

A Beauty With Multiple Masks Chapter 791

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Vinson was stumped by Henrick's reaction.

He was astounded that Henrick was more concerned about whether he was cheated upon than the fact that he had murdered someone.

“Since he is desperate to know, you should tell him, Sannie.”

Sweeping her gaze at Henrick, she explained, “To be honest, my mom never let you touch her as she didn't have any feelings for you. She simply married you for expediency's sake. However, she didn't expect to have let the fox into the henhouse and brought about her own death.”

With a scowl on his face, Henrick bellowed, “That's impossible! Impossible! On the night we got married, we-”

Before he finished, Henrick fell silent.

He suddenly remembered that he had only slept with Maureen once, which was on their wedding night.

That day, he had a lot to drink and didn't remember what they did in bed. The only thing he recalled was seeing some bloodstains on the sheet when he awoke the next day.

At that time, he didn't think too much about it and attributed his memory loss to being drunk.

But now that he thought about it, he could sense that something was amiss.

Setting aside the fact that Maureen had always been cold to him, he realized that it didn't make sense for a married couple to have only made love once.

Evidently, Arielle isn't my daughter, and I have raised someone else's child all this while!

As rage swelled within him, Henrick screamed with his bloodshot eyes, "I'll kill you! I'll kill you!"

"Please don't get confused." Leaning into Henrick, Arielle coldly remarked, "You are now on the chopping block, while I'm the one holding the knife. The one in control right now isn't you. Henrick, tell me, how should I torment you to death? Should I chop off your legs first or your hands? Let me think...."

Since you used those hands to push my mom..."

"No, no..." Seized by fear eventually, Henrick yelled, "Murder is a crime! Don't you dare openly do this to

me!"

Arielle slapped him at once.

After that, she wiped her hands as if she had touched something filthy. "Don't worry, just like how you treated Cindy, I too won't let you die easily. That would be letting you off too lightly. We will settle the score one by one, starting with the villagers..."

Straightening her posture, Arielle turned to Vinson. "The materials I have prepared have already been sent out."

"Alright, I'll liaise with the courts..."

Just as he spoke, Vinson suddenly thought of someone. He reminded Arielle, “Sannie, if you want to take the legal route, why don’t you contact your grand-disciple?”

“Grand-disciple?” Momentarily surprised, Arielle asked, “Do you mean Ev? The old chess fanatic’s student?”

“Mmm-hmm. Mr. Eakins has just been promoted two months ago. I’m afraid he is higher in rank than all the people I know in the courts.”

“In that case, I’ll contact him right away. However, I’m not sure if he is willing to get involved,” Arielle mumbled as she gave Everett a call.

Once the call connected, Arielle explained her objective. At the same time, she was worried that Everett might think something that trivial was beneath him if he was as important as Vinson made him out to be.

Contrary to her expectations, she heard Everett’s enthusiastic reply. “Yes, Grandmaster! Your problems are mine too. I will resolve them to the best of my abilities. Send me all the details, and I’ll sentence him to one hundred years in prison.”

“Erm...”

His response wasn’t what she expected at all. It was now obvious that Everett was a chess fanatic through and through.

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Meanwhile, Henrick began to tremble when he heard their conversation.

“Arielle, although I’m not your biological father, I have raised you for many years. Don’t be ungrateful by sending me to prison!”

“Ungrateful?” Arielle snorted. “Aren’t you my mom’s murderer?”

“T—it wasn’t me. I didn’t kill her! Cindy is the one responsible! She contacted an old lady who threatened me into pushing Maureen off the building. Sannie, you have to believe me!”

Arielle’s ears pricked when she heard the words “old lady.” Squinting her eyes, she asked, “Do you still remember what she looks like?”

Henrick shook his head. “It happened so long ago that I don’t remember. The only impression I had was that she had a big mole on her eyebrows.”

“Mmm-hmm. Is that it?”

