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Chapter 1923

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"What then?"

'Then..." Susan's face started burning up because she was blushing uncontrollably.

"Your parents... They don't seem to have a problem with it. Ian, I found out what happened to you. I'm very sorry. I didn't know my mom would do such a thing to you." Suddenly, she sounded so down and remorseful.

Ian fell silent. What is she talking about? What did her mom do to me?

lan's memory hadn't recovered, so he couldn't remember what happened before part of his memories was removed.

However, he could tell from her tone that she was sad. Instinctively, he answered, "It's okay. It didn't affect me."

Susan didn't know how to respond to that.

Right at that instant, her heart wrenched, and she started crying. "Oh, Ian..."

Ian heard her crying. He clenched his fists and asked, "Is your mom against it?"

Upon hearing that, Susan shook her head. "No. Ian, don't think too much about it, okay? I'll get her to agree to it. Initially, I thought she should just be left out of it.

However, your mommy said we should get her blessing. Otherwise, things won't work out for us. Hence, I've decided to have a talk with her."

"Okay." In the end, that was all Ian could say. What else can I do? Since I don't know how it happened, and how it turned out to be, I can't even take matters into my own hands. What if I end up ruining Susan's plan? The only thing I can do now is to wait. However, I'm sure of one thing now. What happened in the living room that day was all real. It wasn't a dream.

lan had a good night's sleep that night.

The following day, when he woke up, Kurt had already made breakfast. Besides, Vivian was up as well, and she was feeding Lotus.

"Ian, you're up! Wow! You look a lot better today. Is it because you had a good night's sleep?" Vivian was still in her pink pajamas, and she was elated when she saw Ian looking much better that morning.

lan turned away awkwardly and said, "Are you not going to get changed? We're leaving soon."

"Oh! I'll do it now." Vivian ran off.

Soon, three of them were done with breakfast, and they were about to go to school.

"Oh, right! Have you seen the news this morning?" Kurt asked when Ian was just about to get the car.

News? Ian frowned and asked, "What news?"

Kurt raised his brows. "It's just a rumor. It is said that because of the incident of the Limmer family, there was

news from the White House yesterday. It seems like they want your family and the Limmer family to have a marriage alliance. I don't know if it's true or false."

Ian went silent, and he immediately whipped out his smartphone from his pocket.

He hadn't been keeping tabs on those matters. Not only was he not interested in them, but it was also because he had been busy with classes. Besides, he had to manage Hayes Corporation during the weekends.

Hence, he had never paid much attention to what was being said on the internet.

When he searched for the national news on his smartphone, the first thing he saw was news related to the Limmer family. Perhaps it was a trending topic, so it was still on the front page of the news webpage.

"Suicide?" Ian's expression turned grim when he saw that word in the news.

Soon, as he kept reading, he saw the follow-up development of the incident. It turned out that someone had posted on the internet, saying that the incident had nothing to do with the Jadeson family. So, it has nothing to do with Mommy.

One of the comments read: The person who made this statement seems to be Ms. Limmer. She firmly denied that his mother's accident had anything to do with the Jadeson family. So, that should be true, right? Another read: That seems to be the case. This is such a good way to deal with the issue. Now, the situation with Ms. Limmer's status is rather sensitive because there are so many people in Jadeborough wanting to get into Golden Heights. It's only normal to see them dragging the Jadeson family into this.

Someone replied: That's right. As long as someone can manage to ruin the relationship between these two families, the Limmer family will rise with ease.

The comments went on.

With the release of that statement, many people began to divert their attention from the Jadeson family. Instead, they were analyzing the matter.

The statement was done impeccably well, and it was published at the right time.

Seeing that, Ian heaved a sigh of relief.

As he continued reading, he noticed that most of the netizens were analyzing the prominent families in Jadeborough. They generally believed that the reason the Limmer family was so sought after was that some people wanted to seize the opportunity to get acquainted with the Limmers so they could rise to several levels at once.

Even if it was the power they were after, it could still bring a lot of benefits.

And along with that analysis, the Jadeson family, which

was the most prominent family in Jadeborough, had naturally become the target of their objection. Through Twitter, it can be felt that everyone in Jadeborough was afraid that the Jadeson family would form a connection with the Limmer family.

That morning, a rumor revealed that those two families were actually going to link up through marriage. The netizens were astounded.

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109373##: What? This is insane! A marriage between those two families? What's going to happen to everyone else? The Jadeson family is already powerful enough on their own. They're linking up with the Limmer family? They're going to be invincible!

