

A Beauty With Multiple Masks Chapter 181

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Chapter 181 Convince The Woman, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

Even though it was just a passport photo, the woman looked graceful with a smile that bright. One could only imagine how ethereal she must be in real life. Stunned by the beauty, Susanne gradually realized that the woman looked awfully alike to her deceased friend. The uncanny resemblance made her recall horrible memories, which gave her the chills. *This must only be a coincidence.* "Is this the woman you saw?" she asked, showing the photo to Wendy. Glancing at the unforgettable beauty, Wendy immediately recognized Arielle. "Yes." Upon hearing her reply, Susanne let out a breath in relief.

See. I knew this is just a coincidence. There's no way she's that woman's daughter. Then she turned to Geoffrey with a frown. "How did she get close to Vin?" *A waitress like her shouldn't even have the chance to approach my son.* "She was Mr. Vinson's g-gift from his business partners at the banquet in the hotel two days ago," replied Geoffrey a bit shyly. In an instant, a stormy look swept across Susanne's face. *Did he seriously reject a lady from Horington, whom I've personally selected, just for this "gift?" How foolish! He really can't see who matches him best!*

"That stupid unfilial son! How dare he get together with such a dirty woman! Phone him right now and tell him to come back right this instant!" she ordered in rage. Other than a mere waitress, Wendy didn't expect that Arielle was also Vinson's sex slave gifted by somebody else. *A sex slave surely won't challenge my position because the Nightshires definitely won't accept her.*

Wendy tried her best to control the smirk that threatened to appear as she held Susanne before saying softly, "Vinson is still young, and that woman is indeed gorgeous. It's normal that her beauty entices him." "He can be normal all he wants, but not with her. I can't let this be. I'm going to bring him back here by myself. Get the car ready, Geoffrey!" "Calm down, Ms. Stone!" exclaimed Wendy. "Vinson is at the rebellious stage now.

The stricter you are on him, the more he will do the opposite. Do you really think he'll willingly return home with you? If anything, it will only make things worse." Susanne was quiet for some time before asking, "Then what am I supposed to do? Let him mess around with that woman?" "Of course not," Wendy answered. "You know, if you can't persuade Vinson, then you can persuade the woman. I mean, women like her only approach Vinson with one purpose, don't you think so?"

"Ah!" Susanne's eyes lit up. "Money!" *If I give that vixen enough money, she will stop sleeping with him. I bet she's aware that the Nightshires will never welcome her into the family.* "You're brilliant, Wendy!" Susanne patted Wendy's shoulder in satisfaction. "A clever woman like you is really deserving to be Mrs. Nightshire."

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Chapter 182 What A Small World, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

Wendy blushed and said, "Ms. Stone, you're making fun of me again." Susanne smiled in response and was satisfied with Wendy. Then, Susanne turned to Geoffrey and instructed, "Send her contact number to me." "Understood." Geoffrey quickly sent Arielle's number to Susanne's phone. Miles away, Henrick asked to see Arielle as soon as she returned to the Southall residence. "Dad, what's the matter?" Arielle asked smilingly. Sitting at the desk, Henrick waved at Arielle delightedly and said straightforwardly, "Didn't you say you wish to work in our company?" Arielle nodded. "Do you allow me to work there?" Henrick responded affirmatively, "I have rented the new office and need more staff over there. So, you can work with me starting from tomorrow and learn how to manage a company from the managerial staff." After falling silent for a few seconds, Arielle proposed, "Dad, I wish to start working from the bottom instead of joining the managerial level right away.

If I can be one of the managerial staff without any experience, I'm afraid that your reputation might be affected." Henrick cared about his reputation above everything else. Once Arielle finished, he nodded satisfactorily. "You're right. The staff love to gossip about everything. Besides, it's good to have fun while learning about how the company works from the bottom. So, which department would you like to join?" Arielle replied excitedly, "I heard from Aunt Cindy that there are not many profitable departments in the company, while the most profitable department is the AI technology department. Since I have some knowledge about AI, I hope to get some experience there."

