

Returning from the Dead His Secret Lover Chapter 1931

Returning from the Dead: His Secret Lover

Chapter 1931

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She wasn't someone to be messed with.

When Vivian confronted Sigrun that day, Sigrun's attitude was arrogant. She thought Vivian wouldn't know what to do since Vivian had always been naive.

Despite getting caught, she wasn't afraid and even threatened Vivian she would spread the word about how the Jadesons allowed an aunt to marry a nephew.

Her words sparked Vivian's temper.

With a wave of her arm, Vivian got all the information on the Lightburn family in her hands in less than an hour. Without giving the Lightburn family a fair warning, Vivian immediately published it on the internet.

Did Sigrun take Sebastian's daughter as a wimp?

The members of the Lightburn family felt as though they were thrown to hell that night. The situation finally deescalated when Lucius personally gave Vivian a call.

Vivian had Sigrun tell her everything from the start. That was when Vivian heard about Ian's incident.

To be honest, she was furious when she heard about it and even hated Susan's mother for it. She couldn't understand how someone who was once family could become so cruel.

Vivian swore she would take revenge on her if anything happened to Ian.

That was why she was so worked up the night before when she waited for Ian's and the others' return.

"Kurt, let me tell you something. I won't allow anyone to hurt my brother. If Susan deals with this matter properly, I'll forgive her. otherwise..."

otherwise what?

Vivian didn't finish her threat, but Kurt knew Vivian was infuriated when he caught the dark look on her face. It was the first time he'd seen her get so angry after Elysium's incident.

Seeing it was almost time for class, Kurt took Vivian to the campus.

Not long after they left, Susan and Ian came down the stairs.

They were calmer than before, but Susan couldn't help but be filled with worry when she didn't see Vivian and Kurt in the living room.

"Did Vivian... got angry?"

"Don't worry. I'll explain it to her."

Ian held an umbrella over them. His tone was much better now that he had relaxed.

Susan nodded.

After a while, they got on their bicycle to get to class.

Regardless, Susan didn't expect the students on campus would whisper and point at them with furious expressions when she and Ian arrived.

"Is it her? She's the one who took advantage of her background to be engaged to Ian?"

"Yeah, that's her."

"She's too much!"

The whole way from the bicycle parking lots to her class, Susan had only received looks of contempt from everyone she passed by.

She was confused by all the looks she'd been receiving. Her strand of patience finally snapped when she saw the students still throwing her the same looks despite almost reaching the finance and accounting block.

"What is going on? Why are they all looking at me like that? They're staring at me as though I'm forcing you against your will."

"You're not. Don't listen to their nonsense."

Ian nonchalantly denied her claim.

Susan didn't know how to retort Ian.

Without a choice, she let him leave for his class.

After she stepped into the building where her class was, she saw Anna racing toward her.

“Ms. Limmer, you’re finally back! Let me ask you something. Did you really snatch someone else’s boyfriend?”

“What?”

Susan shot Anna a look of confusion.

/ snatched someone else’s boyfriend?

Susan stared at her best friend intently. “Who are you talking about? Whose boyfriend have I snatched?”

Anna replied, “Sigrun Lightburn from the Faculty of Business Administration. The entire campus already knows. What’s going on, Ms. Limmer? I’ve never seen you talking with that Lightburn girl’s boyfriend before. How did you manage to steal him from Sigrun?”

Susan felt like she had a ball of cotton stuck in her throat for an entire minute.

Me? I snatched Sigrun’s boyfriend? She was the one that stole mine! We were already a couple back at the University of Pollerton and in Yeringham.

Susan was so mad she only saw red in her vision.

“Anna, I didn’t steal her boyfriend. Ian has always been my boyfriend.”

“Your boyfriend?”

“Yeah. We’ve been together ever since we came back to

the country. We had some misunderstandings between us. That was why Ian came here, and I followed him here to get him back.”

To clear her name, Susan told Anna the whole story.

As Susan expected, Anna had a look of comprehension on her face after Susan finished explaining.

“So that was what happened. That means you guys are fine now?”

“Yeah.” A pretty shade of pink colored Susan’s cheeks.

“Our families have approved our relationship, and we’ll probably... get engaged on Ian’s birthday.” Susan’s cheeks blazed hotter.

Wow! An engagement.

Anna’s eyes sparkled at the news.

Ian was in the Faculty of Finance that day afternoon. He could hear the students’ comments were starting to turn in Susan’s favor.

They weren’t criticizing Susan anymore. Instead, they were describing her with surprise and admiration in their tone. After all, not every girl could chase their man over thousands of miles.

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Ian’s mood was getting better.

As the morning classes ended, he glanced at the watch on his wrist, and realizing that it was still early, he got out of the classroom and headed toward the Faculty of Media.

“Hello, is Vivian here?”

“Vivian? She has gone to the television production studio. A celebrity is visiting their faculty today, so she’s heading there to snap some photos for an assignment,” a student from the Faculty of Media explained.

Celebrity?

Ian scrunched his brows upon hearing that. At the thought of how Vivian had to shoulder the weight of the heavy camera to shoot a person who she had no interest in, his mood, which had just turned for the better, became gloomy again.

Coming within his vision upon arriving at the studio was a large crowd flocking around the stage. Among them, he spotted Vivian at one corner, struggling to capture some shots of a blonde female celebrity on stage.

Alongside her, many students from the film major were also trying to take some photos.

Unfortunately, that female celebrity did not seem to be very cooperative.

“Ms. Lina, where would you be filming for your next project?”

