

## Bumpkin 101

### Chapter 101

Melissa stamped her foot in anger. Just as she was flying into a rage, she suddenly saw Matthew walking toward Veronica. Her eyes lit up, and she brightened up instantly.

Dressed in black casual clothes, Matthew was wearing a black sports headband on his forehead, which made him look appealingly younger and more handsome while lending him the athletic air of a basketball player on the basketball court. However, Veronica knew that he was only wearing a sports headband to keep the sweat on his forehead from dripping into his eyes and affecting his work. After all, he couldn't free up his hand to wipe his sweat away while moving things up and down the mountain all the time.

Walking up to Veronica, Matthew spread his hand and held out to her what he was holding. "Here, this is for you."

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"What is it?" Veronica asked, before noticing the bright red raspberries in Matthew's palm. These were a kind of red fruit that grew on the ridges between fields in rural areas, and they tasted great with a sweet and sour flavor, "Where did you get them? I love these!" Delighted at the sight of raspberries, she took them from Matthew and stuffed a few into her mouth right away. "They taste just right; they're sweet and sour. Thanks," she said, thanking Matthew while tasting the raspberries.

When she looked up, she saw Melissa looking at the raspberries greedily with eager eyes. She gave her a few raspberries, saying, "Try them. They taste great."

"Sure! Thanks, Roni." Melissa took a few raspberries and tasted them before nodding vigorously. "Gosh! They taste so good! Thank you so much, Matthew."

Veronica was rendered speechless. *Damn it, I'm the one who gave them to you, okay?*

Matthew took a cigarette out of his pocket and lit it. Then, he began smoking the cigarette while standing aside.

It was now afternoon, and those who had been busy all morning were sitting at the village's entrance for a rest. Leaning against a tree, Matthew put one hand in his trouser pocket while holding his cigarette with another. With his right leg slightly bent, he put his foot on the tree trunk to support himself. Even when he was just

standing there, his casual and laid-back posture gave the impression of a handsome and energetic young hunk that would sweep anyone off their feet.

was talking to him, she took out her

villages nearby and learn about their situation while we're at it," Mathew said. "We still need to

let their kids attend school because the school is far away and they can't afford their schooling. Do we need to

“Uh–huh,” Matthew replied.

life isn’t easy,”

constantly pestered by Melissa, who kept badgering her to help her ask Matthew out on a date. Just when she was at the end of her rope, Melissa used her “superpowers” again, saying, “Here, I’m paying you another 10,000. Just ask my Prince

rose at once. “Haha! Sure, no problem! Since you’re so generous to me, I’ll give you the opportunity to watch the sunset with him.

my bestie! I love you so much!” she said while trying to kiss Veronica on the cheek

her away, though. “Ugh, get off

Melissa was amused by

up the mountain at the end of the village first. You tell Matthew later that I’ve gone up the mountain to look for raspberries and watch the sunset. Tell him that I couldn’t find

“Okay.” Melissa nodded vigorously.

the mountain to the top, picking all the raspberries

the top of the mountain, she enjoyed the breeze while looking down at Dawnpol

sportswear, whereas Melissa was wearing light blue casual clothes. Even though Veronica couldn’t make out their faces from a distance, she was able to identify them based on

gazing at the foot of the mountain, a voice suddenly

look at where the voice had come from, only to find that it was the masked man she had seen at the rice field on the southern end of the village a few days ago. She had asked the villagers about him, and they said he was the son of Henry, one of the villagers. He had been working outside the village before this, but he

walked with a stick

to see a disabled man fall, so she ran up to him and helped him up right away. “Are you

he said in an unusually deep and hoarse voice that

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Veronica let out a chuckle. “No, not really. Helping those in need is one of us Destorians’ traditional virtues, no?” she replied with a smile.

The two walked down the mountain for a while. As they walked on a very steep path, the masked man slipped and fell to the ground with a cry of pain. “Ouch!”

“Watch out!” Veronica saw the masked man lying on the ground with the steep mountain slope behind him. If he fell down the slope, he wouldn’t die, but he would definitely be seriously injured.

Immediately, she rushed to him and grabbed his foot in a tight grasp. “Don’t worry! I’ve got you.”

