

All Too Late Chapter 161

Samuel accepted the plate, his lips twitching when he glimpsed the word written on the slice of cake.

He then fixed his gaze on Kathleen.

Kathleen was sitting next to Diana and having a delightful conversation with the latter.

From the way Diana beamed with joy, one could tell she was genuinely happy.

Samuel remained silent as he saw that.

Calvin nudged him with his shoe. "Stop looking. She's not yours anymore."

"Dad, do you think making fun of me is interesting?" Samuel ate the cake even though he did not enjoy desserts.

The reason was simple—Kathleen had given it to him.

"Mull it over. If it weren't for you, my grandchildren would be calling me Grandpa by now." Calvin felt depressed when he brought up the issue.

Whenever he was reminded of that, he felt like hitting Samuel.

It was not an easy feat to be pregnant with twins.

Yet, the children were gone.

Samuel did not say a word.

Losing the children was the biggest regret in both Kathleen and his life.

It was also a traumatic experience for the Macari family.

If the children were still alive, Samuel would already be hearing them calling him "Daddy."

Not long after, Charles came over.

He greeted Diana and the rest nicely. However, Samuel did not receive the same treatment.

Despite that, Samuel was not bothered by Charles' attitude.

His family members were always being mean to him anyway.

The celebration ended when everyone had the cake.

As Kathleen prepared to leave, Diana was not willing to let her go.

She held Kathleen's hands and said, "When you're done with shooting, come over and stay with me for a few days, will you?"

"Sure." Kathleen nodded. "Old Mrs. Macari, I will. I promise you."

I'm a man with elegance. If she's coming to stay over, I—

"By then, I will prohibit Samuel from coming anywhere close to the place. Rest assured." Diana smiled.

Hearing that, Samuel was at a loss for words.

Kathleen was flushed.

"Goodbye, Old Mrs. Macari. See you, Mr. and Mrs. Macari," she said.

"See you again. Be careful on the way back," Diana reminded.

Soon, both Kathleen and Charles left the place.

After sending Kathleen off, Diana narrowed her eyes at Samuel. "I had wondered what motivated you to attend the event, Samuel. Don't tell me you had no idea Kate would be joining the competition today!"

"So what if I had? It's all part of my plan to get Kathleen back," Samuel coldly responded.

"How shameless! You're the one who lost yourself when Nicolette returned. Not that just, but you even forced Katie to divorce you within three days!" Diana fumed.

Samuel did not say a word.

Don't even mention that matter again. I regret what I've done.

"Katie and Christopher are not together now, but that doesn't mean it's impossible between them. Don't be arrogant. There's no way to tell who Katie will choose at the end!" Diana coldly responded.

"That's right! Now, you've finally realized how good Kate is. Just what were you even thinking back then?" Wynnie uttered angrily.

After saying that, she led Diana back to her room.

Calvin approached Samuel with a grin.

“If you’re going to say the same thing as them, save your breath,” Samuel said indifferently.

“Is this how you speak to your father? I was about to say I want to help you!” Calvin was frustrated.

Samuel said coldly, “I’m not expecting any good plans from you.”

“Fine! I won’t help you then! You’re an insensible guy. Despite how adorable you were when you were young, I feel like kicking you in the butt now,” Calvin fumed.

With a frown, Samuel questioned, “Any ideas?”

“I refuse to tell you. I want to piss you off!” Calvin was a man with character.

Although he did not dare to be mad at Wynn timer, he did not hold himself back when speaking to Samuel.

“Dad?” Samuel said in exasperation.

“Don’t call me that!” Calvin drank his coffee.

“Do you still want to have a grandchild?” Samuel frowned.

Calvin put down the cup. “I would have gotten my grandchildren if it weren’t for you!”

“Without me, you won’t even have the chance to have grandchildren,” Samuel responded indifferently.

Calvin snorted.

“I will be leaving now if you refuse to talk.” Samuel picked up his jacket.

“Stop right there!” Calvin approached. With a deep voice, he responded, “The appearance of Astrid was all it took to find out whether Kathleen and Christopher had serious feelings for each other. Do you know what that means?”

“What?” Samuel put on his jacket.

Calvin spoke seriously. “In some relationships, you can only tell if you truly love someone when a third wheel appears. Do you think I can’t tell Kate has a small spark of

affection for Christopher? Although that spark isn't enough for her to pursue an intimate relationship, they would have gotten together if it weren't for Astrid's presence."

Samuel remained silent.

Calvin added, "Astrid's presence cleared things up for Kate, causing her to be aware that she doesn't like Christopher that way. If she had, nothing Astrid did would have changed that."

"What are you trying to say?" Samuel was not sure why Calvin was telling him all these.

Is he trying to upset me?

"You're so dumb. Let me ask you. Why do you think Kate chose to marry you even though she knew you liked Nicolette?" Calvin questioned.

"Because she was fond of me," Samuel responded.

"Bingo. Kate was not bothered by the fact that you liked Nicolette because of her deep love for you," Calvin replied. He subtly implied, "To know what she's feeling for you now, you just have to find another woman to test the waters. With that, you may find something out."

A frown marred Samuel's countenance.

"Think about it. You will never gain anything in life if you don't take risks." Calvin patted Samuel's shoulder.

As soon as he finished his words, he strode out of the room.

Samuel fell silent.

Do I really have to do that?

After that, he furrowed his brows and left.

Once he was gone, Wynnie came out from the corner and returned to her room.

"What kind of stupid scheme did you just give our son?" Wynnie fumed.

Calvin frowned. "What's wrong?"

"Kate doesn't like Samuel at the moment. It's hard to tell, but she might feel better knowing he is seeing another woman," Wynnie worriedly said.

In a serious manner, he asked, "Darling, is that what you really think?"

“What do you mean?” She was puzzled.

“I can tell Kate still has feelings for Samuel.” Calvin loosened his tie before continuing, “Previously, Kate mentioned she would be with Samuel if he broke both Nicolette’s legs. However, he failed to do so, and she left. Now, Kate knows Samuel did what she wanted, and it’s even causing him trouble. Do you think she could bear the guilt of that?”

Wynnie was stunned as she heard that.

Calvin went on, “We both know Kate’s character well. Do you think she actually wanted Samuel to break Nicolette’s legs? All Kate wanted to see was his attitude, and his response disappointed her. However, now she knows he had fulfilled her request, and Nicolette is pressing charges. Do you think she will stand by and do nothing?”

His wife kept quiet.

“One of Kate’s strengths is her kindness. However, that’s also her weakness. She’s too kind. It’s only a matter of time before Samuel succeeds in wooing her back.” Calvin narrowed his eyes.

“I think you’re being optimistic.” With a meaningful look, Wynnie responded, “Even if she still has feelings for him, there’s no way to undo the damages. Kate will not be able to accept Samuel another time.”

“You want to bet on that?” Calvin broke into a wide smile.

“On what terms?” she asked.

“If both of them reunite, promise me to put your work at the law firm aside temporarily and travel the world with me. If they don’t, or either one of them is involved in a new relationship, you can be on top and ride on me.” Calvin grinned.

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“Y-You shameless man!” Wynnie’s face instantly flushed red.

“You’ve always wanted to be the queen in bed. I’m here to satisfy your needs.” Calvin laughed wickedly.

Wynnie refused to talk to Calvin after that.

He is a filthy pervert!

Looking at how embarrassed Wynn timer was, Calvin laughed out loud.

That's Wynn timer. She may look like a mature and steady woman on the outside, but deep down, she also has a shy and embarrassed side.

Calvin hugged her and kissed her cheek. In a low voice, he said, "Breaking news. Aaron urged Emily to be nice to Kate. They want to have Kate as their daughter-in-law."

"How do you know that?" Wynn timer frowned.

"Knowing one's strengths and the enemy's is the sure way to victory. This is my strategy," he said.

Her brows furrowed deeper. "You have a snitch in the Morris family?"

Calvin merely smiled and said nothing.

Wynn timer was rendered speechless.

This man is full of schemes.

Meanwhile, Samuel drove back to his mansion.

Upon entering the room, he looked at the balcony opposite of his place.

He saw the light was still on.

Without turning the light on in his room, he lay on the bed and texted Kathleen.

He texted: Are you still angry?

Kathleen replied: I'm not a petty woman. However, from now onward, I will avoid you.

Samuel texted: We are partners. How are you going to avoid me?

Kathleen replied: We can communicate via phone without having to meet each other.

