

Garden 88

Vol. 4 Chapter 1.4 - Hey, you, beautiful Count. What's your name? What's your number?

"Purchase order."

With just those words, the curator wiped his sweat, ran off and started hurriedly writing the purchase order. He had bought so many items, so it took quite a bit of time. In the meantime, Aeroc waited for a while on the sofa in the lounge which was only open to important customers. Sitting across from him, Kloff stared at him intently. He was still holding onto that darn flower. He must really want to take it to the grave.

"I didn't know you were such a wealthy person."

"Hmph, which part of me seemed poor to you?"

"I didn't mean it like that. It's enviable that you can have whatever you want."

"Is there a need to be envious? You can get what you want by just giving a cheap smile. You got a flower from just smiling, if you kissed her, you would've gotten the whole bouquet."

It was quite a nasty sarcasm. Aeroc didn't think Kloff really intended to do that. At least the rational part of him thought so. However, his emotions wouldn't allow it. What was good about a flower? It was just a common rose. Although it was a far cry from the high-class roses grown at the estate, Aeroc couldn't help but feel jealous of how beautiful that shabby rose was. Sadly.

Kloff seemed a little shocked. A sharp light flickered in his deep eyes before being overshadowed by subsequent embarrassment. Aeroc regretted saying that.

“...I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to say that on purpose.”

“It’s alright.”

Kloff shook his head nonchalantly, his strong thumb and long index finger twirling the stem of the flower. The slightly withered red flower fluttered, and its petals spread wide. His gaze was involuntarily fixed on it.

“I wonder if I ever bought flowers before?”

“What?”

“It feels unexpectedly unfamiliar, yet I feel strangely familiar with the repulsiveness at the same time. I wonder what kind of person I was. When I see this red flower, it’s as if someone comes to mind.”

“Who?”

Aeroc leaned closer, looking straight at Kloff.

“There’s a person who comes to your mind when you look at the rose?”

“I can’t say for sure, but someone delicate, slim, with a sad smile... A vague feeling remains, so I can’t recall exactly who it is. It’s someone like this slightly withered flower... Maybe I have given him a flower before. Looking at this, I feel like memories might resurface. Based on people’s reactions, it seems I might have had a quite nasty temper, but surprisingly, I also seem to have romantic memories. Haha.”

As he spoke, he let out a subdued laugh. Suddenly, a broken door seemed to appear in Aeroc’s chest. Through it, a cold gust of wind blew fiercely. If losing his memory was a sign of something, what should Aeroc do? He had barely managed to push away the cold, painful memories. But now, if they returned... Kloff must have realized Aeroc’s wavering heart, he suddenly raised his head and looked at Aeroc.

“Are you in pain again?”

“Ah... No.”

“Your complexion is pale.”

“I’m just a bit tired.”

Just right at that moment, the curator returned with the order form. Without even looking at it, Aeroc signed it quickly and then called for a carriage to return to the estate. During the ride in the carriage, Kloff kept glancing at Aeroc. He seemed concerned, and if the carriage jolted even slightly, Kloff would

reach out to gently embrace Aeroc, all the while holding the withering flower in his hand. Aeroc rejected the gentle reach of Kloff's hand and stared out the window.

"Did your outing go smoothly?"

Hugo, who had come to the entrance to greet them, opened the carriage door himself and inquired about their well-being. However, Aeroc only replied briefly, "Not really," and went straight to his room. The nuance was off, and Hugo could feel Kloff trying to grab him from behind. But it wasn't in his duty to meddle between them.

The receipt from the art gallery was placed into the box that Kloff had designated before. He carefully closed the sturdy wooden lid and tears fell onto the back of his hand.

"People do say that tears come easily when you're pregnant."

He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. The pain in his stomach returned. He scolded himself for blaming the puppy again.

"It's not your fault. I'm sorry."

He pressed his hands against his abdomen, trying to ease the pain. Tears streaked down his face as he tried to soothe his fussing child, forgetting to wipe his own tears.

Despite using the excuse of being tired to skip dinner, Hugo didn't allow him to. Thankfully, Martha was on a short vacation, leaving the mansion. No, maybe it was unfortunate. He wanted to scold her and be sullen with her. If it were Martha, she might fix the fool's stupid symptom with a hit of her frying pan. But Aeroc didn't want to disturb her on her brief visit to her family. She should be back in a few days.

He washed his face and sat at the dining table with an indifferent expression. Across the long dining table, Kloff sat. He used to be discontent with Hugo's petty grumpiness, but today, they were quite welcome. Facing Kloff right now was a challenge. He wanted to eat quickly and leave the table as soon as possible.

"By the way, Angel."

While having their meal, Kloff called him. When Aeroc looked up, Kloff smiled gently. He was someone who usually smiled with self-confidence, but at the sight of him smiling very kindly without a trace of aggressive possessiveness, it felt like the blood vessels in Aeroc's chest were constricting.

Aeroc had seen that expression before, but he used to smile like that at someone other than himself. A needle pricked Aeroc's heart deeply. His hand was shaking as he held the juice glass.

Right, if Kloff had lost his memories... then for him, it was before everything happened. Right now, he was the original Kloff himself.

Aeroc recalled distant memories that he had forgotten before.

The natural self-assuredness that absorbed people and his gentle strength. Kloff wasn't originally the type to be stubborn and greedy. He had undoubtedly changed because of Aeroc, even if he, himself,

didn't know it. Once Kloff regained his memories, Aeroc might have to let him go. This thought hurt his heart. The area around his eyes burned black. Fortunately, no tears fell down. The hot and burning tears evaporated away.

Grinning, Kloff set the teacup in his hand on the table and turned to Aeroc, who was drifting away in his newfound realization.

"I've been wanting to ask for a while now, but what is our relationship?"

Suddenly, judgment was thrown at him. Aeroc wasn't prepared for it yet. From where and how should he explain? Aeroc didn't know.

In the past, you should have lived happily with your wife and child. But I committed a grave sin against them, and I turned a blind eye to it. In the end, you came back for revenge. I faced a death that was appropriate for my crime. But that's just a comfort to me, it didn't relieve your pain at all.

The merciful gods took pity on your wife and child, who died innocent. They made a miracle and gave you a second chance, but I ruined it. You were separated from the one person who could have brought you happiness, yet I became a cat burglar and turned into an omega. Even if I pretended to not like you, when you hovered around me, I seduced you and eventually had a child with you, because you had imprinted on me in a previous life. How shameless can a person be? How far can I forget my own shame?

Ah, is this his third chance? Poor Kloff. So that he's able to pursue his complete happiness. So he can escape from a sinner like me.

Aeroc's eyelids grew hot. The half-filled apple juice shook. Even if he tried to endure it, his vision blurred, and his chest was filled with guilt. The puppy whimpered again. It hurt. But he couldn't console the puppy.

"Why are you crying?"

A bewildered Kloff got up from his seat and approached. He sat down on one knee next to Aeroc, who had his head lowered and was shedding tears silently. Then, he gently wiped away the tears tenderly.

"I don't know what's going on, but did I ask an inappropriate question?"

Aeroc shook his head.

I don't have the right to accept your worries. I have to tell him the truth. Rapiel got married not too long ago and left. I can't stay by your side just because things didn't work out between you two. Misfortunes will continue to come. You've lost your memories. It's a chance for you to start again.

Tears poured out like a torrent, and Aeroc couldn't look at Kloff properly.