

A Beauty With Multiple Masks Chapter 1741

In the bathroom, while kneeling in front of the Duke, Linda slowly reached out to unbuckle his belt.

“You know what to do. Just do it like how you did it all this while,” the Duke ordered.

Although Linda was unwilling to please him, she couldn't bear to put Mark's life at risk.

I'm sorry, Mark...

Linda grabbed the Duke's thighs and froze.

Seeing that she had stopped doing what she was supposed to do, the Duke asked, “Do you want Mark to die?”

Left without a choice, Linda pleased him.

Mark had just bought dinner for Linda. He was walking into the room with a smile on his face. When he heard the sound of moving water in the bathroom, he tiptoed toward the bathroom, thinking about scaring her. However, when he arrived at the entrance of the bathroom, he saw Linda kneeling on the floor.

His glistening eyes widened with fury, and he clenched his fists. At that moment, he wanted to take the Duke down with him.

Perhaps it was his intense gaze because Linda noticed his presence. She froze on the spot the moment she saw him.

The Duke was enjoying the moment with his eyes closed. After sensing that Linda had stopped, he opened his eyes and saw her staring at the entrance. He turned to look in the same direction and saw Mark staring at the two of them.

“Buzz off!” the Duke bellowed.

Instead of leaving, Mark dropped to his knees and begged, “Your Grace, please give Linda to me. In return, I'm willing to serve you till I die.”

The Duke was infuriated.

Since he doesn't want to leave. I shall just let him watch the woman he likes pleasuring another man.

With that in mind, he barked at Linda, “Remember what I said.”

Linda knew what he was talking about. However, she didn't want Mark to see her in that state. "Mark, leave. Even if His Grace is willing to let you have me, I won't leave with you. Who do you think you are? Do you think I would ever fall for you?"

Mark was utterly heartbroken when he heard those harsh words. Still, he stayed on his knees.

Linda had no choice but to stand up and slammed the door shut.

Since he's not willing to leave, I'll just let him listen from the outside. Once he has thought things through, he'll leave on his own.

The Duke was furious at her action, and he immediately pulled her in. She tried her best not to let out a moan, but the more she did that, the rougher the Duke got.

Mark was clenching his fists as he listened to Linda's moans. He was dying to rush in and kill the Duke. Yet, he didn't dare to do so because his younger siblings were at the Duke's mercy. If he failed to kill the Duke then and there, he wouldn't be able to bear the consequences.

Meanwhile, the Duke wasn't keen on letting Mark listen to the sound of them having sex. He whipped out his phone and made a call. Within minutes, some men came and brought Mark away.

After a while, the Duke put on his pants and glanced at the worn-out woman on the floor. "Treat this as a lesson. If something similar happens again in the future, you know what I can do."

With that, he left. Linda, on the other hand, just knelt there and stared blankly into thin air.

I shouldn't have gotten close to Mark!

When the Duke arrived downstairs, he told his men to let go of Mark.

While staring at Mark with his emotionless eyes, the Duke said, "You're the first person who dares to lay hands on a woman I've slept with!"

After saying that, the Duke whipped out a gun with a silencer and fired once directly at Mark's leg.

"Treat this as a lesson. Remember this, no one's allowed to touch what's mine."

Mark fell to his knees, and blood was spilling out of his calf. The Duke merely glanced at him before getting into his car and leaving the scene.

Mark forced himself to stand up and limped back into the hotel. After taking the elevator upstairs, he glanced at his room and Linda's room before walking into Linda's room without hesitation.

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One week later, Lorraine woke up in her apartment and prepared to go for a jog. The moment she opened the door, a white piece of paper fell by her feet, eliciting a curious frown from her.

What's this? Who put it here?

Leaning against the door, she scanned the surroundings outside but didn't notice anything. She picked up the paper, and upon reading its contents, she hurried back into her house.

"Boss, there's news about the queen mother," Lorraine shouted as she strode to Arielle's door.

Arielle, who had just woken up, came out upon hearing the words.

"News about the queen mother? From whom?" Arielle asked with narrowed eyes.

Lorraine showed her the paper.

After going through the contents, she asked with a frown, "Where did this piece of paper come from?"