Samuel: Aren't you afraid your phone might be tapped? It is possible if the Morris family and the Corbyn family refuse to give up.

Kathleen pursed her lip before she replied: There must be a third person at the scene if we meet.

Samuel: Sure. As long as the person is not Husky.

Kathleen: Don't you dare insult Charles!

Samuel: He even reprimanded me, your ex-husband.

Kathleen: Serves you right! You deserve it!

Samuel's mind was imagining Kathleen's angry face when he glimpsed the words on the phone screen.

She is always so lively and energetic. What a pretty and adorable woman.

Samuel: Sure. Serves me right. I deserve it.

Kathleen did not feel like entertaining him anymore.

This man is shameless.

Samuel: I will be editing the blueprint for Flobury tomorrow. Do you want to come and have a look?

Kathleen: No. I have a shooting session tomorrow.

Samuel: I can send it over to you.

Kathleen: You can ask Tyson to send it.

Samuel: He went to Smealand to dig up some potatoes.

Kathleen was at a loss for words.

Kathleen: Is there no one else in your company who can send it over?

Samuel: They don't have the right to speak to the best actress. Only I can do that.

Again, Kathleen was rendered speechless.

Samuel: My dad told me something today.

Kathleen: I'm not interested.

Samuel: He wanted me to look for another woman to trigger you.

Kathleen's lip twitched a little.

Calvin is indeed his father. How thoughtful he is for his son.

Samuel: However, I promised not to lie to you again, so I turned him down.

Kathleen did not respond to his text.

Samuel texted: If a woman appears out of nowhere, that must be my father's arrangement. You better not accuse me of that.

Kathleen still did not reply to his message.

In the meantime, he noticed the opposite light was off now.

Is she asleep?

Samuel sent another text: Good night.

He put down his phone. Although the heater was on in the dark room, he could not feel the warmth.

The winter Kathleen left me was pure suffering. Since she's back now, I don't have to force her to be with me. As long as she's there, and I can see her, it will be fine.

Samuel woke up in the morning and realized he remained in the same position he fell asleep last night.

He sat up in bed and felt a little dizzy.

As a bout of coughing wracked his body, he noticed he had a fever again.

The self-inflicted injury a year ago had made his body constitution worse than ever before.

He took some medicine before going for a shower.

While Samuel was showering, he stood in front of the mirror and fixed his dark gaze on the long scar on his body.

Due to the physical pain back then, he realized that true agony was when he lost Kathleen. Everything else paled in comparison.

After the hot shower, he changed into clothes that could keep him warm.

Samuel wore a black knitted turtleneck on the inside with a white shirt over it. On the outside, he wore a long cashmere coat with a suit collar.

His lower body was clad in a pair of ironed pants and boots.

His outfit was clean and smart, lending him the air of an elite.

Samuel walked downstairs and left without taking his breakfast.

Coincidentally, he met Kathleen, who was heading out at the same time.

His lips curled slightly when he saw her.

Kathleen turned her head around and got into a car.

Soon after that, the car drove off.

Samuel went into a Maybach and followed behind.

Kathleen felt restless the moment she reached the film set.

After she quickly recomposed herself, she was able to focus on her shoot again.

Soon, the scenes were all done for the morning session.

Suddenly, Kathleen questioned Valerie, "Are we expecting someone later today?"

"Who is that going to be?" Valerie was puzzled.

Kathleen pursed her lips. "Never mind."

Valerie did not get what Kathleen was trying to say.

Everyone took a break at noon and continued shooting in the afternoon.

Once in a while, Kathleen would glance around.

Curious, Valerie asked, "Kate, are you looking for anyone in particular?"

"I'm trying to see if there are any fans here today," she responded in embarrassment.

Valerie smiled. "If fans wanted to come and visit you, they would have to discuss and get approval from the manager and the film crew first. They can't just come here as they wish."

Hearing that, Kathleen nodded.

"Kate, it's your turn to shoot now." Valerie removed the down jacket from Kathleen's shoulders.

Kathleen then approached the set to continue her scenes.

The shooting ended at seven o'clock in the evening.

After Kathleen changed her clothes, she returned to the car.

She massaged her temples as she felt uneasy.

However, she could not tell why she was feeling that way.

The driver sent her back to her place a moment later.

The moment she got off the car, she noticed Tyson walking out of the mansion while carrying something in his hands.

“Tyson, what do you have in your hands?” Kathleen approached with her brows furrowed.

“It’s Mr. Macari’s clothes,” he replied.

“Is he not coming back tonight?” Kathleen was confused.

“He’s been admitted to the hospital,” Tyson remarked.

Admitted to the hospital?

With a frown, she asked, “Why was he admitted to the hospital all of a sudden?”

“He got a fever,” he said.

Fever?

“Samuel had gastritis last time, and now he’s having a fever. Is his body’s condition that bad?” Kathleen frowned.

“Ever since you left him, his constitution has never been good. I thought you knew about it, Ms. Johnson,” he said awkwardly.

“You thought I knew?” Kathleen was confused.

What do I know?

“Please don’t tell anyone in the family, Ms. Johnson. Mr. Macari didn’t want them to worry about him. He didn’t want me to tell you too, but I can’t hold it in anymore. That’s why I’m telling you now,” Tyson remarked.

Kathleen responded with a nod.

Tyson felt embarrassed. “I will get going now. Goodbye, Ms. Johnson.”

“Sure. See you around.” Kathleen nodded.

Tyson got into the car and drove away.

Kathleen turned around and returned to her house.

Charles put away the tablet in his hands. “Oh, you’re back? Sit down, and we will have dinner.”

Kathleen walked to the kitchen and looked at the dishes on the table. She ordered, “Maria, please prepare some oatmeal and two simple dishes.”

“What’s with the sudden urge to eat a lighter meal? We can have our dinner later then.” Charles sat over.

“It’s not that. I want to send the food to Samuel,” she explained.

Her words rendered Charles speechless.

Maria approached and asked, “Is oatmeal all right, Ms. Johnson?”

“Yeah. I gave you a pack of assorted medicinal herbs before, right? Put that in and cook it together with the oatmeal. Those herbs are not toxic in any way, so anyone can take them without a problem,” Kathleen instructed.

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Kathleen sat down to have her meal.

Charles stared at her. “Are you planning to visit Samuel?”

“Mm.” She nodded.

He did not know what to say anymore, nor did Kathleen wish to explain.

After finishing her dinner, she collected the prepared oatmeal and drove to the hospital.

Kathleen gently knocked on the door upon arriving at the ward’s entrance, but there was no sound inside the room.

She lightly pushed the door open, entered the room, and saw the table lamp lit inside the ward.

When she walked over, she noticed Samuel sleeping soundly on the bed, his complexion pallid and lips slightly chapped.

He wore a blue and white striped hospital gown, which was unbuttoned from the collar to his chest, revealing his muscular torso.

The man appeared to be experiencing slightly labored breathing. His forehead, neck, and chest were covered in a thin layer of sweat.

Kathleen came to an abrupt halt.

“Water.” His voice sounded hoarse.

She immediately poured him a glass of water. “Here’s your water, Samuel.”

Samuel gradually opened his eyes and regarded her with bleary eyes. “Katie?”

“Here, drink this.” She helped him sit up on the bed.

He sat up, received the glass of water from her, and gulped the content.

Kathleen placed a pillow behind his back so that he would feel more comfortable leaning against the headboard.

Then, she took the glass and put it on the bedside table. “I saw Tyson on my way back. He told me you have a fever.”

Samuel looked up. His hazy eyes instantaneously became focused. “I told him not to say anything.”

“Why is your body so frail?” She frowned.

The man paused and subconsciously pulled his hospital gown closer.

Kathleen was perplexed.

What is that supposed to mean?

“Don’t tell me you think I’m taking advantage of you?” she asked awkwardly. “This is not the first time I’ve seen your body anyway. I’ve already lost interest in it.”

Samuel’s dark eyes gleamed. “I’m being reserved. Do you have a problem with that?”

She was at a loss for words.

He buttoned his clothes and added nonchalantly, “Thank you for visiting me.”

"I brought you some oatmeal."

"Mm." He nodded. "I'll eat it later. I don't have the energy to do that at the moment."

He turned his head sideways to look intently at her. "Unless you feed me."

"Why should I feed you? Aren't you being reserved, Mr. Macari? I think it's best I keep a safe distance from you."

