

Chapter 251

Raising his gaze to her, Vinson asked curiously, "How can you think that? Yvette is responsible for everything that happened tonight. She is just reaping what she sowed. If you hadn't been smart enough to see through her plot, you would have been the one suffering the consequences.

Arielle couldn't help but chuckle. "Vinson, I suddenly get the feeling that you know me very well."

Vinson shrugged. "I feel otherwise. The better I know you, the more I don't understand you."

Laughing, Arielle replied, "Yvette isn't the only one responsible for tonight."

Vinson raised his eyebrows at once. "Who else is involved?"

"I also saw Cindy... and her lover," Arielle answered.

Vinson was slightly surprised but quickly digested the fact that Cindy had a lover.

Given that she could still get married after having an affair with her brother-in-law, I

shouldn't be surprised by the fact that she has a lover.

With a darkened expression, Vinson remarked, "Despite being exiled to the monastery, she still has a lover doing her bidding. That's quite a surprise. What's his name? Give me his details and I'll take care of him."

Arielle shook her head to decline. "There's no need. I'm not the one who wants him disposed of; Henrick is. If he knows about that guy's existence, he will definitely be 'pleasantly surprised'."

Vinson smirked. "No wonder you refrained from making any moves. That's a good idea. We can use her lover to destroy her. But still, nothing much can be done with her being in the monastery-"

"No," Arielle replied as she watched the passing scenery outside the window. "I have a feeling that Cindy will be returning soon."

Vinson was puzzled. "Since Cindy is already there, wouldn't Henrick not think of her for the time being?"

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Pursing her lips into a smile, Arielle replied, "I don't know. It's just a gut feeling. Haven't you heard how accurate a woman's sixth sense is?"

"In that case, we will wait for her to return and deal with them all at once."

Arielle nodded in agreement. However, she knew deep down that the matter wasn't as simple as Vinson was making it out to be.

Furthermore, she was curious as to how Cindy planned on returning.

Going on a hunger strike or attempting to mutilate herself would only anger Henrick further.

In spite of that, Cindy and her lover were both shrewd characters. Hence, she would definitely not stay in the monastery for long.

Nevertheless, Arielle was already prepared for Cindy's return.

As she looked out the window and thought about Cindy, the car suddenly came to a stop.

Just when she thought they had arrived at the Southall residence, she realized that they were in front of a different mansion.

There was a lake in front of the mansion. Even at night, it was still a beautiful sight to behold.

In Jadeborough, a similar lakeside mansion would cost hundreds of millions. Even then, the lack of availability made it difficult to buy one even if one could afford it.

Arielle gave Vinson a curious look. "What is this place?"

"My home." Just as he opened the door, Vinson remarked, "I'm hungry. Make me some ravioli."

Arielle was stumped.

She was annoyed at Vinson trying to take advantage of her despite how tired she felt.

Knitting her eyebrows, Arielle asked, "Can I do it another day? I'm exhausted today. Besides, there's something else I need to do-"

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Raising his eyebrows to make a point, Vinson asserted, "No, you promised me that you will prepare it whenever I want it."



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"You..." Arielle was filled with exasperation. Nevertheless, she knew that she had to keep her promise.

Left without a choice, she let herself out of the car under Vinson's watchful eye. After that, she dragged herself and followed him into the mansion.

Despite how extravagant the mansion looked on the outside, Arielle was surprised to find the interior furnishings to be simple.

The rooms were largely painted in black. Even the walls were covered with dark-colored tiles.

It was one thing for the hard furnishings to be black, but another for the soft furnishing to also be in black. Other than some basic furniture, the living hall had nothing else. Even the sofa was a single-seater, causing the mansion to look eerily empty inside.

"Does anyone live here?" Arielle couldn't resist asking.

Vinson grunted before replying, "When I'm not at the manor, I'll usually be here."

Arielle was shocked. *How can it be so spartan with someone living here?*

Cognizant of what was going through her mind, Vinson explained, "I don't like anyone to disturb me here. Besides, the minimal furnishings make it easier to clean."