She yanked the masked man toward herself with all her strength, only to realize that the man was very heavy despite his lanky figure. However, she didn't think much about it at the dangerous moment. After dragging him a few steps back, she sat down beside him and reached for his neck to support him. "Come on, get up." Since the man had difficulty walking, it was difficult for him to pick himself up after the fall. Having no alternative, she could only prop up his upper body to help him to his feet.

"Uh, thanks." The masked man took the opportunity to wrap his arm around Veronica's neck.

Veronica helped him up with all her strength. "You're quite heavy despite your skinny build, eh?"

As she was preoccupied with helping the masked man up, she didn't notice the flicker in the man's deep eyes behind his mask. At this very moment, a sharp dagger suddenly appeared in the hand he was wrapping around her neck, and it gleamed coldly under the setting sun. The dagger was aimed right at Veronica's neck, and a stab would be all it took to kill her.

However, before the man could strike, Veronica suddenly cried out, "Watch out!" Then, she shoved him away at once.

At the critical moment, the masked man swiftly put his dagger away at lightning speed and fell onto the slope, whereas Veronica gasped in pain. "Hiss..."

ground, the masked man watched Veronica gasp as she clamped a hand over her wrist, which now had two bleeding

If Veronica hadn't shoved him away just now, he would've

letting go. Everything had happened so suddenly that she dared not relax even the slightest bit. Immediately, she sucked on the wound, drawing out the venom and spitting it out to the ground. However, after sucking on the wound several times consecutively, she didn't manage to draw much venom out of it. She looked back at the masked man, saying, "I've got to go down the mountain first. Otherwise, I might die if I

sides as he watched Veronica from behind. After hesitating for a few seconds, he asked, "You need paused. "You have a

a knife with you," he said while handing the dagger in his hand to

from him. "Thanks! What a nice coincidence." Without saying another word, she made a cross-shaped cut in the wound on her

that she clenched her teeth hard, her hands trembling. Luckily,

to the ground right away. In an instant, blood gushed from the cut and trickled slowly down the back of her hand

had treated the snakebite, the masked man instantly felt that she wasn't as simple

struggling to endure the pain. Then, she returned the dagger to him. "Good thing you brought a knife with you. Otherwise, I might die

gradually slipped away as well. After a

her lying beside him, the masked man clutched the dagger in  
slightly cool evening breeze blew away the smell of blood before

last rays of the setting sun spilled onto the earth, tinting it with a shade of orange as smoke spiraled  
upward from the chimneys of the houses at

Melissa went down the mountain after they didn't get to meet Veronica at the mountain

away without looking for Veronica. However, after he finished having dinner, Melissa turned up, saying,  
"M-Matthew..."

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It was 8:00AM the next day when Veronica regained consciousness. Besides Melissa, Matthew was also  
in the room; the two had kept watch over her the entire night.

Veronica came round and opened her eyes, only to feel a little weak all over.

Seeing that she had regained consciousness, Melissa cried out, "Veronica! You're awake at last!"

Matthew immediately stood up, walked over, and put a hand on Veronica's forehead. Seeing that her  
fever had gone down, he asked, "How are you feeling?"

"How did I get back here?" Veronica asked subconsciously, before raising her wounded hand as her  
wrist hurt.

"You didn't come back even by midnight, so Matthew went searching for you with his men." Melissa sat  
next to Veronica, her eyes red with hurt. "Luckily, you're alright. Otherwise, I'd feel very sorry toward  
you."

Born in a wealthy and distinguished family, Melissa was usually arrogant and domineering. However, she  
was crazy about Matthew, and Veronica, who was on friendly terms with him, could help her date him,  
so she liked Veronica very much as well. Despite her domineering disposition, beneath that flamboyant  
exterior, she was a kind-hearted person.

When Veronica recalled the masked man yesterday, her eyes darkened. "Did he bring me back?"

"Was there anything wrong?" Matthew sensed that something was amiss. He asked, "Who treated your  
wound?"