Bobogirl: Exactly! Whose idea is this?

The comments went on and on.

Everyone was angry and violently objecting to it.

Not long after that, someone revealed that Jonathan had gone to the White House to propose the idea. He was very adamant about linking up with the Limmer family.

This is the end! Everyone was lamenting the situation.

lan was also stunned. Is this real? From what I know, Great-grandpa wouldn't do such a thing. Besides, the Jadeson family is already so strong. We don't need to form ties with the Limmer family.

lan went to school with an uneasy feeling.

By the time the incident broke out entirely, he had just finished his class. When he was taking notes in the classroom, a group of students suddenly appeared, and they were staring at him from outside the classroom.

"Look! Isn't that Ian from the Jadeson family?"

"Yes. That's him. Who knew he would end up having to marry the exchange student from the Faculty of

Accounting? Weren't they relatives in the beginning?"

"I don't think so. Didn't you see the statement issued by their country's officials? That exchange student is a descendant of the Limmer family. The Limmer family produces heroes in their country."

The students chatted among themselves.

While they were staring at lan, not only were they shocked, but they were also feeling sorry for him.

Some of those who had talked to lan or consulted with him before couldn't help but approach him.

"Ian, I heard about how you're getting forced to marry the exchange student. Is it true?"

"You have such a tough life, Ian. Someone of your family background will never have a say in such personal matters. Even your girlfriend has now gone missing."

"Oh, you're right! I've only remembered that. That girl, Sigrun. What is she going to do now? Ian, I feel so bad for you."

Within a few minutes, everyone went up to lan and consoled him.

lan was confused.

After staring at them for a while, he asked, "Where did you guys hear that from?"

One of the students answered, "God! You know nothing about it yet, do you? Poor you."

Another chimed in, "Exactly. Why are your parents like that? Ian, I feel so sorry for you. Since you weren't told, I guess it's better to Just ignore the whole thing."

Some of them even had tears in their eyes, and they went to the extent of patting his shoulder.

lan was getting sick of it. He immediately took out his phone, cleared his table, and ran away after pushing through the group of students.

Everyone was dumbfounded. We've forgotten about how bad lan must be feeling. Should we go after him? What if he does something stupid?

In the end, Ian found out about everything that was going on.

He didn't get his information from the news, though. It was Sasha who called him and told him about it.

"Ian, did you see the news? Did I do a good job?" Sasha asked.

lan's mind was a mess, and he couldn't find the words to answer Sasha.

Hearing no response from Ian, Sasha chuckled and asked, "What's wrong? Why aren't you talking? Are you too happy to speak?"

After a while, Ian replied, "Mommy, the next time you do something like this, do you mind telling me about it beforehand?"

Finally, Ian had spoken, but he sounded irritated and helpless.

Sasha smiled. "All right. I'll remember that, still, are you happy with the arrangement? I was the one who proposed the idea to your great-grandpa. Your greatgrandpa is from a different generation, Ian. It's only normal that he has a feudal way of thinking. Besides, he had been a prominent figure throughout his life, so he's bound to be prideful. Hence, I think the situation now is the best we can hope for."

After composing herself, Sasha went on to explain the reason behind their method of breaking the news.

She had indeed done her best for lan and Susan.

lan quickly nodded and answered, "Okay. I understand. Thank you, Mommy."

"Don't say that. However, I need to know your opinion on the next matter. The White House had already made the announcement. If you were to get engaged at nineteen-"

Before Sasha could finish her sentence, Ian interrupted, "Did she agree to it?"

After being stunned for a moment, Sasha smiled and explained, "Why wouldn't she? Frankly, we have a lot of respect for Susan because she had done a lot to get US to where we are. After I spoke to her about it last night, we only got your great-grandpa to go to the White House after we got the confirmation from her this morning."

In fact, that was exactly what happened. They only got Jonathan to go to the White House after Susan told them Sigrith had agreed to it.

Susan is very efficient.

"Ian, what now? Do you want to get engaged first? Your great-grandpa was over the moon after he came back from the White House. He had even gone to the study and prepared a lot of invitation cards because he said he wants to invite his comrades to the happy occasion."

lan kept mum.

"Also, both your grandpas, Uncle Solomon, and the others had also called to ask about it. They wanted to know when the engagement is because they want to celebrate with US."

"Mommy, hold your horses. Have you asked her about it?" lan asked.

Sasha was confused. After a while, she finally realized what Ian was asking about. "You're right. How did I forget about that? Okay. I'll just ask your wife about it. Take care, okay?"

