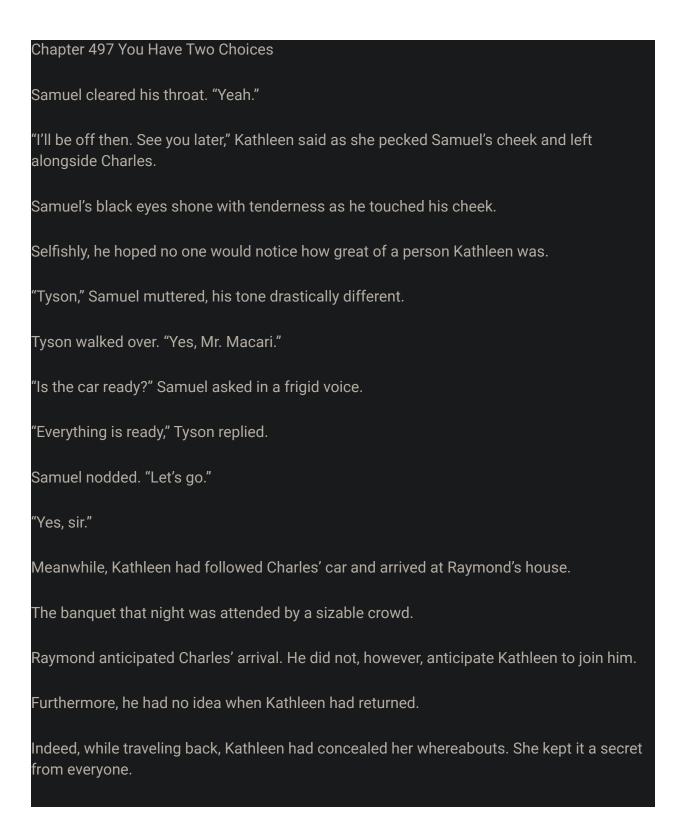
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As a result, Raymond had not heard anything about her return.

Raymond was certain, though, that the siblings were unaware of his intentions that evening based on how they entered the banquet. As a result, a satisfied smirk flashed on his face.

"Godfather," Charles greeted impassively.

Raymond nodded. "You've arrived."

"Long time no see, Mr. Watson," Kathleen greeted flatly.

Raymond smiled. "Ms. Johnson. I wasn't expecting you."

Kathleen only smiled faintly in return.

"It's good, though," Raymond added, a sly grin on his face. "I have an important announcement to make tonight. It'll be even more lively now that you're both here."

"I wonder what the good news is?" Kathleen asked.

Raymond cracked a half-smile. "I wouldn't want to spoil the surprise for you. You'll know eventually."

He cast a quick glance at the visitors. "I should head over and say a few words as it's almost time and the guests are almost all here."

"Go ahead," Kathleen replied indifferently.

With that, Raymond turned on his heel and headed for the stage.

Kathleen glanced around before whispering, "Where's Clarissa, Charles?"

"She returned with me, but I'm not sure what happened to her after that," Charles replied nonchalantly.

Kathleen did nothing but give Charles a thoughtful look.

He still did not seem to be feeling anything for Clarissa.

Relationships, though, were in fact, complicated.

"It's odd. I haven't seen Wilbur either," Kathleen remarked, her brows knitted together.

In a low voice, Charles replied, "Maybe Wilbur isn't even here."

"Don't tell me he went to deal with Axeworth Corporation on Raymond's behalf?" Kathleen inquired, her temples throbbing.

"It's possible," Charles muttered.

Kathleen lowered her gaze. She could not help but feel slightly worried for Samuel.

"Are you really treating Samuel as a hothouse flower?" Charles asked in an attempt to console Kathleen.

Kathleen was taken aback by his words.

"He's Samuel Macari, for crying out loud," Charles continued. "Even if he's lost his memories, he's not an easy opponent."

Kathleen nodded.

Raymond's voice came through before Kathleen could even utter a reply. "Truth to be told, I've invited everyone tonight to attend my daughter Clarissa's engagement ceremony."

