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On the other side, the group assembled, intending to depart to the Nepenthe Valley.

Suddenly, Nina mentioned, "Daddy, can we bring Monica along? She needs the antidote too."

"But she was the reason why you're like this. Now you want to bring her too?" Davin uttered, bewildered at the suggestion.

Nina frowned. "Uncle Davin, you're right. All this happened to me because of Monica, but she's a victim too! If it wasn't for Grandpa, her father would not have died, and her family business would not have been wound up. There's a reason behind everything she did to the Seet family, including me."

"Nina, she had tried to mess with the Seet Group even before all of that. Having poisoned you, I think she's had her revenge. Now, she's on her own," Davin replied.

"Uncle Davin, I don't think it's fair. She experienced the devastating pain of losing her father, but none of us have to go through that. In comparison with the Marston family, the Seet family is far better off. Hence, bring her along and save her life. At the end of the day, she is a person of bitter past, and I really sympathize with her."

Davin turned his head and looked at Evan. Ultimately, Evan was the one who would decide.

Evan was silent for a moment before uttering, "We shall do as Nina says. Bring her along."

Regarding the past grudges, Evan felt indebted to the Marston family as well. Although Monica was hated and despised, there was a reason behind her doings.

Levant, who stood at one side, also supported the idea. "Agree. As to whether she survives, that depends on fate. If we manage to save her life, then it will put an end to the long-lasting feud between the two families."

Nonetheless, Evan's gaze looked dull, and he kept quiet.

He had his own opinions on putting an end to the long-lasting feud.

A while later, the bodyguard brought Monica over. The woman's face was as pale as paper, and her hair messy and greasy; even Nina was terrified at the sight of her.

If the poison isn't neutralized, will I end up just like her?

At once, Evan noticed Nina's uneasiness and tried to console her, "Nina, once we reach the Nepenthe Valley, you will be cured. Don't worry too much about it."

"Trust us, Nina. Even though Crystal Rose is unpredictable, we have our ways to convince her to treat you."

Nina felt relieved upon being reassured by Davin and Evan. Then, she smiled blissfully at them and replied, "I'm not afraid. I trust Daddy and Uncle Davin."

"Why did you bring me here?" Monica looked at them, puzzled.

"We're going to save your life," Davin answered.

"Save me? Are you capable of doing that? If you really can save me, Nina won't look this gauntly! Besides, that b*stard only injected a very small dose of poison into me. I did not have any symptoms in the early stages. However, Nina is different. I mean, look at her—how is she better than me? Very soon, we'll both be dead..."

"Nina is feeling much better than you. You're looking lifeless! I suggest you shut up!"

Before she could finish her sentence, Davin interjected and told her off. He then instructed the bodyguard, "Watch her closely."

The bodyguard quickly replied, "Yes, Mr. Davin."

"Alright, let's depart now," Evan commanded.

They got into the car and sped toward Nepenthe Valley.

After almost a full day of traveling, they arrived at Nepenthe Valley in the evening.

They stood before the valley and stared at the endless stretch of road. Stupefied, they dared not act rashly.

Davin gazed at the wavy roads before asking worriedly, "Rumor has it that the Nepenthe Valley is a tough terrain. There will be ambushes along the way or even monsters! Once the night falls, we might fall into a trap, and that'll be ugly!"

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Nina agreed with Davin. After all, everyone was there to save her life. Hence, if something bad were to happen to them, she would feel extremely guilty.

“Daddy, it’s getting dark. Let’s find a place to settle down, and we’ll start our journey tomorrow,” Nina suggested.

Evan paused for a second before agreeing, “That sounds good.”

Then, everyone got into the car, looked up for a place to stay for the night, and hurried toward the direction.

Though the accommodation was bedraggled, it was good enough to stay. And the food... Well, it was mediocre but was sufficient to fill their stomachs.

After dinner, Evan, Davin, and Levant sat together and started chatting.

Out of the blue, Davin mentioned Tiffany and Luke. He asked Levant if he planned to stay with them.

Levant rolled his eyes at him. “Everything is fine the way it is. Why do you find the need to mention Tiffany? Besides, Sheila hates me to her guts because of Tiffany, as if I owe her my life.”

It had always been the case—that Sheila would leap at the first opportunity to ridicule Levant.

