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Bring Your A Game, Mr Chapter 451

Joseph hesitated for a moment. Seeing that Elise wasn't saying anything to stop him, he said with a nod, "I'll think about it."

Danny jumped with excitement. "Oh, yeah! Please be sure to think this over! I was afraid that you wouldn't think about it, you know?" he said. After a moment, he collected himself and said unflinchingly, "Come on, I'm ready. Whatever the test is, bring it on!"

"Hmm." Joseph frowned slightly. "Firstly... get out of my room."

Danny's overflowing enthusiasm was quenched at once. "Huh?"

"You idiot." Elise slapped the back of Danny's head from behind. "He's now a patient who needs rest. You want to see him being sickly all the time?!"

"Oh, yeah, that's right!" Danny ducked his head while nodding vigorously. "Well, in that case, I won't be bothering you anymore, Mr. Fuller. Just tell me if you need anything. Starting from today, I'm at SK Group's disposal. Just put me wherever you need me to be!"

Joseph was speechless; he didn't expect Danny to be so good at talking. With an awkward look of embarrassment on his face, he said, "I'll remember you."

Danny clenched a fist in front of his chest and made an encouraging gesture to cheer Joseph on. Facing Joseph, he thumped on his chest before leaving the room in a solemn manner.

At the sight of the scene, Joseph's eyebrows twitched continuously. He began to wonder if he had made a wrong decision.

Elise gave Joseph a sympathetic look. Then, she closed the door and left as well.

Meanwhile, Danny was hopping and leaping around like a rabbit in the courtyard, giving Alexander no peace.

Alexander shook his head. "When will you behave more like an adult?" he asked, before walking toward Elise. "Ellie, what kind of medicinal ingredients do Grandma and the one in there need to recuperate? Just make me a list. The black market will open in the suburbs tonight, so I'm gonna buy them back."

"Is the black market coming to Athesea too?" asked Elise.

"Uh-huh." Alexander nodded. "It's been 13 years since it last opened. You're lucky."

“Yeah, that’s true,” Elise agreed.

One of the reasons the black market had endured through so many years was that it had always been held randomly in different places. In order to see and experience in person what the black market was like, one had no choice but to follow the information released on the darknet. Also, its actual venue would only be announced the day before it actually opened.

Even so, the black market had attracted black market lovers from all over the country and even all over the world, who gathered at the black market like moths flying into flames. Therefore, those who could enter the black market had to be considerably powerful in terms of both social background and financial resources.

In other words, being a shareholder of Frazier Incorporated alone wouldn’t be enough for that. Elise knew that Alexander had an even greater power backing him up—only it wasn’t yet the time for him to tell her about it.

Just then, Danny threw himself at them and said with a slur in his voice, “Count me in, Alexander!”

“You?” Alexander raised his eyebrows, which was pretty rare. “If I take you there with me, you’ll end up being sold off without you realizing it.”

However, Danny argued, “Are you really my brother, Alexander? Yeah, all I know is to eat, drink, and have fun, but it’s not like I wanted to be like that in the first place. You never took me out with you and let me see the world, so when am I gonna learn something?” At this moment, he felt like a talented young man in ancient times, who failed to land a job in the government and was both depressed and frustrated from being unable to fulfill his ambitions.

Alexander’s eyes dimmed a little at Danny’s words, but he wasn’t good at consoling people. Seeing the world wasn’t just as simple as what it sounded like. Now that the situation was still volatile, how could he agree to risk Danny’s life by taking the latter out with him?

Noticing the change in Alexander’s expression, Elise put out her hand and gave Danny a pat on the back in an easy manner. “I’ll take you there.”

“Ellie!” Alexander instantly got nervous, as though he was being confronted by a formidable enemy. “Stop fooling around. You know that the black market is no ordinary market, and that you can be in danger anytime. You’d better not go there yourself, let alone take Danny with you.”

Danny’s hope, which had just been kindled, was extinguished at once. In an instant, he lost heart completely.

"It's okay," Elise replied calmly. "It's not that dangerous. As it happens, I also want to visit an old friend at the black market, so I can take Danny with me while I'm at it. And besides, you've forgotten something; I'm not one of those damsels who live a pampered life and never need to fend for themselves."

Alexander had no choice but to relent. After all, he could say no to anyone except Elise. "Okay, you may go there, but we have to agree on a few rules. You must stay within my sight and be no further than one meter away from me at all times. Also, you must always listen to me," he said with a serious look on his face.

"Okay," Elise said. It's always been like this as long as he's present, anyway.

Alexander nodded. However, upon seeing Danny, whose eyes almost popped out of his head in excitement, he resumed a stern countenance. "Don't get too excited about it yet. I'm going to make calls now. If I can only get one ticket, you're gonna stay at home!" Then, as Danny watched bitterly, he calmly took out his phone and stepped aside to make phone calls.

Danny smacked his lips in vexation. When he looked back, though, he saw Elise sending a text message with her head down. The message read, 'Get me some tickets to the black market.'

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Chapter 452 Hey, You Wanna Save Face?

Perplexed, Danny asked, "Are you going to the black market, Elise?"

Elise glanced up at Danny while putting away her phone calmly. "Uh-huh," she replied, before sitting down in the rocking chair next to her and rocking back and forth leisurely like an old man.

A while later, Alexander came back with his cell phone. He said indifferently, "I've gotten two tickets."

"Yes!" Danny raised his fist in victory. He asked in surprise, "In that case, I can go with you two, right?"

"Nope," Alexander replied harshly.

Danny was instantly filled with disappointment. Just then, however, a gust of wind suddenly blew past him, and he sensed someone flying past him in a supercilious manner.

The next second, a familiar voice sounded from behind him. "Miss Sinclair, here are the tickets that you've asked for. There are ten of them. Master Bryce said you can bring

friends with you to the black market, and if the tickets aren't enough, you can give the market manager your name so that the rest of them can enter," the man said reverently.

As soon as the man finished his speech, Danny turned around and dashed back to Elise's side with the speed of a nocked arrow, staring at the stack of tickets in the box with shining eyes.

Elise took the tickets. "Thanks for bringing me these. You didn't have to come in person, though. Just let somebody run the errand for you next time."

The man showed an acute sense of propriety. "Like I said, I'm honored to be at your service, Miss Sinclair. Well then, I won't be keeping you any longer," he said politely. Then, he turned around and left.

As soon as the man disappeared from the door, Danny jumped up and hugged Elise. "Oh, my God! What a fantastic sister-in-law I've found for myself! Black market! It's the tickets to the black market! They're so difficult to get, yet that guy gave you a stack of them!"

At the sight of the scene, Alexander's bushy eyebrows snapped together, and he hemmed twice crossly. "Ahem! Ahem!"

However, Danny was totally oblivious to it. Wrapping his arms around Elise, he shook her in gratitude with all his might.

Alexander's face darkened. He walked over to Danny right away, forcibly wrenching the latter's arms away from Elise. Then, he said in a voice devoid of warmth, "It's inappropriate to be overfamiliar with someone of the opposite gender, Danny."

"What's the problem with that? Elise and I are a family!" Danny argued obsequiously.

However, not even Elise could stand listening to the boy's words any longer. She opened the transparent box containing the tickets, took a ticket out of it, and handed the ticket to Danny. "Here, take it."

Danny waved the ticket in his hand, flaunting it in front of Alexander as if it were some precious treasure. "Look, Alexander! Now I can go to the black market even without you!"

Alexander shook his head before turning to look at Elise. He said with a note of tenderness and resignation in his voice, "Just spoil him all you want."

Danny brazenly clung to Elise once again. "What's wrong with her spoiling me? Since you're not doing so, it's only natural that someone else is gonna do it. It's none of your business! I hereby declare unilaterally that starting from today, I'm Elise's real brother, and I'm cutting all ties with you!"