Based on the information she acquired, the only department in Southall Group that made a profit was the AI technology department. Therefore, she wanted to find out how it continued making profits while all other departments suffered losses. "Sure!" Henrick agreed to it right away. He didn't think much and only thought that Arielle wanted to have some fun there. Since the AI technology department produced robots, he thought Arielle was intrigued by them.

As I have expected, girls only think about having fun. Also, Henrick thought Arielle was different from Cindy. After Arielle mentioned how Cindy might turn against him, he eventually believed that Cindy was hatching a plot secretly. Therefore, he decided to send Cindy to another place to reduce her chances of interfering with the company affairs. On the other hand, he didn't feel the need to keep his guard up against Arielle. Now that she was close to the Nightshires, she had no reasons to scheme against Southall Group. *Besides, how ill-intentioned can a lady from a village be?*

"Well, get some rest for two days and report for duty at the AI technology department on Monday. The department is located in our branch. By the way, you can hide your identity if you wish to do so because the staffs have never seen you before. On Monday, you can go to the company with Mason. Since he studied AI

design before, you can ask him if you have any doubts." Arielle rolled her eyes upon hearing it. *Mason?*

Arielle believed that he was probably the man sent by Cindy to kill her. *Well, what a small world!* Back then, Arielle was forced to stay on the uninhabited island alone for a week. While Arielle was looking for ways to retaliate against Mason, an opportunity appeared all of a sudden. *What a coincidence.* "Sure, I'll learn from Mason." As Arielle smiled, a glint flashed across her eyes. Meanwhile, Henrick was satisfied with Arielle because she seemed to be obedient.

He was narrow-minded and still thought that women with intentions were not good women. "Well, you should get back to your room and get some rest. I'm sure you're tired. Besides, I'll have to discuss the rent with Mr. Nightshire," Henrick said while putting both of his hands on the desk. Also, there was a pile of bills next to him.

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Chapter 183 Okay To Spend The Night Elsewhere, A Beauty with Multiple Masks Arielle glanced at the bills and the numbers with contempt. Nonetheless, she didn't reveal her emotions but merely answered cutely, "Alright." She turned around and left the study. The moment Arielle turned around, her smile faded away. Later, once Arielle arrived at her room, she received a call from an unknown caller. She tilted her head and gazed at it bewilderedly, for the calling code indicated that it was from Jadeborough. Since Henrick registered the number for her, not many people would call her on it. *In that case, who is calling me?*

Out of curiosity, she picked up the phone and asked, "Hi, may I know who this is?" The next moment, a woman replied crossly, "Where are you? Let's meet up." After confirming that the voice was unfamiliar, Arielle frowned and said, "I'm afraid you have the wrong number." "Not at all," she said coldly, "I'm Vinson's mom. I'll meet you at Soir Coffee in Nightshire Square half an hour later." With that, she ended the call without giving her a chance to say no. Arielle's gaze dimmed as she put her phone down. *If I'm not mistaken, Vinson's mom is Susanne Stone.*

To a certain extent, Susanne's attitude was similar to Vinson's, for both of them didn't give others any chance to say no. Arielle remembered Vinson said that Susanne and her mom used to be good friends. Therefore, Arielle thought she could get some information from Susanne about her father. Although Susanne didn't talk nicely, Arielle wanted to meet her anyway. She told Henrick that Vinson was bringing her out for supper. Meanwhile, Henrick was delighted upon hearing it and agreed to it right away. He even reminded Arielle caringly, "I'm not a conservative man. So, I won't ask you to come home early. Have fun." *In other words, he won't mind if I spend the night elsewhere.*

What an open-minded father! Arielle pretended to smile in response and called a cab to the cafe. Soon, the sky turned dark. There was no traffic jam in Jadeborough at this hour. As such, Arielle arrived at the meeting place proposed

by Susanne within half an hour. Arielle used to visit Soir Coffee for commercial shooting. As such, the staff welcomed her excitedly once she entered. "Ms. Sannie, it's our honor to have you here. Would you like to have coffee? We have just launched a new drink today. Would you like to try it?" Arielle declined the offer with a smile.