“If everything goes according to plan, it’ll probably be at your school,” the female celebrity answered, her tone as if her presence was a blessing bestowed upon the students.

In an instant, an exhilarated cheer erupted from the crowd. Delighted to hear that piece of news, everyone in the studio angled their camera lens toward the celebrity and clicked their shutter button incessantly.

Like the others, Vivian wanted to snap some shots too.

However, given how she had to shoulder a bulky camera’s weight with her petite frame, she was on the verge of getting squeezed by the other students. Right then, a hand held onto her from behind.

“Ian?”

Whipping her head around to the youth, Vivian was thrilled.

Ian nodded and pulled her to her feet after grabbing the camera from her hands.

“This is the assignment you have to complete?”

“Yeah. The professor wanted US to start by taking shots of figures before progressing to scenes.” The visibly crestfallen Vivian sat beside Ian as she spoke. The resentment within her was so overpowering even the youth beside her could sense it.

It was no wonder why she could react that way. After all, that was not what she had wanted to learn.

Picking up the camera in his grip, Ian switched it on and browsed through the photos inside, only to find that they were of mediocre quality, taken from not-so-flattering angles. At once, his brows knitted tightly together again.

“Vivi, you can always change your major if you don’t like this one. stop forcing yourself anymore.”

“But there’s nothing I like here.” Vivian clutched her head and said aggrievedly.

Ian fell silent.

After a long while, he abruptly suggested, "How about... a school transfer?"

"No way!"

As expected, Vivian violently objected to that suggestion as soon as his voice rang out.

"I'm not going to switch schools. I want to stay here because Kurt is here. Don't worry, Ian. I will do my best." As she finished speaking, she reached out to grab the camera back, intending to continue with her assignment.

Seeing that, Ian grabbed her by her arm. "Vivi, that's not what I mean. I just don't want to see you so stressed because of your studies."

"Then what about you, Ian? Weren't you also in agony?"

You even tried to remove your memory because you couldn't be with Susan, didn't you?" Vivian retorted.

Ian held onto Vivian's hand, unable to vocalize a single word for a long time.

The reason was crystal clear. They both had tolerated the pain and hardship to be able to stay by the side of the person they loved. Only those involved in it would know whether it was worthwhile to go through such tribulation.

Eventually, Ian did not persist in discussing the matter anymore.

He released his grip and brought up another topic.

"Regarding Susan's mother, I know you probably dislike her a lot, Vivi. But I want to remind you that I'm greatly responsible for it as I was the one who didn't handle it well."

"What?" Vivian sounded surprised.

He didn't handle it well/? What has that got to do with him?

"A-Are you speaking up for her, Ian?"

"That's not it. I'm only stating a fact. About Susan and I, it has been my fault from the start. I did whatever I wanted to. When we encountered problems, I only resorted to extreme methods. That inadvertently caused Sigrith to have more doubts about my mental health," Ian placidly expressed.

Strangely enough, he could finally talk about this matter calmly after talking it out with Susan in the bedroom that morning.

It was to the point he could mention his mental disorder without letting his emotions get the better of him.

Vivian was dumbfounded.

“So, do you mean to say that you’re the one who caused her to misunderstand?”

“Yes.” Ian bobbed his head.

“Besides, she knew about my character, and that’s why she came kneeling and begging me. Of course, she’s indeed being selfish. But I also learned from Susan that her mom’s temperament significantly changed when she came over. That’s why Susan suspects that someone instigated her mom.”

“Who would do that?”

“A housekeeper from the Heard family. He’s called Mr. Glen. I heard Eddie placed him at their neighboring house to keep an eye on them. Daddy is already investigating right now. You don’t have to worry about it.”

This time, Ian decided to reveal the truth about everything, including such a confidential piece of information.

At once, Vivian became wordless.

Her initially relaxed expression swiftly grew tense. Thinking about how that matter had arisen because someone had been stirring trouble from behind, her eyes glinted with anger.

“Why do these irksome scums keep showing up everywhere?”

“Fret not. Daddy will deal with it. So, you’re no longer angry now, right?”

“What is there to be angry about? I’m just worried for you and don’t wish anyone to hurt you.” Unlike her words, Vivian did not seem too pleased. She was still huffing in frustration as she lowered her gaze.

Instead of uttering a response, Ian merely pulled her closer to him and gently massaged her head.

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When Susan showed up at the television production studio, she saw Ian and Vivian busy taking photos.

With Ian's presence, that female celebrity also became much more obedient.

"Is this posture fine?" She flashed a bright smile and took the initiative to ask the two while standing on stage.

While Ian said nothing, Vivian was so ecstatic she brought her camera up and began snapping photos wildly.

That sight left Susan feeling slightly relieved. *Since they're taking photos together, they've probably resolved their misunderstanding and patched things up.*

A smile crept up her face, and she turned around to leave.

"That should be Vivian's brother, right? He's rather impressive, isn't he? His appearance instantly made a female celebrity obey him. Look, she even allows Vivian to take photos of her"

"Exactly. I guess money does make the world go round."

A group of students began gossiping in dissatisfaction outside the studio after catching a glimpse of Vivian and Ian's actions inside.

Susan's eyes darkened.

Throwing a glance at the group, she noticed that they also had a photography pass hanging on their necks, similar to one that Vivian possessed. Comprehension instantly dawned upon her, and she strode up to them.

"Hi, may I know... why you guys are crowding around here to take photos of that lady?"

"It's an assignment we have to complete!" Seeing that it was a senior they were unfamiliar with after peering at Susan, one of them within the group impassively answered.

Ignoring the displeasure written on their faces, Susan continued to probe, "I see. Then why are you all standing outside? That girl is in there; you guys can head inside too."

