

Garden 69

Vol. 3 Chapter 10.1 - The bitter with the sweet

The month went by quickly, and by the second month, the butler had tapered off in intensity, whether because he was getting tired or because he had nothing left to teach. Kloff's posture was perfect, and he had already read dozens of liberal arts books. He even played footsies with Aeroc, entangling their legs together.

After that, the butler made a ridiculous attempt to teach Kloff to play a musical instrument, but he gave up after Kloff nearly damaged a valuable treasure violin. From the beginning, Kloff had impeccable table manners and was excellent at horseback riding. He was versatile in all other sports, and there was hardly anyone who could defeat him in swordsmanship. But now, there was nothing left to nitpick him about, so they ultimately returned to square one. It was a matter of his social status.

"Do you have any accomplishments? Don't bring up your wealth."

"Not yet."

"Then I shall wait."

He gritted his teeth, but there was nothing he could do. Even before the butler told him to never dream of officially marrying the Count, he had already half given up. Instead, he made up his mind to establish Aeroc as his rightful omega during this next heat. The butler would probably not like it, but he wouldn't be able to do anything if they made an accident. Aeroc seemed surprisingly a little disappointed, realizing that they couldn't have a wedding ceremony, and probably couldn't for a long time.

“If you want to do it grandly, I suppose you could publicly announce yourself as Omega and have a big ceremony in the cathedral.”

Kloff said that half to tease him, but Aeroc seriously considered it. It would be right for him to reject it outright as it could threaten the position of the Count, but seeing that he couldn't do it, Kloff was overjoyed and had to restrain himself from immediately kneeling before Aeroc and making a grand proposal. He wanted to save this for later. After a while, Aeroc shook his head.

“I can't, not yet. But we can't just let it pass like this.”

“Of course. How about we have a simple meal?”

“A feast? Where?”

“Anywhere. Wherever you like.”

Aeroc went back to his thought again, then nodded. Kloff held Aeroc's hand and kissed the back of it. And just as he was about to kiss again on his lips, he was interrupted by the butler's coughing fit, as if he had contracted lung disease.

“I will prepare for the feast.”

“I'll leave it to you then. By the way, it's not a feast, just a dinner. I'd like it to be as private as possible.”

“Don’t worry about it.”

Although the butler was very strict and intimidating, he was also very thorough in his work, so after saying that, Kloff was able to go to his office that day without any further troubles. Aeroc stood by the window, looking at him. Kloff looked up at him, smiled, and raised his hand, and Aeroc raised his in return. There wouldn’t be many days left for them to part like this. After this upcoming heat, Kloff would protect his wife and child by their side. No one, butler or otherwise, would have the right to stop him then.

In the weeks leading up to the celebratory dinner, he would occasionally stop by the estate, but nothing much happened. Instead, he worked day and night to elevate his social status. Kloff organized the tasks he had started and handed them over to reliable colleagues in the industry, only dealing with major clients, and devoted the remaining time to managing national funds.

He’s still at an early stage, so there haven’t been significant achievements yet, but Kloff was confident that he would see the light of day before the year ended. People who exerted their influence in this field held high positions, so Kloff became quite busy meeting with them. As a result, he visited the estate less frequently. As Aeroc was safe and sound at the estate, he didn’t get too worried.

As the promised day drew nearer, Kloff felt his heart pounding strangely for no reason. Especially when he touched the ring he had prepared again, perfectly matching Aeroc’s finger, he couldn’t calm down even more. It wasn’t like this when he prepared a proposal for Rapiel before. This time, he felt nervous and anxious. He even had a slight fear that things might go wrong.

“Kloff Bandyke, if you’re already like this now, how will you do later?”

He tried to control his excitement, but it was difficult to suppress the smile that kept creeping out. Seeing his superior chuckling to himself, the secretary looked at him like he was a crazy person, so Kloff pretended to clear his throat as if nothing happened.

On the promised day, Kloff dressed more immaculately than usual. He wore his perfect suit which was polished by Martha, even in his eyes, he was looking quite good. After waving goodbye to Martha, who begged him to return with success this time, Kloff went to the estate. And as soon as he entered the entrance, he couldn't close his mouth at the sight of carriages bustling around the Count's estate.