Then, she glanced around the coffee shop but didn't see Susanne. A moment later, she asked, "Is there any private room here? I'm expecting someone but not sure where she is now." "Oh, we do have a private room. The two guests in the room also say they are expecting someone. Please come with me." "Sure, thank you." Arielle nodded and followed the staff to the private room. Once the staff opened the door, Arielle saw the graceful Susanne in the private room. Also, a girl with a sweet smile on her face was sitting next to Susanne.

She was the one who came to see Vinson after the shooting ended. Since Susanne brought this girl, her message was clear. Meanwhile, the two of them looked in the direction of the entrance and frowned in unison the moment they saw Arielle. Wendy frowned because she was shocked by Arielle's beauty and felt displeased. Meanwhile, Susanne was stunned once she realized that Arielle looked like her old friend who passed away more than the photo.

Apart from Arielle's physical appearance, her demeanor was also similar to her late friend. Susanne couldn't help but feel that they didn't have to apply any makeup to showcase their beauty. As Susanne was deep in thought, she instinctively gripped the cup of coffee. *How is it possible that they look alike? Could it be a coincidence?*

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Chapter 184 A Billion, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

Arielle was unperturbed by their slightly contorted faces. Keeping her courtesy, Arielle walked into the room, nodded at both of them, and greeted, "Hi, Ms. Stone, how can I help you?" Meanwhile, Susanne, who frowned a lot, began the conversation without beating around the bush. "I know what happened between you and my son. Tell me, how much do you need in order to stay away from my son?" Arielle was startled by Susanne's directness. Also, Susanne seemingly didn't take into consideration the friendship between Arielle's mom and her. Since Susanne was so cold, Arielle decided to stop being polite to her. She sat in front of Susanne, crossed her legs, and said coldly, "What happened between your son and me? Ms. Stone, I'm forgetful and not sure which incident it was. Was it the day I saved Vinson's life on the uninhabited island? Or was it two days ago when I saved Vinson once again during the explosion at the building?" Susanne stared at me in disbelief and asked, "What nonsense is that? When did you ever save my son?" At the same time, Wendy couldn't help but interrupt, "Miss, please don't make lies that will be exposed within seconds."

Slowly, Arielle looked up and glanced at Wendy nonchalantly. Instantly, a shiver ran down Wendy's spine. Given that Wendy's family pampered her since she was born, she had never seen someone with that demeanor before. All of a sudden, Wendy was rendered speechless. After glancing at Wendy for a moment, Arielle ignored her and responded to Susanne, "Ms. Stone, if you doubt my words, why don't you call Vinson to verify them? Please find out if the two incidents actually happened between us." Susanne gritted her teeth in anger.

Deep down, she felt that Arielle was witty and different from her late friend, who was quite reticent. Since Susanne wanted to end the conversation with Arielle as soon as possible, she proposed, "Vinson is at a loss because you have charmed him. I'm sure he'll cover up your lies for you. Name your price now, and don't show your face before me ever again!" A moment later, Susanne added, "You should know your place. My son is way out of your league. Besides, you'll never have the chance to be married into the Nightshires. If you are smart enough, just grab your money and leave now.

Otherwise, you won't get even a penny!" Arielle burst into laughter upon hearing Susanne's offer. *My god, it's so hard to communicate with this opinionated lady. In that case...* "A billion," Arielle proposed coldly. "What?" Susanne was at a loss upon hearing it. She couldn't believe that Arielle would make such a crazy offer. A moment later, Arielle put on a faint smile and gazed at Susanne composedly. "Ms. Stone, don't you think that your son is worth the price?"

With that, Susanne's expression turned grim. She threw a question at Arielle furiously, "Why isn't my son worth more than a billion?" "Exactly," Arielle tabbed the table twice as she continued, "In that case, we'll settle it at one billion. After all, your son is worth a lot more than that."

Susanne was stunned when she realized that Arielle used reverse psychology against her. "You filthy woman..." Susanne stood up in anger and yelled, "You're outrageously greedy! A waitress like you can't even make a million in your life. How dare you ask for a billion?" "Waitress?"

Arielle raised her eyebrows and asked bewilderedly, "Since when have I become a waitress?" As Susanne was startled as well, she turned to Wendy.

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Chapter 185 Three Questions, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

After gulping down her saliva, Wendy stood up and explained to Susanne, "When I saw her yesterday, she was wearing the waitress uniform of Soir Coffee."

