

Pursuing 151

Chapter 151 Cheap

Hearing that, Arius rubbed his nose in shame. Indeed, he was the one at fault, so he did not dare to say anything else.

On the other hand, Tristan shot Arius a vicious glare, and the latter flinched in terror.

These two's demeanor are truly in sync! It's quite terrifying.

Even after exiting the presidential suite and entering Tristan's car, Sophie said nothing to him to explain the situation.

"Do you trust him a lot?" It seemed like Tristan was really bothered by the close tie between Sophie and Arius.

"What do you mean?"

"You're a cautious person. If you didn't have absolute trust in him, he wouldn't have had a chance to drug you."

Sophie continued staring straight ahead in silence.

"Sophie, I don't care how important he is to you. If he hurts you, I won't let him off the hook."

"Mr. Tristan, he wasn't trying to hurt me." There were many things Sophie still could not tell Tristan.

Tristan was disappointed. Even now, she still can't bring herself to explain anything to me.

“Send me to the Tanner residence, will you?” Arius had to return to the medical association, so the surgery had to proceed earlier than scheduled.

“Are you not going to school today?”

“I need to talk to my grandpa, so I won’t be going to school today.” Regardless of everything, Sophie had made up her mind to convince her grandfather to agree to the surgery.

At the end of the day, this surgery determines how much time Grandpa has left to stay by my side. No matter the cost, I have to get him to undergo this surgery.

“What’s going on? Soph, no matter what happens, I hope you won’t keep it a secret from me. I want to face life head-on with you no matter rain or shine.”

His words moved Sophie. Although they had technically only met by chance, he had been nice to her all this time, taking on all her problems as if they were his.

Tristan was disappointed to see that Sophie remained secretive with him. Have I not done enough? Why won’t she tell me anything?

Nevertheless, Tristan sent her to the Tanner residence. Only after watching her enter the house did he turn to leave. However, before he could get into his car, Willow stopped him.

“Hello, are you Sophie’s boyfriend?” Willow’s heart skipped a beat when she finally met the man again.

Mason was now bed-bound, and no one could tell whether or not he would be able to stand on his two feet again. On the other hand, the man before her was healthy and elegant in all ways. He made her heart race.

Nevertheless, Tristan was completely uninterested in talking to Sophie’s sister.

Still, Willow persisted despite his obvious indifference and ran toward him. She had dressed up to her nines that day, and she was sure that no man would reject her.

“Since you’re here, why aren’t you going in with Sophie?” Willow deliberately asked. “Right, Sophie’s always been like this. She’s very wary of others. Maybe you don’t matter to her, and that’s why she didn’t ask you to come in. I don’t know if you’re aware of this or not, but she brought Mason home less than a month after meeting him five years ago. Oh, I’m sorry. I think I’ve run my mouth.”

Willow was spilling the beans on purpose.

Upon hearing her, Tristan drew his brows together.

Is she trying to drive a wedge between us? Isn’t that a cheap trick?

“Sorry, but I don’t know who you are. Can you move aside now?”

Whether or not he and Sophie were getting along was none of an outsider’s business.

Tristan’s straightforward response made Willow grimace.

After biting her lip, she decided to throw caution to the wind and uttered, “I’m just doing this for your sake. There are plenty of men around Sophie. I’m hoping that you won’t end up as one of her playthings.”

At that, Tristan narrowed his eyes at her. That look from him sent chills down her spine.

“I don’t want to hear you talk about Sophie from now on. If I hear this again, don’t blame me for making you pay.”

Willow never expected that the man would not heed a single word from her despite how she had to muster her courage to tell him those things.

"I know better than you who Sophie is. A girl like you is asking to be taught a lesson," Tristan added.

By then, all the colors had drained from Willow's face.

"This is just for your sake..." Willow tried to protest, but Tristan gave her no chance to do so as he went into his car.

Overwhelmed with rage, she tightened her fists.

What spell did Sophie cast on this man to make him so protective of her? Why?

Jealousy was an emotion that could drive anyone mad.

When Willow thought about the recent incidents that she had gone through, she felt the overwhelming urge to skin Sophie alive.

After Tristan entered his car, he did not leave immediately; he intended to wait for Sophie in the car.

When he saw Willow still standing rooted to her spot and fuming, he sneered.

Disgusting.

Tristan was no fool. The moment Willow walked over, he knew what she was about to do.

When Charmaine saw Sophie return, she immediately paused her work and asked in concern, "You're free today? Are you here to visit your grandpa?"

Sophie did not even feel like responding to Charmaine's feigned concern.

"I'm going up to see Grandpa," was all Sophie said before heading to the backyard.

After all, she knew that Josiah was in the middle of tending to his garden at that moment.

“This girl is so rude. Does she really think that she owns Tanner Group now?” Charmaine simply could not bring herself to like this daughter of hers.

