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Henrick sighed and lamented, "That's right. She's so shallow and vain! She even used to look down on me, let alone someone like you who grew up in a village. It's all my fault for failing to locate you earlier..."

Although Henrick looked riddled with guilt, Arielle was unmoved.

He's so good at putting up an act that he can be an actor.

Arielle also showed off her acting chops by shaking her head and saying, "That's all right. I'm back now, aren't !? Anyway, I'll listen to whatever you say."

"Good girl," Henrick replied, reaching out to stroke her head gently.

At that moment, Vinson's voice could be heard from the stairs. "Dad, the car is here to pick Aunt Cindy up."

Neither Vinson nor Arielle called Cindy "Mom".

If it were not because Vinson was playing along with Arielle, he would not have called Henrick "Dad" either.

A scumbag like him doesn't deserve it!

Henrick did not notice anything strange about Vinson's gaze. In truth, he still did not quite dare to look directly at Vinson.

Although Henrick clearly knew for a fact that Vinson was now his son-in-law, it still seemed surreal to him.

It's all thanks to my darling daughter, Arielle. All I hope is that she doesn't harbor any ill intentions. Anyway, regardless of whether she has any ill intentions or not, it never hurts to be careful. Even the person closest to me ended up betraying me, let alone Arielle.

Henrick hid the emotions coursing through him as he instructed Alfred to bring the bodyguards over.

Soon, the bodyguards had Cindy tied up and sent her off in the car to the psychiatric hospital run by Carter's family.

Meanwhile, Arielle stood at the manor's door and watched the car disappear into the distance before looking away.

She did not know why, but she had an ominous feeling that Cindy would return soon.

Previously, my gut feeling about Cindy returning from the monastery proved to be accurate. I wonder if it'll be the same this time.

Suddenly, Henrick's voice interrupted Arielle's thoughts.

Henrick said, "Ah, it's already time for lunch. Vinson, I had the kitchen help prepare a simple meal. Let me know if the dishes are to your taste. If you don't like them, I'll get the help to prepare something else."

"Don't worry about it. I'm not a picky eater," Vinson replied with a slight nod.

Then, Henrick led them back inside and sat down at the dining table.

Arielle was surprised when she saw the dishes that had been prepared.

The large, round dining table was laden with a wide variety of dishes.

Arielle had not seen so many different dishes together on one table after her return, and she could not help glancing at Vinson.

Tsk tsk! I've heard people say that having a son-in-law is almost like having a son. The way Henrick treats Vinson is a hundred times better than the way he treats his biological child!

Nonetheless, Arielle did not show her real emotions as she sat and ate what Henrick referred to as a "simple meal."

At the end of the meal, Arielle was so stuffed that she just felt like lying down.

However, some people came to pay their last respects, so Arielle had no choice but to go to the backyard and receive their condolences.

Since it was not appropriate for Vinson to be present, Henrick arranged for him to wait in Arielle's room.

By the time Arielle saw off the last guest, it was already dark. Looking up at the sky in the backyard, Arielle

could see the faint glow of stars.

I wonder if people's souls really do wander after death. If they do, I wonder what's running through Shandie's mind when she sees me looking up at the sky.

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Arielle was still caught up in her thoughts when Henrick rushed up and said, "Sannie, I have to go to the office for a while. I almost forgot that there's a shareholder meeting tonight. I need you to take care of things here, but I don't think anyone will come at night. Oh, and remember to take good care of Vinson. Make sure that he has everything he needs, okay?"

Arielle nodded and replied with a smile, "Sure. Leave it to me."

"All right. I'll be going now." With that, Henrick turned and hurried off.

He did not notice that the moment he turned his back to Arielle, her gentle gaze turned into a cold, piercing glare.

As she narrowed her eyes, the flickering candlelight in the backyard shone on the side of her face and made her look even more menacing.

Just as I thought, Henrick and Cindy are involved in Mom's death! However, it's strange that Cindy refused to divulge any details. It's as if someone else is also involved in it. Well, it doesn't matter. I'll find out sooner or later. I'm in no hurry. Since I've confirmed that both of them are involved in Mom's death, I can begin to exact revenge. I'm not going to spare either of them!

Apart from the flickering light from the candles and the sound of leaves rustling in the gentle breeze, the backyard was quiet.

Anyone else would have deemed it eerie, but Arielle stood there quietly for a long time. She looked calm, as if she was merely casually taking a stroll in the backyard.

Alfred was passing by the backyard on his rounds when he saw Arielle standing there all by herself. He hurried over to her immediately and said, "Ms. Arielle, you don't have to stay here if you're afraid. We can stay instead."

"Afraid?" Arielle echoed with a smile on her lips.

