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"No, you were right. I shouldn't have had those intentions. Had I bulldozed through their relationship, Devin would probably cut off ties with me. I should thank you instead."

Wow, I didn't expect him to be so understanding.

Sebastian was relieved that Edmund was the bigger person.

When the cuffs were unlocked, the two assisted each other and escaped the basement.

Lo and behold, another loud explosion sounded as soon as they stepped foot outside. As a consequence, the ground underneath shook terribly.

"Hurry up! There are plenty of nuclear bombs buried beneath us. Someone must have triggered it and caused a bombing on the other side. We've got to seize this golden opportunity and leave this place at once," Edmund uttered in a pressing manner.

Sebastian nodded as Edmund helped him scurry to safety.

Bang! A series of deafening explosions sounded again behind them, rushing them to run for their lives.

Sebastian could no longer hear any of those jarring sounds.

He could only feel his rapid heartbeat, heavy breathing, and the bloodstains in his mouth.

"Sebastian! Sebastian!" He roughly heard someone calling his name at his ears.

As the flames caught up with him from behind, he could not hear anything. Instinctively, he ran as fast as he could without stopping...

He was resolute to stay alive for he knew that he had a family to return to. He was looking forward to seeing three adorable faces and one silly woman.

Boom! The entire basement was filled with billowing smoke.

Sebastian was blasted quite a distance away before falling onto the ground. He was already unconscious when Edmund crawled over to check on him.

At that moment, a young man wearing a pair of gold-rimmed glasses darted toward them. When he saw the casualties, he yelled, "Quick, send him to the hospital. Hurry up!"

That was the end of an eventful night. The sun would rise again in two hours' time, and a brand new day began...

Two days later at Oceanic Estate, Sabrina decided to bring the four kids back to Avenport.

This was because Sasha did not return ever since she left for Avenport.

In fact, she was showing signs of not returning anymore. She had arranged for Royal Court One at Frontier Bay to be cleaned even though Sebastian was still unconscious in the hospital. She probably would have him settle down there once he woke up.

The triplets were overjoyed when they learned that they could finally go home. However, Jonathan was feeling sentimental, knowing that he would miss the children. Then again, he knew that there was no reason he could make them stay any longer.

"Remember to keep in touch frequently with Great-grandpa, okay?"

"We will, Great-grandpa," the triplets promised in a crisp voice.

Devin set off the journey with Sabrina.

"Hubby, are you sure you can drive me there? You're super busy, aren't you? With the fall of Eddie, many agendas await your attention. Are you sure it's okay for you to be away?" Sabrina could help but ask on the way back to Avenport.

It's indeed a chaotic time. The White House is in a mess. Silas has no influence on the situation, whatsoever. Will it worsen the political unrest if Devin is away?

Devin smiled and replied placidly, "Just leave it to Grandpa. I'm not good at this."

He casually indicated that he would not get involved in the matter. Afterward, he carried his kid on one arm, baggage on the other, and made his way out of the house.

Similar to Sebastian, Devin disliked politics.

The only reason he put on the uniform was because it was his dream and wish. His ambition was to contribute his earnest passion to build the country. He wanted nothing to do with political power.

With that, the whole family went back to Avenport, along with the triplets.

Meanwhile, in Avenport, Sasha had been constantly traveling between the hospital and Frontier Bay.

She was over the moon when she was informed that Sebastian had been discharged.

"Solomon, the doctor allows him to go home. So, I'm planning to take him back today. I'm certain that he will be thrilled to see that he's home when he wakes up."

Upon receiving the notice, the delighted Sasha updated the man in the hallway, who had just arrived at the hospital.

Solomon stopped in his tracks. "So soon? Isn't he still in a coma?"

"It's fine. The doctor says that it was due to extreme fatigue. He's in deep sleep now. Thus, he can recuperate at home. The other minor injuries, scratches, and abrasions will heal with time."

"What about you? What's your plan?" A sudden question caught her by surprise.

Sasha was stunned. She was too happy that she had forgotten her own condition.

"I've contacted Haruto on your behalf. When you're available, I'll get him to examine your condition. I can understand that his wellbeing is important, but you can't neglect your own health too. Otherwise, how can you spend the rest of your life with him?"

The man gazed at her quietly after putting his points across in the hallway.

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Sasha froze and stared at him with a blank face for almost a minute. She found herself not able to utter a single word in response.

Through his words, she knew that he had let go of her.

Though she was happy about it, she also felt guilty and sad when she saw how composed he was because she was indebted to him.

Later that evening, the rightful owner of Royal Court One at Frontier Bay returned, despite still in a coma.

All the relatives and close friends of the Hayeses were invited over. Among them were the Wands and the Blackwoods. It was a really merry scene.

However, the lights on the top floor of Hayes Corporation were still brightly lit.

"Mr. Akiyama, aren't you heading over?"

Akiko was still working when she realized that the president was still in his office. After hesitating, she decided to post the question.

The man in the office glanced at her through the corner of his eye. "Whatever for?"

The brief and unexpected reply rendered Akiko speechless.

She stood there for a while and left. Shortly after, she returned with two bottles of authentic sake from Jetroina.

"Sake, Mr. Akiyama?"

What?

Solomon gazed at that Jetroinian woman standing at his door. For a split second, he really wanted to shoo her away as he found her annoying. He did not want her to keep disturbing him.

However, when he saw how careful she was, trying to please him. He said nothing but nodded to indicate that he had accepted her invitation.

About ten minutes later, two of them starting downing the liquor at the coffee table, one glass after another.

