

Into The Rose Garden - Chapter 8

Chapter 8

When Aelock opened his eyes, he thought for a moment whether there was a barn in the fiery pit of hell. But he soon changed his thoughts. The place where he was lying was not the shed he had been using until now. It was a small humble cottage, and he was lying in what could be called a bed, albeit a rough one, and was covered with a clean blanket.

He slowly got up. The last thing that came to mind was cold water. But now, the place where Aelock opened his eyes was obviously a dry room. He didn't understand how it happened. Under the sliding blanket, his naked body came into view.

Though he washed his skin hard with soap, he still couldn't get rid of the old grime but the smooth and clean skin did not look like that of a street bum, even with the scars and bruises. When he brought his nose close to his arm, he could smell the scent of fragrant flowers. It was as if he entered and came out of the water with high-quality bath salts.

He brought my legs together neatly, placed them on the floor, and got off the bed. He found a table by relying on the faint light that came through the tightly closed wooden window shutters. There was probably a sturdy and large table around here.

Also.

On top of it, he felt a soft fabric that smelled like the sunlight. Aelock hugged it and inhaled its scent deeply. There was no smell of the gutter. For some reason, his heart swelled. It was not a forced mask-like smile, but a genuine smile of joy, buried in the cloth and remained there for a long time. Then, slowly, he put it on.

As expected, it was a little short in length. However, it was not so uncomfortable since he was so skinny. As long as he didn't button up the sleeves and the neck, it was fine. His wrists and ankles were sticking out through the ends, but it didn't bother him because there was no one who would make fun of him here.

Aelock, fully dressed, rubbed out the soft texture with his palms and opened the closed window shutters. A bright light streamed in and he had to cover his eyes with his hand. After blinking a few times, his eyes began to adjust to the light with a feeling of drowsiness. Right then, he could see the scenery outside the window.

Not far away, beyond the walls of the cedar trees that stood like bars, the very mansion he saw yesterday revealed its majesty. On the other side of the huge mansion, the tips of cedar trees stretching toward the sky poked out their heads elaborately, like saplings, driven by perspective.

He didn't know what had happened the previous night, but he knew that Klopp had brought him here. Clearly, meeting him yesterday had some other bad consequences. Aelock was afraid of what kind of terrible torture he had prepared for him, who had a genius talent for causing pain. It seemed that he was unable to die of his own volition.

Fortunately, however, Klopp did not abandon him on the streets again but kept him locked up here. At the very least, he won't starve or freeze to death as long as he was here. He would not be subjected to gang rape either. Instead, there would be no conversation, even if it was a worthless combination of sounds and no human body heat. Still, compared to the bottom, this place was like heaven. It wasn't because he was less beaten, less cold, or less hungry.

As long as he stayed in this cottage, Aelock could wait. For Klopp to come to see him.

The first day he spent time sitting on the bed in a daze. He just couldn't believe it. After a terrible time that seemed like an eternity, he didn't feel like he was back here again, so he went in and out of the cottage several times. He circled the small tree house in anticipation of someone coming through the cedar trees that he did not dare to cross. Nothing had changed since Aelock used it in the past. Then, when hunger arrived, he came to his senses.

In addition to the space used throughout the cottage as a bedroom/sitting room or living room, there was a small kitchen situated around the corner. He had never been there before when he was here. When he opened the door, which had been creaking since it had not been used for a long time, acrid dust rose. He thought it would be better to clean up first. He picked up a bucket and a half-rotten mop from the corner. Then he went to the well outside the cottage.

The well was a hand pump. When he first encountered this pump on the street, he remembered being very embarrassed because he did not know how to use it. Fortunately, someone by his side had already brought a bucket full of water. It was meticulous solicitude. Aelock lifted the metal bucket carefully so as not to spill any water and poured it halfway into the opening above the pump. And he moved the handle hard. Clear water gushed out of the pump, which had been gurgling.

He crawled across the floor with his not-so-skillful hands until his knees were sore, and wiped away the dust all around. And anything that caught his eye was wiped with a rag. Aelock's forehead was covered with sweat by the time the place was clean enough to be called one's dwelling, though it was obviously not to the level of an experienced housekeeper's maintenance. After being in a prostrating position for a long time, blood rushed to his pale face, turning it slightly red.

