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After a short pause, Arielle asked, "Then, do you still remember how he looks like? What does he do for a living? How did he know my mom?"

"Why are you so eager to know about your mom's previous lover?" Josiah asked curiously.

Arielle hesitated for a while before voicing her suspicion, "He might have something to do with my mom's death."

"What?" Josiah then fell into silence, dumbstruck.

After a few minutes, he spoke up, "I only know that they met each other at Jadeborough University. Perhaps he is still there, so you can try and look for him. Well, that's all I know. He's very mysterious, and it seems like he has a strong background. He was a bit rude, so I didn't really like him. I didn't interact with him much at that time. I'm sorry, I can't really recall how he looks like since it's too long ago. All I remember is that he is very handsome. If he ever shows up, I can definitely recognize him."

"Thank you, Mr. Doyle. You've helped a lot." Arielle bowed at him to express her

gratitude.

The latter waved his hand dismissively. "It's nothing. Well, I'm sorry that I can't provide you with more details. If I happen to recall how he looks, I'll inform you."

"Sure! I'll give you my contact number." Arielle then told Josiah her phone number.

After exchanging contact numbers, the two parted with each other.

After Josiah had left, Vinson uttered, "Since Henrick wants you to continue studying, you might as well look for that man in Jadeborough University. I'll make the arrangements for you. Also, you can use this opportunity to search for your childhood memories with your mom at that university."

"All right." Arielle nodded firmly. "Tha—"

Before she could finish her words, Vinson made a shush gesture and reminded, "Have you forgotten again about what you should say?"

Hearing that, an awkward look appeared on Arielle's face. She then shot a glare at

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Vinson. "Vinson Nightshire, are you out of your mind?"

"Maybe." Vinson gave a nonchalant shrug before he went on saying, "Either you say what I want you to say, or you keep the thanks to yourself. We're married, so there's no need to be so courteous to me."

Arielle was stumped. If it wasn't for Vinson's reminder, she had almost forgotten the fact that the two of them were married.

"Let's go." Vinson beckoned to her. "I'll send you to Yvette's birthday party. After that, I have something I need to attend to."

The next moment, Arielle blurted out, "Then I shouldn't bother you. Go ahead with your work. I can go there on my own."

As she made her way to the door, Vinson halted her in her tracks when he suddenly carried her in bridal style.

"Arghh—" she cried out. Before she had even realized it, the man had stuffed her into the car.

After sitting up, she roared, "Vinson

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Nightshire! Are you mental?"

Vinson raised his brow at her. "Well, maybe." *Or else, why would I act so weird?*

He was not like his usual self anymore. Whenever he met Arielle, he would want to talk to her. Even when she was not around, he would miss talking to her.

Eventually, Arielle decided to let it slide. After all, she owed Vinson a big one for inviting her to Haut Monde.

On their way to Yvette's house, Vinson asked, "Do you know Ev's background?"



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Arielle thought for a while before answering. "He said his name is Everett Eakins. And... he's a professional chess player?"

Vinson shook his head at first and then nodded in response. "Apart from being a professional chess player, he's also a senior official of Jadeborough Court."

Arielle was slightly surprised at the revelation. "If that's so, then he indeed has the right not to greet me."

"But now he's become your student's student," Vinson said smilingly, "If you ever file a lawsuit in the future, you don't need to worry that no one will back you up."

Hearing that, Arielle raised her brow. "It seems like I now have a powerful and influential grand-disciple. Nevertheless, instead of relying on backup, I will find the evidence and hold the person responsible for my mom's death liable."

Vinson nodded. At that moment, the man's eyes were full of admiration for Arielle.

He then recalled when Arielle amazed everyone earlier that day. "Do you need me

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to ask everyone to keep your identity as a pro chess player a secret?"

Casting her eyes outside the car window, Arielle rejected, "Nah-uh."

She was no longer the Arielle who had just stepped foot in Jadeborough. Since the Southall family had collapsed, it didn't matter anymore if Henrick found out about her real identity. Even if he found out about it, it was impossible that he would kick her out.

In the end, she could still stay in the Southall family and investigate Maureen's death.

Besides, after suffering such a huge defeat, Kelsea would never want the news to spread.

Hence, she need not do anything since Kelsea would make sure no one knew about what happened that night.

From that day onwards, Arielle had decided not to hide her identities anymore.

Soon, it was almost time for Yvette's birthday party to begin.

