

Chapter 18

She shot onto her feet and shrieked, "Arielle, what's the meaning of this? Can't you suck it up this once instead of vying against me for the first-class seat? Need I remind you the reason we're on this flight? It's because we're going to my awards ceremony! Mine!"

Arielle spat coldly, "Relax. I'm not here for your precious first-class seat."

Shandie knitted her brows before interrogating loudly, "Then why are you here?"

Right then, Henrick had overheard the commotion and joined in with a thunderous voice. "What do you think you're doing, Arielle? And here I thought you were a sweet and obedient girl. Was that all just a façade?"

Arielle was about to respond, but the man beat her to it. He interjected with a sharp gaze, "I'm afraid you're all mistaken. Ms. Moore is not here for the first-class cabin. Rather, I'm escorting her to that private jet, the one next to this aircraft."

"What!" Shandie bellowed as her eyes shot over to the window in disbelief.

What she saw next clouded her thoughts with resentment. It was a luxurious private jet with an extremely sleek and polished exterior. Across the jet's body was an elegantly written word with fine penmanship—Nightshire.

Chapter 18

*That's the Nightshire family's private jet!*

Shandie whipped around to stare daggers at Arielle, jealousy flitting across her dark eyes.

Even Cindy, who had been silently observing, balled her fists after seeing the Nightshires' jet.

Henrick soon snapped back to his senses and quickly asked the man, "Sir. I'm Sannie's father, and our family is traveling together on this flight. If it's alright, can the rest of us go as well?"

The man maintained a neutral expression as he pointed out, "Apologies, Mr. Nightshire has only extended his invitation to Ms. Moore alone. Not to mention, the three of you got a cabin upgrade but chose to abandon Ms. Moore in economy-class by herself. Is that how a family should be with one another?"

Regret festered in Henrick like a tumor.

*Damn it! I should have upgraded Arielle's seat to first-class too. If I had done that, then maybe I would be lounging in Vinson's private jet at this very moment...*

The man couldn't care less about what Henrick thought. He swiftly turned on his heel and bowed respectfully to Arielle. "This way, Ms. Moore."

Arielle nodded, then cast an icy stare at



Chapter 18

Henrick. "I'll meet you guys at the airport."

With that, Arielle held her head high like royalty and disregarded Shandie completely. She followed closely behind the man as they exited the airplane.

Shandie's and Cindy's faces twisted with jealousy at the luxurious private jet that parked beside them.

Shortly after, Arielle boarded the jet. The first thing she saw was Vinson, whose head was lowered to focus on reading a contract.

The assistant spoke up, "Mr. Nightshire. I've brought Ms. Moore over."

Vinson hummed a simple *Mm-hmm* in reply without even looking up.

Arielle felt uneasy. Not knowing how to respond or what to do, she tensed with her feet planted on the ground.

Thankfully, the assistant came to her rescue. He advised, "Mr. Nightshire is currently busy. You may make yourself comfortable in the cabin that's inside."

"Okay." Arielle nodded. She then cautiously walked past Vinson and entered the cabin.

Once inside, Arielle's jaw dropped in shock. She exclaimed, "Rain?"

Chapter 18

The blonde man lifted his gaze and gawked, equally as surprised. "San? I never thought I'd see you here. Have you returned to this country?"

"Mm-hmm, I just got back some time ago."

Rain cheerily patted at the seat beside his, beckoning her over. "Come sit with me."

Arielle obliged. Once she sat down, questions about her current life came out of Rain's mouth with burgeoning excitement. He also invited, "I'm heading to Norham for the academy's award ceremony. If there's nothing on your schedule, would you like to attend as well since you are one of our academy's founders?"

Rain was the principal of the Crown Coffee Academy and a world-renowned coffee sommelier.

Back then, Arielle and Rain were the ones who came up with as well as established the Crown Coffee Academy.

They wanted to create a place where coffee enthusiasts could expand their knowledge on coffee-making.

What they never expected was for the academy to develop into a well-known spot for socialites. Hence, Rain created a restriction whereby only ten students may receive the expert level barista certificate. This way, only the elite,



Chapter 18

talented, and worthy coffee connoisseurs could receive these certificates.

Arielle's lips curled into a devious smile when she heard that Rain was on his way to Shandie's award ceremony. She stated, "What a coincidence. I'm heading there myself..."

Rain beamed at once. "That's wonderful! The students will be ecstatic to meet the academy's founders. They'll be over the moon!"

"No." Arielle shook her head and requested, "I was hoping that you'll keep my identity confidential."

Rain's vibrant smile fell glum in an instant. He then inquired, "Why?"

"I have some personal reasons."

"Alright then, I'll be more than pleased as long as you attend the event."

Arielle flashed a faint smile but didn't say anymore.

Two hours of flight later, the jet gradually made its descent into Norham airport.

Vinson had already left by the time Arielle disembarked from the jet.

Unbothered, she exchanged goodbyes with Rain and went to look for the other three

Chapter 18

Southalls.