She was, in truth, rather perplexed.

To Susan's understanding, Vivian was a magnanimous person who surely would not mind sharing such an opportunity with her classmates.

Nonetheless, those girls' faces immediately contorted into an ugly scowl upon hearing her words.

"Why should we go in there? Didn't you see that celebrity's assistant chasing US out? Gosh, Vivian, that brat, is usually so laid back and always ranks last in grades among everyone in the faculty. But now that there's an assignment due, she calls her brother here to help. Is there a need for her to study if she completes her assignment this way? Her family is so rich that she can probably afford to start up her own media company after

she graduates. Why does she still need to come to school and go through the drill?"

Those girls spared no leniency with their words.

Of course, those nasty remarks caused anger to brew deep within Susan, but she chose not to say anything and left to find the Faculty of Media's professor.

About half an hour later, she learned from the professor that Vivian was not scoring well for the various modules since her admission into the school.

Knowing that Vivian was such an intelligent girl, Susan was appalled to find that her results were at the bottom of her class after flipping through pages of documents.

"Sir, w-what's wrong... with her? Vivi used to be an outstanding student."

"My take is that she doesn't seem very interested. She always looks listless during my classes. It appears like she's merely trying to idle the hours away."

Despite Vivian's poor attitude in class, the professor was nice enough to share his understanding of her when he encountered someone enquiring about it.

Doesn't seem interested?

Susan's heart skipped a beat when she heard that.

It's honestly torturous to do something without any interest. This matter obviously isn't a minor issue. Vivi learning something she doesn't like now means she'll have a job that she's unenthusiastic about in the future. She'll be in an agonizing spot when that day comes.

That afternoon, Susan chatted with that professor for a long time in the latter's office.

Following that, she went to look for Kurt.

“The professor said that?”

Like Susan, Kurt’s mood instantly went downhill after learning about the matter.

Truthfully, he had his suspicions too.

Yet, Vivian had done everything she could to keep the truth from him, mainly because she was worried he would chase her away for that reason. To avoid chances of him learning about it, she had even fostered a good relationship with her professors and classmates prior.

So, that silly girl has been forcing herself.

That revelation made Kurt leap to his feet.

“Where are you going?” Susan hastily asked when she saw his action.

“I’m going to look for the professor to apply for a school transfer.”

Little did she expect that instead of confronting Vivian and helping her resolve her problem, Kurt would choose

to apply for a school transfer for himself.

Where does he intend to transfer to? To a school that offers a program that Vivian is interested in?

Susan was undoubtedly stumped. It was the first time she came across such a couple where one would go to such an extent for the other half. She knew well that her relationship with Ian was far from that stage.

“Don’t act recklessly just yet. Sit down and hear me out first.” It took Susan a while to calm her emotions before she could assuage Kurt with her analysis.

Bracing himself, he sat back down.

“The thing is, I’ve learned from Vivi’s professor earlier today that she shows no interest in classes because she hasn’t found her professional hobby.”

“Professional hobby?”

“Yes. The Faculty of Media, in the eyes of many, is merely dealing with the entertainment and film industry. Vivi probably sees it that way too, and that’s why she

isn't interested. But there's actually something within the program that fits well with her interests."

Susan took out a document she retrieved from the professor and placed it in front of Kurt.

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There were more than a handful of branches in the media industry-media studies, production, directing, and arts, to name a few. On one look, it was adequate to say those were not something that would pique Vivian's interest.

However, as Kurt lowered his head to browse through the document, he noticed that Susan had circled the point "scene and costume design" under the directing section with a red pen.

"What's this?"

"That's what suits her. The professor mentioned that other than the actors' superb acting skills, the success of a film is also closely tied to these two factors. For instance, that wildly popular drama rose to fame because of its costume, props, and makeup." Susan found some images of that particular film as she patiently explained.

As an incredibly clever youth, Kurt immediately understood upon seeing the documents before him. Even his eyes lit up in realization.

Above all, Vivian's name would be equivalent to a living signboard if she could make a breakthrough in that aspect of the film industry. When that happened, directing anything she was interested in, including documentaries, dramas, and fashion shows, would not be a problem.

She'll be able to film and coordinate everything by herself. There's nothing she isn't capable of, right?

With that, Kurt grabbed everything and strode out.

In no time, Susan walked out of the architecture faculty and coincidentally ran into Ian at the school's central square. As the two exchanged glances from a distance away, the smile on their lips grew increasingly brighter.

“When did you go over there?”

“Oh... While you two were busy taking photos. Is everything resolved?”

As they strolled along the forested trail, Susan dared not look at the youth beside her. She walked awkwardly and deliberately kept a distance between them.

It was probably the first time the two walked side by side after their relationship’s breakthrough.

There was no doubt it was an awkward moment-and also a nervous one.

Susan lowered her head and stared at her toes.

Ring!

All of a sudden, a student riding a bicycle appeared from behind.

Shocked, Susan was about to move aside when a large hand reached out to her shoulder and tugged at her. In the next second, she found herself landing directly into his embrace.

Susan was so startled her mind went blank.

Her heart thumped so wildly that it almost felt like it was about to leap out of her chest.

“Are you all right?” Ian seemed slightly unsettled too.

Vividly sensing Susan’s soft and warm skin resting in his palms, coupled with the scent of her silky hair lingering around his nostrils, he felt the tips of his ears burning red.

However, he did not loosen his grip.

“I-I’m fine.” Leaning against Ian’s chest, Susan felt her heart pounding vigorously, causing her to stutter as she tried to speak.