Alexander shot a disdainful look at Danny. “What an ingrate,” he said. Then, he haughtily returned to his room.

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Night fell soon afterward, and Elise and the others quickly set off for the black market in a car.

After following the instructions on the ticket, they arrived at the place where the black market was held. It was an undeveloped suburban area with not a single habitation within a near 100-mile radius—the deciding factor that led to the black market being held here.

Upon getting out of their car, Elise and the others saw a market as lively as the commercial street. The entire black market looked more like a street in ancient times, but it was lit with modern technology. In short, it was a retro-styled commercial street.

Despite its peaceful and prosperous facade, everyone knew that everything—from something as tiny as a needle to something as enormous as invisible power—could be traded on the black market. The interests of the parties involved in the transactions were inextricably interwoven, making the transactions far more complicated than the simple buying and selling of goods that they were purported to be.

After signing in at the entrance, Elise and the others entered the bustling market.

On the outermost fringes of the market were peddlers selling smuggled daily commodities. These people smuggled inexpensive items from abroad, then waited for buyers to purchase them so that they could pocket the price difference. Meanwhile, having gotten their hands on the items, the buyers would repackage them at low cost with obscure and incomprehensible foreign language, labeling them as top-quality goods from abroad in order to make exorbitant profits by selling them at ten to twenty times the original price.

The black market was also the best place for profit seekers to get rich overnight, which was why so many people scrambled to try getting into the black market, all in hopes of striking it rich.

When the group walked past what seemed like a fortune-telling stand, Elise inadvertently took another glance at the stall owner, upon which the man immediately latched onto her like a limpet. “Hey, sweetie! You must be a celebrity. Wanna buy some fake fans? We can also regulate comments on your social media, boost your retweets, and amplify your social media followings! Come on, we offer great value for money! You know H, the nation’s darling? She’s bought fake fans from us, too!”

Upon hearing his words, Elise couldn’t help but laugh. She stopped in her tracks and teased, “Hey, be careful lest I file a complaint against you for the false advertising.”

“That’s right!” Danny stepped forward and pushed the stall owner back a few steps. “What you said about H buying fans from you is just sheer nonsense. Does she even need to buy fake fans? She draws fans with her own talents!” He looked at the stall owner as if the latter was a retard. How dare you rip people off blindly without recognizing H herself standing right before you? Seems like not only are the black market transactions shady, but these black market traders are also evil-minded!

The stall owner dared not make a sound since he was outnumbered by Elise and her group. Then, seeing the murderous look in Alexander’s eyes, he immediately ran back to his stall.

Elise chuckled and continued to walk on.

“Ellie,” Alexander called out to her just then. “I’d like to buy something over there, so don’t wander too much. Just go straight down the road slowly and wait for me, okay?”

“Just go ahead. Don’t worry about me,” Elise replied.

With that, Alexander left with Cameron.

On the other hand, Claude had his eyes on the herb market as soon as the group entered. The instant Alexander excused himself, he immediately slipped away to the stall selling medicinal ingredients nearby, leaving no one else but Danny beside Elise.

The two strolled aimlessly along the market stalls, but they didn’t find anything they wanted to buy. Just when they reached a corner, a tall and brawny brute suddenly popped up and stared at them fiercely, saying, “Hey, you wanna save face?”

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Chapter 453 Selling Faces

Danny instantly stood in front of Elise. “Who are you, and what do you want?” He pulled a long face with studied ferocity. He knew he was weaker than Elise in terms of strength, but he was a man after all. In moments of danger, he had to stand in front of her to protect her.

However, such a huge commotion drew no response from the street vendors and passersby around them, who were already used to such situations. Ignoring the worrying situation the three were in, they continued running their own businesses, haggling over prices as though their world was separate from that of Elise and the others.

After confronting the brute for a moment, Danny narrowed his eyes, ready to strike the first blow. However, just as he was about to make a move, the burly brute before him

suddenly laughed obsequiously. “Hehe, I was just kidding, folks. Don’t get the wrong idea, okay? I meant it literally!”

Danny was astounded; he had thought he and Elise were about to run into a grave situation at last. At the sight of the situation, he spat with a frown, saying, “Tsk. Just my luck. So, what business do you have with us?”

“Selling faces, of course. Look at this, folks...” the brute said while putting his hands on the back of his head. After a brief pause, he suddenly tore at his hairy scalp and stretched it toward both sides.

Danny took a step back immediately as the sight of the creepy scene gave him goosebumps.

The next second, though, the brute tore off his entire face.

“Eek!” Danny’s face scrunched up with disgust as he thought he was going to see the man’s badly mutilated face.

However, when the brute took away his face, what was revealed was another, more good-looking face that looked totally unlike the one just now.

“What the hell?” Danny’s lips twitched. “Is that face-changing?”

On the other hand, Elise watched the show with great interest as a bloodthirsty smile played across her lips.

“Yes, and no. You might as well say it’s an art of disguise.” The brute was still smiling broadly, but his delicate features looked very amiable. “We make masks using fine-quality imitation human skin that feels no different from real human skin. Although the masks are made to order on a one-to-one basis, it’s very easy to wear them, allowing you to transform into someone else with little effort! Still worrying about being caught cheating on your lover? Still afraid to show yourself for fear of making a laughingstock of yourself? Worry not, for our masks keep you free from worries!”

The brute promoted the advertising slogans while holding up the ‘human skin’ in his hand, showing it around in various poses. The scene looked extremely bizarre.

Seriously, would anyone buy masks from him with such advertising slogans? Danny wondered. The next instant, however, he heard Elise say, “Interesting. May I add you on WhatsApp? I’ll do business with you.”

“Really?! Haha! I’m making the first transaction at last!” said the brute. Then, he continued to promote the ‘human skin’ in his hand, saying, “Sweetie, I’d suggest that you buy more of them so that you won’t have to worry about getting caught no matter how many times you cheat on your boyfriend!”

“Who said I want to cheat on my boyfriend?” Elise finally realized why the brute had few customers despite the nearby stalls doing booming businesses. I’d better not waste my breath talking to this guy. He’s got such a foul mouth, she thought. “Anyway, let’s exchange our numbers first. I’ll call you later to talk about our collaboration.” As she couldn’t stand the brute’s irritating words anymore, she quickly exchanged contact information with him. After wiring him the deposit, she told him to go back and wait for an update.

Seeing that the money had been transferred to his bank account, the brute left merrily with the ‘human skin’ in his hand.

Staring at the face hanging from the brute’s hand, Danny shuddered with a chill running down his spine. Then, he moved closer to Elise, asking, “Elise, what are you buying such useless stuff for?”

“I have uses for them.” Elise smiled before continuing to move on.

The black market was large, so Elise and Danny only finished visiting one-third of its area after walking for two hours. Having gotten tired from all the walking, they found a milk tea stand and sat down to get something to drink, waiting for Alexander while they were at it.

The stand owner was a Thai who couldn’t speak English but was good at making milk tea. As a result, despite finishing more than half of her cup of milk tea in one gulp, Elise didn’t get sick of its sweetness.

Just as Elise was wondering if she should buy another cup for Alexander, a man walking past her suddenly collapsed at her feet. As a doctor, she instinctively got up and tried to help him up, taking his pulse upon touching his wrist.

A moment later, a grave expression took over her face. If she had to find a term to describe the state of this man’s health, it would be withered. If one could draw an analogy between a healthy man and a fresh, tender, and juicy sponge gourd, then the man, who appeared to be in his thirties, had become like a dry and fibrous loofah.

There was little need to treat such people. Still, healers were supposed to treat all patients as equal, so Elise tried to treat him using traditional medical treatment.

Luckily, the man had quite a strong will to live, and he slowly opened his eyes.