Samuel, handsome as he was, regarded her with a sensual gaze and uttered in a husky voice, "It's not impossible if you wish to see my body. I'll allow you to do it if you feed me."

Kathleen was rendered speechless.

His mood lightened up at the sight of the young lady's resigned and embarrassed reaction.

"I'll get going now." She stood up and was about to leave when he suddenly grasped her wrist.

Kathleen noticed Samuel was indeed weak when he grabbed her, unlike his usual energetic and vigorous self.

Displeasure filled her fair and delicate face when she turned her head around. "What do you want?"

"I'm really hungry; I haven't eaten anything in a day," he said feebly.

She pursed her red lips. "Why didn't you ask Tyson to feed you?"

"Don't you think it's weird for a man to feed another guy?" Samuel retorted unhappily.

Kathleen sat back down. "Tyson isn't bad-looking either. The two of you standing together is quite a captivating sight."

"I'm afraid I do not share that sentiment."

The woman poured the oatmeal into a bowl and placed it in front of him.

Then, she picked up a spoon, scooped some oatmeal, and fed the man.

"Eat." Her placid gaze did not reveal any emotions as she stared at him.

He opened his mouth and tasted the food.

Samuel did not expect Kathleen to really feed him.

He remembered he had once returned home after having too much to drink, causing his stomach to feel uncomfortable.

She had also cooked oatmeal for him back then, even blowing on the food to cool it before feeding him the meal.

Yet, he had taken her kind gesture for granted.

At that moment, only did Samuel realize he was truly a blessed man.

“Did you make this?” he asked.

“I’m too busy to do that.” Kathleen spooned another mouthful of oatmeal.

Instantaneously, he thought the food was bland and tasteless.

Still, he ate an entire bowl because he was genuinely famished.

After the meal was finished, Kathleen cleaned up and stretched out her hand in his direction.

“The blueprint of Flobury isn’t here with me. I’ll send it to you tomorrow after I’m discharged from the hospital.”

“I don’t want the blueprint. I want your hand.”

“Oh.” Samuel raised his arm without knowing what she was planning on doing.

She placed a hand on his wrist to check his pulse.

The man never knew that she possessed such a skill, so he was a little astonished to see that.

She glanced at him from time to time, then lowered her gaze frowningly, absorbed in her thoughts. After repeating the series of actions a few times, she asked, “Why are your internal organs in such a frail condition?”

Samuel curled his lips. “I didn’t know you’re adept at pulse-reading.”

“My granddad is a traditional medicine practitioner. I learned it from him,” Kathleen explained.

“Old Mr. Yoeger?” He knitted his brows.

"I'm referring to my mom's adoptive father!"

He chuckled lightly. Of course, I knew that.

"Don't try to change the subject. What happened to your body?"

"Don't you already know?" he croaked.

I do?

Kathleen was baffled. "What do I know?"

Samuel grimaced, unsure if she was feigning ignorance.

"Do you really not know?" He narrowed his pensive eyes.

She was caught in utter bafflement. "What exactly are you trying to say?"

He regarded her meaningfully with a frosty gaze. "It's nothing."

Speechless, she searched her bag and took out a piece of paper and a pen. "It'll be very troublesome to return your body to good health. I'll write you a prescription. A human's internal organs are important, but we need to address them individually, starting from the liver."

Samuel placed his large palm on her soft hand. "It's not necessary."

"Why? Are you aware that this prescription is extremely valuable? Those wealthy businessmen from Norwal City even offered me a huge amount of money to treat their diseases, but I rejected them."

The man stared fixedly at her. "Thank you, but you really don't have to do that."

Kathleen furrowed her brows. "Samuel Macari, do you know that you may not live over forty years old if you do not care for your health?"

"I believe I have more than ten years to live," Samuel replied coolly, seemingly genuinely unperturbed.

She fixated her piercing gaze on him. "What will happen to your grandma and the others if something bad happens to you?"

He uttered expressionlessly, "I already died a year ago."

Kathleen frowned.

“You don’t have to worry about me. I’ll make the necessary arrangements since I still have over ten years to live.” Samuel placed both hands behind his head and gazed at the ceiling.

“That’s an optimistic assumption. If you’re always ill and still reluctant to care for your health, you should consider yourself lucky if you can survive another five years!” Kathleen snapped. “You’re the sole heir to the Macari family. Your grandma and the others will be devastated if you die.”

He cast her a sidelong glance. “I heard some people can still reproduce at the age of sixty?”

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“What do you mean?” Kathleen frowned.

“I’ll persuade my parents to have another child while they are still young,” Samuel answered faintly.

She was rendered speechless.

“If I can only live for another five years as you’ve said, I feel relaxed instead,” he continued, gazing at her.

“Why?” She was startled by his words.

“Because that means I can only pester you for another five years.” He hung his head. “You must be elated that you can get rid of me completely five years later, huh?”

“You are simply unreasonable, Samuel Macari!” Kathleen stood up angrily. “I only left because you were the one who broke my heart in the first place!”

“So you can’t bear to lose me, can you?” Samuel cast her an unfathomable look.

She was at a loss for words.

The man stared into her clear eyes, asking, “Can you?”

“Talking to you is really exhausting, Samuel. It’s full of traps.” She took a deep breath before replying, “No matter how much I hate you, I’ll never wish for the worst for you because Old Mrs. Macari and the others will be heartbroken. That’s all.”

His Adam’s apple bobbed up and down.

"I'd be sad if you die, but not particularly sad," she continued coldly. "Everyone has to go through the process of aging and death. It's only a matter of time. I won't grieve for your death because you're just an insignificant person in my life. How deep my love was for you before is equivalent to how unimportant you are to me right now."

"If only I had died in the past," he said self-deprecatingly.

The woman took a deep breath. "Since you do not require my prescription, I will not force you either."

Having said that, she began to pack her belongings.

"Kate, I'm going to miss you if I die," Samuel uttered in a hoarse voice.

Kathleen paused momentarily before continuing her actions.

"Prescribe the medication for me, then. I'll do as you say and take it regularly." He grabbed her wrist, but she immediately shook it off.

The man held it again, repeating the cycle several times.

Finally, Kathleen was infuriated and bellowed, "What exactly do you want, Samuel Macari!"

Samuel cast a look at her soft and delicate face that was tinged with rage. "I want to stay alive so that I can keep seeing you."

Speechless, she shook off his hand and left quickly without a backward glance.

When she stepped out of the ward, she coincidentally bumped into Tyson.

The latter was stunned when he saw her. "Ms. Johnson, are you here to visit Mr. Macari?"

"I'm not here to visit that son of a b*tch!" Kathleen strode away in a huff.

Did they fight again? Tyson was confused.

After taking a few steps forward, the woman turned around and called out to him.

She handed him a piece of paper. "This is a prescription. Get the medication from the pharmacy and ask him to take it."

With that, she turned to leave.

Bewildered, Tyson held the prescription in his hands with a slight frown.

When Kathleen reached home, Charles was still wide awake.

“You’re back?” He looked at her.

She walked over and sat down. “Mm. Why aren’t you asleep yet?”

“How can I sleep in peace when you aren’t home? So, how is he?”

She knitted her brows. “Nothing major. It’s just that his internal organs seem weak for some unknown reason.”

“Are you worried about him?” Charles kept mum about the secret.

Kathleen raised her head in exasperation. “He is Old Mrs. Macari’s only grandson. If anything happens to him, how can she go on living without him? The same goes for his parents. I may not have feelings for Samuel anymore, but I can’t simply sit by and watch him suffer for the sake of Old Mrs. Macari and the others. Stop making guesses, Charles.”

He gazed at her intently. “Won’t you feel upset if Samuel has a girlfriend?”

“No.” She shook her head. “Instead, I’ll wish him the best for finally leaving the past behind.”

Charles thought his sister might be sincere this time.

“Anyway, I can accept anyone as long as it isn’t Nicolette.” Kathleen stood up leisurely. “I don’t want to wait any longer, Charles.”

His gaze darkened. “Do you mean you want to bring the plan forward?”

She nodded in response.

“That’s not a problem.” He looked at her meaningfully. “I’ll contact Old Mrs. Yoeger, then.”

“That would look very intentional.” Kathleen’s expression remained calm as she said, “I’m thinking of asking Old Mrs. Macari’s help.”

“You’re going to go beg her?”

She nodded.

The next day, Samuel visited the film set while Kathleen was filming.

Although he was the largest investor, he still brought many food and beverages for the film crew during his visit.

