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Chapter 1491

Following this, Nicole heard a flurry of gunshots being fired from outside the car and the sound of explosions banging on her ears. The man in the face mask's gun could not be found. Watching the aircraft in the skies being shot down one by one and seeing Nicole's watch still blinking, he could only roar in anger, "Retreat!"

The dark-clothed men got their orders and clustered around the man in the face mask while retreating, confused. Nicole saw this and quickly pressed stop on the detonating feature of the watch.

'So close. With only less than twenty seconds left. If the rescue were late even by a bit, I would've been a goner...' She thought to herself.

'However, who was the one who came so swiftly to rescue me? Even if Jason and the others were still on the way, they could not have arrived now,' Nicole continued her train of thought.

Just as she was thinking about it, the sound of a helicopter landing was heard. Nicole glanced sidelong, but her whole body was stuck in the overturned car. She was lying on the ground and could only see a silhouette walking toward her from afar.

The silhouette was tall, slender, and familiar.

Could it be...

Her thoughts were still running when the person had already seen her. He ran directly in the direction of the jeep. Nicole could clearly see the man running over.

It was him. It really was him! Whenever and wherever she was in danger, that person would definitely appear...

However, should he not be in a coma now? Why was he here? Then she saw that under his black trench coat, he was still wearing his hospital gown. Her eyes turned watery.

'This guy definitely didn't listen to the doctor's orders. The first thing he did after waking up was to find me,' Nicole thought.

"Nicole!" Jared said and rushed to the side of the vehicle. Seeing Nicole drenched in blood, his heart felt like it was pierced by something. It ached unbearably.

He did not care about his body strength. He pried open the car door and dragged her frail body out. He didn't care about blood stains on her body and held her tightly, "I'm sorry..."

He hated himself so much for sleeping so long. For letting her suffer and almost getting her killed. Once he remembered that Nicole was surrounded by so many people from above just now, his heart almost seemed to suffocate with excruciating pain.

"You came..." Nicole used all her strength to hold onto Jared's neck. His chest felt safe and sound. Only in his embrace could she be able to feel so at ease.

"I've arrived..." Jared softly whispered into her ears and directly held her up, "Go to the nearest hospital!"

Nicole did not speak and allowed him to carry her onto the aircraft. The exhaustion slowly settled in. Nicole enjoyed the feeling of his embrace. She slowly shut her eyes and fell asleep.

Seeing Nicole behave like a kitten in his arms and slowly drift asleep, Jared felt immense distress. He could not help but close his face onto her forehead and kiss her...

His gaze landed on the new device on Nicole's arm. He pressed the red button. The still-slumbering Nicole's brows unfurrowed as she fell into a deeper sleep. She had not rested well these few days. Nicole felt herself sleeping for a long time and had a very long and beautiful dream.

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Jared woke up and came to her rescue. He kept her company every day and brought her out to play. No missions, no family restrictions. She could go anywhere she wanted to go.

In her dreams, she was like a normal girl. She could go shopping with him, go to the fairgrounds, eat ice cream, and do the stuff she used to think was childish. As long as she was with Jared, she felt everything had meaning.

After a long time, she gradually woke up. The sunlight pierced through the curtains and gently shone into the room. The whole interior became particularly warm. Nicole tried to move but felt her hand being grasped. She lowered her head and discovered that Jared was lying on her bed, seemingly asleep without changing his clothes.

She looked at him with a hurt expression. Nicole was most familiar with his body conditions. He had just woken up and should be very weak. Nicole pulled out her hand

and tried to wake him up. Yet, he woke up simultaneously when she pulled her hand out.

Seeing Nicole woke up, Jared's gaze brightened. He immediately asked, "How are you? You thirsty?"

Nicole nodded her head. Sleeping for so long did make her slightly thirsty. Jared wanted to get up to pour water for Nicole. Suddenly, a figure from the sofa was one step ahead to pour water and quickly put it at Nicole's side.

Nicole raised her head and saw Carl's worried and complicated expression. It was fortunate that she was okay. Yet, he was a bit helpless. He did not know how to face

Nicole. He assumed the words she said when she was close to death were true...