Right then, Davin immediately tried to explain, “That’s because my wife is a great friend of Tiffany’s. And obviously, she will stand by Tiffany’s side and go against you. Needless to say, Tiffany’s enemy is her enemy as well. Hence, it explains why she treats you so badly. However, should you choose to marry Tiffany, my wife’s attitude toward you will surely change dramatically! Heck, she may even treat you like her own brother!”

Upon that, Levant sneered in response. “I’ll need to marry someone that I don’t love, just so that she will treat me like a brother? That’s absurd! Who does she think she is!”

Evan, who kept quiet all the while, suddenly spoke, “If you don’t love her, then why did you get her pregnant? That’s irresponsible!”

“I...” Levant was speechless at that. There was a period of time when Tiffany was very close to him. One night, they were having drinks together, and in a drunken

state, Levant mistook Tiffany as Nicole. That was why he slept with her, as he was under the impression that she was Nicole.

"It's all because of the alcohol!" he grunted regretfully.

Davin pursed his lips. "How can you blame it on the alcohol? You're obviously attracted to Tiffany. And after sleeping with her, you're now trying to escape the ensuing responsibility. You're a heartless wretch!"

"How am I heartless? Do you think it'll be better if I choose to marry her even if I don't love her? She should be with a man who truly loves her and wants to be together with her—a man who is responsible and mature. This way, she will have a happy married life."

Davin sized him up and asked curiously, "If you don't love her, then who is it that you love? Unless... it's Nicole?"

Davin then looked toward Evan. *This question will definitely pique his interest.*

Hearing that, Levant was speechless. Davin's question was impossible to answer.

After a short pause, Levant glanced at Evan, coughed, and responded with his head held high, "It's my own business, and no one has the right to interfere."

On the other hand, Evan did not respond. He slowly folded his sleeves and unbuttoned his collar.

Davin initially did not understand the abrupt gesture. However, after he noticed the scratches on Evan's arms and the bite marks on his neck, Davin quickly understood Evan's intention.

What a way to display affection! Even when he's alone!

Davin took a deep cough before asking on purpose, "Evan, the marks on your neck and arm... are those Nicole's doing?"

"Yeah! Her nails are quite sharp. Last night, things got a little bit too intense. She didn't do it on purpose," answered Evan. Then, he started massaging his neck, as if Levant would not notice it.

However, he didn't know that the bite and scratch marks had stirred up ripples of jealousy in Levant right at that moment.

"Well, d*mn! Nicole and you must be inseparable!"

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As soon as Davin said that, he caught a glimpse of Levant, who looked pale and uneasy. The look on his face was horrible. At this very moment, Levant's heart had turned icy cold.

When he found out that Nicole was pregnant with her second child, he knew very well he should give up and move on. Be that as it may, he couldn't resist being uncomfortable when being shown the evidence of Nicole and Evan's intimate moments.

His affection toward Nicole was one of the worst hurdles that he had to overcome.

"Nicole and I are deeply in love. We will not be separated. Not this lifetime, next lifetime, or any lifetime, for what it's worth," Evan replied.

While the message was slightly less impactful, Levant was still jealous. He blurted, "Evan, are you trying to hint something to me?"

Evan replied, "Well, you're not wrong to think that way."

Levant answered unhappily, "I don't bear any hope toward being with Nicole anymore, so there's no need to send me such message!"

"Well, if you no longer hold any hope, why would you think that the message is directed toward you?"

"Exactly. If you've really moved on, then why won't you marry Tiffany? If a woman can't get the man that she loves, then she'll be pickier when it comes to her next partner. However, men are different. If a man can't get the woman he loves, he'll become less selective of his partner and will end up marrying any woman. If you've really moved on, then why can't you marry Tiffany?"

After a moment of awkward silence, Levant stood up and rebutted angrily, "These are two separate matters. Even though I'm not hoping to get together with Nicole, that doesn't mean I'll simply marry any woman. If that was the case, I'll be better off single and alone." Then, he stormed off furiously.

Davin let out a sigh while watching his retreating figure. It was so obvious that Levant had not moved on. What magical powers does Nicole possess? How is Levant so deeply in love with her?

He then turned his gaze toward Evan and reminded the latter, "Evan, you must treat Nicole well. Your love rival is playing for the long game. If there's any room for him to get between the two of you, then—"

"You're overthinking it. Nicole does not have any feelings toward him," Evan immediately brushed away Davin's concern.