Nevertheless, it was apparent she enjoyed that situation since she did not try to break free. Even when there were passers-by along the two stretch of lanes beside them, she merely buried her head deeper into Ian’s chest.

As she listened to his strong and steady heartbeat, her cheeks began to turn bright red.

The pair eventually left while holding hands, with the young man grabbing onto Susan’s slightly quivering hand in his warm palm tightly without letting go.

It was a really sweet moment between the two.

Meanwhile, Sasha had once again found Sigrith. She had also brought along Mr. Glen's recording with her.

"Listen to this."

She took out the device and played the recording in front of Sigrith.

The latter's face turned ghastly white at once.

"You..."

"I've always thought that you know how to differentiate right from wrong though you're a little dumb. That was why I was willing to lend a helping hand when something happened to your family."

Sitting opposite Sigrith, Sasha appeared relatively calm.

Yet, her expression was slightly different this time. It felt like it was missing warmth even though it was peaceful-looking, so much to the extent her whole body seemed to be exuding a terrifyingly frosty aura.

Sigrith clearly felt a chill running down her spine.

"Sigrith, you're an utter disappointment. It turns out you've attributed your husband's death to my children and my husband all this while. Don't you find your mentality extremely absurd?" Disgust and rage were apparent in Sasha's eyes as she coldly snorted.

When Sigrith heard those words, her face lost all colors instantaneously. She sat there, unable to maintain her composure in the slightest.

"1-1... only heard them talking about the situation during then. T-They said Colton wouldn't have died if not for that desperate circumstance. He died in their hands in the end."

"Bullshttt!" Sasha could no longer hold herself back and cursed.

"What do you mean desperate circumstance? That was because Elizabeth had been bewitching and misleading him from the beginning. She didn't even reveal his real identity to him and made him become one of her pawns. Why didn't you direct your resentment toward the Heard family? Why are you venting your anger on US instead of settling scores with the real culprit?"

Sigrith remained silent.

“Anyway, even if it’s true that my husband and kids caused Colton’s death, do you not think he deserves to die? Do you have any idea how many people he killed? There were over hundreds of children on that name list. Elysium’s matter drove Kurt mad. That was why he rushed over to the capital and killed everyone. Everything is Elizabeth and his fault! Does he not deserve to die?”

A wave of fury crashed through Sasha as she threw Sigrith a barrage of questions. She was very close to serving the latter a tight slap on her cheek to bring her to her senses.

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Colton wasn’t willing to be Elizabeth’s puppet, but he had done many things starting from the children’s list. He was the one helping Elizabeth scheme things.

Thus, there was no reason for him to stay alive. He knew that his deeds were unforgivable, so it didn’t make sense for Sigrith to beg for his forgiveness. *She’s nothing but a fool!*

Sasha lost patience and refused to talk to her anymore.

Getting to her feet, she shot Sigrith a look full of disgust and hatred.

“I wouldn’t have agreed to come to see you if you weren’t Susan’s mother. Don’t you have a brain? If you can’t even differentiate between good or bad, you’re no better than trash,” she mocked.

With that said, she stormed away.

She didn’t bother sparing Sigrith’s feelings at all.

Sigrith’s entire being trembled profusely as the color drained from her face. However, she couldn’t manage any retorts even after Sasha left.

In the evening, she went home to receive a call from the White House.

“Mrs. Limmer, the Jadeson residence called me this afternoon to inform me that the arranged wedding between your daughter and their son will be called off. What happened? Why is it canceled all of a sudden? Did something happen?”

Sigrith gaped in shock as she gripped her phone tightly. Her mind went blank, and she stood rooted to her spot at the door.

Never in her wildest dreams did she know this day would arrive.

/ thought the Jadeson family wanted my daughter to marry into their family Their son has been clinging to my daughter all the while. Why did they call off the wedding suddenly?

That was when she started to panic.

After hanging up, she gave Sasha a call. To her shock, the call failed to go through even though she tried a few times.

It was pretty obvious that Sasha had blocked her number.

Flustered, she called Oceanic Estate. Fortunately, someone answered the call. "Hello? Who is this?"

Recognizing Olivia's voice, Sigrith asked hastily, "Olivia, it's me, Sigrith Halford. May I know if Mrs. Jadeson is at home?"

Alas, Olivia's reply was harsh, even though they were on good terms previously. "Oh, Mrs. Limmer. I'm sorry, but Mrs. Jadeson isn't at home. She's on the way to cancel the reservation at the hotel. I think she has to cancel the jewelry, gowns, and the sort. She doesn't have time to see you

Sigrith's mind went blank as her face paled.

She's canceling everything? That means they are determined to call off the wedding.

"O-Olivia, wait a minute. What about Old Mr. Jadeson? Is he there? Does he know about this?" she stammered.

"Of course, he knows everything. Mrs. Limmer, you know that he didn't agree to the wedding in the first place, so it was Mr. and Mrs. Jadeson who made the decision. Now that you think Mr. Ian isn't worthy of your daughter and have found a better husband for her, Mrs. Jadeson decided to call off the wedding to grant your wish."

Olivia was eloquent enough to explain the entire matter in just a few sentences.

She didn't forget to expose Sigrith's doing to humiliate the latter entirely. Sigrith could feel her cheeks turning pink after she heard what Olivia had to say.

Alas, she had fallen victim to her own avarice.

Olivia hung up and turned to see Sasha descending the stairs with two jewelry boxes in her hand.

She flashed a smile. "Mrs. Jadeson, what did you pick for your darling daughter-in-law?"