“That’s all I can remember.” Henrick was on the brink of tears.

What will happen to me if I’m locked up in prison?

He had always loved fame and fortune. The moment he was jailed, he would lose everything.

Arielle cleared her throat again. Before Henrick could plead for mercy, she plainly declared, “Good. You are no longer of any value to me. Vinson, take him away. I don’t ever want to see his face again.”

“Sure.” With a wave of his hand, two bodyguards dragged Henrick out of the trunk and headed into the Specialized Forces’ detention area.

When Henrick realized where he was, his knees buckled at once.

“Specialized Forces... why am I here? I don’t want to go in. I rather go to prison!”

Vinson sneered, “Don’t worry. You will be spending time in both places for a long while.”

Amidst the height of the controversy, Henrick would be sentenced via the usual legal avenues. After that, he would be transferred to the Specialized Forces’ prison where he would suffer terribly for the rest of his life.

Just like Cindy, he would be tormented by a fate worse than death.

After glancing at Henrick’s silhouette, Arielle asked Vinson with an uncertain tone, “Wouldn’t it have been better if I personally imprisoned and tortured him instead of relying on the law?”

Reaching out to rub Arielle’s hand, Vinson reminded, “It’s not worth breaking the law over someone like that. After all, he is human and has many contacts in Jadeborough. If someone lodges a missing person’s report to the police, we could be in a lot of trouble.”

Arielle nodded. “You’re right. I still need to exact my revenge upon that mysterious person. Hence, it’s not worth being ruined alongside Henrick.”

Vinson was stunned. “That’s not what I meant. Shouldn’t you think about yourself for once? *Why* dont you consider stopping here? From what Cindy says, those people are not to be trifled with.”

Arielle knitted her eyebrows. “Given how far I have come, there’s no way I can stop. Furthermore, the

old lady which Cindy and Henrick had mentioned is the true mastermind. How can I ever forgive them? No matter who or where they are, I will seek revenge on behalf of my mom!”

Having failed to persuade Arielle, there was nothing much Vinson could do.

At that moment, Arielle received a message notification on her phone.

When she checked, she realized it was from Trisha.

“Who sent you the message?” Vinson leaned over to sneak a peek

A few seconds later, he pursed his lips and remarked, “is that friend of yours again. She’s actually reminding you of your exam in two days’ time and wants you to go back to school to study”

“What’s with the snarky tone? Why are you jealous of a girl?”

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Vinson waved her off. “I’m not jealous. I’m just envious that you have such a good friend.”

“I can feel the jealousy in your voice.”

“You’re imagining things.” Vinson lifted his jaw. “In that case, you should go back to school while I tie up loose ends.”

“No, there’s no point in revising now. I’ll deal with Henrick first. After all, it will be done in a day or two.”

“Sure.” Vinson nodded as he wasn’t keen on Arielle going back to school.

Soon, it was primetime for the online media.

During that period, many netizens were online scrolling through the news.

After picking the right timing, Vinson contacted a few major online media firms to release the news concurrently

Thereafter, he contacted the major stars of Nightshire Entertainment and requested that they share it on social media.

Leveraging on the popularity of the celebrities, the news titled “*177 Cracked Houses*” became the top trending topic online.

Considering how hot it was, everyone felt the urge to click and read it.

The news described the condition of the residences at the old Southall estate.

There were a hundred and eighty homes there of which one hundred and seventy-seven had cracks in them. Furthermore, more than ten houses had already collapsed with more at risk of the same fate.

The cause had been narrowed down to Henrick's mine conducting explosive blasts indiscriminately. They were done so without any regard for the consequences.

Furthermore, the mining company delayed payment of its workers' salaries and owed them up to five million.

The majority of the miners were local villagers who lived in abject poverty while the owner of the mine led an extravagant lifestyle. He had bought a house in Jadeborough and planned to rebuild his old house into a luxurious villa.

The news was so detailed that it triggered outrage among all the netizens.