Does that mean even a cleaner isn't allowed here?

The next moment, he added, "Other than Carter and the other two, you're my first guest."

Arielle's lips twitched. "You seem to be quite the loner."

"Perhaps." Vinson pointed at the fridge. "The ingredients are all in there."

Resigned to the fact that she wasn't there on a tour, Arielle sighed before heading into the kitchen.

The moment she opened the fridge, she was stunned.

There were only two eggs inside the fresh vegetable compartment.

How am I going to make ravioli with just two eggs? Is Vinson overestimating me? I know how to cook ravioli, but I can't make them out of thin air!

Just when she was about to question Vinson whether he actually bought any ingredients, his voice rang out from outside. "They're in the freezer."

With that, Arielle opened the freezer and saw a few packets of frozen ravioli inside.

After rummaging through the compartment, she noticed there was nothing else other than the ravioli.

Did he just bring me here to cook this? Why can't he do something as simple as this himself?

Vinson explained from behind her, "This batch of ravioli is a new product yet to be launched. We'll try it after you cook them. If they're unacceptable, I'll stop them from bringing it to market."

Stunned, she turned around to look at Vinson, who had appeared out of nowhere. She asked, "Did you invite me here to test the ravioli?"

After all, anyone could have cooked it. There was no need for her, specifically, to do it.

Can it be that he is worried that I'm hungry? Actually, I haven't eaten anything the entire day, and my stomach is growling.

The next moment, she heard Vinson's reply. "In your dreams. You are good at cooking ravioli. Hence, I just want your honest opinion."

Arielle was exasperated.

Can I be any more narcissistic? As if he would be someone so attentive and thoughtful. Even if he is, he wouldn't behave that way to a friend like me. Instead, he would reserve it for his loved one. What was I even thinking?

Vinson pestered her, "What are you spacing out for? Get cracking now! I'm hungry. Cook some of each available flavor and tell me what you think. If you don't give me a satisfactory answer, I'm not going to let you leave tonight."

Gritting her teeth, Arielle glared at Vinson. "Given that attitude of yours, aren't you

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worried that you will never get a girlfriend?"



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Vinson shrugged. "What's the use of having one? Stop wasting time and start cooking. I'll be waiting outside."

Just as he spoke, he walked out with his cutlery and plate, as if she was his housekeeper.

Arielle stomped her feet in frustration. However, she had no choice as she was bound by her word.

Taking a deep breath, she reminded herself to not make a fuss over the matter. After all, Vinson had helped her significantly that evening.

With that thought in mind, Arielle calmed down and began cooking.

Obedying Vinson's instructions, she cooked some of every different flavor. Soon, she had prepared two plates of freshly cooked ravioli.

After making the sauce, she poured it over the ravioli before bringing out the plates.

Vinson was on the phone when he saw Arielle approach. Pointing at the food, he gestured for Arielle to start first.

Coincidentally, Arielle was hungry. Disregarding Vinson, she began to dig in.

She didn't feel hungry earlier because there were too many things going on. But now that she had a break and Vinson was still on the phone, she realized she was famished. In no time at all, she finished a significant portion of the ravioli.

The amount she ate was a lot more than her usual capacity.

Putting down her cutlery, she sighed in satisfaction.

Since she was done, she subconsciously looked in Vinson's direction.

He had a grim expression on as he uttered into the phone, "There's nothing we can do if we were discovered. You should continue your search and see if you can find anything useful."

When he was done, Vinson ended the call with a grunt.

Looking at his solemn face, Arielle couldn't help but ask, "What happened? Is there anything I can do to help?"

Vinson replied candidly, "Harvey has gone to the location you provided and found their hideout."

Arielle's eyes lit up before she asked curiously, "So what's with that expression of yours?"

Sighing, Vinson explained, "By the time they arrived, it was too late as the men were gone. However, there was some stuff left behind which I instructed them to recover."

