

Pursuing 121

Chapter 121 Evidence

Sophie arched a brow and stared at Willow as she taunted, "Do you truly fear me, Willow? I bet you haven't had any peaceful sleep since I came back!"

"You!" Willow could not believe that she was still so stubborn. Suppressing her rage, she tried to put up a gracious front. "I'm doing this for your own good. You may have a better life after leaving this place."

Sophie merely retorted, "No one needs your concern. I can have a great life in Jipsdale as well."

Her defiance infuriated Willow to no end.

The thought of Mason's request to break up exacerbated Willow's dislike for her sister. She spat, "Oh? If you're so determined to live in Jipsdale, I can only wish you good luck."

She hated that everything had changed since Sophie's return.

As Willow turned to leave, Sophie suddenly said, "Willow! Did you have a fun time when I became the school's common enemy?"

Willow clenched her fists wordlessly in response.

A while later, she said, "Why would I? Why does it matter if you dislike me? You're my younger sister, after all, and a member of the Tanner family. Of course, I won't deny that I'm unhappy about what you did."

"Hmph." Sophie could not help but scoff. She added, "I despise people like you. If you were bolder and confronted me head-on, I would've hated you less."

Willow would never admit to that, so she replied, "You're really mistaken, Sophie. That incident had nothing to do with me."

“Whatever you say!” Sophie ignored her and headed upstairs, leaving her elder sister staring after her with a face contorted with fury.

Willow muttered to herself, “Why are you so smug, Sophie? Did you think you could ever be Whitlea’s match?”

She thought of Whitlea’s background and was confident that Sophie was doomed.

After their classes ended that afternoon, Ysabelle accompanied Sophie back to Wisteria Apartments.

She watched as Sophie placed her laptop on the coffee table and started it up before getting a glass of water.

Concerned, Ysabelle asked, “Are you really not planning to take down that post, Sophie?” The scandalous post accusing Sophie of seducing Bailey had significantly impacted the former’s reputation.

Sophie leisurely poured them both glasses of water before settling on the couch.

Then, she promptly hacked Willow’s phone and retrieved several unedited photos and a short video.

“Come here,” she said while beckoning Ysabelle over with a finger. Willow is super determined to frame me, huh?

After watching the video, Ysabelle cursed before she could stop herself, “F*ck! It was her!”

Sophie calmly sipped her water as Ysabelle added, “I’m going to beat that b*tch up!”

It turned out that the photos had been Photoshopped to cause a misunderstanding, but the short video revealed the truth.

Sophie was only sleeping while Bailey draped his shirt over her.

However, the edited photos told a vastly different story and spoke volumes about Willow's viciousness.

Suddenly, Ysabelle commented, "There's another problem, Soph. You can clearly see the tenderness in his eyes while he's draping the shirt over you."

It was clear that the young man had romantic feelings for her.

Sophie remained silent. She did not deny what she saw in his gaze, but it did not change the fact that she had not done anything to Bailey.

"Soph, your popularity with the boys is a little troublesome, huh?" Ysabelle knew Tristan would go mad with jealousy if he chanced upon the video.

Nonetheless, Ysabelle continued, "To h*ll with it! Let's share the video now. No one will dare to slander you again."

I want to see their expressions when they see this video!

To her surprise, Sophie said, "Let's wait a little more. The time is not yet ripe."

Despite her impatience, Ysabelle replied, "Fine! You're the boss! I'll follow your lead!" Oh man! I wish I could punch those b*tches in their faces!

Meanwhile, Mason had somehow made his way to Jipsdale Premier High, and he was immediately accosted by Willow's clique when they spotted him.

"Mr. Laird, are you here to see Willow? She's not around now. You—"

"I'm not looking for her."

His reply instantly angered the girls.

One of them spat, "Don't tell me you're here to see Sophie. Mr. Laird, she's absolutely horrid and goes around seducing other men. Don't fall for her tricks."

Mason's expression darkened in response as he warned, "I'd advise you to watch your words."

Undeterred, one of the girls took out her phone and showed him a post. She explained, "We're telling the truth, Mr. Laird. If you don't believe us, you can see this yourself. How could she be an innocent angel when she's already messing around in school?"

After reading the title of the post, Mason's expression became even grimmer.

Willow's clique grew smug, and one of them chimed in, "We're only saying this for yours and Willow's sake, Mr. Laird! Willow is such a nice girl! Sophie's fooling around with other people's feelings just because she's pretty. How can she ever compare to our dear Willow?"

Mason returned the phone to the group and remained silent.

They don't deserve to make things up about Sophie's character.

His reaction frightened the girls into silence, and they quickly walked into the school.

When Willow arrived at the classroom later, her clique immediately swarmed her.

"Willow, Mason came to Jipsdale Premier High today, but he wasn't looking for you. He must've been looking for that b*tch, Sophie! But it's okay. We've avenged you and showed him that post."

"Yeah! I'm sure Mason will see Sophie's true colors now."

“What?” Willow was shocked.

“What’s wrong? I’m sure Mason’s only temporarily besotted with Sophie. He’ll be keeping a far distance from her after seeing those photos.”

“You—” Willow did not want Mason to know about the photos at all. What will he do after learning about this?

Her friends were confused by her reaction, for they only wanted to stick up for her earlier. “What’s wrong, Willow?”

Willow swiftly suppressed her rage and lied, “It’s nothing. I’m not feeling too well today. Could you girls help me get excused from tonight’s revision session?”

“Are you really okay, Willow?” Her clique remained concerned.

“Yup! I’m totally fine.”

Then, she left the school and called Mason.

The line rang for a long time, but nobody answered, and Willow’s anxiety ballooned.

She dialed his number repeatedly until he eventually picked up.

“Where are you, Mason?”

He replied curtly, “Nocturnal!”

After ending the call, Willow hailed a cab to the bar. There, she was barred by a security guard from entering the premises because of her school uniform.

She could only call Mason again. The latter frowned when he saw a shivering Willow outside the bar.

“What is it?” He always seemed exceptionally aloof when interacting with Willow.

Chapter 122 What A Bummer

“I heard that you’ve been to Jipsdale Premier High today, Mason.”

Unable to stand watching Willow shiver incessantly, Mason removed his coat and wrapped it around her.

His warmth still lingered on the inside. Willow could not help but raise her eyes to regard him.

You still care for me, don’t you? It’s not like you no longer feel anything for me anymore!

“Mason!” Willow felt profoundly aggrieved, for everything she had done was only motivated by her desire to be with him.

“This isn’t the sort of place where you should be, so hurry up and go home!”

When Mason turned back toward Nocturnal, Willow rushed to him and hugged him from behind.

“You’re only treating me this way because of Sophie, aren’t you, Mason?”

“Willow!” Mason’s inflection carried with it a tone of warning.

“I’m as saddened by what happened to Sophie as you are, Mason, but this isn’t something that’s within our control! Won’t you please just stop being like this?”

Enraged, Mason shoved Willow off, sending her staggering back several paces.

That got her staring at him in disbelief.

“Sophie isn’t that sort of person, so someone must be messing with her behind her back.” Convinced that it was his lack of trust in Sophie five years ago that led to the present-day circumstances, he thus

decided that five years later on this very day, he was going to stand by her no matter what.

Hearing that from him only left Willow even more infuriated.

Does he really trust her that much?

Ignoring her, Mason continued into Nocturnal.

As much as Willow wanted to follow, she found herself stopped at the door by the security.

“No entry without a valid ID card, miss.”

“I’m of legal age.” Willow was actually older than Sophie by a year and only had to take a year off from school because of poor health. That meant that she was already nineteen.

“Sorry. You’re in uniform, so without the proper documentation to ascertain your age, we cannot allow you in.”

Willow was irate, but since she was unable to do anything about them, she could only keep standing there.

By the time Mason exited Nocturnal, it was already two past midnight.

Owing to having one drink too many, he opted not to drive and hailed a ride over to Wisteria Apartments instead.

The minute he got on, Willow, too, hired a car in pursuit, as seeing how drunk he was got her concerned that he might wind up in a sticky situation.