“Mrs. Tanner, Ms. Sophie is pushing her luck. Ms. Willow is still the more obedient and sensible one.”

“That’s right. Willa’s more sensible and sweet. It’s genuinely a pity that Mason is in this state now. I wonder if he’ll ever recover.” Every time Charmaine thought about Mason’s leg, she would feel troubled.

If Mason could no longer walk, Willow would have a hard life, and Charmaine could not bear to let her suffer.

After all, Willow was the daughter she had doted on since young.

“Mrs. Tanner, Ms. Willow is such an outstanding person, so there isn’t a need for her to stick to the Laird family. I heard from a relative that the best families in Jipsdale right now are the four major families.

“The four major families.” Charmaine knew that those four families were the best choices, but unfortunately, the Tanners had nothing to do with them at all.

“Mrs. Tanner, since Ms. Willow is such a wonderful person, if she can get a chance to meet anyone from the four major families, she would be able to...”

Charmaine was starting to grow haughty as she listened to the words of the housekeeper. If Mason’s no longer a good choice, we can always opt for someone else as long as that person can give us what we want.

“The four major families? Let me think about how we can approach these four major families...” She’s right. All Willow lacks is an opportunity.

“My darling, you’ve come! Hurry over to look at my orchid!” Josiah beckoned Sophie from inside the greenhouse.

Sophie then walked over and crouched down beside Josiah to look at his beloved orchid.

“How is it?” Josiah eagerly asked.

Chapter 152 Good Luck

Sophie gave Josiah’s orchid a few more glances and realized that it was indeed of a rare species.

“If you like it, I’ll get someone to send a few more pots of this orchid to you,” was all Sophie said to him in response.

She had come not to talk about orchids with Josiah but to convince the elderly man to undergo surgery.

“Soph, is there something you want to talk to me about?” Josiah rarely saw her so hesitant to say anything.

There was no point in hiding it anymore, so she said, “Grandpa, I hope you’ll agree to the surgery.”

Josiah turned silent.

Why is she suddenly talking about this? Though, it isn’t actually that abrupt. Didn’t she bring me to the hospital for a full-body checkup the other day?

Josiah was contemplating how he should reply to her. He was old and genuinely did not want to go through the hassle anymore.

“Soph, I don’t want to undergo the surgery. All I want for my final days is to see you happy. That’s all I need.”

If he did not agree to undergo surgery, he might have a little longer to live. However, if he agreed to it, there was a high chance that he would not even survive the operation as his body might not be able to handle the stress.

Nevertheless, Josiah was moved.

While Josiah was keeping his condition a secret, Sophie, who did not live with him, knew what was going on. On the other hand, Yale, Charmaine, and Willow, who all stayed under the same roof as Josiah, did not notice anything amiss about him. Who said that she’s not caring?

“Grandpa, trust me, okay? Please agree to the surgery.” Sophie leaned against his leg. He was the last bit of warmth she had in the world, and she did not wish for him to leave her so soon.

“Soph, I don’t want to part with you, and that’s why I don’t want to agree to this surgery.” No one was not afraid of death. Although elderly people were expected to be more accepting of death, Josiah did not want to meet his demise yet.

He still wanted to stay by Sophie’s side.

If he were to leave as well, she would be all alone in the world.

“Grandpa, please trust me. I’ve really sought help from the best doctor in the world, and I trust that he won’t let me down. I’ve never asked for anything from you, but please, do this for me.” The only time Sophie would act so lowly was when she was with Josiah.

Josiah’s heart ached to hear her words. How could I let her be in so much despair?

Only then did Josiah begin mulling over his words.

“Soph, I really can’t stop worrying about you.” She isn’t even of age yet. If I leave, she’ll be all alone, and I can’t rest in peace.

“Grandpa, you said that you want to watch me get married. Are you going to go back on your words?” she asked. It was an urgent matter, and this was the only way she could persuade him.

“Soph...” What decision should I make? A beat later, Josiah said, “Okay. In that case, I agree to the surgery. But Soph, you have to remember that I’m the one who chose to do the surgery. Even if I don’t

leave the operation room alive, you’re not allowed to be sad about that.”

Sophie blinked quietly.

Even now, he still has my best interests at heart.

“Okay.”

Josiah then gently patted Sophie’s back.

“You always do things discreetly, my child. Don’t you know that’s why you tend to suffer the most?”

You should learn from Willow. Be more of a sweet talker, and others will feel bad for you. Isn’t that better for you?

As Josiah was going to undergo the surgery, he had to be admitted to the hospital for prior observation.

Josiah summoned the butler and had the latter pack up for him.

“Old Mr. Tanner, are you really going to undergo the surgery?” The only one who knew about Josiah’s condition other than Sophie was the butler.

“That’s enough. You just need to know that I’ll be undergoing the surgery. Pack up. We’ll be going to the hospital with Sophie.”