After pondering a moment, Arielle suggested, "We can conduct a fingerprint analysis of the items and see if there's a match in the database."

Smiling wryly, Vinson replied, "They already did that, but it was a dead end. The perpetrators' identities are very well hidden. Despite matching against the global database, we were still not able to find any matches."

Arielle's heart sank in response.

The killers that were after Vinson were ruthless. Arielle began to worry now that they were unable to find them.

When she saw the ravioli that was getting cold, she reminded Vinson, "At least we discovered their hideout. I'm sure we can find a lead in there somewhere. Anyway, don't dwell on it so much. Have some ravioli before it gets cold."

Vinson replied, "I already had dinner so I'm not hungry. Anyway, I'll send you home now."

Just as he spoke, he got to his feet.

Stunned, Arielle asked, "But I haven't given you my opinion about the ravioli."

Isn't that why he wanted me to eat them?

However, Vinson waved his hand and answered, "The marketing department has specialists to do it. So, you don't have to. Let's go."

Arielle was dumbstruck as she watched Vinson's silhouette as he walked out.

So why did he invite me here? Is it just so that he can treat me to ravioli?

Arielle didn't ask nor think too much of it, worried that she would get carried away

again and feel a sense of inexplicable disappointment.

Just as their car left the residential area, Arielle made an effort to look at the sign by the entrance. On it were the words "Maplelake Manor" emblazoned in gold.



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Shandie had once mentioned that those who stayed in Maplelake Manor were all wealthy, and it was her dream to live there one day.

Soon, the car arrived at the Southall residence.

By then, Arielle was dozing off when she saw Vinson working on something on his tablet intently.

Arielle then glanced over and saw that he was replying to an email.

For a moment, she had mixed feelings.

I didn't know Vinson is usually so busy. Even so, he still brought me out to attend the elites gathering and Yvette's birthday party. But why? What's going on in his mind? Is it because I saved his life before?

Vinson, who was staring at his tablet, suddenly raised his head.

With that, their gazes met. Arielle was caught off guard, and her cheeks blushed as if she had done something guilty.

Vinson grinned and teased, "Do I look

good?"

Arielle's heart palpitated as she coughed to break the awkwardness. With contempt, she said, "You're so narcissistic!"

Seeing her embarrassed look, the smile on Vinson's face widened as he suddenly stretched out his hand to caress Arielle's soft hair.

Arielle froze with that one simple action of Vinson's.

She had gone through a lot and had met different people in her life. However, she had never had a man stroking her hair before.

The temperature in the car rose rapidly as its atmosphere changed.

Vinson's gaze was deep, and his action was gentle. His eyes were filled with emotions that Arielle could not comprehend.

"You..." blurted Arielle.

Her voice seemed to have snapped Vinson back to his senses.

He calmly retrieved his hand and asked, "What brand of shampoo do you use? Your hair is really smooth."

With flushed cheeks, Arielle shot him a furious stare and scowled. "Don't touch me!"

Vinson merely shrugged and replied, "Well, your hair is a mess. I was just trying to comb it for you. Why are you reacting so strongly? Don't tell me no man has ever touched you? Now that we are on this topic, have you ever been in a relationship?"

"Huh?" Arielle, who had been single all her life, gave an exaggerated smile and answered, "I've dated many more times than you."

Vinson arched a brow at her. "Trying to act experienced, are we? Anyway, let's head back quickly. I think the Southalls are still unaware that Yvette was the one who prepared the gown. Shandie is probably getting disciplined by Henrick now. Hurry up so you can get a good show."

Arielle merely felt uncomfortable and tense when she was alone with Vinson.

Hence, she only agreed in a whisper and opened the car door without looking back at Vinson.

I must have been mesmerized by his beauty. I can't believe my heart was pounding madly just now. In fact, I've never felt like this before.

Halfway through her journey to the doors of the Southall residence, Arielle could not help but touch the spot that Vinson had caressed.

Why is it that the feeling of myself stroking my hair isn't the same as Vinson stroking it? Wait a moment, why am I thinking of Vinson again? I must stop thinking about him!