"What if? You can never say for sure. Some women are soft-hearted and can marry a guy in the heat of the moment."

At that, Evan stood up. "Don't worry about it. Nicole is not Renee. She has her own principles and will not be moved so easily."

When Davin heard that, he became offended. Is he implying that Renee got together with me in the heat of the moment?

As if! For your information, Renee is very much in love with me! Besides, I'm still a very attractive man!

Watching Evan's silhouette as he walked away, Davin chased after him and yelled, "Evan, you're wrong! Renee is truly in love with me, it wasn't a rash move..."

He followed Evan to the guest room, trying to explain his relationship with Renee along the way.

Evan, on the other hand, didn't seem to be bothered. He ushered Davin back to his room to rest.

"Evan, don't you get it? Renee is—" Davin continued to babble relentlessly.

Evan had to interject, "It doesn't really matter. Let me ask you this—If I record what you're saying now and send it to Sheila, can she understand?"

It was effective. Almost immediately, Davin stopped talking. Then, he bowed before retreating back to his room.

Sheep can never find out about this, or all hell will break loose!

The following day...

At the break of dawn, the group had their breakfast and headed toward the Nepenthe Valley.

Davin suggested letting a few of the bodyguards check if the path ahead was safe. They reckoned they should only continue if it was safe enough to do so.

Evan, however, felt that it was unnecessary. Even if there was a problem, it was a risk that they must take to retrieve the antidote for Nina.

Thus, they warily maneuvered the bumpy and curvy road. With their senses heightened, they cautiously observed the surroundings.

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The few bodyguards led the way. After walking for half a kilometer, a few masked men dressed in black blocked them in their paths.

“Who are they? They don’t seem friendly...” Davin whispered.

Having scrutinized the men, they noticed that they all have a symbol wrapped around their sleeves – Crystal Rose.

Levant asked, “So, they’re the followers of Crystal Rose?”

Instantly, the man dressed in black asked, “What do you want?”

“We’re here to look for someone!” Draven replied.

“Who?” the unknown man continued asking.

“We’re looking for Crystal Rose, the Lady of the Nepenthe Valley.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. Leave now!”

Davin stared at the symbol on their sleeves. “Nonsense! You’re her men! You’re all adorned with her symbol!”

The men dressed in black coherently looked toward their sleeves. Impatiently, they growled, “What symbol? Leave now!”

Right then, Evan’s bodyguard instinctively moved forward, standing in between Evan and the mysterious group of men. “I suggest you move out of the way! Don’t block our paths!”

One of the men replied, “I think they prefer violence. Then, that is what you will get!”

Soon after that, a fight started almost immediately.

Draven, whose skills surpassed the Hidden masters, was impeccable. His mastery of the grapple and dodge techniques were beyond perfection. His opponents were dumbfounded. Not one of their aims landed on him despite how hard they tried.

Meanwhile, Davin sneered and mocked, "Don't worry. Take your time. It's a shame that you're only punching the air. You seem quite strong, though. If you continue this way, you'll be exhausted soon enough."

The leader of the men in black stared ferociously at Davin. He then took a deep breath and lifted both of his arms, hitting left, right, and center.

However, his efforts were to no avail. Even worse, Draven managed to make him stumble, and he slammed onto the ground forcefully.

Davin could help but sympathize with him, "Didn't I just tell you to take your time? Why did you act contrary to my advice? My, my, look at you now. I say, it must surely hurt! Anyway, be careful, or else it will only get much more painful."

"Shut up!" the man was embarrassed and yelled in response.

"Why is it that you can't accept the truth? If that's the case, stop lying on the ground and stand up. Stand up and get beaten up like a man!"

The man in black gritted his teeth and got up. Just as he managed to regain his balance, Draven launched a ferocious kick that sent the man flying.

At one side, Davin shook his head and sighed. "Looks like it's over. He can't take it anymore!" He then continued to insult the man, "Hey, can you still take a hit?"

The man gritted his teeth and glowered at Davin hatefully. The next second, he retrieved a knife and hurled it in Davin's direction.

Fortunately for Davin, he nimbly avoided the knife. He was nonetheless shocked by the sudden attack. "Gosh, I nearly took a direct hit. That was a close call!"