Carl glanced at Jared's cold gaze and said with slight guilt, "Your body seemed quite frail. You can call for me to do these things for you."

Although before this, Carl was not satisfied with Jared.

However, this time, Jared saved Nicole. He also noticed that the only person able to protect Nicole was Jared. He was ultimately not compatible with Nicole...

Hence, he was willing to bless them from the deepest part of his heart and ready to help Jared willingly. Jared saw Carl's genuine expression and felt his heart feel more comfortable. He had stood guard for Nicole for two days, making his body relatively weak. He did not heed Carl any longer. He watched Nicole finish drinking her water and said in a low voice, "Feeling better?"

"Mmm," Nicole nodded, "No need to be so worried over me. I feel fine." She said while touching her head. The final injury was her head in the overturned car, but she is not in pain currently.

"Thankfully, you brought the Beacon product with you. You had some light injuries, and the doctor only needed to bandage them. However, the new light performed its function. Your injuries healed very swiftly. With merely two days, you were almost fully healed," Carl said while taking the cup and putting it down. His whole body felt a wave of relief wash through.

Then only did Nicole remember that she had brought this product from Beacon before. It was just that she did not get injured so heavily last time. Hence, she did not want to waste it but did not expect it to be used by them.

"What a pity. It was just a slight injury; there is no need to waste it," Having these things are costly. The production of this product on Martin's side is also little.

"It's fine. I have already increased the investments on Martin's side. The first batch of devices will be sent here very quickly," Jared said. He had understood the situation at the base these two days. He also knew that there was many injured personnel, so he contacted Martin and let him send the stuff over.

Nicole saw Jared's expression and could not help but be filled with reassurance. Indeed she did not need to bother as long as Jared was present.

"You think so considerately," Nicole smiled at Jared. The smile on her face was like a flower blossoming.

Carl saw her smile and was stunned. However, following this, his heart was slightly envious. He was destined never to behold her smile in his current life.

"You guys can talk first. I'll inform Mr. Douglas that you've awakened," Carl said. He merely wanted fresh air and did not want to interrupt their romantic moment.

"Mr. Douglas came?" Nicole was shocked and did not expect Zane to have rushed over from their headquarters.

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'Of course. He heard you were injured, so Mr. Douglas rushed over as soon as possible. But, you were in a coma for two days, so I arranged for him to stay at the base," Carl replied.

"Oh..." Nicole's expression was slightly awkward as she had not expected that she would have slept for two days.

It was honestly too much; most likely, Douglas was already furious. Yet, she only had eyes for Jared at the moment.

'When did you wake up? I didn't even know..." Nicole asked. When Mr. Johnston Sr. came over, he had clearly not yet awoken. However, when she was in danger, he rushed around from the mainland.

Jared stared at the surprise and worry that glinted in Nicole's eyes, then looked at her and reproached, 'I haven't woken up yet, and you dumped me and then went adventuring all alone? What did you plan to do if I had not rushed over in time?"

Once he remembered Nicole's blood-soaked state, his heart felt like it was painfully stabbed. It was not like he had not seen Nicole go on missions. He also guessed that a strong person like Nicole would definitely be met with dangerous missions in the

organization. However, before this, she would always save the day. But this time, he noticed how dangerous Nicole's jobs were.

Being stared by his searing gaze, Nicole was feeling slightly guilty. She did not know how to answer and merely mumbled, "It was an emergency, and I was worried I would drag you down. So I left..."

"Then you used this thing to observe me constantly?" Jared narrowed his gaze and pulled out a pinhole camera from his pocket.

Nicole did not expect him to know and could only squeeze an ugly smile while saying, "I was just worried for you..."

'Was it also you who agreed to let Martin send Fiorella to my sick ward?' Jared continued asking. 'Is this woman not jealous?' He thought.

When mentioning Fiorella, Nicole's expression turned worse. She pouted, saying, "Of course not. It's just that it would be impossible for Martin to always stay with you at the sick ward. On Max's side, if he kept running to the hospital, grandfather would know. Since Fiorella would not have any ill intentions toward you..."