Needless to say, all of those were thanks to Kathleen.

The ex-husband investing in his ex-wife's movie was a topic the film crew often secretly discussed.

They even speculated when the duo would remarry.

Nevertheless, Kathleen didn't think that much. She bit on the straw while sitting beside Samuel as he showed her the blueprint of Flobury.

This time around, the blueprint was way more detailed than before.

The man had made many changes because she had suggested bulldozing the two mines first.

Naturally, he intended to give her the income from the mines.

Yet, she disagreed, "Just take it as my investment."

"An investment doesn't require such a large sum," Samuel responded coolly. "You're going to suffer losses if you do business this way. Even if you're now collaborating with me, you should learn to watch for your own benefits."

"But I can't take advantage of you either." Kathleen furrowed her brows.

"It's my honor to be taken advantage of." He smirked.

She had nothing to say to that.

"Do you want to see it?" He suddenly stared at her.

"See what?"

"My body." The man narrowed his eyes. "Didn't you walk away angrily yesterday?"

"Are you sure that was what pissed me off?" She scowled.

How skillful he is at twisting the truth!

"I won't take a single cent of the income from these two mines. Of course, as for the right to use the land, I won't stand on ceremony either," he stated in a deep voice.

"Sure." Kathleen nodded. "Since it's a collaboration, it's best that everyone profits."

Samuel smiled faintly. "Since you don't want to take advantage of me, why do you want to collaborate with me?"

"As I said, I thought you were the best candidate for collaboration. I can find a way to pay you back if I've taken advantage of you, but I don't want the Corbyn or Morris family to take advantage of me," she answered solemnly. "Of course, had it not been because Felix was too difficult to deal with, I might have partnered with the Morrises instead."

"In Jadeborough, I'm the only person who can take the two mines away from you."

Kathleen peered at him, wondering where he had gained his confidence from.

"Let's have dinner tonight?" Samuel invited out of the blue.

"Sure." She nodded.

"You're quick to agree, aren't you?" He was a little surprised.

"I called Old Mrs. Macari earlier and said I'd go over for dinner tonight." Kathleen sipped on her black coffee.

No wonder...

"I'll wait for you and head back together, then." Samuel crossed his legs and took out his phone to settle some work matters.

"But it'll take at least another three hours for me to wrap up." She frowned.

"I can wait." His lazy voice somehow carried a hint of affection. "You don't need to worry about me."

She pursed her lips.

"As you wish." With that, she stood up and walked out.

Upon seeing that, the man curled his thin lips into a smile. So what if I have to wait for you here for three hours? I can even wait for you for a lifetime.

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Three hours later, Kathleen finally knocked off work.

When she returned to the lounge to get changed, Samuel was indeed still there.

She drew the curtains and began to undress.

After a while, Samuel did not hear any movements from the changing room, so he asked, "Kate, are you all right?"

"I'm fine," she answered in an incredibly soft voice.

"What's wrong?" he queried worriedly.

"Could you get Valerie here for me?" Kathleen muttered awkwardly.

She had wanted to use her phone, but she could not reach for it as she had left it on the dressing table.

The man furrowed his brows and questioned, "Is it that time of the month?"

She gave no response.

"Wait there," he said before walking out.

Kathleen waited patiently. Finally, Samuel returned five minutes later.

With a bag in his hand, he reached past the curtains and into the changing room.

She noticed that there were new underwear and sanitary pads in it.

"Thank you." Her face heated up. "There's one more thing," she whispered.

"Do you need painkillers?" Samuel frowned. "I'll go and get some."

"No, no!" Kathleen quickly shook her head. "Could you please pass me the bathrobe that's hung outside? I forgot to grab my clothes earlier, and it will be troublesome if I dirtied the film set's costume."

The man noticed a black bathrobe hung outside and took it to pass to her.

"Thank you!" She took the bathrobe and immediately draped it over her body before coming out from behind the curtains.

Her fair, exquisite face was currently as red as an apple.

Carrying the bag, she hurriedly walked toward the restroom.

Samuel smirked at the sight of that. What's there to be shy about?

After a good five minutes, Kathleen came out of the restroom, her expression looking a lot more relaxed.

She grabbed her clothes and went into the changing room to get changed once more.

In the meantime, Samuel sat quietly on the couch and kept himself busy.

Kathleen could not help but realize that one of Samuel's greatest merits was his patience.

After she was done, she came out and said, "Sorry to keep you waiting."

"I told you, I'll always have the patience to wait for you."

The woman fixed her gaze on him. "I was just about to praise you for having such good manners to wait this long patiently."

"It also depends on whether the person is worthy of my time." Samuel's voice was deep with a hint of affection. "You're the first."

"I don't believe it!" Kathleen refuted firmly. "Have you never waited for Nicolette?"

"She never dared make me wait," he replied indifferently. "She was always the one trying to please me. Although she had saved my life, what she needs more are the status and identity I can give her. There was always a clear line when it came to our relationship."

He did not mind telling her everything.

Kathleen pursed her lips, saying nothing.

Samuel then stood up and added coldly, "As for what you said about her and me previously, I can swear I've never touched her. If I did, I'd rot in hell."

Once again, the woman was at a loss for words.

Kathleen followed Samuel as they returned to the Macari residence.

As soon as they entered, Wynnie said, "Samuel, what's the matter with you?"

The man bent over and handed Kathleen a pair of adorable bunny indoor slippers to change into.

"What is it this time?" he asked blandly.

Wynnie lowered her voice, slightly concerned about Kathleen. "You're trending online."

“What for?” Samuel furrowed his brows.

How could he not know about it?

“You went to the convenience store and bought underwear and sanitary pads for some woman! The paparazzo captured everything!” Wynnie grumbled.

“They are truly idle, huh?” he scoffed.

Kathleen blushed upon hearing that. Is such a piece of news even worth the buzz?

“Do you know everyone is suspecting that you have a new lover? Who did you buy those things for!” Wynnie boomed.

Samuel let out a sigh, then said to Kathleen, “Take off your coat. It’s warm in the house.”

“You don’t have to tell me that,” the woman replied and did just that.

She wore a fluffy pink sweater and a black knitted skirt on the inside, making her look both sweet and stunning.

“Mom, get her a painkiller,” Samuel requested calmly.

“It’s fine,” Kathleen answered as her face reddened in embarrassment.

This incident is already trending online. Now, everyone knows I’m on my period. Let’s just hope Samuel doesn’t clarify it.

“Kate, are you not well?” Wynnie asked concernedly.

“Um, my back... hurts.” Kathleen’s delicate countenance flushed exceedingly.

“Your back? Have you seen the doctor?” Wynnie was worried that it was the after-effect of that incident a year ago.

Samuel looked casually at his mother and asked, “Mom, when do you think a woman’s back would hurt?”

“It can hurt anytime!”

Samuel was rendered speechless.

Pfft!

Kathleen couldn’t hold back her laughter anymore.

"Mrs. Macari, Samuel actually bought those things for me," she stated bashfully.

"Oh." Wynnie was calm for a moment before realization dawned on her. "What!"

After dinner, Kathleen went to visit Diana and confessed everything.

The latter furrowed her brows. "So, your mother is the daughter of Frances?"

"Mm." Kathleen nodded.

Diana mulled it over before saying, "Since you're certain about it, you should go to the Yoeger residence immediately."

"Charles and I are being cautious because we're not sure how Old Mrs. Yoeger feels about this. It's a tricky situation, after all. If Vanessa really played a part in not allowing Old Mrs. Yoeger to look for my mother, I have no choice but to take revenge," Kathleen explained.

Diana understood Kathleen's intentions. "If you have evidence, I'm sure Frances won't play dumb. However, you are right; it is a tricky situation. Furthermore, there are a ton of problems within the Yoegers at present, and Vanessa can be said to be the one leading the family right now. If you really want to avenge your mother, I doubt Frances will let you lay hands on Vanessa."

Kathleen nodded in agreement. "That's why I was hoping you'd be able to arrange a meeting for me with Old Mrs. Yoeger. I want to know more about the relationship among the Yoegers first. I initially wanted to wait until Old Mrs. Yoeger's birthday banquet to do so, but I don't think I can wait that long anymore."

"That'll be a piece of cake," Diana said solemnly. She then called out to Wynnie.

Wynnie swiftly entered the room. "Did you call for me, Mom?"

"Let's not host the charity auction I mentioned to you outside anymore. Let's do it at home," Diana stated.

