

Returning from the Dead: His Secret Lover Chapter 1370

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Chapter 1370 The Paranoid Jadesons

“Ms. Ichika, when will Mrs. Minamoto and Ms. Himari be arriving? I plan to begin with the preparations.”

“Huh?” Finally, Ichika raised her head and turned to look at Wendy.

The Minamotos had been invited to Frontier Bay for dinner that day. Since Sasha and the rest weren't present, Wendy had done an excellent job welcoming their Jetroinian guests on behalf of the Hayeses.

Naturally, Rufus, Jackson, and Sharon would be present too.

“All right, let me make a phone call to ask them about it,” Ichika replied as she rose to her feet.

She fished her phone out and prepared to call her husband. Yet, Ichika changed her mind when she caught sight of the endless wave of messages in the chat group. With a purse of her lips, Ichika called her mother.

“Should we wait for Mr. Akiyama?”

Aoi was situated at Hillside Villa when she received Ichika's call. Upon hearing her daughter's question, Aoi hesitated.

When Himari heard this, she quickly cajoled, “Mom, let's head there now. If we wait for Mr. Akiyama, we'll have to wait until he finishes his work so that he can fetch us there. Let's not cause him any more trouble.”

Himari was eager to leave as soon as possible. After all, she heard that her cousin-in-law was the president of the Hayes Corporation. Furthermore, it was rumored that he was one of the wealthiest men in Avenport.

Himari was burning with curiosity. I wonder, how will his house look like?

She vividly remembered the wedding too. Although the couple was dressed in simple attire, their poised and elegant mannerisms outshone everyone else and made them the stars of the event.

Moreover, her cousin-in-law had been the one who paid for the wedding's private jet and luxury limousine.

Swayed by her daughter's pleas, Aoi decided to head there first.

When Wendy heard this, she made a quick phone call to inform Rufus and Jackson. After her call, it didn't take long for them to arrive.

"When will they be arriving?"

"It shouldn't take long for them to arrive. I apologize, Mr. Wand. I have not sent an invitation to the Hayes family. Since Mr. Hayes and Madam aren't home, it will be inconvenient to host a large event. Tonight, I'll have to ask for your help to entertain our distinguished guests," Wendy explained with an apologetic look.

Rufus merely smiled good-naturedly. "Don't apologize. It is our duty to entertain the guests too. You have planned everything out very thoughtfully. Besides, Sharon will be present tonight."

Rufus mentioned Sharon on purpose.

In truth, Sharon was a complicated person. The woman, who married into the Blackwood family, hailed from a family of studious scholars and was thus well-educated.

Despite her complex character, Sharon was an excellent host. Hence, she was more than capable of keeping a few guests entertained throughout dinner.

After everyone gathered, they waited for the arrival of Aoi and Himari.

Similarly, Ichika was also waiting for someone else.

She stood at the entrance of Royal Court One, eagerly anticipating the man's arrival.

After her earlier phone call, she couldn't help but send him a quick message. In Ichika's text, she told him that her mom and sister would be attending the dinner too and implored him to return a little earlier.

Ichika glanced at her phone again.

Sabrina: Aren't you guys blowing this out of proportion? How did this become a murder? Are you guys delusional?

Devin, Solomon, Sasha, and Jonathan did not reply to Sabrina's text.

Nevertheless, there was truth to be found in Sabrina's message. Ever since their harrowing battle with Eddie, they had grown paranoid.

They would panic and overthink the situation at the slightest sign of trouble.

However, Sabrina was getting annoyed about the Jadesons' paranoia.

All of a sudden, Sebastian, who had remained silent throughout the entire conversation, sent a text.

Sebastian: Most research institutes rarely use zinc.

Following Sebastian's text, deathly silence ensued in the group chat.

In his office, as Solomon stared at the text, his entire mind turned blank.

Truthfully, Solomon was terrified.

Although he was not involved in the matter, the mere thought of it left him restless, and he lost sleep over it. However, Solomon's sleepless nights were a well-kept secret.

He grabbed his smartphone and continued to stare at the chat group until Sebastian sent another text.

Sebastian: I'll go back and handle it.

Finally, Solomon returned to his seat as his tensed body relaxed.

Beep... Beep...

Suddenly, Solomon's phone rang, signaling an incoming call.

He picked it up and answered the call, "Hello?"