Why should I be afraid of the dead? Should I be afraid of ghosts? If there are indeed such things as ghosts, Mom would've dragged Henrick and Cindy with her. The dead are gone and helpless. That's why I have to live and bring the culprit to justice!

The night air was chilly.

Arielle pulled her coat around herself tightly and said, "Well, I am a little afraid... I think I'll have to trouble you to stay here and keep watch."

Alfred scratched his head. Despite her words, he did not think she seemed afraid at all.

Am I mistaken? I would've thought a lady her age would be afraid of the dark.

However, Alfred did not bother to dwell too much on it. He merely nodded and replied, "You should go and rest. Dinner is ready. You can have it with Mr. Nightshire."

Arielle had not seen Vinson the whole afternoon, and she only remembered that he was still in the house when Alfred mentioned his name.

She quickly asked, "Where is he?"

Alfred pointed upstairs and answered, "He's been in your room the whole afternoon. He did not call for any of us. Why don't you go and check on him?"

"I'll go now." Arielle straightened her clothes, then hurried through the backyard up to her room.

He has been in my room since afternoon... I wonder if he's bored to death by now.

However, when she opened the door to her room, it was completely the opposite of what she had thought.

Vinson was on her computer in the midst of a video conference.

When he heard the door open, Vinson turned to glance at Arielle. Then, he motioned for her to wait for him for a while.

Arielle nodded before sitting on the couch quietly.

The entire video conference was held in Ustranasion.

Vinson spoke Ustranasion fluently. With his deep, magnetic voice, Arielle felt as if she was listening to ASMR.

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Arielle was also proficient in Ustranasion, so she could understand what was going on during the video conference.

She gathered that Nightshire Group wanted to expand their ravioli business globally.

Although it did not seem like much, they felt that they could potentially make a huge profit if they released it internationally.

As Arielle listened, her gaze was drawn toward Vinson.

Dressed in black from head to toe, he exuded an understated coolness that added to his charm. She gazed at his handsome face with chiseled features, unable to look away.

As she listened to his low voice, she started to feel drowsy, and her vision began to turn blurry.

Eventually, her breathing steadied, and she dozed off.

After the video conference ended, Vinson was surprised when he turned around and saw Arielle fast asleep on the couch.

Is she simply too exhausted? Or is she too trusting? How could she fall into such a deep slumber with only two of us in the room?

Vinson turned off the computer and walked over to the couch without making a sound. He gazed down at Arielle, studying her carefully.

His gaze first fell on her lips.

She had rosy pink lips that were not too thick nor too thin. Although they exuded an air of youthful innocence, her well-defined cupid's bow added a hint of sexiness to them.

Vinson could not help swallowing hard.

Lips like these can really be... one's undoing.

Vinson forced himself to look away, and his gaze then fell upon her brow.

When he saw her furrowing her brows, he could not help doing the same.

Why is she still so troubled when she's asleep? When will she ever be able to truly feel happy?

At that thought, his hand reached out toward her brow as if it had a mind of its own.

However, before his fingers could touch her, Arielle suddenly opened her eyes. In one swift motion, she grabbed his arm and pulled him toward her.

Caught off guard, Vinson fell forward, feeling as if the room was spinning around him.

When he could see clearly again, he realized that he was lying on the couch with Arielle on top of him. Her hands were around his, holding them in a death grip.

She's much stronger than other women!

Vinson could sense murderous intent radiating from her.

In the blink of an eye, Arielle wrapped a hand around his throat.

"It's me!" Vinson choked out frantically.

She froze, then her fingers loosened their hold at once.

When she jolted back to her senses and saw that her fingers were around Vinson's throat, she was shocked. Then, she quickly apologized, "I'm sorry... I always wake up in a foul mood."

"It's fine. That's a good habit to have. At least no one will be able to harm you when you're asleep," Vinson replied nonchalantly.

Seeing that Vinson did not blame her, Arielle felt even more guilty. She shifted uneasily and explained, "I really didn't do it on purpose. A-Are you okay?"

"My neck is fine, but this is not." As he spoke, he pointed toward the wound Cindy had inflicted.

Arielle looked down at Vinson's arm immediately, aghast.

There were blood splotches on the clean shirt he had just changed into that afternoon.

It was clear that his wound had opened up after she

grabbed him and flung him down.

"It's bleeding... Your wound must have opened up. Let me take a look."

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Arielle leaned over to check on Vinson's wound.

Some strands of her hair fell forward and brushed against his forehead. The touch was light, making him feel slightly itchy, and his heart skipped a beat.

For some reason, Vinson's mind was all over the place, and he swallowed hard again. However, Arielle continued sitting on top of him without noticing anything.

It was the type of torturous feeling only a man could understand.

