

Pursuing 101

Chapter 101 Teach Her A Lesson

Ysabelle's thoughts were simple.

"But as your friend, I don't want to see you get hurt because of me."

Sophie did not like how that felt.

She tried hard to make herself stronger because she did not want the people around her to be hurt.

"Soph, I really am fine."

"This time, yes, but who can be sure that nothing will happen to you the next time?"

Ysabelle fell silent, but she did not regret her action at all. If this were to happen again, she was still going to do the same thing.

Sophie called Tristan.

There was no way she was not going to tell Tristan about what had happened to Ysabelle.

Both Tristan and Felix immediately drove to Jipsdale Premier High.

Right after they got down from the car, they rushed to the infirmary.

"Belle, are you okay?" Felix instantly checked on her upon entering the infirmary.

"I'm fine! I really am. Look, don't I look fine? You really don't need to be this nervous."

Tristan glanced at Ysabelle to make sure she was actually fine, but he did not say anything else.

“What about you? Are you hurt?”

Sophie shook her head.

“I’m fine.”

No one could hurt her easily anymore.

“Come on. Bring Ysabelle to the hospital for a checkup.”

After all, Ysabelle had fallen down the stairs. Having her undergo a checkup would put the others at ease.

Ysabelle then climbed down from the bed. She knew that the three of them would not let her go if she did not go to the hospital, so she had no choice but to agree to it.

When Felix realized that Ysabelle was about to walk to the car on her own, he quickly stopped her.

“I’ll carry you.”

Ysabelle rolled her eyes at him.

I’m not crippled. I don’t need anyone to carry me! Unfortunately, Felix did not give her a chance to reject him as he swiftly scooped her up in his arms.

Tristan heard that Ysabelle was hurt, so he only drove a car over.

After Felix carried Ysabelle into that car, Tristan had no choice but to open the door to the front passenger seat for Sophie before sitting in the driver's seat.

"Don't worry. Ysabelle's fine," Tristan consoled Sophie.

"Mr. Tristan, the one who's hurt is your niece," Sophie said. He should've taken the matter more seriously, shouldn't he?

"I'm glad that you weren't the one hurt," Tristan said it naturally.

Sophie did not know how to respond to that.

Unlike her, Felix cried out, "Mr. Tristan, that's too much! We can't have Belle hurt either!"

"Uncle Tristan, do you recently have an issue with me?"

Bailey had been outside the entire time, so when he saw them entering the car, he ran over and asked, "Sophie, how's Ysabelle?"

"She's fine. We're going to the hospital so she could get a checkup."

"Is there anything I can help out with?"

Bailey felt that his presence there was unnecessary, but he, too, wanted to help out.

"It's fine."

"Are we going to leave yet?" Tristan asked, shooting Bailey an impatient look.

He vaguely remembered the other young man.

“Yes.”

Tristan then drove off after Sophie gave a nod.

Even after they were long gone, Bailey was still staring in the direction the Lamborghini had headed.

“Who is he? Why is he here?” Felix asked warily. He can’t be one of Belle’s suitors, right?

“He’s Bailey Dixon. He’s a smart student,” Ysabelle replied, quite impressed by Bailey.

Tristan ignored the two in the backseat.

Once they reached the hospital, Felix bought Ysabelle for a checkup.

In the meantime, Tristan and Sophie waited by the chairs in the waiting area.

Both were individuals of few words.

Tristan had tons of questions bubbling in his mind, but since Sophie was saying nothing, he decided not to ask anything.

“Mr. Tristan, Ysabelle was hurt because of me. But don’t worry. I’ll deal with this.” Sophie would rather settle her own affairs by herself than have others intervene in the matter.

“Sophie, what am I to you?”

“Mr. Tristan?” Sophie frowned, wondering what he was trying to tell her.

“You’re always insisting on dealing with your personal matters on your own and never letting me help you out. I don’t think you’ve ever thought of me as someone you can rely on. Am I right?”

After a pause, he muttered, “Sorry. I shouldn’t say these things to you.”

Tristan had never lost his composure like that before.

He was a merciless and efficient man in the corporate world.

Yet, he was losing control of his emotions around Sophie.

“I...”

What had happened five years ago had made Sophie aware that the only person she could rely on at all times was herself.

That was why she had been brought to the hell-like training camp after meeting Arius at Horington.

There, she had come into contact with many unbelievable matters.

By the time she gained all those abilities, Sophie was already used to relying on herself.

Tristan sighed.

“What am I going to do about you?”

Two hours later, Ysabelle was done with her checkup.

“Mr. Tristan, Willow must have a death wish. I can’t believe she tried to push Sophie down the stairs!”
At that moment, Felix wanted nothing more than to tear Willow from limb to limb.

“You don’t need to concern yourself with that anymore.”

“Mr. Tristan, what do you mean? She hurt Belle!”

One look from Tristan made Felix instantly shut up.

“Soph, I think we should teach Willow a lesson too. Who knows what she’s going to do next?”

“Mm, don’t worry. Now that I know you’re fine, I’m in the mood to play this game with her.”

Sophie had both old and new grudges against Willow, and she was not going to let her off easily.

As Ysabelle was hurt, she did not attend the night self-study session.

Tristan had applied for leave on behalf of Ysabelle and Sophie.

Ysabelle did not want her family to find out that she had fallen down the stairs, so she went to stay over at Wisteria Apartments.

“Belle, come to my place! There are only you and Sophie here. No one will be able to take care of you.”

“I don’t want to. I want to stay here with Soph!” Ysabelle said in determination.

“Then I’ll stay too.”

“Why are you staying here? There’s no room for you.” The units at Wisteria Apartments were lofts of over two hundred square meters, but there were only three bedrooms in them.

"I don't mind! I can sleep on the couch." Felix really did not mind.

"Mr. Tristan, let me stay and keep Belle company!"

"She doesn't need you to take care of her," Tristan rejected.

Felix let out a sigh.

At that very second, he felt as if he was at the lowest level of the food chain.

In the end, Felix shamelessly stayed at Wisteria Apartments.

After dinner, Sophie received a call from Josiah.

"Soph, that boy from the Laird family is back. Are you okay?" the elderly man worriedly asked.

"Grandpa, nothing happened between Mason and me. You don't need to worry about me. He won't affect me."

"Yes, of course. Tanny is way better than that Laird boy in every way," Josiah remarked.

The boy from the Laird family had not chosen to stand on Soph's side during the incident five years ago, so he has lost the chance to do so now.

"Grandpa."

Sophie felt helpless. Why did he bring up Tristan?

"Drink some water." Tristan brought a glass of water to Sophie.

When Josiah heard Tristan's voice, he excitedly cried out, "Soph, Tristan's right beside you, right? Let him answer the phone! I want to talk to him for a bit!"

Sophie was speechless at that.

"What can you possibly talk to him about, Grandpa?"

Ysabelle thought, The two of them have only met each other for a few times, haven't they?

"Just hand him the phone."

Sophie had always gone along with Josiah's requests as long as they were not ridiculous, so she handed the phone to Tristan.

"My grandpa wants to have a word with you."

Tristan took the phone from her.

"Hello, this is Tanny. It's been a while." Tristan did not lower himself that much, but the hint of respect in his tone was audible.

Chapter 102 No Match For You

"Tanny?" Felix could not believe that he had just heard Tristan call himself that.

Ysabelle thought, It seems like Uncle Tristan is quite serious about his relationship with Sophie. It's my first time seeing Uncle Tristan being so polite with someone. He's not even like that when talking to his own grandpa!

“Tanny, come and visit me with Soph when you’re free.” Josiah truly liked Tristan, and he felt that Tristan would be able to protect Sophie well.

“Okay, Old Mr. Tanner. I’ll definitely visit you with Sophie when I get the chance to.”

“Okay. Do take care of Soph.”

Josiah talked to Tristan for a dozen minutes before asking the latter to return the phone to Sophie.

“Soph, I think Tanny’s not a bad choice. He’s a hundred times better than Mason.”

“Grandpa, he’s more than a hundred times better than Mason,” Sophie replied. In fact, Mr. Tristan and Mason aren’t even on the same level. There’s no need to even use the same standards to compare them.

“That’s right. You’re right!” Josiah was at ease to hear Sophie say that.

Regardless of how things were between Mason and Willow, Mason was no longer associated with Sophie.

Moreover, Josiah could see that Tristan was treating Sophie sincerely, and that was enough for him.