The comments section exploded accordingly:

*“Da*n Southall Mining has no heart at all. This is the most irresponsible company I have ever seen. Henrick Southall, you deserve death!”*

*“F**ck! I'm really shocked at how long it took to unearth such an unscrupulous businessman. Arrest him and jail him for a hundred years!”*

“A hundred years is too short. Once he dies, he should just be buried in prison.”

The more the netizens clicked to read the news, the more they investigated Southall Mining.

Coincidentally, Wendy was one of them too.

Henrick Southall? Isn't he Arielle's dad?

Arielle sneered.

With a dad like that, there's no way Arielle can escape. All this while, she must have leveraged her status as a daughter of the Southalls to gain many benefits. And now, it's time for her to pay the price for them.

Logging in with an alternate account, Wendy commented:

“Did all of you know that Arielle, the ambassador of Soir Coffee, is Henrick Southall's daughter?”

After she made her comment, Wendy patiently waited for the backlash to be unleashed upon Arielle.

Soon, the netizens, who were barely rational, began to direct their ire at Arielle.

Wendy then told everyone that Arielle had taken leave from school despite how close the exam was. Hence, it must be a sign of her guilt.

After that, she relished in her God-given luck which resulted in Arielle embroiled in a controversy.

Worried that her comment would be buried by those of other netizens, Wendy hired some professional trolls to maintain her comment as a hot topic.

After a while, she checked the replies to her comment with anticipation.

However...

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After clicking in a few minutes later, she noticed that there were thousands of replies to her comment not including those from her paid trolls.

She was shocked at how immense the response was.

Evidently, Arielle was extremely influential online.

At that moment, Wendy had mixed feelings over the entire matter.

How can Arielle attract so much attention online?

It's one thing for her to be popular in real life, but to wield so much influence online really makes her an eyesore.

However, Wendy quickly regained her composure. After all, Arielle wasn't being popular right now for the right reasons such as her piano performance or translations. Instead, it was due to the heartless actions of her father.

The comments about her must be negative.

However...

"That's right! Henrick Southall! Isn't he the Chairman of Southall Group who kicked my goddess out of the family?"

Wendy nodded. *"That's him! Arielle's dad, Henrick Southall!"*

However, the next comment wrote:

“She doesn’t need a useless dad like him. Perhaps, she was kicked because she didn’t agree with his actions.”

“That must be what happened. Given how virtuous she looks, she must have a heart of gold too. Therefore, she must have been chased out of the family because she tried to stop Henrick.”

“My goddess is so kind and pitiful. Boohoo! I swear I will protect her no matter what!”

Widening her eyes, Wendy was baffled.

“What’s going on? Why is this happening? This must be an outlying spastic comment.”

Seized by hysteria, Wendy scrolled further down to read the comments. However, all of them were either sympathizing with Arielle or asserting that she wasn’t in league with Henrick.

Trembling in rage, she staggered backward and knocked onto the bathroom countertop. It almost caused her to lose her balance and fall.

Holding onto the washbasin, she seethed with anger.

What’s wrong with netizens nowadays? She had never met a group that was so difficult to manipulate.

Wallowing in her misery, Wendy was sick of looking at her phone.

Unknown to her, she had missed a separate fast-rising trending topic.

While she was raining her fists hysterically onto the countertop, the school bell rang.

Regaining her composure, she rushed back into class,

So what if Arielle has won over the netizens? At the end of the day, hasn't she chosen to skip class out of embarrassment? The monthly exam is right around the corner. After missing so many sessions, she would likely be kicked out of preparatory class by Donovan if she doesn't make it to the top twenty. By then, I'll post her results online and her reputation as a top student will be ruined. Therefore, I have to be patient.

By the time Wendy returned to class, Donovan hadn't arrived yet.

After taking her seat, she asked her classmate curiously, "Why is Mr. Baxter late again? Doesn't he always come into class before the bell?"

