

Into The Rose Garden - Chapter 6

Chapter 6

He held the shiny silver coin in his hand and twirled it around in his hand. It was the first time he had ever touched a silver coin himself. It was insignificant when one owned countless things, and precious when one lost everything. Unlike platinum, the light gray metal, which looked very fragile, was like the crystal of a fleeting dream. Every night, he pondered as the shiny surface reflected against the orange-colored sky.

Should I buy bread? I could eat and buy a large piece of bread with lots of raisins every day for the next six months. I could buy some sugar with it too. It would be nice to buy a blanket for the coming winter. Boots with warm fur could work too. Or taking this to a slightly warmer southern city would be fine. Winters there will not be as harsh as here. What should I do?

Aelock squatted in the shed and agonized with his face buried in his lap. If he still thought like before, he wouldn't have troubled himself over this to such a degree. He would have immediately gone to the stationery store, buy a pen and papers, and send letters to all the addresses he still remembered. And he won't be able to get a reply to any one of those countless letters.

Everyone who once fretted over not getting his invitation now turned away from him. However, Derbyshire and Wolflake, who were once very close to him, refused to even visit. After turning back around without even entering the mansion, no one even acted like they knew Aelock. Klopp was the only one who reached out at that hopeless time. In retrospect, it was a path that led him further into the abyss.

He couldn't waste his precious money on something pointless, knowing full well that there would be no reply anyway. He wasn't even hungry. It was a golden opportunity that he doubted would come again in the future. He didn't want to spend the precious silver coin on bread that he could get by offering his body anyway.

Aelock remembered what he wanted most. He never thought that with this money, his dream would become a reality at least once. Aelock did not sleep all night and left the shed before the men coming to dispose of their semen

stormed in. And until the morning came, he wandered in search of a high-end boutique in his distant memory.

By the time the sun rose completely, Aelock was kicked out without even entering the high-end boutique properly by the owner, who was afraid of losing the reputation of the boutique. When he begged several times and showed a silver coin, the uptight-looking tailor raised the glasses hanging on the bridge of his nose and laughed coldly.

“A single silver coin cannot even buy a tie in my place! Get lost.”

He was a little surprised. He thought he could buy at least one set of poor-quality clothes with this precious silver coin, if not high-quality ones. It was disappointing that he couldn't even buy a tie that he had worn once before and thrown away.

He bit his lips while walking in the shade. All day he snooped around anywhere that looked like a store, but he was lucky if he didn't get hit, let alone treated properly. Eventually, he gave up on the high-end stores along the main street and was able to buy a very old suit and worn-out shoes at the most shabby second-hand clothing store among the stores used by the working class. He paid his only silver coin for it and got some copper coins back. He used those up to buy soap at another store.

He excitedly ran to the riverside without realizing it. Before it was too late, he washed himself clean, out of sight of others, and carefully put on clothes that smelled of dust and mildew. He also wore the shoes. He wished he could iron some wrinkles, but he was not allowed that luxury.

Aelock ran his fingers through his still-damp hair, tossed it back, and walked down the street. People glanced at him a little, but they didn't show the hostility they had before. He walked with a pounding heart. Most passed him by, but a young alpha or two stared at him. Aelock was terribly afraid as he didn't know the reason why they were staring, and so, chose to walk in a shade that was as inconspicuous as possible.

“Excuse me.”

Someone spoke from behind. When he looked back in surprise, it was a person who was a complete stranger to him. Whilst having a friendly smile on, he hesitated a little before trying to say something more. Behind were those

who seemed to be his friends, laughing happily and whispering to each other. Aelock got goosebumps.

“I-I apologize. There is somewhere I need to be right away.”

“Oh, could you at least tell me your name?”

“Apologies.”

He quickly responded and quickly increased the distance. The stranger seemed to follow him for a bit but then walked away. Aelock was so startled that his heart almost jumped out. He was wearing shoes that didn't fit, and his heels were sore and hurting, but that didn't make him slow down.

After more than two hours of walking, Aelock found himself at the end of a rather neat street where the middle class of the city lived. Beyond this street, the other side was an area lined with mansions of nobles. He had to walk for dozens of minutes to pass through the gate of one mansion. As opposed to other streets of the city where there are many pedestrians, there was almost no one walking around in this area since everyone used carriages here. If some were occasionally seen walking around, it was only when the servants of each mansion looked around once in a while to prevent strangers from approaching.

When he was kicked out of this place for the first time, he was often kicked out by the servants after coming back on his own without thinking about his appearance. There were several times when he was beaten to the point of losing his mind while resisting.

Aelock moved his feet while forcibly straightening his stiff shoulders. Fortunately, the servant passing by from the other side looked at him with a bit of a wary look, but he didn't try to catch him. It was thanks to the outfit that was not much different from his even if it was old and smelled a little dusty. Still, Aelock felt prickles on the nape of his neck and increased his walking speed.