Moreover, when he entered the estate's entrance, the butler dressed in a formal suit raised his head and greeted him, saying, "Hello, Sir. May I see your invitation?"

"What invitation? And how is this a private dinner?"

"It has been prepared privately. Following the Count's standards, of course."

He gritted his teeth and glared at the butler, but the situation had already occurred, and there was no way to rectify it. Seeing the butler with a faint smile, Kloff was sure he had been tricked. He trusted him too easily. This fox-like cunning old man.

It was useless to grab the butler and talk him down. He had to find Aeroc right away. Following the footman's guidance, he entered the estate and found that there were tables set up outdoors instead of a dining hall. Seeing the lavishly decorated table and garden, just like the previous soirée, he felt dizzy for a moment.

The Count's finances were in much better shape thanks to Kloff's efforts, so this wasn't a big problem, but the important thing was, how could they think this whole feast as a private dinner? Especially when he saw someone talking to a huge alpha with silver eyes then saw Kloff and waved at him. That guy was his former fiancé! Kloff felt like he was going to faint, but he decided to find the culprit first, strangle him, before fainting himself.

"Aeroc!"

He rushed to him across the feast hall. Some guests looked at Kloff and extended their hands, saying, "I heard it's a special day for you. Is it your birthday?" He smiled his best hospitality smile unknowingly and said, "No, it's not my birthday. There must be some misunderstanding." He hastily shook their hands.

"Please excuse me. I'm looking for the Count."

"If it's Teiwind, I saw him over there."

He quickly ran in the direction pointed out by the guests. Amidst the bustling crowd of busy servants serving the guests, in the center of the garden's huge feast hall, he spotted Aeroc in a dazzling white suit.

He looked even more radiant than usual, and the moment he saw Kloff, he suddenly lost the usual masked smile as if he had thrown it away somewhere and smiled beautifully, as if Kloff was dreaming. At that moment, not only Kloff but everyone around him looked at him at the same time.

"The Count seems exceptionally charming today."

“Oooh, I wonder if something happened to him. He does look very happy.”

“Could he have fallen in love?”

“Who is this lucky Omega? Is it Westport’s?”

Hearing that, Kloff’s mind cleared instantly. He grabbed Aeroc’s arm, who was smiling generously toward anyone.

“Please excuse us. I have something urgent to discuss with the Count.”

The bluntness of his tone startled the guests who had just been chatting, but they didn’t protest, knowing that Kloff was the Count’s financial manager and that they had an oddly close relationship. Aeroc and Kloff were already known to have a close relationship among the aristocrats. Although there were opinions that it was an incomprehensible friendship between eccentric bachelor alphas, people shrugged it off easily as they saw Kloff dragging Aeroc by the arm to a corner.

“What are you doing, behaving so rudely towards the guests? Everyone is looking at you strangely.”

Surprisingly, Aeroc was the one to get angry. But since they couldn’t argue here, Kloff took him to a secluded corner in the garden where no one was present. Since the incident of violence before, no one approached where Kloff was, but just in case, he asked a passing maid to block the area so that no one

could come this way. The maid, who was the Count's servant and knew well that their relationship was more than an 'incomprehensible friendship', nodded quietly.

As soon as they reached the corner, Kloff grabbed Aeroc by the collar and snarled.

"How is this a simple dinner?"

"But I've already reduced the guest list by half."

Aeroc waved off Kloff's hand, irritated. His appearance was so dazzlingly beautiful that Kloff wanted to knock him down right away, but he had to control it because he needed to express his anger first. He deliberately put his hands on his hips and paced back and forth, arguing and raising his voice. Otherwise, he felt like he would give away his excitement.

"I thought there wouldn't be any guests!"

"How can there not be guests at a feast? Don't be absurd."

They really were bad at communicating. Initially, all Kloff wanted was a romantic moment of sharing high-quality wine while whispering to each other privately, just the two of them. The last thing that he wanted was a grand banquet with all the aristocrats gathered, including his former fiancé. But it seemed that his intentions didn't get through Aeroc at all. Disappointed, Kloff loosened his tie and sighed.