“Remember to come and visit me when you’re free.”

“Okay, I’ll come and visit you in a few days.” Arius had not returned from Anglandur yet. Once Arius was back, Sophie planned to find a chance to get her grandfather to go for a full-body checkup.

He still had to undergo the surgery, and Sophie was confident in Arius.

Once the call ended, Sophie sat down beside Ysabelle.

“Does it still hurt?”

Ysabelle chuckled. “Soph, I’m fine. It doesn’t hurt anymore.”

Although Ysabelle tended to act like a spoiled princess, the pain she felt was overcome by her desire to protect Sophie from harm.

“Tsk. I wonder who was the one shedding tears when their wounds were getting treated earlier,” Felix pointed out mercilessly.

Ysabelle kicked his waist.

“D*mn it, Felix. Are you trying to embarrass me?”

“Look at how lively she is. She’s fine. You don’t need to worry about her,” Tristan said nonchalantly.

Ysabelle was speechless.

Fine. I no longer exist in Uncle Tristan’s heart as long as Sophie’s around, then I guess I shouldn’t embarrass myself further.

“Okay. I’ll go to sleep if there’s nothing else.”

Sophie then stood up to return to her room.

“Mr. Tristan, I’ve never seen you being so humble and polite with anyone else. It seems like you’re really planning to get Sophie.”

Tristan ignored him.

At that, Felix scratched his nose awkwardly.

“To be honest, Sophie isn’t a match for you in terms of background.”

It was highly likely that William would disapprove of them if the two of them were to get together.

However, Ysabelle was the first to voice her disagreement.

“Felix, what are you trying to say? Which part of Soph isn’t a match for Uncle Tristan? Even if one of them isn’t a match for the other, it would be Uncle Tristan not being a good match for Soph. He’s ten years older than her!” Ysabelle cried out agitatedly.

Then, she belatedly realized that her uncle was staring at her, looking as if he was about to murder her.

Instantly, Ysabelle hid behind Felix.

“Uncle Tristan, that isn’t what I mean. It’s just that...” she explained to her uncle.

This is all Felix’s fault! Uncle Tristan looks so scary right now! What am I going to do? Sophie’s already back in her room, so no one can save me!

“Felix, don’t say something like this again. I’m the one with the final say, and if I think she’s a match for me, then she’s a match for me.” No one else’s words were going to change Tristan’s mind.

“Okay, I got it.”

Felix had been working for Tristan for over a decade. How could he possibly not know Tristan’s character?

Unlike most people, the angrier Tristan was, the calmer he appeared to be.

At that moment, Tristan was livid, and it was because Felix said that Sophie was not a match for him.

“Go to bed.”

“Okay.”

Upon receiving Tristan’s order, Ysabelle leaped from the couch and rushed to her room.

Oh, thank god! Thank god Uncle Tristan didn’t seem to mind what I said.

When the two men were the only ones left, Tristan asked in a nonchalant tone, “Felix, am I old?”

“Holy sh*t!” Felix was stumped. What’s the matter with Mr. Tristan? Can he stop scaring me? “Mr. Tristan, you’re only twenty-eight! You’re at the peak of your youth; you’re at the prime years of a man’s life!”

“Peak of my youth?”

“That isn’t important; what’s important is that, Mr. Tristan, do you know how many women are after you? I can’t believe you just said that you’re old. Please stop scaring me!”

“What’s the point of having many women after me? I just want one.”

Felix fell silent.

If Jipsdale’s female socialites hear what he just said, I wonder how many would choose to jump off buildings. It’s only now that I know Mr. Tristan is such a faithful and devoted man despite the fact that

I've worked for him for so many years.

"Mr. Tristan, don't you think that you've fallen for her too quickly? Could it be that you're only feeling this way because she saved you?"

"Am I you? Am I someone who doesn't even know whether or not I love someone?"

Felix widened his eyes. Did I offend him in any way? All I did was fall for Ysabelle! Forget it. I don't dare to retort him.

The next morning, Sophie woke up and went to get a glass of water. Just as she stepped out of the room, she encountered Tristan.

Sophie had just woken up, so she had a relaxed look on her face. As the collar of her nightgown was too loose, the gown was slanted to one side, revealing her smooth shoulder to all.

Her pretty collarbones were a deadly attraction to Tristan.

Upon seeing the man in front of her, Sophie was abruptly reminded of how her house had two men staying in it.

Just as she was about to return to her room to change her clothes, Tristan pinned her against the wall behind her.

When she was locked in place, Sophie lifted her beautiful eyes to look at the man, who clearly just woke up as well.

"Mr. Tristan..." Sophie voiced, and she was surprised to hear her own voice. It was not that she was doing it deliberately.

However, there was already a fire burning in Tristan's eyes. Sophie's morning voice sounded soothing and soft.

Hearing that made the lower part of his abdomen tighten as another part of his body awakened.

“Ahem.” Sophie averted her eyes, not daring to meet his eyes anymore.

Tristan then lowered his head and planted a kiss on her forehead.

Sophie bit her bottom lip, wondering, Is he trying to add fuel to the fire?

When the man saw the young woman bit on her pink lower lip, he felt as if he had been electrified.

Then, as he supported himself with one hand against the wall, he used his other hand to pull her nightgown’s collar together.

Sophie’s heart was beating quicker and quicker as he adjusted the collar for her.

“Put on your clothes properly. I’m not as much as a gentleman you think I am.” The truth was that Tristan had been holding himself back with great difficulty.

After a moment of silence, she replied, “Sorry. I’ve slept my mind away and forgotten that you and Felix are here.”

Sophie had been staying in that house alone recently, and since she had had a good night’s sleep the night before, she had completely forgotten that there were two men staying in her house.

Tristan then pressed a kiss on her lips as punishment.

“Am I someone you’ll forget that easily?”

Sophie was rendered speechless. Fine! Mr. Tristan’s quite petty. I did say I’m still groggy.

Right then, Ysabelle came out of her room and happened to see her uncle kissing Sophie as he pinned her against the wall. Instantly, she panicked.

What am I going to do now? Do I get back into my room, or should I greet them as if nothing has happened?

Nevertheless, before she could come to a decision, Sophie spotted her.

Chapter 103 The Terrifying Sophie

Following Sophie's gaze, Tristan turned around and saw Ysabelle.

"Ah! I didn't see anything. Really, I saw nothing at all!" Ysabelle declared as she covered her eyes.

Will he kill me to bury the secret? The look in Uncle Tristan's eyes is really terrifying.

"Both of you should head down first, while I take a shower," Tristan suggested before returning to his room.

Sophie was speechless.

Ysabelle defended herself, "Soph, I really didn't see anything. Please beg Uncle Tristan on my behalf to let me live."

"Way to go."

"Boohoo... Don't you love me anymore? Are you just going to stand idly by? And to think that I have always been worried about you." Ysabelle was depressed.

“There, there. Don’t worry. You’ll be fine, as I’m here for you.”

Sophie’s words finally eased Ysabelle’s concerns.

“You’re still the best, Soph. I love you,” Ysabelle confessed brazenly.

Felix, who had gone out to get breakfast for everyone, walked in on the intimate scene upon his return.

F*ck, have I been cheated on?

“What are both of you doing?” A long while passed before Felix managed to find his voice.

Ysabelle released Sophie before shooting him a glare.

“It’s none of your business.”

“D*mn it, Ysabelle. Why are you being snarky to me recently? What have I done to deserve such treatment?”

“Your existence itself is a mistake.”

Felix responded with silence while standing rooted to his spot. In that instant, the dejection in his eyes was obvious to Ysabelle.

For a second, she regretted her action, and she realized that she shouldn’t have said such harsh words to him.

Just when she wanted to apologize, Felix told them to head downstairs for breakfast and left after dropping his words.

Ysabelle could feel a squeeze in her heart.

What's wrong with me recently? Why am I always getting on Felix's nerves? He isn't a short-tempered man. But this time, it seems that I've really hurt him.

"Let's go down and have breakfast," Sophie said. Who knows how long Tristan will take to shower? Besides, we still have to go to school.

"Mmm-hmm!" Ysabelle followed Sophie downstairs.

When he saw them coming, Felix laid out the breakfast he bought on the table.

"Where's Mr. Tristan? Is he not taking his breakfast?" Felix couldn't help but ask.

