

A Cue For Love Chapter 1091

Chapter 1091 A Cheap Oath

Anna and Natalie followed the monk into the monastery. The monastery was located in a remote area, and even the building seemed a little dilapidated. There were few people in the monastery—only a few monks sweeping the ground and praying. It was a rather quiet place.

After walking for about ten minutes, the monk came to a stop in front of a meditation room and knocked on the wooden door. "Master."

"N-Nereus," came the low and unsteady male voice from inside the room. "Master, your daughter has come to visit you," reported the young monk as he glanced at Anna.

There was no response after that, and the silence lasted for a long time. If not for the voice earlier, Natalie would have thought that the meditation room was empty.

Hearing no response from Varre, Anna uttered, "Do you not want to see me after so many years?"

Right then, the door opened. An elderly monk in robes appeared in front of Anna and Natalie. His old age was evident on his face, for his wrinkles were deep, and his face was pale and tired. Even his breathing was weak, and it was clear that he was gravely ill.

Benedict, also known as Varre, had been standing by the doorway for a long time; he just did not open the door right away. "Annie..." Varre called out, tears welling up in his eyes.

However, after briefly studying Varre's face, Anna stiffly said, "I want to have a talk with you. There's something important I want to ask a favor from you for."

Varre weakly nodded and gave her a smile. "Come in, and let's talk."

The young monk intervened, "Master, but your body—" Before he could even finish his sentence, Varre chided, "Nereus, we have guests, but why are you still standing here instead of making tea for them?"

The young monk was upset by the scolding, but it was his master's request, so he agreed to it and went to make tea.

In the meantime, Anna and Natalie went into the room with Varre.

The meditation room's decoration was simple— a mattress, a bed, and a rack filled with books. Nevertheless, it was a sight that matched the rest of the monastery. Old, but clean.

"Annie, I don't have chairs here..." Varre started, a little flustered.

"It's fine," was Anna's icy reply before she sat on the mattress with Natalie.

Natalie then began studying Varre, who looked far from her expectation of a master craftsman.

The man was in a set of robes with prayer beads—the standard appearance of a monk.

His face was pasty, and his lips were dark. The part beneath his eyes was sunken, too, and it was apparent that he did not have long to live.

"Annie, it's been such a long time since I've seen you. You're so tall now." Varre smiled as he looked at his now-adult daughter. Although it had been twenty years since he last saw her, she was his daughter at the end of the day, and he could recognize her right away.

At that, Anna gritted her teeth and turned away from him, not wanting to see his warm gaze.

"I'm here for a reason. I need you to replicate a piece of work..."

"Of course," Varre answered without a hint of hesitation.

Hearing that, Anna turned to Varre and frowned. "I haven't even told you what you need to replicate and what the requirements are, but you're already agreeing to it?"

"It's been a long while since I last crafted anything, and I swore to Fyrtia the God that I won't touch the chisel ever again," Varre began. "But if it's a request from you, it's a request I'll do."

Unlike her usual gentle self, Anna snarled, "I knew it. Your oath is cheap. You can revoke it whenever you want to."

Natalie felt that Anna was crossing the line with those words, and she discreetly tugged her sleeve.

“Anna...”

It was then Anna noticed that she had gotten carried away, but the demon in her heart that formed from her childhood experiences told her Varre deserved those words.

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Chapter 1092 The Secret

“I wasn’t wrong,” Anna said, glancing at Varre in disdain. “Do you think your mistakes can be fixed if you stay by Fyrtia’s side? This means nothing to the dead; these will only alleviate the guilt and remorse felt by the living.”

At that, Natalie turned to Anna. She felt that everything Anna was saying was particularly harsh as if the latter was trying to agitate Varre. However, Natalie could see that Anna’s words were also hurting Anna herself.

Varre was equally affected. His already pale face turned ashen. In the end, it was a lose-lose situation.

Natalie wanted to say something to lessen the tension of the atmosphere, but she did not know what Anna and Varre were hung up about, so she dared not voice careless words. All she could do was hold Anna’s clenched fist in hopes of making Anna calm down.

Varre could see that his daughter did not wish to forgive him. In a hoarse, quiet voice, he said, “Annie, give me the item that you want to replicate, and I’ll do it as quickly as I can.”

“Okay.”