Elise asked with a serious expression, “Who are you? Why are you here?” In fact, such a dying person seemed out of tune with the black market, for one could gain nothing from them.

The man’s face was bloodless, and his eyes were sunken. After taking a few sharp breaths, he explained intermittently, “They... took both my kidneys away... without

paying me money... I came to ask them for money, but I couldn't find them... They're hiding from me..."

With that, the man lost his strength and leaned against the leg of the table at his last gasp, his eyes opening and closing, as if he would die at any time. However, he had basically made his tragic story clear. In short, it was the story of a desperate man, who ran into a bunch of organ smugglers and had both his kidneys taken away without getting paid for that.

Unable to bear the sight of the scene, Elise got up and said to Danny, "Help him up and find a place for me to give him treatment."

"Okay." Danny nodded.

However, just as he was about to help the man up, a few men suddenly rushed over from the roadside, making a loud noise as one of them pointed at the dying man and said, "He's here! Didn't I say that he wouldn't last long? Hurry up and take him back. Perhaps he's still warm!" As he spoke, the bunch of men came to the dying man and were about to carry him away.

Grabbing one of them by the wrist, Danny snapped, "Who are you guys? What's your relationship with him?"

"Who are you, then?" asked the vulgar man in reply from a distance away. Then, he warned, "A new face, eh? No one told you to stay out of other people's business in the black market, huh?"

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Chapter 454 Healthy With No Bad Habits

Upon hearing that, Elise expressionlessly looked at the man who seemed to be the leader. "You're the one doing business with him?"

"What? You've never heard of the great Nightfall, pretty?" The man's expression was aggressive and disdainful. "But it doesn't matter if you haven't; the only one you need to remember is me, Mad Dog. This isn't something that you have any power over. Grab your little wh*re and get the hell out of here!"

"Watch your mouth! Who are you calling a wh*re?" Danny yelled.

"I'm talking about you! What? You wanna practice throwing hands with us?"

"If practice is what you want, then you'll have it!" As he spoke, Danny whipped his jacket off and raised his fists in preparation to fight. He might not be as strong a fighter as Alexander, but getting in a few punches wasn't something impossible for him.

When he passed Elise, a hand suddenly reached out and stopped him.

“Don’t worry, Elise. Let me at them. It’s just a few people; they might not actually defeat me. We might not have to run.” Danny was confident in his combat skills.

Elise outright ignored him as she looked at the man in front of her with a smile that didn’t reach her eyes. “You got it wrong—we have no intention of getting into an altercation with you; we just want to strike a deal with you too.”

“A deal?” Mad Dog grinned in disdain, a sly glint flashing across his eyes for a moment before being quickly buried. “So, which one of you here is the merchandise?” he asked in faux bashfulness.

Elise initially wanted to say that she was the merchandise, but she felt that it didn’t sound that believable. The gears in her head whirred, and then she reached out to pull Danny over and pat his chest. “This guy. He’s healthy, and he doesn’t have any bad habits like smoking or drinking. Name your price.”

Danny opened his mouth to protest, but when Elise shot him a glare, he promptly got into the role he was supposed to play. Instantly, he turned into the protagonist of an angsty, tragic movie. “That’s right, it’s me. But, I’m the only one being sold here. Since I’m so dashing handsome, can you please name a higher number?”

Mad Dog scrutinized Danny thoughtfully. “That’s not my decision to make; I gotta go back first and discuss with my superior. Don’t worry though—we’ve always been honest and fair when it comes to business. We won’t be fleecing you.”

“Sure. Go now, then,” Elise said while smiling.

“You’re an impatient one.” Mad Dog glanced at her meaningfully before he turned to order his subordinates. “You two there—take that guy back to base. The rest of you will come with me!” He then gestured at Danny and Elise with his chin a few times. “Don’t just stand there. Come.”

With that, he turned and headed in the same direction as he came, leading the way as he did so.

Elise swaggered after him while Danny tailed her closely. At the very back of their entourage were Mad Dog’s two henchmen.

They maintained their positions throughout the journey—Elise and Danny in the center while Mad Dog and his men sandwiched them. Slowly, they were led from the crowded and noisy bustle of the streets into a deserted alley.

It was then that Danny realized something was fishy. “These people are suspicious. Don’t get caught in their trap,” he whispered.

However, Elise continued her carefree demeanor, as though nothing was happening.

At last, they were led to a dead end. A repulsive man stood at the very end. Slowly, he turned around to look slyly at them. At the same time, over a dozen men suddenly gathered by the entrance of the alley with sticks and baseball bats in hand as they gradually made their way closer to Danny and Elise.

Danny looked behind him warily, getting into a defensive stance.

“Where’s your superior?” Elise asked calmly, a smile playing on her lips.

One of the thugs behind her raised his voice. “Girlie, you didn’t even know that only the Bossman’s word is needed when it comes to black market stuff before, and you still had the guts to come knocking on our door! You’re hilariously brave!”

Elise’s gaze lowered. After a moment of thought, she spoke to Mad Dog. “So, if I cut you down, then we can seal this black market deal?”

“Hehe…” Mad Dog chuckled in objection. “You look pretty small, but you sure talk big, pretty. Tell me then—which gang are you from? How dare you challenge Nightfall?” he said mockingly.

“I don’t belong to any gang; I just don’t like the sight of your face.” With a flick of her hand, a silver needle fell into her palm.

“If that’s the case, then don’t blame me when I go all out on you despite you being a girl.” Mad Dog’s expression darkened as he harshly gritted out an order. “Beat up the guy till he’s dead. Capture the girl alive!”

The moment the last word fell, the crowd of men behind surged forward, brandishing their weapons as they charged at Danny.

Danny’s combat skills were not shabby. Each punch of his rang true, and he flowed into each move smoothly, so although he was severely outnumbered, none of his opponents could get close to him.

While the thugs couldn’t gain the upper hand, there was no one watching Elise’s back now.

Seeing this, Mad Dog approached her with an insincere smile. “Hey pretty, I’ll get them to leave his corpse in one piece so long you call me ‘honey.’ How about that?”

After that, he reached out to touch Elise’s face with a lecherous smile.

"I don't like others touching me." Elise's expression abruptly chilled, her voice sounding like it had frozen over. "If you want to cross my limits, you'll have to pay the price," she continued.

Mad Dog's hand uncontrollably froze in place a few inches away from Elise's face. He craned his neck in irritation to carefully study her face again. That was a 17, 18-year-old girl, all right. She looked absolutely harmless. There was nothing to fear about her.

At that thought, his tenseness slipped away. Narrowing his eyes, he bravely continued to move his hand closer to Elise's face.

Right at that moment, an even louder racket came from the entrance to the alleyway.

"Who are you guys? Ah!"

As the screams continued, the thugs attacking Danny rushed over to the source of the noise in droves.

Mad Dog couldn't help but turn his head to look as well. Taking advantage of the sudden opportunity, Elise quickly flung her hand out, a silver needle instantly jabbing into his offending hand.

In just a moment, Mad Dog was in so much agony from the abrupt jolt-like sensation that he couldn't even stand straight. He stumbled a few steps backward before he finally fell to his knees.

"Didn't I say that you'll have to pay?" Elise looked down at him from where she stood, a chilly gleam shining in her pretty eyes.

Meanwhile behind her, the thugs soon lost the fight, having been sent flying to the ground. It wasn't until all of the thugs were down that Danny saw that the newcomers were Alexander and Cameron.

Alexander walked past the thugs expressionlessly as they lay on the ground wailing. When he reached Elise's side, he took off his coat and draped it over her shoulders. "I thought I told you to wait for me by the street?"

"This is an accident," Elise said with an innocent look on her face as she shrugged.