Instantly, Arielle figured it what went wrong. Despite being a good friend of Arielle's mom, Susanne was hostile toward Arielle because she thought she was a waitress. Arielle shrugged and explained, "It appears that there is a misunderstanding. I'm not a waitress here." Susanne frowned as she asked, "If

you're not a waitress, why were you wearing a uniform? Stop making up stories." Arielle gazed at Wendy for a while before turning to Susanne.

"Ms. Stone, can I have a word with you for a while? I've something to tell you. If you can give me the time, I can lower the price from a billion to ten. Give me ten minutes, and you can then pay me ten to leave your son." Miles away, Vinson, who was working overtime, suddenly sneezed. "Ah-choo!" *Who's scolding me?* Over at the cafe, Susanne felt tempted by Arielle's offer after listening to her. Although Susanne could afford to pay Arielle a billion, she felt that a vixen didn't deserve the amount. Nonetheless, she also felt uncomfortable to pay Arielle ten as though Vinson was worth nothing more than ten.

In the end, Susanne queried seriously, "What do you want to tell me?" Susanne was intrigued to find out what nonsense Arielle would spew. Meanwhile, Wendy, who stood beside Susanne, felt nervous unknowingly. Given that Arielle looked surprisingly composed, Wendy instinctively felt that it probably wasn't a good idea to let Arielle and Susanne talk in private. As such, Wendy couldn't keep her cool and pulled Susanne's arm anxiously. "Ms. Stone, please don't fall for her sweet talk. Why don't we give her the money and let her leave Jadeborough?

I mean, a lowly woman like her is good at deceiving others with sweet words!" Susanne had similar thoughts. Even if Arielle wasn't a waitress, she was not from a wealthy and noble family either. Otherwise, Arielle wouldn't have been sent as a gift to Vinson. However, Susanne didn't think that Arielle could manage to deceive her with just words. *Who am I? How can a vixen deceive me with only a few words?* Susanne looked at Wendy, patted her arm gently, and comforted, "Don't worry, Wendy. You can wait for me outside. She can never deceive me."

Wendy wished to dwell on it but was afraid that Susanne would be unhappy. As such, she had no choice but to bit her tongue. Besides, Wendy was confident that the lowly woman surely couldn't sway Susanne's mind. Wendy told herself silently not to be frightened by Arielle's demeanor. Hence, she took a deep breath to calm herself down and grabbed her handbag to leave the room. Once the door was closed, Susanne began to look more ferocious.

Apart from being Vinson's mother, Susanne had been through all sorts of dangers and bloodshed with Vinson's dad. Although she had retired now, her murderous and overbearing aura could still be felt. She stared at Arielle nonchalantly and instructed, "Go ahead. You only have ten minutes." Arielle didn't mind if Susanne was impolite to her. Since Arielle wasn't interested in marrying Vinson to climb to a higher social stratum, she didn't care if Susanne liked her or not.

Instead, Arielle only wished to get the answer she wanted from Susanne. Shortly afterward, Arielle said calmly, "Rest assured that we won't need ten minutes. I'll ask three questions and leave once you answer all of them." Susanne frowned and asked curiously, "What are the three questions?"

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Chapter 186 Not The Sort To Kill Herself, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

Arielle unhurriedly fished out a photograph from her pocket and turned it to Susanne. Susanne glanced at it impatiently. Upon recognizing the face in the photograph, however, her gaze lingered on it. Depicted in the photograph was none other than her very good friend—Maureen. Susanne gaped at Arielle, her eyes widening in disbelief. *This vixen looks just like her! She gives off the same air too. Besides, she was able to produce a photograph...* Thoughts raced wildly through Susanne's head. *It can't be!* After a moment, Arielle commented coolly, "It looks like you do know my mom."

Dumbfounded, Susanne continued staring at Arielle wordlessly. She raised a trembling finger and pointed at Arielle. Her lips parted as if she were about to speak but only managed to croak out a single syllable, "You..." Arielle nodded calmly. "Yes. I'm Arielle Moore, Maureen's daughter." Susanne felt her head spinning. She had interrogated the butler for every detail about Arielle except for her name. If Susanne had known that this woman shared the same last name as Maureen, she would have been able to deduce her identity more accurately.