"Oh, these aren't from me. The Hayes family sent two sets of jewelry-one from Solomon and one from Saul. Ugh, I'm a bit embarrassed," Sasha explained as she glanced at the boxes in her hands.

The kids were only engaged, but it didn't stop them from sending over these gifts. Only family members who cared about the kids would get this excited over their engagement.

Olivia was delighted to see that.

"There's no need to be embarrassed. Oh, by the way, I mocked Sigrith Halford when she called a while ago. That won't be a problem, will it?"

"Huh?" Sasha raised her head in surprise.

Did she call? That was fast. Did she put aside her pride to contact us after learning that we're calling off the wedding?

Glancing at the jewelry boxes in her hand, Sasha responded calmly, "It's fine. If I'm not mistaken, she'll show up soon. Tell Old Mr. Jadeson about it. I have to leave to pick the kids up."

"Sure!" Olivia agreed readily.

Shortly after, Sasha drove her car out of Oceanic Estate to pick up Nina, Natalie, and Yoel from school. Indeed, Sigrith showed up not long after she left home.

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"Is Old Mr. Jadeson at home?" Sigrith asked carefully.

Everyone in Oceanic Estate scared her senseless, including the housemaids who came to welcome her. Thus, she put on a flattering smile and asked to meet Jonathan politely.

Alas, the housemaids ignored her. In the end, Olivia had to come out to deal with her.

“Oh, Mrs. Limmer. Why are you here? Didn’t I tell you that Mrs. Jadeson went out to cancel the reservation at the hotel? She isn’t home,” Olivia said airily.

“N-No. I’m not here to see Mrs. Jadeson. I want to talk to Old Mr. Jadeson,” Sigrith explained hurriedly.

She was so embarrassed that she wished the ground would swallow her.

After all, she never knew she would be in such a pathetic state one day.

Fortunately, Olivia wasn’t about to ruin things for Oceanic Estate despite having a sharp tongue. She ended up bringing Sigrith to Jonathan.

The moment Jonathan spotted Sigrith, his expression turned as dark as thunder.

With a snort, he demanded, “Why are you here? Are you worthy of visiting Oceanic Estate, Mrs. Limmer?”

Thud!

At once, Sigrith fell to her knees as fear clawed up her throat.

“N-No. Old Mr. Jadeson, I’m sorry. I really am. Please be kind enough to forgive me this time. I grew too arrogant and forgot my place. Old Mr. Jadeson, please spare me this once!” she pleaded.

All she wanted was for Jonathan to forgive her. Thus, she got on her knees willingly without any hesitation.

She wanted nothing more than things to return to how they were before.

It turned out that being abandoned by an influential family was a horrible thing to experience. She never knew that. After losing everything, she realized that the fame and power she had dreamed of was nothing but a joke that wasn’t even worth mentioning.

Kneeling on the ground, Sigrith wiped her tears away.

Jonathan was speechless.

When Sasha came home with the kids, Sigrith had already left. Jonathan heard that she was home and summoned her to discuss the matter.

Thus, Sasha left the kids in the living room.

“Nina, remember to take good care of them. I need to leave,” Sasha reminded Nina, the eldest among the kids.

Nina didn't say a word.

When they were left alone, she spotted Natalie sitting on the floor. The latter was cupping her cheeks as her eyes turned red. Thus, she ran into the kitchen and got a slice of strawberry cake.

“Stop crying. Even if you cry, your daddy won't come home. It's more important to fill your tummy. You can visit him when you grow up,” she told Natalie.

Hearing that, Natalie burst into noisy tears.

Brandon's illness had deteriorated, so shortly after Matteo sent Natalie back to Netheria, he sent her back to them again.

Sasha grew anxious after picking Natalie up.

However, Brandon refused to reveal the truth. After learning of the matter, Sebastian told Sasha to take good care of Natalie and stay out of Brandon's case.

Indeed, they shouldn't be interfering in his business.

She was busy enough with Tillie. From the beginning, she helped Tillie give birth to her child and paid extra attention to them until Tillie's child was three months old.

As a result, she got so tired that her hair nearly went grey.

Sebastian didn't want her to tire herself out. Sometimes, it was impossible to change things as humans weren't God.

Natalie sobbed nonstop.

In the end, Yoel came to sit beside her and offered her his shoulder to lean on.

Sitting in a proper manner, he suggested, “Don't be sad. My dad says he'll come to pick me up after my little brothers celebrate their first birthday. I'll ask him to take you to your dad.”

It seemed that he had inherited his patience from his father, Solomon.

Indeed, Natalie stopped crying.

She rubbed her eyes and turned at her shoulder to glance at the little boy who was younger than her.

“When will your brothers celebrate their first birthday?”

Can Momma Ichika take care of them alone after that?” she asked innocently.

Yoel didn’t want to talk about it.

His wish to go home was destroyed after his mother, Ichika, gave birth to a pair of twins in Jetroina. They were both boys, so she was devastated as she wanted adorable baby girls.

Alas, she gave birth to boys.

Hence, Solomon had to take care of the newborn twins and ensure she didn’t suffer depression. He also had to work, so he was pretty overloaded.

Naturally, he couldn’t take care of his eldest son.

Yoel fell silent and cupped his cheeks sadly.

“Why are you guys overthinking? Natalie, why don’t you call Matteo if you want to see your daddy? He can bring you to your daddy,” Nina told them.

Natalie lit up at once, and her distress faded into thin air.

She ran away to call Matteo, who always bullied her. Nina, who was two years older than her, trotted behind her.

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“Hello?” When the call connected, a familiar predatory voice rang out.