"You always have an excuse." Alexander crooked his finger and gently tapped her head, but his voice was soft and warm. "Let's see if you can remember my words better next time!"

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Chapter 455 Rules of the Black Market

Night descended upon Lithium City. The buildings within the city bathed in darkness. The only source of light was the moon hanging high in the sky.

After determining that the coast was clear with his telescope, Xavier waited until one before he left his hiding spot to sneak into Timothy and Sasha's home. With the information that he had gleaned over the last few days guiding him, he soon reached their bedroom. He unlocked the door with a specially-made knife and walked inside with gentle footsteps.

"Who's there?" The man in the bed was rudely woken up.

Xavier rushed over with large steps to cover Timothy's mouth while he positioned a sharp knife by Sasha's neck. "Timothy, Sasha, someone paid me a handsome sum of money to ask me to bring you two back. Come with me, and I won't hurt you." Xavier's voice was low, but the threatening undercurrent was evident.

"You call this a polite invitation?" Timothy's voice was even. As he spoke, he looked at the knife by his wife's neck through his peripheral vision.

"Apologies, but there is no other way," Xavier said expressionlessly. "I don't want to hurt you two either, so long as you cooperate." Having said that, he put the knife away. A pause later, he reminded, "By the way, I know the escape routes in this area very well. Neither of you will be able to make it past me, and you cannot defeat me in a fight either. You should get rid of your thoughts of escape."

"Don't worry. We aren't looking to die yet." Timothy pushed his glasses up his nose. There was no sign of fear on his face.

Xavier didn't want to waste time talking. Quietly, he got up and stood aside to give them space to move. "Let's go. It's better for us to leave while it's still nighttime."

Both Timothy and Sasha frantically put on their clothes and got off the bed. Holding onto each other tightly, they slowly began to make their way outside.

Xavier's eyes were slightly narrowed as a strange feeling rose within him.

Since they're hiding here, they must know very well that countless people are looking to assassinate them. They probably knew that such a day would come. They shouldn't be behaving like this now, holding each other calmly; they should be trying to die like martyrs or beg for their lives.

Xavier quickly swept a gaze across the room. A sly look immediately flashed across his eyes. "Stop," he ordered coldly.

Timothy and Sasha stopped in their tracks, but they didn't look back. Timothy turned his head back slightly. "What do you want?"

Xavier walked over to them with soft footsteps. He remained behind Timothy and Sasha as his fingers ran across the gun he held behind him. "A famous physicist with not a single book in his bedroom. Don't you think your disguise is a little sloppy, Professor Lancaster?"

The room descended into a deathly silence at his words. In the blink of an eye, the fraudulent professor and his wife rushed out the door, still holding onto each other.

But Xavier was faster than they could ever hope to be; the moment they took a step, two gunshots rang out, the bullets striking them right in their hearts. Regular people would have already fallen over with such grievous injuries, but Timothy and Sasha kept running as though they had a beast on their heels.

Xavier's senses were on alert as he realized that being stuck inside a place where death was inevitable was even more terrifying than facing death itself.

The house!

The next moment after that thought, Xavier leaped out of the sole window in the room.

At the same time, a huge explosion rattled the sky as the houses around the site were instantly reduced to smithereens.

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When Elise and the others emerged from the alley, someone stopped her. "Miss Sinclair, Master Bryce would like to see you."

Elise did intend to pay him a visit, so she let go of Alexander's hand. "You guys can go back first and hand them over to the police. I'll be right back," she reassured him.

Before Alexander could voice his concerns, the man, Macaque, interrupted, "What Master Bryce means is for you, Miss Sinclair, to bring them along and see him."

"What's the meaning of this? Has this Master Bryce of yours fallen so low as to dabble in this kind of business?" Elise asked sarcastically.

"You misunderstand. Since we are in the black market, we have to follow its rules."

Now that Macaque had laid that out, Elise couldn't say anything against him.

However, Alexander did not feel at ease. In the end, everyone followed Elise to Bryce's place.

Although this place was considered the administration district for the black market, it more resembled an opera stage. Lights blazed down on it. Seats were arranged haphazardly below the stage, but there were no guests.

Bryce was dressed in a red stage outfit as he lay on a bed with sumptuous covers and pillows, looking like he had stepped out of a period drama. He was an absolutely beautiful man. Although his eyes remained closed, his beauty could clearly be described as mesmerizing, like he was Narcissus.

The entourage stopped before the stage. Macaque then went onstage from the steps by the side as he respectfully delivered his report. "Master Bryce, Miss Sinclair has arrived."

Bryce slowly opened his eyes, an eyebrow gently raised as he idly looked at the crowd. With just one glance, he immediately found her.

"You've changed again," Bryce said in jest.

"The same goes for you," Elise said calmly.

It was only then that Bryce got up from the bed. With measured steps, he walked to the forefront of the stage and leaned down, extending a hand toward Elise. "We'll have to speak as equals."

Elise was about to take his hand and jump onto the stage with his help, but Alexander stopped her.

"Who is he?" Bryce withdrew his hand, pulling it behind his back.

"My fiancé," Elise answered.

Bryce narrowed his eyes as he meaningfully studied Alexander. Then he turned around. "If you wish to speak with me, you will have to first come up on stage," he said, his voice clearly distant.

Elise looked at Alexander. Can I even get up there from this height? she asked with her gaze.

Alexander gave her a calm look. The next moment, he bent down and scooped Elise into his arms. Kicking over one of the stools next to him, he stepped onto the stool, and with a powerful leap, he was on the stage.

Before Elise could get her bearings, she was already safely deposited on the stage.

It was then that Bryce finally looked at Alexander properly, but it was just a momentary look. His gaze then once again rested on Elise. "You and I do not like beating around the bush. So, I shall lay it out to you—you cannot take that man with you."

"But he's not one of yours," Elise said lightly.

"That is, indeed, the case," Bryce replied. "However, he is part of the black market, and so he shall only be judged within the black market. No other place will be allowed to judge him."

"I'd like to see if you're going to deal with him, or if you're going to shelter him," Elise said, her face devoid of expression.

"You still do not understand me well enough." Bryce's lips curled up into a sneer. "If he was someone I wish to protect, then there would have been no need for me to speak in circles." With that, he looked to the side and shot a glance at one of his men.

The man nodded before looking at two other subordinates by the side. The two subordinates immediately understood what he wanted. They dragged the repulsive man forward. With a kick to the repulsive man's legs, he fell forward on his knees. The knives in the two subordinates' hands rose in a smooth motion before being brought down.

Instantly, the wretched man's legs were separated from his body. Blood gushed out like a raging river, dyeing the floor crimson. He couldn't even scream. After a few choked whimpers, he passed out.

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Chapter 456 Does He Actually Have Eyes for Alexander?

Danny couldn't help but frown. It seemed that his brother was right—the world was not as simple as he thought.

Once the wretched man was carted off-stage, Bryce sat back on the bed. "Are you pleased with this outcome?" he asked breezily.

"There's nothing to be pleased about—you just cut this man down. In the future, there will be thousands of others to take his place. Bryce Fiore, I know that this black market of yours is outside the jurisdiction of the law, but do you not even have any basic principles?" Elise asked indifferently.

Bryce didn't even look up. "On the contrary, I had no idea that you have become an advocate for the police."

"This has nothing to do with the police. In business deals, you pay the agreed price, and you get the promised merchandise. Now, that man's blood is on your hands. Is this any different from a dog-eat-dog world?"

"All right, all right..." Bryce waved a hand in dismissal with utmost patience. "I have already rendered that man a cripple, and I will also drive the others away. Let us not allow this little matter to ruin this beautiful meeting of ours when we have not seen each other for such a long time, shall we?"

"If that's the case, then there's nothing for us to chat over tea." Elise composed herself before she went straight to the point. "I want to make a deal with you."