"Me. I did it myself," Veronica replied.

he went up the mountain, so he assumed that Veronica had done the same while going up the mountain  
last night. It was just that she collapsed near the steep mountain slope, so he thought she might have  
dropped her

to hear that you're alright." Matthew's heart was finally put at rest when he saw that Veronica was fine.  
He said, "Just rest well for

quite an amount of blood, Veronica

village chief made a chicken stew to nourish Veronica's health. In the afternoon, the warmhearted villagers came to visit her, bringing things like eggs, fish, chickens, ducks, and geese with them. After all, these were the only things people had in

by the villagers' simplicity and enthusiasm, Veronica felt very glad. She rested for two days, during which time Melissa followed her around and attended to her more eagerly than before, which she

again. Seeing the masked man walking past the other side of the pond with his stick, she yelled, "Hey, you! Stop right there!" Laying aside the stick she was using to fish for crayfish, she stood up and trotted to the other side of the pond. Then, she walked up to the masked man and questioned, "Why did you leave me on the mountain that day? I saved you!" She was

bruises and grazes on his arm. "I—I fell down the slope while hurrying down the

"Alright. I thought you had ungratefully run away." She finally cast aside the displeasure that had been building up inside her over the past

masked man's family, Veronica learned that he was less than 30 years old. Since he was still young, he was supposed to be inclined to have fun, so

no way she could do any work. With plenty of free time on their hands and nothing else to do, the two passed the time fishing for crayfish by the

masked man refused

"Aw, come on let's go! I'm not good at crayfish fishing, so I only managed to

worked in fields, so they weren't interested in crayfish at all. Because of that, there was an overabundance of crayfish in the pond near the doorway and in the village fields, making it very easy for

that Melissa and Veronica were having a great time, the masked man fished

the dagger in his hand already aimed at her neck. However, recalling how the lady had gotten poisoned in order to save him, he put his dagger away and went down the mountain in the

the evening, the masked man left before Matthew came. Veronica repeatedly pleaded with him to

came back with Quincy and the few others, they began prepping the crayfish and peeling garlic to make crayfish with garlic. Cooked using the earthen stove in the rural village, the crayfish tasted extraordinarily toothsome and

who felt completely stuffed, took a stroll in the village, while

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Raspberries were known scientifically as *Rubus idaeus*, but Veronica referred to them by their common name lest Matthew didn't understand what she was referring to. "Is food all you have in mind?"

The two were each holding an umbrella. As Matthew stared at her, the raindrops that fell between them from the umbrellas looked like a thin curtain of rain that lent a beautiful touch to everything.

"It's not something to eat? Tsk, who knows what you're giving me? I can't read your mind, after all," Veronica said. She felt that Matthew was deliberately keeping her in suspense, but she nonetheless took what he handed to her, only to find that it was an exquisitely made small box. She lowered her head to take a sniff at it, and it had a faint yet pleasant herbal scent,

Matthew said, "This is an ointment that I asked an old traditional medicine practitioner in the neighboring village to prepare. It speeds up the healing of wounds and removes scars." Women were relatively particular about their appearance and disliked having scars left on their bodies, so Matthew went to a traditional medicine practitioner to ask for the ointment.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk." Veronica clicked her tongue while opening the box. Seeing the creamy white ointment inside the box that was giving off a refreshing scent, she couldn't help but ridicule, "Are you trying to be nice to me? I'll take it then." She closed the little disc-shaped box and put it into her pocket before looking up at him. "Just spill it. What's the favor you'd like to ask of me?" *Matthew can't be so attentive as to give me an ointment for no apparent reason. He's definitely up to something.*

Matthew was having a faint smile on his good-looking face just a moment ago. The next instant, however, his expression turned somewhat chilly, and he gave off piercingly chilly vibes, as though he was covered with frost from head to toe. After darting a sidelong glance at Veronica with chilly eyes, he went past her right away.

Veronica couldn't help feeling perplexed as she stood where she was while watching the man walk on in the mud. "This is baffling. Why is he angry all of a sudden?" *Is it because I didn't thank him?* She hurriedly caught up to him as they headed for the school together.

It took the pair an hour to get to the school by foot due to the relatively long journey. The heavy rain pattered down as large raindrops splattered down onto the earth with a loud pattering sound, but the sound couldn't drown out the voices of the kids reading aloud in school. The kids were reading aloud, as though they were entirely

with their minds

whereas its roof was covered with uiles. As rainwater dripped from the eaves, a man in a blue raincoat climbed up the ladder onto the roof to fix the

Veronica stood in the rain. As she looked at the scene before her, she felt  
have experienced what it was like to

in class, the pair merely glanced at them from a distance.