It took Susanne a long while to recover from the shock. Gulping, she asked doubtfully, "Weren't you kidnapped ten years ago by those traffickers?" Susanne felt a wave of regret wash over her. When Maureen died and her only daughter had vanished, Susanne had done her best to look for the daughter. However, the chaos in Susanne's own home fully absorbed her attention for a long while. The missing person's case had grown cold since then. Arielle nodded slightly. "I was, but a kind soul rescued me. I had a high fever then and lost my memory, so I never came home. I only reunited with the Southalls recently.

There were too many things to deal with, so I was only able to meet with you now." Thoughts clamored in Susanne's mind. She felt ashamed for having cursed Arielle privately just moments before. However, Susanne had never expected that Arielle, her dear friend's long-lost daughter, would ever appear before her eyes again. From the troubled expression on Susanne's face, Arielle guessed at what she was thinking and said earnestly, "Please don't feel bad. You had no idea who I was, so I understand why you reacted the way you did.

Besides, you thought that I was Vinson's one-night stand. Let me explain everything. That night was a complete accident, and nothing happened between Vinson and me. We're just friends that intend to stay that way. Please don't think that I'm trying to marry into the Nightshire family to improve my social status." Susanne felt her face grow hot with embarrassment. She felt thoroughly put to shame by Arielle's maturity.

As an older woman, Susanne could not be certain that she had behaved with equal magnanimity. Susanne bit her lip, then said, "I'm sorry for being rude to you earlier. You mentioned that you had three questions you wanted to ask me. What were they? Go ahead with them." The tone with which Susanne addressed Arielle had transformed completely into a meeker, kinder one. Arielle twisted her hands together nervously.

"Was my mom's death really due to suicide?" Susanne stared at Arielle, her eyes darkening. She examined Arielle, then said cautiously, "Are you suspecting that

your dad...?" Arielle nodded firmly. "That's right." Susanne sighed heavily. "At first, I suspected that as well, so I conducted a private investigation of my own.

I didn't manage to uncover anything. They either managed to cover up their tracks completely, or it wasn't done by them at all." Arielle's brow furrowed. "If it wasn't them, I can't think of anyone else who would hurt my mom. I can tell that you know this, just as well as I do. Mom's not the sort who would kill herself."

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Chapter 187 Terror, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

Susanne fixed a steady gaze on Arielle. "Focus on living the best life now that you're back. Stop meddling with the dark shadows of the past! Sometimes ignorance is bliss. So what if you manage to find out the truth? You can't bring your mother back to life." Arielle, however, looked defiant. "I'll be able to deliver some justice to Mom, at least!" Susanne softened her tone. "If she were watching you from heaven right now, she'd want you to live a good life too." Arielle shook her head vehemently. "The only reason I came back here was to seek revenge for my mother.

If I can't even do that for her, what's the point in coming back?" To Arielle's surprise, the expression that flitted across Susanne's face was one of approval. However, it quickly faded and was replaced with a look of helplessness. "I'm sorry, but I can't help. I couldn't uncover anything ten years ago, and it's definitely more difficult now. If there was any proof then, it would most probably have been destroyed by now." Arielle had not expected to get anything out of Susanne. It was sufficient that her suspicions regarding Maureen's suicide were confirmed.

"The second question," Arielle prompted, taking out two pieces of paper from her pocket. She held them out towards Susanne. Susanne took them with considerably less impatience than before and peered at them closely. When she finally read the last line, Susanne froze. She then raised her head and looked at Arielle in bewilderment. The shock on Susanne's face was even more obvious than it had been compared to the revelation of Arielle's identity. In a quivering voice, Susanne stammered, "You... You're not Henrick's daughter?" "That's right," Arielle said soberly, lifting her head to meet Susanne's gaze levelly.

"Henrick's not my father at all. I looked at my mother's diary but could get no answers out of it. I know that you were her good friend. You must know something!" The blood had drained from Susanne's face entirely. She looked at Arielle with a gaze of mute horror. Susanne nodded instinctively, then shook her head violently when she recollected herself. "I don't know. I don't know anything. Your mom kept most things to herself.