Natalie cowered instinctively at his voice.

Matteo added, “Who is this? Why aren’t you talking?”

Natalie couldn’t bring herself to utter a word.

A long while later, she gripped the phone and stammered, “I-It’s me. I miss my daddy. Can you bring me back?”

“What?”

Matteo was training on the training ground. Sweat dripped down his forehead, and he was taken aback to hear her voice.

Wait a minute. Is this the little crybaby?

Comprehension dawned, and he halted in his tracks. Silence ensued.

He didn't want to tell her that her father was dead.

Matteo hung up despondently.

“What's wrong? Who did you talk to on the phone? Why are you acting this way?” his friend asked in concern after noticing his expression.

All Matteo wanted was to stay silent. He would have difficulty breathing whenever he recalled the photo of the body covered with a white cloth.

Right then, their discipline teacher showed up. He spotted Matteo and waved at him. “Matteo Wand, come here!”

“Got it!” Matteo responded curtly and ran over to him.

A few minutes later, he was brought to the higher-ups' office in the military school. There, he got to meet several strangers. One of them was a professional-looking woman.

Matteo glanced at the other students beside him in surprise.

“Captain Warlow, these are the students I told you about. They are the most agile and smartest students among their peers. Which ones will you pick?”

The discipline teacher introduced them to the lady after bringing Matteo and his friends into the office.

Captain? Is she here to pick a few talents?

Matteo fell into deep thought while his friends gave the woman curious and earnest stares.

As military school students, they were prepared to serve the country anytime. Thus, they couldn't help but grow curious about why the captain came here.

Matteo grew excited as he recalled his grandfather and uncle.

Nevertheless, he didn't know what was lying in wait for him. The lady brought him to a room and showed him his mission. His mind went blank after seeing the unexpected photo.

"He's the only person who survived for one year after his kidneys were removed. We finally cracked down on the organization, thanks to him. Matteo, have you made up your mind?"

The female captain pointed at the photo of the dead body covered with a white cloth and the two gruesome scars on his waist before explaining how the person died.

Matteo's body started trembling.

His mind was blank save for the fury that clouded his thoughts. He tried hard to still his rage, but the little crybaby's plea seemed to ring in his ear repeatedly.

*/ still remember her sweet voice pleading with me to bring her back to her daddy. Why? Why did he fall prey to the bad guys? He's an Emmanuel, and the Emmanuels are related to the Hayes family. Who the f*ck did that to him? Does the person have a death wish?*

Matteo was on the verge of losing his mind.

Lana Warlow demanded, "What's wrong?"

As she kept her gaze on him, she immediately noticed something was amiss with his reaction and demanded to know why

Matteo was at a loss for words.

It took him a while before he regained his composure and replied, "I'm fine. I-1 was just a bit shocked, that's all. By the way, why were his kidneys removed? I remembered he used to be a popular celebrity."

Matteo didn't reveal that he knew Brandon in real life.

He knew that the police wouldn't allow those related to the victim to carry out the mission-if there were one-to prevent their emotions from taking over their senses.

Indeed, the wariness in the female captain's gaze faded away after hearing his answer.

"You're right. He's Brandon Emmanuel, a top actor seven years ago. According to our investigation, it was pure accident that he ended up in the criminal organization's hands," Lana explained.

"An accident?" Matteo repeated dumbly.

Lana nodded. "Yes. One year ago, he brought his daughter on vacation in Gronga. He ran into someone he knew, who was his ex-manager. It was this person who brought him to the boss of the criminal organization. He had lost his kidneys when he showed up again."

They got the information from Brandon, who called the police before his death. Thanks to him, they solved an international organ trafficking case that had been troubling them for some time.

Matteo didn't remember how he stepped out of the room.

All he remembered was that he went to the bathroom in his dorm and turned on the tap to allow the water to pour on his body.

He was afraid that he would act recklessly and feel the urge to kill someone if he failed to calm himself down.

Outside the military school, Lana was about to leave. She brought the students' resumes with her but excluded Matteo's.

"Captain Warlow, why didn't you pick him? I've read his resume, and he's better than the ones you selected," her assistant asked in confusion.

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Lana's brows snapped together.

Why didn't she pick Matteo?

That was because he wasn't a suitable fit for the job. As an experienced police officer, she knew something was wrong with his reaction earlier.

Lana drove away in her car.

That night, a black Jeep came to the military school to pick the students up. The person in charge had a list and photos of the students with him. *Hmm, the number of students is correct. However, one student's height and looks don't look right.*

"Well..."

“Let’s go. Captain Warlow is hurrying US. We’re leaving in half an hour. If we miss the opportunity, they won’t get another chance to sneak in,” another man urged.

In the end, the students were brought away. The birthday celebration for the triplets in Oceanic Estate was going to be held half a month later.

Ian and Susan only received news that their families confirmed their engagement a week later in Atlantius.

They would be getting engaged on the same day as the triplets’ birthday, less than a month away.

Ian and Susan were rendered speechless.

They didn’t know what to say.

/ can’t believe Mom is this efficient at this age!

“Ian, I’ve prepared everything for your engagement party. You can buy a present for Susan if you want. Just let me know how much it is,” Sasha reminded Ian after she told him the date of their engagement.

Ian pursed his lips.

She prepared everything. What else can I buy?

Ian hung up and came out of the bedroom to see Vivian heading downstairs with a bucket of dog food to feed Lotus. He followed her down the stairs.

“Ian, don’t you need to work?” Vivian asked curiously.

Ian often spends the whole day in his room. Why did he follow me out to feed Lotus?

Ian said naught a word.