"Darling, a-are you free to talk right now? My mom and sister are already at Frontier Bay. Once you are finished with your work, you can come over right away." The feminine voice that echoed from his phone was soft and demure.

There was a trace of wariness present in her voice. It was as if she was afraid of disturbing Solomon's work.

Solomon glanced at his watch and realized it was almost time for him to get off work. "All right."

Throughout the call, Solomon failed to sense that something was amiss. After his curt reply, he prepared to end the call.

However, before he could do so, Ichika said in a hesitant voice, "Darling, I didn't help Himari this afternoon, right?"

"Huh?"

Solomon had forgotten about the incident entirely.

His confusion put a damper on Ichika's mood.

"I'm talking about the medical book. In the group chat, I noticed that Himari didn't need it anymore..." Ichika's voice was tinged with disappointment.

At last, Solomon remembered. "The medicine isn't the issue. I even asked Haruto about it. It's just a simple poisoning incident. Don't overthink it," he cautioned her.

"Really?"

"Yes, I'll be hanging up now. Once I'm finished with my work, I'll head over to dinner." With that, Solomon hung up.

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Chapter 1371 Sweet Relationship

When Solomon arrived at Frontier Bay after work, dinner had begun without him.

Dinner was a small affair with only a handful of attendees.

Since Sebastian and Sasha were not present, it was held in the dining room. Even from afar, Solomon heard the faint sounds of bright laughter and cheery banter.

'Mrs. Minamoto, we'd be pleased if Mr. Minamoto can come along next time. After all, we are all close relatives. Sasha's mom is Mr. Minamoto's younger stepsister. Your family should visit us more often," Rufus said with a beam.

"That's right. We are all one big family, so you don't have to feel shy or embarrassed," Jackson chimed in to show his support.

In truth, they all shared a very special relationship with each other.

Since Heather was adopted by the Blackwood family, they displayed their generous hospitality by extending an invitation to her older stepbrother.

Aoi was touched to hear their welcoming words.

"All right, I will tell my husband about it when I get home. I can't thank you enough for your invitation," she replied with a grateful smile.

Similarly, Himari was also delighted at Rufus and Jackson's invitation. "It looks like our families have gotten even closer." Quickly, she stood up and poured a glass of wine for Rufus.

Pleased by Himari's politeness, Rufus sang praises about her courteous mannerisms.

When Ichika and Wendy emerged with the dishes, a frown graced the former's forehead when she saw the scene before her.

Nonetheless, Ichika did not dwell on it any longer because a tall man making his way to the dining room had caught her attention.

"Darling, you're back!" Ichika's eyes lit up with joy. Swiftly, she placed the dishes down and hurried toward the man.

When the others heard Ichika's enthusiastic greeting, they whirled around and saw Solomon's arrival. They were all pleased to see him too.

Himari was still trying to gain Rufus' favor when she noticed Solomon and Ichika's intimate display of affection.

Immediately, a dark expression loomed over her face.

"Darling, dinner has been served. Are you going to take a shower before your meal? If you want to do so, I'll go upstairs and run you a bath first," Ichika eagerly asked as she clutched Solomon's briefcase in her arms.

Upon Solomon's arrival, Ichika had forgotten all of her earlier worries. Right now, she only had eyes for Solomon.

Hearing that, Solomon paused.

Although he had grown used to Ichika's affection, Solomon found himself growing awkward as they were in the public eye.

"I'm going to have dinner first. Why don't you go and keep my briefcase?" Solomon said casually as he averted his gaze from her bright brown eyes.

Immediately, Ichika agreed without hesitation.

With that, he headed to the dinner table while Ichika went upstairs to put his briefcase away.

"Solomon, you are finally here. Come and take a seat! We've been waiting for you." Rufus beckoned him over with a hearty wave and gestured at the two empty seats.

Given Rufus' broad smile and enthusiastic welcome, one might think that he was greeting his own son.

One of the seats was next to Rufus', while the other was next to Aoi's.

Seeing this, Solomon smiled and took a seat.

Now that the central character of that night's dinner had arrived, dinner continued on a high note. Even Aoi looked much more amiable than before.

"The atmosphere you have here is so lively. I'm glad that my daughter married into your family," Aoi remarked.