Levant scoffed. "This is on you. You talk too much."

Yet, Davin cheekily replied, "I'm just telling the truth! Look at how pissed he is! Was I wrong to say it?"

The man was fuming with anger. Being humiliated in front of his subordinates, he would have lost the respect to be their leader. I might as well risk everything!

Right at that moment, the man was willing to sacrifice his life to take down Davin.

He mustered every ounce of strength and stood up clumsily. However, Draven effortlessly pinned him down. This time, regardless of the humiliation by Davin, he no longer had the energy to stand up.

The rest of the men in black struggled but lost eventually. At last, all of them collapsed onto the ground.

"I don't understand. These men are supposed to guard the entrance? What is Crystal Rose thinking?"

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"Don't be too full of yourselves. We're the easiest opponents you'll face. As you progress into the valley, someone will definitely defeat you!"

The man in black snarled, exposing the fact that they were mere pawns. There would be many more skilled fighters waiting for them along the journey.

Davin wanted to enquire more about the path ahead – the possible ambushes, the number of fighters. However, despite repeated attempts to interrogate, he couldn't obtain any information.

Their responses were the same. "Nepenthe Valley is basically hell. Once you get in, there's no getting out!"

"Come on. First, you can't defeat us, and now you're trying to scare us off? Do we look like cowards to you?"

Evan's gaze intensified. He reminded everyone to be careful before proceeding in their journey.

The valley was hushed, and they could not hear anything at all. The more it was the case, the more wary everyone was.

"By right, there should be some animals in the valley. Even if they weren't on land, there should also be some flying in the skies. But there's absolutely nothing! I don't understand!" Levant looked around the lifeless Nepenthe Valley and asked quizzically.

"I agree. Do you think that Crystal Rose is ferociously bloodthirsty? Even the animals feared her, and the birds dared not fly across the valley."

"We will get our answers once we meet her."

"In that case, let's pick up our pace."

The bodyguards suddenly reminded, "Mr. Evan, Mr. Davin, we can't go any faster. Nina is really weak right now. If we speed up, she might not be able to handle it."

Evan turned his head back and looked at Nina, who appeared sallow and sickly. "Are you tired? Do you need to rest?"

However, Nina shook her head. "I'm not tired. I can still go on."

Evan suggested, "I think you should just let the bodyguard carry you on his back. They can take turns, and it shouldn't be a problem."

The bodyguards replied intermittently, "No problem at all. We're willing to carry Ms. Nina!"

"Right, we are!"

At the same time, Monica had tiredly collapsed on the ground. "You guys go ahead. I can't do this anymore."

Davin scornfully remarked, "I thought you're fine just a moment ago? It seems to me like you just want someone to carry you too!"

Monica had been pushing herself for quite some time, but she was now exhausted. She didn't even have the energy to rebut Davin's statement and just stared at him, distasted. With her head lowered, Monica did not utter another word.

At that moment, Evan instructed, "Carry her on your backs too. Look at how skinny she is. She shouldn't be too heavy."

The bodyguard heeded his instructions and replied, "Noted, Mr. Evan."

Monica was, however, taken aback. Why is Evan treating me so nicely?

She said, "Don't think that I'll forgive the Seet family just because you're helping me now. Even if you guys manage to save me, I will get my revenge one day!"

Evan's glacial stare landed on her, but he chose not to respond. He continued walking straight ahead, and the others followed suit.

Another hour passed, and they reached a heavenly place with birds chirping and flowers blossoming. It was a complete and radical change of surroundings, to everyone's surprise.

"Oh my god, all the while, there wasn't a single living thing. It was as if every step was an inch forward into the depths of hell. But now we're in such a beautiful place. This is like heaven!"

Evan muttered, "It clearly shows the wretched personality of Crystal Rose! We must be extremely careful with our moves!"

Just as he finished his sentence, a few women approached them gradually. They were sizing Evan and the group up, their eyes scanning them from top to bottom. Then, with a beaming smile on her face, one of the women said, "You're all our guests. Please come in for a cup of tea."

I don't get it. What's with their kind gesture?

Levant noticed the shock on Davin's face and reminded him softly, "For every kind gesture, there must be an ulterior motive. I think, by inviting us into their place, they must be plotting something evil... Perhaps... to capture us?"

Davin agreed with what Levant had said, but...