What she had not expected was that his destination turned out to be Wisteria Apartments.

After standing below the apartments for the entire night, Willow took ill the next day.

When Charmaine saw the state her daughter was in, she poured a glass of warm water and also brought her some medicine.

“Where were you last night? I know that Mason’s back, and the two of you want to be together, but you should also be mindful of your own reputation. Are you even listening, Willa?” Charmaine furrowed. What’s gotten into her lately?

Throwing her arms around Charmaine, Willow then broke down in tears.

“Why? What’s the matter? I wasn’t scolding you, silly girl. I’m just concerned! You’re to be married to Mason in the future, you know!”

That got Willow bawling even more loudly.

“What’s this about? Did Mason mistreat you?”

“Would I really get to marry Mason, Mom?” She was not at all optimistic about this prospect at the moment.

“Isn’t it why you’ve been working so hard all these years? To be married to Mason? Seeing how fond Mrs. Laird is of you, he surely must marry you.”

Willow was not as confident of this. What would all the preparations she put together count for, with everything else that had gone down?

In the end, the decision still laid with Mason himself.

In order to get Sophie expelled, Whitlea purposefully called for a board meeting.

It had been a while since such a meeting had been convened in Jipsdale Premier High, and even less expectedly, for the purpose of expelling a student.

A dozen directors had already arrived inside the conference room.

“All this over a case of expulsion, Mr. Langston? What’s the point of making such a big deal of it, really? Why don’t you just go ahead yourself and get it over with?”

“Yeah! You should know well that we’re all very busy people.”

“How would any of our opinions matter if Mr. Langston himself has already had his own mind made up?” said Whitlea mockingly.

Andy wiped the sweat off the top of his own head.

“My fellow directors, as the details of this case have yet to be established, I think—”

“Yet to be established? What’s there left to establish? Bailey has always topped his grade. How could you not know that, considering that you’re someone who had watched Bailey grow up yourself? Also, I was told that you were the one who had admitted Sophie. That makes you the very reason why something like this has taken place inside this school. It makes me wonder whether you could have accepted something from her in exchange.”

Transferring to Jipsdale Premier High in her senior year? Isn’t it obvious that some manner of bribery must be involved?

That yielded a frown from Andy.

“Isn’t it a normal thing for students to change schools, Mdm. Dixon? Does having this take place within your jurisdiction mean that I must necessarily be on the take?” said Andy as he stood to his feet.

“Just look and see for yourselves Mr. Langston’s attitude.” Whitlea was positively livid.

“Isn’t it true that the school won’t be able to continue operating without us, Mr. Langston?”

The moment Sophie arrived at school, she found herself mobbed by a group of girls.

“You have some gall showing your face around here again, Sophie.”

“Yeah! How shameless could you possibly get? If something similar were to happen to me, I wouldn’t have been able to continue living.”

“Do you figure that everyone must give a d*mn about that?”

Pulling the hood back from her head, Sophie cast a cold stare that made the observers shudder.

A couple of girls who dared not trifle with Sophie in the mood she was in automatically stepped aside and cleared a path for her.

Sophie let out a sneer.

“Was she taunting us just now?”

“D*mn right, she was! How could that woman be so thick-skinned?”

“The school has already called for a board meeting to get her expelled, so let’s see how much longer she could continue to be cocky.”

“Yeah! What’s she being so smug about? She’s just a sl*t.”

It took only Sophie turning and shooting them a look to cause the lot of them to stumble back in fear.

Pulling out her phone, Sophie went on to post that unedited clip into the forum before she made her way directly to the school’s conference room.

The school’s forum was thrown into a state of pandemonium once more ten minutes later, and the server itself almost crashed as a result.

“Good lord! What the hell is this? Never could have seen a twist like this coming!”

“Heavens! Bailey’s being so affectionate! Could he be the one who fancies her?”

“What a bummer! Still insisting that Sophie was seducing Bailey. This is going to make Mdm. Dixon look really bad!”

Those girls who had been heckling Sophie for days were momentarily stumped, for all along the photograph revealed nothing. Everything that went around had wholly been of their own fabrication.

Apart from uploading a video, Sophie did not have to issue any kind of response, and what a resounding response that turned out to be.

The color drained from Angie’s face after she saw that clip.

Where did this come from? What am I to do now? This Sophie Tanner is too scary. How did she even get her hands on this video?

When Sophie reached the conference room, she pushed her way through the doors without even knocking, and the ensuing noise had all the directors turning their attention toward the entrance.

There, they saw a teenager shrouded in a black hoodie, standing with the light cast from behind her. She had her head covered and both hands tucked inside her pockets.

Whitlea had an awful expression on her face upon seeing Sophie.

“Do you all not see? She’s still as arrogant as ever, even now.” Whitlea could not wait to get Sophie kicked out of the school right away.

Andy went over immediately, as he had not expected Sophie to show up there and then either.

“You should head back first, Sophie. I’d have this whole thing sorted out for you in due time.”

Chapter 123 A Drastic Turn

“Mr. Langston, since I’m the victim of this incident, I think I have the right to be here,” Sophie stated resolutely. No doubt, she was well aware that Andy was very concerned about her. However, she would not chicken out when Whitlea insisted on putting her in a tight spot.

“Sophie...” Andy could not help but heave a sigh. Good gracious! Why is this young lady unusually stubborn?

“Andy, enough of that. Since you’re determined to take her side, how about you leave Jipsdale Premier High too? From what I can see, Mr. Carlson is rather competent too. He can be promoted to take over your position,” Whitlea uttered authoritatively.

They needed a submissive person in charge and not one with a mind of his own, like Andy.

Hearing that, Franky Carlson, the vice principal, was all over the moon. “Mdm. Dixon, I’ve reminded Mr. Langston right from the beginning that we shouldn’t accept Sophie Tanner. I emphasized that such a

problematic student would only ruin Jipsdale Premier High's reputation, but he paid no heed to my advice and insisted on accepting her. I couldn't help wondering if he had been obtaining any benefits from that."

In actuality, Franky and Andy had been on bad terms long ago. Franky loathed the latter for surpassing him in managing the school throughout the years. Hence, he was tickled pink when he finally had the opportunity to prove himself to the board.

"Mr. Carlson!" Andy shot Franky a warning glance, gritting his teeth. D*mn it! He's really good at buttering others up!

"What do you think about this?" Whitlea turned to look at the other directors, who then nodded fervently in unison.

"If that's the case, Andy, leave with this student and we can avoid burning all bridges. Let's resolve this peacefully so it won't be awkward when we cross paths with each other in the future."

Franky was grinning ear to ear. He could barely wait for Andy to be sacked. As the vice principal, I have no choice but to bow to him for more than a decade. Ha! Now it's finally my turn to be the principal!

"Wait a minute! You can't expel me from the school. I didn't do anything wrong," Sophie piped up and advanced toward the computer in the conference room. She turned it on and plugged a flash drive into the USB port.

"Sophie Tanner, you've been expelled from the school. If you insist on stirring up trouble, I'll lodge a police report right away!"

Whitlea was irked by the fearless Sophie. What on earth is she trying to do?

"Lodge a police report? Great! I'm more than happy if you do that. Now that you're slandering me, I believe the police will seek justice for me. What are you still waiting for? Don't you know how to lodge one? Or perhaps you need me to guide you on that?"

Whitlea blew a fuse, her entire body trembling uncontrollably. “Where are your manners? Don’t you know the young ones like you have to be respectful to the elders?”

“Elders? Boy, you have the cheek to proclaim yourself as my elder. Why should I be respectful of you? Do you deserve my respect? Who do you think you are?” Sophie scoffed. Once provoked, she would not think twice about retaliating relentlessly. “You will know if you’ve slandered me after watching this video clip. As an adult, I hope you can reflect on the mistake you’ve committed and apologize to me later!”

“What’s the matter with you? How dare a lowly student like you request we adults to apologize to you? You’re talking nonsense!” Franky stood in front of Whitlea, fending off Sophie’s words.

Sophie snorted coldly. Is that how an adult should behave? How ridiculous!

Without hesitation, she played the video clip.