“The rate of success for this surgery is too low.” The butler knew that he should not be saying those things to Josiah, but he could not bring himself to feign ignorance after working for Josiah for so many years.

A minor mistake by the surgeon, and Josiah would die on the operating table. After all, he was no longer as sturdy as when he was younger.

“As long as Soph’s happy, I won’t have any regrets even if I die.”

The butler did not know how to respond to that. He knew that Josiah had always doted on Sophie, but he never thought that Josiah would still heed Sophie even when it came to matters of life and death.

After packing up, Josiah led the butler down the stairs while Sophie went into her room to get some things before coming back out.

When Charmaine saw the suitcase in Josiah’s hands, she instantly stood up and asked, “Dad, where are you going? Didn’t the doctor ask you to stay at home?”

“I’ll be staying at one of my comrades’ place for a while.” Josiah did not want to reveal too much about his surgery. He felt that it was better for them not to know about it.

“Dad, where are you going? No matter where you want to go, you should wait for Yale to come back and send you. If you go out by yourself now, he’ll surely blame me once he comes home.”

Charmaine could not wrap her mind around what Sophie had said to Josiah to convince him to leave.

“No need to. You just have to settle the matters at home. You don’t need to intervene in my personal affairs.”

If Yale finds out about this, he'll surely kick up a fuss.

Josiah then went out with Sophie. When Tristan saw them, he quickly came out of the car.

"You haven't left?"

"No, I've been waiting for you here. Old Mr. Tanner, come on into the car." Frankly, Tristan did not even know where Sophie was taking Josiah, but he was going to help the elderly man into the car anyway.

Josiah was visibly happy when he saw Tristan.

"Tanny, didn't I ask you to visit me at the Tanner residence? Why didn't you come?" Josiah grumbled.

Tristan did not excuse himself. Instead, he only smiled and replied, "Sorry. I was too busy courting Sophie, so I didn't have time to come here and visit you. Old Mr. Tanner, please forgive me for that."

Then, he helped Josiah into the car.

Josiah was smiling the entire way as he thought, Tanny seems like a decent guy. Maybe he'll be a suitable candidate to take care of Sophie if I'm gone.

"You've been courting Soph since forever. I wish you all the best. I think you're good for her," Josiah encouraged.

"Okay, Old Mr. Tanner. Don't worry. I'll definitely do my best! I'll win over your dear granddaughter and make sure she won't ever feel upset."

Tristan was a smart man; he knew what Josiah wanted to hear. That was why he said those things to please the old man.

“To the hospital.” Sophie climbed aboard and pretended not to have heard their conversation.

Tristan then took on the role of the driver and sent them to the hospital. He knew about Josiah’s condition too. Thus, he wondered, They’re going to the hospital. Does that mean she has already made arrangements for the surgery?

Once they were at the hospital, the hospital director made the arrangements for Josiah himself.

Josiah could not help but turn to look at Tristan when the director came out to greet them.

Chapter 153 Constance Insults Sophie

“All the preparations are complete, Old Mr. Tanner. Don’t you worry!” said the director as he personally escorted Josiah to the VIP ward.

Josiah simply chuckled in response as he knew he had nothing to worry about.

Tristan helped him get seated after the director left, and Sophie came over with Arius shortly after.

“Hello, Old Mr. Tanner. I’m Sophie’s senior. My name is Arius Gullifer,” Arius greeted him with a friendly and easy-going smile.

“Her senior, huh? Sophie, why didn’t you tell me about having a senior like him? What happened in Horington?”

Sophie shot Arius a glare. D*mn it! Why would he bring up the one thing I dread talking about the most? What happened in Horington is in the past, so I don’t want Grandpa to know about it! Besides, him finding out now won’t change a thing anyway. If anything, it’ll only make him worry even more!

“Relax, Grandpa! I didn’t do anything wrong!”

Josiah fell silent. But... I didn't say she did anything wrong...

"Anyway, Arius is the doctor I found for you."

Josiah started freaking out when he heard that the young doctor in front of him was named Arius.

Arius is a legend in the medical field! He's the pride of Chanaea!

"You can just call him Ari, Grandpa." Sophie wasn't planning on introducing him at first, but she did so because she knew what Josiah was worried about.

Besides, Arius' reputation could really come in handy.

Arius Gullifer, the only Chanaean in the international medical association. Young, famous, and possesses peerless medical skills. How is someone like him Sophie's senior? How many more secrets are Sophie keeping from me? Also, she seems to be treating him a little differently. Are they really just senior and junior?

Tristan thought to himself as he glanced at Arius.

After what seemed like forever, Josiah finally found his voice and said, "Thank you very much, Dr. Gullifer!"

Arius scratched his head awkwardly and replied with a smile, "You can just call me 'Ari,' Old Mr. Tanner. Given my relationship with Soph, her grandpa is as important as mine! You really don't have to be so formal with me."