"Mr. Akiyama, you've sacrificed at least half of our people for the sake of saving him. Do you regret that decision? He's your love rival, isn't he? If things go well for him, you will lose your chance to win her." After a few shots, Akiko grew bolder.

Her questions made Solomon turn grim. "You've had too much to drink."

"Right. I'm sorry." A quick reprimand silenced her. Regaining her senses, she bowed her head and dared not say anything further.

Solomon continued drinking.

"Um... Mr. Akiyama, are you going back to Jetroina two days later for the ceremony? Your mother's death anniversary is just around the corner..."

"No!" the man shot a firm reply while furrowing his brows.

Akiko's face fell.

As they continued drinking, they heard the sound of a woman's heels approaching. Click-cluck, click-cluck.

"Solomon? You really are here. Why aren't you attending the party at Nancy's house? She asks me to come and get you."

The door was pushed open by a young lady in a light green dress.

When she saw the two of them in the office, a surprised look settled upon her gorgeous face. Then, she smiled. It was a very charming smile which instantly brightened up the room.

Willow? She's here too.

For no apparent reason, mere displeasure flashed across Akiko's face.

Solomon was curious. "What brings you here?"

"Can't I come over? I'm her best friend. Now that she's back with her husband, she would certainly inform me. Come on, Solomon, let's go and celebrate."

She strode across the room and unhesitatingly wrapped her arms around Solomon's.

They were definitely not a stranger to each other.

Back in Clear, Sasha's best friends were none other than Willow and Solomon. They spent most of their days together.

Later on, Willow had always been a big part of Solomon's life, be it when he was operating a bar in Jetroina or when he escaped to Clear when he found out he was terminally ill. Hence, it was only normal that they were close and intimate.

Looking helpless, Solomon did not know what to do with Willow.

"I'm quite busy, and I haven't finished all the tasks at hand yet."

"Cut the crap! I know you too well. Come on, let's go. Everyone's waiting for you, the party won't be complete without your presence. Nancy truly wishes for you to be there. I'm sure Sebastian concurs with her too once he wakes up."

With that said, she ushered him to the door and dragged him out of the office.

Akiko turned green with envy as she watched from the coffee table. Subconsciously, a trace of hatred appeared in her eyes.

She wanted to compete with Sasha. Yet, she was not even at par with Willow.

Seeing how brazen the latter was in front of Solomon, Akiko dreamed about having the same privilege to act similarly.

Willow forced Solomon to show up at Royal Court One in Frontier Bay. The moment he appeared, he was greeted by everyone's warm welcome, including Sabrina and the rest of the Hayeses.

"Why are you only arriving now, Solomon? You even needed Willow to personally bring you here. Is there a need for such formalities?"

Sasha, the lady of the house, approached him with a glass of champagne.

At that instant, Solomon felt slightly uneasy. "Oh, no, it took me a while to finish the pending work..."

"You need to get your priorities right. What's the occasion? It's the very day your brother comes home. Is your work more important than him? You're too much." Sabrina walked over and handed him an appetizer while giving him a piece of her mind like a big sister he never had.

Both Solomon and Sasha were shocked to their wits when they heard the phrase Sabrina used.

My brother? Is she referring to... Sebastian?

Everyone quietened down. At that very moment, no one said another word. Their glistening eyes revealed their inner thoughts. Finally, there was acceptance amidst the family.

From the perspective of a family, they were indeed brothers. They both addressed Frederick as their father, regardless of whether they were related by blood.

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The party lasted till eleven o'clock at night before it ended.

Solomon was preparing to head home as well. He figured Willow could stay at Royal Court One since it was such a huge villa, after all.

As he was heading out, he heard the sounds of stilettos clicking from behind. Turning around, he saw a lady in a sage green dress running toward him.

"Solomon, can you send me to Imperial Rose?" Willow's pretty face was blushing red as she awkwardly pleaded.

Imperial Rose? Isn't that where the Emmanuels stay?

Solomon sighed. "So your purpose of coming to Avenport this time is to look for that guy from the Emmanuels instead of attending Nancy's party?"

"That's not it."

Willow's face heated up in embarrassment after getting exposed.

Yet, she refused to admit it.

"I'm really back to attend Nancy's party. B-But Brandon happened to be back, so I thought I might as well meet him too."

Solomon remained silent.

It was not the first time he saw her do that.

Eventually, Solomon let Willow get on his car and drove her toward the location despite that late hour.

"When did he return?"

"On the 28th at noon. He completed the shoot for a film overseas and is back for only three days," Willow audibly conveyed Brandon's schedule while touching up her makeup.

Hearing that, Solomon instantly frowned.

He hated the way she acted. He hated to see a lady degrading herself for a man and ending up not getting her well-deserved respect. Nonetheless, he did not stop her despite watching her do that for the past years.

He reckoned he should not say that much as a friend.

As such, upon arrival and seeing the villa without lights on, he muttered, "Call me if there's anything."

"Sure. Thank you, Solomon."

Willow picked up her bag and headed inside gleefully, without knowing it was yet another sleepless night.

Meanwhile, back at Royal Court One, Frontier Bay.

After showering, Sasha returned to her bedroom on the third level. Exhausted as she was, she lifted the blanket and lay down beside the man on the bed.

"Sebby, there were so many guests today. They were all happy to hear that I'm back and came to visit me," she mumbled as she snuggled herself into Sebastian's embrace.

Just the perfect body temperature and those rhythmic heartbeats as robust as his breathing...

Sasha shut her eyes tight, feeling extremely satisfied.