Given that he was hurt by Ysabelle's harsh words, he needed Tristan to heal that wounded soul of his.

"Uncle Tristan has gone back to his room to take a shower." Ysabelle took the initiative to answer, hoping to salvage the situation.

Even though she had spoken politely, Felix simply grunted in acknowledgment.

When Ysabelle looked to Sophie for help, the latter, as someone who was no different from a brute, was equally clueless as to how she should console Felix.

After being insulted that way by someone he likes, he must be devastated.

"Anyway, I need to go first, as I have something to do. Please inform Mr. Tristan on my behalf." Felix picked up a bagel and took a bite but still couldn't bring himself to swallow it. Getting to his feet, he prepared to leave.

"Felix..." Ysabelle called out to him. He's really pissed now. What should I do?

"I'm fine. I won't disturb you today. You should focus on your studies."

Just as Felix spoke, he grabbed his jacket and left.

Ysabelle, too, put down the bagel in her hand.

"Eat it! Why aren't you eating it?" Sophie questioned. So what if he's furious? I bet he will come crawling back to Ysabelle before the day ends.

"I'm not hungry. You eat. Soph, do you think what I said just now was too much? I've hurt him, haven't I?"

"Ysabelle, he's definitely hurt. However, if you're asking me for advice, I honestly have no idea."

After all, she barely had any experience when it came to dealing with a romantic relationship.

She just felt that Mason was a good guy, but both of them never really got together.

Therefore, she truly didn't have an answer to Ysabelle's question.

"Forget it. Asking you is a waste of time." Just like her, Sophie was a greenhorn when it came to relationships. Hence, Ysabelle knew that it was pointless to seek her opinion.

Sophie continued chewing on her bagel.

When Tristan came down and didn't see Felix, he asked curiously, "Where's Felix?"

"He left after I got on his nerves."

“Oh, let him be then.” Tristan didn’t want to get involved in matters between them. After all, no one should interfere when it came to matters regarding love.

Even though he was of the opinion that both of them were made for each other, he wouldn’t poke his nose into their business.

Tristan picked up the coffeepot and poured some for Sophie who didn’t decline, as it was one of her favorite drinks.

Once breakfast was over, Tristan cleaned the table before going downstairs with them.

“Uncle Tristan, I...”

Ysabelle felt that she would be tormented the entire day if she didn’t resolve things with Felix.

“What is it?” Tristan could read her mind. Nevertheless, he felt that she deserved a lesson, for he, too, couldn’t tolerate her recent treatment of Felix.

“It’s nothing.”

In the end, she chose to swallow her words.

Whatever. Felix and I aren’t a good match for each other anyway. I’m not going to give it any more thought.

After her misdeeds the previous day, Willow was really afraid of running into Sophie, for she was familiar with Sophie’s ways of handling things. Therefore, she tried her best to hide in class and not go out.

Unfortunately, she was still human at the end of the day. Unable to hold her pee in any longer, she headed to the restroom.

In the end, she ran into the one person she was avoiding. Murphy's law was truly at play.

Willow straightened her back. There's nothing to fear, as we're in school. Sophie won't dare to do anything to me here. Besides, there are still a lot of people around.

Nonetheless, Sophie continued to follow her from behind without saying a word.

The longer she continued to do so, the more anxious Willow became.

Unable to withstand it any longer, she walked to a corner with no one around.

"Sophie, what are you trying to do? Don't forget that we're at school."

"So what? Do you think I wouldn't dare touch you just because we're at school? Willow, I must admit that you're so naïve that it's actually laughable."

She hurt Ysabelle, and she's not going to get away with it.

Given Sophie's character, Willow knew that revenge would definitely be served.

"What do you want to do? Other than some grazes, Ysabelle is fine. It's not like you're going to kill me."

Willow would never believe that Sophie was capable of murder.

"Sophie, let me warn you. The school corridors are monitored by surveillance cameras. Come at me if you dare." Truth be told, Willow was terrified. Nevertheless, she remained defiant when facing Sophie.

No matter what, she was one of the proud daughters of the Tanner family too.

As Sophie approached her step by step, she reached out and grabbed Willow by the neck.

“Kill? Willow, do you think I’ve not killed before? I’ve already warned you to stay away from me if you value your life. However, you just don’t get it, do you? I’ve yet to hold you accountable for what happened five years ago. And now, you’re desperately trying to get on my nerves? What’s wrong with you? Are you really not afraid of death?”

As the breaths Willow took grew increasingly smaller, the horror of suffocation took over her being. In that instant, she saw death looking right in her face.

Taken aback by Sophie’s brazenness to attack her in school, Willow was stricken by fear.

Flailing her arms hysterically, she desperately tried to free herself from Sophie’s death grip.

She’s terrifying! Sophie is just too terrifying!

Chapter 104 Bridal Carry

Just when Willow thought she was done for, Sophie finally released her grip on the former’s neck.

“Remember, stay out of my way. If you see Ysabelle, run. Otherwise, I won’t show you any more mercy.”

Sophie shoved her to the ground when she finished speaking.

Willow gasped for air desperately, her face pale as a sheet. There was no doubt in her mind that she would have met her maker in less than a minute if Sophie had not released her grip.

Enveloped by a sense of fear and asphyxia, Willow took out her phone and gave Mason a call.

When the latter saw it was her, he ended the call and continued going through his documents.

In spite of that, his phone rang again the next second.

In the end, Mason relented, for Willow had saved his life once, obligating him to help her to the best of his abilities.

“Mason, save me. I’m about to die.” Willow’s sobbing voice rang out the moment the call was connected.

Mason’s brows furrowed.

“What happened? Where are you? Don’t panic. I’ll head over right now.”

Mason drove straight to Jipsdale Premier High where the guard at the entrance forbade him from driving in. Left without a choice, he got out of his car and entered the school on foot.

His gaze darkened when he saw Willow collapsed by the stairs.

As for Willow, she burst into tears at the sight of him.

“Mason, I thought that I would never see you again. Death was knocking on my door just now.” Willow was trembling all over, for the fear she felt was real.

Mason wrinkled his brows.

“Willow, tell me what happened.” As they were on the school grounds, the school administration had to take responsibility in the event a student was hurt.

“Mason, I’m really scared. I thought I would really die.”

His heart softened when he saw how violently Willow was shaking. Mason then carried her in his arms.

"I'll send you to the hospital first. We'll talk about it after you get examined."

As Willow wrapped her arms around his neck, Mason brought her downstairs.

"Mason, don't leave me. I'm afraid when I'm alone."

Mason didn't answer, as he could never give her what she truly desired.

When the students saw the dashing Mason carry Willow away, they gossiped amongst themselves.

"Oh my God! He's really handsome!"

"Don't you know? He used to be a legend in Jipsdale Premier High. I heard that he and Willow are a couple!"

"Mmm-hmm. I was told of it too. I even heard that Sophie also fancies Mason."

"Sophie must be dreaming. He's out of her league!"

"Precisely. Mason and Willow are a match made in heaven!"

"I'm so envious of her bridal carry! I wish I was the one in his arms."

"Say, why would Willow get hurt? Could it be that Sophie hurt her? Sophie has been jealous of her, hasn't she?"

"I think Sophie must be the one who hurt her. Just a while ago, you missed how terrified Willow looked."

“Sophie is really wicked. Who does she think she is?”

“All of you should shut up. I’ll smack whoever that makes another sound.”

Ysabelle could no longer tolerate the harsh comments.

Who the f*ck is Mason? There’s no way Soph is interested in him. Uncle Tristan is way better than him!

“Ysabelle, you had better stay away from her. Look, she even dares to strike her own sister.”

“Shut your trap.”

Ysabelle was incompetent at verbal insults. Hence, that was the best she could manage out of her limited vocabulary.

Meanwhile, Sophie came over and swept a calm gaze across the girls.

“Mason? Not my cup of tea.” With that, she held Ysabelle’s arm and left.

“Soph, don’t mind their words.” Ysabelle was worried that the snide remarks would hurt her.

Even though Sophie had nerves of steel, Ysabelle still sympathized with her upon hearing the comments.

“Mmm-hmm. I’m not bothered by them. Besides, they were not wrong. I was the one who roughed up Willow,” she bravely admitted.

“It was because of me, wasn’t it?” Ysabelle, too, felt that Willow had it coming.

“I just can’t bear the sight of her. Anyway, let’s get back to class.” After Sophie helped Ysabelle back to the classroom, the fourth period began.