With that, she hung up the phone.

Veins were popping on lan's forehead. *Who's the one getting engaged? I'm the son, no?*

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Susan, currently in Jasper Lake, couldn't calm herself down that day. After all, she never thought Sasha and the others would act so quickly and create such a grand scene.

While she was at a loss, Sigrith said, "Are you satisfied now? Your melodramatic wedding is akin to a nationallevel event."

Instantly, Susan's face turned pale, for she didn't expect to receive Sigrith's mockery about her wedding.

"Mom, why did you say so? What's wrong with Susan marrying into the Jadesons? You didn't have to be that harsh," Timothy couldn't help but scold Sigrith when he heard her thinly-veiled mockery.

Once he finished, Sigrith stopped holding back her dissatisfaction and argued, "Did I say anything wrong? Didn't I express my excitement? The Limmer family will finally cement ties with the Jadeson family and become wealthy forever. How could I not be happy?"

"You…"

Timothy was furious and rendered speechless.

In the end, Susan decided to stop Timothy from arguing with Sigrith.

"Timothy, aren't you supposed to head to the university? It has been many days, right? Let me buy a flight ticket for you. Is that okay?"

"But-"

"All right. I've heard that the Neal family's company has recently signed an agreement with you. Hence, you can work for their company as soon as you graduate. Is that correct?"

Susan delicately changed the subject of the conversation and successfully distracted Timothy from the argument with Sigrith.

Hence, Timothy no longer looked as tensed.

"Yes. I worked in their family's hotel for two months during my summer holiday. During that time, Zaylynn's dad realized I was good at developing software, especially games. Consequently, he suggested forming a partnership with me after I finish my studies."

"Really?"

A glint of surprise flashed across Susan's eyes once Timothy explained it.

She was aware Timothy loved playing games. All the more so, he had been passionate about computers since he was young.

Understandably, she was excited upon knowing that someone intended to invest in him.

With that, Susan ignored Sigrith and quickly booked a flight ticket for Timothy on the same day. Then, she took him out to buy some gifts for a certain someone.

Feeling confused, Timothy asked, "Why should I give her a present? I mean, I'm not that close to her anyway."

Thud!

Filled with slight dismay, Susan hit his head and retorted, "You managed to enter and work in the Neal family's hotel because of your relationship with her. Besides, her dad was impressed by your talent and wanted to invest in and collaborate with you. So how can you say you're not close to her?"

"Moreover, I didn't ask you to buy something for her. Just buy some local specialties of Jadeborough for her parents. After all, you should be grateful to them for valuing your talent."

The thoughtless Timothy seemed to have understood it. After Susan patiently educated him, he stopped being hesitant and decided to heed her advice.

Later, they visited many stores on the streets and bought a lot of local specialties, especially baked apple roses.

Susan bought a lot of them once she recalled Vivian liked the food very much.

Feeling curious at the sight of it, Timothy asked, "Why are you buying these?"

Susan replied, "The gifts are for Zaylynn. I know many girls love them. She can distribute them to her friends

whenever she wants to. Doesn't she have many friends?"

Timothy didn't know how to respond upon hearing it.

Why are girls so troublesome?

When they had finished buying everything and were about to go home, they passed by a store and coincidentally saw Sasha. She was shopping with her sister-in-law from Gossamer Creek.

"Huh? Sasha, isn't that Susan? What a coincidence!"

"Where is she?"

Sasha had stepped into a jewelry store but turned around excitedly once she heard it.

About ten minutes later, she dragged Susan to the jewelry store and urged her to look at the various jewelry.

"Susan, which one do you like the most? Don't be nervous. I'm just looking around with your future aunt-in- law. Anyway, feel free to pick the one that you think is the best. I'm sure a young lady like you has good taste."

Although Sasha was honey-tongued, Susan wasn't naive and instantly knew her intention.

In the end, Susan didn't specifically say which item she liked but claimed that all jewelry in the store was beautiful.

Nevertheless, Sasha felt conflicted when she heard Susan's response. "All? I can't buy everything, can I?"

Feeling shocked, Sasha's sister-in-law quickly pointed at the most treasured item in the store. "Well... Sasha, I think the jade bracelet looks good. It's richly colored and has near-perfect translucency. I'm sure whoever wears it will look beautiful."

Sasha purchased the bracelet when Susan came out of the store. When Susan thought they could go home, Sasha took her to an haute couture store to order a tailor- made dress.