Her classmate shook her head. "I don't know. He seems distracted ever since he got married. Perhaps, he is enjoying marriage so much that he doesn't want to get out of bed."

Stunned, Wendy asked, "Since when did he get married? Why didn't I hear about it?"

The classmate shrugged. "Everyone in school knows about it. Why haven't you heard? Before this, there were rumors online about Donovan getting together with Queenie Mill, the famous doctor. The school insisted that he take responsibility for his actions before allowing him to come back and teach. Subsequently, both of them registered their marriage the next day. Since he has just gotten married, it's natural that he is less focused on us."

"However, we're already in the second period of the afternoon." Feeling upset, Wendy furrowed her eyebrows.

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Given that she planned on entering Jadeborough University, she was naturally concerned with Donovan's recent tardiness.

At that moment, Wendy heard the students seated behind her discussing something. When the word "Arielle" pricked her ears, she couldn't help but turn around.

"Are you talking about Arielle?" Wendy put on a warm smile to feign friendliness.

However, the two students looked at her warily, as if she was the *enemy*.

Smiling awkwardly, Wendy explained, "Please don't misunderstand. I did have some conflict with Arielle before this, but everything has been resolved now."

The students asked skeptically, "Really?"

Wendy nodded. "Really. It wasn't a big conflict to begin with. Just a trivial squabble between girls."

Just as she spoke, her classmates lowered their guard against her.

Feeling relieved, Wendy pretended to be concerned. "Actually, I do sympathize with Arielle. I didn't expect her dad to be so evil to the extent of endangering the homes of others and delaying the salaries of his workers. When Arielle was using her dad's money, she probably wasn't aware that it belonged to the workers. What a shame..."

When Wendy was done making her snide comment, she waited for a turnaround in attitude from her classmates.

She figured that her insinuations were obvious enough to convince them that Arielle too was at fault.

However, when she raised her gaze, she saw them frowning with displeasure.

Frozen momentarily, she asked, “What is it?”

“Didn’t you read the news?” One of them explained, “Arielle never used any of Henrick’s money.”

Wendy scoffed, “How is that possible?”

The girl squirmed her lips. “If you don’t believe it, you can read the news yourself.”

“But...” *I did go through the news.*

Filled with skepticism, Wendy checked the news on her phone again.

She saw two new trending headlines.

Henrick Southall The Murderer.

Henrick Appropriated Moore Family Assets.

She clicked onto the first one immediately.

The news related how Henrick was unfaithful in his marriage and plotted with his mistress to kill Maureen. Furthermore, there was a voice recording attached.

Subsequently, Wendy put her phone to her ear to listen.

The voice on the recording belonged to Cindy. She recounted how she and Henrick formulated a plan to kill Maureen and frame it as suicide. Furthermore, they even engaged human traffickers to kidnap

Arielle who was very young back then.

After she had finished listening, Wendy tapped into the second trending topic with mixed feelings.

Inside, she read how Henrick appropriated the Moore family assets after Maureen's death.

At the end of the news, there was a picture of a donation receipt.

it stated that Arielle had donated two million.

Below it was Arielle personal comment

“This is the amount of money given to me when I first returned to the Southalls. I didn't want any of it. Hence, I donated it to organizations that helped missing children hoping that all of them would be returned to their families safe and sound.”

Wendy expression darkened.

Arielle really knows how to put on an act. No wonder the classmates behind me insisted that she didn't use any of Henrick's money,

If only she had read the news beforehand, she wouldn't have bothered to talk to her classmates seated behind her.

By doing so, she had ruined her own reputation in front of them.

Amidst her frustration, she heard both of them whispering in private.

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“How could I have believed that Wendy and Arielle had reconciled? If I hadn’t read the news, I would have assumed that Arielle was led astray by her dad.”

“Wendy is really weird. Let’s avoid talking to her next time.”

When she heard the comments, Wendy dug her nails into the table in anger.