Upon hearing the news of Willow being hurt, Yale and Charmaine rushed over.

Both of them heaved a sigh of relief at the sight of Mason.

Ever since Mason returned, his attitude toward Willow was colder than before, causing them to worry that their relationship had taken a turn for the worse.

But now that he was by Willow's side, it was a sign that he still cared for her.

"Thank you, Mason."

Mason merely nodded before making way for them.

"Willa, what happened? How did you get hurt?"

"Mom, it's Soph. I have no idea why she did this to me."

"What? Sophie? That's audacious of her!" Yale bellowed. "What in the world is she trying to do?"

"Dad, I'm as clueless as you are!"

Willow put on an innocent look as she sneaked a glance in Mason's direction, hoping to learn his thoughts about the matter.

However, all she could see was a frown on his face.

"Willow, I'm sure there must be a misunderstanding. I know Sophie isn't capable of such a thing."

“Mason, why don’t you believe me? Are you saying that I’m making false accusations against her?” Willow was on the brink of tears. How can he not trust me?

“I just think that she’s not a bad person.”

“In that case, are you saying that I’m the one that’s bad?”

Willow summoned her tears at will to cement her pitiable look.

“All right. I’ll get to the bottom of the matter. You should rest at home for the next few days instead of going to school.”

Feeling annoyed, Mason was in no mood to continue the topic.

“Mason...”

Willow felt indignant. Even though I have ended up in the hospital, he still refuses to stay by my side.

“Willa, Mason has just returned to the country and probably has a lot on his plate. So, you shouldn’t get in his way.”

Just as Yale spoke, he stood up to walk Mason out, leaving Charmaine and Willow in the ward.

“Willa, was it really Soph?”

Willow gave her mother a pained look. “Mom, what’s that supposed to mean? Do you also think that I’m framing Sophie?”

“That’s not what I meant. I just don’t want both of you to ruin your relationship over a man.”

"I'm not!" Willow was infuriated. Even my own mother doesn't believe me.

"Fine. Let's just forget it. Going forward, don't step on Sophie's toes. Instead, focus your efforts on staying by Mason's side."

Speechless, Willow was further outraged by her mother's words. Still, she wouldn't dare get on Sophie's nerves anymore.

Recalling the fearless look on Sophie's face, Willow believed that the former would really carry out her threats to kill her.

By the time Mason returned to his office, he had lost the mood to work.

He then drove aimlessly around Jipsdale until it was five. Eventually, he still failed to keep control of himself and headed toward Jipsdale Premier High.

He waited inside the car, feeling the need to have a proper talk with Sophie, as they didn't have the opportunity to do so the last time.

Finally, after three complex experiments, Aaron dismissed Bailey and Sophie from class.

When both of them came out for dinner, Mason's car was right in front of them.

"What's wrong?" Bailey couldn't help but ask when Sophie stopped in her tracks.

Chapter 105 Tristan Has No Interest In Girls

At the sight of her, Mason quickly alighted and approached her.

"Sophie, let's have dinner together." There were certain words that he needed to say to her in person.

Bailey scrutinized the man in front of him. Isn't he Willow's boyfriend? Why is he here to see Sophie at a time like this?

"You must be here to question me about hitting Willow, right? There's no need to do it over a meal, as I can give you an answer straight away. I wanted to teach her a lesson just because I don't like her face. How about that? Are you happy with the answer? If you are, you can get out of my way now."

All this while, my words never matter to him, so why even bother? Since he didn't believe me five years ago, it's meaningless for him to say anything now.

"Sophie, I really have something to tell you. Can you listen to me for once? Are things between us so bad that we can't even have a meal together?"

"I'm sorry, but the sight of you makes me lose my appetite."

Mason was at a loss for words as he felt a squeeze in his heart.

Has our relationship deteriorated to such an extent?

"I know you're not able to get over what happened five years ago. But don't you worry. I'll make sure you get the justice you deserve."

"Mason, I don't need you to interfere in my affairs. And what's this talk about seeking justice for me? Do you think you're some kind of superhero?"

"Sophie, let's go. We still have to attend a self-study session at night," Bailey reminded, as they had yet to have their dinner.

Sophie nodded before leaving with him.

After being spurned by Sophie, Mason leaned against the car door. Regardless of what he said, she refused to listen to him.

Meanwhile, Willow's friends sent her a message when they coincidentally spotted Mason meeting with Sophie.

After that, they walked up to him.

"Mr. Laird, you're back. You must stand up for Willa. Sophie is just too much. She always acts as if she owns the place."

"That's right! All she does is bully Willa. I bet she's jealous of both of you being together."

"Mmm-hmm, Mr. Laird, Sophie is a terrible person."

When he heard how they disparaged Sophie, an excruciating pain surged in his heart.

All these years, she has suffered a tremendous amount of insults alone. And yet, I chose to leave her behind after that incident and let her carry the burden by herself.

"Going forward, don't ever let me hear you badmouth Sophie. Also, Willow and I are not in a relationship."

"Mr. Laird..."

The girls couldn't believe their ears.

"What do you mean? Are you dumping Willa?"

"Yea! How can you do that? Willa waited for you for five years. Now that you're finally back, how can you just abandon her?"

Willow's friends felt bad for her.

Having no intention to waste time arguing with a bunch of girls, Mason turned around in exasperation and returned to his car.

Upon receiving the message, Willow flung her phone at the wall, causing its screen to shatter when it dropped to the floor.

"Sophie!" Willow clenched her teeth. Why does she always mess up my life? Why didn't she just die in Horington?

Willow's pretty face contorted in anger, as the urge to tear Sophie to pieces swelled within her.

The next day in school, Ysabelle pulled Sophie aside, causing the latter to cock her brows.

What is she up to?

"Soph, accompany me to Lombard Group this afternoon."

"Why?" Sophie was puzzled.

"I'm bringing Uncle Tristan and the others lunch." Felix had ignored her for two days. Realizing the folly of her actions, she planned to tell him that she was sorry.

"The others? Do you mean Felix?"

Sophie knew what Ysabelle was up to. I bet she wants to apologize to him.

"Mmm-hmm."

“All right then.”

During the noon break, Sophie and Ysabelle picked up the food from Pegasus Pavilion before hailing a taxi to Lombard Group.

As it was Ysabelle’s first time there, both of them were stopped by the receptionist because she didn’t recognize them.

“I’m Ysabelle Lombard. Tristan is my uncle, so let me in.” Ysabelle felt helpless. It was understandable that the receptionist didn’t know her, but no matter how much time she spent explaining, the former just refused to believe her.

Sophie watched them argue for a while before finally giving Tristan a call.

When Tristan picked up, he and Felix were already having lunch outside.

Nonetheless, he was not only surprised to receive her call but also delighted by it.

“Mr. Tristan, where are you? Ysabelle and I are in the lobby of Lombard Group. Are you here?”

“What?”

“We brought you food,” Sophie patiently explained.

“Food? All right. Just stay there. I’m coming back right away.”

After ending the call, Tristan grabbed his suit jacket and prepared to leave.

“Mr. Tristan, where are you going? We haven’t even started eating.” Felix got to his feet and hurried after Tristan.

“You guys should continue. I need to head back to the office.”

Charles asked, “What’s wrong? Is Lombard Group going bankrupt?”

Sean added, “You think? It definitely has something to do with Ms. Sophie.”

Only that girl possesses such a hold on him.

Felix was rendered speechless.

Forget it. After all, I’m just someone who’s being resented. Despite all my efforts, Ysabelle doesn’t appreciate me at all.

In the meantime, Ysabelle was disheartened by the fact that she was barred from entering Lombard Group even though she was a Lombard.

“Let’s just sit over there. I’ve called Mr. Tristan to come and pick us up.”

Sophie dragged Ysabelle to the lounge of the lobby.

“Girls, Lombard Group isn’t the place for you to mess around. Can both of you please leave?”

If management sees the two students here, we’ll lose our jobs!

“You had better not go too far! Didn’t I tell you that I’m here to see Mr. Tristan?” Ysabelle raged.

"I know that Mr. Tristan is the epitome of a man and is irresistibly charming. However, he has no interest in women at all, so please leave!"

Ysabelle snapped, "Does my uncle know that you think of him that way?"

Having no interest in women? Is she really talking about Uncle Tristan?

Sophie was speechless.