'No ill intentions. Are you sure?' Jared said with a face filled with glumness.

'Does this woman care about me after all?' Jared thought.

Seeing that Jared was not speaking and was seemingly angry, Nicole could only sigh, "Of course, I was not reassured. I wanted so badly to fly back immediately. If there had been no accident the day before, I would have already left and returned to your side..."

Jared's emotions felt much better when he heard those words coming from the bottom of her heart. His gaze also softened slightly, but his tone was still scolding, "If you really wanted to go back, why did you not consider more for yourself?"

He had already heard the incident from Carl's mouth and knew that Nicole chose to sacrifice herself to protect Carl. His heart was filled with rage and distress for her. Nicole was stunned and answered awkwardly, "Was it Carl who told you?"

Jared's gaze turned stormy, and he said, "Do you know how it feels to hear from another man's mouth that my woman sacrificed herself to save him at all costs?"

Heartache and inexplicable jealousy were what he felt. The more he looked at Carl, the more Carl looked like an eyesore. Nicole understood Jared so well and knew he was slightly jealous. She could only tell him the truth, "On a mission before we met, Carl got heavily injured and disappeared into the sea for a long time when he tried to protect me. I still remember the feeling of guilt now... So, I really didn't want to lose him again."

Nicole's words were spoken with deep emotions. But when Jared's ears heard them, it only made him feel more unbearable. "Then you would have the heart to let me lose you?" His voice was still cold but also hinted at a sliver of fear.

Jared was not afraid of anything. No one would make him scared, and he did not fear death. Yet this time, he was terrified. If he were late by just a bit, he would not get to see her again.

Seeing Jared's blue gaze, Nicole's heart sank. She could only droop her head and say, "I'm sorry... Jared..."

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She had almost never uttered these two words to anyone, but this time, she could not help but to do so, as she had truly disregarded his feelings. Seeing her bow her head as she admitted to her wrongdoings, Jared felt heavy in his heart.

With considerable effort, he held her in his arms and said, "I don't want your apology. I want you to take good care of yourself. If you were in my position, would you allow yourself to lose me?"

Nicole immediately thought of the critical injuries that he had sustained for her. Indeed, all she could feel when he was in a coma was a deep, crippling heartache.

"If I have to lose you, you might as well just stab me and let me die," Jared said, his words brimming with a measure of sincerity and gentleness that made Nicole's heart quiver.

It was only then that Nicole knew how important she was to Jared, and how painful it would be for him to lose her.

"Remember this. The day you die, I will not be able to live on alone. I will never let go of you, even if it means following you to hell and back," Jared said.

Looking out the window, he did not allow her to look into his eyes and see how serious he truly was. His words were akin to that of an oath. It reverberated across the room, with each word etching itself into Nicole's heart. Hearing this, she could not help but raise her arms to hug Jared as her heart quivered.

"The same goes to me. In that case, let US promise that if you die first, I will definitely not let you go alone," Nicole answered.

It was then that questions began to arise. Why would she not be the same when she had lost him? Why would she also love him to the point of not being able to let go, even in death?

Jared never thought that she would actually make this pact with him, that he was actually so important to her.

“Why would I die, silly girl?” Jared said as he let go of her head.

Then, he gazed into her eyes and said, “You haven’t married me yet. How could I allow myself to die?”

Unable to help herself, she remarked, “So imprudent.”

To her, he had ruined such a beautiful moment. Meanwhile, Jared bit his lips, feeling that she was incredibly adorable. In response, he planted a kiss on her forehead.

However, it was also then that the door to the ward swung open. Carl and Zane walked in, and as soon as they saw the scene before them, they were taken aback. There, things took an awkward turn, with the duo pondering if they should stay or go. Thankfully, Nicole had heard the sound and raised her arms up to push Jared away lightly.

Seeing that Carl and Zane had entered, her face turned bright red. “Mr. Douglas... you came.”

‘That fella, Carl. Didn’t he tell me that he would inform Mr. Spears? Why did he bring him here?’ Nicole thought to herself.