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When their car almost reached Yvette's house, Arielle curled her lips into a smile and asked Vinson, "Do you know of the Actonwards' taboo?"

Vinson wasn't close to Yvette. Even if they were acquainted, he wouldn't care about her family's taboo.

Hence, he shook his head. "What is it?"

With her eyes gleaming and a bright smile on her face, Arielle answered, "Black color."

"Huh?" Vinson was confused. "Why is that so?"

Arielle explained smilingly, "I only learned about it today when I looked into the Actonwards' family history. It turned out that Yvette's father is from Guzzur - an ancient tribe. Black color is taboo amongst the Guzzurns. Her father resides overseas most of the time, but he came back two days ago. Most probably, he will attend Yvette's birthday party, so..."

Hearing that, Vinson cast a glance at his black tie. "So, I guess I should take off my tie?"

Arielle nodded. "They think that the ominous black color will bring bad luck, so you better take it off."

Vinson nodded understandingly. "Fortunately, you didn't pick a black suit for me, or I might unknowingly offend others. You can go in first, and I'll join you later. We've found some clues about the guy who planted the bomb in the building, so I need to share the information with Jordan and the rest."

"All right then. But if you're busy, you don't have to come. I'm more than grateful when you helped me make the appointment with Mr. Capello, the top makeup artist."

"Oh, don't mention it." Obviously, Vinson thought it was no trouble at all.

Arielle looked into the distance and soon fell into deep thoughts. *I suppose Shandie must be heading to the Actonward residence in that black gown by now.*

*I wonder what Yvette's reaction will be when she sees Shandie in that black gown that she prepared for me.*

In the meantime, after having done with



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her makeup, Shandie headed to Yvette's house and had reached her doorstep.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Looking at her reflection in the compact mirror, she was amazed by how beautiful she looked in the black gown and matching makeup. "The top makeup artist's makeup skill is indeed on another level. I almost couldn't recognize myself! Yvette is so kind to make an appointment for me with Mr. Capello. Oh, you can't imagine how difficult it is to get an appointment with him."

After the car came to a halt, the chauffeur turned to face Shandie and flattered her, "Ms. Shandie, you've inherited those beautiful facial features from Mr. and Mrs. Southall. You're a natural beauty! You look stunning even without makeup on. That has nothing to do with the makeup skill of the makeup artist."

Shandie raised her brow at the chauffeur's words.

Although she was pleased, she remained silent as the mention of Cindy left her seething with anger.

Cindy had always claimed to be a clever woman. However, in the end, even Yvette was more helpful to her than that woman was.

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"I'm going now. I'll call you when the party ends."

With that, Shandie eagerly got out of the car.

Unbeknownst to her, the chauffeur called to report to Arielle as soon as the door was closed.

During the period when Cindy was not around, Arielle had bribed the housekeepers in the manor. Those people all had soft spots. Hence, their loyalty to Arielle was unquestionable.

As for those who were unbribable, she didn't get into contact with them so as not to alert Cindy.

In the end, she had obtained information about the identities of those who were Cindy's lackeys. It was a good thing that she didn't try to bribe all of them in the beginning.

As soon as she answered the call, the chauffeur reported through the phone, "Ms. Arielle, I've let Mr. Capello do Ms. Shandie's makeup and watched her enter the venue as per your order."

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Arielle uttered a response before ending the call.

Sitting next to her, Vinson shifted his gaze from the document to her. While scrutinizing her expression, he asked, "Who's that? Why do you look so happy?"

"Is it that obvious?" Arielle touched her own face. Then, she stated smilingly, "Well, someone called to tell me that a good show is about to start."

"Good show?" Vinson repeated after her.

Nonetheless, seeing her in a good mood seemed to have made him feel happy as well. *Hmm... How weird it is...*

Meanwhile, Shandie hurried into the Actonward residence as soon as she got out of the car.

The yard was full of guests in their white suits and colorful gowns. None of them wore black outfits or even black accessories.

All of them had avoided dressing in black, for they knew Yvette's father was around and that black color was taboo for the

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Guzzur tribe.

Being the only one dressed in black, Shandie stood out as soon as she entered the yard.

Nevertheless, she didn't think too much. She counted herself lucky that not only did she wear the most stylish gown, but its color also didn't clash with that of other guests'.

*Ha! God is on my side! I will definitely shine at the birthday party tonight!*

Thinking that she was about to stun everyone, she was so excited that she couldn't suppress her smile. However, poor Shandie failed to notice the shock or malicious pleasure in the guests' eyes.