Susan was at a loss once she heard that.

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Chapter 1926

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Although Susan's dad had passed away, she couldn't count on her mom to make any decisions for her big day. As a twenty-two-year-old girl, she had never experienced big moments in life like that but had to shoulder everything alone. One could imagine how nervous and lost she would be, albeit smart.

"Susan, what happened? You don't seem to be in a good mood."

"N-Nothing..." Susan quickly denied it.

When Sasha saw her response, she put down the dress album, held Susan's hand gently, and sat on the couch in the haute couture store.

"Susan, I've asked Ian about your engagement with him. Ian will respect your decision no matter what. We can postpone the event if you disagree with it. Also, we can discuss it after both of you have graduated," Sasha proposed as she could sense Susan's uneasiness.

"N-No. I didn't mean that..."

Once Sasha finished, Susan looked up and denied it.

Deep down, she could hardly imagine how Ian would react if she mentioned the word "disagree."

After a while, she awkwardly lowered her gaze and spoke her mind in front of Sasha. "I just... don't know what to do because I've never experienced it before."

It wasn't until now that Sasha realized what troubled

Susan.

After leaving the haute couture store, Sasha gave her a lift to Jasper Lake.

'Susan, do you want to go back to the university?"

"Huh?"

"It's okay. Parents on both sides can help arrange your marriage. I can talk to your mom if you're okay with it, so you can put your mind at ease and continue studying. After we've come up with some suggestions, you can give your comments and share your views," Sasha comforted Susan in the car.

Her words settled Susan's chaotic mind. Susan was like a sailboat that wandered amid a storm but finally arrived at a haven. At that moment, she felt relieved like never before.

She's right. Why should I be worried?

With that, Susan went back home with delight.

Sigrith was on the balcony when she saw Susan come out of Sasha's car. As such, she mocked Susan in the living room, "Did she drive you home again? Susan, you treat her like your mom, even though you aren't even married yet. How amazing!"

At that time, Timothy had returned to his room and didn't hearthat.

Thud! This time, Susan couldn't take it any longer. She dropped everything in her hands and came up to Sigrith.

"Mom, I can't understand why you are holding such a deep grudge against them. Have you forgotten who saved you? Do you remember who let US go when Jared wanted to kill US after dad passed away? Don't you think we are able to live in peace because of them?" Susan questioned Sigrith with tears.

Instantly, Sigrith's face became red, for Susan had touched her sore spot.

"What a load of cr*p! Since when did I hold a deep grudge against them? I was just..."

Suddenly, something came across Susan's mind. "Wait a minute. Do you still keep in touch with Mr. Glen? Did he tell you anything?"

Yes, it must be Mr. Glen.

After Ian realized that Kilian Glen had called Susan, she hadn't contacted him since then.

She deliberately ignored him even when he came to her house.

However, Susan eventually noticed that something was wrong with Sigrith. For instance, although Susan never told Sigrith about what happened in Atlantius, Sigrith knew she went to Mdm. Bennett's house.

Moreover, Sigrith also knew a lot about Vincent.

As Susan pondered about it, she fixated her piercingly sharp gaze on Sigrith.

"What did he tell you? I'm warning you-don't let him fool you. He comes from the Heard family and always wants to sabotage us!" she reminded Sigrith sternly.

Although Sigrith kept mum, she sat still and dared not utter a word now.

After moments of silence, Susan returned to her room to pack her belongings.

It was already evening when she got everything ready.

Sigrith had just finished preparing the food and laying the table. Since Susan had finished packing, Sigrith asked Susan to have dinner together.

"Why are you leaving already after being back for only a few days? I'll be alone if all of you have left," Sigrith grumbled with slight frustration.

Susan had picked up a spoon when Sigrith spoke. Her hand couldn't help but shiver.

"Timothy and I have to leave to continue our studies. If you're lonely at home, feel free to resume working in the bar. I can let Aunt Sabrina know if you're interested."

Unknowingly, Susan followed Ian's way of addressing Sabrina.

Nonetheless, Sigrith was displeased once she heard it.

"Why should I work there to embarrass myself? Do you know how many eyes are on me now? Won't I make the headline if I go there?"

Susan didn't know how to respond to that.

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After a while, Susan continued to eat her food and replied, "It's up to you. However, please remember not to stay close to the socialites anymore. I'd rather see you dancing with the ordinary women in the square."

"I won't go!" Sigrith mumbled, expressing her unwillingness.