some were already unpacked, and there were a dozen books that had been drenched in rain. Veronica couldn't find anything to collect the rainwater, so she had no choice but to stand in front of the bookshelf with her

second-graders were attending classes together, whereas there was a class for the third-graders, the fourth graders, and the fifth-graders, respectively. However, there were only two teachers. In such a difficult environment, the two teachers gave a lot

finally stopped, and the sky cleared up. The man in the raincoat rearranged the tiles on the leaking roof. After everything was fine, he trotted up to Veronica and Matthew while panting for breath with an affable smile.

a look because we had nothing else to do. Anyway, it's really admirable of you and your wife to already. These kids are the future of our nation, so it'll be a shame if nobody cares about them," Mr. Pearson replied while taking off his raincoat. Then, he

Veronica quickly stepped forward and stopped Mr. Pearson. Then, she took off her backpack, took 40,000

earlier was donated to you guys by our company, whereas this is a token of my regard. Please keep it and use it as living expenses for you and your wife. The kids will only do better when you two are doing better." Veronica had met Mr. – Pearson and his wife after coming to Dawnpol Village. They were

had always thought of Veronica as a woman who cared for nothing but money, but he never thought she would give away 40,000 to Mr. Pearson and his wife at one go, especially because to the best of his knowledge, Veronica was not only hard up but also

saying, "No, no, no, you don't have to. You've given us a lot, so and the kids, so please don't refuse it."

stained with yellow mud as they ran in the mud, but Veronica was in a very good mood. Standing on the hill, she sniffed the fresh air after the rain before catching a glimpse of a rainbow at

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Veronica disliked the photo very much and wanted to delete it. The next moment, however, Matthew snatched her phone out of her hand. "Never mind, let me take a photo of you." After taking her phone away, he took a photo of her alone and showed her the photo.

Veronica nodded in satisfaction, but as she scrolled through the photo album on her phone, she asked, "Where's the photo just now?"

Holding the umbrella in his hand, the man walked ahead of her and replied with a casual air, "I deleted it."

"Oh, okay. It's fine that you deleted it. It didn't look good, anyway," Veronica muttered, before setting the photo Matthew had taken as her phone's lock screen wallpaper.

That night, the rain poured down heavily, accompanied by flashes of lightning and claps of thunder.

Veronica lay wide awake in bed until about four or five in the early morning before drifting off to sleep. At some point in time, however, she was woken from her dream by Melissa, who shoved her a few times, saying, "Get up, Veronica! Something bad happened. Veronica, get up!"

Veronica asked in a sleepy daze, "What's the matter?" When she opened her eyes, she saw Melissa looking incredibly worried and anxious.

Melissa explained, "The rain was too heavy, and it caused a mudslide that took down the school on the hillside. The teachers and a few kids who went to school this morning are still there, so some people have been gathered in the village to rescue them. They asked us to tell those in Goon Village to evacuate." Dawnpol Village was situated between two mountains that were very far apart, so it wouldn't be affected even if a mudslide occurred. On the other hand, Goon Village was situated close to the foot of the mountain. If a mudslide occurred, the consequences would be disastrous.

"A mudslide, you say?" Veronica's heart skipped a beat. Startled awake, she sat up in bed at once. "How could this have happened?"

scared to death.

heavy at the moment. Even if they want to leave, they can't. She was anxious as well. After all, she had always lived in comfort without ever having to do manual labor or fend for herself. She only came to Almeida this time because she got bored

out of bed at once, Veronica got changed and walked out of the house with Melissa. Standing under the eaves of the doorway, she watched the rain outside, which never seemed to stop as though the sky had cracked

"Yeah, they are."

case, let's hurry to Goon Village. Something bad's gonna happen if we're late,"

ladies walked out of the yard and stepped on the muddy road together. However, neither of them had time to care for

when a voice rang from behind.

to see Hendric coming their way in a raincoat. Pointing at Melissa, he questioned angrily,

village chief asked Veronica and me to tell the villagers at Goon Village to evacuate. Are

heavy rain, forcing everyone to shout at the top of

there. Go back with me!" Hendric grabbed Melissa's arm without giving her the opportunity to say no.