Tristan isn't interested in women? In that case, was it a phantom that hit on me?

"It's true. There has never been a woman by Mr. Tristan's side. Both of you should just give up."

Tristan, who had just returned, was walking up to the girls when he overheard the receptionist's comments.

How can she say something like that in front of the girl I fancy? Tristan's face turned grim.

"Mr. Tristan?"

Not expecting Tristan to come back at that time, the receptionist was shocked to the core.

"Mr. Tristan, these two girls insist on seeing you. I'm in the midst of getting them to leave." The receptionist finally found her voice.

"There is no need to. Come, let's go up to the ninetieth floor." Tristan took over the food the two girls brought. "This is Ms. Tanner. When she comes to see me next time, please escort her straight to my office on the ninetieth floor."

The receptionist was dumbstruck, as Sophie was the first ever girl allowed to do that.

Chapter 106 Mesmerizing Beauty

“Who is that girl? Why does Mr. Tristan allow her direct access to the ninetieth floor?”

“Exactly! Even his mother has to call him before she’s allowed to go up.”

“Given her age, can she be Mr. Tristan’s niece?”

“How is that possible? How would his niece have Tanner as a surname?”

“So? Is she supposed to be his girlfriend? But I have never heard that he has one. Don’t you dare give me a shock like that.”

Ysabelle and Sophie followed Tristan into the CEO’s private elevator. Ysabelle was disappointed because she didn’t see Felix around.

“Uncle Tristan, where’s Felix? Isn’t he with you?” Ysabelle finally got the burning question off her chest.

“Oh, he didn’t come to the office today.” Even though Felix stayed by his side to gain experience, there were many times the former had to deal with the Northley family’s affairs.

“Really?” Ysabelle expressed her doubt. “So be it. I want to see how long he can stay angry for.”

After she had painstakingly made the decision to come here, he ended up being absent.

With that, Ysabelle decided she couldn’t be bothered anymore.

“Soph, I’m not feeling well, and I’ll head back first. You should stay for lunch.” The moment they came out of the elevator, Ysabelle decided to go back.

“What? Weren’t you fine just a moment ago? Why are you feeling under the weather all of a sudden? In that case, I had better go with you.”

It would be so weird for me to eat with Tristan here alone.

“You should have lunch with Uncle Tristan. I’m taking my leave.” Before Sophie could react, Ysabelle reentered the elevator and pressed the button for the lobby.

Subsequently, the elevator doors closed in front of her.

So, what’s going to happen now?

“Let’s eat,” Tristan suggested, leaving Sophie no choice but to follow him.

After leading her to his private suite, Tristan laid the food she brought out on the table.

As Ysabelle had bought enough food for four, Sophie and Tristan were shocked to see how much there was.

“Let’s dig in. After that, you can even take a nap,” Tristan said. No matter how busy senior year is, an afternoon nap is still important.

After taking her seat, Sophie began to eat.

Nevertheless, there was no way they were able to finish the huge amount of food in front of them.

At the same time, Tristan obviously knew that the food was from Pegasus Pavilion after tasting it.

Once they were done with lunch, Sophie wanted to leave, as she had no idea what she was even doing there.

Tristan then handed her a glass of water after clearing the table.

Meanwhile, Sophie felt tired and sluggish after having spent the entire night helping Butterfly resolve an issue.

When he saw how sleepy she was, Tristan suggested, “Why don’t you get some sleep? I’ll wake you at two.”

“I think I should go.”

“Just take a nap. I’ll send you back later.”

Without protesting any further, Sophie easily found her way to the bedroom and lay down on Tristan’s bed.

The room was designed with a minimalistic theme, while the bed sheets were jet black in color. Upon lying down, Sophie could instantly feel how comfortable the luxurious fabric was.

For some inexplicable reason, she felt that the black sheets were part of Tristan’s unique taste.

Before she knew it, she had gradually fallen into a deep sleep on Tristan’s bed.

When he entered the room and saw how soundly she was sleeping, Tristan was filled with a sudden sense of satisfaction.

At that moment, Sophie was curled up in bed without her school jacket on. She had taken off her jacket before she napped.

When he saw the grimace on her face, Tristan furrowed his brows. What's she dreaming about?

Walking over, Tristan kneeled by the bed and held her hand.

With his other hand, he gently patted her on the shoulder.

Sophie, who was having a nightmare, gradually calmed down. The painful look on her face was then replaced by a blissful smile.

Tristan stayed by her side for a long while.

It wasn't until he was sure she was sleeping better that he got up from the bed and observed her.

In that instant, he was filled with an overwhelming sense of contentment just from watching her sleep.

Sophie, too, didn't expect that she was able to sleep that soundly.

By the time she was awake, it was already half-past three. Walking out of the bedroom, she saw Tristan working in the living room.

Given how engrossed he was with work, Sophie didn't feel like disturbing him and planned to slip out quietly. In the end, he looked up before she could even take two steps.

"Come here."

For some inexplicable reason, Sophie had never liked to be ordered around.

Nevertheless, she quietly obeyed his words at that very moment.

When Tristan extended his hand toward her, she gave him a baffled look, which elicited a delightful smile from him.

Before she knew it, he pulled her over to sit by his side.

“Don’t worry. I’ve already applied for leave on your behalf. There’s no need for you to return to class in the afternoon.”

“Didn’t you promise to wake me? Why didn’t you?” Sophie had just woken up from a nap. Her languid voice was tinged with sensuality.

Tristan couldn’t help but pull her into his embrace and plant a kiss on her cheek.

“You’re so irresistible.”

When Sophie looked up at him, he could feel his being gravitate toward her.

Pulling her closer, he gave her lips a kiss.

By the time Sophie gathered her senses, she stared at him in surprise.

“Mr. Tristan.”

“Don’t let other men touch you, for it will drive me mad.”

He had initially wanted to give her more time, but whatever self-control he had would always falter in front of her.

Sophie blushed, her cheeks and ears turning as red as a tomato.

Enchanted by her coy response, Tristan was delighted.

Sophie gave him a look before wanting to get off him.

Whoever comes in and sees us will definitely get the wrong idea!

“Let go of me.”

Sophie began to worry, cognizant of Tristan’s naughty intentions.

In spite of that, he had always treated her with respect, causing her to forget that there was an uncompromising beast underneath that facade of the man.

Tristan kept her locked in his embrace.

“Do you hear me? I have no desire to wait any longer, as there are just too many men around you.”

With so many men coveting her, he was worried about losing her to someone else.

“No. What gives you the right to demand something like that from me?”

Her response intensified his refusal to release her.

“Sophie...”

Nonetheless, all he could do was sigh in the face of her defiance.

After all, he couldn’t even bring himself to raise his voice at her. Left without a choice, he personally walked her out.

As it was still within office hours, the office was filled with staff coming and going. The sight of Tristan escorting a girl in a school uniform in a protective manner triggered mass envy among the female employees of the company.

Coincidentally, Charles, with Winter in tow, had arrived at Lombard Group to hand a document over to Tristan. Much to their surprise, they ran into Sophie and Tristan, who were on their way out.

When Winter saw that both of them had come down from the ninetieth floor, her expression drastically changed.

Even I have never set foot in there. And yet, Sophie gets to access it with such ease?

“No wonder you left even though the dishes had already been served. I knew it had to be because of Sophie.” Charles couldn’t resist teasing him.

Chapter 107 What Is Her Relationship To Him

“That’s right. Who else could it be, aside from her?” Tristan was totally unabashed about his favoritism toward Sophie.

Hearing him say that gave Winter a feeling of tightness in her chest. It was as though she was suffocating from being throttled.

“It’s been a while, Mr. Tristan.”

Winter finally regained her own voice. No matter. It’s not too late so long as they are yet to marry.

Tristan merely acknowledge her with a nod.

“Let’s go and get this document signed then. A good thing that I got here in time too, as I wouldn’t know where else I’d be able to find you otherwise.”

“Stick around for a bit. I’ll drive you over later.” Tristan reiterated as he did not want her to leave on her own.

Only after he saw Sophie signal her agreement did Tristan take Charles upstairs. His personal seal had still been left on the ninetieth floor.

That left Winter and Sophie inside the lobby.

Not the chatty sort, to begin with, Sophie was not that fond of Winter either. Hence, she had no inclination to interact with the latter and simply sat there in silence while she waited.

That made Winter feel indignant.