Susan stopped persuading Sigrith, for she knew Sigrith wouldn't listen to her.

After dinner, Susan dragged her luggage out and wanted to call a taxi to the airport.

She spotted a silver car parked outside the apartment as soon as she got downstairs. The car windows rolled down, revealing Mark as the driver. "Susan, are you heading to the airport? Mrs. Jadeson asked me to pick you up.

Susan expressed her gratitude and quickly hopped in.

As the car sped down the road, Mark only chatted casually with Susan. However, Susan seemed to be deep in thought.

When they were almost at the airport, she finally said, "Mr. Stewart, can you do me a favor?"

"Go ahead and say it," Mark responded without hesitation.

Nonetheless, what Susan said next was a bolt from the blue to him.

"Mr. Stewart, I don't know if my guess is correct, but something is wrong with my mom. Ever since my dad passed away, she taught US to be nice to Mr. Hayes and the others and be grateful to them. Also, we have to repay them after we've grown up."

She paused for a while and added, "However, I feel she holds a deep grudge against Mrs. Hayes and the others now. Furthermore, she is displeased with how close I am to everyone at Oceanic Estate. She will get mad whenever she finds out I go there or Mrs. Hayes drives me home. Mr. Stewart, she wasn't like that in the past. Even if she quarreled with Mrs. Hayes before, I can't believe her attitude toward them would upend."

As Susan spoke, tears uncontrollably streamed down her face due to worry.

Mark quickly pulled over and comforted her, "All right. Please don't be upset. I'll inform Mr. Hayes once I'm back. Rest assured that everything will be fine once he looks into the matter."

Susan felt relieved after she heard Mark's assurance. "Okay."

He's right. After all, everything can be resolved as long as a god-like man like Mr. Hayes decides to interfere!

Hence, she went abroad with relief.

It was already midnight when Susan arrived at the airport in Yartran's capital and came out with her luggage.

Although she contacted someone before boarding the plane, she couldn't help but feel slightly anxious when she set foot in another country.

Will he come here? After all, he has to drive for three hours from Atlantius to the airport.

As she restlessly exited the airport, she saw a red Lamborghini in the parking area at the front.

At that moment, she unknowingly thought the car's headlights were like two bright beams of light amid the pitch-black night.

Although the lights shone on her for only a few seconds, her eyes began to feel slightly tired.

"Did you lose your intellect during your trip?"

While Susan felt emotional, someone suddenly pulled something off her ear.

As her body shivered, she quickly turned around and saw a handsome young man in a black jacket standing behind her.

The man with a cold expression was none other than Ian. He was holding the earphones he had taken from Susan's ears.

Susan was at a loss for words.

No wonder I didn't see him or hear any of his movements.

Susan lowered her head in embarrassment.

"I... I forgot. Did you go in just now? I didn't see you when I came out from that exit."

As Susan wanted to diffuse the awkwardness in the air, the seemingly unhappy lan grabbed her collar and dragged her toward the car.

Susan was startled for a while before she could hastily come up with some words.

"Ian, don't do this. I'm not Vivi. Let go of me now. You're stepping out of line! I'm your aunt!"

Bang!

The next moment, Ian threw Susan onto the car and sprang upon her.

"What did you say? Come again?"

How terrifying!

His tall and sturdy figure was like an iron tower that entirely encapsulated Susan. Besides, his alluring gaze, coupled with a surge of emotion, sent a chill down her spine.

At that time, Susan's mind went blank.

Earlier, she instinctively blurted out a few words, for she was too nervous and scared.

While Ian seemingly wanted to devour her, Susan shrunk back like a fawn that was frightened.

"I... I said the wrong thing. I'm not... your aunt..."

"Well, who are you to me then?"

Susan gulped when she heard the question. After a while, she finally mustered up her courage to cautiously ask him back, "Uh... Your girlfriend?"

Girlfriend? With a question mark?

Ian stared at Susan with his darkening gaze, exuding a growing sense of coldness. Moments later, he grabbed her head with his slender fingers and kissed her lips ferociously.

All Susan could feel was a buzzing in her head.

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Chapter 1928

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No one knew how long it had been. Just as Susan was almost out of breath, the guy finally loosened his grip on her.

It was early summer. Thousands upon thousands of shining stars shone above their heads, unhindered by the cloudless night. Cacophony filled their ears as the crowd hustled around the city airport. Yet as the two stood feet apart in front of the car, it seemed as though they were oblivious to the noises around them.

All they could hear were their hearts pounding against their chests and their mingled breaths as they panted. The warmth of their breaths heated their skins.