With that, Anna took out the box that contained the jade and the jade key and passed it to Varre.

“The jade key and the jade are in here.”

With that, Anna stood up and left the room.

Natalie did not hurry after Anna. Instead, she turned to Varre and inclined her head. "To be honest, I was the one who asked Anna to ask for this favor. My daughter's life is on the line for this. Thank you."

Varre said, "I should be the one thanking you. I didn't know how I should meet her, but you've given me a chance to do that."

Unable to stop herself, Natalie asked, "Do you know about your health condition?"

Although Natalie did not take the elder man's pulse, she could see from his pallor that he must have cancer. Late-stage cancer, as a matter of fact. Something that surgery, chemotherapy, and acupuncture could not treat.

"I do."

"Then, Anna..."

Varre shook his head. "It is fate. I hope you'll keep this a secret for me. I'm already happy to be able to see her in my last few days in this world. She despises me, but she came to ask for a favor from me for your sake, so you must have done something exceptionally great for her at one point. I'll definitely replicate this jade key for you."

A wave of complicated feelings washed over Natalie when she heard that, but in the end, she nodded solemnly at him.

Varre opened the box in front of him. When he saw the jade key inside, a look of shock crossed his face.

"This is..."

Although jade keys were rare, they were not one-of-a-kind.

Yet, Varre was stunned by the beauty and elegance of it. At the same time, a thought popped into his head, and he blurted out, "Where did you get this key from?"

"I don't know," Natalie confessed. "I only know that this jade key must mean something special because a hidden force is trying to snatch it from my hands. I don't know if this is a key for some kind of mechanism or if it's a symbol of power."

Varre closed his eyes.

"This is fate. Fate! I've suffered so much for this jade key, but who knew I was going to be able to hold it in my hands before I die?"

Natalie's brows snapped together when she heard him, and she asked, "Mr. Varre, what is this key? Why is it so important?"

"I've never seen this key myself before, but I've read about its description in the books." When Varre opened his eyes again, a melancholic look was in his eyes. "Rumors had it, there is a secret room in the royal mausoleum of Loang, and there are plenty of priceless treasures in that secret room. The room was made with ancient meteorites, and they cannot be destroyed unless one uses dynamites. However, if one uses dynamite, the treasures would be destroyed as well. There was only one key to the secret room, and it was a jade key. If my guess is right, this must be the one."

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Chapter 1093 Fortune Or Ill Fate

Natalie was shocked. She thought that the jade key was related to the royal family's secret, but as it turned out, the jade key was related to the treasures of the royal mausoleum instead. "Mr. Varre, why are you sure that this is the key?"

"I was obsessed with gem carving back then. That man had used my wife and Annie's life as bait to make me loyal to him. He wanted to create this key according to the records in the old books," Varre said agitatedly, his eyes bloodshot.

"Somehow, that man managed to find countless books with the key's descriptions, and I tried many to recreate it with multiple jade stones, but none could be used to unlock the royal mausoleum's secret room." "Anna and her mother?"

"Annie hates me because I'm the reason her mother died..." Varre uttered in a pained voice. "I could carve all kinds of sculptures beautifully, but I could never carve out the mysterious jade key. The man thought I wasn't serious about the job, so he fed Wilna a poison he had developed. It made her body puff up like a ball, and in the end, she exploded. Annie had to witness her mother's death."

"What?" Natalie's jaw dropped at the revelation.

No wonder Varre came to a remote monastery that doesn't even show up on the GPS to be a nameless monk despite having such a luxurious life in the past. No wonder those cruel words could come out of the gentle Anna's mouth even though it's obvious that Varre is dying. So this tragedy is related to this jade key...

"Mr. Varre, have you ever... explained this to Anna?" Natalie could not help but ask. "What good would the explanation be to Annie? It'll only make me feel better, not her." Varre bitterly shook his head. "Annie loves her mother. If she finds out that the man had a hand in her mother's death, she will certainly seek revenge. That man is a powerful figure. Only by becoming a hermit did I finally have these twenty years of peace. Annie will only risk her life if she seeks revenge. I don't want to lose my daughter after losing the woman I love. I'd rather have Annie blame this on me and think of me as the vilest person in the world so that she can live a simple life. As her parent, I don't wish for her to achieve great things. I just hope that she'll be safe and sound in her life. That's all..."