She didn't tell me about anything like that." Arielle wrinkled her brow, then insisted, "Ms. Stone, I think you know more than you're choosing to say. What do you know? Why are you so afraid?" Susanne's eyes darted nervously from side to side. She then hastily leaned forward and whispered, "Shh! Stop talking! If you

want to stay alive, don't ever mention that ever again!" Susanne picked up the two pieces of paper that contained proof of Arielle's kinship and ripped them into a million tiny pieces. Arielle was too taken aback to stop Susanne in time.

When she had regained her composure, she immediately raged at Susanne, "Ms. Stone! What on earth are you doing?" Susanne grabbed Arielle's slender arm tightly. With a grave look on her face, she said emphatically, "I'm doing this for your own good. Listen to me! Stop pursuing this matter any further!" Arielle looked cynical. Seeing that she was about to launch into another tirade, Susanne swiftly clamped her hand over Arielle's mouth. Susanne shook her head vigorously with unmistakable terror in her eyes. Arielle realized then that she would get nothing out of Susanne on this front.

She made eye contact with Susanne and nodded in agreement. Susanne then relaxed her hold on Arielle and lowered her hand. The entire affair, however, had left Susanne immensely wary. Evidently in a hurry, she picked up her bag and said briskly, "If there's nothing else, I'll head home now."

"Wait, Ms. Stone! I haven't asked my third question yet!" Arielle said, tugging at Susanne's sleeve relentlessly. Susanne, however, cupped her hands over her ears and cried, "I don't know! I don't know anything!" Bemused at Susanne's childish response, Arielle said, "Don't worry. This question has nothing to do with the previous two." That was sufficient to cause Susanne to lower her hands tentatively.

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Chapter 188 The Third Question, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

Arielle then asked, "The third question is this. Do you think choosing Vinson's future wife for him will make him happy? Do you think that's fair to him?" The abrupt shift in conversation startled Susanne, who was left speechless. By the time Susanne could comprehend what was happening, Arielle had already strode over to the door and opened it. It was vividly clear to Susanne that the third question was meant to be a rhetorical one. Susanne stood rooted at the spot, staring after Arielle's departing figure. Her dark gaze was clouded and unfathomable.

Wendy, who had been waiting at the door throughout the entire exchange, burst in upon seeing Arielle left. Wendy immediately bolted over to Susanne and probed inquisitively, "Ms. Stone, did she take the money?" Susanne snorted. She shook her head, then said scornfully, "No." The money had been the least of her worries just then. Wendy then noticed the odd expression on Susanne's face. Anxiously, she asked, "Ms. Stone, what did that woman say to you? Don't take it to heart! If she doesn't want to leave, I'll chase her out of here myself."

"There's no need for that," Susanne said, exhaling slowly. "I misunderstood her. Besides, she's not interested in Vin in that way. Don't worry." Wendy stared at Susanne in astonishment. "What do you mean, she's not interested? He rejected me because of her!" Wendy argued passionately. Vexed, Susanne replied shortly,

"Vin has never liked girls who were too forthcoming. It's normal for him to reject you at first. He'll get used to you after further interaction." She massaged her temples, then continued wearily, "It's getting late. I'm going back to rest now."

You can stay as long as you like, but I'll take my leave first." Susanne made no delay in making her exit, not even turning to give Wendy a second glance. Wendy felt disturbed by the encounter. *Why is she suddenly treating me so coldly?* Wendy reflected. *Is it because of that vixen?* Wendy gnashed her teeth, determined not to allow Arielle to get the better of her. She whirled around and dashed out after Susanne.

Inside the car, Susanne remained silent for the entire journey while she looked grim. Wendy had racked her brains to think of an appropriate topic of conversation but failed miserably. At last, when they arrived back at the residence, Wendy managed feebly, "Ms. Stone, what on earth did that woman say to you? You've been looking disquieted since she left. Was she rude to you?" Susanne shook her head but said nothing. Wendy mistook Susanne's silence for agreement and declared, "She's a nobody! How dare she show you no respect?"