"Mrs. Minamoto, you can rest assured that your daughter is in good hands. We won't mind if your elder daughter marries into our family too. Haha..." Rufus joked.

Similarly, Sharon and Jackson laughed along.

However, Aoi did not join in their laughter.

Before she could reply, Himari tugged on Aoi's sleeve with a shy look. Flustered by everyone's scrutiny, Himari quickly lowered her head.

Himari's bashfulness caused Aoi, Rufus, and Sharon to fall silent.

After several moments, Jackson's booming laugh shattered the silence. "It looks like she's flustered. Doesn't this mean that she has taken a liking to our family?" He chuckled in an easy-going manner.

Finally, Sharon snapped out of her daze. "That's right. Mrs. Minamoto, if you don't mind, you can look for a potential suitor for her. There are plenty of handsome and eligible bachelors in our family."

Likewise, Rufus nodded in agreement.

When Aoi saw their eager expressions, she merely responded with a reluctant smile.

Why did Himari express her agreement at this particular juncture? Isn't she aware of their status?

After all, Himari was the daughter of the prestigious Minamoto family. Without the Hayeses' support, no one in the Minamoto family would approve of this marriage. Furthermore, the only suitable candidate in the Hayes family was already married.

Seeing Aoi's reluctance, everyone refrained from mentioning the topic again.

Solomon steered clear from the conversation too. All this time, he had been focused on the empty seat next to him. Promptly, Solomon rose to his feet and headed out.

"Where is he going?" Sharon asked.

"He must have gone to help Ms. Ichika move the sake. It was specially imported all the way from Jetroina. Since it's dark outside, he must be worried for her safety," Wendy replied with a joyful beam.

Even Wendy had grown fond of Ichika as the latter was a caring woman.

"It looks like they have a rather sweet relationship," Sharon said.

"Yes." Wendy nodded. Suddenly, she thought of something and asked, "Mrs. Blackwood, Vivian was begging for her aunt to stay the night and keep her company. If Ms. Ichika stays the night here, what arrangements should we make for Mrs. Minamoto and Ms. Himari?"

Sharon mulled over Wendy's question before she answered, "Since Solomon is present, he can send them home. If they face any difficulties, you can head over and offer a helping hand."

Sharon lived up to her role as a matriarch and made the appropriate arrangements for her guests.

Wendy agreed to Sharon's instruction without a second thought. Just as she prepared to inform Vivian of the news, Wendy heard a feminine voice echo in the air.

"We can stay here too. This way, it won't be too much of a hassle."

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Chapter 1372 Greedy

Her statement left Wendy and the rest at a loss.

Nevertheless, Wendy could not refute because the Minamotos were their distinguished guests. "All right," Wendy agreed with a smile. "Please excuse me. I'll go ahead and prepare the rooms right now."

By the time Solomon and Ichika finished moving the sake, the arrangements had been fixed.

How could Himari be so discourteous? This isn't even her home. Even if she's a guest, it doesn't excuse her lack of propriety.

When Ichika learned of this news, she fumed in anger. Ichika spent the rest of dinner with a petulant pout on her face.

Immediately, Solomon noticed Ichika's displeasure. Once dinner ended, he made his way to her. With a low voice, he said to her, "Don't worry about it. Sasha and the rest will not mind. Later, I'll head home and bring you your personal belongings."

"Huh?" Hearing this, Ichika looked up. "D-Darling, you'll be home alone. Will that be all right?" Ichika asked hesitantly.

Clearly, everything happened because of her. But judging from Ichika's tone, she had no intentions of staying here. Instead, she wanted to return home and keep her husband company.

Ichika's question left Solomon speechless. He lowered his head and glanced at her worried gaze. Wordlessly, Solomon heaved out a heavy sigh before he spun on his heel and left.

Meanwhile, Wendy was changing the bedsheets of the guestroom upstairs.

Unlike Hillside Villa, Frontier Bay had plenty of rooms to accommodate several guests.

Despite its immense size, Wendy chose the second floor as the Minamotos' temporary residence. The third floor was reserved solely for Sebastian and his family.

Suddenly, Wendy heard someone making their way upstairs.

"Wow! I want to stay on the third floor. Mom, look at the gorgeous view up here. There's even a balcony and swimming pool. We can go swimming tomorrow!"

Following the joyful voice, Wendy heard the sound of high heels clicking against the wooden floor as the person ran upstairs.