Beep!

Just then, a car emerged from their right side, about to leave. Seeing the pair frozen in a daze, the driver honked at them, annoyed that the pair were blocking the path.

Susan jolted out of her daze. With lightning speed, she shoved the man away from her and ducked into the car without looking back.

lan fell silent.

It was somewhat out of character for him to do something as daring. Flustered, he scrambled into the car as well, with his ears all red.

The pair rode in awkward silence all the way to Atlantius. In the end, it was Vivian who broke the silence. Vivian, along with Kurt, had been sitting on the couch and waiting for their return. Upon their arrival, Vivian immediately leaped to her feet.

"You guys are finally back! Quick, Susan, tell me. What's going on? Since when have you two become a thing?"

Vivian's curiosity about the topic was the reason she was willing to stay up late. She had been pondering on that question for quite some time, and she was impatient to finally be able to ask it out loud.

A furious blush flared up in Susan's face.

She tossed a glance at Kurt, who was standing next to Vivian. To her surprise, a look of resignation was written all over Kurt's face. It was as though staying up along with Vivian took quite a toll on him.

"Go on, tell me. What's going on? I've been confused out of my mind. Since when has your relationship shifted to romance? It can't be like what the rumors are saying and that you're forced to date each other, right?"

Vivian was getting a little irritated.

From her perspective, she was supposed to be considered family by both of them. Keeping something so huge from her was unacceptable.

Panic shot up Susan's chest as she stammered, "N-No, Vivi. L-Let me explain. The two of US, uh, w-we..."

"Why are you explaining yourself to her? Didn't she keep us in the dark when she was having issues with those

behind her back?"

Unexpectedly, before Susan could say anything, Ian cut her off. The latter had been standing quietly behind her before making the snide remark out of impatience.

At first, Vivian had intended to wait for an answer.

However, after lan's comment, Vivian's pale face instantly reddened in fury. She stared daggers at lan as the rim around her eyes turned bloodshot.

"You're both unbelievable!"

Stomping her feet, Vivian turned around and dashed up the stairs, leaving Kurt gaping at her in disbelief.

Poor Kurt was dumbfounded.

Is she really angry?

Instinctively, Kurt wanted to chase after her, but after a second of thinking, he decided to deal with Ian first. With an unpleasant tone in his voice, Kurt warned, "Don't cross the line. You just got the girl, and you're already tossing your own sister aside because of the girl? Is that how you should act?"

With that being said, he headed upstairs without another word.

Susan's face turned pale before blushing at Kurt's words.

Just as she was about to chase after Vivian to explain the situation, lan grabbed her by her arm before she could even take the first step.

"lan, what-"

"Talk to her tomorrow. She's not calm enough right now."

With just a casual comment, Ian pulled her into the bedroom.

That night, Vivian waited bitterly in her room for the pair to explain themselves, but to no avail. Disappointment filled her heart as tears began rolling down her cheeks. In the end, it was Kurt who slowly coaxed her to sleep. Even after Vivian had fallen asleep, her frustrated tears still lingered on her long eyelashes.

After all, she had the right to feel aggrieved.

Ian had kept such a huge thing from her. Sometimes she wondered if the former still considered her as his biological sister.

Not only so, but Ian had also talked back at her in a menacing manner. Ever since they were children, Ian had never raised his voice at her. Yet because of another woman, Ian had snapped at her that night.

With a heart filled with frustrations and disappointments, Vivian drifted off to sleep. As Kurt was pulling a blanket over her shoulders, he heard her mutter in her dreams, "Matt…"

She truly does seem like a baby.

Kurt shook his head in mild exasperation.

The next morning, Kurt woke up around seven o'clock. When Susan had not been around for the past few days, it was Kurt who had been preparing breakfast.

Out of habit, Kurt went over to the room next to his to check up on Vivian. To his surprise, the door was already open. Without hesitation, he went over to take a look inside.

"It's you?"

Kurt stared at the tall outline in disbelief. The person inside was placing a small cake on the small table in front of Vivian's bed.

Indeed, the person inside the room was lan.

He was dressed in workout attire with a cap on his head. Peeking from below the cap was a forehead drenched in droplets of sweat.

It was as though he had gone for a long workout session since early in the morning.

lan did, in fact, go out early in the morning.

After placing the cake on the table, Ian took out the earphones in his ears and strode toward the door.

Kurt said nothing as Ian made his way toward him.

"Why did you stir up trouble last night?"