Finally, the party began.

The guests handed over their invitation cards before they entered the mansion hall.

Initially, Shandie planned to enter the mansion as soon as possible, yet she soon changed her mind. She quietly walked toward the end of the line, wanting to

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make a grand appearance to grace the party.

*Everyone should get the chance to admire the most beautiful lady at the party!*



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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A chandelier, in which its Swarovski crystals sparkled and glittered, illuminated the magnificent hall.

The Actonwards was prominent. Its business, including overseas properties, had flourished even more ever since it came together with the Bakers by a marriage contract.

Hence, the guests being invited to Yvette's party were all but influential figures.

Yvette looked like a princess with the red butterfly knot hairpin and her fishtail dress trimmed with gold sequins.

"Yvette, you look amazing!"

"Happy birthday, Yvette. I've prepared a star-shaped diamond as your birthday present. Later, when you unwrap it, remember to read the card."

Yvette thanked her friends with a grin on her face.

Just then, a young lady came rushing in. She grabbed hold of Yvette's hand and gabbled, "Yvette, guess what I saw outside?"

The latter tilted her head. "What is it?"

"There's a girl attending the party wearing a black gown!" The young lady's face was full of anger as she spat out, intentionally emphasizing the word "black."

The young lady was unhappy seeing that someone actually dared trifled with Yvette. "You mentioned that your father would be present when you sent the invitation card earlier. How dare she show up in a black gown? That's a huge disrespect toward the Actonwards!"

At first, Yvette was slightly bewildered when she heard the young lady talking about a black gown. The next moment, she sneered.

*Who else could it be wearing a black gown, if not Arielle?*

*Good gracious, that idiot really shows up in that black gown!*

Before this, she was still worried that Arielle might not wear the black gown. If that really happened, she still had a backup plan in finding fault with Arielle, saying that the latter didn't wear the dress



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she prepared for her. That way, the guests would naturally think of Arielle as an ungrateful person.

On the other hand, if everything went according to her original plan and Arielle really wore the black gown, that would be a great disrespect toward Russell.

Right then, the young lady went on saying, "Yvette, you'd better ask the bodyguards to deny her entry, or it will be big trouble if your father sees her."

Yvette nodded with a scowl on her face. "She's here to ruin my birthday party! Don't worry. I won't let her enter!"

Unbeknownst to anyone, she was so excited that she couldn't wait to see Arielle.

Excusing herself, she rushed downstairs to find her father.

After knocking on the door, she entered the study.

It was an all-white study where not a single black item could be seen. At first glance, it looked like a snow wonderland.

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Smiling sweetly, she made her way toward Russell. "Dad, most of the guests have arrived. Why don't you go down and give a speech?"

Russell furrowed his brows as he folded the newspaper up. "No, I don't think I'm going. I still feel uneasy about hiding the cancelation of engagement with the Baker family from others. Besides, we didn't invite the Bakers to the party. What if the guests become suspicious?"

Upon the mentioning of the engagement, Yvette's smile stiffened.

Yet, she managed to collect herself in no time. Once Arielle's reputation got ruined, the Bakers would realize how important it was to let Jordan marry her—a socialite from a respectable family.

Well, at least she wouldn't disgrace her family name.

After all, marriage between prominent families was not only about the union of two families. More importantly, the married couple represented the dignity and pride of the two families.

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*Even if Jordan doesn't like me, what can he do? He can't possibly defy his family, can he?*

In truth, people like them had no say in their marriage. They could only accept arranged marriage for the sake of their family's interest.

Hence, Yvette was determined to ruin Arielle!



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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A smile reappeared on Yvette's face. She held Russell's arm and reassured him, "Don't worry, Dad. After today, the Bakers will definitely reconsider the engagement. I've had everything planned out. Besides, the Bakers haven't made known the cancellation of the engagement, which means to say that they are still hesitating. Hence, we need to make my birthday party exceptionally grand. Dad, you *must* make an opening speech."

Having yielded to his daughter's persuasion, Russell placed the newspaper aside and stood up.

The doting father gazed at his daughter with his eyes full of affection. "Oh, how could I say no to my only daughter? I'll go down and make a short speech then."

Little did he know that his indulgence toward Yvette was the very thing that ruined her.

Yvette was relieved, seeing that she had successfully persuaded Russell. Later, while Russell was preparing to make his speech in the hall, she ordered the housekeeper to inform the bodyguards to allow the entry of a lady who wore a black

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gown.