Natalie was stunned to her core to hear their history.

"Mr. Varre," she muttered, "you're telling me these..."

Varre inclined his head and whispered, "Miss, you've gotten the real jade key, but this jade key could be your fortune or your ill fate. I've withdrawn from society for years, and I've gotten used to this life. Unless the matter concerns Annie, I don't wish to intervene in mortal affairs anymore. I've told you everything I know about the story of this jade key, and I'll fulfill Annie's request. I hope my words will be able to provide you more insight into your future and less ill fortune."

A pause after, he continued, "Another thing—a selfish wish of a dying monk. I wish to tell you the secret I've kept all these years. It has been tormenting me."

When Natalie left the meditation room, she could not help but turn to give one last glance at Varre, who was concentrating on engraving the jade.

She thought that she would only be asking Varre to replicate the jade key for this trip of hers.

She never thought that she would learn the rumors behind the jade key and Anna's tragic past.

Recalling Anna's hesitance the night before, Natalie suddenly realized she now understood everything.

Still... Varre reminds me of my mother. My mother brought me to a border town in Chanaea after I was born. After she passed away, she left a letter, but she never once mentioned that I wasn't Thomas' daughter. She only said she hoped that I would have a peaceful, simple life. What difference is my mother's wish from Varre's? Hiding that piece of information from me so that I won't be caught up in perilous situations.

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Chapter 1094 Blood On Lips

After Natalie left the meditation room, she went to look for Anna. Natalie had to scour through the entire place before finally finding the other woman in a remote spot of the monastery.

When Natalie found her, Anna was crouched in a corner, curling herself into a ball as she hugged her head with her arms. She was trying to cover her eyes and ears, and at the same time, she was mumbling under her breath, "No, no, no. Don't do this..."

It was as if Anna was deep in the throes of a nightmare. Natalie bit down on her lower lip and slowly approached Anna. Then, she hugged her. "Anna..."

Instinctively, Anna shoved her away before casting panicking eyes on Natalie. When she finally registered Natalie's face, she relaxed and panted. "Natalie, it's... it's you..."

Even though Natalie did not ask Anna what happened, she could guess that Anna must have returned to her childhood nightmare after what she learned from Varre—Anna must have dreamed about the bloody way her mother had died in front of her.

Anna's pain was something Natalie could not empathize with. She could not even put herself in Anna's shoes and began imagining the pain.

How cruel had that moment been? "I'm sorry," Natalie apologized as she hugged Anna again. "I'm really sorry... I didn't know my actions would make you suffer this way..."

Tears just kept flowing out of Anna's hollow eyes. "It was because he was obsessed with gem carving. That's why he socialized with strange people; that's why Mom ended up..." Anna began bawling and muttering. "Does he think that his sins will be gone just because he now worships Fyrtia? The guilt in him has gone away, but the dead will never come back."

No. It was not because he was obsessed. It was definitely not because he had socialized with strange people. Anna's mother's death was caused by the greed of powerful people. No one knew whether the treasures in the royal mausoleum truly existed or not, but that man had no qualms about staining his hands red.

Natalie desperately wished that she could tell Anna the truth behind everything. Yet, just as she started speaking—"Anna, actually..."—she recalled what Varre had told her in the room, and she swallowed the rest of her words.

"Natalie, what were you going to say?" Anna hesitantly turned to Natalie. "Nothing. It was nothing."

In the end, Natalie decided to keep it a secret too. The reason for her to do that was the same as Varre's. Ignorance was bliss, and knowledge spelled pain and danger.

Natalie only wanted Anna to bring her to Varre to replicate the jade key. What was going to happen next could be even more dangerous, and Natalie did not want Anna to be caught up in it.

Natalie accompanied Anna until the latter recollected herself. Meanwhile, after Natalie left, Varre picked up the jade and began studying it.

Then, he took out the carving tools he had kept in the highest spot on his book rack. It had been twenty years since he had touched them, but when those tools were in his hands, the muscle memory returned.

He was not going to go back on his words. With that thought in mind, he started replicating the key.

Gem carving was a concentration-heavy task. As time went by, Varre's body started to tire out. Blood escaped him from the corner of his lips, but he simply wiped away the blood with a handkerchief before throwing himself back into his task.

At the same time, Billy was on the return trip with the hyper-realistic mask-wearing substitute.