Lorraine pointed at the door. "It was sandwiched by the door. I saw it fell down when I opened the door to go for my morning jog."

Clenching the piece of paper, Arielle narrowed her eyes at it.

Who sent this? What is their purpose for telling me the queen mother's location?

How do they know that the queen mother isn't dead and where she's hiding?

Arielle's mind was filled with questions.

"Boss, should we head to the location to verify it?" Lorraine gave Arielle an eager look.

"Do you intend to go?" Arielle asked with raised brows.

Lorraine nodded, for she was already bored to death there. Given that there was an opportunity to go out and get some air, she naturally wanted to seize it.

“Go ahead, then,” When she saw Lorraine turn around and return to her room right away, Arielle shook her head.

She really is excited...

Walking to the door, Arielle looked at Lorraine, who was in the midst of changing.

She instructed, “All you need to do is to confirm her presence there. Don’t do anything hasty and always ensure your own safety.”

Lorraine acknowledged Arielle’s concern entirely.

“Don’t worry. I’ll be careful.” With that, she headed out.

At the same moment, Vinson emerged from the room.

“Sannie, what do you plan to do now that we have found the location of the market for the organ trade?”

Torsten was still in their hands instead of being handed to Aaron. After the recent interrogation, they managed to force the location out of him. As a result, Vinson had sent his men to verify the location at once and had just received confirmation of its authenticity.

“We can let Aaron handle it. After all, it will be an achievement for him if he successfully deals with it.”

After giving it some thought, Arielle decided Aaron should step in. After all, he was the king, and that was his duty.

If she were to take on the task, the most she could do was destroy the market and shattered their network. However, given how massive the web of relationships was, Aaron was in a better position to resolve the matter for good.

Upon hearing her suggestion, Vinson concurred with a nod.

“In that case, let’s go back to our home country,” Vinson suggested as he pulled her into his arms.

Even though he didn’t voice it out, he was cognizant that she was worried about them and missing them too. After what happened to Dylan, he knew that life was unpredictable and wanted to go home and spend time with her.

Arielle fell into a dilemma at the mention of going home, as she had just received news about Nancy.

Until Nancy was thrown into prison, there was no way her mind would be put at ease even if she went home.

“Vinson, why don’t we leave after the queen mother is caught? I want to see her facejustice with my own eyes.” Arielle would only feel that her revenge for her father was complete once Nancy was punished by the law.

Before Vinson could reply, the phone in their room rang. Dashing to pick up the phone, Arielle felt a sense of dread when she saw who was calling.

She slid to answer immediately. “Save me!”

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“What’s wrong? Where are you now?” Arielle had hardly spoken when the call ended abruptly.

When she tried calling back, she couldn’t get through at all.

“Vinson, we’ll talk about going home when we’re free, all right?” Arielle put her phone in her pocket. “Someone has brought us news about the queen mother. Hence, Lorraine went to check it out. She just called me for help, and I need to go save her now.”

Just when she was preparing to leave, Vinson stopped her. “I’ll go with you.”

With that, both of them loaded a gun each and set off in their car.

Arielle had already committed the location revealed by the paper to memory. Nevertheless, she wasn’t sure if Lorraine was still there. Hence, while Vinson was driving, she took out her phone to hack Lorraine’s phone so as to determine her location.

“Vinson, this is the location of her phone. Let’s search for her there,” Arielle informed Vinson while staring at the information she had obtained.

After giving her a nod, Vinson spun the car around and changed directions.

As the road ended in an alley, both of them exchanged glances before stopping their car. With their backs against each other, they walked in carefully.

“Lorraine?”

“Lorraine?!” Arielle shouted a few times, but no one answered.

“Sannie, I think that’s her phone!” All of a sudden, Vinson saw a blood-stained phone in the bushes by the wall.

Arielle hurried over to retrieve the phone before giving Vinson a nod.

With a stern expression, she replied, "It is her phone!"

The blood on her phone caused her heart to sink, as she had reached a dead end with regard to Lorraine's tracks.

"Vinson, I should have stopped her and personally came to verify the information."