"It's enough

to go alone instead!" Melissa usually seemed unreliable, but she was worried about Veronica and didn't want to let the latter risk her life by going to Goon Village alone. She argued, "How could you be so selfish, Dad? There are still many people over there. If we're late, they'll be in great danger." Hendric was worried about Melissa, but

of which was

your mom if anything happens to you? Go back with me!" Hendric chastised Melissa angrily while dragging her

Veronica. She yelled, "Veronica, what are you waiting for? Hurry up and lend me

her mouth, Melissa was very delicate. If she went to



the masked man coming her way with an umbrella in his hand. "You're going to Goon Village?" he asked  
village chief asked us to hurry up and tell those in

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When the masked man was about to get across to the other side, Veronica got onto the bridge as well. Unexpectedly, no sooner had she walked a few steps than the masked man slipped, reeled, and fell onto the wooden bridge right away. With half of his body submerged in water, he clung tightly onto the wooden bridge with both arms as his umbrella and stick had been swept away by the flood. "Help! Help me! Save me.." He looked at Veronica for help, waiting for the latter to rescue him.

The scene was extremely perilous, and the current was swift. If Veronica were to act slower, the masked man might even get swept away directly by the flood. Having no time to think about anything else, she immediately rushed forward and stretched out her hand to grab him.

*Splash!* The floodwater slapped against the wooden bridge, resulting in loud splashes. The situation was dire; the current was so rapid that the masked man almost lost his grip on the wooden bridge.

Hurriedly, Veronica dashed toward the masked man and bent down to grab him. "Hold tight to my hand and come on up!" She didn't know where this canal led to. No matter where the canal led to, however, she had to save the man right now.

Stretching out his hand, the masked man held Veronica's hand tightly, climbing up slowly as she pulled him up. After struggling for a while, he finally climbed out of the water and barely steadied himself. "Phew, that was a close call! Thank you so much." His back bent, the man stood in front of Veronica and bowed slightly, thanking her "sincerely."

Veronica waved her hand and let the masked man standing before her get to the other side of the bridge before her. "It's nothing. Let's go... Ah!"

Unexpectedly, the next instant, she was shoved into the current right away by the masked man!

Everything happened very suddenly, but it seemed like everything was just as expected. Veronica let out a cry of alarm, but she stretched out her hand and held onto the masked man at the critical moment. With a loud splash, the two fell into the surging river water and were swept far away by the swift current. Everything happened so fast that they were already a dozen meters away from the bridge before they could even cry for help.

In the river water, Veronica clung tightly onto the masked man. She didn't let go of him no matter how he resisted. *Damn it! I misjudged him after all,* she thought. She

knew very well that the man had taken advantage of her kindness, which was why he had purposely pretended to fall into the water in order to shove her into the water when she let her guard down after rescuing him. But in any case, if she were to die, she would never let the masked man get away with it.

off. He wanted to lift his foot and kick her away, but he couldn't exert his strength at

that, the two were swept downstream along with the

waters had swept away everything on the river banks, so there was nothing for her to save herself

muddy as mud. “Cough... Cough...” Exerting all her strength, she raised her head and coughed a few times to relieve her

better either. Like her, he was swept underwater and choked on the

man, her eyes darted a little over his shoulder and caught sight of a thick wooden pole coming at them from behind. Alarmed, she immediately let go of the masked man’s hand, fearing that the wooden pole would hit her hard and knock her unconscious on the spot if she were

say that this was also an opportunity for her to

the side with all her might. Her movements seemed effortless, but she almost exerted all her strength in the turbulent

it. However, she didn’t notice the cut at all in such a situation. Instead, she lunged back at the wooden pole right away at lightning speed, clinging onto it tightly. As for the masked

so fast as though it all happened in

feel sorry for the

couldn’t exert her strength at all. All her

and clung to the thick wooden pole before

pole, the two kept a

the f\*ck are you?” She was emotional not because she was enraged, but because the masked man wouldn’t be able to hear her at all if

was surging, and the sound of the surging water was

at Veronica

say a word, Veronica didn’t speak

river grew wider as the water carried them downstream. Veronica didn’t know what was ahead of them, but she knew one thing very well—if they didn’t get ashore soon, they would probably

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After looking at each other, Veronica and the masked man pinned their hopes on the

However, the tree was on the right side, which was also the masked man’s side.

Veronica moved to the right, trying to give herself the opportunity to grasp the big tree as it might be her only chance to survive. However, the masked man might become the biggest obstacle to her survival, so she had to seize the opportunity.