It lasted barely twenty minutes, but it was enough to let everyone have a grasp of the situation. Sophie was undoubtedly the victim as she did nothing and was oblivious to everything throughout the time.

Whitlea’s face fell in an instant. Even though the video had proved that Sophie did not commit a wrong deed, she considered the latter to have gone against her by playing the video clip in front of everyone.

How could my son gaze at a delinquent in such a way? She could not accept the fact that her son had fallen for Sophie instead of demure young ladies from prominent families she had shortlisted for him.

Andy approached Sophie and said, “Everyone, it’s merely a misunderstanding this time. Sophie is really talented. Mr. Elswick is even planning to let her take part in the physics competition this time. I’m convinced she’ll be able to make us proud.”

“Andy!” Whitlea almost burst a blood vessel. Doesn’t he know I’m planning to let Bailey take part in the physics competition?

Sophie asked indifferently, "So, are you still lodging a police report? I've uploaded this video clip on the school forum. I wonder what those students who can't seem to distinguish between right and wrong will say again!"

"Mdm. Dixon, why not put everything to an end? After all, the top management is extremely displeased with this hiccup. If the situation escalates, Jipsdale Premier High's reputation will be ruined." One of the directors tried to talk Whitlea into changing her mind.

"I agree with him. What's important now is that we should try to resolve this matter as soon as possible so it won't tarnish the image of our school. Otherwise, I'm afraid it will affect the new intake of students next year," another director chimed in.

Unequivocally, the students' backgrounds played a major part. Instead of relying on the teachers to play their roles well in educating them, it was relatively important to ensure the students enrolled in their school were of virtue.

"Wait a minute! Someone has obviously set Sophie up and instigated the others to go against her," Andy pointed out. What are the culprit's ulterior motives for editing the photos? Did Sophie step on anyone's toes?

"Sophie, do you know who posted these photos?" Andy asked.

"I do."

"Sophie is obviously the victim in this matter. In my opinion, the school should seek justice for her."

"It's all right. I'll settle the issue with my own method." I'm not a crybaby who will only grumble to the teachers whenever I encounter any problems!

"Let's put an end to this. Mdm. Dixon, since it's Bay's mistake, we'd better not go overboard." The other directors did not wish to blow things out of proportion too.

No words could describe Whitlea's resentment. She vowed to expel Sophie from the school despite anything.

However, the other directors had stood up and stepped out of the conference room.

Franky cast his head down sheepishly and could not help despising himself for getting on Andy's nerves. Oh my! He'll unleash his wrath on me later.

"Sophie, let's go!" Andy was worried stiff that Whitlea would strike against Sophie. Hence, he had been waiting for her and was reluctant to follow suit when the others left the conference room.

"Mr. Langston, I wish to have a few words with Mdm. Dixon. You don't have to wait for me." Sophie pulled a chair to sit down.

Andy remained in the same spot, fearing that Whitlea would pick on her.

Whitlea shot daggers at Andy, but he pretended to be oblivious to it. He had to ensure nobody could lay a finger on Sophie on his turf. Otherwise, he would not know how to explain to Felix if anything occurred.

"Mr. Langston, let's go!" Franky urged him. He still made up his mind to take Whitlea's side.

"Go ahead yourself. Why bother about me?" Andy snapped at him.

"Get out!" Whitlea bellowed. She was utterly ashamed because of the video clip.

Sophie threw Andy a meaningful glance. The latter had no choice but to step out.

With that, only Whitlea and Sophie were left in the conference room. Sophie remained seated, resting her elbows on the conference table.

“Mdm. Dixon, is there anything else you want to tell me?” Sophie asked.

“You can continue studying at Jipsdale Premier High if you wish to. But you mustn’t take part in the physics competition this time.” Whitlea sounded as if she was being sympathetic.

Sophie snorted. She still hasn’t learned her lesson. Bailey is unlucky indeed to have such a mother.

“Stay away from Bailey from today onward. I’ve made the perfect arrangements for his future, and you have no place in it,” Whitlea reminded Sophie arrogantly. The assertive mother only hoped that her son would not go against her will.

Chapter 124 Leave Jipsdale Premier High

“I’ll definitely join the physics competition. As for you, I advise you to practice kindness.”

Sophie didn’t bother giving her any quarter.

“How dare you? Do you really think that I can’t do anything about you?” Whitlea never expected her to be such an obstinate person.

Right then, her innate intransigence was bared in its entirety.

However, Sophie merely shrugged with a nonchalant expression on her face.

“Try it, then. We shall see whether I’m the one to scam or you’re the one who ends up doing so.” Getting to her feet, she remarked, “Honestly speaking, Bailey has truly rotten lucky to have a mother like you.”

Bailey is really a pretty great person, and I also believe that he’ll have some remarkable achievements in the physics field in the future.

Whitlea smashed everything that could be destroyed in the conference room.

She's simply too insolent! No, she'd only be a ticking time bomb if she were allowed to stay in Jipsdale Premier High. I must get her kicked out!

Meanwhile, Willow only learned about the development on the forum when she came to school in the afternoon.

"Willa, who do you think is sabotaging Sophie behind the scenes?"

Initially, they were all convinced that it must have been Sophie who seduced Bailey. Unexpectedly, they ended up proven wrong.

"Exactly! The person even had someone photoshop the pictures! Who hates her that much?"

"Who cares? Anyway, I just don't like her!"

"That's true. She has tons of enemies, so who knows the identity of the culprit? It's just a pity that the board of directors will now decide not to expel her anymore."

Willow logged in to the forum. The instant she saw the video, her expression changed.

I didn't send this video to Angie, and my phone has been with me all this while. Therefore, how did it appear on the forum?

Unprecedented fear struck Willow.

If Mason were to learn that this incident was my doing, what would he do?

She didn't even dare imagine the consequences.

“What’s wrong with you, Willa? Did you not hear us?”

“Yeah. Don’t worry, Willa. Plenty of people detest someone like Sophie, so it’s only a matter of time before she’s booted out of Jipsdale Premier High!”

“I’m going to the washroom for a while.” After saying that, Willow stood up and left right away.

“What’s the matter with her now? Wasn’t she just fine earlier?”

“I don’t know. It must be because of Sophie. Ever since she returned, she has been acting really strange.”

Willow found Angie on the field. Angie had been there for a long time, not daring to return to class. She was afraid that her classmates would learn about everything she did.

Most importantly, she was worried that she would be ostracized.

“Angie!” Willow called out to her.

Hearing her name, Angie glanced over her shoulder. As soon as she spotted Willow, her eyes brimmed with resentment.

“This is all on you, Willow! If it weren’t because of you, I wouldn’t have ended up in such a state right now. Yet, you still have the audacity to appear before me!”

At that, Willow’s brows furrowed.

“What does this have to do with me, Angie? Was I the one who photoshopped the pictures? Was it me who told you to publish them on the forum and ordered you to write all those remarks? You did everything yourself, so what has it got to do with me?” At that moment, all she wanted to do was disassociate herself from it all.

I can't have anything to do with this matter!

The urge to rip her into pieces gripped Angie. "How devious of you! You must be utterly smug now, huh? I'll wait and see how long you can remain triumphant! Do you think that Sophie is genuinely ignorant of everything when she could get her hands on that video? Do you really think that everyone is a fool?"

"Leave Jipsdale Premier High, Angie. It won't do you any good to stay here." Willow reckoned that no one would know the so-called truth as long as she left Jipsdale Premier High.

"Why should I? The university entrance exam is just around the corner. Where could I go after leaving Jipsdale Premier High? Willow, go and urge Sophie to show me some mercy!"

Sophie didn't do anything, but Angie lived in fear every day, terrified that she would see something about herself on the forum in the next second.

"Leave Jipsdale Premier High and take responsibility for everything. I'll solve the rest of the problems for you. I'll help you, both in looking for another school and financially. I promise you all this as long as you leave this place."

The only way Willow could think of then was to have Angie leave. When she has left, I can shove all the blame onto her. Consequently, this matter will have nothing to do with me.