I'll get all of my friends in Jadeborough to teach her a lesson! That'll make her think twice about ever being rude to you again!" "Enough!" Susanne suddenly erupted with a flash of wrath. "Don't interfere with any of Arielle's matters anymore. It ends here today. I don't want to hear her name mentioned ever again!" There was a note of warning in Susanne's outburst. Wendy gazed at Susanne wretchedly. Susanne had raised her voice on Wendy. *That vixen must have said something to her! She's bewitched Ms. Stone!* Wendy thought bitterly. Wendy's heart was full of resentment but she dared not reveal it.

She could only nod obediently, concealing the hatred she had for Arielle. However, Wendy vowed privately that she would seek Arielle out and destroy her. Arielle, in the meantime, had just returned to the Southall residence when she received a text message from Vinson. *Don't forget that you promised to come with me to the banquet tomorrow.*

The reminder flashed across the screen in luminous words. Arielle suddenly recalled with a start the agreement she had made with Vinson back then. *But...* Arielle's gaze shifted to the invitation beside her. It was an invitation to Yvette's birthday party.

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Chapter 189 Incorrigible, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

Cindy had dropped off the invitation earlier, and the butler had reminded Arielle several times about the party after that. It was utterly coincidental that Yvette's birthday party fell on the following day. Arielle was sure that it was a trap laid for her. She had resolved to not only avoid it but to retaliate instead. If Arielle

missed this opportunity, she did not know when the next one would arise or if she would even be able to come by one. This was her best shot to clear the obstacles in her way. Arielle thought about it and immediately dialed Vinson's number on her phone.

Vinson answered almost immediately. "What's up?" Arielle replied frankly, "I have a birthday party to attend tomorrow, so I don't think I can join you at the banquet. I'm sorry." Vinson contemplated this for a moment, then asked, "What time is the birthday party?" Arielle glanced down at the invitation in her hand. "Seven." Unfazed, Vinson replied, "That's perfect. The banquet I want to bring you along for is at four in the afternoon. I can accompany you to the birthday party after that." "Wouldn't that be too much of a rush? Why don't you find another girl to go with you?"

Arielle stammered. Vinson replied persuasively, "I've already gotten someone to tailor the gown to your measurements. It'll be too late to ask someone else. Why don't you come with me, and then I'll keep you company at the birthday party after that?" Vinson was afraid that Arielle would refuse, so he hastily added, "You did promise me, after all. Take it as repayment for what I did to get the diary for you." At the thought of how Vinson had risked his life for the diary, Arielle felt it was impossible to reject Vinson. Clenching her jaw, Arielle agreed reluctantly, "All right."

"I'll send a car over to pick you up at three in the afternoon tomorrow then," Vinson said cheerfully. "OK," Arielle replied. She suddenly remembered her conversation with Susanne a few hours ago, and began, "Tonight..." Arielle abruptly trailed off, deciding that it was of no further use to recount the conversation to Vinson. They had clarified matters between them, after all. At the other end of the line, Vinson sensed Arielle's hesitation. "What happened tonight?" he asked. Arielle shook her head instinctively, then realized that Vinson could not see her. "It's nothing."

"I'm a little tired tonight, so I'll hang up first. Try to get an early night as well." "Sure, goodnight," Vinson said tenderly. There was more like a note of affection in his voice. Arielle found herself panicking slightly but steadied herself and grunted a reply. She then hung up immediately. Arielle sat down on a chair, feeling upset. The image of Susanne leading that girl into the private room to have a cup of coffee together stirred up a vague feeling of discontent in Arielle. "Forget it!" Arielle told herself firmly, forcing her mind not to dwell on the meeting that had happened that night. After washing up, she lay in her bed, anticipating the trap that Cindy must have designed for her.

Since Arielle believed that the trap lying ahead of her was at Yvette's birthday party, Cindy and Yvette must naturally be conspiring with each other. *Yvette...She didn't even hesitate to command her dog to bite me! It looks like she's still looking to draw blood.* Arielle shut her eyes. As she let her thoughts wander, a clever plan suddenly struck Arielle like a bolt out of the blue. Pleased with the ingenuity of the plan, Arielle fell asleep to the lullaby of the gentle breeze blowing in from the window.