"Truly, one never comes to me without a reason." Bryce looked at Elise reproachfully. "Just for once, can you leave with empty hands after you have given me your offerings?"

"No," Elise replied boldly. "Haven't you heard that thieves aren't supposed to go back empty-handed? I'm the thief here, the evil one. Of course I will only be taking from you; who has ever heard of a thief leaving a present for the one they're robbing?"

"Hehehe... Someone learned how to crack a joke. How fascinating." Bryce let out a low laugh. At last, he lifted his head. His eyes were absolutely similar to Alexander's inky-black ones. As though he was teasing her, he pulled a leg up onto the bed and placed an arm on top of his knee. Then, he gestured at her. "El, come here."

Alexander couldn't help clenching his hands that were by his sides into fists.

El? This was even more intimate than the nickname 'Ellie.'

"If I keep standing here, you're going to turn down that deal, aren't you?" Elise asked, not cooperating with him at all.

Seeing how he didn't get to have some fun with Elise, Bryce put his leg down in disappointment. "When have I never followed your whims? Tell me then—what do you have your eyes on this time?" he asked languidly.

"Nothing too rare; just some dragonmoon grass and solaria flowers. You have them, so spare me some," Elise said.

"You truly are here to fleece me," Bryce said in annoyance. "I do not have them."

"Come on, old sport, are you still deliberately trying to play me?" Elise was all smiles. Anyone could see the evilness behind it.

“Who are you calling ‘old sport’! Look at my beautiful, delicate features—do they look like those of an old man’s?!” Bryce stood up in agitation. With his arms behind his back, he shot a meaningful look at Alexander.

Elise rolled her eyes. “I already said that he’s my fiancé. If you keep having funny ideas about him, I’m going to actually have to strike you down.”

Everyone else was bewildered. What was going on?

“Such pettiness.” Bryce’s tone instantly turned charmingly saccharine once Elise had seen through his intentions. “It’s just one look; it’s not as though I will actually lay a hand on him!”

The corners of Alexander’s lips twitched awkwardly as he quietly moved to stand behind Elise. This Bryce person did not look like he was one to give up even until the very end.

Bryce instantly frowned. “Such a beautiful man as well. It’s such a pity that he’s not my beau...” he lamented, a melancholic look on his face.

“Ahem...” Elise narrowed her eyes as she chuckled coldly. The next moment, she lifted a hand and smacked the back of Bryce’s head. She swiftly followed up with a few more smacks. “What weirdo nonsense are you saying? You should be looking for a girlfriend to date instead! A girlfriend! How many times do I have to say it?!”

Bryce couldn’t block the rest of Elise’s strikes after the first few times, so he stood up and puffed his chest out. “Enough! Allow me to maintain some dignity while within my territory!”

Seeing how he had returned to normal, Elise finally stopped hitting him and retreated to the side.

Nonetheless, Bryce wasn’t one to remember past grievances. In an instant, he pressed close to her, taking her hand and grinning. “Yes, this is how sisters should be like!”

Alexander raised an eyebrow. “Sisters?”

“What else were you expecting?” Bryce stated. “And mind your own business! Since you don’t belong to me, stay away from us. Do not hurt my little El, you dog!”

Alexander had no words.

Meanwhile, down the stage, Danny shuddered, gooseflesh prickling all over his body.

“Quit your yammering,” Elise turned to say harshly to him. “What about the goods I asked for?”

At the mention of that, Bryce immediately pulled his face away from Elise's shoulder. Quietly, he let go of her hand and returned to his bed. "It's not that I don't wish to hand them over to you. You know as well that I love seeing men fight each other. I may not have the solaria flowers, but the dragonmoon grass has already been sent to the arena as a prize for the tournament."

Elise lowered her head to think. He wasn't lying; Bryce had always loved watching boxing tournaments. Not once had he missed a single match. But Elise hadn't thought that he would simply decide to host his own tournaments.

"So, as long as I win the tournament, I can get the dragonmoon grass for free, yeah?" Elise asked.

"Of course, little El. You know that I do not allow anyone to break the rules when it comes to the arena." As Bryce spoke with a smile that didn't quite resemble one, his gaze once again shifted over to Alexander. "If you cannot participate, you can also get someone else to take your place..." I wonder what his body looks like once those clothes are off...

He had only just finished speaking when two fingers suddenly appeared in Bryce's line of sight. They then viciously jabbed into his eyes.

"Ow, ow, ow—El! How could you poke me in the eyes again!" Bryce cried out in pain as he whined with his hands over his eyes.

Elise looked at him, unfazed. Her arms were folded in front of her chest as she looked down at him. "If I hadn't jabbed your eyes, your head would have been filled with dirty thoughts. This is for your own good."

Bryce rubbed his temples. "Why, thank you. Thank you so very much!" he said through gritted teeth.

"You're welcome. We're like sisters, after all. Gotta rib you over a man!" Elise said, smirking.

"...I do not wish to talk to you now." Bryce was still licking his wounds as he waved a servant over. "Bring them to the arena."

The servant nodded before turning to beckon at Elise and Alexander. "Miss Sinclair, Mr. Griffith, please come this way!"

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Chapter 457 Furor at the Arena

It might have been hastily constructed, but the scale of the arena was beyond extraordinary. From the looks of it, it was not any shabbier than the arena for WWE tournaments.

Elise immediately spotted the dragonmoon grass lying next to the trophy. Her hands couldn't help but itch at the sight.

In the ring, two muscled fighters were battling fiercely. Every move they made was meant to be decisive, not the slightest bit of restraint shown as they hurled attack after attack at their opponent.

The man leading Elise and the others brought them around the arena. As he led them around, he explained how the tournament worked. "The rules of the arena are simple—once you're in the ring, you'll be fighting one-on-one with your opponent. The one still standing ten minutes later is the winner."

"Doesn't that mean that someone needs to be beaten to the point that they can't get up?" Danny asked naively.

He had just finished asking his question when the sound of someone falling over came from the ring.

Thump—

As one of the fighters collapsed, the other raised his arms in the air, having become the winner of this round.

"Who's next? Who's next?!" the man bragged madly as though he had limitless strength to draw on. It was as though anyone else who dared to step in the ring would be ripped into half by him.

Just as Danny was watching in stunned silence, Alexander brushed past him and walked straight toward the referee. There, he signed his name on the provided waiver before he calmly walked up the steps into the ring. Clad in a white suit, he looked like a prince right out of a painting under the lights shining down on him. He did not fit in at all with the arena with his majestic elegance.

To the audience, he just looked like he was going to be beaten into a pulp.

"Yet another guy to the slaughter!"

"Tsk tsk, he's so skinny; can he even last two minutes?"

"Hey! Sissy! Don't go crying for your ma when those clothes get dirty later, hahaha!"

The audience jeered and hooted, but Alexander was unfazed as he stood in the ring. He didn't even focus as he distantly watched his opponent rage and bellow. The man was a whole head taller than him and twice his size.

Without waiting for the starting bell, the man tossed his gloves aside and charged at Alexander, his massive fists ready to strike.

Seeing this, the referee hastily rang the bell.

The man brought his fist down as the bell rang, but before he could hit Alexander, Alexander had already lifted his leg to kick the man in the belly.

As though time had stopped, the hulking man froze on the spot. His fist remained in the same position as they had been, poised to strike. After a full three seconds, he finally withdrew his fist. With his hands over his caved-in belly, the man collapsed heavily to the ground. The impact rattled the entire ring.

Meanwhile, the bell had only just finished ringing.

The man had already fallen when the sound of the bell was still reverberating throughout the arena. Alexander was the clear winner.

A worker rushed up then to check the man's injuries. Once he had ascertained that the hulking man could no longer stand, the worker got up and lifted Alexander's right hand.