Right then, the arm wrapped around her suddenly had a slight movement. Even though it was not a pronounced action, those fingers on her waist felt extra perceptible to Sasha when they pulsated all of a sudden.

"Sebby?"

Instantly, she opened her eyes and her face lifted into an excited expression.

Ahem, ahem, ahem...

Sebastian let out a few coughs upon hearing Sasha's voice. What followed was a slight quiver of his eyelashes.

Slowly, he opened his eyes.

"Sebby! You're finally awake!"

Sasha was excited to see that and immediately sat up straight.

Despite still being in a daze and a blurry vision, Sebastian instinctively reached out his hand after hearing that familiar voice.

"Darling..."

"Hmm, yeah. I'm here."

Sasha hurriedly held onto his hand and pressed it against her cheek tightly. Torrents of emotions streamed down her face uncontrollably.

"You've finally woke up. I thought..."

"Silly girl."

Sebastian's vision, by then, had slowly become clearer and more focused.

At the sight of the crying woman, he felt a pinch in his heart, which quickly evolved into a warm smile on his face.

He pulled her into his embrace and muttered, "Nothing will happen to me. I still have you and the three kids. How can I leave you all behind?"

"Hmm..."

Sasha, who had been quivering in grief, finally felt better with that warm cuddle before his chest.

Indeed, Sasha and Sebastian had never thought of giving up despite the problems they faced. They always gave their best even in difficult times.

Living life to their fullest was not only for themselves but also for the other party.

And so, news of Sebastian regaining consciousness after the party ended spread around quickly. Many erupted into delight upon receiving that piece of good news.

Guests who had left the party soon also heard about it and could not hold back their tears of joy.

The next day, Sabrina and Devin had already arrived with their child when Sasha steadied Sebastian down from upstairs.

"How do you feel? Any discomfort?" Devin asked when he saw the two coming down.

"I'm fine. Just feeling a little weak," Sebastian explained truthfully while sitting

For a person who had been unconscious for that long, there was no doubt he would be weak. Besides, those injuries he sustained on his head and limbs from the car accident had yet to fully recover.

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Seeing his condition, Devin was slightly worried.

"Shall I ask Grayson to come over and take a look at you? He knows your condition better."

"It's alright," Sebastian politely rejected.

Sitting in the bright and sunny garden, he watched the four kids running around not too far away. Suddenly, a revelation struck him—he had finally achieved the kind of life he had always been looking forward to.

"What are your plans going forward? Are you entering the White House?"

"Not really. You know I'm not interested in that. As compared to that, I'd rather pick up my weapon and protect the world. The power game is never my cup of tea," Devin expressed his thoughts as he arranged the breakfast on the white dining table.

In fact, someone like him was hard to come by.

He was a man full of responsibility and ambitions. Unlike others, he refused to go with the flow and mixed in the murky seabed of power.

Truth be told, if everyone donned in that uniform were like him, there would be peace in the entire world.

Smiling, Sebastian picked up the mug of warm water in front of him.

"That sounds great too. Grandpa shall deal with those things instead. I might be accompanying Sasha to Jetroina sometime later. Solomon said he has found Haruto and would let her meet him when the time comes."

"Oh, that's great." Hearing that piece of news, Devin's eyes glowed.

In comparison, Haruto's medical knowledge and skills were far more competent than Grayson's. After all, the former was a genius in the medical industry.

Devin headed back to Jadeborough after breakfast that day.

Even though he had no plans of intervening with matters at Jadeborough, he still had to take charge of the situation there before a new leader took over the role.

On the other hand, Sabrina stayed.

She felt great to be back at this home with Jaena.

"Oh yes, Sab. Have you met Edmund?"

"Oh, nope," Sabrina, who was having a fun time playing with her kid, replied without giving too much thought to it.

In truth, Edmund did not appear at the party the other day. Sasha had tried calling him a few times, yet, none of the calls went through to her surprise.

And she reasoned it with two possibilities—one, he was unwilling to pick up her class; two, her number had been blocked.

Somehow, Sasha felt a prickle of guilt within her.

She thought of meeting him in person to not only thank him but also to apologize regarding the incident earlier on.

Nevertheless, she still had not managed to get in touch with Edmund. Instead, Willow made an appearance as she came running to her house. The moment she stepped foot in, she threw her bag aside, jumped onto the couch, and began tearing up.

Sasha was shocked to see her.

What is this all about again?

Without choice, she put down the cookies she had prepared for the kids and walked over to Willow.

"What's going on? Who has bullied you? Tell me; I'll avenge you!"

"Really?"

Willow looked up at Sasha innocently with her swollen and teary eyes upon hearing those words.

Sasha took a deep breath and gulped. "Yeah, go ahead and tell me."

Elated, Willow explained, "Then, ask Brandon to come over. I've waited at his house for three days, but he's nowhere to be seen. What do you think he's up to? Is he not willing to see me?"

Sasha did not know what to make of it.

Wait, no way. Since when did this woman get so close with that ostentatious guy?

Sasha could not get it through her head. There were just too many matters she was going through and weighing on her mind for the past few years. Had Willow not told her about it, she would never learn about it in any way.

"Hold up... I'm a little confused. You're telling me that you and Brandon are dating? You guys have gotten to that stage?"

"We've even done everything there is to be done."

Sasha spat her mouthful of water onto the floor.

Done everything there is to be done... What the hell! What a scoop!

Sasha pushed herself off the chair due to the extreme shock. She only managed to digest that piece of news she heard after a short while and continued prying into the matter.

"Since you guys have gotten to that stage, then why is he still avoiding you when you've looked for him for three days?"

