

Garden 89

Vol. 4 Chapter 1.5 - Hey, you, beautiful Count. What's your name? What's your number?

"Shhh, don't cry. Have I done something wrong?"

It was a warm voice Aeroc had heard in distant memories, a voice from someone else. Even a simple "You're okay" seemed to carry a powerful force that would make everything truly okay. The most powerful and gentle comfort in the world was consoling the deep loneliness hidden in his heart.

As the Count of Teiwind, Aeroc was surrounded by many people. There were always social gatherings, and he participated in various charitable organizations. Even selecting from among the countless invitations that were flown to him took time. Each approach had a purpose. Patronage or friendship.

There weren't that many people interested in Aeroc himself, not as the Count of Teiwind. Even if there were, most of them only wanted his appearance, making it difficult to have real conversations. It was fine at first, since he was an orphan and had no close family. He missed his mother terribly and, at times, even longed for his strict father.

He disguised his cold emptiness with a polite smile. He tried hard to uphold the dignity of the Teiwint Count as his father had taught him. However, even after becoming an adult, Aeroc was just a child yearning for his mother's embrace. That's why he fell for Kloff Bendyke, who stood in stark contrast to his loneliness. He really hated Rapiel, who was loved by him. So much that he thought if only Rapiel wasn't there, he might have been able to have Kloff. But he realized that someone who knew love could become terribly cruel.

"Please don't cry."

Kloff tried to comfort him, not realizing that his words of reassurance only brought tears to Aeroc's eyes. His heart ached. There had never been comfort for Count Aeroc Teiwind to begin with. Aeroc had paid a terrible price for it, and yet he still sought what he could not have.

He barely managed to shake his head and brushed Kloff's hand away, wiping his tears with his own hand. Kloff smiled in embarrassment.

"Did we have a close relationship? Enough for you to be upset because I don't remember you?"

Instead of answering, Aeroc pressed his lips together and forced back the tears. He tried to bury his tears and find his composure. He didn't want to delay this any longer.

"We're friends, Kloff. You're my accountant and property manager, and I'm your client. Nothing more, nothing less."

"But why are you crying? Why am I staying in this house and receiving Angel's care?"

"That's because you got hurt when you visited my house. Regardless of who it is, if someone gets hurt in my house, I'm responsible. I'm crying because I feel sorry for you, who lost your memories. It's nothing more, nothing less than that too."

Aeroc tried to speak firmly but was slightly trembling from the tears. Kloff furrowed his brow, then asked, "Is that so?" But he didn't say anything more.

Kloff stayed in his own room, not far away from Aeroc's. Although it was referred to as a guest room, it was originally a room used by generations of Teiwind Countesses. At first, Hugo had seemed pleased to have Kloff finally using a different room from Aeroc's. But when Kloff responded with a polite "Thank you," Hugo looked taken aback. Before Aeroc went to bed, Hugo couldn't help but let his rare curiosity slip.

"Will his current condition really last for a long time?"

When the reticent butler asked that question, it was a sign of great concern.

"To be honest, I'm not sure. We can only hope for a fast recovery."

He added that, when Martha returns from her vacation, he'll explain the situation and discuss how to proceed. It felt like things would be resolved the moment Martha returned. Until then, Kloff's work was temporarily suspended. Aeroc had sent a letter to the accounting office in advance, explaining the temporary break due to an accident. Based on the various discussions they had, it seemed like he hadn't completely lost his knowledge and might be able to return soon.

That night was exceptionally lonely. The large bed couldn't be any colder. In a dream, he gave birth to a beautiful puppy. He proudly extended it towards Kloff, who stood not far away, looking at him.

'Our baby. Isn't he lovely?'

Kloff didn't move at all. In the dim shadow, only his cold pupils shone brightly.

'Kloff?'

'Same... like what you did before... kill it.'

The warm space retreated, and the surroundings turned into a cold cabin. Kloff reached out with a hand resembling the Grim Reaper's scythe and snatched the puppy away. Then he disappeared, leaving only Aeroc behind.

"No, don't go!"

Aeroc sat up, nearly screaming. It seemed like he had almost screamed. Looking around, he realized he was in his usual room. His heart was pounding intensely. He was short of breath. He tried to sit up properly and regulate his breath, but it didn't work. His cheeks grew warm again. Maybe it would be okay if he waited for a moment. This wasn't an unusual nightmare to him. If he waited a little, he would calm down.

But his racing heart didn't calm down easily. It was his first time suffering alone after having a nightmare. Ever since Kloff had come to the mansion, he had always managed to ease his tense self. With a soothing hush, Kloff calmed his adult self like a baby. When he gently stroked his back with his large hand, it unbelievably made Aeroc feel better.

But now, Kloff wasn't by his side. The space next to him was as cold as ice. Even if he burrowed into the blanket, his body still shook like a willow tree. At this rate, the puppy might get scared and wake up. He tried his best to make himself comfortable for the sake of the puppy. He took deep breaths and silently sang the lullaby he had practiced so many times. It was of no use. He was too scared to fall asleep.

He crouched and trembled for a while. Despite constantly rubbing his hands and feet to warm them, it was futile. Just then, the distant sound of thunder reached his ears. It seemed like rain was coming. He really disliked it. If he fell asleep like this, he felt like he might never wake up again. It might be better to give up on sleep, even though he would get scolded later. As long as he didn't get caught, it should be okay.

He decided to go to the study and read a book. He put on his robe and took his pillow too. The pillow was more comfortable than the cushions in the study. He considered bringing a blanket too, but refrained. It would be troublesome if he fell asleep there. Hugo would cause a scene, and Aeroc didn't want Hugo to worry.

The corridor was dark, with only the lamp by the door lit. It made the sound of his breathing loud. He tiptoed down the corridor toward the study. The study was at the end of the corridor, but he wanted to pass Kloff's room on the way. At first, he hadn't thought of doing that. But he soon became curious about what Kloff was doing. He stopped in front of the firmly closed, heavy door.

Is he sleeping? He must be sleeping.

Aeroc was about to knock, but he gave up the idea. He changed his mind and continued walking. However, he had only taken a few steps when he found himself stopping again. He turned his body back and stood in front of Kloff's door.

It should be okay to just see him for a moment.

The night was lonely without his lover, who used to share body warmth with him. He missed him terribly. Despite thinking it wasn't proper, he opened the door as if he were a thief. And he peeked inside. Unfortunately, due to the darkness, he couldn't see anything.

I just wanted to see him sleeping soundly.

He decided it was best to leave, but his heart had already passed that point. Aeroc stepped into the room. The thought of an aristocrat like him creeping into the Alpha's sleeping quarters in the middle of the night made him feel as guilty as a teenager doing bad things without his parent's knowledge. But this was all the fault of a man who had lost his memory in a stupid accident. He shouldn't have left his pregnant mate alone.

He walked slowly through the darkness to the bedside. He felt warmth on his fingertips. Cautiously, he felt around the area. After a while, his eyes adjusted to the darkness. He could see Kloff lying still on the bed. His heart raced. As he moved closer, to his relief, Kloff was deeply asleep.