Oh no... In haste, Wendy scurried out of the room to stop the intruder.

"You aren't allowed to go upstairs. That's where Mommy and Daddy live. Hurry up and come back down! If you don't, they will be very mad if they find out!"

Before Wendy could open her mouth, a small figure had rushed out of the hanging garden to the foot of the stairs. There, the little girl placed her hands on her hips and yelled at the intruder on the third floor.

The little girl was none other than Vivian.

Wendy paused when she saw Vivian. At the same time, she couldn't help but smile in amusement.

Vivi appeared at the right time.

Himari was roaming around the third floor when she heard the child's voice. Immediately, she stiffened and came to a screeching halt.

Himari quickly changed her approach. "Are you Vivi? Your house is gorgeous. I couldn't help but look around," Himari explained as she looked at Vivian.

Despite that, Vivian gave her no mercy.

"That doesn't mean you can enter the third floor. My daddy has mysophobia. He hates it when someone goes to the third floor. He also doesn't like strangers touching Mommy's stuff! He built the swimming pool for her. The flowers on the balcony are also Mommy's favorites. You'd better come down right now!" Vivian glared at Himari. "If Daddy learns of this, you will have to face the consequences of your actions!" Vivian said as a final warning.

Vivian had said nothing but the truth. In this villa, the third floor was off-limits to everyone except Sebastian, Sasha, and their three children. No one else was allowed to enter it as they pleased.

Left with no choice, Himari heeded Vivian's warnings and returned to the second floor.

Her face was flushed with embarrassment.

"Mrs. Minamoto, Ms. Himari, please accept my sincerest apologies. She's still young and naive. Usually, no one ever goes up to the third floor. Hence, Vivi tried to stop Ms. Himari," Wendy quickly rushed out of the guestroom and apologized profusely.

"It's all right. Himari shouldn't have wandered into their personal bedrooms." Mrs. Minamoto was utterly ashamed by her daughter's rude antics.

Fortunately, no one took Himari's actions to heart. After the incident, Aoi and Himari made their way to the guestroom, which Wendy prepared for them earlier.

When Himari entered the guestroom, she noticed the room's elaborate design right away. Yet, it could not hold a candle to the breathtaking designs she had seen on the third floor. The stark contrasts prompted Himari to seethe in envy.

"This place is much more magnificent than Ichika's home. Why do they get to marry into such wealthy families?" Himari complained.

"Weren't you the one who rejected the marriage in the first place?" Aoi snapped in reply.

She was in a foul mood as Himari's rude mannerisms and actions had left her embarrassed.

On the other hand, Himari refused to admit her wrongdoings. Instead, she glared out the window with a spiteful look. "I wasn't the one who didn't want it," Himari retorted as she looked at the garden. "Ichika snatched it away from me. Mom, since the Hayeses are rolling in dough, maybe I should marry someone from their family too."

"Y-You!" Aoi was so angry she couldn't muster a proper response.

Coincidentally, someone knocked on their door, interrupting their conversation.

"Mom, I brought your pajamas here. Are you inside?" Ichika called out from the other side of the door. She had made a quick trip home to collect Himari and Aoi's toiletries.

Quickly, Aoi opened the door to let her daughter in.

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Chapter 1373 Fight Amongst Sisters

When Aoi opened the door, she saw Ichika with two huge bags in her hands. They were filled to the brim with Aoi and Himari's personal belongings.

In comparison to Himari, Ichika is much more sensible and caring.

Aoi's mood brightened when she thought of this. She took the bags from Ichika's hands and ushered her into the room.

"Ichika, where is Mr. Akiyama? Didn't he send you here?"

"He did. I told him to return home first. Since he has work tomorrow, I didn't want him to stay up too late," Ichika replied.

The mere mention of Solomon caused her to beam from ear to ear.

When Aoi noticed Ichika's blissful smile, she couldn't help but feel happy for her daughter too.

Contrarily, Himari felt a stab of envy and hatred. How could Ichika be so happy? It's so unfair!

"Ichika, despite your love, your husband doesn't even reciprocate your feelings. Was it worth getting married when your love is one-sided?" Himari sneered.

"What did you just say?"

Instantly, Ichika's mood took a drastic turn.

Aoi whirled around and glared at Himari in anger. "Himari, what on earth are you saying? Watch your mouth!"