The two moved to the right together, but just as they were about to reach the tree, the water surged fiercely against them with even greater resistance. As both of them were on the right side, the thick wooden pole suddenly tilted in the water and flowed downstream vertically, dragging them further away from the big tree horizontally all at once.

"You let go of the wooden pole. I'll grab you." Veronica took the masked man's hand right away while telling him to let go of the wooden pole and swim to the river bank. After all, even a bit of a struggle could buy them a chance to survive. At this very moment, she had no other choice. Even if the chance of survival was slim, she had to shoot for it—even if the masked man might survive and kill her by cutting the rope. *I don't want to die!* she thought.

With his eyes behind his mask, the masked man gave Veronica a meaningful look. Then, he let go of her. The two had a rope tied between them. After letting go of Veronica, he struggled to swim to the right with all his might.

They were ten meters away from the big tree. Then, as the masked man swam closer and closer to the tree, the distance between them and the big tree shortened. They were six meters away... three meters away... one meter away!

The ten-meter distance was covered in the blink of an eye. At this moment, however, the masked man was still a distance away from the tree.

Veronica's nerves were on edge; she was very nervous, for she feared that they might miss the opportunity again. However, at the critical moment, the masked man suddenly took out a dagger and clutched it in his hand. Just when he nearly brushed past the tree, he suddenly thrust the dagger in his hand into the tree trunk.

thick wooden pole she was clinging onto to prevent the strong current from sweeping the masked man away and ruining the last opportunity to struggle for their

dagger to stay close to the tree. Even though Veronica had put pressure on him, he nonetheless stretched out his arm and hugged the tree

she grabbed the rope tied between her and the masked man while swimming toward him. However, the man held up the dagger in his hand. With

had never been so desirous of staying alive as she was at this very moment. Without saying a word, she continued swimming toward the masked man. However, just when

herself to death. At the last moment, she swam against the current with all her strength. Then, she stretched out her hand and tried to hug the tree trunk, but she had underestimated how strong the current was. Instead of hugging the tree trunk, she was swept dozens of centimeters

A big question

the masked man grabbed

they lay on the river bank, feeling so worn out that

"Why did you save me?" The moment the masked man thrust his dagger downward, she thought he was going to cut the rope and let

man didn't answer

recovering their strength, they stood up and headed into the

of the fiercely surging river water faded away in the

man was no longer stooping and limping as he had been before. Instead, he stood upright and walked

the masked man had been in the village before they arrived. Judging by the timeline, she felt that nothing could've been wrong with

in sight around them, so they chose to climb up the mountain in the end. When they stood on the top of the mountain breathlessly and looked around, they couldn't see anyone or any village except the thin

40 kilometers per hour," Veronica said while raising her hand to check the time on

hour for them to get to the mountain from the river. In other words, after falling into the

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Leaning against the tree trunk, Veronica watched as the masked man walked further and further away. In the end, stimulated by a strong desire to survive, she stood up and followed step by step behind him. They were in the wilderness, and it was getting dark soon. If she really were to stay here alone, she didn't know what she would be facing. However, she didn't want to die.

Upon hearing the sound behind him, the masked man walking ahead looked back to see Veronica stumbling after him, and a hint of surprise flickered across his eyes. He didn't say a word, but he slowed down his pace a lot. *This woman is amazingly tough, eh?*

They walked for a while until dusk deepened and they couldn't see any path at all. Only then did they find a suitable place to rest and take shelter from the rain. It was a cave, though. If a mudslide occurred, the mouth of the cave could be sealed at any time, burying the two of them alive. Sitting against the wall, Veronica looked weakly at the masked man with pale lips, asking, "Are you sure it's safe in here?"

"You can go outside if you want." The man darted a look at her. Then, he searched for some firewood and lit a fire with the lighter—

Having walked for a long time, Veronica felt cold and tired, and she shivered with cold. When she finally felt a trace of warmth, she fell asleep on the spot.

The man sitting across from her prodded her with a stick. Realizing that she was already out cold, he turned to look at the wound on her arm. After hesitating for a moment, he walked up to her and touched her forehead, only to realize that she was having a high fever, which was most probably caused by an infection in the wound on her arm. After finding the dagger on her, he examined her wound, hesitating whether to treat the wound for her. In the end, however, he didn't do anything. He merely mumbled, "I'm kind enough not to kill you."