A real snobbish one, aren’t you? You’re only getting to remain by Mr. Tristan’s side temporarily, and that’s it. What’s there for you to be so stuck up about?

“I heard that Transfix Cosmetics are making real progress under your stewardship, so congrats!” said Winter while she absentmindedly tousled her own hair.

Sophie merely grunted and made no attempt to build on the conversation.

“You’ve seen for yourself, Sophie. Mr. Tristan and you aren’t in the same league, no matter how much effort you put in. We ought to be aware of our own limitations so as not to make life any more difficult for ourselves than it needs to be.”

Hearing that elicited a chuckle from Sophie.

“Isn’t that the truth? Given your reputation, never mind the Lombard family, even the Laird family might not think much of you. Being as young as you are, you may not understand where I’m coming from, but I’m only saying this for your own good.”

“For my own good?” Sophie could not stifle a laugh. “Is it because you think that I’m young and impressionable, Ms. Quigley, or because you think I’m a moron? Aren’t you telling me these just to make me leave Mr. Tristan?”

That yielded a frown from Winter that the exquisite makeup on her face was unable to mask.

Yet, an instant later, she got that smile back up on her face.

“No. Sincerely, I only hope that you may be able to appreciate the reality of the situation for yourself.”

“Mr. Tristan, huh? Perhaps others may think that I’m unfit for him, but I, Sophie Tanner, am definitely good enough if that’s what I desire.”

Did she seriously believe that I’m some ignorant girl who could be brainwashed that easily?

“Don’t you know that there are many things in this world that are immutable and completely beyond your control, Ms. Tanner? Like, the status quo that you’re born into!”

“Ha!” replied Sophie with a sneer. “Are you that lacking in self-confidence? Having to bring in your family background to back you up even in matters of love?”

“Self-confidence? Do you believe that the people in high society do not care about these things? You did not strike me as such a naïve person, Ms. Tanner!”

A fling is something else, but when it comes to the question of marriage and having to spend the rest of your lives together, it will no longer be the concern of two individuals; It’s the business of two families.

“The Lombards are a family that you Tanners can never hope to get in with. Besides, you’re the notorious Ms. Sophie, an outcast even to your own family.”

“I see! It looks like I’m really not good enough for Mr. Tristan.” Sophie nodded as though in agreement. “But would you dare repeat what you’ve just said to Mr. Tristan? Why don’t you tell him that, and ask

him to stop pestering me? To be honest, I'm still very undecided about whether I want to be with him! Now that you've mentioned it, it got me thinking whether I should seriously consider our possibilities."

"Haha. Mr. Tristan, pestering you? I'm genuinely shocked, Sophie, by how far you'd go in making such outrageous claims."

Sophie was generally unenthused about continuing with this exchange.

"You should know better than anyone whether there's any truth to it. Have you ever been up to the ninetieth floor? It was Mr. Tristan who brought me there himself. Do you know the layout there?"

Initially, she did not want to bother with her, but the latter's relentless prodding made her decide to pile onto her counterpart's misery.

"You—"

That had Winter practically shaking with rage.

Sophie then firmly disengaged. When the receptionist who knew Sophie to be an important associate of Tristan saw that they were still there, she immediately brought her a glass of warm water.

"Have some water, Ms. Tanner."

"Thank you."

"I really wasn't aware that you are Mr. Tristan's girlfriend, Ms. Tanner, so please do not take it personally if I'd offended you in any way today." The lady from the front desk looked at her in concern, for it was a well-paying job that she could not afford to lose.

"It's fine. Don't worry about it." Putting herself in her counterpart's shoes, she understood that the receptionist was only doing her job, and thus she was not going to be petty about it.

"Then I shan't continue to disturb you." Hearing her response did much to set the receptionist's mind at ease. "Oh, would you mind putting in a good word on my behalf in front of Mr. Tristan as well? I really didn't mean to badmouth him." Seeing that Sophie was being more approachable, the receptionist made yet another overture.

She thought she must have been out of her mind today, declaring that Tristan was not interested in women, and in front of his girlfriend, at that.

Sophie was thoroughly taken aback by that request.

"I'm not his girlfriend, actually." Concerning that, Sophie thought it better to clarify.

The receptionist was baffled. Why would Mr. Tristan bring her up to the ninetieth floor if they weren't dating?

"They're not together," Winter chimed in immediately when she heard her counterpart say so. So, Mr. Tristan has never regarded Sophie as his girlfriend.

What Sophie said came to her as some relief.

"Ms. Quigley—" The receptionist certainly recognized Winter but was also aware that Tristan did not regard the latter in any exceptional way.

At that moment, Tristan stepped out of the elevator alongside Charles.

"You don't have to concern yourself with this matter anymore. I'd take care of it," said Charles as he walked. "Winter's really fond of you, Mr. Tristan. Though I know that you don't feel the same way about her, I just hope that you'd be able to let things slide on my account, no matter what she might attempt to do in the future," said Charles in disquietude when he saw how Winter and Sophie were, standing next to each other.

"We're buddies, Charles, so there's no need to say such things between us. I'd turn a blind eye, so long as she does not try to harm Sophie."

Having grown up together with Charles, he had few qualms about agreeing to such a request, conditional to Winter not wishing ill upon Sophie.

“Of course.”

Charles remained uneasy even with such verbal assurances, as Winter was persistent and had proved unreceptive to his own repeated warnings.

“All right. Let’s go!” Tristan sounded a little different from usual when he came up beside Sophie, being much more gentle in his tone when he spoke to her.

That did not sit well with Winter who was quietly infuriated.

“I think we should be taking our leave as well.”

She had insisted on accompanying me to the Lombard Group only to catch a glimpse of Tristan, so that ought to make her give up now!

“Charles, I...”

Winter felt profoundly aggrieved. All the effort I had put in was for the sake of keeping up with him. Sleeping no more than a few hours a day and working hard to get myself into a top university; all that was to make myself good enough for him. But what of him? Not once had he recognized the sacrifices that I had made.

“You can’t force love, Winter, so you ought to just give it up.” With the exception of Sophie, Mr. Tristan has never brought any woman up to the ninetieth floor. Doesn’t this make the issue obvious?

Chapter 108 Is Someone On Her Tail

Winter was truly and adamantly indignant about this state of affairs, but there was little she could do about it under the circumstances.

Old Mr. Lombard, though, would never be able to accept Sophie for her background, especially when Sophie herself is consistently dogged by a bad rep.

“Whatever the case, steer clear of Sophie, or even I would not be able to protect you.”

Though the Quigley family was considered among the four major families, there was still a considerable gap in the influence they wielded when compared to the Lombard family.

Under Tristan’s leadership, the Lombard family had already left the other three families lagging far behind, making Tristan someone not to be trifled with in the here and now.

“Okay. Got it. I won’t try to mess with her.” So long as I’m not the one moving against her directly, nobody can hold me responsible if someone else decided to do otherwise, could they?

She was certainly nobody’s fool.

Winter had always thought herself to be exceptional, and not once had she considered herself to be Sophie’s lesser.

Tristan opened the door for Sophie to get inside the car.

“To the Wisteria Apartments?” That’s going to make me late for school, wouldn’t it?

“Yeah!”

They only just got in the car when a call came in from Bailey. Sophie took one glance but still choose to pick up.

“Why aren’t you in school today? Are you not feeling well?” Bailey asked in concern. He had grown accustomed to paying attention to Sophie’s every move without even realizing it himself.

“No. I took the day off because I had some stuff to see to. What’s up?”

“Nothing, really. I just wanted to ask if you’d be coming into the lab after class.” He was missing her a little despite only not seeing her for one afternoon.

“Nah. I don’t think I’ll be headed there today.” Sophie considered that she might not be able to squeeze in the time after her visit to the Wings of Light.

“Do you have anything else for me?”

“No. That’s it.”

The dead tone on the phone left Bailey a little despondent.

Nevertheless, he still turned around and made his way to the medical laboratory, for it was only there that he would be able to avoid thinking about her.

“Who was that?”

As the volume on Sophie’s phone was turned up pretty high, Tristan was able to hear the male voice coming from the other end.

“Just a schoolmate.”

“A guy?” Tristan’s fingers tightened around the steering wheel. She really is too attractive.

“Yeah. Our physics teacher is sending us for competition together, so we’ve been doing experiments together quite often,” said Sophie in a casual manner as she did not think too much of that call from Bailey.

