

Chapter 350 Scars

Ashton's words left an indelible impact; the expressions of the others changed.

Given the gravity of the accusation leveled against Rowan, no one dared to venture into the precarious territory of antagonizing him.

Flustered, Klein rushed to interject, "Ashton, why are you making trouble? We came to visit Rowan today. Calm down."

Ashton gave a sly smirk, involving Klein into this.

"Klein, stop pretending. Haven't you seen that photo? Loraine and Rowan were so close to each other in the ward that they almost kissed! Their relationship must be unusual! Besides, don't you doubt it at all?"

Klein found it pointless to deny the fact that he'd laid eyes on the photograph. "What should I doubt?" he asked.

"Consider this. The moment Universe Group secured the government project, Rowan was dispatched to Vagow for inspection. And once he assumed power in Vagow, Universe Group nearly monopolized the development of the project. Isn't there something fishy about all of this?"

Klein was taken aback. He was well aware that, aside from Bryant Group and Universe Group, there were hardly any other company in Vagow capable of undertaking the project.

Yet, he had harbored the same suspicion previously. After Rowan returned, Universe Group's progress became remarkably smoother.

Observing his stunned reaction, Ashton gave a complacent snort and shot Loraine a look of hatred.

Loraine clenched her jaw and retorted icily, "Rowan's illustrious military achievements throughout the years cannot be fabricated. Ashton Riley, do you have any evidence to support what you say?"

"Evidence? Once Rowan is stripped of his rank and investigated, the truth will come to light. Loraine, it is useless for you to come to Rowan's defense. Your association with him is well-known, and it's only natural for you to protect each other!" Ashton interjected with a gleam of excitement in his eyes. "Take Rowan's supposed hospitalization as an example. There is no concrete proof of him being injured. He's been elusive and avoided public appearances. It's possible that he feigned illness to apply for merit."

His words flew with passion as he sprayed spittle in his enthusiasm, like a performer commanding the stage.

A regal and icy voice echoed from behind, causing Ashton to startle.

"Ashton, who are you talking about?"

Ashton froze, his complexion draining of color as he turned to face the imposing presence before him.

The others followed suit, quickly turning to greet the man with hushed respect.

"Rowan!"

Rowan, clad in a striped hospital gown, looked worn out but still exuded an aura of grandeur. Despite being wheeled out in a wheelchair by a doctor, his aura remained commanding, leaving everyone breathless.

Cold sweat broke out on Ashton's forehead. When he was about to say something, Rowan lifted the hospital gown in front of everyone.

His strong muscles were lined with many scars.

A pristine white bandage stood out amid the sea of old wounds.

Rowan gave a soft cough, crimson droplets seeping through the tightly-wound bandage. He surveyed his surroundings with a stoic expression, his lips curling into a scornful sneer.

"I never entrusted the frontline tasks to others. Surely these wounds serve as ample proof, don't they?"

The doctor interjected immediately, cautioning Rowan against succumbing to anger as the wound was still tender. Rowan shook his head, indicating his indifference.

"This is my most recent scar, courtesy of a gunshot. The bullet had a diameter of nine millimeters. Would you like me to remove the bandage for a closer look?"

A palpable sense of trepidation washed over everyone, leaving them at a loss for words as they exchanged uneasy glances, reluctant to speak up. Ashton paled, his face ghastly white.

As a seasoned civil servant, this was his first time witnessing such a gruesome wound, and fear gripped him tightly in its icy hold.

Klein hung his head, consumed by shame over his initial suspicion.

Rowan's pained coughs distressed Loraine. He was proving himself in such a humiliating way.

She hurried to pull Rowan's hospital gown back down and retrieved the wheelchair from the doctor. She wheeled him back for proper bandaging.

As she passed by Ashton, she cast him a chilly glance.

"As a government official, you slander against your superior. We won't let you go unpunished."

Ashton flushed and said anxiously, "I am not propagating a baseless rumor. If you want to blame anyone, blame that photo. It is your own lack of decency that should be faulted. You can't blame us."

Loraine gnawed on her lower lip, vexed at her inability to trace the source of the incriminating photo. She was thinking how to counter the damaging accusation when a frigid voice cut through the air from behind her.