Zane coughed and pretended as if nothing had happened.

And after clearing his throat, he asked, “Are you feeling better?”

Nicole nodded and replied, “Thanks to the Beacon, I have made a swift recovery.”

‘The things that Martin had invented are truly handy, indeed,’ she thought.

At the mention of the Beacon, Zane shot Jared a glance before saying, “It’s pretty useful. Your fiance had a large shipment of Beacons sent over to US. We are ready to distribute them to everyone at the base and headquarters.”

Nicole was pleasantly surprised, as she did not expect Jared to actually be so considerate.

Concurrently, Zane walked up to Jared and asked, “How is your body? You have been taking care of Nicole for a while now. Are you okay?”

Zane's tone of concern took her aback.

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Nicole suddenly thought that Jared and Zane might actually know each other. Otherwise, there would be little explanation as to why Zane had given her the coffee beans that were procured from Jared's farm.

As expected, Jared maintained a very polite tone with Zane. "I'm fine. It's only right for me to take care of her."

Zane smiled. 'I never expected that you and Nicole are together. I'd have introduced you guys to each other earlier if I knew that this would happen.

In response, Jared said, "Yeah. It's a shame I didn't get to see her when I met you back then."

As the conversation occurred, Nicole began to feel a little awkward. She figured that she might probably not have any feelings for Jared if they had met each other earlier.

"Mr. Spears, how did you get to know Jared?" Nicole asked, as she was a little curious about it.

It was then that Zane realized that Nicole was still there.

In awkward fashion, he replied, "We've known each other for a long time. I first met him when I visited his grandpa, but he was still a teenager back then."

Nicole lifted her brows and looked at Jared. 'I see. Mr. Spears is a friend of Jared's father. Now I know why he'd always send him coffee.'

After having engaged in all of the small talk, Zane cut straight back to the chase again. "I'm afraid that your grandpa has heard about it now that you're here."

Jared knew what Zane was talking about, as his face took on a solemn expression. "Yes. He has heard about it."

As soon as Jared had woken up, his grandfather had informed him about the Reby Family Crest. His instincts had clued him in, and that Nicole was his fiancée. Thus, he had rushed to her aid without bothering to keep himself well rested at all. He was worried that his fiancée would be in danger.

After listening to their conversation, Nicole could almost guess what they were talking about.

Her gaze darkened as she said in a low voice, "I guess the Johnston family is also one of the families affiliated to the Reby Family Crest, am I right?"

Both Zane and Jared looked at Nicole at the same time, as if they were admitting that what she had said was right.

"Not only the Johnstons, but every other family who were involved in the Holy War back then, and that includes me. I've heard about it," Zane said.

Zane sat on the sofa and with a solemn look on his face, he said, "Rumor has it that the descendants of the Reby family retrieved crest and hid it more than a century ago. None of US have expected it to reappear again. However, every family in the Holy Alliance are bound to the will of our ancestors, and will obey whoever possesses the Reby Family Crest, no matter what."

"Holy Alliance? Holy War?" Nicole asked, as she could vaguely remember the system mentioning these keywords when she was searching for the owner of the crest back then.

Zane noticed how confused she was, so he took a deep breath and continued, "It's a long story and it's only briefly mentioned in our family's records. More than a thousand years ago, rumor has it that a deadly tribe went on a rampage on our land, and nobody could stop them.

"Because of this, every powerful family in the world had no choice but to form the Holy Alliance to stand against them. Still, we failed anyway. After that, the Reby family invented a drug, which managed to obliterate our enemies for good. However, they also lost five of their bravest and most formidable sons in the battle.

"That was why the Holy Alliance had gifted five crests to the descendants of the fallen warriors of the Reby Family as a token of gratitude."

Carl and Nicole looked at each other after they had heard this myth-like story. "Do people really believe in things like this in this day and age?"

"Even though some of the allies from a thousand years ago had disappeared, the families that are still around all have a very long history. All of us value the will and traditions of our ancestors very much. All the families have documented this incident at the very beginning of their family's history, so the descendants take it very seriously. That being said, every descendant of the families that are a part of the Holy Alliance will do everything they can to assist and protect the person who holds the crest," Zane finished.