When they arrived at the kennel, Vivian poured the dog food into Lotus’ dog bowl. Lotus proceeded to munch on its food greedily. Right then, Ian said casually, “Why do girls like dogs?”

“Hm? Why not? Look how adorable Lotus is. We also like cats,” came Vivian’s answer.

“Really?” Ian bore a doubtful expression as though he didn’t believe her words.

Seeing his reaction, Vivian started fretting and told her brother earnestly about what girls normally liked.

Upstairs, Kurt was watering the flowers on the balcony after he finished doing the dishes. He happened to spot their exchange and watched without a word as Vivian got tricked by her brother.

Soon, Ian came upstairs.

Seeing him, Kurt asked, "We're going fishing today. Do you want to join US?"

"No. I'm busy," came Ian's curt reply.

He then strode to his room and slammed the door shut behind him.

Kurt shook his head in resignation. When Vivian skipped up the stairs with the empty bucket, he pulled her into their bedroom on the second floor so they could change their clothes.

"Vivi, I'll bring you somewhere later," he told her.

"Really?" Vivian enthused as her eyes lit up in excitement.

She was too innocent to realize what his real intention was.

Shortly after, they departed. Ian and Susan were left alone in the apartment in their respective rooms.

Susan was in her room, talking to her mother on her phone. It was pretty rare for her mother to keep discussing her engagement.

"Susan, what about this? Mrs. Jadeson told US not to worry about anything, for she had prepared everything. But you're going to marry into their family, so I think we should show our sincerity," Sigrith said.

"What will it be?"

"They prepared a bride price, so I need to prepare a dowry for you. What do you need? Just let me know, and I'll prepare it for you," Sigrith explained cheerfully on the other end of the line.

She was grateful that the matter was resolved peacefully. Thus, she was willing to spend her own money to prepare a dowry for her daughter and respond positively to the engagement.

She had been muddled for too long.

Alas, Susan found her action pointless.

"They will prepare everything for US. Keep your money for yourself. You don't have to prepare anything for me," Susan responded.

Sigrith protested, "What are you talking about? Susan, I know I was wrong. However, I have more experience than you. I'll have you know that women are supposed to have a proper wedding. You can't marry your husband without taking anything with you just because his family is rich.

Even if the Jadesons say nothing, others will look down on you. They will assume you're greedy for not preparing any dowry. Instead, you're getting their money for your own family. It concerns your reputation, my reputation, and the Limmer family's reputation!"

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She was right. Sasha and Sebastian didn't mind, but if this were to happen in an ordinary family, the bride would be looked down upon by her in-laws.

Susan's cheeks turned pink when she finally understood what her mother meant. She had never considered that before.

"1-1 didn't know about that. You can call the shots," she faltered.

After a brief hesitation, Sigrith made up her mind. "Mm. What do you need? I'll have to prepare household electrical appliances, a car jewelry, and the sort according to traditional customs. I think your in-laws have prepared those. Why don't I buy you a house?"

A house? Susan was shocked by her suggestion. That's expensive. One house costs at least millions. After we get married, we'll stay in Oceanic Estate. Who will live in this house, then?

Susan couldn't make up her mind.

Right then, Ian came upstairs. The door to her room was shut, so he frowned and knocked on the door. "Susan, what are you doing inside?" he pressed.

Shocked, Susan ended the call and hurried over to open the door.

"Ian, you're awake?"

The tall young man stood at the door. Noticing her averted gaze, he brooded unhappily. *Why did she ask that?*

“Who were you talking to on the phone? You chatted for so long.”

“1-1 was talking to my mom,” Susan replied as she hung her head low shyly.

The call reminded her of their engagement. After resolving the misunderstanding, they confessed their feelings for each other and then planned their engagement. Everything had happened in the blink of an eye.

She dared not meet his gaze.

“Your mom?”

Fortunately, Ian was reminded of the conversation he had with his mother a while ago.

The tips of his ears turned red.

“What did she say?” he asked.

“S-She asked if she should prepare a dowry for our engagement. She even suggested buying a... house for us. By then, we can do anything we want without asking for the elders’ permission.”

Susan’s head was so low that it was practically in front of her chest.

After revealing the content of her conversation with Sigrith, she couldn’t help but blush.

Mom was talking nonsense.

To her surprise, Ian nodded in agreement. “That’s a great idea.”

“Huh?” Susan lifted her head at once. “Do you think it’s a good idea?”

“Yes. We can decorate it however we like and live there. We’ll only visit Oceanic Estate during the holidays. What’s the problem?”

Huh? How could he say that so matter-of-factly?

Susan could barely hide her bewilderment.

I’d love that, too. I want nothing more than to build our own house together. Imagine how blissful we can be in our own home. Nevertheless, won’t his parents get upset?

That was what got Susan all worried.

However, Ian wasn't worried at all. He knew Sasha was pretty busy with the clingy Sebastian and the three children.

Besides, Sasha was also an open-minded parent.

Thus, Ian agreed to the matter. In the evening, he received an unexpected text message.

Matteo: Ian, I heard you're going to marry Susan. Congratulations!

It was Matteo, who hadn't been in touch with him in a while.

Ian's lips curved into a grin.

He replied: *Yeah. Remember to come home early.*

He was referring to the day of their engagement. That day was also their birthday, so Matteo should be home early for the occasion.

To his surprise, Matteo rejected him outright.

Matteo: Ian, I don't think I'll be home in time. I've been selected to participate in special training that will span a few months. I heard that those who complete the training would get to join the SWAT team. I must grab the chance!