"Ashton Riley, I suggest you exercise greater caution in your words and actions!" Marco interjected, his tone cold and cutting as he strode over and stood by Loraine's side. "Do you truly believe yourself to be blameless? I happened upon something rather intriguing. Should I report it to your superior?"

Upon hearing the commotion, Marco wasted no time

in dashing to the scene. He even asked Qbot to investigate Ashton, and the robot did find the illegal things he had done.

Ashton's eyes widened with a sense of guilt as he realized Marco's formidable ability to uncover his darkest secrets.

Aware of the scrutinizing gazes from his colleagues, Ashton said, "I have pressing matters to attend to at home. I must take my leave now."

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Ashton hastily made up an excuse and scurried away.

The rest of them stood there, feeling awkward and unsure of what to do. It seemed as if they had no choice but to leave.

Noticing Marco's presence, Klein approached him with concern.

"Marco, why are you in the hospital? Are you hurt?"

Marco hesitated for a moment, glancing at Loraine and Rowan for a sign of whether he should reveal the reason for his injuries.

Rowan took the hint and spoke up on behalf of Marco.

"Marco sustained injuries during a mission for the Cheetah Command. Thanks to him, I was rescued from a dangerous situation."

Klein and the others were taken aback. When did Marco start working closely with Rowan? To add to that, they were on a mission together.

Everyone then looked at Loraine.

After all, both men were rumored to be interested in her.

Rowan coughed to regain their attention.

"Marco, I haven't formally thanked you yet. Rest assured, I will arrange for someone to take good care of you during your hospitalization, and I will help you apply for a formal reward from my superior."

But Marco could sense that Rowan was trying to absolve Loraine of any involvement with him. He didn't say anything. The atmosphere quickly grew tense for a moment.

Rowan noticed Marco's dissatisfaction and his expression turned sour. "If you don't think the reward is enough, tell me what else you want."

Marco locked eyes with Loraine, his gaze filled with passion.

His intense gaze made Loraine subconsciously turn away.

Everyone was puzzled by this. What could he possibly have meant by that?

Then they saw Rowan's face darken.

The relationship between the two men and Loraine was complicated, and the situation was tense.

Everyone was speculating, and it was Marco who finally broke the silence.

"Thank you for the offer, but I don't need any rewards. I can get what I want on my own."

As he spoke, his eyes were still fixated on Loraine.

Although his voice was not loud, Loraine felt as if he had whispered in her ear. His intense stare made her

heart race and she couldn't bring herself to meet his gaze.

Rowan was surprised by Marco's refusal of rewards. He silently praised Marco for his self-sufficiency.

The atmosphere among the three of them was tense and uncomfortable. Klein, who was observing the situation, wondered why Rowan didn't treat Marco like a rival in love. Who was Loraine staying at the hospital to take care of?

Noticing Klein's gaze, Rowan cleared his throat and apologized. "I'm sorry, but I'm not feeling well today. Please leave."

Rowan asked them to leave, and they already saw Rowan's injuries. They decided not to stay any longer. The visitors hurriedly left after leaving their gifts.

Klein smiled as he prepared to hand Rowan his gift. But as soon as he passed by Marco, Klein winked at him, insinuating that Marco follow him.

Marco frowned and reluctantly followed him.

Once alone, Klein asked, "Are you still pursuing your ex-wife?"

Marco didn't deny it and nodded.

Klein sighed and looked back carefully. He warned Marco, "It's extremely difficult to compete with Rowan. Are you sure you want to be his rival?"

Marco didn't reply. He knew the kind of relationship Rowan had with Loraine.

He was her uncle!

However, Marco seemed to have offended all of Loraine's family.

Marco was saddened deep down. Klein whispered, "That photo of Rowan and Loraine doesn't seem to be fake. They..."

Marco's expression turned cold upon. "Do you know who spread the photo?"

Klein shook his head.

Marco's eyes darkened. He then looked lowered his hand and clenched the phone.

He was determined to uncover the truth, not out of jealousy, but to protect Loraine from the rumors.

Meanwhile, Rowan returned to the ward and was furious upon hearing Hubert's report.

"I want you to find the one slander Loraine! I'll make them pay!"