"But isn't this crest supposed to be given to the Reby family? Why would somebody else own it now?" Nicole said, curious.

Zane then sighed and said, "According to what my ancestors have documented, somebody coveted the power of the crest about two hundred years ago, so they stole it away from the Reby family. However, the descendants of the Holy Alliance followed the orders of their forefathers and obeyed the person who had stolen it nonetheless. Then, chaos broke out a hundred years later, so the Reby family retrieved the crests and destroyed them. Nobody would've thought that one of the crests... would be with you now."

Zane stared at Nicole with a look that indicated mixed feelings.

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Nicole had always been somewhat of a daughter to Zane, and yet, he felt like he had become something of a servant to her now. All in all, it was just an unpleasant feeling for Zane.

Nicole did not notice Zane's reaction as she was pondering about the causes and consequences.

'I'm afraid that the Rebys did not destroy the crests,' she said. "Instead, they kept it."

"Are you saying that there are more crests out there?" Carl looked at Nicole, shocked.

Nicole shook her head. "I'm not sure about that, but it's not easy to procure the crests. I'm probably the only person in this world who can do it."

The three men immediately fell silent after they had heard what she had said. They knew what Nicole was capable of and that she was not lying.

'Doesn't this mean that Nicole is the only person who can own all five of the crests if she's the only person who can acquire them?' Zane thought, becoming restless at the notion that Nicole could possibly own more than one of these.

'Listen, you just got this thing, and it has already gotten you into so much trouble. It'd be best if you do not pursue the other crests. Otherwise, even Zane's organization won't be able to keep you safe.'

It was a different time as compared to a thousand years ago. Only about two thirds of the families in the Holy Alliance are still around, and only half of them are considered to be the most prestigious families in the world. It had been so many years, and there are many more mysterious and ancient families that were equally powerful. Things would only get worse if those families were to come after the crests.

“It’s better for us to take ownership of them, instead of letting them fall into the hands of those with devious intent.” Nicole looked at Zane with an expression of seriousness on her face.

Zane arched his brows. “Is that why you put yourself at risk?”

Nicole shrugged her shoulders. “What do you think?”

Then, Carl butted in. “It’s not. She’s only doing this for that kid from the Guzman family. The first order that she gave the other families was to protect the Guzmans.’

“The Guzman family?” Zane frowned. “What does this have to do with them?”

Jared’s gaze darkened as well. “What’s going on? Be specific.”

As things stood, Jared would never let that kid get away if he did anything to put Nicole in danger.

Nicole quickly glared at Carl after realizing that the two men in front of her were going to put the blame on Zeke. “You don’t know anything.”

‘I...’ Carl uttered, but stopped as soon as he realized that he owed his life to Nicole.

“Nicole, what exactly happened? You can’t hide from me.” Zane looked at Nicole with concern.

He thought that Nicole had become too mature as of recent.

Nicole looked at Zane and tried to play it off as something unimportant.’ Zeke got the crest by accident and someone was going to kill him for it. I was worried that those men won’t stop coming after Zeke if I don’t do something, so I took ownership of the crest temporarily.

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Temporarily?!” Zane was shocked. “How could you not talk to me about something so serious before making that decision? The crest isn’t going to recognize somebody else as its owner as long as you’re still alive. You just turned yourself into a sitting duck to those people!”

Nicole lifted her brows. “That was how it worked back then, Uncle Zane. However, this new crest is a system. Do you know what I’m good at?”

Her words shocked Zane. “Are you going to overwrite its system?”

Nicole nodded, and after a while, she said, "I can probably do that, but this system is the most complicated out of all the other ones that I've seen. I might need some time to look into it."

Zane calmed down a little after he had an idea as to what Nicole's plan was. "You should figure something out to distance yourself from the system as soon as possible then."

In response, Nicole moved in closer and stared at him. "Then what?"

There'll still be people coming after it... I've got to place it somewhere safe."