Kurt remained speechless.

stir up trouble? It was just a mere reminder.

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Kurt thought that Ian was the spitting image of his old man when the latter was being unreasonable.

"Mr. Ian. Firstly, it truly was your fault last night. You truly did keep the truth from her from the beginning. You could have just apologized. Not only did you not apologize, but you turned the situation around and blamed her instead."

lan was at a loss for words.

"Secondly, do you not know your own sister? She views her relationship with her two brothers in the highest regard. She would always share everything with you, so when you keep secrets from her, she would feel hurt, thinking that you are treating her like a stranger. Got it?"

Once again, Kurt reminded Ian bluntly.

Just as Kurt's voice dissipated, Ian fell silent. It was as though he had been pulled out of his own world.

At eight o'clock, Vivian finally woke up. As she opened her eyes, she noticed her favorite blue velvet cake on the table, as well as lan, who was sitting nonchalantly by the window, waiting for her to wake up.

Vivian was stumped.

"Awake? Go freshen up quickly and eat the cake. It's not early anymore."

Seeing that Vivian was awake out of the corner of his eye, Ian made a casual comment as he scanned the document in his hand.

Vivian pursed her small lips together before slowly getting out of bed and heading for the bathroom.

When she returned to the table, she noticed that the cake had been taken out of the box. There was also a mug of warm milk next to the cake, with its steam still visible. The milk even had her favorite sugar cubes.

It was evident that Vivian had a sweet tooth.

"Vivi, I'd like to apologize for my behavior last night. I was not keeping the secret from you on purpose. It's just that... things between Susan and I are complicated.

Because of that, no one else knew besides Kurt."

As Vivian took a seat at the table, Ian put down the work in his hands and started explaining.

Indeed, he had not intended to hide it from her.

It was more of a subconscious decision not to let Vivian know about it. In lan's mind, Vivian was his younger sister. He had built a habit of wanting to protect her, yet he had never thought about letting her help him.

Not only so, Ian realized that Kurt had been right. His personality did include him keeping his feelings to himself and not letting anyone else know about them.

Vivian picked up the small spoon and ate the cake in small bites.

After a whole night of rest, Vivian was significantly calmer. Between bites, Vivian raised her head and looked

at lan.

"Ian, you should have talked to US about it. When you went to Yeringham on your own to look for Susan, could the troubles you faced be avoided if someone were to help?"

"What?"

"I've heard everything. To prevent the two of you from being together, Susan's mom tracked you down, knelt in front of you, and said that you're... you're diseased, and you two are not fit to be together. Do you know how heartbroken I was when I heard that? My brother is not diseased. If Matt and I were to have any clue-even if it's just a small one-we would have been able to help, or at least shield you from the pain."

Vivian was still eating the cake as she spoke.

However, at the end of her sentence, the mist in front of her eyes started pouring down as giant tear droplets.

Did she stay up late last night just to get an answer from them?

Of course not. In reality, her heart had been aching for quite a while, to the extent that she had sleepless nights. It was so painful that she wanted an answer, as though an answer would soothe the pain.

lan was stunned.

His lips parted slightly as he gaped at Vivian. All of a sudden, it was as though something had struck his brain. In a flash, fragments of memories flooded to the surface.

Knelt? That's right; there was a woman who knelt in front of me. She said... She said...

Clang!

The fork in lan's hand fell to the ground as his hand trembled. The sound of it hitting the floor reverberated in the room.

"Ian?" Vivian was startled. At the sight of Ian's odd expression, she quickly stood up and made her way in front of Ian.

"Are you all right? lan?"

Vivian repeatedly called Ian by his name. After a few tries, color slowly returned to Ian's paled face as he recomposed himself.

So this is the memory I had suppressed. This is the reason -the true reason-why I had left Susan.

lan's finger turned cold. Within a matter of seconds, a sense of despair weighed on his heart, choking the breath out of him.

"lan?"

"Vivi, tell me. Do you... Do you think that I'll be like Daddy? Do I... really have a psychological condition?"

"No!"

Vivian immediately rejected the idea with a firm voice. She looked at her brother with an agitated expression. The tearing pain in her heart caused her just-dried eyes to water once again.

"You're not diseased! You're healthy and perfectly fine! Also, Daddy doesn't have psychological illnesses either! He was forced to be like that!" Vivian denied the idea.

Her voice raised higher and higher with each sentence she said.

Kurt and Susan finally heard the commotion from downstairs.

The two of them exchanged glances before bolting upstairs.