"Sure." Wynnie nodded.

Diana then turned to Kathleen and said, "The few of us have a charity home where we organize a charity auction annually."

"I'm aware."

"It happens to be my turn to host it this year. I'd intended to find a suitable venue for the event, but since you wish to meet Frances, I'll host it here at home." Diana truly doted on Kathleen.

“Thank you, Old Mrs. Macari,” Kathleen said in appreciation.

Diana grinned. “What’s there to thank me for? You don’t have to be so courteous with me!”

“Old Mrs. Macari, if you ever need my help, feel free to let me know.”

“Just focus on your filming. I’ll help you settle everything else,” Diana reassured.

Kathleen was deeply grateful as she looked at the elder.

Diana held the former’s hand and remarked smilingly, “I’m really delighted you shared this with me and allowed me to help you with it. It shows that you still see us as your family.”

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Kathleen was flattered. “As long as you don’t find me troublesome, Old Mrs. Macari.”

Diana chuckled. “Why would I find my dear Katie troublesome?”

At that moment, Samuel entered the room.

Diana added meaningfully, “I even want to announce that you’ll be my god-granddaughter from now onward.”

Kathleen was astonished.

On the contrary, Samuel’s face darkened. “No way,” he piped up.

I’m fine with anything but this!

“What right do you have to object?” Diana’s face fell. “My amazing granddaughter-in-law had to become my granddaughter! I’ve yet to settle the scores with you, and you dare to go against my will?”

The man’s captivating face darkened further. “No matter what you say, it’s a no.”

“I’ll do whatever I want to!” Diana did not care whether her grandson agreed.

Although Samuel was unwilling, he no longer said anything else.

He was always filial regardless of the circumstances.

Meanwhile, Diana held Kathleen's hands. "Katie, I was the one who took your parents' life away. Had they still been alive, they would definitely be doting on you to the moon and back. I owe you this much."

"You don't owe me anything, Old Mrs. Macari." Kathleen felt uneasy.

"Don't be nervous. In any case, treat me like your biological grandma from now onward. You'll have my support in everything you wish to do. Just let me know."

"Thank you." Kathleen felt utterly touched by that.

Diana stroked Kathleen's head. "You've suffered too much in the past. It's all my fault. I shouldn't have let you marry Samuel."

The latter shook her head lightly. "It's not your fault. It was all my wishful thinking."

"No, it's not," Samuel chimed in huskily.

He had feelings for her too, but it was only a recent discovery.

"You, shut up!" Diana was irritated at the sight of her grandson.

As such, Samuel fell silent.

"I'll have to trouble you in the future, then, Old Mrs. Macari. It's late now. I should get going," said Kathleen.

Diana nodded faintly. "Okay."

When Kathleen stood up and turned to leave the room, Samuel did the same.

"Did you only realize now that the person you liked all along has been Kathleen?" asked Diana frigidly.

He pursed his thin lips slightly.

"Had it not been because I saw your feelings for Kate, do you think I would have married her to you?" Her face turned grim. "I originally wanted her to marry Christopher. Because you're my grandson, I fulfilled your wish. In the end, it was a mistake and a thorn in my heart. I've genuinely let Katie's parents down."

A shadow shielded Samuel's eyes as he strode to catch up to Kathleen.

"Let's go back together," he said in a deep voice.

"Mm." Kathleen nodded silently.

The man's Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed. "Let's go."

They put on their coat together while Wynn timer and Calvin sent them off.

Wynn timer became increasingly concerned as she watched their retreating figures. "Do you think this would be good for them?"

Calvin answered placidly, "Everyone has their destiny."

She heaved a sigh.

"Let's go in. It's cold here." He wrapped his arm around her shoulders.

She nodded, and they turned to return to the mansion.

On the way back, Samuel inquired in slight nervousness, "Is your back still hurting?"

"It's much better now." Kathleen's ears turned red. "Regarding the trending topic about you..."

"I won't make any clarification. I've asked Tyson to get it off the trending topics." Samuel's aura was aloof yet magnetic.

"Thank you." She let out a breath of relief.

"I don't want certain people knowing the date of your period, after all. In case anyone tries to offer a needless favor," he added darkly.

Kathleen remained silent.

He should be referring to Christopher.

The duo did not communicate for the rest of the journey.

Soon, they arrived at the entrance of the Johnson residence.

When Kathleen was about to alight from the car, he held onto her small tender hand with his broad one.

"Is something the matter?" She tried pulling her hand out but to no avail.

He said in a deep and alluring voice, "Take good care of yourself."

"I will." She tugged her hand once again.

Samuel released her hand and watched her get out of the car.

He then leaned back in the driver's seat and sighed heavily while placing both hands on the steering wheel.

Concurrently, Kathleen opened the door and entered the house.

Charles peered at her. "What's going on with the trending topic?"

"Are you referring to Samuel?"

He nodded. "I know that photo was taken when he was near the film set. What a coincidence that a paparazzi happened to catch him around."

"Charles, why don't you say that my period came at the perfect time, then?" She rolled her eyes. "Do you think Samuel is a psychic and can predict everything?"

He snorted coldly.

"Stop imagining things," she said in resignation. "He won't use such a matter to get himself on the trending topic."

"You seem to trust him a lot, huh?" Charles shrugged.

"Because I understand him. He won't do such a thing."

Samuel is not a person that would go so low as to attract attention using such private matters.

"You, on the other hand, should be looking out why such an incident would be trending," Kathleen reminded him flatly.

He frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Samuel was buying things at the convenience store near the filming site. How could the paparazzi not know this fact? Why didn't they clarify?"

"Are you saying the paparazzi made it sound ambiguous on purpose so that you would admit to it?" Charles raised a brow.

She nodded. "Check whether that person is related to the Yoeger family. I have a feeling this incident might be related to Nicolette."

"Got it. I'll investigate."

Kathleen then turned and went upstairs, massaging her temples while doing so.

I was too careless. Why didn't I think of this?

After returning to her room, she knocked on Samuel's bedroom's balcony railing with a laundry stick.

The man came out of the room. "Why don't we get our balconies joined together?"

"I've got something important to discuss with you. It's in regards to your trending topic," she said awkwardly.

"Nicolette did it." Samuel had investigated it a while ago.

"As expected." Kathleen knitted her brows. "What does she want?"

"To create misunderstandings between us."

She blinked.

"I reckon everyone will think I'm the one behind it, assuming I'm using this to force you to admit to our relationship. Even if it doesn't succeed, you might think I'll do something as low as that to court you. Grandma, my parents, your brother, and the rest of them must think that way," he said grimly.

"Indeed."

Samuel was dispassionate yet charming and elegant.

"However, Nicolette miscalculated." Kathleen's exquisite face remained composed.

He peered at her. "How?"

"I know you better than that." The moonlight reflected in the woman's eyes. "You're not someone who will be that despicable to use private matters to attract attention. Besides, it's totally unnecessary, for you know that would violate my boundaries."

He stared at her doe-like eyes and felt a surge of warmth in his chest.

"I presumed you might misunderstand me." The man's gaze wavered.

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"You're mocking me!" Kathleen gasped.

How dare he doubt my intelligence!

"Fine, I'm the foolish one then." Samuel relented reluctantly.

Kathleen replied smugly, "Rightfully so, too. I'm going to bed. Goodnight."

"Before I forget, thanks for the medicine. Though they might be one of the most bitter ones I've ever tasted," said Samuel as he fixed his gaze at the back of Kathleen's willowy figure.

"That was intentional. You're most welcome."

Samuel was dumbstruck by her imprudence.

Kathleen continued on her way, leaving behind a resigned Samuel.

"I'll finish it up regardless!" Samuel called out, sounding like he had been wronged.

A smile tugged on the corner of Kathleen's cherry red lips as she entered her room and shut the door to her balcony.

Samuel lingered on his balcony till Kathleen's curtains were drawn.

He had just reached his room when his phone began to ring.

The caller ID displayed was that of Nicolette.

Samuel had lost count of the number of times his phone had been bombarded by her.

He had never picked up any of her calls except for that first time.

Nevertheless, he had to put a stop to this.

"Do you plain on explaining yourself, Mr. Macari?" Nicolette mocked over the phone.

Samuel couldn't help his rising feelings of disgust. "I owe you nothing."

Nicolette curled her lips. "I wonder what Kathleen thinks of you right now. She must be beside herself, blaming you for everything that transpired?"

"Don't compare her to the likes of yourself."