With that, Arielle patted her face lightly to force herself to stop thinking about Vinson.

Soon after, she arrived at the mansion.

Although there was a slight distance before Arielle entered the mansion, she could already hear Shandie's voice begging for mercy as she tried to explain herself.

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"Stop spanking me, Dad! I'm sorry! I shouldn't have worn the gown. But I did not purchase it myself!"

Smack! A loud spank on the flesh could be heard, followed by Henrick's scolding.

"Stop coming up with excuses! I thought you would have turned over a new leaf after spending some time in the monastery. I can't believe you're dumber and more evil than before. I'm ashamed to have a daughter like you!"



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Arielle immediately hurried into the mansion as she could not bear seeing Shandie being disciplined by Henrick.

Besides, Henrick would feel apologetic to Shandie later on for being so fierce once the truth was revealed.

By then, things would just get messy.

Arielle stepped into the living room and saw Henrick whipping a badly-bruised Shandie with a leather belt.

"Dad!" Arielle hurried forward and grabbed Henrick's arm before he could hit Shandie further.

Henrick calmed down slightly when he saw Arielle. Nonetheless, he was still furious over Shandie's mistakes.

"Don't stop me, Sannie. You have no idea what this girl did. Russell was so mad at her!"

Nonetheless, Arielle did not release her grip on Henrick. She looked at him and explained, "Dad, I've just returned from the Actonward residence and am fully aware of the whole situation now. Listen to me,

Shandie has nothing to do with it."

With that, Henrick loosened his grip on his belt and asked with a frown, "What do you mean?"

Arielle then briefly explained everything to him, and to sum up her story, she said, "All in all, Yvette wanted to set Shandie up. Hence, this has nothing to do with Shandie. So could you please stop disciplining her?"

Upon hearing Arielle's explanation, Henrick was stunned and Shandie, who was on the floor, wailed even louder.

Shandie was no fool. After all the misunderstandings had been cleared, she naturally had to milk the grievances she suffered for all it was worth.

Ultimately, Shandie was his biological daughter whom he had taken care of since she was a baby. Hence, the bond between the both of them would naturally be stronger than compared to Arielle. A regretful expression appeared on his face.

Feeling guilty, Henrick squatted down and helped Shandie up. "I'm sorry, Shandie. It's

my fault. I shouldn't have disciplined you so harshly. You should have explained yourself sooner."

Shandie thought to herself that she had, in fact, tried to explain herself but was ignored. Nonetheless, she still shook her head pitifully and replied nonchalantly, "It's all right, Dad. You disciplined me because you were not aware of the full story. But I've really reflected a lot after returning from the monastery. I'll definitely not do anything that will make you and Arielle mad again in the future. Also, will both of you please forgive me for my past mistakes?"

Seeing how matured and thoughtful Shandie had become, Henrick felt even guiltier.

He gently helped Shandie up and ordered the butler, "Call a doctor over to treat Shandie's wounds."

"Yes!" replied the butler as he turned to leave the living room.

Right then, Arielle spoke. "Wait a moment!"

The butler froze and turned over to look at

Arielle nervously. "Ms. Arielle, is there anything else? If not, I would need to call a doctor for Ms. Shandie."

Shandie narrowed her eyes when she saw Arielle stopping the butler. She thought Arielle wanted the wounds to leave a scar on her.

*As expected, Arielle is still an evil b*tch!*

With that, Shandie immediately put on a pitiful look and tugged Henrick's arm. "Dad, why is Arielle stopping the butler from calling a doctor over? Is she not willing to forgive me? But I've admitted my mistakes already."

Henrick was displeased when he saw the teary look on Shandie. He then turned to Arielle and questioned coldly, "Sannie, your sister has apologized to you and has guaranteed that she won't repeat her mistakes. Why won't you forgive her? As an older sister, can't you be more forgiving?"

Arielle sneered inwardly when she heard Henrick. *Now you're saying that I'm not forgiving?*



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