightly upon hearing Arielle.

“In that case, I'll head over to have a look first and see how Sasha has been recovering as well.”

Arielle's hands stiffened when she heard Vinson. However, she quickly regained her composure and nodded. “Head over quickly then.”

“Okay. Call me if anything happens here.”

“Okay.” Arielle nodded and sent Vinson off with her gaze.

Out of politeness, Vinson still greeted Henrick before leaving the funeral.

Henrick nodded in understanding. “Head over quickly. There's nothing much here. We will be having the ceremony in the afternoon. Do drop by if you have the time, but it's all right if you don't.”

Even so, Henrick still hoped that Vinson could make it for the ceremony.

After all, he had invited many guests over for the funeral ceremony. Though Henrick dared not announce the news of the marriage of Vinson and Arielle, with Vinson around during the ceremony, the guests would still treat Henrick with more respect.

“All right. I'll make a move first.” Vinson gave a nod and left.

Vinson did not look at Cindy once throughout his own time there. It was as if Cindy was transparent to him.

This made Cindy rather awkward, but she dared not utter a single word.

After Vinson had left, she turned to Henrick and asked, “Rick, did Mr. Nightshire and Sannie get together during the time that I was in the hospital?”

“Yep!” Henrick shot a proud smile and continued, “That's my daughter! Although she might look clumsy, being able to have Vinson pursue her is something extraordinary of her! I know that you don't really like

Sannie. However, with Shandie gone now, Sannie is our only child left. I hope you can see her as your own from today onward. She is very obedient, and she will definitely be filial toward us.”

Cindy gave a stiff smile and did not say anything further. However, her heart was filled with a grudge.

That b\*tch! She is definitely skillful at seducing men. Even Henrick has so much trust in her now! It's okay. Once Shandie's funeral is over, I will announce a piece of shocking news. By that time, Henrick will definitely not place all his attention on Arielle.

The crematorium was near.

Cindy wailed when Shandie's body was being pushed into the incinerators.

Her wailing sound was so loud that it almost shattered glass.

However, Arielle remained a cold look. It was only when Henrick was about to turn over did she put on a look of grief.

On the other hand, Henrick's face was filled with genuine sorrow, which was rather rare.

Nonetheless, one would be totally inhumane if they were not sad when the daughter that grew up with them suddenly passed away.

An hour later, Cindy hugged Shandie's urns in her arms

as she sobbed. The three of them remained silent throughout their journey back to the Southall residence.

Right then, it was also time for class at Jadeborough University.

Donovan had no class then, as he had swapped with Arthur. Hence, he quickly headed to the principal's office to search for Marcus.



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Donovan speed walked to the principal's office as he wanted to bring Marcus to Arielle's house immediately to expose her lies.

Lying to apply for leave was against the school rules, and it was strictly prohibited in Jadeborough University.

The students of a normal class would be punished if they were caught doing so. However, students in the preparatory class would be expelled from the class if they were caught.

Though there was no way for Donovan to have Arielle out from Jadeborough University, kicking her out from his class was sufficient for Arielle to not be an eyesore to Donovan.

There was no one in the principal's office when Donovan arrived. He knocked on the door, but there was no reply. Nonetheless, the door was left ajar. Hence, the door was pushed open with the knock.

“Mr. Brown?” Donovan called out as he walked into the office.

Sadly, there was no one in there.

Donovan furrowed his brows and took out his phone to call Marcus.

However, the moment Donovan took his phone out, a man appeared at the door. He was almost fully covered from head to toe with a fisherman's hat on his head and a mask covering his face.

Although the man covered himself quite thoroughly, Donovan still managed to recognize him with just a glance.

“Mr. Brown,” Donovan called out and asked curiously, “It's so hot today. Why are you covering yourself from head to toe?”

Marcus was shocked, as he had never expected that there would be someone in his office.

After taking a good look at Donovan, Marcus let out a sigh of relief. He then looked around to make sure that there was no one in the corridor. Subsequently, he quickly entered his office and closed the door.

After that, Marcus asked, “How did you recognize me when I'm dressed up in this manner?”

Marcus was rather upset as he took about triple the time he usually used to get ready just to disguise himself. However, it seemed like his disguise did not work its purpose.

Donovan was even more curious and asked once more, “Why are you dressed up in this manner?”

“Sigh. It was all because of the incident last night. Steven and his friends looked down and ridiculed Wendy's song. Not to even mention Arielle's as well. I've gone through their details. They are all from the suburbs. Sigh. Steven must have said nastier comments after I've left. I'm so ashamed now. To begin with, I shouldn't have even organized this freshman party!”

Donovan's expression immediately became more complex.

Seems like Mr. Brown isn't aware that Steven did not look down on Arielle's song, but bowed to her and asked her to teach him.

Just when Donovan felt a sense of relief, he felt annoyed at the same time.

Steven was someone of the upper-class society that even Donovan did not have the right to greet him. Hence, Donovan felt ashamed that Steven would bow to Arielle.

After hesitating for about two seconds, Donovan decided to not tell Marcus about what actually happened last night.

Instead, he said, "Now that you brought up the incident last night, is it convenient for you to visit a student's home with me now? She applied for leave yesterday after the freshman party with the reason that her family member has passed away. However, I can tell that she was lying. Hence, I'll need you to go over to her house with me to verify it."

"What? How can she use such an excuse to apply for leave?" Marcus' expression immediately darkened upon hearing Donovan.

After all, Marcus was fine that his students were not high achievers. However, he could not allow his students to have such ill behavior.

Using the passing of a family member as an excuse to apply for leave was strictly forbidden!

“Sure! After all, I don't want to stay in the school for the moment in case any teacher were to find fault with me. I'll follow you over now,” said Marcus. He then paused for a moment before asking, “Oh right, what's the name of the student?”

“Arielle Moore.”



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