

Into The Rose Garden - Chapter 3

Chapter 3

A man who he could never forget could be seen through the transparent window of the carriage without a single handprint. The man, with his dark auburn hair compactly slicked back, cradled a happily smiling blonde child on his lap. The blue eyes of the child collided with that of the hobo watching.

Oh.

He knew that child. That lovely angel. And the man who held the child very affectionately. He knew those two beautiful people and that he, who was crawling at the bottom, couldn't reach them no matter what.

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Aelock was in an extremely bad mood. The hall of the Count's mansion, where a grand banquet was being held, was full of people laughing with *hahas* and *hohos*, but none of the merry-looking faces had what Aelock wanted. The person he was looking for was a man with creases in the middle of his forehead and a blank expression that made him look like he was a little angry.

"Aelock, you look especially beautiful today."

"Excuse me."

A man who seemed to recognize his face at first glance approached, pretending to be friendly. Even from a few steps away, he gave off such a strong odor that made his nose rot, and he blatantly flirted with Aelock with a fishy smile. He didn't care that he was an alpha as well, or that they were both males, which no longer had any meaning, and was once taboo set by God.

Rather, he was an awfully crude man who followed the vulgar trend of hooking up casually with the same alpha or omega without having to take any responsibility. The other person's pride was not hurt at all even when Aelock pushed him away with a cold smile. Instead, he approached an omega the

same way he did previously with the same relaxed and vulgar eyes, as if he were enjoying himself.

Immediately after seeing him say the exact same thing he had just said to the omega, Aelock left, feeling like vomiting for even breathing the same air for a few seconds as they stood together. Even so, the gaze did not stop scanning people.

Where the hell are you?

In his hands gathered behind his waist as she wandered around, he held an invitation that he had written with a pounding heart a few days ago. The invitation, which was especially handwritten, was retrieved from the entrance. It meant that he had come. However, he could not be seen for several hours. He couldn't let go without saying goodbye. This banquet was all just an excuse to meet him.

Eventually, footmen were mobilized to find him. They quietly walked around the banquet hall to carry out their master's orders. Soon after, a footman who had gone out into the garden returned and reported that he was on the way to the cedar trail. The Count's expressionless face, which had been as cold as a piece of marble until just a moment ago, was colored with joy, like drops of ink spreading on water.

Aelock headed for the cedar trail almost as fast as he could run. The path was illuminated by the blue moonlight, with orange lanterns under each tree, adding to the subtle atmosphere. Originally, this path was not to be decorated with anything, but *he* seemed to like the cedar trail, so he purposely ordered it to be lit with lanterns. Of course, there was also a footman who cleverly diverted the other guests to prevent anyone else from entering.

Aelock took a deep breath and calmed his pounding heart. His pride still did not allow him to show his emotions and act like a puppy who met his owner. He was already aware that he was getting a little confused. He knew very well that it was unsightly to get excited alone when the other person didn't display any meaningful words or actions. At the same time, there was also a sense of resentment towards the other person who made him so restless. Could he not act friendly with him once in a while?

Even when everyone else flattered him, who had wealth, fame, and prestige, the man showed no interest. No, he pretended not to. If he really wasn't

interested, why did he respond to his invitation? Surely there must be some goodwill.

He deliberately grabbed the invitation he had sent to him and came out. He thought of making a little joke using the invitation as an excuse, in case it would be awkward again like before. Something like “Must I write it in my own handwriting for you to accept it? “How about gifting me ink and a pen for my upcoming birthday?”.

Of course, considering his financial situation, he knew the appropriate price range and the right craftsmen for the items. The astute butler would give him a hint along with his coat. He wanted to sit next to him at his birthday banquet, which was a month away.

The light flickered through the walls of the cedar trees that separated the rose garden not far away. There was a shadow. Aelock deliberately slowed down his steps as he tried to harden his slightly relaxed expression. It was to not let the other person know he was approaching him. He wanted to see his natural expression.