Just as they reached the bedroom door, Susan heard a sentence that scared the daylights out of her.

"But, it is true that psychosis runs in the family. It was because of this reason that Daddy was locked up by Grandpa for all those years. It can't be made up. Even when we were younger, I have always been different from the both of you, haven't I?"

A heavy silence hung in the bedroom, suffocating everyone inside like the calm before the storm.

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"That's not true!"

At the most critical moment, a slender figure dashed into the room. She was just like a gigantic hand that had suddenly appeared in the stormy seas, stabilizing the boat that was just about to capsize.

"That isn't it, Ian. Indeed, that gene runs in the Soprano family. However, Aunt Sabrina is fine. Also, there isn't anyone in the Soprano family who is like Uncle Sebastian. Haven't you realized that?"

That person was Susan, who had been listening to the conversation outside.

She stood next to Ian while holding his hands which were trembling slightly.

Even though it was already summer, his hands were so cold that Susan could not help but shudder.

lan was rather stunned to see the woman as he had not expected her to appear suddenly.

"I... It was just a casual remark." A look of panic flashed across lan's eyes as he did not want to continue discussing that topic.

He tried to retract his hand, but Susan tightened her grip on his hands as she said, "No, Ian, hear me out. What happened to Uncle Sebastian has got nothing to do with genetics. Well, perhaps there's a slight connection, but it's mainly because of his childhood experiences and other things that he had encountered as an adult."

Taking a pause, she continued, "But you're not the same, right? You grew up in a loving environment with so many people caring about you. There's no reason you would be like Uncle Sebastian. If a person walks down the wrong path, most of the time, it's due to their own choices and factors other than genetics. Ian, don't you understand that?"

Susan started choking up at the end of her sentence.

In fact, she was so scared that tears started streaming down her face.

That was because she knew what that meant to the young man in front of her. When she first heard the truth, she had a hard time accepting it as well, not to mention lan, who was directly affected by it.

Besides, he was in so much agony that he had even chosen to forget his memories.

Susan looked up at lan, her teary eyes filled with fear and unease. She was grabbing lan's hands so tightly that her fingers had turned white.

"lan, you-"

"All right. Let's go out first and let them talk." Before Vivian could finish her sentence, Kurt quickly interrupted her and dragged her out of the bedroom.

Vivian did not mean to hurt Ian. She had only revealed the truth as she was too worried about her brother.

However, even if she had not said it, it was just a matter of time before lan would find out.

After the door was shut, the atmosphere in the room suddenly turned heavy with tension. Susan was still kneeling on the ground while looking up at lan.

"lan?" A few seconds later, Susan finally broke the silence.

After what seemed like a long time, lan, who was sitting on a chair, slowly turned back from the window and looked at the woman.

"Have you thought about it carefully? You do know what the future might entail if you choose to be with me, right?"

"There's nothing for me to think about. We grew up together, and I know the kind of person you are. That's enough for me to be sure about this," Susan said resolutely while holding lan's hands tightly.

She could feel her heart aching as she met the young man's sorrowful gaze.

In fact, she knew very well what he was afraid of.

He was worried that he would end up being like his dad and was even more afraid that their future children would suffer from the same fate.

At that moment, Susan felt herself having difficulty breathing as if she could feel the man's pain.

She reached out and caressed lan's handsome face, which was pale and had a tense expression.

"lan, you have to remember that I've known you for a long time. Back then, when I ran out at midnight to get you that gift, you'd already left a deep impression on my mind."

The woman could feel lan's hands trembling slightly after she said that. The next moment, he shut his eyes.

Plop!

Susan felt a jab to her heart as hot tears fell on her palm.

Meanwhile, Vivian and Kurt were downstairs, getting ready to go to school.

However, Vivian was still feeling very low. She kept looking back up at the apartment, wanting to know what was going on.

When Kurt noticed that, he tried to comfort her after they got into the car. "Don't worry. Everything will be fine. By the way, how did you find out the truth about your brother's forgotten memories?"

"I heard it from Sigrun. The second day after she returned, I suddenly saw a post on the forum that was indirectly scolding our Jadeson family. I was really mad about it and got someone to find that person's IP address. It turned out that Sigrun made the post," Vivian replied furiously.

Kurt was momentarily stunned to hear that.

"Sigrun? Why haven't you mentioned this to me before?"

"It's just a small matter. Besides, I've already settled it. I have also warned her that if she continues creating trouble, I won't let her off," Vivian answered casually.