“Is he interested in you?” Tristan had not realized how much his words reeked of envy.

Sophie’s brows perked up.

“I wouldn’t know that.” Sophie was never one to place too much attention on people who were not important to her.

That yielded no response from the flabbergasted Tristan, who thought he might be contending with one rival too many.

The car arrived at Wisteria Apartments, but Tristan did not see her upstairs as he had other matters that needed his attention.

After getting in, Sophie changed out of her uniform into a black hoodie and a pair of light blue jeans before grabbing a ride down to Wings of Light.

Wings of Light was situated along the most bustling street in Jipsdale. Real estate was at a premium here, but Wings of Light itself occupied a standalone building consisting of eight floors. Though shabby on the exterior, stepping inside would reveal that there was more to it than meets the eye.

Having not been around for some time, she was refused entry by the elderly gentleman guarding the entrance because he did not recognize her.

“Have you lost your way, lass? Go on and turn around. This place is for employees only!”

“Actually, I’m looking for Neveah, sir.” Wings of Light did not have as many staff on board in its infancy, and it was only after Butterfly took the reins that they started to hire more support personnel. That

woman was never one to mistreat herself. The people she often brought on board, though, tend to be much more advanced in age, giving the place an appearance of a shelter for elderly folk from the outside. In spite of that, none of them were ordinary in any regard.

“Ms. Sekelsky, eh? Hang on. Let me make a call.” The gentleman then phoned Butterfly.

From his description, Butterfly was able to infer that it was Sophie because very few could boast of the latter’s bewitching looks.

Butterfly came down personally to receive her. With the other members kept occupied these past few days, only she remained stationed in Wings of Light.

“Finally. Hadn’t you promised me before? Took you a really long time to get here, it did,” Butterfly could not help but gripe. “Come on then, let’s head on up!”

An eight-story building would not usually come with an elevator, so Butterfly had one specially retrofitted when she first bought the place. She took Sophie up to the eighth floor where the interiors were rather impressively done.

“I’ve reserved an office for you! Would you like to go check it out and see whether it is to your liking?” Butterfly then ushered her toward the furthestmost office.

That got Sophie’s eyebrow raised. She had been pretty much hands-off since handing the keys to Wings of Light over to Butterfly, and had not expected the latter to have an office renovated for her.

Pushing past the door, Butterfly led Sophie inside a space with a rather indie vibe before she turned to the latter in anticipation.

“So, how do you find it? Do you like it? If you do, would you mind dropping in more often whenever you are free? It could get a little lonely being here by myself sometimes!”

“It’s all right, I guess!” It was not hard to tell that Butterfly had invested quite a bit into fixing up the place, but she still preferred to answer to the beckoning of freedom. “Isn’t Wings of Light doing very well at the moment? I think you’re well suited to run things here, so why don’t you just continue on?”

Butterfly was rendered speechless.

Plonking herself down on the swivel chair, Sophie then pressed a switch to activate it.

Less than ten seconds afterward, the computer had fully booted up.

The speed of the computer’s operations was very much to Sophie’s satisfaction.

“Oh, Phantom! Wings of Light is your baby. Don’t you have any feelings toward it at all?”

“None whatsoever.” Sophie was extremely indifferent.

That got Butterfly reeling once more.

Well, fine! Why am I even trying to talk emotions with Phantom? This girl is nothing if not heartless.

From her pocket, Sophie fished out a piece of gum which she unwrapped before she popped it into her own mouth. Then with a tug of the chair, she brought herself in front of the computer.

While her fingers danced over the keyboards, strings of code blazed across the screen, one line after the other.

Even if she matched Butterfly for pace, one could not help but behold the manner of her operations; it was clear that there was a stark difference between them.

It was just that effortless for some people to crush the competition, and Sophie was exactly of that sort.

“Relax. My firewalls are solid! No one will be able to get past them.” Sophie was supremely confident about her own skills. “I could still bolster them if you don’t feel secure, though.”

As it was already past eight in the evening when she left Wings of Light, Sophie decided to pass on attending the self-study session.

Pulling the hood over her head, Sophie plugged in her earphones and walked along the street. She did not get too far before she discovered someone on her tail.

Her lips curled up into a smirk. These people just won’t quit.

At that moment, her phone started to ring. Sophie hit the button to put the call through.

“Where are you?” Tristan sounded rather anxious.

“Outside. Why?”

“Send me your location. I’m coming over to pick you up right away.” Knowing that those people were after Sophie, there was no way he could sit idle.

“It’s cool. I can handle them myself.” Sophie then thought about hanging up. It’s been a while since I got to stretch my limbs, so I might as well give myself a good workout today.

“Sophie.” There was a hint of anger to Tristan’s tone.

“What?” Why would I want to bother him with something I can resolve on my own?

Chapter 109 Beaten To A Pulp

Tristan was worried, as those were professional mercenaries who were vastly different from ordinary thugs.

He couldn't control his temper, as he was extremely anxious.

However, he had no choice but to tamp his temper down after hearing her question.

"Soph, be good. Stay in the crowd instead of going somewhere desolate. I'll come to you now." His men had tracked her location down, and he was on his way to her.

Sophie was rendered speechless.

"Mr. Tristan, I can handle them." His voice was soft; she couldn't bring herself to be harsh on him. After all, he was only concerned about her.

"Be good and don't move. Wait for me," Tristan implored, his tone contrary to his usual arrogant voice.

"All right." Sophie caved in. She couldn't bring herself to say no or reject Tristan mercilessly like how she used to reject other men.

Yet, Sophie could not wait for any longer after realizing the men were armed.

She was currently in the most bustling area in Jipsdale. The streets were crowded, so the consequences would be unimaginable if they were to use their guns in public.

Sophie unlocked her phone and clicked on the map. She observed the map for around one minute before strolling toward a desolate area calmly.

The men clad in casual clothes immediately shared a look and strode after her.

Playing with the wire of her earphone, Sophie strolled into a quiet alley.

“Get her!”

Sophie came to a stop at the end of the alley and turned to look at the men.

“You have nowhere to escape now, huh?” one man sneered as his gaze gleamed with malice. “Surrender without putting up a fight, so you won’t have to suffer as much.”

“Escape?” Sophie repeated mockingly. “You’re nothing but trash. Why do I need to escape?”

“Ha!” The leader let out a mirthless laugh. She’s confident, huh? “Take her away!”

The mercenaries stepped forward menacingly, but Sophie was still fiddling with the wire of her earphone.

Before they could reach her, she pulled out a piece of gum and unwrapped it before tossing it into her mouth.

Chewing on her gum, she observed the men carefully.

Finally, the mercenaries stopped in front of her. Sophie darted out of their way before they could take action against her.

Leaping into the air, she kicked one man’s crotch forcefully.

Sophie didn’t like beating around the bush. These were deadly mercenaries, so she didn’t hold back and attacked them mercilessly.

The mercenaries collapsed to the ground one by one.

The leader of the mercenaries was scowling by now. His subordinates were skilled but got defeated by the young lady easily.

“You’re the only one left. Come on!” Sophie said arrogantly.

“You must be sick of living!” the leader growled. He shrugged out of his jacket and tossed it aside, then strode toward Sophie ominously.

Without wasting time, he pulled his gun out and aimed for Sophie’s head.

“We never wanted to kill you. Just come with us,” the man commanded.

“No.” There was no way she’d leave with them easily.

At that moment, Tristan’s car rolled to a stop before the alley.

His heart clenched up anxiously when he thought of Sophie entering the quiet alley instead of listening to his words.

The alley was eerily silent, and for a moment, Tristan dared not walk into it.

Bang!

A loud gunshot rang out, prompting Tristan to dash in.

To his shock, he saw over ten mercenaries moaning in anguish on the ground.

One man’s wrist was bleeding, as he had been shot.

Sophie, however, had over ten guns with her.

She arched a brow at the sight of him.

Tristan hurried over to her and only relaxed after making sure she was all right.

“Who sent you here?” Tristan went to the leader.

However, the leader merely glared at him and refused to spill a word.

“You won’t say anything, huh? Never mind. I’ll make you regret what you have done today.”

Right after he said that, Felix appeared with over a dozen of men in black.

Tristan ordered, “Bring them back, but don’t let them die.”

He wanted to question them personally after sending Sophie back home.

Felix noticed the mercenaries rolling in pain on the ground and cast Sophie a look.