Zane thought for a moment, and with a pained expression on his face, he said, "That's because too many people know about the Reby Family Crest now. The Rebys disappeared after they had retrieved the crests about a century ago. It's very difficult to track them down now, but I'll try anyway..."

Carl then grew nervous. "Is Nicole never going to be safe before we can find the other crests?"

Upon hearing that, Jared calmly said, "The Holy Alliance will protect her as long as she's still the possessor of the Reby Family Crest. Most people wouldn't dare to do anything to harm her. Any newly minted family that is ignorant of the rules will have to get past my family first before they get to try anything."

Only a few new families that had emerged in the start of the century would covet Nicole's crest, and the Johnston family happened to be the strongest family among them. Such was why Jared was not afraid of them at all.

A feeling of warmth rushed over Nicole after Jared had said that.

Carl kept mum at once. 'Oh. I almost forgot. Not only does Nicole own the crest. She also has Jared around to protect her...'

Zane looked like he was relieved too. Nicole has chosen the right person to be her fiance.'

"Let's not talk about the crests for now. After all, we know that nobody would dare to harm Nicole for now. Instead, we should be focusing on finding out who attacked our base. They could be the same group of people who robbed the Braves from us," Zane said with a troubled look on his face.

Nicole's eyes became stern. "The Braves were robbed from us?"

'Didn't I move them away? Why would they be stolen?' she thought.

She shifted her gaze to Carl subconsciously.

Then, with a look of defeat, he said, “The reason why Olaf and his men couldn’t back us up at that time was because somebody else had attacked the harbor too. They hijacked the ship that was supposed to ship the Braves away...”

Carl became very frustrated as he thought about that. On that day, he almost lost Nicole while the Braves had been stolen from them. It was just awful for him.

The grimace on Nicole’s face became even sourer. “First, somebody came after the Reby Family Crest, and now, the Braves have been stolen. I’m sure that these people have some major plans ahead if they’re working together.

With the Braves gone, Nicole could only wonder what would happen if she had lost the crest too.

I’m afraid that all hell will break loose if these two things fall into the wrong hands,’ she thought.

Nicole’s words made the three men think.

“The crest will bring them the power of more than a hundred families combined, and with the Braves... Even a country could be overwhelmed with the might of such power! What is this person up to?” Carl asked, getting more worried by the second.

Zane grimaced as well. “Even we would have to obey that person if Nicole had not managed to get her hands on the crest.”

Zane knew that the people in his family would never let him get away with it if he were to defy the will of his forefathers.

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Zane’s words shocked Carl. He was glad that Nicole had managed to secure the crest before anybody else. Otherwise, the consequences would be unfathomable.

“Looks like we’ve got to find out who attacked Nicole and robbed us of the Braves. We can only start striking back after we’ve figured their intentions out,” he said.

Jared’s gaze was vengeful. He would not spare a single soul who had been involved in the assault against Nicole. In fact, he would chop the masked man in black into a million pieces if he ever found out who he was.

“Yeah, Uncle Zane. You should assemble a team to retrieve the Braves as soon as possible,” she said.

The technology used in Braves were developed by the Turmann family. Serious trouble would arise if someone else managed to reverse engineer it.

“I already did that, but that ship disappeared right after it had arrived at the open sea. They destroyed the tracking device too, so it’s not working anymore,” Zane said with a look of dismay.

However, as troubled as he was, he stood up and continued anyway. “Just leave it to me. You’re now the owner of the crest, and the entire organization will be under your command. All you need to do is keep yourself safe.”

Carl looked at Nicole anxiously. “You’ll only be safe after we’ve captured and neutralized our enemies...”

Jared’s gaze swept across Carl. “Worry for yourself. I’ll protect her.”

Jared was eager to find out who was bold enough to mess with him and his loved ones.

Zane then eyed Jared with a look of concern. “Our top priority now is to bring Nicole back to your territory as soon as possible. After all, it’ll be difficult for a dragon to crush a snake in its own domain. I’m afraid that you’re in danger too.

Indeed, Jared was still not in his best of health and above anything, he needed rest.