It was the first time in her life that Arielle had felt a sense of remorse. If anything were to happen to Lorraine, she wouldn't be able to forgive herself for the rest of her life.

When he saw how Arielle was blaming herself, Vinson reassured her, "No news might be good news now. Let's go and check the queen mother's location to see if she's there. Perhaps the queen mother noticed Lorraine and took action against her."

Arielle nodded as a vicious glint flashed across her piercing eyes.

Once I get my hands on her, I'll make sure that she suffers a fate worse than death.

Both of them then returned to the car with Lorraine's phone. While Vinson was driving, Arielle wiped the phone clean in absolute silence.

Truth be told, Lorraine was just a driver she hired and not their subordinate. In spite of that, the former was willing to put herself in danger for Arielle's sake. As a result, the doubts Arielle harbored about Lorraine's loyalty were no more.

When both of them arrived at the address of the apartment, they saw the entire place crawling with armed guards. It was as if there was someone especially important inside.

After exchanging a quick glance, both of them split up.

As the agile Arielle moved rapidly, her figure quickly disappeared. A few minutes later, she emerged outside a room, with her body hanging off the wall and hidden by the surrounding greenery.

"Monisha, are you still not able to get in touch with them?" Nancy's hoarse voice rang out from the room.

"Ever since you disappeared, the king holds absolute authority. Their power has significantly been curtailed by the king hampering their attempts to help you despite their desire to do so," Monisha answered.

"Aaron, he truly deserves to die! I shouldn't have spared him and made him king. He should have died together with Dylan," Nancy hissed upon hearing Monisha's report.

Infuriated by the exchange, Arielle took out her silver-plated needles and attempted to shoot them at Nancy's body.

"Who goes there?"

Arielle's hand froze momentarily before she put away her needles.

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Upon hearing the sound from outside, Nancy ordered Monisha, "Go and check it out!"

Soon, Monisha returned and reported that the guards saw a figure flash past. Suspecting that someone had infiltrated the compound, they had begun a search. The moment she heard the news, Arielle left in a flash. Having avoided the heavy patrols, she finally hid in the forest behind the compound.

All of a sudden, she felt a tap on her shoulder. Her expression tensed up as she whipped out her silver-plated needles to attack.

"Sannie, it's me..." Only when Vinson's voice rang out did she pull back.

If he hadn't said something in the nick of time, he would have been at the receiving end of her needles.

"I thought I was discovered," Arielle whispered.

Looking at him from the corner of her eye, she asked in a concerned tone, "Did you manage to locate Lorraine?"

Vinson shook his head. "No." He paused briefly. "But I did find something else."

"What is it?"

Vinson whispered the answer into her ear, causing her eyes to widen in shock.

"Drugs?"

Vinson nodded with a grim expression.

Arielle's expression drastically darkened, for drugs were something she utterly detested. Every year, there were plenty of police officers who lost their lives in the war against drugs.

"The information is correct. The queen mother is indeed inside."

After sharing their discoveries, both of them prepared to leave. They had to think of another plan since Lorraine was nowhere to be found.

Meanwhile, in a basement somewhere, Lorraine's blood-covered body was being strung up. With her hair strewn all over, she looked pathetically messy.

Nearby, the Duke was sitting on a chair with his legs crossed.

Staring at Lorraine, he questioned in an indifferent tone, "Who sent you here?"

If it wasn't because he had contraband stored there, he wouldn't have gotten his men to capture Lorraine. After all, he felt sentimental over the fact that she had worked for him before. Unfortunately, she had seen something that she shouldn't have.

Staring at the Duke, Lorraine said plainly, "No one sent me. I just came here by mistake. It's up to you whether you believe it or not."

"I would advise you not to be so stubborn. I'm sure you're aware of my methods once I find out that you're spying for someone."

The Duke's emotionless tone sent a shiver down Lorraine's spine.

"No one sent me, really," Lorraine repeated, staring at him. "I came here entirely by accident."

Faced with her refusal to confess, the Duke got to his feet.

He glanced at her and said, "Since you're unwilling to talk, I'll investigate it myself."

With that, he turned and left.