*That's strange. Didn't we agree to meet up after getting off our flights? So why aren't Henrick and the others here at the arrival hall as promised?*

Airelle held her ground in silence. She knew that Henrick wouldn't abandon her because she was still of value to him. So she waited.

Right then and there, a bodyguard dressed in a coal-black suit strode towards Arielle's direction. Beside him was a man that she would recognize anywhere—Vinson.

Despite standing next to a tall bodyguard, Vinson still towered with his superior stature.

Some passersby curiously paid attention to Vinson. Their faces either turned a bashful shade of red or gawked as they vividly babbled about Vinson's appearance.

"That guy's incredibly handsome! Do you think he's a celebrity?"

"No way. If he is, then he should have blown up all over the internet by now. Even those influencers can't compare to his good looks."

Compared to the eagerly buzzing crowd, Arielle's skewed frown was an underwhelming reaction.

She glanced briefly at him before focusing on



Chapter 18

her phone and dialing Henrick's number.

The call went through, yet Henrick had instantly rejected. Arielle knew that this must have been Shandie's doing.

*Although Cindy is a wicked woman, she wouldn't be so stupid to use such sloppy tactics against me.*

*It seems like Shandie is trying to get on my nerves by keeping me in the dark about their whereabouts. Game on, then. I'll patiently wait here for them.*

Noticing a lounge nearby, Arielle headed over for some refreshments.

What she hadn't realized was that she walked right into the lion's den; just as she entered, the lounge door flung shut behind her.

Arielle instinctively turned around but was shoved to the wall by a towering man. His powerfully built body pressed against hers, trapping her.



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Chapter 19

Immediately, Arielle prepared to lash out. However, her movements came to a screeching halt when she caught sight of the man's face.

"Mr. Nightshire? Y-you..." She stared at him and blinked in utter disbelief.

Vinson interjected before Arielle could finish speaking. "Why did you pretend not to recognize me?"

Arielle looked at Vinson with a gaze full of puzzlement. On the other hand, Vinson's stare resembled the look of a ferocious and enraged lion.

*Is he angry because I didn't greet him when I walked past him earlier? Doesn't that mean he recognized me? Then why did he act like we were strangers in the airport? He even ignored me when we were on the plane!*

"You were the one who ignored me first! Besides, how would I dare disturb such a busy man like you?" Arielle replied in bafflement.

*What on earth is he thinking? He clearly recognized me. Yet, he pretended like he didn't. He should have continued the act. Why is he cornering and berating me for doing the same thing?*

Arielle tried to push Vinson away to put some distance between them. "No matter what... you should let me go first. People will



Chapter 19

misunderstand if they see us like this."

Arielle's words seemed to go in one ear and out the other. Vinson's gaze remained fixated intently on hers.

He found that her bright eyes were like pools of clear water. At the same time, her gaze was as deep as the bottomless ocean.

There wasn't a trace of fear nor flattery present in her brilliant gaze. The only thing Vinson saw was suspicion. She treated him like he was an ordinary person.

*An ordinary person... How long has it been since someone treated me this way?*

"Are you angry because I couldn't recognize you at the airport?"

"I did not get angry," Arielle said and jutted out her bottom lip. *Why would I get mad?*

Vinson fell silent after he heard her answer.

He could not express the complicated feelings within his heart.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Vinson released her from his grasps and stepped back all of a sudden. "Why did you come to Norham? Are you following me because I haven't given you an answer?"

Chapter 19

"Following you? I'm not as free as you think; I certainly don't have the time to be following you. Besides, what answer do I need from you?" Arielle replied with a confused look.

All of a sudden, she recalled the last words Vinson had said during the birthday dinner.

Her eyes widened as round as saucers as she crossed her arms in front of her chest. "Are you still thinking about the joke I made the other day?"

"As I said, the truth is hidden within your joke. You don't have to worry; I'm still thinking about it."

"Haha!" Arielle burst out in laughter as she tilted her head. "I wish I could peer inside that head of yours to find out if your brain is made out of cotton!"

"That is something I should say to you instead," Vinson replied impassively.

"What on earth are you talking about..." Right at that moment, Arielle's phone began to ring.

The moment she answered the call, Henrick's voice echoed through the phone. "Arielle, where did you go? Why did you keep your sister waiting for so long?"

*Waiting? I haven't even seen Shandie's shadow.*



Chapter 19

Immediately, Arielle acted as if she had been wronged. "This was the first time I took the plane... I must admit that I was totally clueless. Dad, I'm sorry. Where are you? I'll try to look for you," Arielle murmured softly.

"Look for the airport staff. We are at the information desk."

"Alright, I'll head over right now!" The moment Arielle ended the call, her image of a prim and proper woman vanished into thin air.

"My Dad is looking for me. I'll take my leave first. Also, let me repeat myself. I was joking the other day! You can forget about it!" Arielle called out as she waved her phone in Vinson's direction.