The stomach, which had been hungry since earlier, made a louder noise because of the physical labor. On the table where the clothes were placed, some root vegetables such as potatoes and carrots and green vegetables such as asparagus and cabbage were placed with salt. Unfortunately, there was nothing he could eat without cooking.

He found a small knife in the kitchen and decided to try chopping up the potatoes first. He put a round potato on the table and smacked it with the knife, but it missed. The potatoes were firm, not soft. He had never imagined that potatoes could be this hard. He tried the carrots and it was hard too. Cabbage, too. Asparagus was tough. *How do you cook these strong things?* Aelock pondered. He was hungry, but he thought it would be a fairly enjoyable time.

It wasn't until late at night that Aelock managed to get control of the potato. Before he could eat it, which had shrunk considerably from its original size, he cut three fingers and burned one because of the hot pot. Even with the firewood outside the pot and the given matches, he couldn't light the fire properly, so after agonizing over it for a long time, he burned a little bit of his long hair as well. After blowing on a half-cooked, half-burnt baked potato and eating it, Aelock took off his clothes, hung them on a chair, and climbed onto the bed naked.

Due to the heavy labor, he was very tired today. Unfortunately, there were no lamps, so when the sun went down, there was nothing to do. Truthfully, even if there was a lamp, there was still nothing to do. The physical fatigue pushed

away all the painful memories of the past that came every night and allowed him to sleep soundly without thinking about anything.

It felt like a cool breeze brushed his cheeks in his sleep. He had to get up to check what it was, but he was too tired to open my eyes. If it had been a barn or a street, he would have woken up before the wind blew and crawled into the deep shade, but this was a cottage. No one came here except for that person. *He isn't coming, is he?* It must be the wind in the garden coming through the closed shutters. The cool breeze made him feel good. Aelock seemed to have smiled a little even in his sleep.

He woke up suddenly in the dark of dawn. He rubbed his eyes and got up, and reached for his clothes, but then something else came into Aelock's eyes. A lamp, soap, and clean towels were placed on the table. It was clear that someone had come and gone. As far as Aelock could remember, only one other person had been in and out of the cottage besides himself. Other servants would bring various items outside the door, but they never came inside. Aelock, unable to wear anything, ran out of the cottage with nothing on.

"Klopp!"

He quickly ran to the cedar wall. Along the wall to the path leading to the rose garden on the other side. But he couldn't go any further than that. It was difficult to get out of here. If he was nearby and saw Aelock stepping into the mansion, he might throw him out again. It was forbidden to wish for anything other than what was given. The only thing he was permitted was a cottage. Aelock stood on his tiptoes to find the figure of a tall, broad-shouldered man. No matter how many times he put his head out, he couldn't see anything. He called him again.

"Klopp!"

No response came back. No one seemed to be there. Then, when a brisk wind blew and he realized again that he was not wearing any clothes, he quietly returned to the cottage.

The embers that still hadn't died out were so painful that he tried to extinguish them by sinking into the river, but this time too, he was pulled out and a bellows was used to make them flare up again. He didn't even have any flesh left to burn anyway. Now, Aelock looked forward to the heat that even made his bones hot.

He saved his life, so if Aelock were to keep staying alive, someday he would look back on him at least once. That's why he didn't want to miss this chance by being selfish like before. One day, when the time comes when he wants to talk face-to-face, he would come and wake him up. Until then, all Aelock could do was wait for a better look.

He tried roasting carrots for breakfast but cut himself in the same spot he did the day before. He put his bleeding finger in his mouth and opened the box that Klopp had brought him at dawn. He saw a white bandage. He cut a small piece of thick fabric and wrapped it around his finger. It did hurt a little. In addition, he also closed the wounds from yesterday that were quite long. When he looked down at his hands, he suddenly remembered the white band that had touched the smiling lips of that person. In doing so, he could still vividly see the image of the two lovely people with one kissing the other's fingers as if his wounds heal quickly.