Watching his leaving silhouette, Lorraine took a deep breath. She did not expect Nancy to be there, let alone encounter the contraband storage. If it wasn't because of her curiosity to find out more after discovering the clues, she wouldn't have been caught in the first place.

"Your Grace, what should we do with her?" Linda, who was following the Duke out, asked.

"Keep her like that for the time being. We'll deal with her once the investigations are concluded," the Duke replied.

In truth, his intention was to recruit Lorraine because of her exceptional capabilities.

After grunting softly in acknowledgment, Linda looked up instinctively when she heard the sound of footsteps. The sight of the approaching figure sparked a glint in her eyes and her heart began to pound furiously.

Mark snuck a greedy glance at Linda before turning his attention to the Duke and reported, "Your Grace, I have sent out a batch of goods and the payment for it has also been received."

Meanwhile, Arielle, going back where she came from, suddenly pointed in front and asked, "Vinson, look, what do you think that is?"

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Trailing the trajectory of Arielle's vision, Vinson narrowed his eyes when he saw the traces of blood on the floor.

There's blood on Lorraine's phone, and there's blood here. It can only mean...

As he exchanged glances with Arielle, the same thought popped into both their minds.

Is this a clue that Lorraine left behind for us?

"Vinson, Lorraine might be trying to tell us something," Arielle suggested.

Vinson nodded to indicate his agreement.

"Let's follow the trail," Arielle suggested amidst her concern for Lorraine.

"Sannie, security here is really tight, and there's no place to hide in broad daylight. I think we should make our move at night instead," Vinson held her back.

Arielle could see the logic behind Vinson's words. Despite that, she was worried that by being late, she would put Lorraine in danger.

After Arielle voiced her concerns, Vinson fell silent. Even though the situation was unpredictable, he couldn't allow all three to have their safety threatened.

"You should head back to the car. I'll take a look around. If her life isn't in danger, we'll return at night to rescue her," Vinson proposed.

Although both of them were formidable fighters, it was still risky to go against such heavy security. A single mistake might land all three of them in trouble.

Cognizant that Vinson was worried about her safety and of the fact that this was the only way, Arielle nodded. "All right. Be careful..."

Vinson gave her hair a tousle before disappearing from the site.

After he was gone, Arielle narrowed her eyes in thought. Instead of going back to the car, she returned to her previous position to see if she could find out anything more from Nancy.

Meanwhile, the Duke was impressed with Mark's capabilities. If the latter hadn't coveted someone he shouldn't have, his future prospects would've been significantly brighter.

Nevertheless, the Duke still needed Mark this time because he hadn't brought enough men over, it made no sense to deny an extra pair of hands. By the time the matter was settled, he would then give Mark's fate some proper thought.

"I still need you to deliver another batch of goods. This batch is of extreme importance, and any mistakes will not be tolerated," the Duke instructed with a stern expression.

"I'll take extra precautions and deliver the goods safely to their destination," Mark replied at once.

"There's no hurry. You can send them two days later. For now, go and investigate what Vinson and Arielle are up to."

The mention of the two elicited a bloodthirsty smile from the Duke's lips.

"Is that all you need? Am I to check anything else?" Mark asked.

"Just do as you see fit."

With that, the Duke walked ahead with Linda following closely behind. After just taking a few steps, she turned around to look. When her eyes were met by Mark's passionate gaze, she quickly turned her head away.

As Mark watched their leaving silhouettes, his eyes were filled with longing and desire for Linda. His fists were so tightly clenched that throbbing veins surfaced on the back of his palm.

Linda, wait for me!

Mark declared in his mind as he followed them at a steady pace. It wasn't until both of them entered the study that he stopped in his tracks and left the apartment. Once they

were in the study, the Duke gave Linda some instructions before heading off to Nancy's room.

"Your Majesty, isn't it time for you to fulfill your end of our bargain?" the Duke asked while leaning against the door.

Nancy's heart sank at the words. It was just a matter of time before she had to come to terms with it. Regardless of how unwilling she was, there was no way for her to reject him. After all, her life was at stake.

"I'll hand it to you as soon as possible," Nancy replied in a solemn tone.