"How would I know? I won't be here looking for you if I know the reason for it. Nancy, tell me. Do you think he doesn't want to see me? If that is so, he can tell me straight up. I won't badger him then," Willow added with a pitiful expression on her face.

To that. Sasha fell silent.

In all honesty, she had learned not to take words from this best friend of hers too seriously, especially regarding relationships. Like a typical Pisces, she would never give up so easily, sometimes even getting overly obsessed, once she made up her mind for it.

A trace of ominous premonition hit Sasha.

Later, she went to make a phone call to Brandon.

"Hello? Brandon?"

"Sasha? Wow, you're actually calling me?" Brandon picked up the call, and like usual, his tone sounded familiar and very endearing.

After some contemplation, Sasha asked, "It's like this. Willow is at my house. Can I know what's going on between the two of you?"

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Chapter 1297 Everything That Could Happen Has Happened

"What?" Brandon's tone sank immediately upon hearing Sasha's words. "She went to look for you? Sasha, listen. Don't meddle yourself in this matter. I've told her we're nothing more than friends and for her to stop bothering me."

"Nothing more than friends?"

Sasha was stumped.

Shifting her gaze to the depressed woman in the garden, she became anxious, "But Willow says you guys have—"

"Slept with each other?" Brandon snickered over the phone. "We're all adults, so we got drunk and did things as we wish. Don't tell me that we'll have to get stuck together because of that? We're in the 21st century, mind you! Please tell her to stop being so pedantic!"

Brandon's choice of words hinted at his annoyance. Sasha was stunned and didn't know how to react.

She was unclear about the situation going on between the two.

Actually, given the society we're in, Brandon does make a point if it's a one-night stand. There's no way I can implore him any further.

Besides, she could tell from Brandon's tone that there was not even a hint of love he had for Willow.

Sasha hung up the call and walked out of the room.

"How is it? Did he agree to come here?" As expected, Willow who was waiting intently in the garden, immediately leaped up from her seat upon seeing Sasha's return and looked at her with hope.

Sasha's heart ached seeing her act that way.

Nonetheless, she walked over and pulled her over to sit on the chair.

"Willow, be honest with me. Are you guys really a couple?"

Willow turned her gaze away as she sat down, her face and lips paled of all colors.

"W-What did he tell you...?"

"No. He only mentioned to me about that night after you guys got drunk... He says he's sorry about it. Brandon isn't a mature guy, Willow. His mom has spoilt him since young; that's why he doesn't have a great sense of responsibility. He won't think that he'll have to be responsible for a lady after sleeping with her. Besides..."

"Willow, tell me honestly. After you guys got drunk that night, was it really by chance? Or..."

Sasha did not finish her sentence.

Yet, she had put forth her meaning clearly.

By now, Willow was getting more flustered. As embarrassed as she was, all she wanted to do at that moment was to bury her head down.

The atmosphere became stilled in an instant.

Even the birds and bees in the garden had seemingly stopped in their tracks. Only their breathing and Willow's sobs could be heard.

Indeed, foolish women can act extremely silly and terrifying.

Why would she still use such methods to make someone who doesn't like her stay? No wonder Brandon sounded so annoyed after I mentioned Willow's name.

Left with no other choice, Sasha sent Willow back to the room to get some rest.

Later at noon, Sebastian returned home after a body check at the hospital.

Seeing there was another person at home, he asked Sasha about Willow. As she explained the situation in detail, Sabrina jumped in and interrupted before Sebastian could say anything.

"What's wrong with that woman? With Aunt Matilda around, I'm sure she'll put her through hell even if she manages to marry Brandon!"

At the thought of that intimidating figure in the Emmanuels, everyone including Sasha broke out in cold sweat and could not seem to say anything anymore.

They had forgotten that the perfect candidate who would fit Matilda's criterion as a daughter-in-law was someone talented and beautiful inside out but also well-matched in terms of background.

Just the mere thought of it sent Sasha shuddering in fear.

In the end, Sasha pacified the agitated Willow. That day, after knowing Brandon's short break had come to an end and was leaving Avenport, Willow finally accepted the reality and decided to return to Clear.

Really?

Judging from Willow's gloomy expression, Sasha was a little skeptical about it.

Of course, as much as she was worried, she did not insist on asking Willow to stay since the latter had already made up her mind.

After some thought, Sasha ultimately decided to contact Solomon to seek help from him since she could not leave the matters on hand behind.

"Solomon, do you happen to be free? Willow says she wants to go back, but I worried about her as she's not at her best mental state right now. Can you help me send her home?"

"Alright," Solomon readily agreed.

That afternoon, Solomon found the dejected Willow at the waiting area in the airport.

She was sitting alone in a corner, with tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Let's go. I'll send you back."

Solomon was exasperated to see her pathetic appearance.

Conversely, upon seeing the man's arrival, Willow did something she had never done before in Frontier Bay—an immense outpour of her emotions.

After staring drearily at Solomon for a split second, she pranced up and hugged him, bawling her eyes out.

"Solomon, he lied! Everything that could happen has already happened between us. B-But now he says we're all adults and should be clear of the line. Why did he do that?"

Solomon felt awkward toward Willow's action that his body stiffened up at once.

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/ Returning from the Dead: His Secret Lover Chapter 1298 Obsessions Does Not Bode Well

Solomon had always thought of Willow as a girl with the looks but not the brain. Her beauty was captivating, the sexy kind, but her intelligence was underwhelming, to say the least.

That said, it was not always a bad thing as that meant that she was innocent.

In the end, Solomon pried her hands off him after holding it in for quite some time.

