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Sebastian took a chair and sat down.

There was a strong stench of blood lingering in the air at the casino, where the stains on the floor were still clearly seen. The messy surroundings indicated that a gory battle had happened here not too long ago.

“Spill. What exactly happened?” He crossed his legs and asked, giving the man a lot of grace.

Edmund stood there with a blank face.

Moments later, he gave in to Sebastian’s death stare and started to reveal the full story with a stammer, “He’s Eddie’s man. I... I helped your family, and I also saved you from the basement of Sheerwood residence. Hence, he targeted me to avenge Eddie.”

“Hmm... Why didn’t you come to me for help?” uttered Sebastian as he gazed at Edmund.

He’s definitely telling the truth.

Sebastian had also figured it out when he had guessed the identity of the Jetroinian.

Upon hearing the unexpected question, Edmund panicked slightly. He avoided Sebastian’s gaze and shook his head.

“I can’t go to you.”

“Why?” Sebastian furrowed his brows. “Was it because of your pride? I’ve mentioned this before, and I’m going to say it again. Since you’re Devin’s friend, we’re on the same side. You’ve risked your life for the Jadesons so many times. It’s only fair that I repay you the favor,” he assured Edmund with a promise.

In this world, the number of friends that Sebastian had could easily be counted using one hand.

However, he was extremely disappointed to be rejected by Edmund once more.

"All this happened because of my father. That's why I didn't feel it was wrong for that man to take away all that I ever had. It was just that I couldn't come to terms with it, especially these past few days. That's all."

Sebastian kept quiet, giving Edmund time to express himself.

"Now that you've gotten everything back for me, I'm all good. It's about time I reevaluate my life goals."

Reevaluate his life goals?

Sebastian looked at him while suspicion flashed past his beautiful black eyes.

What does that mean? What does he want to do?

"I'm thinking of heading to Smealand. The industrial sector isn't too developed over there. Therefore, I want to bring our technologies over and try it out. Who knows? I might succeed and make a name for myself."

Shifting his gaze away, Edmund stood in front of Sebastian and proclaimed confidently.

Yes, that's my plan.

A while ago, when he heard that Sabrina got into trouble at the airport, he swore in his heart to leave the country and never return if she was unharmed.

As long as I stop seeing her, I won't cause her any trouble.

There was pin-drop silence at the casino when both of them kept quiet.

However, it was a different kind of silence. It felt more like the calm before the storm, with Sebastian exuding an icy cold aura.

Smealand? What industrial development? Is he going there to dig the ground and farm?

Sebastian lost his last strand of patience. Sitting there, he jeered at Edmund, "Are you even a man? What's the big deal about liking a woman? Do you need to scurry away to someplace so far away and underdeveloped just to avoid her?"

Edmund's face turned scarlet in a flash.

His expression changed subtly and his body turned stiff, as though someone had rubbed salt in his wounds.

Deep down, he knew that he could never escape Sebastian's hawk eyes. No matter how he attempted to cover up with excuses and white lies, Sebastian could still see through him.

In the end, Edmund went silent.

“Let me be honest with you. If you don’t face the matter head-on, it will forever be like a thorn in your flesh regardless of where you are. You should deal with it, not find ways to sweep it under the carpet.”

Sebastian continued, “There’s nothing wrong about having feelings for someone. The only unfortunate thing about it was the wrong timing. Edmund, there’s more to life than your love for a woman. For example, there’s still your relationship with your friends and family... Your world shouldn’t revolve around your relationship with a woman. Sometimes, you can still be her guardian angel by wearing another hat. Isn’t that great?” Sebastian counseled him calmly.

That was an extremely rare scene. Edmund was probably the first person on earth to have Sebastian, a renowned president, spend time giving him valuable advice on life.

As he listened, Edmund gradually lowered his head.

He did not want to admit that he had a strong urge to break down into tears. He had always felt like he had an embarrassing secret, to which people would loathe, despise, or keep a distance from him if anyone ever found it out.

Conversely, Sebastian did not even rebuke him. As a matter of fact, he seemed to be more understanding than he used to be.

Edmund heaved a sigh of relief. With his lips twitching, he said, “I’m delighted that you don’t detest me. Therefore, I don’t want to hide anything from you. The reason why I was manipulated by Eddie back then was because he had some dirt on me.”

“I know.” To Edmund’s disbelief, Sebastian gave a two-word reply casually.

He lifted his head and stared at him, gaping. “You... You know this as well?”

Sebastian scoffed. “Of course. It’s very typical of Eddie to use various despicable means to control others. Besides, it’s not like you have any other weaknesses he can exploit.”

Edmund was at a loss for words.