Unable to bear it any longer, Vinson said in a low voice, "Arielle."

Arielle was rolling Vinson's sleeve up. As soon as she heard him call out her name, she looked up instinctively.

However, it would have been better if she did not do so. When she did, the tip of her nose brushed against Vinson's nose bridge

With their noses touching, their eyes met.

Their breaths mingled, and the atmosphere was intimate.

Arielle let out a cry of surprise.

She finally realized that they were in a potentially compromising position.

Her ears and neck were flushed as she jerked back her head and quickly climbed off Vinson.

She moved at the speed of lightning as if her life depended on it.

In an amused and exasperated tone, Vinson said, "I'm not a wolf. You don't have to be so afraid of me."

Of course, she's right to be afraid. If this keeps up, I don't know what I'll end up doing.

Vinson had come to terms with the fact that he was a man with desires.

"I'm not scared..." Arielle muttered.

Suddenly, she remembered that she was supposed to be tending to Vinson's wound. Hence, she got up and hurried to get the first-aid kit.

Vinson sat quietly on the couch as he watched Arielle flitting about busily. Subconsciously, his lips curved into a smile.

Things feel different now that I have a wife...

Meanwhile, Arielle focused all her attention on cleaning his wound. When she finally finished and looked up, she realized that he was gazing at her.

Vinson's eyes were dark and mesmerizing.

Her heart began to race, and she could not help holding

her breath.

Seconds later, Arielle averted her gaze and asked uncomfortably, "W-Why are you looking at me?"

Inexplicably, Vinson felt pleased when he saw the tips of her ears reddening.

He arched his eyebrow slightly and said with a smile, "We're already husband and wife. Can't I even look at

you?"

Arielle shot him a look, then said, "Stop joking around. Let's get back to business. I used something today that made Cindy think that I was Shandie. She told me that she and Henrick were involved in my mom's death."

Vinson frowned. "Did you record the conversation?"

Arielle shook her head. "With the state that she was in, even if I did record it, the recording would be useless. I wouldn't be able to use it to bring her to court. We'll need to proceed slowly."

"Well then, let's start with Henrick," Vinson replied.

Once again, Arielle shook her head. "Henrick is starting to be wary of me. He won't even let me go to the office. Instead, he wants me to further my studies. Clearly, he doesn't want me to get involved in the business because he's afraid I'm up to something. It's going to be difficult to find out anything from him."

Vinson was not surprised to hear that. He nodded and

answered, "I've managed to get a good understanding of his character. He's someone who is wary of everything. What's more, since he's involved in your mother's death, it's only natural that he's intimidated by what you're capable of."

Arielle sighed. "Then what should I do next? Should I continue pretending to be their sweet and naive daughter?"

After pondering for a moment, Vinson said, "One is only likely to reveal deepest, darkest secrets when they're pushed to the brink of a meltdown. Take Cindy, for example. Even if she thought you were Shandie, she wouldn't have revealed something like that under normal circumstances."

"Do you have a plan?" Arielle asked, her eyes lighting up.

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The corners of Vinson's lips curled into a smile. "Finding out the cause of your mom's death is not the only way to defeat him. Think about it. What does he care about the most?"

Arielle remained silent for a moment before answering, "Money!"

"That's right." Vinson raised a brow. "You should focus on your studies, as well as searching for your biological father for now. I'll find a way to bring Southall Group down."

"Thank you..." Arielle expressed her gratitude.

The next moment, Vinson reached out a finger to press her lips. There was a faint scent of sandalwood and tobacco on his finger, but it did not smell bad.

He said, "I don't want to hear that. I want you to say something like 'Vinson, you're the best."

Arielle frowned as she smacked his finger away. "What's with that weird fetish of yours?"

Vinson raised his chin and replied casually, "I'm always this weird. Now, cut the crap and say that to me!"

Arielle pursed her lips. "Vinson, you're the... b-best." She looked embarrassed, and her tone was a little awkward.

Vinson wagged his finger. "That was too awkward. Say that again."

For some reason, Arielle felt even more embarrassed upon hearing that.

She lowered her gaze to stare at her feet. After a few seconds, she finally muttered, "Vinson, you're the best."

Upon noticing her reddened ears, Vinson nodded with satisfaction. "All right. You can start going to the university after the arrangements are made. Feel free to let me know if you have any problems with your studies."

"Don't worry." Arielle shook her head. "I've already obtained my doctorate degree overseas. But, of course, I didn't use this identity. Hence, what I'm going to study locally doesn't really matter."

"But it matters to me. I want to give you the best life since you're now married to me." Vinson looked at her solemnly. His eyes were brimming with affection. "I'll find a way to send you to Jadeborough University. After all, your mom graduated from there, and she used to work for quite some time in the university. Perhaps you can find your biological father there."

