

Garden 84

Vol. 3 Chapter Scene #2 - Into the rose garden

Aeroc suddenly regained his senses.

He heard the sound of a calm breeze from all directions. As he stood up, he found himself in a secluded corner of a peaceful garden. At that moment, a heavy silence settled over him. The breeze that had been rustling just a moment ago ceased, and the shade turned into a dense darkness that clung to his ankles. The silence was so cold that it made his ears numb. He wanted to scream, but somehow no sound came out. Panicked, he looked up and saw a rose garden in the distance. In the midst of it, a gaunt man was laughing with a group of children.

Ah, my Kloff.

Aeroc reached out his arms. However, he slipped away through his hazy fingers.

Kloff!

With a voice muffled in silence, he tried to call out, but Kloff didn't turn towards him. There was a beautiful man with blond hair smiling beside Kloff, speaking softly to him.

Ah... It was just a dream after all.

The cruel reality weighed heavily on his shoulders. Barely able to support his crumbling body, he took a few uncertain steps forward.

Thud.

He didn't need to look down. It must be the sound of a lively, vibrant flow of blood. Before the darkness that engulfed everything came rushing in from all sides, he wanted to watch over Kloff and the children a bit longer. He blinked his blurring vision and barely focused his gaze.

Then Kloff looked back at him. And Aeroc smiled at him.

That was enough. Even if it was just a fleeting dream, Aeroc was happy.

Kloff's indifferent expression gradually turned into surprise. He opened his eyes wide and seemed startled, then shouted, "Aeroc!" and ran towards him.

...Huh?

Before he could say anything, Kloff lunged for him and threw his arms around his stiffened body.

"What's wrong? Why are you crying?"

“Ah...”

He was so startled that his frozen vocal cords moved involuntarily and made a strange sound. Beyond the broad shoulders emitting a bitter scent, he saw a blond person looking in their direction. Another tall man stood beside them. They were both looking at him with a bit of concern in their eyes. Ah.

“K... Kloff?”

“Are you hurt somewhere?”

“It’s not that...”

Kloff’s hands engulfed Aeroc’s clueless and bewildered face. Then he grimaced and kissed his cheek. It was a very warm and affectionate kiss. For a moment, Aeroc couldn’t breathe.

“You said you were going to harvest some rhizomes, but why are you crying?”

“I don’t really... know too...”

It was then. Two kids who were playing in the garden ran over to this side, chirping, “Mom! Mom!” as they clung to Aeroc’s legs. He stared blankly down at the children. Among them, a boy with deep black hair grabbed Aeroc’s hand and asked,

“Did Father say something mean again?”

Aeroc shook his head, not knowing who was the father of this child.

“He just suddenly cried. Why does the blame always fall on me?”

“That’s because you have an impressive record for it.”

The boy gave that jab and Kloff responded with, “Homework.” Then, with a scream, the boy dashed away.

Watching the two children, one carrying his blonde little sister, running as if they were about to stumble, Aeroc shouted without realizing it,

“Be careful, Lenoc! Yurea might fall.”

“Yes, Mom!”

H saw the child turning around while waving his hand.

Lenoc.

Ah... Yes, that child's name was Lenoc. Aeroc and Kloff's first son. Yurea was their first omega daughter.

All memories came flooding back. Aeroc let out a rueful laugh and clung to the man who was looking at him with concern.

"Why were you crying?"

"It's just, I stood up too fast and felt dizzy."

"I told you to be careful since you're in the early stages of pregnancy."

"You're nagging again."

While giving him a reproachful remark, Aeroc nodded his head. He looked down worriedly and planted a quick kiss on the top of Aeroc's head. Tears flowed even more as he felt the pressure against him. With strong arms wrapped around his waist, Aeroc was led from the shade into the sunlit rose garden. With each step they took, there was a stomping sound.

As they stepped out of the shade, Aeroc turned back. He saw the pebbles that Kloff had laid at Aeroc's request shimmering in the light. Aeroc leaned against the shoulder of the man who held him and wiped the last of his tears away, smiling.

The darkness was gone now, and the brilliant light filled everything.