"That's right, Grandpa! You can just call him 'Ari!' He'll be in charge of your surgery, and the director will give him his full cooperation. I'll keep you company in the hospital throughout the next few days, so you have nothing to worry about!" Sophie added.

Josiah frowned when he heard that.

“Since the surgery hasn’t started, you should all go do whatever it is you should be doing! What are you all standing here for? I have full faith in Ari’s medical skills!” Earlier on, he was skeptical about the surgery’s chances of success but found a glimmer of hope when he heard Arius would be performing the surgery. Maybe I will be able to see Soph get married and have kids, after all!

“Thank you for your trust in me, Old Mr. Tanner. I won’t let you down!” Arius promised.

“Of course I trust you! You’re the best medical practitioner in the world! Who else would I trust if not you?”

Sophie held Josiah’s hand with an anxious look in her eyes. Despite her usually being as cool as a cucumber, she found herself feeling uneasy when her grandfather’s life was at risk.

“I’ll be here with him, Soph. You can go do your work and come back when you’re free.” Arius didn’t want her to stick around as he knew she had a lot of work to do.

“What’s wrong with me being here? Why are you all trying to get rid of me?” Sophie asked with a frown. Does my presence really make them that uncomfortable?

“I can’t help but feel like I’m being supervised when you’re around, which makes me feel really uncomfortable. Go on, run along now!” Arius replied.

He was determined to give his best in performing the surgery anyway, so he really didn’t need an extra pair of eyes monitoring him all the time.

“All right, then. I’ll go buy Grandpa some food and come back later,” Sophie said. I can’t leave! Yale will surely be looking for Grandpa everywhere once he finds out that Grandpa isn’t home. When that happens, I’ll have one more problem to take care of...

“I don’t feel like eating anything, so you three can go ahead. Help me treat Ari to a nice meal, okay? I’ll personally treat him to another meal when I get better!” Josiah wasn’t sure how Sophie got him to help out, but he wanted to thank Arius properly.

Arius held Josiah's hand and said with a chuckle, "Sure thing, Old Mr. Tanner. I'll certainly claim that meal when the time comes!"

Josiah felt especially at ease after hearing that.

The butler waited until the three of them had left before commenting, "Ms. Sophie sure is something else, isn't she? The people she knows are all big shots!"

However, Josiah wasn't sure how to feel about that.

"The fact that she knows these people means she must be one of them as well. I remember how Sophie used to be such an innocent and adorable girl... Honestly, I would very much prefer for her to remain that way. At the very least, she wouldn't have so many things to worry about!"

It pained him just thinking about the hardships that Sophie must've gone through to achieve that status.

"You're overthinking it, Old Mr. Tanner. Besides, Sophie wouldn't have been able to handle all this on her own if she had remained the way she was," the butler replied.

Only through growth can a person hope to gain what he wants. I suppose we can't have everything our way, huh...

Constance had just stepped out of Mason's ward when she saw Sophie walking in between two men. To make matters worse, the men both looked extremely handsome and were not the kind to be trifled with.

Hmph... No wonder she doesn't like Mason at all!

With that in mind, Constance said disdainfully, "Now I see why you wouldn't visit Mason, Sophie. You've found yourself another man! Or should I make that two? You sure are something else for dating two guys at the same time!"

Sophie decided to ignore Constance as she knew there was no point in talking to someone that unreasonable.

However, Arius wasn't about to just let it slide.

"What, are you jealous? Well, I suppose it makes sense. Given your appearance, I doubt any guy out there would even take an interest in you! You'd probably be alone for the rest of your life if you weren't rich!"

Constance was so angry that her fingers were trembling as she pointed at Arius. "You... Do you have any idea who I am? How dare you speak to me like that? I could have you disappear from Jipsdale if I so much as feel like it!"

Arius quickly wrapped his arms around Sophie's and said sarcastically, "Hey, Sophie! Did you hear that? She said she would make me disappear! I'm so scared! What should I do?"

Sophie burst out laughing when she saw Arius acting like a child. "Now, now... That's quite enough, Arius."

She deemed Constance an unimportant person, so she didn't want to waste any more of their time on her.

Arius let out a defiant snort and pointed at Tristan as he added, "I could put you through a fate worse than death before you even make me disappear! Do you even know who he is?"

Having recalled how powerful Tristan was, Arius decided to use his name instead.

Sophie quickly stopped him when she realized what he was about to say next. "We're going out for lunch, aren't we? Come on, quit wasting your time arguing with her!"

Tristan simply stood there glaring coldly at them as Sophie dragged Arius away by the arm.

“See that? Sophie is the kind of woman who forgets her current boyfriend after finding someone new! She doesn’t deserve to be loved at all!”