Nicolette gritted her teeth. "You'll never have her!"

"It was you who sent her that fabricated audio recording a year ago," Samuel uttered harshly.

Nicolette was stunned to hear this but quickly regained her composure. "What are you going to do about it?"

Samuel's eyes were two endless chasms of swirling wrath. "Enough of your games, Nicolette."

Nicolette was the reason all along for the rift between him and Kathleen.

"It's too late, Samuel. Kathleen would never believe that we've never slept together before," Nicolette taunted.

Samuel remained silent.

"We're all grown adults now. Who'd actually care about an occasional dalliance or two? Unfortunately for you, you can't prove your innocence like a woman can."

There was ice running through Samuel's veins. "You repulse me."

It was unthinkable that Nicolette would exploit him as a tool for bragging.

Me? Repulsive?

Nicolette's face formed into a snarl. "You only have yourself to blame! This wouldn't have happened at all if you had married me in the first place."

Samuel was indifferent to Nicolette's paroxysm of anger.

"You should have questioned the reason behind it instead."

"Why then? Tell me!" Nicolette cried.

"I've never loved you, and I never will," Samuel delivered coolly.

It felt as if someone had landed several blows to Nicolette's gut.

She had known this all along but had refused to acknowledge the truth of it.

If Samuel had truly loved her, he would have gone against his family for her sake.

She supposed that she simply wasn't important enough.

Nicolette attempted to cling to a string of hope. "You're saying this because Kathleen's around, right?"

"She's not." Samuel inclined his gaze toward the opposite balcony.

The lights had dimmed.

"Don't ever try calling me again. We're over and done with," Samuel warned as he swiftly hung up.

"Samuel, wait!" Nicolette screamed into the void that was the empty ringing tone.

She gripped her phone tightly till her knuckles turned bone white.

It had still come to this in the end.

Samuel did not love her.

He had never belonged to her, not in the truest sense.

What more was the point in her pretending to be his savior?

Nonetheless, she would carry the secret of his savior's identity to her grave.

It was the day after Nicolette's phone call.

Kathleen was getting into her car when she spotted Samuel headed her way.

He was dressed impeccably in a white dress shirt, dark sweater, and suit with peaked lapels that accentuated his elegance.

"Good morning," Samuel greeted.

"Are you going to work this early? It's only seven o'clock," Kathleen bemused.

Samuel signaled toward his car. "Hop on. We've got important matters to discuss."

"Are you saying that there are trivial matters too?" Kathleen joked.

"Sorry to burst your bubble, but that's not the case today."

Kathleen huffed indignantly.

"Get in. It's too cold to stay out for long," Samuel urged.

The snow-white cardigan and down jacket Kathleen was engulfed in made her resemble a fluffy furball all the more.

Kathleen scanned Samuel from head to toe. "I'm dressed in more layers than you are."

Winters in Jadeborough were not to be trifled with.

The corner of Samuel's lips lifted in amusement. "Is your heart aching out of sympathy for me?"

"You can freeze to death for all I care."

Samuel's eyes lit with a feral glint. "My car's over there."

"Rumors will be flying all over town if others catch sight of me. You should get in my car instead," Kathleen refused profusely.

"Would you still make it in time after sending me to work?"

Kathleen pursed her lips in thought. "Can't whatever it is be discussed over the phone?"

"It's crucial that we discuss this face to face. Besides, I have a flight to catch at nine o'clock."

Kathleen was caught off guard by his statement.

"I'll be traveling outstation for two days due to work," explained Samuel.

Kathleen strode toward Samuel's car. "That's none of my business."

What an interesting reaction.

Samuel followed closely behind.

He had left the heater on, so the car was perfectly warm and toasty.

Kathleen brought along a thermal flask of coffee to keep her functioning throughout the day.

Samuel took his place at the driver's seat and fastened his seatbelt.

The sunlight reflecting off Samuel's wedding band caught Kathleen's attention as Samuel rested his hands on the steering wheel.

She felt her skull thrumming with a portent migraine.

Kathleen couldn't bear the silence any longer and forged on. "So, what is this all about?"

"It's regarding the launch of Flobury in three days. As the company's partner, you should attend the opening ceremony as well."

Kathleen was taken aback. "Are you sure?"

"Don't underestimate your importance, dear partner," Samuel said with a half-smile flirting his lips.

The morning sunlight illuminated his coal-black eyes to a sparkling sheen.

"You may set a date with Charles. He'll make the arrangements."

"Considering how much animosity he bears toward me, I doubt he'd even give me the time of day to voice my request." Samuel shrugged.

"I'm surprised you've still got some degree of self-awareness."

Samuel continued to sulk.

"It's fine then. I'll personally convey it to him instead once we're done with the discussion."

Samuel nodded in agreement.

Now that everything was settled so breezily, Kathleen felt as if she'd just walked into a trap.

This elaborate set-up must have simply been a ploy for her to get into his car. She should have smelled it from a mile away.

Just then, a bag of medicinal herbs in the storage compartment snagged her attention.

Samuel saw her reaching for it. "I'll drink it later once I've reached the airport."

"Remember to heat it up first."

"It's okay," said Samuel impassively.

"You've always had a weak stomach. Drinking it lukewarm would simply defeat its medicinal purpose in the first place." Kathleen was furious that Samuel placed his health in such low regard. "What would the doctor say if he knew of this?"

"I'm sorry, but I'm really running short on time," Samuel responded gently.

Kathleen brows knitted worrisomely. "You should have hired a domestic helper then."

She retrieved the medicinal herbs and warmed it with her heat pack.

Problem solved.

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Samuel regarded Kathleen thoughtfully.

Her prickly exterior truly concealed a heart of gold.

She may admonish him, but she still ensured that he took his medication correctly.

“How confident are you in your medical skills?” Samuel’s tone turned serious.

“I don’t mean to brag, but I’m actually pretty good. My treatment methods are renown worldwide, just search it up and you might learn a thing or two about me.”

“Do you have anything to increase longevity? I’m hoping to at least be around long enough to care for my parents in their old age.”

“Cut to the chase, Samuel. I haven’t got all day.”

“I want you to treat me,” Samuel muttered lowly.

Kathleen felt as if she’d been drenched by an ice-cold bucket of water.

“State your price. All I want is to live as long as you do,” said Samuel.

Kathleen was speechless.

“Please?” Samuel pleaded.

“But you’d have to listen to my instructions without complaint. Otherwise, neither the most comfortable hospital room nor the best medication would do you any good,” Kathleen warned grimly.

Samuel could barely believe his luck. “So I’ll take this as a yes?”

“I’d be a fool to refuse such an offer. This is money we’re talking about here.”

“I guess I’ll be under your care then,” Samuel commented cheekily.

Kathleen instantly switched into her professional role. “Would you mind telling me why your body weakened so drastically?”

“You’ll hear all about it once I’m back from my trip.”

What’s with all this dodgy mysteriousness?

“We’re here,” Samuel announced promptly.

Kathleen passed the medicinal herbs to Samuel. "I can't emphasize this enough, but please remember to take them regularly."

"I'll do it right now."

Samuel tore open the package and drank it in a single gulp.

His sharp features scrunched up at the ghastly aftertaste.

The bitterness was truly a force to reckon with.

Samuel swallowed and felt an overwhelming wash of relief that it was over. "We're done here. I hope my future prescriptions are ones that taste fit for human consumption."

An unexpected burst of laughter escaped from Kathleen at the amusing tableau in display.

Samuel's mood instantly lightened upon witnessing Kathleen's gorgeous face fill with mirth.

"Right. See you in two days' time." Kathleen took hold of the empty medicinal packet.

Samuel leveled a meaningful look at Kathleen. "Goodbye."

Kathleen turned to leave and went on her way.

Samuel immediately took to quaffing an entire bottle of water.

The medicinal herbs were truly horrendous.

Kathleen must have been trying to exact her revenge with them.

Having said that, her smile today was worth the affliction.

Kathleen had three hours of time to spare in the afternoon.

She changed into discreet attire, donning her shades and face mask before departing from the film crew.

She was headed to a hospital specializing in traditional medicine in search of her grandfather's old friend who was the director.

The hospital was famed all over the country and her role as a director required noteworthy medicinal as well as management skills.

Kathleen never would have expected to catch sight of Vanessa in the director's office.

She hadn't meant to eavesdrop, but the door was ajar and the sound of the conversation within floated out clear as day.