"What do you want then?"

"[…"

Willow, who cried like a baby, was suddenly at a loss for words.

Solomon, on the other hand, looked away. He was afraid that he just might leave if he saw her any longer.

"If you're sure you want to be with him, I can help. Hayes Corporation is one of the shareholders of the company Brandon's in. I can arrange for you to work there, assuming that you would like to get closer to him."

"Really?" Willow's eyes lit up the moment she heard that.

She instantly stood up and hugged Solomon's arm again while her beady eyes were still watery with tears.

"That'd be great! I knew you could do something, Solomon! Help me make the arrangements as soon as possible."

Solomon looked at her in silence for a few seconds before he tried shaking her off so that he could leave.

Nevertheless, Willow did not let go. Her eyes were sparkling with joy as she kept her gaze on Solomon, unwilling to let go.

Solomon was rendered speechless.

In the end, he let Willow have her way and brought her back with him.

When Solomon returned, he called Sasha and gave her a summary of what happened, and, as expected, Sasha was in awe of Willow's persistence after hearing Solomon's story.

"That doesn't sound too bad. At least there's a chance she gives up after realizing the truth with that arrangement."

"Yes. my thoughts exactly."

Solomon nodded and told Sasha the reasoning for making that decision.

After that, when he was about to end the call, a man's voice popped up from the other end.

"Who're you on the phone with?"

"Huh?" Sasha sounded a little shocked.

"Sebby, you're awake? I'm talking to Solomon right now. Willow came back and decided to stay again, so he called to let me know," she explained briefly.

As soon as Sebastian heard that, he frowned.

Nonetheless, it was none of his business. So, after he got closer, he changed the subject, "Can you ask him when he can go to Jetroina?"

"Huh?" Sasha was stunned yet again.

That soon? The weather in Jetroina right now is freezing! On top of that, he hasn't fully recovered. Can he actually handle it?

"Sebby..."

"Regarding Jetroina, I'm ready whenever. Haruto's already there," Solomon interrupted.

"Alright, I'll get back to work now, Nancy. Let me know after you guys finish discussing."

After that, he ended the call.

Solomon did not want to admit that his heart still ached even now when he heard Sasha and Sebastian talking so intimately with each other. It was like something heavy was weighing down on his chest.

Thus, he took out his laptop and got ready for work.

Half an hour passed, and Akiko received news telling her that Willow got arranged to work in Brandon's company without any problems.

"Ms. Fischer, you're going to be working as Mr. Emmanuel's personal assistant. Are you happy about that?"

Akiko's smile was dazzling when she brought the news to Willow as it meant that Willow would no longer be at the company and would not keep bugging Solomon.

Willow was nervous before she heard the news, but her nerves instantly turned to joy after that.

"Of course! Do I go there right now?"

"Calm down now. Mr. Emmanuel's going to show some resistance if you went there alone. I'll have someone accompany you there. That way, no matter how reluctant Mr. Emmanuel is, the company likely won't do anything out of respect for Hayes Corporation."

Akiko was very considerate.

Willow was overjoyed after hearing what Akiko said.

Then, Willow went to Brandon's company with one of the supervisors from the public relations department of Hayes Corporation. When Willow got there, she immediately got sent to a film set, where Brandon was.

"Brandon!"

Willow was ecstatic when she saw him.

She had her bag with her and the clothes she wore for three days straight because she waited for him at the house, when she saw the man. He looked like he just walked out of an antique drawing.

As soon as Willow saw Brandon, she quickly forgot all the unpleasant things that happened to her.

That said, Brandon was not so happy to see her, as his expression was ice cold.

His team also started murmuring on the side.

"Why is she here again? On set no less. This woman's so persistent."

"Right? She should really take a look at her age! She's three years older than Brandon! Where does she get the courage to be so forward?"

"Ugly people and their tomfooleries!"

u "

Everyone was looking at Willow with detest in their eyes.

Willow noticed them, of course, and her face paled, instinctively looking over to the man she was there to see.

However, she noticed that he wasn't looking at her anymore. Instead, he acted as though she was never there and continued on with his schedule.

Brandon...

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At Frontier Bay.

Sasha had eventually decided to depart for Jetroina the next day under Sebastian's request.

The children all surrounded her when they heard about it.

"Don't worry, Mommy. You go get cured. I'll look after Vivi at home."

"That's right!"

The brothers were very considerate and made their mother a promise.

Vivian was turning ten as well, so she became very obedient when she heard that her mother was leaving to get treated.

"Mommy, I'll call you every day. And Daddy, remember to tell us everything that's going on with Mommy," the little girl said as she pulled Sebastian's arm.

Sebastian's heart had already melted by then, so he agreed without a moment's hesitation.

Not long after, Karl and Xayden arrived as well.

Even though Xayden was not a doctor, he got asked to follow along because he was still considered a genius when it came to chemistry, and that he was the reason why Sasha was able to stabilize.

"Mr. Hayes, let me go along with Xayden too. Your body has not recovered completely. I'm worried that there might still be remnants of Eddie's men in Jetroina that would try to harm you."

"Okav."

Sebastian did not refuse as he recalled the time he was in the Sherwood residence's basement.

Indeed, the guy that was watching him looked like he got brainwashed.

With that, the crew left, accompanied by Solomon.

The trip was actually quite a rare occasion as the two men had never gone out together ever since they found out each other's names, even though time had passed and they were no longer at each other's throats.

That said, it was still very awkward for the two to be aboard the same plane.

Solomon was silent the entire flight.