Chapter 154 You Belong To Me

“Mrs. Laird, was it? I’m Tristan Lombard. Please keep in mind that there are some people you should never insult, and my woman is one of them.” There was no way he could tolerate someone insulting Sophie, let alone doing so multiple times in a row.

The look on Constance’s face changed the moment she heard him mention his name.

How is this possible? Even the Laird family finds Sophie unworthy, so how could someone like Tristan be dating her? There’s no way the great Lombard family would approve of her! On top of that, Tristan would never allow his woman to get so friendly with other guys!

With that in mind, Constance protested, “Are you kidding me? You can’t possibly be Mr. Tristan! A man like him would never take an interest in a girl like Sophie!”

Tristan simply snorted at her without saying anything, but that was more than enough to terrify her to the core.

With Mason’s fate still uncertain as he lay on the hospital bed, the Laird family would be doomed if she offended Tristan.

“Are you really Mr. Tristan?” Constance asked with an uncertain look in her eyes. She was clinging to the last shred of hope that the man standing in front of her wasn’t actually Tristan.

“What kind of woman did you say Sophie was?” Tristan asked with a sneer.

Constance didn’t dare say anything further after that.

All it takes is an order from Mr. Tristan to destroy the Laird family completely!

Noticing that Tristan was still standing there, Sophie had no choice but to come back for him.

“Why are you still wasting your time on her?” she asked with a frown as she grabbed his hand and dragged him away.

A smile formed on Tristan’s face when he saw her holding his hand, and he kept his gaze fixated on their interlocked fingers the whole time.

Sophie shook her head when she noticed what he was doing.

“Oh, come on, Mr. Tristan! Are you serious right now?” Since when did he become so childish? Why must he compete with Arius over everything?

“Yes, I am. I want everything that Arius gets. You belong to me, Sophie. Make sure you remember that, okay?”

He could put up with everything else she did, but this was something he had to stand firm on.

Sophie felt her heart race when she heard his confession-like statement. She tried pulling her hand back, but Tristan grabbed hold of it and refused to let go.

“You’ve chosen to hold my hand, so you mustn’t let go for the rest of your life.” Despite being a man of few words, Tristan found himself saying a lot when he was with Sophie. He feared someone else would beat him to it if he didn’t make a move sooner.

The look on Arius’ face turned gloomy when he saw the two of them holding hands.

“That’s unfair, Sophie! You need to treat us both equally!” he protested. She grabbed me by the wrist but went straight for his palm! There’s a huge difference between the two!

“Are you two quite done? If you don’t want to have lunch, we can just go our separate ways right now!” Sophie’s patience had run out at that point.

Arius could only rub his nose and keep his feelings of indignation to himself.

The three of them soon arrived at a nice restaurant, attracting a lot of attention due to their remarkable appearances.

After all, a goddess-like beauty hanging out with two ridiculously handsome men wasn’t exactly a common sight for most people.

Even so, the three of them paid no heed to the strange looks they were getting as they sat down at a table.

A waiter soon came over and handed them some menus so they could place their order.

Tristan was fine with having anything that Sophie was having, so he just set the menu aside without even looking.

Arius, on the other hand, was determined to order the best dishes available since it would be their treat.

After bombarding the waiter with a barrage of orders, he placed the menu down and said, “Hey, Sophie! I bet you must be really proud of yourself for being able to treat me to a meal, huh?”

Due to his status in society, there were countless people in Jipsdale who would kill to treat him to a meal.

Sophie simply ignored him and ordered a few additional dishes according to Tristan’s preferences before handing the menu over.

Naturally, Tristan’s mood improved significantly after she placed her order.

When the food was served up, Tristan helped top up Sophie's plate with all sorts of food. Not wanting to lose to him, Arius poured her a bowl of soup as well.

Sophie glared at them and shouted impatiently, "Can't you two just have lunch normally?"

She was already stressed out due to Josiah's upcoming surgery, and their childish behavior only worsened her mood even further.

"It's all his fault, Sophie! I wouldn't have done something so childish if it weren't for him asserting his dominance! Fine! I'm sorry, okay? I'll drink this soup myself!" Arius whined like a wimp.

"You should eat more, Sophie. Don't worry. I'm sure your grandpa will be all right," Tristan reassured her as he knew she was concerned about him.

"Sophie, didn't you say you'd trust me to get the job done? Do you not have faith in me?" Arius grumbled in displeasure.

"This has nothing to do with you. I'd still worry about him regardless of who performs the surgery."

There was no such thing as a surgery without risks, so she couldn't help but feel uneasy no matter what.

In order to offer her emotional support without overwhelming her, Tristan simply held Sophie's hand in silence.

I bet Tristan would beat me to a pulp if I were to hold her hand right now... Oh, woe is me... Arius thought to himself with a wry smile when he saw the intimate interaction between them.