“Yeah. We’ll be on our way in an hour,” Jared replied.

His men were already waiting. Zane did not have to remind him of that at all.

Upon knowing that all of the arrangements had been made, Zane felt relieved. “I’ll leave her to you if that’s the case.”

Clearly, Nicole was like a daughter to Zane, as he had never been so worried for a person before.

“Sure.” Jared nodded, assuring Zane that Nicole would be safe under his wing with the look of determination in his eyes.

Feeling at ease now, Zane said, “Please send me regards to your grandpa.”

“I will,” Jared finished.

After that, Zane turned around and left the ward.

Carl looked at Nicole playfully after he saw how downcast Zane was when he left the room. "Uncle Zane doesn't dare to give you any orders anymore. Come to think of it, you're not only the owner of the crest. You'll soon be Uncle Zane's superior too."

Nicole rolled her eyes at him. "Don't spout that kind of hogwash. Uncle Zane will beat you up if he hears it."

Carl burst into a gale of laughter, as his mood had significantly improved after Nicole had woken up. "I don't care about anything but you. I have nothing to worry about as long as you're safe."

His gaze looked so sincere, that it reminded Nicole of the time when he got dragged away while he was professing his love to her. And just like that, things took a romantic turn in the room.

However, Carl felt a sudden chill running down his spine as he saw Jared's sharp gaze directed at him through his periphery.

Carl immediately fell silent. He felt that Jared's presence was so oppressive that it was practically suffocating him...

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"I-I guess I should get going now. I'm afraid that Uncle Zane might need my help..." Carl said, and left the room thereafter.

The door slammed shut with a bang, showing how much Carl was in a hurry to leave. This gave Nicole a sense of relief.

'Looks like Carl isn't really bothered by everything that had happened. I wish that I could pretend that nothing had happened too,' she thought.

However, Jared had noticed everything. "What happened between you and him? Why is there some sort of tension in the room?"

Jared noticed that Carl would treat Nicole exceptionally well, and whenever he stared at Nicole, he would do so in a passionate way. Besides, he had never really gotten along well with Carl. Even now, he regretted the fact that he had allowed Carl to leave, especially after he had observed how guilty the latter looked.

' Nothing much.' Nicole looked at Jared.

Then, she came up with a random excuse in fear that Jared would grow jealous once again. "I guess he's distancing himself from you after he had seen how close you are with Uncle Zane. You're not seeing green now, are you?"

"Are you sure?" he asked.

Jared could not believe what Nicole had said to him because Carl was the heir of his family, and he had figured that the latter would have no reason to fear him just because he discovered that Jared was a close friend of Zane's. Even though he had more questions, he did not bother to ask because Nicole was not ready to tell him the truth.

Besides...he did not want Nicole to think that he was a petty man who would become jealous over everything.

"You're so good with words. What exactly do you mean by that?" Jared frowned and looked at her with his brows raised.

Nicole was left speechless. 'Does this dude not know how easy it is for him to get all jealous?'

"Whatever. I'm feeling hungry. I want to eat something," she said.

Nicole did not wish to continue the conversation with him after she had narrowly just escaped death. She just wanted to have a good meal.

Jared nodded and looked at his phone. "I've already asked someone to send some food over."

"Okay." Nicole nodded.

As expected, someone came into the ward with breakfast in hand just after they had waited for a few minutes.

"These are all your favorite food," he said.

Nicole had been undergoing a swift recovery with the aid of Beacon, and so, Jared got her all of her favorite food as he thought that they would not affect her health.

Nicole was delighted as soon as she saw the food. "Consider this a celebration for cheating death."

"Sure," Jared said as he stood up and picked Nicole up.

Then, he placed her down on the couch.

Meanwhile, Nicole blushed as soon as she felt how warm he was. Even though they were officially together, and with the fact that she was already used to being intimate with him, she would still feel shy whenever other people were around.

“Dig in,” Jared said, handing Nicole the utensils.