It was already noon the next day when Veronica came round. Even though she was still feeling dizzy, her fever had gone down. Her arm was bandaged with a strip of fabric, and her wound had been treated. She knew it was the masked man who had done these.

Luckily, the mouth of the cave didn't collapse either.

She sat there, yelling, "Hey, is anyone there? Are you there, masked man?"

any response, she decided to stop yelling. Seeing that the rain had stopped and the sky had cleared her to move even a step. Not only that, but she was also starving. After dragging herself through the woods for an entire day, she found some wild fruits to allay her hunger and drank some tree. She climbed up the tree to sleep lest she had nowhere to at night. Her heart shuddered with fright, and she was panic-stricken. The only thing she could use to defend herself was the dagger the big tree while trying her best to hide her presence. However, the wolves' cries slowly approached, making her feel unusually insecure, especially because she was in a thick forest located deep in the mountains. It could be said that she would be up the creek without a paddle in the face a wolf craned its neck and howled. "Owooooo!" Its voice sounded very close a few glittering spots, but when she looked closely, she couldn't help but feel a chill running down her spine. It was because... the to be heading her greedy eyes. There were six wolves in total. How am I supposed to bright moon hung in the sky and spilled moonlight on the earth, making the earth seem like it was realized where she was hiding with their keen sense of smell, she climbed to the top of the a high place, she heard the sound of the tree trunk being scratched. The wolves were clawing at the tree while howling repeatedly, as though to summon encountered one misfortune after another. She vowed that once she left didn't sleep the entire night, while the hungry wolves waited under the tree all had increased from six to ten. Not only that, but these wolves had no intention of leaving at all. Sitting on top of the tree, she looked leave either, resulting in a

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Right at that moment, the two other wolves pounced at her. While she was fighting the wolves for her life, the Wolf King stood up, and with its keen sense of smell, it, too, lunged toward the woman. As Veronica was defending herself from the wolf underlings, she had no time to parry the Wolf King's attack. Right when she thought her life was as good as over, she heard a thundering bang that even scared the little birds in the woods away. Then, the Wolf King weakly whined before falling to the ground

Veronica turned to the source of the gunshot and saw Matthew gracefully appear beside her. Holding a gun, he fired a couple of shots at the two wolves in front of her, immediately killing them. As the wolves fell to the ground, having escaped death, Veronica collapsed to the ground and feebly looked at

Matthew who was jogging to her. That man was as stunning as ever, with his perfect figure and his face of the golden ratio, though he had a look of worry on that impeccable face of his right now.

Matthew hurried to her and condescendingly glanced at her before his eyes fell upon her right arm. As she was donning a short-sleeved shirt, her arm—drenched in blood

—was plainly presented before him. The part that was bitten by the wolves was dripping with blood, which led to her unhealed wound to bleed even more. The blood flowed straight down her pale arm and dripped on the green leaves.

Drained, Veronica went to lean against a tree trunk with her right leg staggering, her injured arm weakly resting on her knees and fingers trembling as she bled profusely. Despite being in grievous hurt, she simply revealed a reassured smile at Matthew's arrival. Her smile carried an unusual sense of security, as if the tension in her heart instantaneously vanished and she no longer had anything to be terrified of.

Still, she maintained her tough-woman facade. "A second more and you'll never get to see me again." She deeply believed that Matthew would come looking for her, and obviously, he didn't disappoint her!

Truth be told, back when Matthew saw the smoke arising in the woods, he swiftly charged toward it, only to be shocked by the scenario he faced—a skinny woman, surrounded by a number of wolves, could have had her life ended right then. In that instant, as if his heart had stopped beating, he was so agitated he almost suffocated.

All of a sudden, his cold, still face turned into a subtle smirk. "You won't die. You're as tough as a rock." Although it sounded like mockery, he was actually comforting her. He then squatted down and took a look at her gravely injured arm, claiming, "The wound's real bad. We gotta get you a tetanus shot ASAP." As he was saying that, he took off his white shirt and ripped it into strips of makeshift bandage before giving

her arm a simple wrap.