Despite knowing Sophie wasn’t someone to be trifled with, he had no idea she was capable of beating the mercenaries to a pulp.

He couldn’t help but wonder how many secrets she had.

I don’t think I can defeat the mercenaries alone.

The alley was silent once again.

Tristan stood silently in his spot. He was obviously upset at her.

Sophie spat her gum into a piece of tissue before going to him.

“Mr. Tristan, are you mad at me?” Sophie asked.

“Why didn’t you listen to me?” Tristan’s entire being was still shaking in fear. He couldn’t imagine what he would do if something were to happen to her.

“I wanted to listen to you, but they were armed. So—”

“You came here knowing that they had guns? Sophie, you did that on purpose, didn’t you?” Tristan interjected, a wave of fury crashing through him.

Sophie was befuddled by his anger.

In her opinion, she was just trying to prevent a gunfight in Jipsdale.

“The street was crowded, and I didn’t want—”

“Those people have nothing to do with me. Why would I bother about their safety? Your safety is my priority,” Tristan cut in.

His words might sound selfish, but he was telling the truth. No one else but her life mattered to him.

Sophie was astonished to learn how possessive he could be. She had no idea Tristan was this concerned about her.

“Mr. Tristan, I—”

Refusing to hear her explanation, Tristan pulled her into her arms and bit the corner of her lips as a form of punishment.

“Why won’t you listen to me?” he whispered in her ear.

Sophie wrapped her arms around him and leaned against his chest.

Her action calmed him down instantly.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to make you worry.”

Tristan sighed out loud. He was hopelessly in love with her.

Without saying anything else, he gave her a ride back to Wisteria Apartments.

“Can I see those men?” She was curious why those men wanted to abduct her.

“Mm, no problem,” Tristan agreed readily.

He would make the arrangements for her if she wanted to see them.

“They wanted to abduct you so they could use you to threaten me into submission.” Tristan had rushed over the moment he received the news, but he didn’t make it here in time. In the end, she had to solve the matter alone.

“No one can abduct me easily. Mr. Tristan, don’t let others use me to threaten you into submission.” Sophie wanted to help him instead of being his Achilles’ heel.

“Don’t worry. I won’t let anyone get the chance to hurt you.” Tristan’s eyes blazed dangerously. He wasn’t even this mad when his enemies had tried to harm him.

Chapter 110 Causing An Unwanted Misunderstanding

Felix had no idea Tristan would bring Sophie to the dungeon.

Everyone who was tortured and questioned here would definitely spill the truth.

Sophie was in a daze after she entered the dungeon.

It did not occur to her that Tristan would bring the men here and that such a place existed in Jipsdale.

“Mr. Tristan,” Felix greeted. He had just arrived a while ago and didn’t have the chance to question the mercenaries yet.

“I’ll bring you around,” Tristan said to Sophie, who nodded in agreement.

Despite priding herself on her rich experience, she couldn’t stop a chill from going down her spine at the horrible-looking devices used to torture the prisoners kept captive here.

“Mr. Tristan, do your rivals often try to assassinate you?”

Is he only the CEO of Lombard Group? Why do so many people want him dead?

“Why?” Tristan led her deeper into the dungeon. Everything Sophie saw here gave her a new perspective of what Tristan was capable of.

“Why do you need to establish a dungeon like this?” The police might not be able to get the answers they wanted, but the prisoners here—including ruthless mercenaries—would definitely spill everything after being tortured by the highly advanced devices. There was simply no chance of fighting back.

“Indeed. After I took over Lombard Group, many wanted me dead,” came Tristan’s answer.

Hearing that, Sophie felt bad for him.

No matter how mentally resilient he was, he must be annoyed by those constant assassinations!

Tristan took in her expression and went to her.

Taking her hand, he said, “But they don’t have what it takes to kill me. I’m still healthy and alive.”

He wouldn’t have created a dungeon if it wasn’t necessary.

“You shouldn’t have brought me here,” Sophie said.

This place was very important to him. If someone else discovered the existence of this place and sent the evidence to the relevant authorities, he would be greatly affected.

“Sophie, you’re different from others. You mean a lot to me.”

He would allow her to do anything she wanted in his territory.

In fact, he could take over any territory that wasn’t his as long as she wanted him to.

His gaze was too affectionate, and Sophie had no idea how to respond. Without a word, she went deeper into the dungeon.

“The technology here is really advanced. I’m sure no one can refuse to talk.” No matter how strong one’s willpower was, one couldn’t resist for long.

“Yes.”

He had spent a lot to build this dungeon, so it was undeniably effective.

After their tour ended, Felix had already pried the information from the mercenaries' lips.

"Mr. Tristan, the Zaleses sent them, just like last time in Horington," Felix reported.

The Zaleses had always been jealous of the Lombards and had been trying to wipe them out in secret.

"Clayton Zales." Tristan's guess was right.

The only person who dared to pull this feat in Jipsdale could only be Clayton.

"Mr. Tristan, what should we do about them?" Felix asked, for there were over ten mercenaries here.

"Hand them to Eustace. He's been trying to capture them, hasn't he?"

Sophie blinked after hearing Eustace's name.

"Sure."

They were doing Eustace a big favor.

"I'll handle the rest. It's late. You and Sophie should go home and rest." Deep down, Felix was still afraid of Sophie. She's not someone to be messed with. I need to show her more respect or risk invoking her wrath.

Sophie yawned loudly. She was indeed exhausted after the fight. "If you're busy, I can head home myself."

In an attempt to butter up to her, Felix immediately replied, "You are the most important person here. I can handle the rest, so don't worry!"

"Let's go," Tristan uttered.

His large hand wrapped around her tiny one and warmed her hand up.

Sophie fell into a momentary daze.

The moment Tristan left with Sophie, Felix ordered his men to tie the mercenaries up.

"Mr. Northley, what should we do with them?"

"Drag them to the door of the SWAT team and leave them in the hands of Eustace. He has dealt with similar matters plenty of times."

The mercenaries had assassinated several important government officials, so Eustace would be rewarded for his outstanding service if he were to arrest them.

That was the exact reason why Felix was terrified. The mercenaries were known to be ruthless, but Sophie had managed to defeat them easily. It was really mind-blowing.

These few days, Eustace had been busy with a case. He didn't get to sleep well.

He had just fallen asleep that day when he received a call from his team.

"What is it?" Eustace pinched his nose bridge in an attempt to wake up.

"Captain Sheppard, come to the station now!"

Eustace's brows snapped together.

"What happened?" he asked. His team members from the SWAT team had been working alongside him for some time and were experienced, so it was the first time he had seen them this flustered.

"You'll find out when you arrive. Even if I explain everything to you now, you won't trust me."

Eustace drove to the SWAT team at once. When he saw that over ten mercenaries were all bundled up inside, he promptly lost his cool.

The leader of the group of mercenaries was an internationally wanted fugitive. His team had been finding the whereabouts of these mercenaries but to no avail.

Who is capable enough of capturing them before sending them here?

"Contact Interpol." Eustace kept his cool and made the arrangements. The leader of the mercenaries had committed many grave crimes, so no matter who captured him, he or she had done a good deed.

"Also, find out who sent them here."

"Captain Sheppard, what a stroke of good fortune! You managed to arrest an internationally wanted fugitive when you were sleeping at home."

Eustace rubbed his nose. That's true. I've cracked a few important cases after I met Sophie. Hmm, it's time for me to go see her. She's a high school student, but not an ordinary being. Previously, she was involved in defusing the bomb. Was it also her this time?

The next morning, Eustace drove to Jipsdale Premier High.

He stared at the gate intently until he saw a young lady clad in uniform heading toward the gate with two buns in her hand. Without hesitation, he got out of his car.

Eustace was wearing his police uniform, which looked great on him. In fact, he looked dashing in his uniform.

Thus, he immediately attracted the female students' attention.

Classes were going to begin soon, but they refused to head in.

"Wow, he's a hunk!"

"Yeah! I used to think that Bailey's hot, but he's not as handsome as this man."

"You're right. Oh, how I wish I can marry a police officer."

Sophie glanced at Eustace as she took a bite of the bun.

She chewed on it slowly before swallowing it.

"Captain Sheppard, you'll cause a misunderstanding if you show up at my school in your uniform to look for me."

"What kind of misunderstanding?" Eustace didn't understand what she was talking about. "I'm here to ask a few questions."

"What is it?" Sophie asked airily.