Arielle nodded, biting her lips. "Thank..."

"Mm?" Vinson raised a brow to interrupt, "What did I just say?"

Arielle had no choice but to rephrase her sentence. "Vinson, you're the best. Are you satisfied now? Can we go down for dinner? Henrick is always reminding me to take good care of you."

Vinson rolled down his sleeves and said, "Okay, Darling. Let's go downstairs." As he said that, he put an arm on Arielle's shoulder.

His action made Arielle stiffen, and she pushed him away reflexively.

"What's wrong? We should make sure that our behaviors are convincing," Vinson asked.

Arielle mumbled, "But Henrick is not even here right now."

Vinson glanced sideways at her. "Are you sure that no one in the house will report anything to him?"

As the realization struck her, Arielle had no choice but to withdraw her arms. They then walked down to the dining room while holding hands.

The table was already laden with a sumptuous meal.

Suddenly, Vinson received a call halfway through their dinner.

As soon as the call was disconnected, he turned around to look at Arielle. "Yvette has been hospitalized.

"What's wrong with her?"

"You should ask me which hospital she is staying in right now."

Arielle played along with him. "Which one is it?"

"The hospital where Aunt Cindy is at."

Arielle's eyelid twitched upon hearing that. Isn't that a psychiatric hospital?

"If I were her, I would end up going to a psychiatric hospital too," she responded without hesitation.

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Soon after, the news that Yvette had gone crazy spread across the elite circle like wildfire.

Yvette, who used to be the top socialite, had turned into a crazy woman in a blink of an eve.

Everyone was shocked upon hearing that. Life was indeed unpredictable.

The socialites, who used to butter Yvette up, gathered around to gossip about the news.

They had been adding insult to injury every now and then. Moreover, Yvette had never respected them at all, so they would not want to miss the chance to make fun of her.

However, Arielle and Vinson were not interested in Yvette's problem. After finishing their dinner, Vinson sat in front of his computer and worked. Meanwhile, Arielle helped Henrick to settle the invitation list for the funeral. She was also responsible for arranging the seats.

In truth, she did not do that because she was free. Instead, she wanted to take that opportunity to review Henrick's strong connections.

She was shocked upon seeing the name list Henrick had sent her. Although she hated him a lot, she could not help but feel amazed by his connections.

Not only did he know the four most prominent families in Jadeborough, but he also kept in contact with all the

big shots from various businesses.

"Tsk!" Arielle realized that she had underestimated Henrick.

Then, she continued to scan through the name list. As soon as she saw "Mason Moore" on the paper, her gaze darkened.

Yvette had suffered because of Arielle, so Mason would never let her off.

Therefore, Arielle expected that something would happen during the funeral.

Soon, the night arrived.

Arielle had just finished arranging the seats when suddenly, a long shadow fell on her desk.

She turned around instantly and saw Vinson's face. Only then did she recall that there was someone else in her

room.

A few hours flew by, and Arielle had forgotten about Vinson's existence.

She glanced at him, frowning. Why is he not leaving yet? Do we really have to sleep together tonight?

After stretching her arms, she stood up and asked, "You're not leaving yet?"

Vinson ignored her question with a casual look. Then,

he asked, "Who's going to use the shower first? You?"

Arielle blushed upon hearing that, and the back of her ears turned hot. However, she decided to ask again, "Do you really want to spend the night here?"

Ignoring her question again, Vinson turned around and walked toward the bathroom. "I'm going to take a shower first. Prepare a set of pajamas for me. Also, I need a towel..."

"I'm not doing it." Arielle pursed her lips. "I don't have any extra clothes and towels in my house."

"I see." Vinson turned around to glance at her. "Then, I'll just take yours."

"I'll go and look for them now!" Arielle ran out of the room after saying that.

Vinson raised a brow as he watched Arielle leave. A satisfied smirk appeared on his face.

After some time, Arielle came back with some toiletries and a set of new pajamas.

She had a lot of extra toiletries at home. As for the pajamas, they were brand new clothes that belonged to Henrick.

However, as soon as Arielle pushed the door open, she noticed that Vinson had already gone into the bathroom. How am I going to pass these to him?

After pondering for a moment, she walked toward the bathroom door.

She could see Vinson's tall and slender figure through the frosted glass door.

The sound of running water echoed from the bathroom, followed by hot steam that escaped through the door gap. Arielle could not help but feel her cheeks turn warm.

She stood still at the doorway, feeling like she had been waiting for eternity. Finally, she took a deep breath as she reached out a hand to open the door.

Right then, the door opened from the inside.

Upon seeing that, Arielle got so shocked that she closed her eyes hurriedly.

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1

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