Unfortunately, one of her nails broke with a crack.

“Ouch!” Exclaiming in pain, she saw blood oozing out of her fingertips.

Da*n it!

She cursed in her heart over how unfair the world was.

At that moment, footsteps could be heard outside the classroom followed by the sound of the door opening.

Donovan had arrived.

“I’m sorry for being late, everyone. Turn to page 110. Today, we won’t be learning anything new. Instead, we will be revising what we have learned previously. Before that, let me take your attendance first.”

Just as he spoke, Donovan flipped open the class register.

When he called out Arielle’s name, no one responded.

Glaring at her empty seat, he asked Jared who sat next to her, “Jared, is Arielle still absent?”

Jared nodded. “She has taken two days leave to deal with matters at home.”

“Hmph!” Donovan snorted without another word.

She is skipping class every other day. What kind of student does she think she is?

Nevertheless, Donovan felt more relaxed and natural in her absence. When Arielle was around, he would somehow feel stressed all the time.

If Arielle doesn't turn up for the exam, doesn't it mean that she will be forced to leave my class? By then, I'll no longer need to look at her annoying face.

Casting his delight aside, Donovan began to go through the textbook with his class.

In the midst of their revision, Donovan's mind began to drift, causing a troubled expression to appear on his face.

Over the last few days, he stayed at the teacher's quarters. where he enjoyed a few days of peace. However, Queenie had dropped by the school that afternoon and insisted that he return home in front of the principal.

Since he couldn't lose his temper, all he could do was wallow in his misery,

“Hmph!” Snorting aloud, Donovan hated Arielle's guts.

If not for her, he wouldn't have to marry Queenie who was extremely clingy.

“Mr. Baxter?” When the students saw that he was spacing out, they couldn't help but remind him, “Mr. Baxter, we have finished the exercise.”

Regaining his senses, Donovan reminded himself not to get distracted unnecessarily.

To him, his most important objective was to get the students of the preparatory class admitted into Maxwell University. As for Queenie and Arielle, he knew he didn't have to concern himself with them for the time being.

After surveying the class, Donovan asked, "The answer is 0.03. Whoever got it correct, please raise your hand."

More than half the students in class raised their hands.

Donovan nodded in satisfaction at how good the preparatory class students' foundations were. As a result, it wouldn't be difficult for them to get into Maxwell University.

When Donovan swept his gaze around, he noticed that Jared also had his hand raised.

Smirking, he didn't bother with Jared at all.

Given that Jared joined the class via connections,

Donovan felt that he couldn't compare to those that he had handpicked. Therefore, he wasn't going to waste any time on someone like Jared.

"In that case, Wendy..." Finally, Donovan's gaze settled upon Wendy. He continued, "There's still another way to solve this question. Please come to the board and show it to us."

"All right, Mr. Baxter." Wendy had already figured out the alternative answer. The moment she walked to the board, she began writing it down with chalk.

However, by the time she finished, her answer was 0.418. It was different from the correct answer."

"Erm..." Wendy's expression darkened.

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What's wrong? What isn't the answer 0.03?

Wendy tried to figure out where she went wrong. However, the more desperate she was, the harder it became to see it. In the end, she had no choice but to seek Donovan's help.

Nodding at her, Donovan remarked, "Have a seat first."

"Yes, Mr. Baxter." Biting her lip, Wendy returned to her seat.

Donovan asked, "Does anyone know which step Wendy got wrong?"

Everyone fell silent. Many of them didn't even know about that method, let alone figure out where Wendy's mistake was.

Suddenly, someone raised a hand.

The moment Donovan saw that it was Jared, he averted his gaze at once.

Considering how lousy Jared's results were when school started, how is it possible that he knows the answer? He must be fooling around.

Donovan quipped, "Since no one knows the answer, I'll explain. Wendy's steps are very neat. However, she has made a mistake in the third formula. She should be using this instead..."