After lunch, the three of them returned to the hospital together with nutritious food for Josiah. Surely enough, Sophie heard Yale's voice from outside the ward.

“What’s wrong with you, Dad? Given your age, you probably don’t have that many years left! Why would you put yourself through all this?” Yale had just found out about his condition. Despite his harsh words, he actually didn’t want to see Josiah take such a huge risk.

“I’ve already made up my mind on this, Yale. There’s no point in trying to talk me out of it!” Josiah replied stubbornly.

“You’ve been brainwashed by Sophie is more like it! I’m your son, Dad! All I want is the best for you! Have you ever considered the risks of undergoing surgery at your age? What if it isn’t successful?” Yale absolutely refused to accept his decision.

Josiah simply stared at him in silence.

Frustrated, Yale went off at Sophie the moment he saw her come in through the door.

“I know you hate us for leaving you all by yourself in Horington five years ago, but that’s all on me! If you want to get revenge, then it’s me you should come after! Your grandpa is really old now, so he can’t possibly handle such a surgery! Will you please spare him from such torment?”

Sophie ignored him completely and made her way toward the table with the lunchbox in hand. She was planning on feeding Josiah first before dealing with Yale. However, her actions angered him so much that he smacked the lunchbox out of her hand, spilling the food all over the floor.

“Hey! I’m talking to you! Are you deaf or what? I am your father, Sophie! Watch your d*mned attitude!”

Sophie’s expression turned incredibly gloomy as she looked up at him. “Get the f*ck out of here right now if you value your life, Yale Tanner! Don’t say I didn’t warn you!”

Yale had truly angered her to the core at that point.

Chapter 155 Nothing To Do With You

What the h*ll? How dare she address me by my full name like that? I'm her father, d*mn it! I'll teach her insolent a*s a lesson!

"Looks like I'll have to teach you some manners, Sophie. Can't have you ruining the Tanner family name by going around causing trouble everywhere!" Yale shouted as he grabbed her arm and swung at her.

Josiah sat bolt upright and yelled sternly, "Stop it, Yale! How dare you hit Sophie in front of me? You've gone way too far!"

To their surprise, Sophie stopped the slap by grabbing his incoming hand by the wrist and flinging it aside with force.

Angered by her act of resistance, Yale said stubbornly as the frown on his face deepened, "I'll have you know that I will never agree to this surgery, Sophie!"

Sophie's gaze was as cold as ice as she replied, "And I'll have you know that the surgery will be performed whether you agree to it or not. I will bear the consequences myself, so it has nothing to do with you."

Seeing as she refused to back down, Yale raised his hand a second time.

This time, Tristan caught him by the arm before Sophie could even react.

"Who the heck are you? I'm disciplining my daughter here, so let go of me! This is none of your d*mned business!"

I've been through a really rough day at work. As if that isn't bad enough, I now have to deal with my daughter's insolence and a random stranger? Who is this guy? How dare he grab me like this?

"Who I am doesn't matter. What matters is the fact that you're messing with someone you can't afford to."

Tristan would never lay a finger on Sophie, so he wasn't about to let someone slap her in front of him.

Not wanting to see them continue fighting, Josiah said, "Go home, Yale. My surgery is none of your business."

"Dad! I know you've always let Sophie have her way and that you've always looked down on me. However, I'm truly doing this for your own good! Think about it, Dad! An old man like yourself undergoing surgery? How likely do you think you're going to survive it?" Yale protested.

I'm the head of this household, yet these people decided on this without even informing me about it! I can't believe I'm actually the last person to find out about this surgery!

Josiah glared at him coldly as he asked, "We've been living together for so many years, Yale. Since when have you ever cared about my well-being? You're my son, and yet you didn't even notice such a huge issue with my health. Do you really think you're in a position to object at all?"

"I've just been too busy with work, Dad. I really am concerned about you right now!"

"That's enough. The surgery will take place the day after tomorrow. Feel free to drop by if you like, and I won't blame you for not coming if you're too busy. Just don't cause any trouble if you decide to come over."

"Fine. I won't stop you if you're so determined to get that surgery done." Yale then turned toward Sophie and continued, "Your grandpa really loves you. I hope you don't repay his kindness with

cruelty."

After that, he stormed out of the ward and slammed the door shut behind him.

Seeing as none of them would listen to him, Yale deemed it pointless to say anything further. If anything, he felt more like an outsider compared to Tristan.

Josiah shook his head helplessly after Yale left. Sigh... Yale and his hot temper... How will he ever be able to handle problems in life if all he knows is to throw tantrums like that?

Tristan went to get a mop from the restroom and began cleaning up the floor.

"Please don't take your father's words to heart, Soph. This is my choice, so I don't want you feeling upset regardless of what the outcome may be."

"Okay."

Sophie had been under a lot of stress ever since Josiah decided to undergo the surgery. She was really afraid of it being unsuccessful, but there was no backing out of it at that point.