When he had asked why he puts on such a serious expression, he answered by saying that he looked this way even when no one was around. Seeing him waiting for someone with a big physique and a serious expression seemed like an interesting sight in its own way. Aelock walked gently, feeling the pebbles through his smooth leather shoes.

The tall body reflected in the dim light was clearly visible. The distance quickly narrowed, and now only a single tree with countless small leaves stood between them. He was muttering to himself. When he imagined him talking to himself with such a serious face, he almost felt like smiling. Aelock couldn't stand it any longer, so he hurriedly went around the tree to reveal himself.

“See you here again, Klopp.”

Klopp, surprised by the sudden appearance, opened his eyes a little wide and turned his head to look this way. The moment their eyes met, Aelock couldn't believe it. The deep eyes, which had only cast sharp glances every time, were slightly squinted, and his mouth, which was always tightly closed and barely gave out necessary answers, drew a soft curve. Klopp was smiling.

The heavily fortified defense posture collapsed all at once. The Count's rather white face instantly turned a pale rose. He could not believe that an insipid and serious man like him was smiling. Could it be because of him?

Aelock managed to suppress the urge to run and stand by his side at once. His heart swelled. It was not a one-sided feeling either. It could not be one-sided. Any omega in the world, even most alphas, wanted Aelock Taywind. There was no way that a low-ranking aristocrat who had nothing else backing him up other than an intelligent mind and tall body would reject him. Aelock approached with a big smile, overjoyed at the thought of having him at last.

"Aelock."

"I could not find you even after sending out such an invitation so I came to look for you. Must I really send a handwritten invitation like this? You do not even have a title but aren't you a little too haughty?"

The man's smiling expression became serious again. To the point Aelock wondered if he had a chronic illness that was worsening as he looked at him. However, since he had just confirmed that it was all just a front, he thought it would be okay to take it off little by little over time. Aelock approached Klopp, naturally invading the polite confines of his personal space. He was thinking of asking him if he was interested in the <First Edition of the Interpretation of the Bill of Rights>, which he had recently purchased at a high price.

But he didn't. It was because he belatedly realized that he was not alone just as he was about to grab Klopp's arm without losing his smile.

Beyond, obscured by alpha's large frame, stood a small man with blond hair and blue eyes similar to Aelock's. He was a little embarrassed when he saw Aelock but greeted him in a rather polite manner.

"Hello, Count Taywind. Thank you for inviting me to the party."

Aelock knew him. He was the son of a distant relative whom he had only seen once when his father died. The eldest son of Viscount Westport, a cousin to Aelock. His name was probably Rayfiel. He didn't remember inviting him, but it seemed he was on the Count's basic list of guests starting from the funeral.

The omega leaned against Klopp's waist with his hand. Also, the alpha's sturdy arm was wrapped around his small shoulders. It was only after looking

at them alternately that Aelock noticed. Klopp's smile was directed at the omega, not him, and his frown right now was not a pretense, but the truth.

In an instant, an unbearable sense of shame and contempt soared. Aelock looked at the two of them alternately, opened and closed his mouth, then quickly turned around. Though he was the owner of this mansion, he ran away to avoid the guests.

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Aelock's head was filled with unreachable fantasies. It was a remnant of the person he had forgotten at some point while rolling around on the cold stone ground. The fantasy was as beautiful as it was ephemeral that it made him forget time. He crouched down with his knees up and placed his hands neatly on them. He pressed his cheek to the back of his hand again.

He tried to imitate the happy smile of the man who left an unforgettable mark on him and the child who inherited his blood. Even in the midst of such misery, an overwhelming feeling leaked out from his heart. *Could life be a blessing once more? Will it lead us to the light again?*

Will I ever see him again under those cedar trees?

Someday again. Yes. That's why.

Let's live.

T/N: hello! i forgot to add this note in the first chapter but i would like to request those who are reading this to also read my comment under this novel on NU (novelupdates) as i have listed out a few pointers for the readers. it's mainly for your own sake since the first volume could get... quite overwhelming for some. that's all, thank you for reading. take care^^