Whatever the Duke wanted was currently under the custody of Nancy's die-hard followers. Without her permission, no one was going to get their hands on it.

Who is the man speaking? What sort of deal does he have with the queen mother?

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Sticking close to the wall, Arielle narrowed her eyes as the curiosity within her began to grow.

"You had better not try anything funny. Otherwise..."

Although he didn't finish his sentence, Nancy was well aware of what he was trying to convey. She was taken aback by how sensitive the Duke was, and her expression drastically changed, for she indeed had other plans in mind. Unfortunately, he had seen through her before she could set them in motion.

Suppressing the discontent within her, Nancy reassured the Duke in an obsequious tone, "You're just overthinking it. Why would I renege on our deal, especially when I'm being hunted by the current king? I'm not in a position to do such a thing at all. Don't let your imagination run wild. I'm not going to try anything funny."

The Duke simply responded by giving her the side-eye. "Good that you know."

With that, the Duke left her room.

After he closed the door behind him, Nancy was so enraged that she would've swept the glass of water in front of her away if Monisha hadn't stopped her.

"Your Majesty, I understand that you're angry, but you have to bear with it for the sake of the bigger picture." Holding Nancy's hand, Monisha continued, "We still have to rely on the Duke now. If he hears you breaking the glass, the consequences aren't something we can afford to bear right now."

Monisha's words snapped Nancy out of her rage. Nonetheless, she couldn't deny the anger she felt.

How can I, the queen mother of Turlen, fall into such dire circumstances?

Closing her eyes, she felt hatred eating away at her heart.

"Aaron, if you hadn't locked me up, none of this would have happened. I'm definitely not going to let you get away with it," Nancy muttered through her gritted teeth.

At that moment, she hated Aaron's guts. If he hadn't thrown her into prison, she wouldn't have needed to ask the Duke for help, let alone lose half of her firearms.

Setting aside their monetary worth, the firearms could have helped her make a comeback. However, they were now...

Consequently, she had all the reasons to despise Aaron. Monisha, well aware of Nancy's resentment of Aaron, also felt that he had gone overboard.

At the end of the day, she's still his grandmother and the person who raised him. How could he have done this to her?

"Monisha, take this item as a symbol of my authority to them tonight and tell them to prepare half of the firearms for the Duke to collect two days later," Nancy instructed as she took out a key-shaped jewel and handed it over. "Don't go alone. Get the Duke to escort you with his men."

"Firearms? The Duke?"

Arielle never expected Nancy to be in possession of firearms. Furthermore, the latter was intent on giving out half of them in return for her rescue.

Isn't she worried that the Duke would use the firearms to threaten Turlen? No, I can't let this happen.

Arielle's eyes narrowed as her lips curled into a smirk. She would definitely not allow the firearms to fall into the Duke's hands nor let Aaron be threatened.

With that thought in mind, she quickly sneaked back to the car and waited for Vinson to return.

Soon, Vinson came back and quickly reported his findings to her, well aware that she was anxious about Lorraine's situation.

"She's here but is imprisoned in the basement. She's not in any imminent danger, so we can come back at night for her," Vinson related while driving back.

It wasn't until she heard that Lorraine was safe for the time being that Arielle's mind was put at ease.

She, too, shared with Vinson what she had learned.

"I need to inform Aaron about this so that he can confiscate the weapons," Arielle said in a grim tone.

Vinson nodded before asking curiously, "Does Turlen have a duke?"

Arielle blinked, as she wasn't sure about it.

"Let me ask Sonia," Arielle fired off a message at once.

After she read the reply, a grave expression descended upon her face.

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If there are no dukes here, who then is that duke? Can he be from another country?

If my guess is correct, the queen mother would be committing treason! In order to save her own skin, she put Turlen in danger by handing its firearms to a foreign duke.

What if the latter uses the weapons against Turlen? What then should we do? How can she be so selfish?

Arielle was incensed.

"She truly deserves to die!"

If I had killed her back then, this business about handing firearms to the enemy wouldn't have happened.

"What is it?" Vinson asked with a cocked brow when he heard Arielle speaking through her gritted teeth.

After Arielle related the matter to him, Vinson felt that it was consistent with the queen mother's character.