As expected, he was the official winner.

"Wow! That little thing's so delicate and frail, but he sure knows how to fight!"

"One more round! One more!"

Alexander stood in the ring, his expression chilly. He simply looked in Elise's direction and nodded.

Then, the worker next to him had only just dragged the man out of the ring when the next challenger stepped up.

Meanwhile, Elise looked for a seat with a better viewing angle before sitting down.

As expected, Alexander won his second battle.

Forty minutes later, he was already the defending champion with his streak of twelve wins. If he defeated his next opponent, he would be breaking the arena queen's record.

The thirteenth challenger was late to the ring. Just like the previous challengers, this opponent was a man. However, he had a fox mask over his face, giving him a mysterious air.

This man did not initiate the first attack like the others before him. On the contrary, both Alexander and this man kept their distance with each other, circling the ring a few times before they stopped.

Perhaps due to his waning patience, Alexander made the first move to try and end the fight quickly. However, his opponent was nimble as he dodged all of his attacks.

Over a dozen attempted strikes later, Alexander still hadn't hit the man, and this angered him. His strikes got faster and faster as well as more vicious. His patience continued to run even dryer.

Elise's eyes narrowed slightly as she watched from the stands. She could faintly sense that something wasn't right. By the time she realized that Alexander had gradually shown his weak point, she felt a serious sense of foreboding.

Just as she was about to yell out a warning, the masked man had already reached out and successfully struck at Alexander's weak point, injecting a poison into him.

Alexander brought a hand up to his injured side. He kneeled on one knee, panting.

The man in the fox mask began to approach him slowly.

Alexander gathered himself. He had already prepared himself to drag the match out until time was up.

Before the man with the fox mask could strike again, Elise jumped out from the stands. Using the momentum she gained, she leaped into the ring to kick the man away and shield Alexander.

The crowd was instantly in an uproar.

"Hey! What's a woman doing in there? That guy's signed the waiver! Referee! Where's the referee? Drag that woman out of the ring!"

"Is this two-against-one? Why is this allowed?"

"Hey pretty boy, if you can't keep fighting, you're going to have to kowtow to everyone. Don't hide your sniveling behind a woman!"

Macaque hastily ran over as well to remind Elise from the side. "Miss Sinclair, you know the rules of the arena—if the participant with the upper hand hasn't stopped fighting, no one else is allowed into the ring!"

“I know.” Elise looked at the man in the fox mask with a frigid gaze. “I believe that he was about to stop. If you don’t believe me, you can ask him.” She narrowed her eyes, her eyes clearly warning him. If the man dared to say ‘no,’ that would be throwing caution to the wind. The arena would be in a furor then. And, she would have the man pay with his life right here and now!

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Chapter 458 I’m No Longer the Same Person as Before

Macaque looked at the man in the fox mask. “What are your thoughts?” he asked.

Although Bryce had mentioned Elise’s identity to him, no one could break the arena’s rules just because of their status. Macaque might be visibly asking the man in the fox mask for his opinion, but in reality, he was hoping that the man would agree. After all, Elise was gutsy enough to hit Bryce. Macaque was actually worried that if Fox-Mask didn’t go along with her wishes, then she might rain wrath down on the arena—no, the entire black market.

The man’s mask only obscured the upper half of his face. Under everyone’s watchful gazes, his lips pressed together into a smile. Then, he spoke. “Let’s do as they wish. I don’t mind fighting against two opponents at once. It will all end the same way anyway—one side will still fall in the end.”

That arrogant challenge of a statement successfully piqued the crowd’s fervor. All of them smacked their tables or got on their chairs as they began to yell and cheer for the man in the mask.

Elise paid no attention to the racket as she turned to help Alexander up. Without giving away her emotions, she felt for his pulse. It was only after she felt his pulse fluttering under her fingers that she sighed in relief. Fortunately, the poison was a weak one. It would be easy to neutralize.

“Looks like I’ve embarrassed you,” Alexander said half-jokingly.

Elise smiled while shaking her head. “You suffered in my place.”

If it hadn’t been for him, Elise would have been the one poisoned instead and rendered unable to fight.

Alexander knew what she actually meant, but he couldn’t help revealing a bitter smile on his lips. He should have been able to hold out for a few more rounds for her.

Danny dashed over to the ring as well. Elise handed Alexander to him. “Wait for me in the stands,” she ordered.

“Hey, are you two done with your tender romance scene already?” the man in the fox mask asked impatiently, his arms folded across his chest.

Elise coldly glanced over her shoulder before she patted Alexander’s hand comfortingly. She watched as Danny helped Alexander down and out of the ring.

Once both men had left the ring, all expression on Elise’s face vanished without a trace. She turned around, a deadly gleam shining in her pretty eyes.

“Whoa, is the pretty lady angry now? What, is your heart already aching just because I hurt your boyfriend a little?” Fox-Mask mocked in a sinister tone.

Elise was in no mood for jokes. Pulling a face, she stated coldly, “Let’s begin.”

The referee rang the bell.

Fox-Mask’s smile disappeared in an instant. A terrifying aura cloaked him, as though he was a completely different person.

It was strange. It was just an instant, but Elise felt an inexplicable feeling, especially when she gazed at the fox mask. It felt like she might have known this man, but nobody who fit this man’s profile came to mind.

Before Elise could carefully analyze this feeling, however, Fox-Mask suddenly changed his tactics and struck first. He was already horrendously fast when he dodged Alexander’s attacks earlier, but his speed when he was initiating the attack was on a whole different level.

All Elise felt was a gust of wind to her face. By the time her eyes narrowed slightly, Fox-Mask was already in front of her. She knew this man was holding back his true power when he was battling Alexander. That was how he was able to get in that finishing blow right at the most crucial moment. Thus, she wanted to see just how strong the man actually was.

And so, the fight in the ring turned into a game of cat-and-mouse.

Fox-Mask was the cat. His movements were both fast and powerful. Anyone could tell with a glance that he had been trained well. Meanwhile, Elise was the mouse, her small body swift like the wind. One kept chasing his opponent while the other constantly dodged her pursuer. Their movements were like a constant series of pictures. One moment, they would be on one side of the arena. By the time the audience caught sight of them again, they had actually already changed positions quite a few times.

The audience was in a daze by the constant movements. They themselves couldn’t even compare to those two fighting in the ring right now.

“Hey, girl, fight back already. Why do you only keep dodging?!”

“I thought she’s a lioness, but it turns out that she’s just a meek little mouse. The arena isn’t a place for you to practice your dance moves. Stop showing off. If you can’t beat him, just admit defeat and beg for mercy!”

“What a bunch of idiots. Don’t look down on her just because she’s a woman. Haven’t you guys noticed that the dude in the mask still hasn’t even touched a single strand of her hair?”

“That’s my thought too. Let’s see who actually wins!”

“That skill of hers is kinda like the arena queen’s!”

“You mean that woman that no one has been able to dethrone at the arena? How’s that possible? Isn’t that just a legend?!”

“Legend, my foot! It’s true, okay? I saw one match of hers with my own eyes back in the day! That lady was brutal! Not like this softie chick here!”

“I’m going to tell you this…”

The audience’s discussions got more and more heated. The fighters in the ring didn’t slow down either as Elise once again dodged yet another blow. They stood on the left and right sides of the ring respectively, each claiming half of the ring.

Fox-Mask let out a breath. He was getting impatient now. “Is the queen of the arena reduced to mere dodging now?”

“You know who I really am?” Elise narrowed her eyes, but she soon composed herself again. Her lips curved up into a cold smile. “Looks like I can’t continue keeping a low profile!” With that, she deliberately smacked the floor of the ring and charged toward the man in the mask.