It was not until late afternoon after walking for a long time despite entering the aristocratic area that he could stand in front of a really splendid and huge mansion with a row of cedar trees standing out on both sides of the mansion.

Next to the high main gate made of steel, there was a copper plate engraved with the name of the owner of the house on the pillar decorated with fancy

stone statues. What had once been inscribed with Teiwind had now been changed to Bandyke.

The steel gate and the entrance of the mansion were separated by a huge garden that couldn't be seen at a glance, so no one would hear Aelock even if he screamed from there. As he was wandering around, a carriage started coming in from afar. A woman he knew well was riding in a small two-person carriage, not a closed coach used by nobles. The middle-aged omega woman, who had a considerable amount of presence, saw Aelock standing in front of the mansion, opened her eyes wide, then narrowed them again and stopped the carriage. The gatekeeper, noticing that the carriage was entering, approached from far inside.

"Hello, Count. What brings you here?"

"Martha."

When the gatekeeper, whom the new owner of the mansion, Viscount Bandyke, had hired several years ago, had only remembered seeing his face once and had never heard of his name before, opened the gate, Martha nodded her head and drove the carriage inside. It seemed that she was buying the items necessary for a housekeeper separately.

He would have been able to get in if he asked her, but somehow he couldn't speak up. Thinking of what he had done before, he had no face to ask her for a difficult request. It was better to wait for Klopp like this. He would come out or go in at some point. As he stood there without saying anything, the gatekeeper with a cold look in his eyes glanced at Aelock and then went back to the mansion.

Klopp was originally the second son of Baron Bandyke, who owned a small local estate. Compared to the high-ranking aristocrats in the capital, he once had nothing in the humble status closer to that of a commoner, though that was not the case anymore. He was a self-made businessman and a brilliant investor who was enthusiastically welcomed even in the exclusive high society of the royal court.

All government bond-related projects he has touched on were making huge profits, and he had made a great contribution to the country by attracting immense benefits in diplomatic negotiations related to the economy. At the same time, he had recently received a title, although it was unknown what

kind of deal he had made under the table with the protection of numerous nobles on his back.

It was not the common title of a Knight, rather he was given the title of Viscount, citing the fact that he was from a family of Barons. To receive a hereditary title at the present time was tremendously unconventional.

There were many rumors and overstatements that surrounded him. In particular, there were countless rumors about the five-year period of disappearance after losing his beloved spouse and unborn child at the hands of hoodlums. No one knew where he was or what he did during that time. It was only when he reappeared in the city's high society that he swayed the economy of the major city with great wealth in his hands.

On the other hand, everything of Aelock was falling apart. The assets disappeared somewhere and the business in which he invested failed. He invested a lot of money because he was a trustworthy person, but he was also scammed. It was strange. No matter how bad Aelock's eye for investments was, it was not bad enough to continue to suffer such a huge loss. It was as if someone had set a trap and waited.

Soon after, Aelock ran out of his fortunes and was under a mountain of debt. Despite his pride, he asked for help from those around him, but everyone turned a blind eye. At that time, Aelock was devastated and eventually had no choice but to sell his mansion. It was because he could not afford the debt that multiplied several times overnight even though he had sold all his other properties. The mansion, with its particularly beautiful rose garden, now belonged to the powerful economic bureaucrat, Klopp Bandyke.

Now, Aelock was waiting for the owner of the mansion where he was born.

Just as the sky was slowly turning to gold, the gatekeeper came out from the inside again.

"Is the Count there?"

He quickly got up from leaning against the wall and stood in front of him. The gatekeeper looked at Aelock up and down in disbelief. He straightened her shoulders, raised his head straight, and looked at the gatekeeper.

"The Viscount invited you, so please come in."

The gatekeeper opened the gates and moved back. *Did Martha tell him?* Aelock gave the gatekeeper a simple nod and entered the residence.

The garden he looked around on the way to the front door had retained its old appearance. It hadn't even been a few years, but faint memories came back little by little as if it were the distant past. He wondered if the rose garden, which his mother, whose face he could hardly remember now, loved so much was still there, but it was not right to roam around without the owner's permission.

Upon reaching the front door, a butler dressed neatly in a black suit came out. It was a young man, not the old butler of Teiwinds, who had been taking care of the mansion for decades. Aelock followed the unfamiliar butler to the living room. The interior decoration of the mansion was also almost the same. It was because the decorations were handed over all at once because he was in a hurry to dispose of them.

If there was one thing that changed, it was the portraits. Most of the portraits hanging on the walls were replaced with other paintings. Among them was the work of a genius new artist whom Aelock had been keeping an eye on. He must have become a very successful painter to decorate the living room walls of one of the most influential aristocrats in the country.