While he was explaining, Donovan began writing on the blackboard.

Meanwhile, Jared's expression turned grim at having been ignored. Nevertheless, he put down his hand without any protest.

At the same time, Henry couldn't resist but grumble, "Isn't Donovan just too much? You are serious about your studies and even took the initiative to raise your hand. But by ignoring you, isn't it a dereliction of his duty as a teacher?"

"Forget it." Although Jared was upset, he didn't want to cause any trouble.

Since he had already decided to come to school instead of joining the army, he knew it wasn't worth getting into an argument with Donovan.

However...

Jared couldn't help but glance at Arielle's empty seat.

Why didn't Arielle come to class over the last two days? Is she affected by what's happening online? This won't do. I must give Harvey a call.

The moment the school bell rang, Jared was the first to step out of class. He took out his phone and gave Harvey a call.

However, Donovan frowned when he saw how desperately Jared wanted to leave

I knew it! Jared has been pretending to be studious all along. A leopard never changes its spots. A bad student can never become a good one.

Outside the classroom...

Jared had called Harvey thrice, but no one answered. Left without a choice, he called Arielle instead and she quickly picked up.

Arielle answered plainly, "Jared?"

Jared found a private corner before continuing, “Arielle... no wait, Boss, are you alright?”

“Huh?” Arielle was baffled. “Why wouldn’t I be alright?”

Jared hesitated for a while. “I saw the news online. Are you affected by what happened to Henrick?”

When she understood the purpose of his call, Arielle replied with a smile. “Don’t worry, I’m fine. Besides, I was the one who released the information.”

“Huh?” Jared was stunned. When he recalled the news about Henrick murdering Maureen, his mind clicked at once.

So, Arielle was just trying to exact revenge for her mother.

Heaving a sigh of relief, Jared replied, “That’s good to know. Anyway, exams are just around the corner. You

should do revision if you have the time.”

“That may not be necessary. I’ll still get first place without doing any revision,” Arielle asserted casually. She wasn’t blowing her own trumpet. Instead, she was just stating a fact.

Feeling the slight from her comment, Jared ended the call quickly.

Just before he did so, a familiar voice rang out in the background. “Who are you talking to?”

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Jared felt a chill down his spine.

Why does it sound like Vin?

Prior to that, he had suspected Vinson was somehow involved with Arielle. Considering Vinson had disappeared, he got worried too.

If that dim-witted Harvey has missed his opportunity with Arielle, he will never be able to find a better wife.

After putting his phone away quickly, Jared hurried back to class to continue his lessons.

Meanwhile, just like a worried father, Vinson stopped what he was doing and walked over to Arielle's side to question her.

Waving her phone, Arielle replied, "My classmate, Jared. He's Harvey's younger brother."

"Oh, that kid." Vinson nodded and asked, "Does he have a girlfriend yet?"

"Doesn't look like it. I have never heard him mention it before."

"I'll introduce one to him then."

"Huh?" Arielle asked curiously, "Why do you want to introduce a girl to him all of a sudden?"

Vinson stared at Arielle intently. "So that he doesn't call my wife for no reason."

Arielle choked. “Come on, Vinson. You’re overreacting. I’m not that desirable. You’re blowing things out of proportion.”

“One can never be too cautious.”

“The saying isn’t supposed to be used in such circumstances.” After frowning at Vinson, Arielle got serious. “The news online has generated enough controversy. Therefore, it’s time for the trial to begin.”

“Mmm–hmm. Everything is already in place for tomorrow.”

Giving her back a stretch, Arielle checked her watch. “It’s almost time for dinner. In order to reward you, Mr. Nightshire, I will personally prepare dinner. So, what would you like to have?”

Vinson gave her a mischievous look. “Anything I want?”

Despite sensing something amiss, Arielle nodded still. “I’ll try my best.”

“Alright.” Vinson stepped forward and hugged her waist. “I want to have you.”

