

A Beauty With Multiple Masks Chapter 10

Chapter 10

“What?” Everyone looked in the direction the housekeeper had pointed at, only to see a snake glaring back and hissing at them. The snake was unlike any the housekeepers had seen before. It had a big head, and it had flared its neck as if ready to attack. Everyone was petrified and stumbled backward in a panic. “Hurry! Run!” the housekeepers screamed as they collectively fled from the room. Just then, Henrick and Cindy finally came to Shandie’s room. Upon seeing the snake still writhing and hissing away, Henrick too retreated, afraid of getting bitten by it. Cindy’s face had turned green as she shakily asked, “What’s going on? Why is there a snake? What’s everyone standing around for? Someone go kill it now!” The housekeepers exchanged looks of apprehension, no one wanting to volunteer to take out the snake. To let any of them deal with a venomous cobra would be akin to sending them to their deaths. Nobody was going to take that risk. Janet, who had taken her time to come up, was now paralyzed by fear. *Isn’t that the snake I released into Arielle’s room? What is it doing here?* Even carrying the box with the cobra earlier was enough to turn Janet’s legs into jelly. Now she was even more afraid to go any nearer because she knew how venomous the cobra was. Janet knew Shandie would be dead if she weren’t given the antivenom within the hour. Yet, that was something she had to keep to herself, no matter how much it pained her. Seeing how no one was keen to take any action, Cindy tugged at Henrick and cried desperately, “Dear! Go kill that snake!” Henrick, like the others, didn’t dare go near the snake. However, he also had his pride as the man of the house to consider. If word got out that he couldn’t save his daughter from a snake, he’d lose all the respect he had. *Damn these useless, cowardly housekeepers! And Cindy too! If it weren’t for them, I wouldn’t be in such a dilemma!* Henrick gritted his teeth and bit the bullet. Just as he was about to step forward with a broom in hand, a voice rang out in the hallway. “Dad, it’s late at night. What’s everyone doing here?” Henrick turned around, only to see a sleepy-eyed Arielle in her pajamas. From the looks of it, the commotion had just woken her up. “There’s a snake in the room. Your sister fainted after being bitten by it. I have to go save her...” Henrick replied hesitantly. “No way!” Arielle exclaimed, fully awake now. “Dad, this is too dangerous! You can’t go in!” Cindy’s blood boiled after hearing those words. Without a second thought, she raised her hand and went for Arielle’s face. Given her reflexes, that was a slap Arielle could have easily avoided, except she decided against it at the last second. *Slap!* The sound was loud and crisp as the slap landed squarely on Arielle’s cheek. Arielle’s fair and tender cheek instantly swelled up with Cindy’s handprint imprinted clearly on it. “You b*tch! You want to see your sister die, don’t you? Get out of my sight, you vicious wench! Alfred! Throw her out now!” Cindy bellowed. Cindy’s request placed Alfred in a sticky situation. Whether he did as she instructed or not, he’d risk angering either Cindy or Henrick. Unsure of how to proceed, he turned to Henrick to observe his reaction. Tears had started to stream down Arielle’s face. Before Henrick could say anything, she cried out, “Dad, I’m only concerned about your safety. After all, you’re the head of the family. What would we do if something happened to you? I’ve only just found you, Dad. I can’t lose you!” Arielle’s words, so honest and sincere, cut Henrick to the heart. *She’s right.*

As head of the family, everyone's survival depends on me! If something were to happen to me, they wouldn't have it easy either. Of course, only my precious daughter knows me best and can empathize with me. To hell with everyone else! With that thought, Henrick furrowed his brows and glared at Cindy. "Why the hell did you hit her? She's only worried about my safety!" he scolded. "But she clearly wants Shannie to..." "Aunt Cindy!" Arielle suddenly interrupted. "If you want to think of me that way, I'll just have to prove with actions that I do not wish for any harm to come to my sister!" Arielle then grabbed the broom from Henrick and walked toward the snake. There was hardly any fear or hesitation on her part. Concerned, the housekeepers shouted, "Be careful, Ms. Arielle! That snake is venomous!" Henrick's face scrunched up in worry. Compared to Shandie, Arielle was more precious to him, and he couldn't risk losing her. "Arielle, don't go!" Henrick pleaded as he tried to stop her. However, Arielle brushed him off and continued walking toward the snake. Seeing Arielle coming closer, the cobra got even more provoked and launched itself toward her. Arielle pretended to struggle with dodging the snake's attack before swiftly turning around to hit the snake's tail with her broom. It wasn't difficult to tell that the cobra had gotten even angrier, especially when its hiss had also become louder and more menacing. Everyone else was so petrified by now that they could only stand and watch from a distance, leaving Arielle alone in the room to fight with the cobra. In their eyes, Arielle was undoubtedly the bravest warrior of all warriors. After a long and arduous fight, Arielle finally caught the snake, all while keeping up the pretense that she had done so with much difficulty. "Get me a pair of scissors or a knife!" "I have a knife here!" one of the bolder housekeepers shouted as she walked toward Arielle and handed over a paring knife. Arielle held the knife against the snake's head and shut her eyes. Despite looking squeamish and terrified, she eventually got the deed done. With its head cut off, the cobra finally stopped writhing. "Darling, are you okay?" Henrick anxiously asked as he ran up to her. Arielle was on the verge of tears, her nerves yet to settle. When she saw Henrick, she immediately leaped into his embrace. "Dad! I'm so scared..." "There, there. It's okay, darling. The snake's dead now!" "As long as Dad is here, I won't be afraid. But, Dad, don't worry about me now. You have to send Shandie to the hospital first!" Arielle said with determination. Henrick's heart melted upon those words. *Not only is my daughter brave, but she's also considerate! She truly is my greatest gift!* When he noticed the handprint still on Arielle's cheek, Henrick's face contorted in rage as he glowered at Cindy. "Look what you've done! She risked her life to protect Shandie! And you still accused her of wanting to harm Shandie?" "I-I..." Cindy stuttered. "If you can't even tell right from wrong, I don't think you're qualified to handle any household affairs. From now on, I'll handle all the finances myself!" Cindy's face instantly drained of all color. "Dear, please, I only..." Before she could explain herself, Henrick interrupted her, "Shut up! I don't want to hear anything else from you! I want you to stay in your room to reflect. And don't come out until you've understood what you've done wrong!" Just then, one of the housekeepers ran in and reported, "Mr. Southall, the ambulance has arrived."