"I'll go buy you something to eat, Grandpa," she said as the food that she had brought over earlier was all wasted.

"All right, go on. Tanny, you can just let the janitor take care of the cleaning. Go keep Soph company!"

Josiah didn't want her going out by herself in her current state.

Tristan nodded and set the mop aside before following Sophie out the door.

"Everything will be fine," he reassured her gently while wrapping an arm around her shoulder. Whatever happens, I'll always be her greatest source of support!

Willow had come to visit Mason at the hospital, only to witness that intimate moment between Sophie and Tristan in the corridor.

Sophie is seducing another man right after doing this to Mason? Does her shamelessness know no bounds?

Her face contorted in rage at the thought of that, and she clenched her fists so tightly that her fingernails were digging into the flesh of her palms.

“Come on, let’s go buy your grandpa something to eat,” Tristan said. He could’ve just let his assistant do it for them, but he wanted to take her out for some fresh air.

It wasn’t until Constance came up to Willow and tapped her on the shoulder that the latter snapped out of her daze.

“How is Mason doing, Mrs. Laird? I’m sorry it took so long for me to come visit him. I’ve been really busy lately. I’m really worried about his condition, so I tried asking around to see if I could find him a better doctor,” she said politely.

Constance was originally displeased with Willow’s absence throughout the past few days, but she felt her heart soften when she saw the latter’s pitiful state.

“Thank you for being such a caring sweetheart. You can go in and see Mason now.”

Unsure of how to face Mason, Willow said, “Actually... I think I should break up with Mason since he doesn’t like me, Mrs. Laird.”

The look on Constance’s face turned gloomy the moment she heard that.

“How could you dump Mason like this, Willow? I can’t believe you’d say something like that after how well I’ve treated you!”

“You know I’ve always liked Mason, Mrs. Laird! The problem is, he doesn’t feel the same about me! Since he likes my sister that much, I figured it’s better if I just give them my blessings instead!”

As Mason could barely walk anymore, Willow was determined not to waste any more of her time and energy on him.

Constance was so mad that she broke into a cold sneer as she said, “Heh... I must’ve been blind to think you’d make a great wife for my son, Willow. Very well... You want to leave? Then get lost and never show yourself in front of Mason ever again!”

“Mrs. Laird—”

“Keep my name out of your mouth! You’re unworthy of saying my name!”

Willow clenched her fists tightly but turned around and walked off without saying anything.

So what if I like Mason? I can’t be marrying a disabled man! Sophie will only look down on me even more if I do! I can’t let that happen!

“What happened?” Mason asked when he saw Constance return to the ward with a furious look on her face.

Chapter 156 Hugging Her

As she never expected something like this to happen to them, Constance was trembling all over in anger as she shouted, “The Tanners are all sc*mbags, Mason! I can’t believe I treated Willow so well for five years, only to have her betray us like this!”

Mason, on the other hand, simply smiled upon hearing that.

He had long since known about Willow’s true nature. The only reason he let her have her way was that she had saved his life before.

“Now, now... Let it be, Mom. I don’t like her anyway, so it’s a good thing that she no longer wants to marry me. Better to see her for who she is now than after she marries into our family,” Mason replied calmly.

Had it not been for the car accident, he would have to deliberately go out of his way to make Willow see the truth and give up on him.

“Whatever. This is all the Tanner family’s fault, so you’d better stay away from them in the future! Don’t get yourself involved in their affairs ever again, you hear?”

Mason simply kept quiet as he knew he couldn’t forget about Sophie no matter what.

Feeling uneasy about his attitude toward the situation, Constance exclaimed worriedly, “It’s impossible between you and Sophie, Mason! Even if I don’t object to your relationship, the guy she’s dating will! Do you have any idea who he is? He’s Mr. Tristan!”

Just thinking of how she had offended Tristan earlier filled her heart with fear and anxiety.

“Stop worrying about me, Mom. Also, remember not to fall for Willow’s lies anymore.”

Josiah had already fallen asleep by the time Tristan and Sophie returned with the food they bought him.

“Just leave the food here, Ms. Sophie. I’ll take good care of things here, so you don’t have to worry at all,” said the butler respectfully. His attitude toward Sophie had changed significantly after seeing her enlist Arius’ help.

Sophie nodded as she set the lunchbox down on the table. Instead of leaving, she turned around and told Tristan, “You can head on home, Mr. Tristan. I’ll stay here and keep my grandpa company throughout the next few days.”

She wanted him to leave as she didn’t want to take up any more of his time.

“No, you should head home and get some rest. I promise I’ll stay here and look after him in person, so you have nothing to worry about!” Tristan replied.

He’s a very busy man, yet he’s willing to spend so much time on me...

"I want to keep Grandpa company," Sophie said after giving it some thought.

"I'll stay here with you, then." Tristan wasn't about to just leave her there all by herself.