"What do you mean by that? Does this matter have nothing to do with you? Yet, you now want to shift all the responsibility onto me! Willow, I really never expected you to be such a person!"

How smart of her to lay all the blame on me! Then, she can remain innocent in this matter!

"Consider it yourself. If you don't leave Jipsdale Premier High and continue staying here, are you sure you can pass the university entrance exam in your current state? Do you really want to give up on your future?"

After wavering for a long time, Angie still nodded in acquiescence. She's right. Every single second is a torment to me as I stay in Jipsdale Premier High now. In such a condition, I really won't be able to get into my ideal university.

"Okay, help me make the arrangements!"

"All right. In that case, you don't need to stay in school today." Right then, Willow only wanted her to leave. With Angie gone, it'd be easy to settle everything else.

"Have you heard the rumor? It was Angie who published that forum post!"

"I really didn't expect it! She looks docile and quiet usually, but she committed such a major mistake this time!"

Ysabelle parked herself in the seat before Sophie and turned back to speak to her.

"Soph, now that Angie has left, Willow shifted all the blame on her. How underhanded of her!"

At that moment, Sophie was doing a physics question. She looked at the question for a while before jotting down the steps to solve it on paper.

"I'm talking to you, Soph! Can you please listen to me seriously?" Chagrin swamped Ysabelle. What's so interesting about a physics question?

"I heard you." Pushing her hand away, Sophie wrote down the two final steps.

Then, she murmured in absolute calmness, "Just let her be."

After school in the afternoon, Sophie and Ysabelle bumped into Willow, who was ascending the stairs, while they descended the stairs.

At the sight of her, Ysabelle snorted.

Willow, on the other hand, didn't dare confront Sophie directly this time. Instead, she merely treated her like thin air. The few girls with her likewise experienced a change in attitude due to that matter and didn't dare provoke Sophie either.

"Weren't the bunch of you smug previously? You must have written a lot of lies on the forum and slandered Soph! Now that the truth has come to light, don't you all owe her an apology?"

"An apology? Why should we apologize? She offended someone herself, so we're also victims, okay?"

"Never mind, let's go!" Willow didn't want to stay there further, for she hoped the matter would end there.

"This matter isn't over yet, Willow! Do you think everything is fine just because Angie has left?" In truth, Angie was merely manipulated into doing it.

Willow halted in her steps as she ascended the stairs. In fact, she didn't even dare turn back.

"You're going too far, Sophie! It was Angie who perpetrated this matter! What has it got to do with Willa?" The girls with Willow shielded the latter behind them once again.

"What morons!" Seeing that, Ysabelle couldn't help cursing them out.

Chapter 125 First Love Is Always Unforgettable

"Who the hell are you calling a moron?" Following the criticism, the few girls promptly blew up.

"Whoever answers to it!" Ysabelle sneered.

"How dare you?"

Snapping, the few girls geared up to charge at her.

However, Willow held them back.

“We’re at school, so forget about it. Fighting at school will result in a demerit.” Willow was worried that they would anger Sophie. Hence, she immediately stopped them from doing anything rash.

“Hmph! Do you see that? Even your pretentious b*tch doesn’t dare go against Sophie. Hurry up and scram!”

“How dare you?”

The few girls were livid, but they couldn’t do anything to her and could only leave in a fit of pique.

Only when they had gone back to the classroom did they snarl furiously, “Da*n it! Ysabelle was really asking for it! How I wish I could slam into her the wall and kill her right then and there!”

“Forget it. Don’t provoke Sophie these days.” Willow was still very much uneasy. Verily, she couldn’t afford to offend Sophie at present.

“What exactly is wrong with you, Willa? Why are you afraid of her?”

“Yeah! You’re becoming all the more different, Willa. You’ve really changed ever since Sophie returned.”

Frustration inundated Willow, but she couldn’t tell anyone about the matter. Thus, she could only bottle it up within herself.

As it was raining that day, the exercise period was called off. All the students studied in the classroom instead.

Bailey went to Senior Class 8 and stood at the door. A few girls caught sight of him and started whispering among themselves.

Ysabelle saw him as well. She walked over to Sophie's desk.

"Soph, Bailey is here."

Sprawled on her desk while taking a nap, Sophie cast her gaze out the window when she heard that. At once, she spotted Bailey standing outside the window.

He seemed to have something to say yet was hesitant to speak.

Sophie got up and strolled over to him.

"Is something the matter?" she queried. That matter had nothing to do with him. As such, she had never held him responsible.

"I'm sorry, Sophie." Because of me, she was put through the wringer.

Gazing out at the autumn rain, Sophie stood there silently without saying a single word.

Bailey tilted his head, only to see her hair fluttering in the wind. As the desire to smoothen her hair rose within him, he lifted his hand.

Alas, she canted her head, leaving his hand suspended in the air. Subsequently, he lowered it in embarrassment.

"I like you, Sophie!" At long last, he gave voice to his thoughts.

No matter what, this is the first time I've got a crush on a girl! Even if it ends in disappointment, I still want to say it!

Even after hearing his confession, Sophie remained as calm as ever.

“We can only be friends, Bailey.”

She was the kind of person who made things clear when it came to matters of the heart. She didn’t like ambiguous relationships.

“Oh...”

Well, I knew long ago that she’d turn me down, no? Nonetheless, he still felt dejected upon hearing her rejection with his own ears.

“Work hard, Bailey! You’re really talented in physics. Let’s compete fairly in the physics competition!”

Sophie would be doing her best, for it was a form of respect toward him.

In response, Bailey nodded.

“Got it.”

The girls in the class were all green with envy to see them both standing together.

“Oh my God, if we’re just speaking about looks, they’re really a match made in heaven!”

“Hear, hear! One placed first, and the other second. They’re a perfect match in all aspects!”

“B*llshit! How’s Sophie worthy of my first crush?” After all, Bailey was the first crush of many girls in Jipsdale Premier High.

“Exactly! Ah, my idol! How could he fancy someone like her?”

All this while, Ysabelle had also been observing the situation outside.

Crap! What should I do? Every other man seems to make a perfect couple with Soph!

As soon as Sophie returned to the classroom, she rushed over to her.

“Why did Bailey come to see you?”

“Why are you so curious?”

Sophie didn’t answer that question, for they were nothing more than ships passing in the night. She had no feelings for Bailey, but neither did she want him to suffer criticism because of her.

“I’m just curious! Listen to me, Soph. Although he’s handsome, my uncle is still better-looking than him!”

“Class is commencing soon,” Sophie reminded, signaling Ysabelle to return to her seat.

At night, Tristan came to Jipsdale Premier High to pick Sophie up. After receiving a call from the man, she left the school building with Ysabelle.

Bailey bumped into them at the school gates. He wanted to bid them farewell, but Sophie had already gotten into the car.

Just then, Willow came out and witnessed that scene as well.

She reflexively took out her phone to snap a photo. But recalling that video, she put her phone away.

Instead, she swiftly hailed a taxi and ordered the driver to follow Tristan's car.

Tristan brought Sophie and Ysabelle to Blossom Garden to meet up with Felix and the others.

Upon seeing Sophie entering Blossom Garden with the man, Willow gave Mason a call right away.

"I've got something to tell you, Mason. I'm now at Blossom Garden. Can you come over? It's really something important. It has to do with Sophie."

Mason initially didn't want to entertain her, but he relented when he heard that it was about Sophie.

It was Christmas Eve that day, so Felix gathered everyone there.

When he saw that Ysabelle had arrived, he instantly pulled out a chair for her and prompted her to have a seat.

Meanwhile, Winter's heart clenched at the sight of Tristan's attentiveness toward Sophie.

If only he'd also treat me in the same manner someday!

Tristan personally poured Sophie a glass of hot water. It was rather cold that day, especially since it rained.

Cradling the glass in her hand, Sophie took a sip of hot water. At once, her entire body felt much warmer.

When all the dishes were served, Felix personally opened a bottle of sherry.

"Today is the first time we're spending Christmas Eve together. Here's to peace and good health to us all henceforth! This bottle of sherry is a hundred years old!" he exclaimed joyfully.

