

A Beauty With Multiple Masks Chapter 101

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Chapter 101, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

I have already thought of the perfect plan to deal with Arielle. I'll find a man for her and stir up some scandalous news about their relationship. When that happens, your father will be glad he still has you. Trust me, darling. It won't be long before you can make a grand return! Having read the letter, Arielle's narrowed eyes stared coldly into the distance.

Just when she thought Shandie was bad, Cindy turned out to be even worse. However, the one mistake that Cindy had made was to underestimate Arielle. *If she thinks she can destroy my reputation, I'd like to see her try!*

With a flick of the lighter, Arielle lit up the letter and let it burn to a crisp. Meanwhile, Cindy was pacing about in her room, her anxiety increasing with every passing second. Suddenly, her gaze landed on the wall calendar, and an idea hit her. *Yvette's birthday is coming up, and I bet she's still mad at Arielle over that dog. Perhaps I could use that to my advantage?* With that thought in mind, Cindy quickly fished her phone out and called Yvette. Once the call got through, Yvette didn't even bother masking the annoyance in her voice. "What do you want?" she barked.

Even though Yvette was rude, Cindy didn't seem to mind. She was merely a distant relative, and a socialite like Yvette would never care to show her much respect. "Oh, my. Who has offended you? Tell me, and I'll stand up for you!" Yvette scoffed and replied, "No need for that! If it weren't for your useless daughter, the Bakers wouldn't have called off my engagement! I don't want to speak to anyone from your family!" Even Cindy was taken aback by this sudden turn of events. "The Bakers called off the engagement? What happened?" Yvette was reluctant to elaborate, but she was no match for Cindy's powers of persuasion. After some coaxing, she eventually shared a summary of what had happened.

Cindy's lips curled into a smile as she listened intently, pleased that the grudge between Arielle and Yvette was even worse than she had thought. Cindy sighed before chiming in, "I'm sorry, I didn't know about this. But Yvette, neither me nor Shannie is to be blamed for that. In my opinion, it's all Arielle's fault! If that slut hadn't bewitched Mr. Baker, he wouldn't have called off the engagement with you!" Knowing that Cindy was on her side made Yvette feel a lot better and more forthcoming. "We haven't told anyone else about the engagement, so please keep it to yourself.

As for Arielle, I won't let her off easy! I hope you won't stand in my way when I go after her." "Why would I do such a thing?" Cindy replied. "The truth is, I've

already thought of how we can get back at her. All I need is for someone to work with me..." With Arielle as their common enemy, it was easy for Cindy and Yvette to talk for more than two hours as they hashed out their devious plan. Before long, it was time for dinner.

As she made her way to the dining room, Arielle saw that only Cindy was at the table. Having lost the partnership deal with Nightshire Group, Henrick was probably still busy panicking about how he could salvage it. Arielle remained calm as she sat opposite Cindy and quietly tucked into her meal. For a while, all was peaceful until Cindy broke the silence.

"Sannie, you're too skinny. Here, eat more," she said while placing a drumstick on Arielle's plate. Arielle looked up, only to see Cindy smiling at her with seemingly no hint of malice in her eyes. Seeing her so calm and collected, Arielle could only guess that Cindy had formulated a plan.

Despite that, Arielle pretended not to suspect anything and smiled warmly back. "Thank you, Aunt Cindy." *Now, let's see what else she has to say.* If Cindy wanted to play the long game, Arielle would be more than happy to play along. Right on cue, Cindy let out a deep sigh. "Speaking of Shannie, it's all my fault for spoiling her..." *There we go. The game's in play.*

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"If I had known she'd make those mistakes, I'd have been stricter on her from young!" Cindy lamented. "You shouldn't blame yourself, Aunt Cindy," Arielle replied. "After all, she's only your adopted daughter. From what I've heard, adoptees usually have personality issues. If you find her to be a handful, we can always disown her, can't we?" Cindy stared wide-eyed at Arielle as her face turned pale with rage. If she didn't have a plan to follow, Cindy would've blown her top at Arielle. Regaining her composure, she forced a smile and nodded her head.