From that moment on, he held high regard for Sebastian even though they were only a few years apart.

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That day, Devin, who was in Jadeborough, received a call from Jetroina. It was Karl, informing him that Edmund had traveled to Jetroina to gamble and had almost lost his entire family's fortune.

In the end, it was Sebastian who bailed the man out.

Sebastian had also suggested that Devin find Edmund a job so that he would stop idling around.

"That idiot!"

Devin could feel his anger building after listening to Karl's words.

Immediately, he made arrangements for Edmund to return to Jadeborough, intending to pick the man up from the airport personally.

As such, Edmund, who had been wandering abroad for a long time, finally started making preparations to return to his country. It was about time for him to get back on the right track in life.

Upon hearing the news, Sabrina rushed to the hotel and greeted Edmund with a flying kick when she saw him.

"There must be something wrong with your brain! Otherwise, why would you create so much trouble? I hope you've learned your lesson after this time. When you get back, you really have to start working hard. As a man, you will have to provide for your family in the future."

"I know, I know," Edmund replied in an exaggerated manner while hugging his leg, which was hurting from the woman's kick.

After cleaning himself up, the man was back to his handsome self again, with a tinge of his usual roguishness.

Indeed, he finally understood.

Edmund had realized what Sebastian told him was true. Even just as a platonic friend, the woman still cared about him so much.

He was very contented with the current situation and would not risk anything to destroy it.

That night, the two of them left Jetroina.

After everyone left, the hospital ward fell silent once again. As Sasha was still trapped in the sealed room, Sebastian was the only one sitting in the cheerless corridor.

Sasha: Sebby, are you sitting alone outside? Do you wanna go home and rest?

Sebastian: No need. I'm chatting with Karl.

Sasha: What are you guys chatting about?

Out of curiosity, Sasha approached the glass door and peered through it with her phone in hand.

Even though she did not see Sebastian, she saw Xayden being forced into a corner by Karl. She also noticed that Xayden, who was backed up against the wall, was holding something in his hand.

"Was it you who did it?"

"N-no... It wasn't me," Xayden replied, feeling aggrieved.

He had indeed not done anything other than put the wine inside the fridge. He had not expected that the bottle would explode. In fact, he did not even know that it was possible for alcohol to cause an explosion, not to mention damaging Karl's clothes as a result.

Xayden wanted to escape, but right then, he saw Sebastian walking out of Haruto's office.

"What are the two of you doing here at this hour? Stop fooling around."

"Mr. Hayes, please be the judge! After a lot of effort, I finally managed to get a few bottles of wine from the most famous bar in Terrandya. But this idiot placed the bottles in the freezer, and they ended up exploding! Not only that, I don't know what he did when he was retrieving the wine, but it caused the glass shreds to fly all over the place. These are from my new clothes!" Karl said, waving a few pieces of shredded cloth in front of Sebastian.

Sebastian was speechless after hearing that. Meanwhile, Xayden was so worried that he had hidden behind Sebastian, keeping silent.

Finally, Sebastian took out his credit card and handed it to Karl. "Take this and buy some new clothes for yourself. You should know this guy well enough by now. Judging by the way he behaves toward me, it shouldn't be a surprise to you that that happened."

Enough said.

Karl knew that Sebastian was right.

Xayden was indeed the weirdest man in SteelFort.

After that was settled, it was time to discuss serious matters. Looking toward Xayden, Sebastian said, "I just spoke to Dr. Shoki. He told me that you managed to find a way to contain the bacteria?"

"Yup, that's right. But I'm not sure if it even exists in the world," Xayden replied, scratching the back of his head.

Not sure if it even exists in the world? What on Earth does he mean by that?

Karl had the urge to smack the man on the back of his head but was stopped by Sebastian.

"What do you mean? How could you have found a way if you're not sure if it exists in the first place?"

"Because that bacteria proliferates by feeding on a chemical substance. I've managed to derive the composition of that chemical substance, and with the help of Dr. Shoki, we have derived the dilution point of that substance. Next, we'll just have to search for the substance needed to dilute it." Xayden tried his best to explain.

So, what would we require?

Sebastian waited for the man to carry on.

However, he did not expect that the answer Xayden had for him was a long and complex chain of chemical formula.

"I've derived this based on the blue pill which Mr. Devin took previously. As the bullet which struck him was from the first batch, the effects were less harmful. For Mrs. Hayes' case, we'll need to manufacture the antidote from a purer substance. However, what's in the market now are all artificial extracts. I haven't seen any natural and pure extract that suits our need yet," Xayden replied nervously.

It was clear that the ingredients they needed had to be entirely pure and naturally occurring.

The extracts and man-made substances which constituted the antidote for Devin would not work for Sasha.