On the other hand, Sebastian was fine at the beginning of the flight, but his head started feeling uncomfortable as the flight reached high altitude. So, he kept his eyes shut.

"Mrs. Hayes, is Mr. Hayes okay? Does he need some medicine?"

"It's fine. He just needs to rest for a bit," Sasha said as she looked at the pale handsome face that was beside her.

Even though she was actually quite concerned, she still comforted Xayden and Karl who followed along.

Silence ensued in the cabin after that.

After a few hours, the plane finally landed in Jetroina.

Solomon saw it through the window, so he stood up and started getting his luggage.

"Haruto is already waiting outside. Do I ask him to come in?" he asked Sasha with his bags in his hands after a brief moment's hesitation

Huh?

Sasha was caught off guard by the question.

Nevertheless, Karl was quick to react and immediately nodded. "Yes, Mr. Solomon, Thanks for the trouble."

Solomon got out of the plane after hearing that.

He was a little stiff and looked quite disoriented, just like how kids would awkwardly try to make up after an argument. Karl felt funny just looking at him.

It took about ten minutes before everyone got out. When they did, they immediately noticed that a doctor was waiting at the security clearance with a wheelchair.

People who suffered from serious concussions were not suited for flight, after all, and needed time to recuperate.

Despite that, Sebastian was the kind of person that would disregard his own well-being for the people around him, especially Sasha. He would literally give up his life for her if need be.

Then, everyone headed to Haruto's hospital, following Solomon's arrangements.

He had contacted the hospital and readied a ward for Sasha.

Then, he passed a set of keys to Karl and said, "This is the key for my house in Terrandya. You two can stay there. Oh, and if you guys need anything, you can go to my bar. Tell them who you are, and they'll get you sorted."

He actually thought about everything!

At that moment, the respect and gratitude Karl had for Solomon grew tremendously.

"Thank you, Mr. Solomon. We'll leave Mr. Hayes' house in your care then since we're all out here."

"Sure."

Solomon nodded and left the hospital not long after that.

That night, both Sasha and Sebastian stayed in the hospital, and Haruto immediately started his research with their conditions in mind.

•••

"Akiyama, are you sure you don't want to go pay your respect to your mother? You don't come back often, you know," Yamada asked while sitting on the sofa with his cane.

It was late into the night, and he had caught wind of Solomon's return to Jetroina. They were currently in the penthouse suite of a five-star hotel in Terrandya.

As soon as Yamada finished, Solomon, who was pouring out a glass of wine, paused for a brief moment.

Mother?

He snickered.

"I need to ask, why did you go out with her even though you knew what kind of person she was? Was it because of her looks?"

Solomon turned around and walked over with the wine. He felt no need to hide the insult in his tone.

Instantly, Yamada's expression darkened, but he did not get angry.

Instead, he took the wine handed to him and started explaining.

"You don't know what happened with your mother and me. Indeed, she caused a lot of trouble back then, but she wasn't always like that. Frederick should never have tempted her if he didn't intend to marry her."

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Solomon kept quiet.

He felt speechless and took a sip of his wine without commenting on the subject.

He knew his mother well. The moment she left him, an eight-year-old boy, at the Wand family and told them that he was an orphan, she no longer deserved anyone putting in a good word for her.

But despite that, Yamada still defended her, which goes to show how loyal of a man he was.

Then, Solomon took out a check from the suitcase he brought.

"This is the profit from the collaboration between Hayes Corporation and Sinch Enterprise, take it."

"[…"

Yamada suddenly became a little hesitant.

He looked at the check and quickly said, "I'm not here for this. I just heard that you were back, so I wanted to see you. I..."

"I know. But I also know that your two sons had taken over Sinch Enterprise, and things are going downhill due to their mismanagement, but they refuse to let you back in. So, this is the only way I could help you right now."

Solomon stood in front of Yamada and explained as that was his true intention all along.

Even though they were not close because of his mess of a mother, the man in front of Solomon was still undeniably the reason he could grow and complete his studies after he was eighteen.

Moreover, the conditions Yamada provided were exceptional.

That was why Solomon was willing to hand the profit directly to Yamada after Solomon took charge of Hayes Corporation.

To him, it was a show of gratitude.

Tears welled up from Yamada's eyes after hearing that and he eventually took the check with his trembling hand.

"I knew I should've let you manage Sinch Enterprise."

"I don't think so. I'm adopted, after all. Don't worry. The amount here is off-the-books. So, they won't find out about it. You can do whatever you want with it," Solomon responded calmly.

After that. Yamada said nothing more.

No one could help a generation hero with his disappointing descendants.

Hence, Yamada got ready to leave.

"Oh, right. There's one more thing I wanted to ask you. You're already thirty. Why isn't there any news about you getting married? Don't the Hayes family care about you? Why didn't they make some arrangements?"

Yamada was already at the door, but he stopped and turned around. He looked dead serious when asking that question.

Solomon's expression immediately darkened.

"No. I just don't want to get married yet."

"You don't want to get married? You're thirty, Akiyama. You're the person in charge of Hayes Corporation! Aren't you afraid that the shareholders would feel displeased if you don't marry and have kids?" He paused.

"On top of that, I heard your sister's already married, right? Let me remind you that people who married into other families will have their shares retracted. You should know that the board of directors would get to redistribute your shares if you didn't have an heir. How are you going to hold on to the Hayes family's share? Have you thought about it?"

The old man actually had a sharp mind. He immediately pointed out the main issue Solomon was currently facing in Hayes Corporation.

Indeed, not only Sabrina's but even Ian's share was in jeopardy because the board of directors was not happy after they confirmed that Ian was a descendant of the Jadeson family.