"I'm only telling the truth. Mom, we came here to see if Ichika is happily married. Yet, you saw it with your own eyes. They don't even share a room. That night, he didn't even touch her when we forced them into the same room."

"You—"

"Moreover, her husband is the only one who refused to spend the night here. It's all because he's still secretly in love with the woman who owns this villa. That's why he didn't have the courage to remain here with Ichika!" Himari continued ruthlessly.

Himari had become deranged.

Even in front of Aoi, she divulged all the secrets without holding back.

Himari's outburst left Aoi utterly dumbfounded.

On the other side of the room, Ichika's face had turned deathly pale. It was as if all the blood had drained from her cheeks. When she heard Himari's cruel words, her entire body shook with rage. Promptly, Ichika dashed forward and slapped Himari across the cheek.

Slap!

The slap rang so loud that it could be heard outside.

Outside, Sharon and Wendy were taking care of the two children. When they heard the sound, both women jolted in shock before rushing toward the guestroom.

"Himari, you've crossed the line! Get out of this house immediately! You are not welcome here!" Ichika was so enraged that she nearly burst into tears.

With reddened eyes, Ichika glared at her crazed sister and ordered her to leave.

Get out? I'm her older sister! I can't believe she had the audacity to order me around.

Ichika's slap added fuel to the fire, and Himari felt her anger increase tenfold.

"Ichika, I can't believe you had the guts to hit me! You even asked me to leave this place! Do you know that your marriage was once mine? I can't believe you are acting all high and mighty after stealing my man!" Himari shrieked like a banshee and lunged toward Ichika with her hands outstretched.

However, Himari's yells did not faze Ichika. When she saw Himari lunging toward her, she merely lifted her skirt and prepared to defend herself.

Hmph! I'm not afraid of her at all.

The sight of her daughters getting into a fight nearly drove Aoi up the wall. "Stop this at once! How could both of you act like this when you are guests in someone else's house!" she cried out.

Hearing this, Ichika decided to heed her mother's advice as she released her skirt and let her guard down.

All of a sudden, Himari's hand landed on her face with lightning speed.

Bang!

The blow caught Ichika entirely off-guard as she lost her momentum and stumbled backward. Himari's vicious hit caused her to collapse to the floor.

"Oh my God, Ms. Ichika, what happened to you?"

"Ichika, are you all right?"

Wendy and Sharon opened the door just in time to see Ichika falling to the ground with a loud thud. Startled, they quickly rushed forward to help Ichika back to her feet.

"Ichika, how do you feel? Are you all right?" When Sharon caught sight of Ichika's reddened and swollen face, she felt her blood boil in fury.

Although the pain caused Ichika's eyes to well up with tears, she refused to burst out crying. In an attempt to maintain her family's reputation, Ichika merely smiled and said, "Aunt Sharon, I'm fine. Himari and I were just fooling around."

"But—" Although Sharon wanted to say something else, she held her tongue when she saw Ichika fighting back tears.

Nonetheless, Sharon's expression darkened. It was clear that her mood had taken a drastic turn.

"Wendy, go look around the house for some ointments to treat Ichika's face," Sharon ordered in a cold voice.

"Right away." Immediately, Wendy rushed off to carry out Sharon's instructions.

Finally, Sharon helped Ichika back to her feet.

Aoi was caught between a rock and a hard place. Although she wanted to clarify the situation, she didn't know where to start. In the end, Aoi stood to the side as she grimaced awkwardly.

"Mrs. Blackwood, they—"

Before Aoi could offer an explanation, Sharon said, "Mrs. Minamoto, squabbles between sisters are not uncommon. However, they aren't petty children anymore. They should know how to mind their words and actions. In the past, my daughter used to fight with Sasha too. But because I never kept them in check, I ended up losing my daughter."

"What?" Aoi was stunned when she heard this.

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Chapter 1374 The Protective Husband

"She passed away?" Aoi asked.

"That's right. She was too pampered and grew up without discipline. As a result, she did many bad things and ended up losing her life as retribution for her misdeeds." Sharon sighed, though her expression remained calm. Years after the incident, she was finally able to talk about it without getting emotional and could even admit that her daughter's passing was retribution. It was a sign that she had finally moved on.