With that, Arielle turned on her heel to leave.

She only managed to take two steps before Vinson's suspicious tone echoed behind her. "What is your relationship with your family?"

His question left her confused. "We are just family." Arielle whirled around to face him again.

"Yet, I think that they don't see you like family," Vinson replied in a monotonous voice.

"Why do you say that?"

"My assistant told me that you were the only

one who did not sit in the first-class cabin when we boarded the plane.”

“Oh, that's what you are referring to; I have a complicated relationship with my family. Ten years ago, I went missing. Now that we are reunited, these trivial issues don't matter to me anymore.” Arielle grinned as she said this.

Vinson opened his mouth as if to say something. A look of hesitancy painted his face. In the end, he handed her a gold business card. “Call me if you need anything. You can also bring this card to the Nightshire Group if you want to meet me.”

“It's alright...” Arielle raised her hands to decline him. Yet, Vinson merely shoved the card into her palm before he left the lounge.

Arielle glanced at the gold card in her hand. Emblazoned on the card were the words- Nightshire Group.

*Is he trying to... show off?*

Arielle owned a company located overseas. Although it wasn't as renowned as Nightshire Group, her company was quite famous too.

Just as she made a move to discard the card, she changed her mind and kept it instead.

*Vinson is correct, what if I need his help? This card will be useful. After all, Jadeborough is a*



*place I'm unfamiliar with.*

Arielle placed the card in her pocket as she changed her mind and walked out of the lounge.

When she finally arrived at the information desk, Henrick looked like he was on the verge of exploding in anger. It was clear that he was impatient after waiting for her.

"There will be dire consequences if you delay your sister's ceremony!" Henrick scowled.

In contrast, Cindy spoke in a very demure and gentle tone. "It's still early. She won't delay the ceremony. I was just scared that Arielle would have gotten lost in this foreign place. Arielle, look at your sister; she was so worried that she burst into tears when she couldn't find you at the exit."

Arielle turned to look at Shandie. True to Cindy's words, Shandie's eyes were red and swollen. There were even glistening tears around the corners of her eyes. "Arielle, it's alright... I'm just glad that you are safe." Shandie sniffled as she said this.

When Arielle shifted her gaze downwards, Arielle caught sight of several red gashes across Shandie's thigh underneath her skirt.

In order to make Hendrick scold Arielle, Shandie had resorted to such extreme tricks

and schemes.

When Shandie noticed Arielle's gaze, she quickly used her hand to cover her thigh.

Immediately, Arielle looked away under the pretense that she hadn't noticed anything. She did not provide an excuse to Henrick. Instead, she apologized profusely. "Dad, I'm so sorry that I made everyone worry. I'll make sure to sit next to everyone so that this incident won't happen again." Arielle's face was pale as she murmured apologetically.

Upon hearing Arielle's statement, Henrick finally remembered that they had booked first-class seats on the plane. On the other hand, Arielle sat in the economy class.

Henrick coughed awkwardly; it seemed like he couldn't find it in himself to remain mad at her anymore. "It's fine. Let's go. We'll be late if we don't set off now."

"Alright." Arielle nodded her head obediently. She even reached out to help Cindy with her luggage.

In the blink of an eye, Henrick's anger dissipated.

Yet, this experience seemed to show that his eldest daughter was someone compliant and weak-willed.



Chapter 19

*Perhaps I should shift all of my attention to Shandie instead.*

In a flash, Shandie garnered his love and attention again. Henrick went out of his way to book the hotel located closest to the ceremony. He even reserved a suite just for Shandie.

In the room, Shandie was utterly delighted. "Mom, isn't my plan brilliant?" She beamed and asked Cindy.

"I told you not to make any move behind my back!" Cindy did not seem to share Shandie's joy. Instead, a deep frown graced her forehead.

Seeing Cindy's anger, Shandie tugged on her arm in a coy manner. "Mom, don't be angry anymore... Wasn't the final result satisfactory?"

Cindy suddenly remembered that Henrick had arranged for Arielle to stay at the cheapest room in the hotel. Immediately, her mood brightened. "You rascal. The next time you try to do anything, you should let me know first," Cindy chastised Shandie and flicked her nose mischievously.

"Relax, Arielle isn't as strong as you claim to be. I bet she's throwing an enormous tantrum right now!"

On the other hand, Cindy was deep in thought.

Anyone who fell into Shandie's schemes would

Chapter 19

have lashed out or defended themselves. Yet, Arielle did not. She merely admitted her mistake and tried to improve her flaws.

This means that Arielle is someone who can endure hardships and stay calm despite being blamed. She would be extremely dangerous if she decides to lash out.

"Darling, listen to me. I've thought about it. You should just receive your trophy obediently. Don't try to say anything else. We should try our best to understand her. There will be plenty of chances to deal with her in the future," Cindy said solemnly.

"Alright, Mom." Shandie nodded her head in agreement. Despite her actions, she didn't seem to share the same thoughts as Cindy.



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