Even though there was still Sebastian, according to the law, he was currently in no position to help his son keep the shares. So, what Yamada said was absolutely right.

"Well, the Minamoto family just held a coming of age ceremony for their daughter, who just turned twenty. Maybe I can arrange for a meeting. What do you think?"

Solomon stayed quiet for a little and calmed himself down before saying, "I'll have someone send you back."

"This is the Minamoto family we're talking about here. Do you know who they are? They are the most prestigious family in the whole Terrandya! What are you thinking!" Yamada's voice filled the space even after he got in the elevator.

You unreliable boy!

Solomon felt dizzy after that and slammed the door shut after returning to his room.

Who the Minamotos were was of no concern to him because he was never going to get married.

That said, when Solomon woke up the next morning, he was surprised that someone was ringing the doorbell. So, he knitted his brows and went to open the door.

At the door was a delicately dressed girl in Jetroinian traditional outfit.

Behind her were two middle-aged Jetroina men who were dressed just as formally as the girl.

Solomon was speechless.

You crazy old man.

. . .

At the hospital, Sasha and Sebastian found out about it as well.

Not through any special means, though, but the television in the hospital.

Someone said that they witnessed the eldest daughter of the Minamoto family being sent to the penthouse suite of the most famous five-star hotel all dressed up.

It looked like they were making arrangements for her to get married.

Pfft!

Karl spat out all the water after seeing that.

"Sebby, what do you think about this?" Sasha asked after Karl got out.

Sebastian's brow furrowed.

"If he's thinking of holding on to the company shares for the family, marrying the daughter of the Minamoto family is indeed a good move."

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The Minamoto family?

Sasha did not know much about Jetroina. Hence, the family name did not ring a bell.

However, since the man in front of her said that it was a good choice, she felt more relieved and did not worry about the matter anymore. She channeled all of her focus on receiving treatment in Jetroina after Solomon had returned home.

Needless to say, Sebastian was by her side, taking care of her all the while.

One day, Karl came over and updated him with a piece of unexpected news.

"Mr. Hayes, I think I saw Mr. Cooper just now."

What?

Sebastian, who was holding some medicine, stopped what he was doing and turned his head.

Seeing his expression, Karl immediately whipped out his smartphone and showed Sebastian the picture he took.

Indeed, the man in the photo was Edmund.

Though the car was speeding off, Karl's average photography skills still managed to capture a clear angle of the man inside the car. It was confirmed to be Edmund, who had left unannounced upon rescuing Sebastian from the basement of the Sheerwood residence.

Why is he in Jetroina? Sebastian frowned.

"Go and investigate his purpose of coming over here. If it's for leisure, leave him alone," he instructed.

Soon, Karl left.

Initially, Sebastian wanted to thank Edmund in proper once everything blew over.

He had two reasons to do so. First, he was the one who sent Edmund back to Yorksland back then. Second, the other man had also saved him in the nick of time.

Therefore, Sebastian wanted to repay him somehow.

However, Edmund mysteriously disappeared and had not shown up anywhere since. Later on, Devin managed to contact him, but he declined all gestures of appreciation.

Edmund had always been a loafer who had no desire whatsoever for power and money.

Seeing that he could not get Edmund to change his mind, Sebastian ended up doing nothing about it.

So, he was not too surprised to hear that Karl spotted Edmund in Jetroina. To him, the possibility of the latter traveling here to look for entertainment was high.

Reality soon proved that Sebastian's speculation was correct. That evening, Karl paid him a visit at the hospital and reported that Edmund had gone to a casino. The latter even had a jolly good time with a bunch of ladies, indulging in all sorts of hedonistic desires.

"He's really something else. Isn't it better to stay in Jadeborough and let Devin find him a good job? Why must he come all the way here to seek pleasure?"

Sasha overheard their conversation in the ward. She, too, had the impression that Edmund was not much of an ambitious fellow.

It did not cross her mind that some people naturally possessed a languid demeanor and never liked to be constrained.

Then, they dropped the topic.

Later that night, Sebastian was surprised at the turn of events. Edmund had run into a spot of trouble at the casino!

"Mr. Cooper, you've lost many rounds already. Do you intend to continue?"

On a table filled with chips, a Jetroinian man sitting opposite Edmund saw that he had run out of chips. With a cigar in his mouth, he asked the question with a smirk.

Edmund would never admit defeat. Thus, he waved his hand, and tens of millions worth of poker chips were instantly delivered to him.

"Absolutely! I'm just getting warmed up."

Therefore, the session resumed.

After gambling for another four to five rounds of high-stake games, Edmund lost again and again. The man from the Cooper family who accompanied him on this trip started sensing something was off.

"Mr. Edmund, let's call it a day and head back. It's getting late."

"Why should we go back? I have vast experience in casinos. I don't believe that I can't even win a game here!" the scion bellowed.

He then added another thirty million in order to recover whatever he had lost.

In truth, it was a piece of cake for someone equipped with his skills to win money from the casino. After all, he had been operating a casino in Yorksland for years. It was impossible for him not to know the cheating tactics used by casinos.

Yet, strangely enough, his thirty million vanished just like that once more.

It was as if luck had abandoned him. He could never get the card he wanted, and each hand dealt was utterly horrible.

"Mr. Edmund..."

"Mr. Cooper, one more round perhaps?" the man stared at him with a bright smile and asked.

Edmund narrowed his eyes. Suddenly, he slammed his palm on the table and requested, "I want to check the security footage. Someone get me the surveillance and monitoring records now!"

Security footage?