Vanessa spoke in hushed tones, "Dr. Yarrow, all I'm concerned about now is how well Nicolette is faring."

"She'll need more time to convalesce. Proceeding with the transplant now would only endanger both her and Mr. Yoeger."

Vanessa was visibly displeased with the news.

"It is of utmost importance for Nicolette to be in optimal health for the operation to be a success," Ethan Yarrow advised.

"What a hassle," Vanessa grumbled.

Ethan shook his head firmly. "There's nothing else to be done."

"Prescribe her your best medication and make sure she's back in the pink of health as soon as possible," Vanessa urged, "And keep this between us."

Ethan swore his secrecy and Vanessa exited the office not long after.

Kathleen moved out of her hiding spot once Vanessa had entered the elevator and she was no longer at risk of discovery.

She announced her arrival with a knock on the door of Ethan's office.

Ethan took in her conspicuous attire suspiciously. "And you are?"

Kathleen removed her disguise and was instantly recognized.

Ethan was delighted by her appearance. "Kate, it was you all along! What brings you here today?"

"I just wanted to check in on you, Dr. Yarrow. I would also like to request for some medicinal herbs if you don't mind," Kathleen uttered politely.

"Be my guest. Here, take a seat."

Ethan poured her a glass of water. "I never would have imagined seeing you here."

"It's been a while, Dr. Yarrow." Kathleen hesitated before continuing, "That woman you were talking to just now..."

"As in Vanessa, Nicolette's aunt?"

Ethan was aware of Kathleen and Nicole's shared history.

However, Kathleen understood that his role as a doctor compelled him to save patients indiscriminately.

"I understand that you're bound by your medical ethics. It's just surprising that Nicolette would actually be allowed the kidney transplant at all."

Ethan surmised that Kathleen had overheard most of the dialogue that took place. "Truth be told, it is not previously unheard of for patients with less than ideal health conditions to undergo surgery."

Kathleen seemed desperate. "Is Mr. Yoeger's health really so dire?"

"His health seems to be deteriorating, or else Nicolette wouldn't have been sent here to recuperate in the first place," responded Ethan.

"So the surgery won't be carried out here then," Kathleen murmured thoughtfully.

Ethan shook his head.

Kathleen quirked her lips. "I see."

The reason behind Nicolette's reinstatement into the Yoeger family must be because they intended for her to be the kidney donor to her biological father.

However, hadn't Vanessa always planned to usurp the position as the head of the Yoeger family?

Nicolette saving Zachary would have been contrary to that.

Or did she have a little accident staged at the surgical theater?

The plot thickened.

Kathleen handed Ethan her checklist. "These are the medications that I'm looking for. Don't worry about their cost."

Ethan skimmed the text and grinned. "I might have the herbs, but I'm afraid I won't be able to help you."

"Why is that so?" Kathleen was dumbfounded.

Ethan shrugged. "You specified wild herbs, which I'm afraid I don't have."

"Do you happen to know where I may procure them?"

"I know of this one person who's the biggest medicinal manufacturer in the country. He has access to every kind of herb under the sky."

"Thank you so much, Dr. Yarrow! I owe you big time!" Kathleen was overjoyed that her search hadn't been for naught.

Ethan scribbled down a phone number and handed it over to Kathleen. "Just tell him that I sent you."

Kathleen stole a glance at the strip of paper. "Caleb Lewis?"

The CEO of Lewis Enterprises?

"That's right. He's sure to have everything that you're looking for."

"You've been a great help, Dr. Yarrow. I'll be heading over right this instant."

"Glad to be of service," said Ethan in good cheer.

Kathleen retrieved a dainty box from her handbag and proffered it with flair. "I've brought the goods."

Ethan flipped open the lid and sniffed its contents. "You truly know me the best."

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"Dr. Yarrow, I'll be leaving first," Kathleen declared with a smile.

"Okay. Be careful on the way," Ethan reminded as he watched her leave.

After leaving the hospital, Kathleen got into her car and called Caleb.

He picked up after two rings.

"Hello. Who are you?" Caleb asked, his voice low and cold.

"Mr. Lewis, hello," Kathleen answered politely. "I am Kathleen Johnson."

Kathleen? Isn't she Samuel's ex-wife? Why is she calling me?

"Mr. Lewis, I got your phone number from Dr. Yarrow. I want to buy some medicinal herbs, and Dr. Yarrow said you have them," Kathleen explained.

“So it was Dr. Yarrow who suggested you find me.” His voice still emotionless, Caleb asked, “What do you want?”

“I have a list with me. However, I want the medicinal herbs to be wild. The price is not an issue.”

“Wild medicinal herbs are difficult to find and expensive. Even if I have them, you may not be able to afford them,” Caleb replied monotonously.

Kathleen was at a loss for words.

“Send me your list. I’ll take a look,” Caleb offered in a calm voice.

Judging from his tone, he did not seem reluctant to help.

“Mr. Lewis, why don’t I message you on WhatsApp? It’s easier that way,” Kathleen suggested tentatively.

“Sure.” Caleb nodded.

After hanging up, Kathleen added his phone number to her contacts.

His name in the app was still Caleb Lewis.

Kathleen sent him a message, and he added her to his contacts too.

Then, she sent the list over.

After a while, Caleb texted: This is not a list. It is a prescription.

Kathleen answered: There isn’t much difference.

Caleb: You made this prescription yourself?

Kathleen: Yes

Caleb: Do you know Connor Johnson?

Kathleen texted back after a short pause: He is my granddad.

Caleb: Your granddad?

Kathleen: Yeah, my granddad.

Narrowing his eyes, Caleb typed: If you do me a favor, I can give the medicinal herbs to you for free.

Kathleen was shocked, as she did not expect to hear such pleasant news.

Kathleen: As long as it is not murder or robbery, I'm okay with it.

Caleb: Come to my house at nine o'clock tonight.

Upon seeing that, Kathleen was startled.

Caleb: I'll send someone to pick you up.

Kathleen froze.

Wait! Does he want to...

She hurriedly texted: Mr. Lewis, I forgot to tell you, but I'm not that kind of woman!"

However, Caleb did not message back after a long time.

Did he not see it? Or is he pretending not to have seen it? I regret agreeing so fast now. I think I've shot myself in the foot.

That night at eight o'clock, Caleb came to pick Kathleen up.

Looking at Caleb's Maybach, Charles commented to Kathleen, "The most amazing car plate number I have seen in Jadeborough is four As, which belongs to your ex-husband, Samuel's car. The other one will be this car with four ones."

Kathleen sighed. "I think I've messed with the wrong person."

"I heard Caleb is unmarried and doesn't even have a girlfriend. It's fine if you don't want Christopher. He is cousins with Samuel, so it's weird anyway. However, Caleb is different!" Charles exclaimed excitedly.

Not wanting to say anything further, Kathleen walked out wearing a black down jacket and got into Caleb's car.

He was an aloof and handsome man.

However, the cold aura around Caleb was different from Samuel's. Caleb was more unfeeling, whereas Samuel was more bloodthirsty and crueler.

In other words, Caleb was slightly warmer than Samuel.

Samuel was icy from inside out.

"Uh, Mr. Lewis—" Kathleen began nervously.

Grabbing the steering wheel with his long fingers, Caleb interrupted, "I'm not that kind of man either."

Kathleen fell silent.

Since he had already spoken, she heaved a sigh of relief.

But why does Caleb want me to go to his home so late at night?

She was in a state of nervousness for the entire journey.

Suddenly, her phone vibrated.

Taking out her phone, Kathleen saw a message from Samuel.

Samuel: Are you sleeping?

Kathleen: Yeah.

Samuel: Good night.

Kathleen sighed.

For some reason, I feel awkward lying to Samuel, as if I got caught cheating on him. But we have divorced already, so why do I feel guilty?

While she was lost in her thoughts, the car stopped.

Glancing sidelong at Kathleen, Caleb realized she was prettier than on television.

Not only that, she seemed meek and quiet.

"Let's go," Caleb declared, his voice a deep timbre.

"Okay." Kathleen got out of the car, and the two walked toward the mansion.

As Caleb's family lived overseas, he lived alone all these years, so his house seemed desolate.

Following him into the mansion, Kathleen asked softly, "Caleb, why did you bring me to your house?"

"Follow me upstairs." Caleb did not want to explain too much.

After hesitating for a moment, she followed him upstairs, her hands in her pocket.

Before she left her house, Kathleen had brought a pepper spray along.