Upon hearing that, a deep crease appeared between Sebastian's brows, as there were a few ingredients that he had not even heard of before...

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Meanwhile, immediately after Sabrina returned to Avenport, she received a call from Solomon, asking her what had happened in Terrandya.

However, as it was too embarrassing for Sabrina to tell him everything that had happened, she merely brushed him off with a few words.

“Nothing much, don’t worry,” she replied.

Sensing that the woman was not willing to share and was about to hang up the phone, Solomon quickly changed the topic.

“You... Do you have some time? I need your help to entertain a guest,” the man requested politely, which was not his usual style.

As far as Sabrina could recall, that seemed like the first time Solomon had asked for her help so directly.

That managed to pique the woman’s interest. “Who’s the person?”

“... She’s from Jetroina. Her name is Ichika Minamoto and she’s currently staying at Palace Hotel. If you’re free the next few days, can you take her around?”

Even though Solomon sounded awkward initially, he gradually got more comfortable as he spoke.

A girl from Jetroina?

Why would this guy bring a girl back from Jetroina? Could it be...?

Sabrina’s eyes suddenly lit up at that thought. Unable to contain her excitement, she replied at once, “Is she your girlfriend? When did the two of you start dating? You didn’t even tell me! Why didn’t you introduce her to me earlier.”

The woman sounded extremely enthusiastic, feeling happy for Solomon, just like how an elder sister would upon knowing that her younger brother had started dating.

However, the man did not sound happy when he replied, “No, we’re not dating.”

“If that’s the case, why are you asking me to keep her company?”

“... Forget it if you don’t have time.”

Solomon ended the call after saying that, not wishing to explain any further.

What’s wrong with him?

Sabrina stared at her phone for a while, feeling confused, before putting it away.

Even though Solomon did not reveal much, intuition told Sabrina that there was more than met the eye. As such, after quickly tidying herself up, she shouted, “Wendy, Wendy! I need to go out for a while. Please help to look after the kids.”

“What?”

Wendy emerged with Jaena in her arms.

“Ms. Hayes, you’re heading out again? Didn’t you just come back?”

“I’m going to meet Solomon’s girlfriend. He just called and told me that he brought back a girl from Jetroina. She’s staying at Palace Hotel, and he wanted me to help entertain her.”

“Really? That’s great! You should hurry then.”

Wendy was delighted to hear that as well.

Sabrina took her bag and set off for Palace Hotel.

However, what she was not aware of was that at the same time, in an office on the top floor of Hayes Corporation, Solomon was sitting in his chair with a grim expression on his face after hanging up. He had even stopped browsing through the documents which were on his desk.

“Mr. George, the shareholders have all arrived. Would you... like to go over now?” Luke asked after a moment of hesitation.

He had been standing in the office for a while but had not dared to speak after noticing that his president was in a bad mood.

The company’s board of directors meeting was held once every half a month. However, for the past few meetings, the discussions had mainly revolved around the share buyback and redistribution of the company’s shares.

As such, Luke knew that it would be no different that day.

Even he, as the man’s assistant, was already getting a headache from it, let alone Solomon, who was the president of the company.

In the end, Solomon still decided to attend.

Just like what the two men had predicted, not long after the meeting commenced, Peter and some of the other shareholders, who had been with Sebastian for a long time, brought those issues up for discussion.

“Mr. George, as the financial year-end is approaching, we would like to know when is the redistribution of the company’s shares happening,” one of the shareholders asked tactfully, mentioning the company’s shares instead of the Hayes family’s.

When Solomon heard that, his expression darkened.

“What’s the rush? My sister’s wedding hasn’t been held yet, and my two nephews have not moved out either.”

“But that’s inevitable. Mr. George, we’re trying to be understanding, but our dividends depend on our shares. Don’t you think it’s a bit unfair to the rest of us that your Hayes family owns three lot of shares?”

“Exactly! Mr. George, we don’t have anything against the Hayes family, but we should still follow the company’s policies. We believe that even if Mr. Hayes was around, he would still handle the matter impartially.”

Solomon clenched his fists tightly when he heard Sebastian’s name being mentioned.

Buzz...

Suddenly, someone’s phone vibrated.

Solomon shot a cold glance toward the right, which was the direction of the sound, and saw a shareholder taking out his phone. After opening the message, that shareholder’s eyes widened instantly.

What’s going on?

The other shareholders had also noticed his shocked expression and looked toward the man.

After a myriad of expressions flashed across the old shareholder’s face, he managed to compose himself before showing what he saw on his phone to the others.

The headline of the article read: Breaking news! Sabrina Hayes was seen touring around with a Jetroinan lady. Could she be the fiancée of Hayes Corporation’s current president?