Meanwhile, Shandie was blocked by the bodyguards at the entrance.

"How could you not let me enter? I'm Yvette's cousin! She will fire all of you if she knows you guys denied my entry!"

The young lady was acting in a supercilious manner. She looked as if she wanted all of the bodyguards to apologize to her.

Hearing her threats, the bodyguards exchanged glances with each other. They had received many guests, yet none were as haughty as Shandie.

To them, her haughtiness was comparable to Yvette's.

Nonetheless, this was the Actonward residence, not the Southalls' territory.

Hence, with a cold expression, one of the bodyguards warned, "Ms. Southall, if you refuse to leave, don't blame us for being harsh to you. We will chase you out of this place by force."

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"Huh?" Shandie snorted as though she had heard a funny joke. "Chase me out? Who do you think you are?"

With much patience, the bodyguard explained, "No matter who you are, you shouldn't wear—"

Just then, a woman's voice interrupted his words. "Miss!"

The bodyguards turned around to find Clara. Instantly, they greeted respectfully, "Clara."

That woman was none other than Yvette's nanny. "I could hear the commotion from some distance away. Don't you know today is Ms. Yvette's birthday? Do you think it's appropriate to cause such disturbance at her party?" she scolded the bodyguards.

One of the bodyguards immediately pointed in Shandie's direction. "Clara, do have a look at this young lady."

That was when Clara shifted her attention back to Shandie. Her eyes twitched the moment the latter's black gown came into sight.

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Not only that, that young lady had even applied dark makeup and black lipstick! *Oh God, this is too much for Mr. Actonward!*

Regardless, Clara was there to lead Shandie into the house under Yvette's instruction.

She believed Yvette must have her reason for doing so.

Soon, she calmed her nerve, trying hard to prevent herself from passing out.

After having reprimanded the bodyguard, she turned to face Shandie and forced a smile at her. "Ms. Yvette has ordered me to welcome an esteemed friend of hers. I suppose you must be the one she was talking about. Please don't take offense at the bodyguards' discourtesy; don't let them ruin your mood. I will make sure they receive punishment for that. Now, please come in."

Shandie's anger dissipated when Clara treated her with respect.

*My, my... Yvette is so nice to me. She even asked someone to welcome me into the house!*



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Holding her head high, Shandie snorted derisively at the bodyguards before following Clara into the house.

As their figures vanished from sight, the bodyguards started to exchange whispers. "Is Clara starting to have poor vision? How could she let that lady dressed in black join the party? Even us bodyguards need to wear white suits."

"You're right. I'm afraid we might get scolded for letting that lady enter."

"Oh, don't bother. After all, Clara was the one who led her in, not us."



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Back in the hall.

Russell took the mic and started his speech on the platform, "Today is my daughter, Yvette's, birthday. Thank you all for coming to her party tonight. As her father, my only wish is for her happiness and well-being. Yvette, happy birthday!"

Then, Yvette made her way onto the stage to give Russell a hug.

"Thanks, Dad. And also, thanks to everyone for coming to my party."

A thunderous applause erupted in the hall.

Just then, Russell's eyes widened in shock. He looked terrified while pointing at the entrance. "T-That..."

The guests were confused at the drastic change in his expression. Subconsciously, they looked in the direction where he was pointing and saw Shandie standing at the door, looking baffled.

Since Shandie had wasted much time dealing with the bodyguards earlier, she hastily rushed into the house, afraid that she might be late.

As soon as she entered the hall, she saw Russell standing on the platform, pointing at her. The man's face was a look of anger and terror.

As others turned around, their expressions stiffened as if they had seen something out of this world.

A first, Shandie had no idea what was going on until the ear-piercing sound of Russell's mic dropping grated her ears. That was when she suddenly recalled that black color was taboo for Russell.

She, unfortunately, had dressed in black from head to toe!

At that instant, her face was drained of all colors, and her mind went blank.

*Why is Uncle Russell back?*

Meanwhile, the guests were all staring at her and gossiping about her.

"Mr. Actonward is here today, so how could she dress in black? Is she here to ruin the party?"

"Whose daughter is she? How wicked!

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Didn't she know that black color is taboo for the Guzzurns? Black outfits are only allowed at a funeral."

"She's not here to ruin the party but to put a killing curse on Mr. Actonward!"

Since Shandie had always hung out with Yvette, some of the socialites had recognized her.

