

Chapter 8

Chapter 2

I rush to his backpack and rummage through it.

Eventually, I find a spare map.

"What's this, then?"

James's face darkens with anger.

Before I can react, Melissa lunges forward.

With a sharp rip—

She tears the map to shreds.

"Are you insane?!" I stare at her in shock.

James grips my shoulders firmly.

The torn fragments scatter into the wind, disappearing into the snowy night.

"Alright," James says, patting me. "Now we don't have a map. Let's keep going."

Everyone else glares at me, complaining that I'm delaying their journey.

One of the girls in a green ski suit, Nora, rolls her eyes and mutters, "Are you done causing trouble? James, some people just love to kick up a fuss."

Softly, Melissa adds, "Rosa, you're already in poor physical shape. James and I are really worried about you going down the mountain alone. Please, come with us."

But there's a vicious glint in her eyes!

I know full well that they deliberately brought me here to this wild, snowy path because they want to see me fail.

I clench my teeth and reply, "Fine, I'll go with you."

I want to stay and watch you both reap what you've sown!

The snowfield presents a breathtaking spectacle as we move forward, taking in the icy waterfall cascading down the cliff and the primitive forest blanketed in snow.

"It's stunning!"

Melissa excitedly hands me her phone, asking me to take pictures of her and James.

She snuggles up closely to him, and the two of them share warmth amid the blizzard.

The way James looks at her is full of a tolerant passion, and I feel nothing but disgust.

James and Melissa are my high school classmates.

After the national college entrance exams, at Melissa's insistence, I confessed my feelings to James.

Who would've known they were secretly involved all along?

Now, with a new lease on life, I understand—

They only valued my family's wealth, setting me up on purpose, treating me like nothing more than an ATM!

I throw my phone onto the snow-laden ground, ignoring James's furious glare.

Apart from the beautiful scenery, we also discover traces left by previous explorers.

Someone excitedly exclaims, "We've found more evidence of a campsite!"

As we continue upwards, the snow path becomes narrower.

I glance at the sports watch on my wrist—

We've reached an altitude of a thousand meters.

In my past life, I never climbed this high.

Using the light from my headlamp, I carefully study the surrounding terrain.

My family runs a business selling outdoor equipment, so I'm familiar with all kinds of terrain from a young age.

Beneath the layer of accumulated snow, I can faintly see the soft soil layer, and the slope is rather steep.

A certain possibility crosses my mind due to these terrain characteristics—

Could it be... this place is prone to avalanches?!

The rest of the group continues ahead, oblivious to my unease.

Suppressing my rapidly beating heart, I casually catch up with them.

We take a break on a gentler part of the snow slope.

By this point, I'm already struggling to breathe due to altitude sickness.

James holds the map, gesturing ahead. "Ahead is the legendary Death Snow Path. No one has ever conquered it before."

An exhilarating gleam lights up in Melissa's eyes as she shakes James's arm.

"We'll name this wild path after us once we conquer it!"

James's eyes soften. "Sure."

Huh.

I doubt they'll get the chance to do it.

In my past life, Melissa and several others were buried right here.

This wild path has a complex terrain, with a steep slope and snow depth exceeding two meters. Even professional skiers treat it with extreme caution.

Not to mention they are amateurs who don't even have the proper equipment.

A quarter of an hour passes as we rest.

Then, James leads the group forward.

He excitedly steps onto the fresh snow path.

"The slope here is a bit steep, so everyone should regulate their speed..."

He advises the group behind him.

Then, he slides forward cautiously, leaning slightly forward to navigate the steep slope.

"The terrain ahead is much gentler. You can all come now."

Melissa follows closely behind.

One by one, the others follow, forming a long line.

When it's my turn, I deliberately show fear and shout, "It's too steep here! I dare not slide!"

Melissa covers her mouth and laughs. "I always say girls can't be too heavy. Rosa, with your unstable center of gravity, of course, you're afraid."

Bullshit!

How can I, standing at 165 cm and weighing 70 kg, be considered fat?

When James hears this, he turns around and says, "Help her out."

Nora, who is ahead of me, rolls her eyes.

"What a hassle," she mutters, reluctantly extending her ski pole. "James, it's no use. I can't pull her."

Helpless, James says to me, "Then, wait here for us to return."

If this were a formal ski group, they would never leave a member behind.

The wilderness snow path is dangerous. Getting separated in a blizzard can be life-threatening.

But knowing what's about to happen, I simply reply, "Alright."

Then, I leisurely sit in the snow, conserving my energy.

James and his group continue deeper into the snow path, getting farther away from me.

Even over the howling wind, I can make out their vague conversation.

"Up ahead is a fork in the road. Hang on, let me check the map."

"James, the right side looks smoother. Let's take the right."

After a moment, James says affectionately, "Melissa, you're really smart. Alright, everyone, follow me."

"The slope ahead is getting steeper. Everyone, be careful. Slow down like before..."

But in the very next moment, James's voice became panicked.

"That's not right, there's a cliff up ahead!"

"Everyone stop!"

The snow trail was in chaos.

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