Considering that she's capable of killing her own son, why would she concern herself with the life of others?

All she cares about is her own life and selfish interest.

“Luckily, you have stumbled upon their plan. Now that we have an opportunity to salvage the situation, there’s no need for you to be so worked up,” Vinson reassured her.

Even though Arielle knew that her fury was unnecessary, she still couldn’t control her anger when she thought about the consequences of the firearms falling into the Duke’s hands without their knowledge.

“Since Monisha is going to get the men to prepare the firearms tonight, should we raid them tonight or wait to do so two days later when the Duke collects them?” Arielle asked Vinson.

“Let’s seize the weapons when the Duke collects them,” Vinson replied after giving it some thought.

That way, the Duke would think that Nancy was responsible for the raid because of her unwillingness to hand the weapons over.

Once distrust had been sowed between them, their dissatisfaction with each other would break up their partnership, ending one of Nancy’s escape routes.

After he shared his thoughts with Arielle, the latter calmed down and felt that his proposal was an excellent one.

Consequently, their initial plan of capturing Nancy that night was also changed. Arielle now wanted to take Nancy into custody after the latter had broken ties with the Duke. By doing so, the Duke would no longer rescue her again.

It was only then that she would spend the rest of her life in prison.

For someone who was obsessed with power, being locked up was a fate worse than death itself.

On top of that, the best revenge wasn’t to take Nancy’s life but to torment her till she broke down mentally from her failure to achieve her dreams. Thus, instead of heading back to the apartment, they traveled directly to the palace.

Ever since Aaron took power, he had proclaimed that Arielle and Vinson could enter the palace freely. However, Celeste objected to the decision. Even though Arielle was his elder sister, she still resented her.

“Mother, do you think I alone have the power to take the queen mother down?” Looking at Celeste, Aaron added in a deep voice, “We owe Arielle for all of this. It was she who treated me as her own brother and helped me discreetly. That’s the reason I’m the reigning monarch today.”

Realizing how indebted they were to Arielle, Celeste withdrew her protests.

Upon her arrival, Arielle related everything that had happened to Aaron, who, in turn, was infuriated to learn of what Nancy had done.

“I understand. I’ll send men to recover the firearms.”

“Monisha will be going over tonight to get them to prepare the weapons. You should have someone follow her. Tomorrow, have your men monitor the place and seize the weapons when they attempt to move them.”

Aaron’s heart suddenly warmed when he saw how concerned Arielle was for him.

“I got it. I’ll do as you say,” Then he stared at the both of them and asked softly, “Do you have time for lunch?”

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“If you don’t…”

“Sure!” Arielle replied before Aaron could finish.

Upon hearing her answer, Aaron looked at her in disbelief.

“Why are you staring at me?” Arielle’s lips curled slightly when she saw the look on his face. “Don’t tell me you weren’t serious?”

Aaron immediately waved his hands in denial. “Why would I do that? I’m…”

Before he finished his sentence, he, too, broke into a smile when he saw Arielle beaming.

She’s teasing me on purpose!

Bursting into laughter all of a sudden, he felt that they hadn’t interacted that way in a very long time. In fact, he missed the time they had spent on the ship when he first threatened her into coming.

Lunch was quickly prepared, as the chef was still the same one who had served Dylan. Since Arielle and Vinson had dined with Dylan quite a number of times, he was naturally aware of their preferences. As a result, he meticulously prepared a feast consisting of their favorite food.

During lunch, Arielle lamented Dylan’s absence in her heart.

Isn’t this what he had always wanted to see?

Aaron too had the same thought.

If I had accepted the fact that Arielle was my sister back then, would we be dining together with Father right now?

The thoughts in their minds caused a sense of bitterness to descend upon them.

After lunch, Arielle brought up the matter of the illegal organ trade.

“Once you have dealt with the queen mother, you have to take care of this. Given how massive the organ trade network is, you’re in a much better position to deal with it.”

Aaron nodded.

“As for the professors and doctors at the research facility, all of them are in my custody. You can just send your men to take them away later.”

Aaron continued to nod.

As they had plenty to do still, Arielle and Vinson didn’t stay any longer.