Caleb only gazed impassively at her hand motions.

Bringing Kathleen upstairs, he stopped before a door and pushed it open.

“Come in.”

Kathleen paused for a second before entering.

The room was bright, but there was no other furniture except for a bed.

A gaunt woman huddled in a corner, her hair covering her face.

When she moved, Kathleen heard the clanking sound of metal chains.

The woman’s feet were cuffed and chained to the wall.

Dumbstruck, Kathleen shouted, “You!”

Caleb slant her a look. “She’s crazy.”

Kathleen furrowed her brows.

“I heard your granddad has a secret technique that can treat madness. Have you learned it before?” asked Caleb, gazing at her.

Frowning, Kathleen retorted, “Is she really mad? Are you sure she didn’t go crazy because you imprisoned her?”

Caleb was speechless.

“Ms. Johnson, if I were really such a person, I would have secretly brought you here to imprison you. I wouldn’t have personally gone to fetch you from your house,” he answered frostily.

“Who is she?” Kathleen asked, staring at the woman.

“You don’t need to know that.”

Kathleen frowned again.

“Ms. Johnson, you’re better off not knowing some things. I will give you whatever you want as long as you make her normal again,” Caleb warned.

Kathleen pondered for a while.

If this woman is really illegally imprisoned here by Caleb, I won't be able to save her if I fight with him. Of course, I can't just suspect him for no reason.

After a short pause, she walked toward the woman and squatted before her.

The woman reflexively huddled further into the corner.

"What's her name?" Kathleen asked.

"Vivian."

Turning back, Kathleen looked at the woman. "Vivian?"

The latter had no reaction.

Kathleen stretched out her hand, placed it gently on Vivian's head, and stroked her hair. "Don't be afraid. I'm here to help you."

Caleb creased his forehead.

Vivian didn't push her away. Usually, she would push anyone who tries to approach or touch her. What a surprise!

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After retracting her hands, Kathleen held Vivian's wrist.

Vivian flinched and raised her head to stare at Kathleen from under her long, thick bangs.

Curling up her red lips, Kathleen cooed, "I'm not here to hurt you. Can you give me your hand?"

Vivian gave no response, but her wrist remained in Kathleen's hands.

Kathleen silently breathed in relief and began checking Vivian's pulse.

However, she only frowned deeper.

"How's she?" Caleb asked, his hands tucked in his pockets.

Kathleen put down Vivian's hands and stood up. "Let's talk outside."

Caleb inclined his head.

After leaving the room, Kathleen stared seriously at him.

“She had been pregnant before?”

Caleb nodded.

“However, her way of aborting the baby was very extreme, so her health was severely affected. Mr. Lewis, if you don’t tell me why she became mad, I can’t save her,” Kathleen declared, knitting her brows.

Clenching his fingers, Caleb maintained his composure and said, “She was pregnant, but she didn’t want the child, so she tied a rope around her abdomen and...”

“Why didn’t you stop her?” Kathleen gasped in horror.

After all, it was too cruel.

“She already did that when we found out.” Staring at her blankly, Caleb asked, “Do you have any methods to make her return to normal?”

“We can only cure her once we target the source of her illness. Although I’ve learned Granddad’s secret technique, it has a disadvantage,” Kathleen replied solemnly.

“What is it?”

“It will shorten a person’s lifespan by half.”

Caleb fell silent.

“Is there no other way?” he asked, staring darkly at her.

Kathleen shook her head. “Unless we find out why she became mad and gradually treat her afterward.”

After a moment’s contemplation, Caleb suggested, “What if you treat her first?”

“It’s not impossible, but—” Kathleen still wanted to remind him, but he interjected, “Give me the prescription.”

After a slight pause, she uttered, “Mr. Lewis, the greatest issue is with her psyche. It’s not enough to just treat her with medicine.”

Caleb made no reply.

“And you can’t chain her,” Kathleen added with a frown.

With a look of displeasure, Caleb countered, "This is none of your business."

The words got stuck in Kathleen's throat.

"Ms. Johnson, stop being so sympathetic. There are things you do not understand. Moreover, this is just a deal between us. You have no right to interfere with my affairs," Caleb added reproachfully.

Kathleen frowned upon hearing his words.

If it wasn't to find Samuel's medicine, I would have left already. And since I have promised Caleb, I need to keep my word. I was indeed filled with sympathy when I saw Vivian. I know my nosiness is my fatal weakness, but I really want to help her, seeing her in such a state. Nonetheless, Caleb is right too. This is just a deal between us.

"All right. I won't interfere, but I have a request," announced Kathleen, staring calmly at Caleb.

"What is it?" The latter knitted his brows together.

"Allow me to visit her anytime so I can understand her condition," Kathleen said firmly.

"Okay." Caleb nodded.

Kathleen secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Giving her an inscrutable look, Caleb added, "I have already asked someone to prepare the things you want. You can take them with you."

"Thank you," Kathleen answered lowly.

She did not expect Caleb to give her the medicinal herbs she wanted straightaway after her first time checking Vivian's condition.

"I'll send you back," Caleb offered.

"Okay." Kathleen tipped her head.

Silence hung between the two as he drove her back.

Though Kathleen was filled with questions, she resisted the urge to ask.

Massaging her temples, she told herself to stop being a busybody.

Soon, Caleb stopped the car at the entrance of the Johnson residence.

“Then, do I have to inform you beforehand if I want to visit Vivian?” Kathleen asked, uncertain.

Caleb’s eyes were dark and bottomless. “No need. You can visit her anytime as long you don’t speak of her condition to others.”

Not expecting him to suddenly be so easygoing, Kathleen was startled.

This man makes me so nervous!

She nodded. “Got it. Good night.”

Caleb hummed in response.

The instant she got out of the car carrying the herbs she obtained with great difficulty, he drove off.

Kathleen let out a long breath before walking into the mansion.

Charles was still waiting for her.

“Charles, you haven’t slept?” she asked softly.

“How can I fall asleep when you’re not back yet?” Frowning, he asked, “But, why are you back so fast?”

“Charles!” Kathleen screeched angrily.

“Haha! I’m kidding!” After a momentary pause, Charles continued, “Did you see Caleb’s family when you went to his house?”

“Isn’t his family overseas?” Kathleen retorted matter-of-factly.

“Oh, really?” Charles replied while nodding meaningfully.

“I’m tired. I’ll go rest first.” Kathleen strode toward the stairs.

“Sure,” Charles said warmly as Kathleen turned around and went up.

After Kathleen left, he lit a cigarette and started smoking.

Is she overseas?

The next day, Kathleen was woken up by her phone ringing.

It was a call from Gemma.

“Kate, you’re trending,” she said grimly.

“Isn’t it normal for a famous actress like me to be trending?” Kathleen replied sheepishly.

“No. The paparazzi posted a video of you going to Caleb Lewis’ house last night.”

Kathleen was dumbfounded.

The paparazzi caught that on camera? It’s going to be difficult to explain now.

“Oh, and you don’t need to bother with what the netizens say,” Gemma reminded.

Kathleen chuckled. “Did you call me early in the morning to comfort me?”

Embarrassed, Gemma replied, “I was afraid you’ll be unhappy.”

“I’m fine. I’ve stopped caring about these things already. So what if I went to Caleb’s house in the middle of the night? We’re both single,” Kathleen declared nonchalantly.

“I agree. But, you know, many netizens are rude,” Gemma said furiously. “Anyway, you have the freedom to love whoever you want. There’s no need to care about them!”

Laughing, Kathleen explained, “Caleb and I don’t have that kind of relationship. However, I can’t tell the others the reason. Whatever. They can think whatever they want.”

“Then, you don’t care what Christopher or Samuel thinks?” Gemma asked quietly.

“Yes.” Kathleen nodded. “We’re just friends.”

Sighing, Gemma answered, “Fine.”

“I can’t talk any longer. I’m hanging up,” Kathleen uttered, preparing to get out of bed.

“Okay.” Gemma inclined her head.

After Kathleen hung up, she saw a message from Caleb.

Caleb: I have cleared up the scandal.

Kathleen: Thank you.

Caleb: I implicated you into this mess. This is the least I can do.

Kathleen: Thank you.

There was no reply from Caleb after that, so she closed the app.

Just then, someone sent her a message on WhatsApp again.

Clicking on it, she realized it was from Samuel.

Kathleen thought he would question her, but he simply texted her: Morning.

Letting out a deep breath, she typed back: Morning.