Fox-Mask stood his ground unflinchingly. When Elise neared him, his lips quirked up into a mocking smile. Then, he reached for his mask and pulled a few silver needles from under it to fling at Elise.

“Holy crap! That guy had been feinting!” Danny yelled in response to the man’s move.

Elise’s expression froze. At last, he’s shown his hand. She swiftly avoided the needles, dodging to the side and lowering herself to the point that she was almost pressed to the floor.

While she was dodging the needles, Fox-Mask quickly darted forward. He stopped right in front of Elise and lashed out with a kick.

Elise's arms shot out to block his kick, but she still ended up colliding into the pillars by the side of the ring from the sheer force. She rebounded and crashed to the floor. With one hand supporting her weight, she kneeled there, panting heavily.

"Damn that son of a b*tch! He should just fight her fair and square! How dare he pull such a dirty trick!" Danny was beside himself with fury and worry. He wished for nothing more than to go into the ring and fight in Elise's place, but he knew he would just humiliate her if he went in now.

The audience had already begun celebrating Fox-Mask's victory in advance.

Taking advantage of this opening, Fox-Mask gathered himself and once again began his assault on Elise.

Elise's speed gradually dropped as she took more hits. By now, the fight had devolved into a one-sided beating, and she was the one getting pummeled.

Alexander's eyes were narrowed slightly as he followed Elise's figure closely.

Being chased around the ring and getting beaten so easily wasn't like her.

Just as Alexander had thought, as Fox-Mask was about to attack her once more, Elise quickly whipped out a silver needle from her sleeve and charged straight at him. The man hadn't seen this coming, and he now had a needle jabbed into his throat. The next moment, he collapsed to his knees.

"You... It can't be. I've gone through all your arena records. You don't know how to fight with silver needles at all!" Fox-Mask cried out in disbelief.

"That's right... I didn't know how to wield silver needles then," Elise said breezily. "But I'm no longer the same person as before..."

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Chapter 459 Let's Finish What We Started Today

Fox-Mask's eyes widened under his mask. At last, the fear of death could be seen in them.

Elise's hand suddenly stopped as she was about to pluck his mask off. A man who was afraid of dying was not worthy of being her opponent.

"However," Elise said as she slowly stood up and looked down at him. "A single needle is not enough punishment for someone who hurt my man."

As she spoke, she pulled out all the silver needles that she had been hiding on her person. Then, she jabbed the needles all over the man's body in front of the audience. Once the last needle was in place, Elise clapped. "From now on, the spots where the needles are will ache unimaginably whenever the weather takes a turn for the worse. You won't be able to sleep from the pain. Don't think about forcing those needles out; if you try, the pain will be ten times worse than if I had just jabbed the needles into your bones."

"You made my man suffer a moment of pain. I'm going to make you suffer a lifetime's worth of pain. Treating others the way you want to be treated is a fair way to live, isn't it?" Elise raised an eyebrow as she said casually.

Fox-Mask didn't answer her; he had no words. Rebutting would only bring an even more frightening punishment.

Elise thought for a moment before she decided to still take the man's mask off. Just as she was about to reach out, one of Bryce's men suddenly came forward to speak to her earnestly. "Miss Sinclair, please have mercy. This man is the star of our arena. If he dies, I'm going to have a hard time explaining his death to Master Bryce."

"He's one of yours?" Elise turned, her gaze harsh as she narrowed her eyes at the underling, as though she was trying to burn a hole through him.

"Yes."

Elise chuckled coldly and withdrew her hand. "Nice. You're one of Bryce's men. Very nice!"

Then, the referee rang the bell.

Elise stood in the ring, the previous reigning champion of the arena lying next to her. At this, no one else dared to challenge her.

Even so, Bryce's subordinate still had to ask Bryce for permission before he brought over the sole sprig of dragonmoon grass that the black market had. He handed it over to Elise.

"My apologies, Miss Sinclair. It's our responsibility to protect the dragonmoon grass and keep it from being taken away by outsiders. It wasn't our intention to hurt your fiancé. I've already ordered someone to bring him the antidote. Please, you're an honorable person. Please don't tell Master Bryce about this incident. Spare us." As the subordinate spoke, he pressed the dragonmoon grass into Elise's hand.

Now that she had the dragonmoon grass, Elise brought it up to her nose and sniffed it. Once she had confirmed that it was the genuine article through its smell, she turned to

look at the subordinate again. "I prefer proper compensation over apologies. I'm sure you know what I want."

"As long as it's something that I have, I will certainly hand it over if you say the word. However, not even Master Bryce has any solaria flowers, let alone me. I may oversee the black market, but I can't give you something that never reaches it, can I?" The subordinate had a pained look on his face, his tone indicating his plea.

"If that's the case, let's finish what we started today."

Elise's expression chilled. She lifted her leg and kicked the subordinate. He flew several feet away and crashed into the stone steps leading into the spectators' stands. When he hit the ground, he hacked up a mouthful of blood.

As the overseer of the black market, Bryce's subordinate was not only its leader; he had also built many advantageous relationships with others, and he was on good terms with many other people operating within the black market. So when the spectators saw that he was injured, practically everyone stood up and looked at Elise, ready to fight her.

"Stop! Don't do anything! This is a personal matter between me and Miss Sinclair! She has already shown me mercy! Or I would have died by now!"

With that, he coughed a few more times. His spit was streaked with blood. Despite all the blood, he was still courteous and respectful toward Elise. "I cannot thank you enough for your benevolence and allowing me to keep my life, Miss Sinclair," he said while bowing.

"You're a smart man." Elise didn't so much as look at him. "Bryce made the right choice when he handed the black market over to you to manage."

"You flatter me, Miss Sinclair." Feebly, the subordinate lowered his head. He didn't dare to say anything deeper than that.

Elise dipped her head before she turned and walked over to the stands to help Alexander up. "How do you feel?"

"It's nothing big. I just feel a little drained," Alexander said.

"Don't worry, Miss Sinclair. That poison works in the same way as tranquilizers you see in action movies and the like. It just causes a person to temporarily lose their strength; it's harmless," Macaque explained.

"Regardless of the poison's strength, those under me should not have been poisoned at all," Elise said with a straight face.

Bryce's subordinate froze before he hastily nodded and acquiesced. "Y-You're absolutely right! I'll tell them to hurry it up. The antidote will be here soon!"

He had just finished saying that when the antidote was brought to him. Bryce's subordinate then offered the bottle of antidote to Elise with both hands.

Elise took the antidote bottle. After opening it, she handed the bottle to Alexander. "Drink up. They won't dare to tamper with its contents as long as I'm here."

Alexander smiled wryly. He was in awe of her attention toward him. However, he didn't say anything in response. Instead, he simply drank the antidote. With his head still lowered, he noticed the anxiety on Elise's face, so he teased, "You weren't this serious while you were in the ring."

"They aren't as important as you," Elise blurted. It was only then that she realized what she had just said. She bit her lip and quickly changed the topic. "Feeling any better?"

Alexander chuckled softly and played along. "Since when do antidotes work immediately after they're taken? Give it a few more minutes."

"Sure." Elise pretended to be serious as she nodded. She had no idea why she felt like this. Alexander's injury was clearly a minor one, but her heart was still in a frenzy. Although she knew that Fox-Mask wouldn't have killed Alexander, fear still lingered within her heart when she recalled that scene.

Her teacher was right—having someone she cared about meant having a weakness. If something were to happen to Alexander, she would probably lose the ability to fight.

At that thought, the cogs began to whir in Elise's head as she tried to find a way to have the best of both worlds, so that she wouldn't have to keep avoiding Alexander yet keep themselves protected.

Now that the notion had struck her, Elise ended up thinking about this problem during the entire journey back.