Everyone, including Kathleen and Charles, was stunned.

Who is Clarissa getting engaged to?

"And the person who's going to be engaged to my daughter is no one other than Charles Johnson," Raymond announced as he looked at Charles.

Charles furrowed his brows. What the hell does Raymond mean by this?

Kathleen, too, had her brows furrowed into a severe frown.

"I believe everyone's aware that Charles is my godson. I have been treating him like my own. Thus, I wish to marry my beloved daughter to him. I hope everyone can give them your blessings." Then Raymond began to applaud, and the crowd soon joined in.

Charles' expression was grim.

"Charles, this appears to be something Raymond had in mind from the start. You might humiliate Clarissa if you leave," Kathleen stated flatly. "I reckon he knows that we're helping Clarissa."

However, Charles had no plans of getting engaged to Clarissa.

He was not romantically interested in Clarissa.

He had only ever regarded her as his little sister for as long as he could remember.

Thus, this arrangement was rather absurd to him.

Kathleen's eyes were cold as she locked her gaze on Raymond. "Now that the groom-to-be is here, I'm curious where the bride-to-be is."

Raymond narrowed his eyes. "Clarissa is feeling under the weather."

"Why didn't you postpone the engagement banquet if she was sick? Is it even appropriate to refer to it as an engagement banquet without the bride-to-be?" Kathleen inquired matter-of-factly. "Moreover, you did not inform anyone that tonight was the engagement banquet for Charles and Clarissa."

Raymond merely stared at her in silence.

He genuinely did not expect Kathleen to show up at the banquet.

"I'm sure you're familiar with my line of occupation, Mr. Watson. Why don't you let me take a look at Clarissa? She might feel better after my consultation. What do you think?" Kathleen asked, staring intently at Raymond.

Raymond frowned at that.

Discreetly, Kathleen tugged at Charles' sleeves.

Charles picked up on her signal right away. Coldly, he declared, "I won't agree to this engagement if Clarissa isn't present."

"I assume you're implying that you'll marry Clarissa as long as she's present?" Raymond retorted.

With a calm expression on his face, Charles replied, "Yes."

Raymond smirked as he ordered, "Bring Clarissa here."

Right as his words were out of his mouth, one of the help came pushing Clarissa, who was seated in a wheelchair.

Her eyes were dull and soulless— an obvious sign that something was wrong.

Kathleen approached Clarissa in an instant. Raymond, however, intervened and stopped her. "What do you think you're doing?"

"I'm just trying to care for my future sister-in-law. Am I not allowed to do so?" Kathleen asked icily.

"Precisely. You are not allowed to do so," Raymond replied, his tone radiating the same coldness.

Charles stepped up. "I'm sure I have the right to do so as Clarissa is my fiancée."

With that, he pushed Raymond away and walked up to Clarissa.

"Clarissa?" Charles mumbled as he caressed the said woman's cheek.

However, there was no reaction from Clarissa.

Charles turned around to look at Kathleen.

Kathleen pushed Raymond away and immediately went to Clarissa.

She frowned upon checking Clarissa's pulse.

"How is she?" Charles asked worriedly.

Kathleen took a deep breath as she placed her hand on Clarissa's head and felt around the area.

As she had expected, she managed to pull out a silver needle from the crown of Clarissa's head.

Raymond's expression darkened. Damn it. Kathleen found out.

Suddenly, Clarissa spat a mouthful of black blood.

"Clarissa!" Charles cried out as he held onto her. "Are you okay?"

Clarissa first looked at Charles, then at Raymond. Her face took on a pained expression.

"Her body is extremely frail now, Charles. We have to get her to a hospital as soon as possible," Kathleen urged, her eyebrows pinched in a frown.

Charles frowned. Instantly, he carried Clarissa from the wheelchair, bridal-style, and prepared to leave.

However, Raymond had ordered his men to stop them.

"What are you trying to do?" Charles demanded, his gaze steely.