"This is my first time spending Christmas Eve with all of you, so it's my treat tonight!" Sophie's voice was cold and indifferent, but she was really pretty happy that she could be with them.

"Your treat? If that's the case, I've got to order a few more dishes!" Felix joked.

"Are you a pig? How much can you eat? Since Soph is treating us to dinner, let's not eat meat tonight!" Ysabelle retorted in jest.

Then, she murmured, "I was merely joking. Are you mad for real?" Things had been like that ever since the last time. It seemed that something had really changed between her and Felix.

"Nope. How would I dare get mad at you?" After saying that, Felix didn't continue speaking on that subject but turned and discussed business with Charles.

That had Ysabelle at a total loss.

"Sophie, I heard that the top scorer in your school likes you. Besides, I saw those few photos. He's close to you in age, so the two of you must have a lot in common!" Having been silent for such a long time, Winter finally couldn't hold herself back anymore.

"It looks like you're very concerned about me that you even know what happened at my school, Ms. Quigley," Sophie replied unhurriedly.

"Hah!" Disdain flooded Winter. "I only heard someone mentioning it, so I brought it up with you. I really envy your tender age. First love is always unforgettable."

She deliberately linked Bailey and Sophie together.

Chapter 126 The Distinction Between Men And Women

“First love? I’ve never dated, so I don’t know whether it’s unforgettable or otherwise,” Sophie countered bluntly.

“Oh, really?” How pretentious! Does she think others are entirely ignorant about her past? Yet, she has the audacity to say that she has never dated! Winter seethed internally.

Contrarily, Tristan was over the moon to hear that.

He was the kind of person who kept his feelings under wraps, but right then, everyone present could sense the change in his mood.

At that, Winter grew all the more upset.

What’s so great about that? She’s just feigning innocence! How could people nowadays not have dated a few times when they reach her age?

“Considering your looks, Ms. Tanner, you must have many suitors. How could you possibly not have dated?” she riposted sourly. Indeed, it was a fact that Sophie had a stunningly beautiful countenance.

That was also a sore spot of hers. In fact, she wondered whether Tristan fell in love with Sophie’s looks. Otherwise, she really couldn’t see anything special about her.

“Don’t tell me I must like the person in return just because he likes me?”

It’s true that plenty of people like me since young because my looks are indeed very much attractive. However, it’s not obligatory for me to respond to all of them, is it?

Winter was left without a retort.

Tristan, on the other hand, was even happier after hearing that.

Exactly! Not everyone is worthy of her. I'm the only one who's worthy of her!

"Keep your focus on eating, Winter. Why are you running your mouth?" Charles was worried that Tristan would fly into a rage, so he stopped Winter from speaking further.

"There are also tons of people who like you, Winter. You must have dated plenty, yes?" Ysabelle definitely sided with Sophie, so she couldn't help reposting Winter when the latter kept targeting and setting Sophie up.

Winter glanced at Tristan, her gaze speaking volumes. I've only loved Tristan since young. How could I possibly take an interest in other men?

Tristan took a piece of barbecue rib for Sophie.

"Don't just talk. Here, eat this."

Unbidden, goosebumps rose over everyone else there. Never had they seen him so gentle.

He didn't even have to do anything that constituted a public display of affection, for he had been keeping an eye on everything about Sophie.

All of a sudden, Winter lost her appetite.

"You guys continue eating. I'm going out for a while."

Charles breathed a sigh of relief at her departure.

Verily, I don't know what will happen if she continues staying here. She can never conceal her feelings in front of Tristan. Because of her love for him, she always can't help hurting others. Never mind if it's some other girl, but this is Sophie, the girl Tristan likes. Therefore, no one is allowed to offend her.

"I'm really sorry, Sophie. If Winter said anything that upset you, I apologize on her behalf. I hope you don't take it to heart." He raised his glass. No matter what, Winter was his sister, so he had to do something about it.

Sophie flashed him a smile.

"I'm not a petty person, so I'm not that easily offended, Mr. Quigley. Don't worry."

When Charles heard that, relief suffused him.

"No matter what, I still need to toast you."

Sophie raised her wine glass and took a tiny sip.

Throughout the entire meal, Tristan kept feeding Sophie.

When they were almost done eating, he snagged two pieces of tissue for her.

Sophie wiped her mouth before crumpling the tissues into a wad and tossing it into the trash can at the side.

"Soph, where would you like to go as this is the first time we're spending Christmas Eve together? How about going to the karaoke bar?" Ysabelle proposed excitedly. It had been a long time since she visited a karaoke bar. Ever since her senior year, her family started getting strict with her. But today, it's probably fine since I'm with Uncle Tristan!

"You'd like to go to a karaoke bar?" Sophie actually wasn't fond of such a place, but she didn't mind going to have some fun if Ysabelle liked it.

"Yeah! I haven't been to a karaoke bar since my senior year. I'm craving to go and sing my heart out. It's good to release some tension."

“Are you that stressed? You seem pretty relaxed to me every day.”

Pouting, Ysabelle acted cute.

“How am I relaxed? You have no idea how high my parents’ expectations of me are! They’ll definitely force me to study another year if I fail to make it into Jipsdale University. I really don’t want to do that. If possible, I want to go far away. Would I have it easier if I weren’t the daughter of the Lombard family?”

Everyone envies me for being the daughter of the Lombard family, having almost everything my heart wishes. But then, no one asked me about my choice. I, too, want to live freely!

Sophie gazed at her in sympathy. Oh, poor thing!

“Where are we going now? To Nocturnal for a drink?”

In truth, they never celebrated Christmas Eve in the past.

They were all surprised when Tristan suggested that they celebrate the festival together. But on second thought, that made sense since the man’s girlfriend was a high schooler.

After all, such a festival was a favorite celebration among high schoolers.

“Let’s go for a karaoke session!”

At Sophie’s suggestion, Ysabelle looked at her gratefully. Sure enough, she’s my idol! She never lets me down!

“A karaoke session? Mr. Tristan doesn’t like it, so why don’t we do something else?”

Winter heard Sophie’s proposal the moment she stepped in, and she couldn’t help saying that.

Everyone swung their gazes at Tristan, who had a hand draped over Sophie's chair.

"It's okay. Since they want to go for a karaoke session, we'll all go together. You can pass if you don't want to go." He was a very democratic person and would never force someone into anything.

Felix and Charles exchanged a look. Sure enough, his principles are only for show when it comes to Sophie!

"Yay! That's great! I can finally go for a karaoke session! Let me tell you something, Soph. I love singing, and my dream was even to be a singer in the past!"

Ysabelle really loved singing, but her father forbade her from entering the entertainment industry. Thus, she could only suppress her hobby.

Seeing her sheer delight, Sophie felt that it was no big deal for her to put up with the noise despite positively loathing loud places.

"Actually, you don't need to accommodate her so much," Tristan whispered into her ear.

She doesn't need to accommodate anyone. All she needs to do is to do whatever she likes. I'm here for everything else, so it's not a problem!

"What if I say I want to hear you sing?" Considering his character, he probably never sang in front of others, right?

At that, Tristan went silent for a long moment.

Meanwhile, Winter sneered upon hearing that. She doesn't understand him at all. How could he possibly sing in front of others? Since he doesn't like such places, he probably hasn't even been to a karaoke bar!

"I'd like to hear you sing as well, Mr. Tristan." Felix imitated Ysabelle, acting coy.

"Buzz off!" Tristan snapped.

Sure enough, his reaction is entirely different. Is this the distinction between men and women?

"Are you opposed to that idea?"

Noticing Sophie's expression, Tristan shook his head adamantly. "Of course not!"

Chapter 127 It Is Time You Give Up

Ysabelle was so shocked that her jaw almost hit the ground. Uncle Tristan actually promised to sing for Sophie!

Casting her mind back, she seemingly couldn't remember ever hearing Tristan sing.

"Don't force yourself, Uncle Tristan." She felt utterly petrified.

Hearing that, Tristan swept a gaze over her. What does she mean by that? Am I not allowed to sing?

"All right, in that case, I'll book a private room for us!" Felix volunteered himself for that task.