Accompanying that headline was a picture of Sabrina, who had not been pictured in public in a long while, together with another woman dressed in a Jetroinian traditional outfit. They were both beaming happily and seemed to be enjoying each other’s company.

It was obvious that they did not have an ordinary relationship.

What was more shocking was the woman's identity, which was dug up just moments later.

She turned out to be the newly-turned adult, Ichika Minamoto, the daughter of the prestigious Minamoto family in Terrandya!

Oh my God!

The old men were all stunned.

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Chapter 1310 He Deserves Better

In the end, the board of directors meeting ended without a conclusion.

At the same time, when Solomon left the meeting room, a commotion erupted among the employees.

"Oh my God, did you guys see the news? It seems like Mr. George has a secret fiancée."

"Yeah, I saw! It's so shocking! It's a lady from Jetroina even!"

"Aaaahhh..."

The crowd was buzzing with excitement.

After all, after Sebastian left, Solomon had been managing the company well, leading Hayes Corporation to greater heights. As such, the employees had already fully accepted him as their leader and were happy that he had found the love of his life.

However, there was one person who did not share the same sentiments.

"What are all of you doing? Why aren't you working? Get back to your seats," Akiko chided upon entering the office, her face darkened after seeing the commotion going on in there.

Immediately, everyone fell quiet and went back to their work.

Who does she think she is? Even Luke, Mr. George's assistant, has not said anything. What an arrogant bit*h.

The crowd glanced at the woman in disdain as she entered the president's office.

In truth, no one was fond of her.

Akiko saw that the man had already returned to his office. After placing the documents in front of him, she hesitated a moment before plucking up her courage to ask, "Mr. Akiyama, why did you... ask Ms. Hayes to meet Ms. Minamoto? I thought the plan was to let her stay at the hotel for a few days before sending her back to Jetroina?"

Initially, Solomon had fully entrusted her to deal with Ichika when the woman had first arrived.

The man had told her then that he had brought Ichika back with him only out of respect for Yamada.

If that was the case, Akiko did not understand why he would ask Sabrina to entertain her.

"Mr. Akiyama, did Ms. Hayes secretly approach Ichika after getting wind about her? Should I release an official statement to clarify the matter?"

The woman's eyes suddenly lit up as she contemplated that possibility.

However, Solomon ended up rejecting her suggestion straight out.

After casting an indifferent glance at her, he replied, "There's no need. I requested for her to do that."

What?

Color drained from Akiko's face when she heard his words.

"Mr. Akiyama, what do you mean by that?"

"You don't have to bother yourself with Ichika from now on. Let Sabrina handle it. Just focus on your work," Solomon said, sounding slightly impatient.

Akiko noticed a hint of displeasure flash past the man's face and did not dare to speak further after that. She dug her nails deep into her palms as her heart sank, feeling resentful that after dealing with Willow, she had Ichika to deal with.

When will this end?

However, Akiko knew that given Ichika's family background, that woman wasn't someone she could pit herself against. If she did that, it was likely that she would be destroyed at any moment.

As such, Akiko was filled with despair as she left Solomon's office.

"I did not expect Mr. George to start dating again."

"Me too. Judging by how devoted he was to Mrs. Hayes, I thought he would remain single for the rest of his life..." someone suddenly mentioned.

Mrs. Hayes? Why didn't I think of that!

Realizing that that was something she could work on, Akiko immediately stopped whatever she was doing and left the office.

...

Meanwhile, after touring around for the entire day, Sabrina and Ichika had returned to Palace Hotel.

Sabrina had taken a liking to the young woman from Jetrouina after spending time with her.

"Ichika, it's set then! You're coming to my house for dinner tonight."

"Sure," Ichika replied shyly.

She was indeed a sweet and adorable girl who still had some baby fat on her cheeks. With her big bright eyes, Ichika looked extremely pure and innocent, as if untainted by all the negativity that existed in the world.

The more Sabrina looked at Ichika, the more fond she was of the latter.

On the way back home, Sabrina texted Solomon: I've already invited Ichika home for dinner tonight. You have to come too!

The woman had ended her sentence with an exclamation mark, which meant that it was an order and not a request.

Solomon was working in his office while sipping on coffee when his phone lit up. After taking a glance at the screen, he spat out his coffee, feeling shocked.

Seriously? She even invited Ichika over for dinner? Is that really necessary? But they've only known each other for a few hours!

Solomon was speechless.

Half an hour later, when Ichika was getting ready to take a bath before resting for a while, she heard a knock on her hotel room door.

Thinking that Sabrina had returned, the girl's eyes lit up as she rushed to open the door at once.