The next day when she awoke, Arielle bumped into Henrick first thing in the morning. Henrick had risen early in preparation to head to the office. Poring over

the accounts last night had left Henrick satisfied with the returns, and he strode down the stairs with a beam on his face.

At the sight of Arielle, Henrick smiled fondly, then asked, "You're up early. Why not sleep in a little longer?" Arielle flashed him a bright smile. "I had an early night, and I'm well-rested. Dad, there's something I'd like to discuss with you." Jovially, Henrick replied, "What is it? I'll do whatever I can help you with!"

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Chapter 190 Bringing Shandie Home, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

Arielle noted that Henrick was in high spirits and smiled demurely at him.

"Actually, I received invitations for two events tonight. The first is for a banquet that Mr. Nightshire is also attending, and the other is for Yvette's birthday party. However, the timing between them is rather tight, so..." Without a second thought, Henrick replied, "Of course you should go to the banquet with Mr. Nightshire! Sannie, Dad knows that you're still young and naive, but you should know how to differentiate important events from the less significant ones." "I know," Arielle said, nodding.

"Isn't Yvette engaged to Jordan, though? Besides, she sent the invitation to me, and if I don't show up, I'm afraid that the Bakers might say..." At that moment, Henrick was still unaware that the Bakers had decided to withdraw from the marriage arrangement with the Actonwards. Henrick's expression thus looked rather uneasy. The Actonwards were a large and distinguished family but were no match for Vinson. However, the matter took on a more delicate nature with the Bakers in the picture. Henrick was torn between both choices.

Arielle pretended to weigh both options equally, then concluded, "I thought of a plan. We can get Shannie to come back and attend Yvette's birthday party instead! We'll avoid offending either party, then." Henrick's face immediately turned dark when he heard the mention of Shandie's name. He vividly recalled that he had almost lost Nightshire Group as a client because of her. Testily, Henrick retorted, "That foolish, incorrigible girl! She'll only embarrass herself and the rest of us if she represents us at the birthday party." Arielle then innocently replied, "You can't leave Shandie at the monastery forever though.

She'll have to get married eventually. Aunt Cindy might be able to reflect somewhat, but it'd be better if you bring Shandie home to keep a watchful eye on her. Who knows if Aunt Cindy is tainting her mind with all sorts of irrepressible ideas over there?" Henrick felt himself wavering. During the process of purging the company, Henrick discovered that Cindy had bought over multiple directors. Indeed, she might corrupt Shandie instead of teaching her how to behave properly.

If Shandie took after Cindy's wicked ways, it would be an uphill task to find someone who would be willing to marry her. Henrick soon became convinced that bringing Shandie back home was the most sensible solution. Having thus made up his mind, Henrick nodded fervently. "All right, let her come home then! If she

refuses to mend her stupid temper and behave accordingly, I'll ship her back to the monastery so she can spend the rest of her life there!" Arielle immediately praised Henrick's decision, flattering him by saying, "Dad, I knew that you always had your children's best interests at heart.

I'm sure that Shandie has turned over a new leaf. I'll go and bring her back home myself." Henrick looked at Arielle with pride. *I'm glad Arielle isn't petty. After all, family members shouldn't bear grudges against each other,* Henrick thought approvingly. Henrick nodded, smiling affectionately at Arielle. "I'm glad that you're so mature, Arielle. Go on and fetch her. Don't tire yourself out on the journey!" "Sure, Dad. I'll leave once I've gotten changed," Arielle replied, already turning to head back up the stairs. "OK, I'll get the driver to wait for you at the door.

I'll be off to work now," Henrick called, getting to his feet. "See you, Dad!" Arielle chirped, waving at him. She watched as Henrick shut the door and got into his car before ascending the stairs. Arielle did not truly want Shandie's return, of course. However, Cindy and Yvette had already laid the trap, and Arielle needed a substitute to take the fall. Once Shandie returned, she would take up her position in Arielle's perfect scheme.

Arielle had barely shut the door when the butler came rapping sharply on it. She flung open the door and was unsurprised to see Alfred standing outside. Larissa, the maid who Arielle had secretly bought over, had once given Arielle a list of Cindy's secret allies. Alfred's name had been right at the top of that list. Arielle put up a naive face and asked, "Alfred, is there anything I can help you with?"