He knew that Ysabelle had always loved to sing.

Honestly, he was exceedingly supportive of that. No matter what she did, he would support her. Alas, her parents didn't think the same.

"Winter, go home first if you don't want to go. Else, I can drive you home first before making a trip back," Charles murmured thoughtfully. Why must she do this to herself? She's downright asking for it!

“No, I’ll go with you all! I don’t want to be alone, Charles!” Winter was willing to go anywhere as long as she could stay a while longer with Tristan. Hence, she couldn’t possibly bear to leave first.

“In that case, let’s go!”

When they went out to foot the bill, Tristan handed his black card to Sophie.

Sophie was stunned for a moment as she stared at the card in her hand. What is he doing?

“What’s the meaning of this? I don’t quite get it.” Could it be because my IQ had dropped recently?

“Didn’t you say that it’s your treat tonight?” The meal today must have cost quite a huge sum, no?

At once, Sophie’s eyes went wide. Don’t tell me I can’t even afford to treat them to a meal in his eyes? It turns out that I’m so pitiful to him, huh?

Naturally, Winter noticed Tristan’s action and couldn’t help snickering.

Hah! If she doesn’t have the money, she shouldn’t have boasted! All of us here can afford to pay for this meal!

“How about I foot the bill instead?” She went over to the counter and whipped out her card.

Immediately, Tristan frowned. What’s the meaning of her doing this?

Sophie walked over as well, taking out her card and handing it to the cashier directly.

Seeing that, Winter grew impatient.

"I'm aware of the Tanner family's current situation, Ms. Tanner." In other words, she was saying that Sophie couldn't afford to pay for that meal.

"Winter!" Ysabelle couldn't bring herself to listen any further. Indeed, the Quigley family is one of the four prominent families. But still, she can't look down on others like this!

However, Winter merely shrugged.

"I don't mean anything. I merely hope that Ms. Tanner doesn't need to lower her standard of living because of us. That wouldn't be good. Am I not right?"

"How could you say that?" Ysabelle saw red. How could she say that about Sophie?

"A person's value is created by herself. I don't want to rely on the Tanner family. I can obtain everything I want through my own efforts. I'm different from you, Ms. Quigley."

Actually, she really didn't want to say that, but Winter forced her hand.

"That's enough! I think you should go home first, Winter!" Charles interjected swiftly. She has really gone too far this time, so I can't help her either.

"Charles, I didn't say anything, did I? I'm just doing this for her good. Verily, there's no need for her to satisfy her vanity by passing off as something she's not." Simply put, Winter looked down on the Tanner family.

Displeasure deluged Tristan. No matter the reason, he didn't want to hear anyone putting Sophie down in that manner.

"In your eyes, Winter, is the Lombard family not worthy of dining with you? And are you saying that my girlfriend can't even afford to treat you to a meal?"

Never had Winter expected him to tear into her like that because of Sophie.

"I didn't mean anything, Mr. Tristan." Despite feeling aggrieved, she still apologized since she wanted to join them instead of going back alone.

By then, the cashier was done collecting the payment and handed Sophie's card back to her.

"Drive Winter home first, Charles. Since she doesn't like to be with us, she doesn't need to join us anymore in the future." Ultimately, Tristan still sentenced Winter for her misdeed.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Tristan." Winter instantly apologized. No matter how dissatisfied she was, she didn't dare to challenge the man.

"Send her back, Charles!" Tristan didn't want to waste any more time on her.

In a trice, Winter's eyes turned red-rimmed. She was a strong career woman in the outside world, but before him, she was merely a weak woman who adored him.

All her perseverance and facade were only for the sake of being with him.

Helplessness swamped Charles. I have already told her not to provoke Sophie, but she just wouldn't listen!

At the sight of Winter on the verge of tears, Ysabelle's heart softened. After all, they always hung out together in the past.

"Let Winter tag along with us, Uncle Tristan! It'll be more fun with more people!" she implored on Winter's behalf.

"Let's bring her along!" Sean seconded.

Even with so many of them speaking up for Winter, Tristan still looked at Sophie. If she doesn't agree, no amount of pleading will work!

Upon seeing that everyone was looking at her, Sophie shrugged nonchalantly.

"I don't mind." It didn't matter to her whether Winter went with them, for she was inconsequential in her eyes.

"This is your only chance." Tristan didn't even bother to spare Winter a single glance.

"Let's go!" Meanwhile, Charles was wholly speechless. Once a woman falls in love, she becomes foolish no matter how intelligent and capable she is!

Winter trailed behind the man quietly.

"Charles, I—"

"Don't say anything. Remember my words—do not provoke Sophie." That is enough. As for the rest, I can't be bothered anymore.

Winter's hands balled into fists.

In the past, they only brought me along when they came out. I'd always thought I was special to Tristan, but I never expected myself to be no one of significance to him. That little slut is really adept at bewitching others!

Felix and Sean went ahead with Ysabelle, leaving only Tristan with Sophie in the end.

"Mr. Tristan, you didn't have to do that because of me."

"It was necessary. No matter who it is, no one can pick on you."

Furthermore, it was just Winter. I'm never bothered about her.

When they went out, they saw Mason and Willow, who had been waiting outside.

Sophie's brows knitted together. Truly, she didn't believe that it was a coincidence.

So, what's her motive in doing everything possible to get him here?

The instant Willow spotted Sophie coming out with the man, glee filled her.

With things having come to this point, Mason will likely give up, yes? Witnessing Sophie with another man, Mason couldn't help eyeing Willow.

Did she call me over just to have me watch this scene?

At the look in his eyes, Willow inexorably defended herself. "Mason, I had no idea that Sophie is here as well. How would I have such great capability to know that she's also here?"

Tristan swept his gaze over the man across from them, but he said nothing.

"Let's go!"

Ysabelle and the others had all left. Is there any need for us to tarry here because of two insignificant people?

"Okay."

He was relatively satisfied with her response.

This is precisely what we should do! In the face of an inconsequential person, we should just ignore them.

Watching as Sophie walked right past him, Mason felt utterly wretched.

It wasn't until she had gotten into the car that he gathered his wits about him.

Noticing that he wanted to leave, Willow promptly grabbed his hand.

"It's time you give up, Mason! There's no longer a place for you by her side."

Chapter 128 Green With Envy

The moment Mason heard that, understanding dawned upon him. Is there no longer a place for me?

"That has nothing to do with you. Go back first."

"Go back with me, Mason! I beg you! Can we not be together happily?" Willow sounded exceedingly pathetic. Really, all I want is to be with him. Is that too much to ask?

However, Mason didn't pay her words any heed. Instead, he got into his car.

Unwilling to go home, Willow pulled open the car door and climbed into the car as well. Never would she allow him to go after Sophie alone.

At that, Mason couldn't help jerking his head back and glowering at her.

"What are you doing? Did you not hear me telling you to go back? Why are you following me? I've already made things clear to you. There's no future between us!" He didn't leave any room for negotiation.

When Willow heard that, the urge to cry seized her.

“There are many of them, yet you want to follow them? What are you planning to do? I’m worried about you.”

“I don’t need your concern.”

No matter what Mason said, Willow refused to get out of the car, adamant that she wanted to go with him.

In truth, she did not want Mason to be with Sophie alone. I’ll never give them such a chance!

As Tristan drove, he peered at the luxurious car tailing him through the rear view mirror.

The corners of his mouth curved into a smirk. This man really doesn’t give up.

“Mr. Laird is following behind us.”

He didn’t make an arbitrary decision but asked Sophie for her opinion. After all, the man was following them because of her.

Therefore, only she had the right to deal with it.

Sophie glanced at the rear view mirror. Sure enough, she caught sight of Mason’s car. Her brows inexorably creased. What is he trying to do? Hadn’t I made things clear? Could it be that he has a comprehension problem?

“Just ignore him. I have nothing to do with him.”

The car drove straight to Ducat Karaoke Bar. As Tristan wasn't fond of visiting such places in the past, no one knew him there.

"How many persons, sir?"

"Haven't Felix and the others arrived?"