"You're right. But I can't bear to let her go, especially since she's been with me for so long. You, on the other hand, have suffered so much while you were overseas. Even though you're finally home, you haven't been able to enjoy much peace, have you? I'm sorry. I've truly let you down." Arielle shook her head. "You're not to blame, Aunt Cindy." "You're a good kid..." Cindy whimpered as she pretended to wipe a tear away. "The thing is, there's a party I was supposed to attend with Shannie.

Many socialites from Jadeborough will be there, and getting invitations to it wasn't easy at all. But, with Shannie being such a letdown, there's no way I can bring her with me now. I was thinking of bringing you along instead and use the chance to introduce you to everyone. What do you think?" Arielle's eyes lit up immediately, unable to hide the excitement on her face. "Really? Come to think

of it, Dad hasn't formally introduced me to the other socialites, so this would be the perfect chance.

I shall go along with you then, Aunt Cindy. I'd still need your guidance when I'm there, though, in case I make a fool of myself." Arielle was so quick to agree that Cindy heaved a sigh of relief. *She may be scheming, but deep down, this slut is just like any other girl. All they want is to mingle with and be a part of Jadeborough's high society.*

"Don't worry. I'll guide you along," Cindy assured. Her smile radiated warmth on the outside, but inside, she was cold as ice. She was ready to destroy Arielle's reputation and make her the laughing stock amongst Jadeborough's most famous socialites. *Let's see how much disdain Henrick would have for his precious daughter when that happens!* Arielle's lips curled upward as she studied Cindy's every move. *A party?*

I can't wait to see what Cindy has in store for me then. It was almost ten when Henrick finally got home and called Arielle to his study. Henrick had been under so much stress and fatigue that Arielle could see his bloodshot eyes and graying hairs. Seeing him in such a state made her heart sink. If her mother's death had nothing to do with Henrick, Arielle would be more than happy to help him grow Southall Group. Her wish would be to let Henrick enjoy his twilight years without having to worry about anything. After all, despite Henrick's character flaws, he was still Arielle's father and her only blood relative.

"Dad, don't push yourself too hard. No matter what, your health should always come first," Arielle said, her voice gentle and filled with concern. Henrick merely sighed in response. "I can't afford to slack when this household depends solely on me. What would all of you do without me?"

Hearing that, Arielle's heart sank even more. She had always found Henrick to be a terrible father, only to realize that she hadn't been a good daughter either since coming back. The more she thought about it, the more she was overcome by guilt. Arielle was about to come clean to Henrick about her having money to help him when he held her hand.

"The truth is, our company is in distress. So many of our projects have fallen through, including the major partnership project with Nightshire Group. I had hedged my bets on that partnership to get the company back on track, but then your sister had to do what she did..."

Before Arielle could blurt out her true identity, Henrick continued, "As such, I don't have a choice but to place all my hopes on you. Here, this is Mr. Nightshire's room key. Take it."

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Arielle was perplexed as she looked down at the room key Henrick had shoved into her hand. All the pity and sadness she had felt earlier disappeared in an instant, leaving her in stunned silence. When Arielle still didn't say anything, Henrick thought she had gone into shock. "Sannie, being innocent and naive isn't a bad thing, but that'd only work if you were still living in the countryside. Now that you're in Jadeborough, you have to learn our ways, no matter how underhanded they might seem. There are times when making sacrifices is necessary."

Arielle's face had gone pale as she mumbled, "Are you telling me to use this room key to get into Vinson's bed?" Henrick wrinkled his nose as if Arielle had offended him. "It's not as bad as it sounds, Sannie. Once you've gotten together with Mr. Nightshire, you'd officially be part of their family and the Nightshire Group. Imagine the fame and fortune you'd have! Not only is this for our family, but it's also for your future. Marrying into the Nightshires is something many people won't even dare to think about, and now, you have the chance to that life!"

Arielle felt nothing but a lump in her throat. No matter how nicely Henrick put it, his intention was still for her to sleep with Vinson. Arielle laughed bitterly at the whole idea. "Dad, if word got out about what I had done, I'd be mocked and looked down upon by everyone." Henrick immediately retorted, "No, you won't! Those cowards only bully people who have a lower status than them. Once you become Vinson's wife, nobody would dare criticize you!" Even with his reasoning, Arielle's gaze turned even colder. "Then, what happens if Vinson doesn't marry me and tosses me aside?"

