

Chapter 108

My heart skipped a beat, and I quickly averted my gaze.

Norman seemed to pick up on my thoughts. He purposefully blew a puff of smoke in my direction, then turned to the others.

"Alright. Let's play a few rounds."

I glanced at Teri for help, but she just shrugged, helpless.

The game began, with Norman handling the custom-made chess set, his graceful movements somehow exuding an air of elegance.

"Knight!" he said, casually moving the chessmen, taking a slow drag of his cigarette as he squinted at the others.

"Hah! Gotcha! I win!" one of the guys across from him cheered, rubbing his hands together.

Norman laughed and cursed, "Such a small win, and you're that excited? Fine then. Take it."

They started counting points and rearranging the chessmen. I watched as Norman casually tossed a wad of cash onto the table.

I scratched my head, feeling lost when I saw that they were playing for real money.

Norman caught my gaze and asked, "Did you get the hang of it?"

I shook my head. "I never learned this."

One of the guys across from us chuckled . "No way. How could you not know? Aren't you Ariana? Back in the day, you'd sit beside Elijah and win plenty of money off us."

Finally, someone couldn't hold back from spilling the truth. I froze.

Teri immediately jumped in. "She's got nothing to do with that scumbag Elijah anymore!"

"Oh, right. Did you guys see the trending news today? That mistress Jocelyn started tearing Elijah apart publicly ." He then said while laughing, "Elijah's in hot water now."

Norman's expression darkened, and he slammed his chessmen onto the table. "Since when has he been a friend to any of you? Do you want a friend so badly? Then get out!"

The three players instantly went silent. One of them hurriedly stammered an apology.

"Mr. Wood, don't be mad. It's just habit. Elijah is nothing in Halton City anyway—just a parasite living off women."

The others quickly chimed in, "Yeah. He's just a pretty boy who leeches off women. Now, he's finally getting his karma."

Another guy, glued to his phone, laughed . "It's all over the Internet—two of them!"

"Oh, and, Mr. Wood, your account's trending too. Looks like the evidence from your buddies is hitting hard."

Only then did a smile return to Norman's face. Seeing him smile, the others started showering him with praise.

Another round started, and Norman ended up losing to all three players. Without batting an eye, he threw down three stacks of cash.

I looked at the money, stunned—it was in Stateside notes.

Three stacks, each at least ten to 20 thousand. That meant Norman had just lost over 100 thousand dollars in a single round?

That was serious money. I couldn't help but feel a pang of sympathy.

Suddenly, Norman grabbed my hand. "My luck's off tonight. Arianna, why don't you try a hand for me?"

He pulled me over to the table. I felt flustered. "I really don't know how to play."

Norman gave a wry smile. "Really?"

I lowered my voice. "I have memory loss."

"Memory loss? Oh—" He studied me with an amused smile for a moment and finally said, "Alright. I'll teach you. If we lose, it's on me. If we win, the money's yours."

"I..."

Before I could protest, the game started.

With a nervous heart, I picked up my chessmen, arranging them clumsily in no particular order.

Then, a slender hand gently took hold of mine, guiding me to organize the chessmen properly, one by one.

His hand felt different from Logan's —warm, dry, but equally graceful , with defined knuckles . He wore a platinum ring with an unusual design on his middle finger.

He leaned in close, his breath tickling my ear. "If you win, I'll give you the evidence. Deal?"

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