Unable to contact Samuel, Billy contacted Kenneth and Steven instead. He then set up tight security and arranged for more manpower to prevent Blaze's people from intercepting the jade key.

Everyone was on guard, but the return trip was peculiarly quiet without any obstacles. Billy was baffled. Why is there nothing from Blaze?

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Chapter 1095 Inexplicable

Meanwhile, Varre had locked himself inside the meditation room of the monastery to carve the jade key.

Nereus arranged for Natalie and Anna to occupy a long-uninhabited room inside the monastery.

Nereus was a shy teenager, around seventeen or eighteen years old. He even flushed self-consciously when Natalie and Anna sized him up. However, his eyes drifted toward Anna from time to time.

Natalie perceptively sensed he had something to say to Anna, and she also had a good guess about the message he wanted to convey.

Although Natalie couldn't tell Anna about the jade key's secret, she reckoned the latter should still be informed of Varre's illness.

Hence, Natalie excused herself, leaving Anna and Nereus alone inside the courtyard.

Nereus hesitated for a long while before ultimately bracing himself and speaking, seemingly having figured out what to say. "I shall not address you as a fellow worshipper since you're not an ordinary follower of our religion who comes here to pay your respect. May I call you Anna as the other lady does?"

Anna nodded.

"Anna, Master's disease..."

"Nereus, I don't want to hear this." Anna knitted her brows and retorted coldly, "I don't care about him."

However, Nereus turned a deaf ear to her refusal and stubbornly continued, "Anna, Master mentioned he did something unforgivable to you and your mother, so he deserved your hatred. Still, he doesn't have much time left and may pass away anytime."

A monk should make peace with the natural progression of life.

Varre had accepted his fate, but Nereus was still young.

He had yet to attain enlightenment and see through all earthly matters.

Varre had repeatedly reminded Nereus not to reveal his sickness, but Nereus couldn't stop himself from telling Anna the truth.

"When Master discovered he had contracted liver cancer, the disease had progressed to late-stage. The doctor said treating his condition would require a lot of money, and the treatment wouldn't cure him. Although the liver cancer brought him a lot of pain, Master had never complained. He did shout your nickname during the few episodes when he passed out after vomiting blood."

He paused briefly before adding, "Annie... That's right. He called out your name. Sensing his agony, I wanted to find you so you could meet him one last time. I know he wants to see you too, but he stopped me from trying to locate you. Can you please tell a white lie and say that you've already forgiven him?"

Waves of emotions churned within Anna as she listened to Nereus' account.

She loathed Varre, and her detestation toward him did not decrease even with time.

Having said that, when she heard about Varre's imminent death, Anna realized she didn't feel the pleasure of getting her revenge. Instead, hints of sorrow and discomfort rose within her chest.

"Anna, can you please fulfill Master's final wish?" Nereus asked while boring his reddened eyes into her.

"No."

Despite the chaos in her heart, her eyes glinted with unusual coldness.

"Nereus, you don't know what I've been through, so you're still able to utter these words to persuade me. I'm only here because I need him to help my friend."

Nereus parted his lips but hesitated to speak. He caught himself as he met Anna's icy gaze.

"I'm tired."

She spun on her heels and returned to her room.

However, right after she turned around with her back facing Nereus, her indifferent facial expression and harsh look in her eyes melted away.

End-stage liver cancer? So what if he dies? What does that have to do with me?

She could only grit her teeth as pandemonium reigned in her chest.

Late at night, Anna draped outerwear around her shoulders and got up while Natalie was sound asleep.

In fact, Natalie was still awake, but when she sensed Anna's movement, she pretended to be in a deep sleep.

When Anna saw Natalie's eyes were shut, she put on her shoes and left the room.

The monastery wasn't expansive, so Anna arrived at Varre's meditation room in no time.

She could see him working on the carving with complete focus under the orange-yellow lights through the wooden window.

He was indeed living up to his promise to her of trying his best to replicate the jade key.

Anna convinced herself that she went there in the middle of the night to check on Varre's progress, but after making sure he was working on the piece of jade, she showed no inclination to leave.

Anna didn't know how to describe her current feelings or what her purpose was, standing there like a fool.

Suddenly, a series of violent coughs sounded from inside the meditation room.

Khaff! Khaff! Khaff!