Henrick shook his head with a smile. "Don't worry. I can tell that Vinson has feelings for you. You ought to have more confidence in yourself, Sannie. Seize this opportunity, and you'll have a bright future ahead!" Henrick might not have said it out loud, but he was very confident in Arielle's looks. Even as a father, he had been blown away by Arielle's beauty the first time he saw her all dolled up. There was no doubt that other men would also feel the same.

Alas, the determination on Henrick's face only hurt Arielle even more. She thought she had learned enough about Henrick, yet he never failed to surprise her with something new. Regardless of how his daughter felt, Henrick could send her to another man's bed as long as he could benefit from it. Arielle tightened her grip around the room key so much that it was cutting into her palm. Even so, she was numb to the pain.

After all, the physical pain could never compare to the heartbreak she felt. It was painfully clear to her that Henrick had never treated her as his daughter or as a person. In his eyes, Arielle was nothing but a pawn. *To think I had almost told him my truth and even wanted to help him.* Arielle chuckled bitterly, tears welling in her eyes.

"Sannie..." Henrick said, a little flustered at her reaction. "My good girl, our family can't end like this. If not for yourself, do it for the rest of us! I know you're

the kindest and most obedient. You'll do what I say, won't you?" Arielle pursed her lips and suddenly asked, "What if I don't want to go?"

A deep-set frown immediately formed on Henrick's face, and Arielle could feel the anger emanating off of him. After a moment's hesitation, he coldly replied, "If you don't want to, then I won't be able to keep you here!"

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Chapter 104 Late Night, A Beauty with Multiple Masks

"Dad... you've really surprised me." Henrick continued to fix his icy gaze on Arielle. "Are you saying you don't want to go?" Arielle looked deeply into her father's eyes before finally shaking her head. "No. I'll go." Those words were like music to his ears as Henrick's expression instantly brightened up. "Sannie, are you serious?" Arielle merely nodded in response, once again looking like the well-behaved daughter Henrick had always thought her to be.

Except her eyes no longer held the same warmth and sincerity she once had, thanks to Henrick single-handedly destroying what little affection she had left for him. However, Henrick was utterly clueless to Arielle's change in heart as he continued to beam in joy. "I knew you'd agree to it. You're my best daughter, completely different from that useless Shannie. I'll only dote on you in the future!" No matter how much he praised her, Arielle felt nothing. Instead, she asked plainly, "Time and place?"

"It's the suite on the top floor of Jadeborough Hotel. I spent the whole night getting that room key, so you'd better not lose it. Mr. Nightshire is currently at a banquet in the hotel, and I've also talked it through with the banquet organizer. All you have to do is to wait patiently in his room." Just then, Henrick thought of something else and quickly added, "By the way, you should change your clothes too. Your usual get-up is too plain, and that won't work.

However, there's not much time left. Just pick any clothes to wear to the hotel, and I'll get someone to send a different outfit to the suite." It was only then that Arielle realized the real reason for Henrick to get home that late. It wasn't because he was busy with work, but rather, he was running himself ragged getting a key to Vinson's room. *So that's how it is...* Just when Arielle thought she couldn't feel any more disappointed with Henrick, his words once again felt like a stab to her heart.

As she had found out the hard way, one could never get used to the pain of being hurt, regardless of how many times it had happened. Arielle found her mind wandering when the white hairs on Henrick's head suddenly caught her attention. Recalling what Vinson had told her before, she said, "Dad, you have a strand of white hair on your head.

Let me help you pluck it." Henrick had wanted to turn her down, but seeing as how she had agreed to go with his plan, he decided to return the favor. As such, he lowered his head and bore with the pain as she plucked the strand of hair off. Henrick chuckled afterward. "You didn't have to pluck it, you know? White hair is common when I'm getting old. However, if you do succeed tonight, I reckon it'll help shave a few years off my age."