A commotion broke out among the crowd at the casino. At that instant, all eyes were fixated on him.

Requesting for the security footage implied that the other party was cheating. In other words, it was a huge issue which alerted everyone. Should the alleged action be true, it could lead to a bloody consequence.

The atmosphere grew tense, causing the Coopers' subordinate to panic.

This is not our home ground. It's best we keep a low profile instead of kicking up a big fuss.

Thus, he pulled Edmund's sleeve and persuaded him, "Just let it slide, Mr. Edmund. Let's go."

Right when Edmund was about to say something, the person who gambled with him stood up.

"Sure, let's satisfy Mr. Cooper's wish. Go ahead and bring the footage from the control room."

"Duly noted, Mr. Kondo." The staff at the casino obeyed the command given.

This feels really off. Why would the accused offer to bring out the footage? Furthermore, our earlier few gambling sessions were questionable.

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Only then, it finally dawned on Edmund that something was amiss. Hence, he decided to leave the casino.

When he was about to turn and leave, several Jetroinians with samurai swords attached to their waists appeared from behind and blocked him.

"Why the rush, Mr. Cooper? You haven't even seen the footage yet. It's not too late to leave after checking it out, I hope."

Darn it!

With that, Edmund had no choice but to return to his seat.

Just as he had expected, the footage was crystal clear, with absolutely no problem or fishy issue detected. However, there was something peculiar. When the cards were transferred to the man sitting opposite him, they magically turned into something else.

"You..." Edmund was enraged.

Jumping out of his seat, he glared at the daring Jetroinian who conducted such a brazen act openly.

"What's this all about? You changed the cards?"

"Yes. How else could I trick you to stay, Mr. Cooper?" The Jetroinian laughed as he removed his shirt, revealing decks of cards hidden underneath. Without a trace of guilt and shame, he tossed them all on the table.

Edmund pressed his lips together in anger.

Having found himself in this situation, Edmund knew that he had been set up. If I still fail to see that this is a trap, I'm really a dumb*ss.

Infuriated, Edmund stared daggers at him.

"Who on earth are you? What are you trying to do?"

"I'm not trying to do anything. I just wanted to find out how much those two gave you after what you've done for them back home. Did you lose all that you've gained to me yet?"

The words spewing out of the Jetroinian's mouth caused Edmund to turn ghastly pale in disbelief.

"You... You guys are...?"

"Don't be nervous or anxious. Rest assured that we've got nothing to do with the other party. Back then, someone was very kind to me when I was down and out. So, when I heard about the great things that Mr. Cooper has done, I looked forward to meeting you in person."

He continued, "For all that you've done, I think it's perfectly all right for me to take some money from you to bury that person when he dies. Wouldn't you agree?"

He walked over and patted Edmund's face, to which the latter avoided as a reflex response.

As he slightly moved his body, the Jetroinians with samurai swords strode over and clasped both of his arms. Then, they pinned him down on the table.

"Mr. Edmund!" his frightened subordinate cried out loud.

As if that was not enough to send everyone into a terror-stricken mode, a knife was immediately placed at Edmund's neck.

Seeing the turn of events, many gamblers started leaving the casino quietly. Within ten minutes, the humungous casino was vacant, leaving only the people at their table behind.

"What exactly do you want to do? Let me tell you something, if I'm found dead in this casino, the Jadesons will never let you off the hook easily!" Edmund said through gritted teeth while being pressed against the table. His eyes had gone bloodshot with anger.

Desperate moments called for desperate measures. In order to save his own life, he had to bring up that dreaded family name.

Fortunately, the Jetroinian nodded in agreement upon hearing that.

"I know. That's why I have no intention of stepping on their toes. Didn't I say so earlier? I just wanted to get some money off you and set it aside for his funeral. You must know, it's all thanks to you that my benefactor suffered badly."

He lowered his head and slapped Edmund's head again.

Benefactor? Is he referring to the person who's about to be charged at the international tribunal? The old bastard who's going to face death soon?

Edmund cackled. "I see that you're just a dog of his. It appears to me that he possesses great talent in brainwashing others. Back at the basement located in the Sheerwood residence, that loyal dog was just like you, committing blindly to him despite knowing that he's a gone case."

Thump!

A chair was swung in Edmund's direction.

As a consequence, he felt a flaring pain from his back and momentarily lost his vision.

"A dog? Are you one too, then? I'm a dog that serves the Limmer family, whereas you're a dog that bootlicks the Jadesons."

The man continued taunting Edmund, "Don't think that I'm unaware of your relationship with that woman, Cooper! Would you like me to send your good friend some photos? To show him just what his dog has been doing all these while?"

Then, he chucked a stack of photos at Edmund.

Edmund took a glance. In an instant, his face turned completely pale.

"How dare you?" he growled his words through gritted teeth.

The Jetroinian smiled smugly. "That's why you should cooperate nicely with me and offer everything that belongs to the Coopers. Otherwise, not only will I send these pictures over, I'll be more than happy to abduct that woman too. How about that?"

Like a venomous snake, he picked up the most eye-catching photo and patted Edmund's face with it.

It was a photo secretly taken at the temple.

On that luscious landscape surrounded by tranquil chanting, that woman was standing under an old maple tree. Wearing a black jacket, she held a child in her arms while gazing into the horizon. It looked as though she was dearly missing someone.

Unbeknownst to her, there were a pair of eyes watching her from afar, showing deep, passionate affection through a burning gaze.

Edmund trembled in trepidation. A series of complicated emotions appeared on his chiseled face, which was still pinned down to the table. He was absolutely aghast at what he saw.