Speechless, Arielle could feel her cheeks burn in embarrassment. She extended her hand to push Vinson away. “Can you be more serious? This is your office. What if someone sees us.”

“No one dares to enter without my permission.”

Just as he spoke, the office door was suddenly flung open.

With a grim expression, Vinson scowled at the door and saw a bodyguard with an anxious expression.

Furrowing his eyebrows, Vinson asked, “What’s wrong? Why are you panicking?”

The bodyguard hung his head and reported, “Mr. Nightshire, the Specialized Forces have reported that Cindy has gone missing.”

“What?”

“What?”

Vinson and Arielle exclaimed in unison.

“What happened? Isn’t she locked up in the Specialized Forces’ detention center? How could she just disappear?” Vinson questioned.

Sweating profusely, the bodyguard recounted what the Specialized Forces messenger had said while wiping off his cold sweat.

“When Cindy fainted from her second punishment, she was brought back to her cell so that she could continue when she awoke. However, when they returned to her cell after a while, she was gone.”

Vinson furrowed his eyebrows in frustration.

Arielle interjected, “She couldn’t have disappeared into thin air. Someone must have rescued her. What about Matthias? Where is he?”

The bodyguard replied, “That was the first place we checked. Considering how grievous Matthias’ injuries were, he lost consciousness by the time we arrived at the hospital after the long journey. Moreover, he had just woken up half an hour ago. Therefore, it couldn’t have been him as our men are still keeping an eye on him.”

“Who can it be then?” Arielle bit her lip forcefully.

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“Don’t fret,” Vinson reassured her, “I will definitely recapture her for you.”

Arielle nodded as a sense of dread began to creep into her.

After assuaging Arielle’s fears, Vinson got the bodyguard to send the man from the Specialized Forces in.

Usually, when members of the Specialized Forces appear at a company, it would mean that the company was done for. Therefore, to avoid any trouble, the Specialized Forces came in civilian clothing.

After the bodyguard left, there were only three people left in the room.

The member of the Specialized Forces bowed in respect before greeting fearfully, “Captain Nightshire.” The address caught Arielle by surprise as she turned to look at Vinson.

“You’re the Captain of the Specialized Forces?”

Vinson spread his arms helplessly. “I wasn’t keen but they forced me into taking up this position.”

Arielle shrugged. “Do you know how many people are dying for this position? And yet, you couldn’t care less about it.”

Vinson explained candidly, “Others desire it for the

benefits that it would bring them. However, the Nightshire Group has never broken any rules. That’s why I don’t need it.”

He then turned to his subordinate. "Tell me in detail what happened."

"Yes, sir." The man recounted the incident remorsefully. However, the contents were similar to what the bodyguard had just reported.

After pondering for a moment, Vinson asked, "Did anyone in particular visit today?"

"Yes," the subordinate replied. "However, they were previously caught for money laundering via a shell company. They came by to turn themselves in."

"Turn themselves in?" Vinson squinted his eyes. "Given how serious their crimes are, there's no way they're not aware of the consequences. Even if they turned themselves in, it would barely lighten their sentence."

"It really is strange indeed." The subordinate explained, "Furthermore, other than the money launderers, an owner of a chain of bars have also turned himself in. He confessed that his bars had been used for drug trafficking."

"All these guys picked today on purpose..." Vinson ordered with a solemn voice, "Go and find out who these two groups of men have met recently. Also, have you checked the surveillance cameras at the detention

area?"

"I have. However, the cameras are out of order."

"Just as expected. This isn't a coincidence but a plot. The enemies have reacted so quickly that even I didn't expect them to rescue Cindy, let alone you." Taking a deep breath, Vinson ordered, "Check all the other surveillance cameras nearby. Also, set up roadblocks on all routes that lead out of Jadeborough regardless of whether they're by air, sea, or land. We absolutely cannot allow Cindy to escape the city."

"Yes, sir! I'll get it done right away." The subordinate left without another word.