Unbeknownst to Henrick, Arielle had stealthily pocketed his strand of hair as she pretended to nod her understanding. "Don't worry, Dad. I won't let you down. How can I not repay you when you've treated me so well?" Touched beyond words, Henrick felt like he was on the verge of tears. He pulled Arielle into a tight embrace and muttered, "My darling daughter, I'm sorry to have to put you through this. You've done well for the family!"

Even though she had returned the hug, Arielle felt nothing but utter disgust toward her father. "Dad, if we don't hurry, Mr. Nightshire is going to return to his room before me." "Oh, gosh! You're right!" Henrick exclaimed before rushing off to bark orders at his staff. He got the housekeepers to get a set of clothes and the driver to prepare to send Arielle to the hotel.

Even Cindy was startled by the commotion as she walked into the living room in her pajamas. "It's already so late. Where are you going?" she queried, alternating glances between Arielle and Henrick. Cindy's appearance reminded Henrick of the mess Shandie had made, and he became visibly annoyed.

"It's none of your business, so go back to your room! Also, you're no longer allowed to visit Shandie. You'll only be a distraction to her. After all the mess she has created, it's time she reflects on herself!" Cindy had planned on going to Louisa's the next day to visit Shandie, but now that Henrick had dropped the bomb on her, her face immediately fell. "Dear, Shandie's our..."

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"Shut up!" Henrick interrupted and gave Cindy a death stare. "You'd better learn what can be said and what can't! I'll sleep in the study room these few nights. And don't go out as you please. I'll have you followed, so you won't go looking for that willful child!" Cindy was so enraged that she clenched her fists tight. *It looks like I have to speed up my plan of taking over Southall Group. I've had enough of you, Henrick Southall!* Arielle smirked when she saw how Cindy's face had contorted in a bid to suppress her rage. *Cindy sure can tolerate and put on an act. If Shandie had half of her mother's tolerance level, she wouldn't have been chased out that easily by Henrick.* It was Arielle's turn to put on an act as she gently urged Henrick, "Dad, when do I leave?" Henrick recovered from his anger and looked at Arielle. "Go now. The driver's already waiting for you. I won't see you off, but

please be careful. If it doesn't work out, then come straight home. I won't blame you."

Making her daughter sleep with another man was something Henrick never wanted to do. If Vinson didn't fall for it and word got out about what Arielle had done, he would only end up losing her. However, with the dire state that his company was currently in, he had no choice but to go with that last-ditch effort. Arielle waved Henrick goodbye and walked out of the house, disappearing into the night. As he watched her leave, Henrick was overwhelmed by an inexplicable feeling of having lost something important.

He soon shook off that feeling with a self-deprecating chuckle. *What is this? Am I getting more sentimental with age?* Henrick was aware that one couldn't make an omelet without breaking eggs. He had to make that painful decision for the sake of the company. Thankfully, Arielle was sensible enough to understand his plight and not blame him. Satisfied that he had done the right thing, Henrick headed up to his study to await Arielle's good news.

Cindy, on the other hand, had gotten busy investigating Arielle. Soon, she found out the long and the short of it from Matthias. "I always thought Henrick truly loved Arielle as his daughter. But now, I know he sees her as just a pawn and a means for him to grow his business," Cindy said mockingly. "Why are you still thinking about that?" Matthias replied, his voice laced with concern. "Haven't you always seen that b*tch as your obstacle?"

If she gets together with Vinson, wouldn't that be worse? She might even become a threat to us..." "Don't worry. That won't happen," Cindy said calmly. "Henrick may be smart, but there are times when he's a complete idiot. If he had bothered to check up on Vinson, he wouldn't have hatched this plan in the first place. Given Vinson's status, he could have any woman he wants, but have you heard of any scandals involving him?"

"No, I don't think so." "Exactly. Vinson is a respectable and honest man. No matter how beautiful Arielle is, he wouldn't accept any woman who shamelessly throws herself at him. Besides, I had seen how coldly he treated Arielle previously when we were on the plane." Despite Cindy's reassurance, Matthias still couldn't shake off the worry that was bothering him.

"But you told me this afternoon that the b*tch had worked with Vinson to set Shannie up. If it weren't for them, Henrick wouldn't have sent Shannie away to the monastery! Maybe Vinson does have feelings for the b*tch?"