Aoi's look was a mixture of embarrassment and apprehension. She immediately directed a glare at her eldest daughter. "Did you hear that?" she said sharply. "You've gone too far, hitting your sister like that. I want you back in Jetroina with me tonight. Your father will hear of this, and he'll make sure you get some discipline."

What Sharon had said served as a wake-up call for her, and she was ready to send her intractable daughter back to Jetroina at once.

Himari paled. "No, Mom, please don't tell Dad." Cowed, she tried to plead with her mother, "It was wrong of me to slap Ichika. I was just upset by her words... And she hit me too."

"Don't justify your actions with excuses!" Aoi snapped. "I'm done with putting up with your shenanigans!"

A short while later, Solomon, who had reached home, received a call from Rufus, telling him that his in-laws would like to return to Jetroina immediately.

"I think it's best that you arrange for them to leave as soon as possible, Solomon," Rufus said with some hesitance. "Ichika's sister... She, uh, got pretty violent and hit Ichika."

Solomon's eyes narrowed dangerously. "Ichika was hit? Why?"

"I'm not sure. There was a quarrel that escalated. By the time Wendy and Sharon arrived at the scene, Ichika was already hit. All I have to say is, her sister is really nothing like her. I don't even have a word to describe someone like that. Did you know that woman had even asked to stay in Sasha's room?"

The silence from the other end of the line was steeped in cold fury. What Rufus said, especially the last part, had completely ticked off the man.

Two hours later, Solomon was seeing Aoi and a reluctant Himari off at the airport.

"I'm so sorry, Akiyama," Aoi apologized guiltily. "You must have heard what happened. Please don't think ill of Ichika. She's not to blame. The fault is entirely her sister's."

She would hate it if her son-in-law got upset with Ichika because of this. Her worry, however, was redundant since Solomon knew better, and he was completely on his wife's side for this.

"Certainly." He smiled thinly at Aoi and handed her two boxes containing expensive sets of jewelry as a parting gift.

Before the latter could breathe a sigh of relief, Solomon spoke up again, "There's something I ought to clarify. Ichika is the only reason I agreed to this marriage, and it has nothing to do with her family. In other words, the union between the Minamotos and the Hayes family wouldn't have happened if it were someone else besides Ichika. I hope you realize that."

His voice grew more chilly as he continued.

Aoi was stunned, while Hamari, who was standing beside her, flushed in mortification.

It was indeed a brutal remark coming from Solomon, a metaphorical slap to Himari's face. Just hours ago, she had disparaged her sister and accused the latter of robbing her of the opportunity to marry Solomon. And now, the man in question was straightforward in his declaration that he would not have married anyone else besides Ichika, proving once and for all that Himari had never even stood a chance.

With a defeated look, Himari boarded the plane with her mother, who could not help but berate her again.

“You really disgraced our family today,” Aoi said, her expression stony. “If it’s marriage that you’re after, it can be easily arranged. Once we are back, I’ll start the preparations for you to marry into the Tsurka family.”

“Mom...”

Back at Frontier Bay, Ichika was waiting restlessly in the villa for Solomon’s return.

Wendy brought some ice over and tried to comfort her, “Ms. Minamoto, please don’t worry. Mr. Solomon knows what he’s doing. He won’t make matters more complicated.”

Wordlessly, Ichika took the ice and applied it on the side of her face that was swelling due to Himari’s doing. She lowered her head, her long lashes quivering and still damp with tears.

While she had no doubt that her husband would be able to handle the matter, she was more worried that he would think less of her after what had happened tonight. Will he be disappointed in me for causing such a commotion? I ought to have shown more manners... He’ll think that it’s tomfoolery that’s unbecoming of someone from a good family.

The thought was enough to make her feel crestfallen. Dreading and looking forward to Solomon’s return in equal measures, Ichika was jerked out of her brooding at the sound of an approaching vehicle a few hours later.

She immediately rushed to the door, her heart beating loudly in her chest. Is that him? Is he back?

Upon confirming that it was indeed Solomon’s car, she quickly went out to greet him.

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Chapter 1375 Making Her Pay

Ichika’s steps faltered when she saw Solomon exiting the car. As much as she wanted to go over to him, she was suddenly overwhelmed with uncertainty and nervousness.