"Oh, you're with Mr. Northley! This way, please."

The employee led them to the private room where Felix and the others were.

He pushed open the door and allowed Sophie to enter first. As soon as Ysabelle saw that Sophie had arrived, she immediately made space beside her.

"Over here, Soph!"

Sophie went over to Ysabelle and sat down beside her.

"Why did it take you so long to arrive? Weren't you both right behind us? Spit it out. Where did you and my uncle go?"

Hearing that, Winter likewise perked up her ears to catch their answer.

"Nowhere."

Truth be told, Sophie was puzzled herself. Tristan's driving skills were superb, but he drove exceptionally slow that day.

Unbeknownst to them, the man did it on purpose. He simply wanted to spend more time with her.

Glasses abounded on the table in the karaoke bar. Many of them were filled with wine.

“Let’s drink to our heart’s content today!” Felix declared domineeringly. Everyone is happy today, so it doesn’t matter even if we imbibe a bit more.

Ysabelle wasn’t interested in drinking. She went over to the screen and selected a few songs.

Then, she asked Sophie, “Is there any song you’d like to sing, Soph? We can sing together.”

However, Sophie shook her head in demurral. “You go ahead. I’ll just listen as you sing.”

“No way, Soph! You’ve got to sing when you’re at the karaoke bar! Besides, I noticed that you were truly in sync with Mark back then. As such, your singing must be really melodious!”

“Hear, hear! Sophie’s voice is sweet in the first place, so her singing must be music to the ears!” Felix couldn’t help echoing. No matter what Ysabelle said, he agreed with it all.

“I really am sorry, Mr. Tristan.” Holding a glass of wine in hand, Winter downed it in a single go before Tristan.

Tristan picked up a glass of whiskey and took a sip without saying anything.

Winter didn’t dare speak further, so she could only shrink back and sit down beside Charles.

“All right, don’t harbor any more inappropriate thoughts. Mr. Tristan isn’t someone you can dream about.”

All Charles could do was comfort her. She isn’t malicious in nature. She merely loves him too much.

Nevertheless, Winter’s gaze remained fixated on Tristan.

He's too good to Sophie, meticulous to a fault. I've never imagined that he would treat someone this tenderly.

"Let's sing together, Soph!" Ysabelle handed the microphone to Sophie.

Sophie took the microphone, but she placed it on the table in front of her.

"You go ahead. I don't like to sing."

"Okay, then. In that case, I'll be singing! Just tell Felix if you need anything."

Ysabelle's singing was really incredible. Her voice was sweet, so it was perfect for her to sing such gentle love songs.

She was exceedingly focused when she sang, rendering her very much attractive. Felix sat in the corner and gazed at her. She was all he saw.

After finishing one song, Ysabelle continued singing another song. This time, it was an extremely popular Ustranasion song recently. Still, it suited her perfectly.

Winter got up and went over to the screen. Selecting a song, she shifted it to the top.

When Ysabelle was done singing, it would be that song of hers.

She stood there leaning against the wall. From that angle, she could perceive all of Tristan's reactions.

It was a song about a confession of love, of which the lyrics spoke of the girl's feelings and her love for the man. The astringent feeling from it would make one feel anguished.

It was clear as day that she was directing that song to Tristan. Regretfully, she was the only one who felt touched after the entire song.

In the meantime, Tristan had already sat down beside Sophie. The two of them merely sat there without exchanging a word. However, they looked incredibly harmonious.

Sophie lifted her hand and picked up a glass of whiskey.

Seeing that, Tristan promptly grabbed her hand. He brought it before him and drank the whiskey in her glass as he maneuvered her hand.

“Drink at home if you want to drink. Don’t drink in front of them.” He wasn’t willing to allow Charles and the others to see her sloshed.

Sophie arched a brow. Well, well, well... He’s really possessive.

By then, Winter had finished singing. Alas, Tristan never once paid her any mind.

She felt devastated, but she couldn’t do anything about it.

All she could do was sit in the corner as though she didn’t exist.

Just then, Tristan selected a song.

It was an Ustranasion duet song. It wasn’t a very popular song, but he really liked it a lot.

Upon seeing that her uncle was truly going to sing, Ysabelle quickly handed him two microphones.

“Here, Uncle Tristan.” She wore a docile expression and acted cute.

Taking the two microphones, Tristan handed one of them to Sophie.

Sophie quirked a brow.

“Let’s sing together.” His voice was remarkably deep, very much seductive as it drifted into her ears.

In response, Sophie nodded in agreement. All right! Since he’s willing to accompany me here, singing a song with him is perfectly within reason.

Charles, Sean, and Felix grew up with Tristan, but even they had never heard the man sing.

Of course, Winter went green with envy.

Argh! The difference is too vast. I sang to him, confessing my love, but he didn’t even bother listening. On the contrary, Sophie gets duet with him!

Chapter 129 Sing A Duet

The song started playing. This Ustranasion song is lovely and I really like the prelude. I didn’t expect Tristan to pick this song. I have heard it before and loved it the first time I heard it.

The male part started first. When Tristan opened his mouth, the audience was shocked. His deep baritone voice reverberated through the air.

Just his voice alone was enough to send shivers down their spine.

The song was about the singer expressing his feelings for the girl he loved in every word of the lyrics. Tristan managed to express and sing it well with his handsome looks and deep timbre voice.

When it was the female’s turn, Sophie lifted the microphone to her lips. Staying on the beat, she started singing. Her voice was on the colder side, but it suited the song.

Tristan subconsciously held Sophie's hand at the chorus. The gaze he gave her was so gentle.

The audience was full of envy at the two acting sweet. Life is short. It isn't easy to meet someone you love.

Even after the song had ended, Tristan still had his gaze fixed on Sophie.

The room fell into silence briefly before Ysabelle's applause broke it.

"You're amazing, Uncle Tristan. I thought I was good at singing and was confident that I could be an excellent singer. Now that I have heard your singing, I'm ashamed of my skills compared to yours. Soph, your voice is so good! It suits the Ustranasion song. I'm sure you'll be popular if you make a debut. You'll be even more famous than Mark."

Sophie set down the microphone and returned to her seat without saying anything.

Even though she used to be in a band with Mark, she didn't like living under the scrutiny of others. She preferred to keep a low profile.

"Mr. Tristan, you sounded so good when you sang," Winter couldn't help but praise. The man I love is good at everything. It doesn't matter what he does. Even his singing is better than the others.

"That's not very good of you, Mr. Tristan. I never knew you could sing so well. Why don't you form a band with Sophie and debut? Your album will be a blast."

"I'm not interested in the entertainment industry. Moreover, why would someone like me enter the entertainment industry?"

That's true. A man like Tristan is more suited to being a leader.

“Soph, let’s sing a song together. I want to sing with you too. I really like your voice. I think our voices match well together.”

“I don’t want to sing anymore.” Sophie reached for the glass of milk and took a sip. Her brows furrowed when she tasted milk on her tongue.

Does Tristan take me as a child? He actually ordered milk for me even at a place like the karaoke bar.

“Come on, Soph. Just one song together!” Ysabelle pleaded.

Seeing how she acted cute, Sophie nodded.

“Fine. You pick a song. I’m fine with anything.”

Getting her permission, Ysabelle hurriedly went over to pick a song. The song she chose was a duet that suited girls.

Finally, Sophie stood on the stage and sang a duet with Ysabelle.

Sophie might look independent, but she was surprisingly good when singing a duet with others.

She wouldn’t try to show off and merely harmonized with Ysabelle.

Felix couldn’t keep his hands to himself and pulled out his phone to record the scene of Sophie and Ysabelle singing.

He took a short video.

Singing is her dream. I hope I can help her.

Once he was done recording, Felix lowered himself to his seat and drafted the description before uploading it to the trendiest video-sharing platform.

His actions had unknowingly changed Ysabelle's life completely.

When the song ended, Sophie got up and went to the restroom, feeling discomfort in her belly.

Tristan was right behind her the minute she stepped out of the room.

Sophie merely wanted to catch some air but saw Mason standing up ahead.

She was not even the slightest bit curious about his reason for being there, so she decided to feign ignorance.