Watching the two leaving silhouettes and thinking about how much both of them had done for him, Aaron couldn’t resist calling out, “Sannie, Vin!”

Even though his voice was soft, it was still audible enough for both of them to hear.

Vinson was still calm, but Arielle’s eyes began to moisten. Turning around, she let go of Vinson’s hand as she walked up to Aaron step by step.

No sooner had she reached out her hand to gently pound him on the chest than she threw herself into his arms and hugged him tightly.

Aaron, under the assumption that she was reluctant to acknowledge him as her brother, was surprised that she was already looking forward to it.

Stretching out his hands to return her hug, he yelled out beside her ear, “Sannie, my dearest sister...”

As both siblings finally acknowledged each other’s existence, it made for a tear-jerking sight. Unfortunately, all Vinson felt was jealousy as he hurried up to their side.

He scooped Arielle out of Aaron’s embrace and remarked in a jealous tone, “That’s enough. You only get to hug her for a moment, so don’t push your luck. If you still want to hug someone, go hug your wife instead.”

Faced with Vinson’s jealousy, Arielle felt helpless.

He's a perfect man, other than being easily jealous.

Setting aside the fact that they were once romantic rivals, Aaron actually admired Vinson a lot. Therefore, he didn't think Vinson was overreacting in any way. If their roles were reversed, he would likely respond to the situation in an even more dramatic manner.

"Vinson, I now hand my sister over to you, and you have to cherish her for the rest of her life," Aaron declared earnestly while looking at Vinson.

Vinson cocked a brow at him.

Why is he stating the obvious? Of course I'll cherish my own wife.

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In the afternoon, both of them had an early dinner.

As darkness began to fall, they drove to the apartment where Lorraine was being held. While they were still some distance away, they found a parking lot to stop their car.

Under the cover of darkness, both of them, dressed in black, disappeared into the night. Although it was already late, the apartment was still brightly lit.

Amidst the blurry scene, rows of guards patrolled the area vigilantly. It was as if any movement would be easily picked up by them.

As a patrol marched past, two shadowy figures scaled the walls in the southeast section of the compound before crossing the courtyard in a flash.

When they arrived at the basement entrance, they swiftly picked the door lock before slipping into the room one after the other. In front of them was a moss-covered staircase that spiraled downward, and the lights on the walls would constantly flicker in the darkness.

As Vinson had come in once in the morning, he smoothly led Arielle down the steps into the basement.

Despite the dim lighting, Arielle quickly caught sight of Lorraine, who was strung up by her hands.

Without wasting a second, Arielle, together with Vinson, rushed forward to free her.

Lorraine's body, having been strung up for a day, was covered with whipping wounds. Moreover, dehydration caused her to lose consciousness.

Drawing out her silver-plated needles, Arielle inserted a few of them into Lorraine to wake her up.

“B-Boss...” The moment Lorraine opened her eyes and saw Arielle, she gave a weak smile. “The queen mother... S-She’s really here...”

“I know. Don’t speak. You need to save your strength.”

Just as Arielle spoke, she was stopped by Vinson when she attempted to carry Lorraine on her back. “Let me carry her. You should lead the way.”

With that, he pulled Lorraine up and put her on his back. Having no time to waste, both of them hurried out.

As Arielle charged forward, there were no guards in sight, just like how it was when they arrived earlier. Hence, she wondered if their enemies were being overconfident. When they were about to leave, Arielle even locked the door on purpose.

“Linda, I can’t stand this any longer. Missing you is driving me crazy!” All of a sudden, a suppressed voice rang out, causing Arielle and Vinson to hide at once.

“Mark, you should leave quickly. If he finds you here...”

“But I can’t bear it anymore. I just can’t stop thinking about you...” Mark’s voice was tinged with pain.

“Mark, a woman like me isn’t worthy of...” Before she could finish, her lips were sealed by Mark’s.

Overwhelmed by his longing for her, he parted her lips with a passionate kiss.

At the same time, his hands began fondling her body.

Meanwhile, the trio in hiding didn’t expect to run into such an awkward situation in a place like that. Nonetheless, they had gone through so much that a matter like that didn’t surprise them at all. Instead, their biggest concern was whether they could escape safely with Lorraine.