Alexander quietly leaned back in his car seat to rest after he had taken the antidote. Perhaps it was because of the late hour, but Alexander ended up falling asleep. The lights outside the car zoomed by, illuminating Elise's face one moment and leaving it in darkness the next. However, her pretty forehead remained scrunched up the entire time.

All of a sudden, someone's phone rang. Alexander woke up from his light nap, but he didn't open his eyes.

Elise distractedly picked up the phone and placed it by her ear. "Who's this?"

“Yoyo? Yoyo, you finally picked up! Please, come to the hospital this instant. The doctors have already issued a notice of critical illness. Please come see your brother one last time. He wants to see you!”

Jeanie was sobbing into the phone. Her voice hitched and paused throughout the call. Clearly, she was already beside herself with panic.

Elise’s forehead immediately creased deeply. She gripped the phone even tighter. “What’s the address? Tell me, which hospital is it?!”

“Athesea! Athesea General Hospital!” Jeanie cried out.

Her voice carried over the speaker and leaked over into the interior of the car. Alexander couldn’t help opening his eyes and sitting up straight.

“All right, I’ll be there soon. Don’t worry. He’ll be fine.” At that, Elise calmly hung up. But her gaze was hollow as she stared off into the distance, her eyes unseeing and unfocused.

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Chapter 460 She’s Smiling!

Alexander took Elise’s phone. Then, he reached out and pulled her into his embrace with one arm while he covered her hand with the other, warming her hand up.

“Cameron, step on it,” Alexander stated solemnly.

Elise leaned against his chest. She couldn’t describe the panic she was feeling. She had thought that she was already used to death, and she was also distant toward her family. And yet, now that this moment was actually here, all she could think of was all the various times Trevor had been nice to her.

There was the time when he brazenly avoided Faye and acknowledged her as his only younger sister, the time when he had summoned the courage to return to the company and fight for her status for her, how he had viewed Alexander as his nemesis, how he wanted to stay at her side forever to protect her, all those times when they chatted over meals, when he called her his sister, and when there had been a sense of camaraderie...

Elise vigorously shook her head. She forced herself not to think about them. As long as I’m indifferent to it all, I won’t be upset.

She kept repeating those words to herself. But when she finally reached the hospital and saw Trevor lying in the bed with his entire body bloodied, Elise still lost it.

“Claude! Where’s Claude?” Elise whipped herself around to find him, only to realize that Claude wasn’t here. “Danny, weren’t you watching him?!” she asked in a panic.

“I... I was with you all the whole time. That guy slipped away so quickly that I couldn’t keep up with him!”

Elise shook her head. “No way. Claude is one of mine. Bryce knows our movements like the back of his hand. It’s impossible for his men not to discover that one of us is missing...”

So, they had to be purposefully hiding the truth. Or, Claude had actually been kidnapped by Bryce’s men!

However, Elise didn’t get the chance to keep mulling this over; the heart monitor showed that Trevor’s heartbeat was getting weaker.

“Alexander!” Elise grabbed him as she said frantically, “I’ve used up all my needles. Find me some needles, quickly. Trevor can’t die. My brother can’t die!”

She finally called Trevor her brother.

But he couldn’t die without hearing her call him that!

Seeing how upset Elise was, Jeanie once again broke down after she had managed to control herself. “Yoyo.” She tamped down her emotions as she stepped forward to support Elise. “Calm down a little. Your brother will be happy that you acknowledged him. This isn’t your fault.”

“No, I can save him! I can still save him!” Elise didn’t know how to explain herself. All she could do was look at Alexander and beg him with her eyes. “Please believe me. Alexander, bring me the needles!”

Alexander and her locked gazes for a few seconds. His eyes darkened. Then, he turned around and vanished down the corridor.

Every scrap of Elise’s strength left her that instant, and she collapsed to the ground in despair. Does he not believe me?

Behind her, the waves displayed on the heart monitor grew smaller and smaller. A minute later, all that was shown was a flat line.

All at once, tears streamed down from her eyes and splashed to the ground. Elise stared at the world through her hazy tears. A massive weight of helplessness crushed her.

At this moment, the sound of running footsteps could be heard from the corridor.

Elise lifted her head and looked in the direction of the sound to see Alexander running toward her. His side still hadn't healed yet; he even had to press a hand to the injury on his side.

And yet, he still kept running with all he had.

"Hurry." Alexander came to a stop at last and handed over the bag of silver needles he was holding.

After a moment of staring, the despair in Elise's eyes cleared. She quickly took the needles and turned to charge into Trevor's room before locking the door from the inside.

Knock, knock, knock—

"Please calm yourself! The patient is no longer showing any signs of life!" The nurse calmly knocked on the door. As nurses, they were already used to seeing people die.

Jeanie had a hand over her mouth as she burst into tears. However, she still forced herself to rein in her emotions, sobbing as she tried to advise Elise through the door. "Yoyo, please don't be like this. Let Trevor pass on peacefully. Please don't cling to him like this..."

Alexander quietly stepped forward and blocked the door. "The patient's family still has something to tell him. You can leave them be."

The nurse looked at him up close. She bit her lip, too shy to meet his gaze. However, her voice softened drastically. "Then, please console her."

"Don't worry. She's my fiancée. Of course I know how to take care of her. I don't need you to remind me about that," Alexander stated, his tone brooking no argument.

At the mention of the word 'fiancée,' the nurse's expression did a one-eighty. Gritting her teeth, she dashed off angrily.

Not long after that, Austin arrived at last. Jeanie ran over and wrapped her arms around him. "Austin, Trevor is gone. Our son is gone..."

Austin nearly collapsed then, but he still forced himself to hold back his grief as the sole pillar of the family. He held his wife and quietly comforted her. "It's okay. I'm still here. This family won't break down as long as I'm here."

"It's Faye!" Jeanie accused. "It has to be her. She wants to kill you and our son. Look at what happened to Trevor in the end. You can't let anything happen to yourself. No, we have to drive her away and out of the Anderson Family!"

“Jeanie...” Austin’s voice trailed off as he released her. “Don’t let your anger get the better of you.”

“I’m not just saying this because I’m upset!” Jeanie stubbornly whipped her arms back. “Ever since that woman joined the family, the household hasn’t known peace. She was practically sent to torture us. Why haven’t you seen the truth yet? Don’t tell me that you also want Yoyo’s life to be threatened as well?!”

Tears were welling in Jeanie’s eyes as she laid out her accusations. Her gaze went over Austin’s shoulder to see Faye standing by the entrance to the elevator behind him. A crazed smile hung on Faye’s face.

“She’s smiling!” Jeanie grabbed Austin’s arm in a panic and attempted to make him turn around.

Austin struggled in place. Only after several moments of hesitation did he finally turn around. However, all he saw was Faye with a look of concern on her face as she dashed over.

“Mom, Dad, how’s Trevor?” Faye furrowed her brows as she asked, an uneasy look on her face.

“No! It wasn’t like this!” Jeanie pointed at Faye in fear as she spoke. “I saw it clearly just now—she was smiling! Austin, that woman was smiling even though Trevor is dead! She’s far too terrifying. You can’t stay around her!”

But Faye sniffled and put on a pitiful look. “Mom, why are you still accusing me during a time like this? I’m also heartbroken because of Trevor’s death. Do you have to rub salt into my wounds?”

“That’s enough...” Austin was already worn-down from losing his son at a young age. There was no way he could handle both women now, so he pulled Jeanie over to the side to talk to her. “Jeanie, listen to me. Faye isn’t as awful as you say she is...”

Jeanie couldn’t process anything he said. Her fists clenched tightly as she looked at Faye. She didn’t dare to shift her gaze away for even a moment.

Just as Jeanie expected, Faye’s expression changed the moment Austin turned his back to her. It transformed into one of insanity, of demented unrestraint.

Faye was the one behind Trevor’s death. Jeanie was sure of it.