Despite her obvious negligence, Mason still ran over to her when he spotted her.

"Soph, I have something to tell you."

At his approach, Sophie instantly turned around to leave.

"We used to be friends. Can't I even have a conversation with you anymore?" he pleaded. He only wanted to talk with her.

Sophie finally stopped in her tracks and looked over her shoulder at Mason.

"There's nothing more to say between us. I've repeated the same thing so many times already. Don't you get annoyed by it? Whatever happens between you and Willow is just between the two of you. It has nothing to do with me. Can you just let me go?"

Sophie had no interest in getting involved in a love triangle.

Mason grabbed her wrist and said, "I already broke up with Willow. I left Jipsdale five years ago because I was shocked when I found out about that incident. You knew that. Nothing is going on between her and me anymore. It was all her wishful thinking."

Willow was trailing after Mason the whole time. His cruel words pierced her heart.

She rushed out from her hiding place and grasped Sophie's wrist. "Sophie, how could you be so shameless? You even stooped so low as to hit on my boyfriend? Do you even believe him? I'm about to get engaged to him. Don't you think it's funny when he said nothing is happening between us? Sophie, you've never liked Mason. Am I right? Especially now. I know you won't give him another chance. If that's the case, why are you not telling him?" Willow shouted.

Willow was all frustrated when she found out that her love for Mason meant nothing to him.

Sophie got very annoyed. I already knew a love triangle is messy, and it's just as I expected.

"Sophie, she's lying. There's no engagement. I won't be engaged to her. My mom was the one who arranged everything. I'm not going to listen to her this time. You have to trust me."

His words sent Willow into a state of panic. She grabbed onto Mason frantically.

"Mason, can't you give me a chance? I love you so much. I'm already putting myself down for you. I can do anything to be with you. Why do you treat me this way?"

Why can't I compare to Sophie no matter what I do?

"Willow, you can't force someone's feelings. Even if you love me, what's the point of that? I only have her in my heart."

"Sophie, is this your revenge? You don't even like him. Why not just tell him straight? What do you want?" Willow didn't dare to blame Mason, so she turned to Sophie instead.

“Is your brain working? What did I even do? Why do I care about what’s happening between the two of you?”

Tristan went to Sophie’s side and pulled her into his embrace.

“She’s right. What’s between the two of you has nothing to do with her. She’s mine.”

Chapter 130 Kneel In Repentance

Mason was gripped with envy after seeing how Tristan wrapped Sophie in his arms.

“Soph, don’t make a hasty decision just because you hate me.”

Sophie let Tristan’s arms circle her waist and sneer at Mason.

“Mason, you’re so full of yourself.” Refusing to continue the conversation further, Sophie turned on her heel and tugged Tristan with her to leave.

This is the first time she’s holding my hand.

Tristan stared at the hands clasped together for a while before he covered her small hand with his.

Mason was furious at their departure. I finally worked up the courage to owe up to my mistake from five years ago. Why wouldn’t she forgive me?

“Sophie, what can I do to get you to forgive me?”

All he wanted was a chance.

Sophie's steps didn't falter. She didn't like anyone or anything clinging to her. Since the situation was already like that, words were meaningless at that point.

Cheat on me once, and I'm never taking you back. That's my principle, and nothing can change that. Hence, Mason's words mean nothing to me.

Seeing her leaving with another man without the slightest hesitation, Mason fell to his knees with a loud thud.

Willow stared at Mason with disbelief. How can he do this? Is he still the proud Mason? Why is he acting like this whenever Sophie is around?

"Get up, Mason! What are you doing? Are you still a man? How could you kneel at her?"

Tristan looked over his shoulder and saw his rival kneeling on the floor.

He really likes Sophie. Well, due to his past betrayal, he doesn't deserve any sympathy no matter what he does now or how much he likes her.

Sophie turned her head and saw Mason kneeling on the ground. The expression on her face looked colder at the unseemly sight.

"Is this necessary, Mason?" Well, I'm not going to stop him since he wants to do it. Honestly, I don't care what he does.

"Soph, I was wrong. I should've trusted you. I shouldn't have left you. I regret it now. Do you know I would dream of you every night for the past five years? You have always been on my mind. I can't forget you. Can you please give me another chance? We can leave this city and start a new life somewhere else. Would you like that? I don't mind doing anything as long as I'm with you."

"Sorry, you might want that but not me. Why would I leave this city? The one in the wrong was never me in the first place." Sophie turned to Tristan. "I don't want to go back to the room anymore. Let's get out of here."

Tristan removed his coat and slid it over her shoulder as he led her to the exit.

He said I could go wherever I wanted. However, no one can force me to do anything I don't want to.

Mason was still on his knee even after Tristan and Sophie had left.

Willow went over to help him up, but no matter how hard she pulled, he refused to stand.

"Mason, let me send you back." Willow pleaded, "Please don't do this. Sophie doesn't want you, but you still have me. I always have my eyes on you. Can't we just be together?"

"I've wronged her. I refused to listen to her explanation and just took off when she needed me the most. What do you even see in someone like me?"

Mason got up to his feet and left the karaoke bar looking absent-minded.

He wasn't paying attention when he crossed the road, and a car crashed into him.

Willow had been right behind him all the while. When she saw the car hit him, she raced over to his side.

Her hands were covered with blood when she touched him.

"Don't scare me, Mason! Mason, what's wrong? Are you okay?" Willow almost cried her eyes out.

However, Mason merely mumbled, "I'm sorry, Sophie."

Tristan drove to Breakwater Port. The place was deserted, except for the two of them.

Silence hung heavy in the car.

I have no idea what Mason means to her, but does he really mean nothing to her?

Tristan was annoyed at the long silence.

“Am I too heartless?” Sophie asked.

Tristan reached for her hand to comfort her. His heart ached for everything she had to face in the past.

If I had met her earlier, then she wouldn’t have had to face everything alone. She was probably only thirteen to fourteen years old at that time.

“No. I agree with every decision you make no matter what you do.” None of those who have hurt her can ask for her forgiveness.

Sophie nodded.

“I think so too.”

“Let’s head back.” It’s getting late, and she still has things to do tomorrow.

Sophie nodded.

Tristan pulled up in front of the Wisteria Apartments. When Sophie got out of the car, Tristan followed suit.

“You can go back.” It’s already so late. He should go back and rest.

After taking out an exquisite box from the trunk, Tristan walked over to her.

“Merry Christmas!”

Sophie took the box from his hand and looked up at him.

“Thank you, but I didn’t prepare any gifts for you.”

“It’s fine. Meeting you is the best present.”

That was how Tristan truly felt.

Sophie’s ears warmed at the sweet words coming out of his mouth.

“I’ll head up then.”

I have always thought I’m strong enough now, but I can’t believe I have a soft side in front of him.

After watching the elevator door close, Tristan whirled around and left.

Sophie’s phone started ringing the minute she got back to her room.

“Soph, where are you?” The call was from Josiah. It’s already so late into the night. I’m shocked that he’s still up.

“What’s wrong, Grandpa? It’s already this late. Why aren’t you asleep?” She could hear something serious had happened from his tone.

“Mason met with a car accident.” Josiah did like Mason in the past, but he preferred Tanny now.

Even though she felt nothing for Mason, Sophie didn't know how to react to that piece of news.

"It's late, Grandpa. Rest well. This matter has nothing to do with you, so ignore it."

After all, Sophie couldn't just pretend nothing had happened after hearing about the boy she was once fond of getting into an accident.

Meanwhile, Mason was still in the ICU at the hospital. Willow's whole body was shaking like a leaf as she sat on the bench alone.

Constance arrived at the hospital after getting a call. She spotted Willow sitting on the bench all covered in blood.

She raced over to Willow and pulled her up.

"Willow, what happened? Didn't I ask you to take good care of Mason? How did things turn out like this?"

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Laird. I didn't know this would happen. I should've stopped Mason. I shouldn't let him meet with Sophie, or he wouldn't end up like this. I'm really sorry. I really didn't know what to do. If Mason is gone, I won't let him go alone."