“M-Mark... Don’t do this...”

Struck by a sudden breeze, the lust-filled Linda was quickly brought back to her senses. “Mark, even if you have no desire to live, I do. Can you stop this now?”

Linda was fearful that their rendezvous would be discovered by the Duke. If it came to that, both of their lives would be in danger.

Mark fell silent.

“You should go. I’ll have to take this food to the prisoner,” Linda said while straightening her clothes.

She then looked at him and warned, “Be careful and don’t let him see you.”

Knowing her concern for him, Mark gave her an intense look before disappearing into the night.

As for Linda, she watched Mark’s silhouette disappear before turning around to go down the basement. All of a sudden, her eyes sharpened.

“Who goes there?”

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Holding their breath, Vinson and Arielle grew wary at once.

“Whoever you are, come out now. I’ve seen you,” Linda asserted in a cold voice as she scanned the surroundings while treading carefully.

Nevertheless, both of them knew there was no way Linda could’ve seen them. All she was trying to do was to bait them out.

“Linda, I’ve already checked. There’s no one around,” Mark said, emerging out of nowhere.

When she saw that he had returned, Linda couldn’t help but knit her brows.

“Why did you come back? Leave quickly before you’re discovered,” Linda pestered him in a serious tone.

Does he have a death wish? It’s not like he isn’t aware of the Duke’s methods.

“Calm down. I’m leaving now. You should deliver the food quickly. Or else, he might suspect something if you take too long.”

Mark’s heart warmed when he saw the concern in Linda’s eyes. After leaving her with the advice, he turned around and disappeared into the night.

Linda glanced at the darkness before entering the basement and unlocking it with a key. At the same time, Vinson and Arielle seized the opportunity to slip out.

Outside, the tree leaves billowing in the gentle breeze made for a terrifying scene in the darkness of the night. Vinson and Arielle, having successfully avoided the guards, prepared to scale the walls back out.

Suddenly, all the lights were turned on.

“Everyone, stay frosty. We have an intruder!” a man shouted at the top of his voice.

At that moment, every single person in the apartment, other than the queen mother and Monisha, came out.

“Your Grace, the woman is gone,” Linda reported to the grim-looking Duke.

“Did you not notice anything strange while you were there?” the Duke questioned angrily.

Linda’s heart sank. She had sensed someone’s presence, but Mark had told her he had checked and there wasn’t anyone around.

I know how capable he is. Did he really not see anyone, or did he let them escape on purpose?

With her mind overflowing with questions, Linda averted the Duke’s gaze and snuck a glance in Mark’s direction.

When their eyes met, all she could see in Mark’s eyes was the deep and gentle affection he had for her, causing her to retract her gaze.

How can I doubt him? Just like me, he’s a faithful servant of the Duke...

“Your Grace, when I was delivering food, I heard something. But after going around to check, I didn’t find anything. The basement door was also locked,” Linda said with furrowed brows.

I have been holding the key the entire time, so how could the door have been opened?

Narrowing his eyes, the Duke curled his lips into an insidious smile.

“Since you just heard them, it means that they haven’t left. They are definitely still here. Search for them even if you have to turn this place upside down.”

The Duke sniggered in exasperation.

Despite the heavy presence of the guards, they still failed to prevent the prisoner from being taken away.

Upon giving out his orders, the Duke returned to his room in a huff.

This time, Linda didn't follow him in. Instead, she joined the rest in the search of the intruders. She was angry at herself for allowing them to escape despite noticing their presence.

Vinson and Arielle were hiding in the forest. As long as they could move forward by one more meter, they would be able to escape safely.

Upon receiving the Duke's orders, the guards began to search the apartment compound with guns in their hands.

"They're probably not here. You should look for them over there. Make sure you find them," Mark instructed a group that was looking around.

Now that they were familiar with him after spending some time together, they agreed with his suggestion and went off in the direction he pointed them in.

When they disappeared, Mark walked up to a nearby spot where Vinson and Arielle were hiding.

As Arielle drew her gun amidst their growing alertness, she was suddenly stunned.