Raymond grinned. "The engagement ceremony is not finished yet. Where do you think you're going?"

"Don't you see the state your daughter is in right now, Raymond?" Kathleen exclaimed exasperatedly. "Her life will be at risk if we don't act quickly."

Raymond merely scoffed at that. "Don't think I'm unaware of your goal, Charles. It's your fault that she's in this state. You have to get engaged to her to save her. If not, you have no right to take her away!"

"Was this your goal all along?" Charles asked, his expression icy.

Raymond wanted to induct him into Blissful Sect.

"Yes," Raymond answered. He was not planning to hide his intentions anymore. "You have two choices. Either watch Clarissa die before your eyes, or get engaged to her and become one of Blissful Sect."

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Chapter 498 You And Samuel

Charles tightened his hold on Clarissa.

She was as pale as a sheet; not even the slightest tinge of color was on her face.

Her condition was getting worse with each passing second.

Kathleen had been keeping an eye on Clarissa's condition. She was aware that Clarissa was on the verge of death.

Charles gritted his teeth as he turned to the help. "Get me the ring!"

As a result of being startled by Charles' furious expression, the help's faces contorted with fear. Without wasting any time, they brought the rings to Charles.

Charles threw one of his arms around Clarissa and drew her close to his chest. Taking the rings from the platter, he slipped one on Clarissa and one on himself.

"Is this enough?" Charles shot Raymond a cold glare.

Raymond was beaming with delight. "Congratulations to the pair!"

Immediately, Charles carried Clarissa and dashed toward the exit.

Kathleen was about to follow them. However, Raymond intervened and stopped her. "Ms. Johnson must stay."

Charles scowled. He turned around, glaring at Raymond. "What? Are you trying to threaten me now?"

"How would I dare?" Raymond refuted. A half-smile appeared on his face as he continued, "But do you think I'll let you go that easily after you chose to appear here, Ms. Johnson?"

Kathleen wore an icy expression. She turned to Charles, saying, "Bring Clarissa to the hospital first, Charles."

"What about you?" Charles frowned.

"I'll be fine," Kathleen reassured. Then in a low voice, she continued, "On top of that, Samuel won't let anything happen to me."

Charles pursed his lips. "I'll be back really soon!"

"Hurry on," Kathleen urged.

Clarissa did not have the leisure to wait any longer.

Charles clenched his jaw and left, holding Clarissa in his arms.

Other than the guests of the banquet, Kathleen was ultimately alone, looking rather helpless.

Raymond sneered. "How are things between you and Samuel, Ms. Johnson?"

"We're still going strong. There's no need for you to be concerned," Kathleen replied coldly. "Spit out anything you have to say. I'm afraid you won't have the chance to do so next time."

Raymond scoffed. "You should be aware that Wyatt has had his eyes on you for some time."

"Is that so?" Kathleen asked disinterestedly. "Then why did he get engaged to Ashley? It's unfortunate that Ashley turned out to be a fraud, though. How is he coping after having his fantasies crushed?"

"Wyatt would still be living his dreams if it weren't for you," Raymond exclaimed as he gave Kathleen a long look. "Don't you think you should bear the responsibilities?"

Kathleen sneered. "I don't understand your logic, Raymond. Was I the one who set Ashley up to be a fraud? It was clearly your party's fault. How could you blame me for it?"

"You were the one who didn't want to take up responsibility. Don't blame me for being harsh," said Raymond, his expression stony. "I'll still have to find a way to get back at you for what you've done to Adina back in Jadeborough."

"Sure thing. Do whatever you want." Kathleen had her arms crossed in front of her chest. "I've been working for you for a while. Do you want me to reveal all you've done?"

Raymond scoffed. As if I'd give her the chance to do so!

"Capture her!" Raymond ordered. "Kathleen and Wyatt will marry in three days. When that time comes, I hope everyone will be able to attend."

Before he finished his sentence, four bodyguards in black immediately surrounded Kathleen.