By then, the day was already breaking. Under the dawn’s light, Solomon could see his wife standing at the door with red-rimmed eyes and a swollen face. The urge

to rush to him was clear in her expression, but for some reason, she was holding herself back. Instead, she only stood rooted to the spot, wringing her hands together and looking like a scared animal.

Sighing, Solomon walked over. "Does it hurt?"

"No..." Ichika murmured. Despite her words, fresh tears quickly gathered in her eyes at his display of concern. Unable to help herself, she blinked, and the tears began to fall.

It was a pitiful sight that unexpectedly made Solomon's heart ache. He had never felt that way toward anyone, and yet, at this very moment, he was willing to do anything to stop the girl's tears.

He sighed again inwardly. What a silly girl. There's no way that face of hers doesn't hurt. She doesn't have to hold anything back in front of me.

In the end, however, he said nothing.

Wendy approached him with a concerned look. "Mr. Solomon, please don't blame Ms. Minamoto. She's still young. Not to mention that her sister provoked her..."

Solomon hummed in acknowledgment before leading Ichika to the car and driving back home.

Once they were back, Ichika was pleasantly surprised to see that her husband was not reproachful toward her as she had expected. Rather, he treated her even better than usual. Not only did he run her a bath, but he also applied some cream on her face to ease the swelling. He even waited until she had fallen asleep before leaving her side.

Touched by his gestures, Ichika was put at ease, and her apprehension had finally dissipated.

After making sure that his wife was asleep, Solomon went to his own bedroom and sent a text: Get rid of Giichi Minamoto's eldest daughter.

His man in Jetroina gaped at the message. Isn't Giichi Minamoto his father-in-law? Why would he want to get rid of his sister-in-law?

Another text from his boss soon followed: If I remember correctly, there's a Nogita family in Terrandya. See to it that she marries into that family.

The man's eyes widened in shock at the latest instruction.

The Nogita family used to be prestigious, but it had been steadily on the decline over the years, to the point where even the ordinary local folks would think twice about marrying into such a family.

Not only had the family come down in the world, but the Nogita men were also notorious for their vices. It was not too long ago that one of the Nogitas' sons was even arrested for soliciting prostitutes.

Needless to say, Solomon's order baffled the man, who had no idea what Himari had done that caused such a reaction from his boss. What he did know, however, was that it had been a long time since his boss issued such an order. Ever since Solomon assumed his identity as a Hayes, he had dropped his guileful acts and acted much like an honorable businessman. He had not resorted to conspiring someone's utter downfall in a very long time.

Until now, that is. The subordinate hastened to do what he was told.

When Himari got off the plane the next morning, a piece of scandal about her had already been spreading online like a wildfire. It was a photo of her in a VIP lounge of a nightclub along with several other rich girls, enjoying the erotic services of a few male escorts.

Comments from the netizens were overwhelmingly negative, and people on the streets were also gossiping about her and the girls' lavish and sinful lifestyle.

"Is that Himari Minamoto? Wow, one would think that someone from an upstanding, prestigious family would have more shame than that."

"Rich people and their vices... Frankly, it's a disgrace."

Though leaked by Solomon's subordinate, the photo itself was authentic. It was indeed Himari, who was a regular at the nightclub.

Despite the strict upbringing of the Minamoto family, she had nevertheless grown to become a conceited and arrogant individual.

The family rules stipulated that the Minamoto children must avoid making public appearances and act virtuously. Ichika, for example, followed the rules and tended to stay away from the limelight, choosing to stay at home besides going to school and taking part in outdoor hobbies. This resulted in her becoming the naive, innocent person she was then.

Himari, on the other hand, was always eager to be the center of attention, and she was not above flaunting her wealth and status to achieve that.

As a matter of fact, she had been to places and done things even more wild and ludicrous than engaging in questionable acts with male escorts in a nightclub, all the while keeping her family in the dark.

When this piece of scandal broke out, many others soon followed. Articles of all kinds circulated online, exposing the misdeeds that Himari had done in the past.

By the time she became aware of what was going on, the entire Terrandya was in upheaval, sending her family into rage and humiliation.

Giichi, in particular, was shaking with fury. Once he saw Himari, he slapped her hard without preamble. "Vile, good-for-nothing child!" he seethed. "How dare you do such things behind our backs!"

The slap was hard enough to send Himari tumbling and collapsing on the floor in a position that was ironically similar to her sister's the night before.