"How did you find me so quickly?" Given that she was hundreds of miles away, she couldn't figure out how Matthew found her.

if you die," Matthew replied as

ravenous! Having voiced her

want this?" After searching in his pocket, he reached out his hand before her and opened

sweets. "Where did you get them?" Although it wasn't a proper meal, some sugar could definitely help what the kids gave me in return when I

past few days. With the sweetness melting

in her smile, the man, heartbroken, responded with a smile of his own. Subconsciously, he caressed

to hide the surge of soreness that suddenly gushed in her reddening, glistening eyes, not wanting the man to see it as she feared he would take

every little gesture of hers, and his heart followingly

and confusedly frowned.

man slightly lifted his head and glimpsed

those, now? She questioned, "Aren't wolves

illegal."

her. "You're dying,

stopped arguing. Having ventured long distances without eating for three days, she was exhausted and starving, so as long

After looking for some firewood, Matthew started a campfire in front of her. He then dragged one of the wolves' carcass away to clean it up before hanging it above the

a fire here." Veronica couldn't help but feel

right here. Don't

## **Chapter 110**

The misery she had gone through to this day was all thanks to the masked man, so bearing no disdain for him would only be a lie, and there she would do whatever to even the debt between them. Even though the masked man left her a dagger and a lighter, which later allowed her to be located by Matthew, he was the cause of her pathetic life today.

The masked man, with his leg injured, had no way to walk, so he could only rest, sitting on the ground under a nearby tree.

Matthew, on the other hand, spoke not a word and continued roasting the wolf.

Sitting beside him was Veronica. Looking at the smoky, tender meat while its scrumptious aroma stormed into her nose, she uncontrollably drooled. "Right, how were the kids at school?" Concerned, she inquired about the kids.

"Mr. Pearson was hurt. The old doctor is treating him as we speak. Residents of Goon Village were also evacuated. Some time after the evacuation, a mudslide occurred, but luckily, no one was harmed," Matthew recounted the happenings to Veronica.

Hearing that, Veronica finally felt relieved. "As long as everyone's safe, or... wait, what?" As if she had remembered something, she grabbed Matthew's arm. "What about my 40,000?" Back when they went up the mountain, she gave the teacher 40,000. And when she was informed about the mudslide, she was worried that the massive sum of donation would have been for nothing.

Seeing her so restless, Matthew slowly closed his eyes. "We found the money. They're a little soiled, though." In fact, the building collapsed and her money was buried along with it, so it was quite an impossible task to scour for it. Regardless, he wouldn't reveal the truth to Veronica. If the woman so in love with wealth were to find out the money she went a long way to accumulate had been engulfed by a natural disaster, she would surely be devastated.

"Really? That's great news! Guess the 40,000 didn't go in vain." She chuckled delightfully.

Matthew, at her joyousness, too, felt relieved. When he was informed that she had gone missing, he expended tremendous manpower and resources to search for her. Eventually, he found himself separated from the searching team before seeing the wafting smoke and ending up finding her.

living here.. Say, Matthew, since

an established connection, such a disaster wouldn't have occurred;" Veronica earnestly pleaded 10 Matthew, hoping he would provide some assistance to the residents of Goon Village. She was aware that even though Matthew was rich, asking him to help in such a manner was somehow guilt tripping. "I mean... I'm just saying,

to her injured arm. "Does your

injured right arm and scoffed. "No

Matthew's eyes darkened as he wordlessly gazed at the grilled meat in his

was fully cooked. He passed a meat skewer to Veronica, to which she accepted it before giving it a blow. She eagerly took a bite and burned her lips. "Ouch, it's hot." Thanks

hot." Seeing her hasty expression, Matthew couldn't bear to imagine how she survived for the past few days. All of a sudden, anger surged in his heart as he subtly turned around, glaring at the masked man who was

her fainting in the mountains. As such, Matthew was highly suspicious of him. Consequently, he had

masked man. She followingly turned to his line of sight, only to see the enfeebled masked man gazing at the meat in their hands, seemingly starving. The sight of that touched the softest spot in her heart. Hesitant, she looked at the skewer in her hand and

Matthew grabbed her wrist. "What do you think you're

to eat," Veronica replied

you forgotten why you ended

death in the age of peace, can we?" With that, she removed Matthew's hand. Since she was using her injured arm to do so, Matthew could only

of grilled meat, Veronica walked before the masked man, only to realize the man's profusely bleeding leg and the surrounding dirt that was stained with his blood. Since he wasn't carrying his dagger, there was no way to extract the bullet, so he could only give it a simple wrap with

blurted as she

then raised his head and peered