After sending the text, Matteo didn't forget to send a pitiful emoji to beg for forgiveness in order to emphasize how rare the opportunity was.

A flash of disappointment appeared in Ian's gaze when he learned that Matteo wouldn't be home in time for his engagement party.

It was an important day, so he felt sad that Matteo couldn't be there for him.

However, he readily agreed to Matteo's request as it was a rare opportunity.

Ian: Okay. It would be best if you worked hard, then. You've always wanted to join the SWAT team. After you succeed, you can attend our wedding.

Matteo: Of course!

Matteo didn't forget to send a smiley emoji. Ian was reminded of Matteo's cheerful smile, and his mood immediately lifted.

He placed his phone aside after their chat ended.

A week later, Susan was in class when she received a parcel. She unwrapped it to see a custom-made necklace nestled in a blue jewelry box.

The pendant hanging on the necklace was a pineapple tart with a bite mark made of rhinestones.

It looked pretty ridiculous, but she loved it nonetheless.

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Susan quickly wore it on her neck, packed her backpack, and got ready to meet the young man, only to notice two students coming her way.

“Someone’s looking for you at the entrance, Susan.”

“Huh?”

Susan was taken aback.

Who’s looking for me? I don’t know anyone here aside from just a few people.

Upon walking to the school entrance with her backpack, she spotted a silver Land Rover parked outside as a young man in military uniform stood outside the vehicle waiting for her.

“It’s you, Vincent.”

“Yup.”

Vivian was as dashing as always, but his gaze darkened slightly as he noticed the exquisite necklace the Astorian woman was now wearing.

“I came over today because I need your help with something, Ms. Limmer.”

“Go ahead,” Susan responded at once, sighing with relief internally at the realization that he just wanted her help.

Yet, the man’s expression turned grim as soon as he spoke. There was also a hint of rage in his eyes.

“We’ve been dealing with a few cases of people having gone missing these days. According to police reports, this may have something to do with an ongoing international organ-trafficking case. That’s why I thought of asking the young Mr. Hayes for access to his information company.”

“What?”

There was so much to take in that Susan fell into a daze upon hearing Vincent’s words.

He wants to use... Ian’s information company?

The woman was extremely taken aback.

Still, her astonishment was immediately replaced by a feeling of pride once she returned to her senses.

My boy’s doing so well now, huh?

Later at noon, Ian brought Vincent to a new electronic information company that was newly established under Hayes Corporation and had the software engineers there help retrieve data on the trafficking group.

This company wouldn’t have been founded if it weren’t for Ian, and the fact that a local official had dropped by to seek the firm’s help within less than a year of its establishment showed how rapidly it was progressing.

“According to the leads you’ve provided, Lieutenant, we’ve only managed to come up with three individuals who meet the requirements. The first one’s a local fishery

tycoon, the second’s an oil magnate from Ackleton, and lastly, Hugo Tilan from Southeast Astoria.

“Hugo Tilan?”

The mere mention of this person’s name caused Vincent’s expression to cloud over.

Ian and Susan waited carefreely inside the office, not interfering much with what Vincent and the software engineers were doing.

On the other hand, the subsidiary manager gasped as he heard that name.

“Are they talking about the Tilan family, Mr. Hayes?”

“Hmm?”

Ian glanced at him, confused by his reaction.

“Hugo Tilan’s the head of Astoria’s underground world,” the manager explained hastily. “He seems like a businessman on the outside, but the truth is every underground industry chain in Astoria has to go through him. In fact, sometimes when the legitimate cargo ships are too afraid to carry our smuggled goods, we have to get his help.”

He let out a sigh.

Remaining silent, Ian finally exited his game, opened up a browser tab, and ran a search on “Hugo Tilan.”

“Good Lord! He’s that terrifying? I can’t believe he’s actually in control of the entire region of Southeast Astoria! He’s even involved in some of the things we do. His resources are pretty much on par with the Hayes family’s!” the manager exclaimed.

“Actually, I’ve heard of this saying…” he continued warily. “In Astoria, the Tilans are basically Hayes Corporation’s evil counterpart. That’s what people in the underworld say.”

Ian finally glowered as he heard those remarks.

How dare a criminal gang compare itself to Hayes Corporation? These guys obviously don’t know their place.

Now, he was ticked off.

About ten minutes later, Vincent walked over with his men and glanced at the people inside the room. “Thank you for your help today, Mr. Hayes. We’ve found our guy.”

“Where is he?”

No one had expected the young president of the company to actually speak.

He still sounded as frigid as ever, though.

It took Vincent a moment to accustom himself to that. “It’s most likely the guy in Southeast Astoria. All of Astoria’s underworld answers to him, and we’ve found out that many wealthy figures have gone there lately.”

“To traffic organs?”

“That should be the case, so we’re going to make our preparations right away. Thank you once again, Mr. Hayes.”

With that, Vincent headed out.

Ian had no intention of keeping him, but after seeing the latter leave, he decided to ask for Hugo Tilan's details from one of the software engineers.

Hugo really was a force to reckon with.

Judging from its aerial shots, his residence appeared to be two-thirds wider than the Oceanic Estate. Moreover, the entire sea area in front of it belonged to him too.

"I wonder what Vincent plans to do. He's up against such a powerful force. Is he going to be in danger?"

Susan couldn't help but worry after finding out about Hugo too.

As soon as her words fell, the young man sitting in front of her turned around slowly, his emotionless gaze sending chills down her spine.

"D-Don't get me wrong. I just... I figured that these bad guys could kill anyone without batting an eye, and Vincent's probably going to send the police. I-I'm just worried about them," she explained hurriedly.