Watching his leaving silhouette, Arielle asked Vinson, “Can there be a mole?”

Vinson shook his head. “A possibility for other organizations, but not for the Specialized Forces. Every member has been trained since they were young and have a very strong bond with each other. Also, all of them are orphans. Hence, familial interest doesn’t exist for them.”

Arielle lamented, “In that case, it only shows how powerful our enemy is.”

“Mmm–hmm.” Vinson nodded. “For the time being, I’ll get Blake and Sasha to protect you as a precaution.”

Arielle didn’t protest. After a brief silence, she suggested, “Can I go over to the Specialized Forces’ base? Perhaps, I can restore the surveillance cameras.”

“Sure, I’ll take you there right away.”

“Don’t.” Arielle stopped Vinson and explained, “I can see how busy you are. You should finish your work first. If it makes you feel better, you can get Rayson to send me.”

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Coincidentally, Rayson knocked and came in to hand Vinson a document. Subsequently, Vinson instructed him to take Arielle to the Specialized Forces.

Before she left, he reminded her, “Call me at once if anything happens.”

He behaved as if he were her old nanny.

Nodding helplessly, Arielle went off with Rayson.

Meanwhile, the Specialized Forces were in chaos as all of them were preparing to hunt for Cindy.

Before Arielle’s arrival, Vinson had instructed them to treat her as an important guest.

Therefore, the deputy captain personally came to receive her.

“Ms. Moore, this way, please. This is the security control room. Today, all our systems have been paralyzed since an hour ago. Also, that was the same time when we realized Cindy was gone.”

Arielle nodded before entering the room.

Inside, a few technical members of the Specialized Forces were struggling to repair the system.

“Sir.” One of the men greeted the deputy captain when they saw him enter with Arielle.

“Just ignore me and carry on. By the way, how are the repairs coming along?”

The staff shook his head in resignation. “Although we have verified that someone hacked into our system, created a backdoor, and inserted a virus into it, we are unable to remove the virus given how powerful it is.”

The deputy captain was shocked. “What kind of virus is that to be able to stump all of you?”

The staff shook his head. “We won’t be able to remove it unless we break its encryption. However, it is so complex that we will likely need one day to do so.”

“That long?”

With an apologetic expression, the deputy captain explained, “Ms. Moore, I’m sorry. They said that we need at least one day’s time. Why don’t you go back and wait for our call?”

“Well, let me try.” Just as she spoke, Arielle walked up to the technical staff under the deputy captain’s look of amazement. She asked, “Can you lend me your computer?”

The staff asked in surprise, “Do you know how to break the code?”

“Let me try.”

The staff then gave the deputy captain a quizzical look.

Within the Specialized Forces, non-members were not allowed to use the computers.

The deputy captain nodded. “Let Ms. Moore have a go, she is a friend of Captain Nightshire.”

“Understood. Ms. Moore, please go ahead.” The staff gestured to her as he stepped aside.

The man was the captain of the technical department. When the rest of the staff saw that their captain had made way for a young lady, they began to grumble softly.

“What’s wrong with the deputy captain? Does he think that all of us are inferior to the young lady? Is that the reason why he brought her here to remove the virus?”

“Our captain is no different. How can he give up his seat for her? This isn’t a place where young girls fool around.”

After mumbling for a while, their words drifted to their captain’s ears.

The captain hadn’t thought much about it initially as there was no harm in letting a young lady try.

But having heard his subordinate’s comments, he began to feel self-conscious.

All this while, men had dominated the IT industry.

On the dark web’s hacker chart, there were no girls within the top fifty. It was one thing for the deputy

captain to bring a lady over, but considering how young she was, it felt like an insult to them.

“Save it,” the technical team captain quipped with a darkened expression. “After all, it’s impossible for her to break the code. Since she’s a friend of the captain, just let her give it a go. Anyway, we have nothing to lose.”