Kathleen's eyes were cold as ice. "Take another step closer to me. I dare you."

The four bodyguards immediately stopped in their tracks.

Kathleen sent a taunting glare in Raymond's direction. "Have you forgotten? I've trained everyone here. You can ask them how I deal with those who disobey my commands."

Raymond was infuriated. "What are you guys doing? Get her!"

Yet, the bodyguards remained rooted in their spots.

Then Wilbur emerged, accompanied by a group of people. "I'll do it."

Kathleen narrowed her eyes at him. "Why not go and worry about your wife instead? She's currently in a tight spot in Jadeborough."

"Everything will be sorted out after you become my sister-in-law," Wilbur replied coldly.

"You Watsons really know how to dream, huh?" Kathleen sneered. "Do you honestly think you guys will succeed?"

"There's nothing impossible. Everything will fall into place once you get married to Wyatt," Raymond declared. He was adamant about his opinion.

Kathleen's gaze was cold.

"Moreover, I've already shut down all airports, train stations, and harbors. You won't be able to escape. Similarly, those who want to save you won't be able to reach you. No one can do anything," Raymond continued. He was determined to succeed.

Kathleen's eyes were devoid of any emotion. "Do you think you'll succeed?"

"You can anticipate it," Raymond replied, smiling sinisterly.

Kathleen smirked. "I'm afraid things will not go the way you want."

Raymond stared at her bitterly.

Right then, a loud bang was heard from the outside.

Kathleen raised her brows slightly.

He's here!

"What happened?" Raymond asked with a scowl. "Go take a look!"

"I'll go," Wilbur declared as he strode toward the exit.

However, a gun was pointed at his forehead just as he reached the door.

Wilbur stared at the man who was holding the gun. "Samuel?"

When did Samuel come here?

Wilbur retreated a few steps at the same time Samuel moved forward.

Samuel heaved a sigh of relief upon seeing Kathleen unharmed.

His ebony eyes looked at her with thick emotions. "Come over here."

Kathleen went to him.

Samuel wrapped an arm around Kathleen as he hugged her into his chest and asked in a husky voice, "You okay?"

Kathleen nodded. "I'm fine."

She was completely okay. Samuel need not get worried about her.

Samuel lifted his gaze and glared at Raymond. "Your plan has failed."

"Failed?" Raymond frowned.

Why is Samuel here? My people told me he was still nursing his injuries in Jadeborough.

"The people you've assigned to wipe out Axeworth Corporation have all been killed," Samuel stated emotionlessly. "You guys are next."

Raymond furrowed his brows. "That's not possible!"

Samuel's cold, piercing look exuded a hostile and deadly aura.

Right then, one of Raymond's subordinates came running into the place as he nervously stammered, "P-Police! There's so many police!"

What?

Raymond widened his eyes.

Soon, a swarm of police poured into the place.

The man leading the group stared at Raymond coldly. "Please come along with us, Mr. Watson."

Raymond scowled. "Why should I? I haven't done anything against the law!"

The police took out his arrest warrant. "Do you think we'd come without proof? Come along now."

"Impossible!" Raymond was in disbelief.

"Nothing's impossible," Samuel drawled. "This is the gift this country has given me in return for my promise to invest five billion here in thirty minutes."

Raymond was dumbfounded.

Kathleen gave Samuel a surprised look. "Not only did you take care of the people from Blissful Sect and Axeworth Corporation, but you've also managed to get a business collaboration done?"

"Yeah. I would've been here earlier if it wasn't for the business meeting," Samuel replied as he pecked her forehead.

Kathleen was at a loss for words.

Meanwhile, the police had cuffed Raymond's hands and brought him away.

Before going, he shot Kathleen a nasty glare. "I won't go down like this!"

"You won't have the chance to start over after going into jail, Raymond. Don't forget; you have quite a number of enemies. How are you so sure they won't try to kill you?" Kathleen reminded him coolly.

Raymond's expression darkened. He shifted his gaze to Wilbur.