It was a unique experience for her to enjoy exquisite French cuisine in a hospital ward, and needless to say, Nicole felt very happy that she could do that. And as if that was not enough, Jared even got someone to bring her a brewing machine to grind her coffee beans with.

Nicole could not remember the last time Jared made her a cup of coffee. She took a sniff and felt like the entire ward was saturated with its fragrance.

Seeing how eager she was, he came up to her and placed the cup down in front of her. “This is the newest strain of coffee on my farm for this season. Give it a try.”

Nicole smiled. Then, she grabbed the cup and took a sip.

Suddenly, she felt a unique yet mellow taste radiating across her tongue.

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“Not bad. It tastes better than all of the previous ones I’ve tried. Oh, and I must add, the aftertaste is very strong,” she said.

Jared could not help but flash her a smile upon hearing Nicole’s professional feedback. “I guess it’s only right that I give the best stuff to the expert.”

Nicole returned the smile before she placed the cup down and began eating.

She looked at Jared and said as she chewed. “You’re looking very pale. You haven’t been sleeping for the past two days, have you?”

‘This dude is reckless. He came to save me right after he woke up from a head injury. How ridiculous,’ she thought.

“It’s fine. I’ll get better by staying here with you,” Jared said in nonchalant fashion.

Nicole’s heart melted, and in a flirtatious manner, she teased, “Cut it off. Nobody knows your body better than me. You’ve got to bed down in a hospital after we get back later.”

'This guy suffered major injuries because of me, yet he disregarded his own health and safety, and rushed out of the hospital just to save me. Does he really think that he's made of steel?' she thought.

"Hospital?" Jared lifted his brows. "I guess not. My grandfather is expecting you."

"Grandfather?" It was then that Nicole realized that Jared's grandfather had come to visit him in the previous video recording. 'He probably knows something...'

Everything else would make sense if the Johnston family was a part of the Holy Alliance.

Noticing Nicole's look of concern, he said, "Don't worry. My grandfather just wants to know what really happened. He's very glad that you own the crest now. After all, you're the future wife of his grandson. It's not an issue that you have the crest to make our family stronger.

Nicole looked at him. "Are you sure? Is that what your grandfather thinks? I'm just worried that everyone else will think that I'm a burden..."

"My family isn't afraid of anything." Jared looked at Nicole sternly to reassure her.

Nicole immediately felt a lot better and as of now, she even began to admire the choice she had made.

She was glad that Jared had been staying by her side, making her feel that she would always have his support whenever she needed it.

"Are you saying that I should never leave you and your family then?" Nicole said cheekily before she continued to eat.

Jared lifted his brows. "Of course. You're never, ever, leaving."

Nicole nodded as she looked into Jared's gentle eyes. "Okay then..."

It was a promise from Nicole that she would never leave him.

As Jared had gotten the answer he wanted, he stroked her hair gently and proceeded to eat his breakfast with her.

Jared's plane arrived as soon as they had finished their meal. Together, they bade everyone goodbye and left the country soon after.

Zane was worried that their enemies would launch another assault on Nicole, so he sent Carl and a few other men to escort them in a fleet of seven other planes.

Nicole looked out of the window and thought that Zane was being overprotective.

Nicole then saw more than ten other planes flying in a formation around Jared's private jet after they had flown out of the city area.

As all of the aircrafts coalesced, the formation became even stronger. To Nicole, a scenario like this could only be witnessed on television whenever some high-ranking officials were escorted out of some country.

"Isn't this a bit much?" she asked.

Nicole had always been a humble person, and therefore, she had never expected that she would one day travel in a manner similar to individuals of major significance.

"Not at all. You're as important as a world leader now. This is perfectly normal." Jared looked at Nicole solemnly.

It would be a huge deal if a country had ten prestigious families present to protect it. However, Nicole was in charge of multiple regions across the globe now. She was the individual whom all families would obey, and thus, her treatment was comparable to those of world leaders.

Nicole was rendered speechless as she looked at Jared. Even though she thought that what he said made sense, she still could not accept the fact that she would have to travel like that.

"Just this once. Let's just get things back to normal once we're home. I don't want to freak my family out," she said.