"Isn't she Shandie? Has she gone crazy? How could she wear a black gown to the party!"

"Isn't she close to Yvette? Why did she show up in a black dress? From the look of it now, it seems like they are frenemies. What an eye-opener!"

"Oh dear, Shandie must have gone insane! I heard she made a mistake and was sent to the monastery by her father. It looks like the life in the monastery has driven her crazy."

Shandie froze on the spot as those murmurs crept into her ears.

Poor Shandie never thought the grand appearance that she imagined would turn

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out that way. Everyone was tearing her down with the most spiteful remarks.

She was at a loss, not knowing how to respond.

For a long time, Russell remained silent on the platform. He fixed his eyes on Shandie, irritated at the sight of the latter's black gown.

The man got emotional when he recalled the issues faced by his company recently and his daughter's canceled engagement. As his brain was deprived of oxygen, he passed out and collapsed onto the ground.

"Dad!" Yvette called out and immediately rushed to her father's side.

The guests all rushed to his aid. One of them helped pinched Russel's philtrum while another helped call the ambulance. The hall was in instant chaos.

Everyone was in a state of panic; all except for Yvette.

The young lady had feigned a worried expression. In fact, she couldn't help it when her heart leaped with joy.

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*Ha! Dad was so angry that he passed out! I thought he would only scold Arielle and kick her out at most. Things have turned out way better than I expected!*

It turned out that Yvette had purposefully avoided looking in "Arielle's" direction just now, afraid that she might burst out laughing after seeing "Arielle's" stupefied state.

Hence, she still thought it was Arielle who showed up in that black gown.

Yet when they failed to resuscitate Russell, only did she start to worry about him.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Chapter 216

"Dad! Dad, are you alright?" Yvette shook Russell violently, but the man remained still as though he was dead.

Shocked, she staggered backward. It took her a while before she mustered up her courage to check Russell's breath.

Two seconds later, Yvette's face drained of color as she murmured, "Dad's dead."

"What? Mr. Actonward is dead?"

"How did that happen? Did someone call for the ambulance?"

The scene became chaotic.

Instantly, Shandie was pinned to the ground.

"Murderer! You murdered Mr. Actonward!"

"Tie her up and send her to jail!"

Yvette couldn't be bothered to reprimand "Arielle" as she was at a loss.

Her plan was to pull a prank on Arielle and accuse the latter of being rude. She didn't expect her father would end up dead.

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*This isn't part of my plan! Why did this happen?*

The Actonward family was a prominent family, but she was the only daughter of her parents. Her mother had passed away due to illness the year before, so if her father ended up dead, the Actonward family would lose its pillar of support.

Besides, the Baker family had just called off her engagement. Hence, she had nowhere else to go.

Without her father's support, her downfall would arrive soon.

Dejection and fury swamped her instantly.

Suddenly, Yvette felt like choking Arielle to death.

*Yes! I shall kill Arielle as she killed my father! I need to take revenge!*

At that moment, Yvette had lost her mind.

Her rationality had deserted her. Right now, she wanted to kill Arielle without caring that she might need to serve a sentence for taking someone's life.



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As Yvette leaped to her feet to seek revenge, a clear voice rang out amidst the chaos. "Everyone, please make way. I know some first aid knowledge. The ambulance takes some time to get here, and time is precious. Let me take a look."

Yvette was shocked to hear that voice.

*Isn't that Arielle? How dare she offer to save my dad? She was the one who killed Dad!*

Yvette whipped her head around to glare at Arielle.

When she saw that Arielle was clad in a white evening gown instead of the black dress that she prepared ahead, she was dumbstruck.

*Shouldn't Arielle be wearing the black evening gown which I prepared for her? Why is she wearing a white one?*

*Wait. If Arielle is wearing white, who was the one in that black dress?*

Yvette turned to stare at the girl clad in black, who was now surrounded by the crowd. The girl was cornered and tied up, but her face was still visible.

Chapter 216

*Wait... Is that Shandie Southall? How could it be? I delivered the dress to Arielle!*

*So Arielle wasn't the one who killed Dad. It was... Shandie?*

*No! That's impossible! How could that be?*

Yvette was still speechless as Arielle made her way over.

Arielle had arrived when Shandie just entered the hall, so she saw everything that happened.

Though she was snickering inwardly, it was still a narrow escape for her.

After all, if she hadn't thought of investigating Yvette's family history, she would be accused as the murderer now.

And it wouldn't be easy to remove the blame pinned on her.