"You don't have to do this, Mr. Tristan. You've been here all day today, so you should go home and get some rest. I can look after my grandpa myself."

Tristan grabbed her hand. "I don't like hearing you say stuff like that. Your grandpa is my grandpa too, so I will stay here with you. Don't worry. I won't bother you."

"That's not what I meant. You're a busy man, so I don't want you delaying your work because of me."

"It's not an issue if it's for you." He was even willing to stay there with her forever as long as he could remain by her side.

Sophie didn't know what else to say at that point.

She wasn't expecting a person as busy as Tristan to set everything aside just so he could keep her company.

"I'll be by your side no matter what happens, so don't you worry," Tristan said while gently pulling her into his embrace. I'll always be there for her whenever she needs me!

Having finished his work at hand, Arius dropped by and saw them hugging the moment he stepped through the door.

So, "first come, first served" isn't a thing when it comes to love... Has Sophie found someone who would risk everything for her? She's always as cool as a cucumber when it comes to dealing with people. On top of that, she's so tough that she could handle everything on her own. It's only when she's around Tristan that she shows this soft and vulnerable side of her...

Arius broke into a wry smile at the thought of that. Instead of interrupting their intimate moment, he silently backed out of the ward and returned to his temporary office. The director of the hospital had renovated an office just for him, and it was equipped with everything he could possibly need.

Arius lit a cigarette and started puffing away while staring at the night sky outside the window.

He was halfway through the cigarette when Sophie came over to see him.

"What's the matter? Is there a problem with my grandpa's surgery?" she asked. Arius only smokes when he's under a lot of stress. I haven't seen him smoke in a really long time...

"Oh, not at all. I'm the one in charge of his surgery, so why would there be a problem? Rest assured that he is in good hands!" Arius knew how much she cared about Josiah, so he would never joke about it no matter what.

"Okay." Sophie felt relieved when she heard that.

"What do you think of Tristan, Soph?" Arius hadn't had a chance to ask her that as she had been busy looking after Josiah since her return.

"Why are you asking me this all of a sudden? What I think about him has nothing to do with you, Arius. You shouldn't have to compare yourself to him," Sophie replied after giving it some thought.

Arius felt a lot better when he heard that.

"You're right. No one could possibly surpass a talented individual like me anyway!"

Was my statement that convincing? Well, whatever... I'm just glad he's feeling better now.

She then asked Arius about the surgery procedures and things to take note of before returning to the ward. Josiah had already fallen asleep by the time she got there.

The butler felt relieved to see that she was actually serious about keeping Josiah company.

“Morgan, you should head back and get some rest. The medical staff and I will take good care of Grandpa.”

“I know, but I’ve been working for Old Mr. Tanner for a very long time now. I know his needs and preferences like the back of my hand, so I think I should stay here with him.” Morgan used to be a member of the armed forces before an accident forced him into leaving the military. Josiah was the one who took him in when he was jobless and had nowhere to go.

That was why he shared an incredibly strong bond with Josiah.

“All right. You can rest on the bed over there, then.” Since it was a VIP ward, there was a spare bed in a corner for family members who were staying overnight.

“You should have the bed instead, Ms. Sophie. I can sleep anywhere, so go ahead and get some shuteye.”

“I’m not tired. I’ll be heading out for a bit, so you can sleep if you want to.”

After glancing at Josiah and making sure that he was fast asleep, Sophie opened the door and left the ward.

She paused in her tracks when she got to the end of the corridor and just stood there, staring blankly into space.

Tristan had just returned from taking a phone call when he saw her standing there all by herself. For some reason, he felt his heart ache when he saw her in that state.

He then walked up to her and hugged her from behind.

Chapter 157 Everything Is Ready

Feeling the warmth from Tristan's chest, Sophie relaxed completely and leaned against him.

"What are you doing here all by yourself?"

"Grandpa is asleep, so I came here to get some air."

"Hmm... I told you to go back and rest, but you refused. I've asked the hospital director to prepare the ward next door. You should go and get some rest. It's not time for the surgery yet, so you don't have to worry."

"Okay, Mr. Tristan. Thank you."

Apart from that, she truly did not know what else to say.

"No need to thank me. Come on. Go and get some sleep. You'll only need to keep watch after the surgery."

"Okay," Sophie agreed reluctantly.

I just wanted to spend more time with Grandpa. After all, no one can predict the outcome of the surgery. If it weren't because there was no other choice, I wouldn't have wanted him to undergo surgery.

When Tristan led her to the ward next door, she saw a hospital bed and an extra bed inside.

"I'll sleep on the extra bed. Since you're tall, it won't be comfortable for you," said Sophie, nudging him toward the larger bed.

"Be good and go to sleep." Without giving her the chance to refuse, he swept her up in his arms and carried her to the bed.

“Mr. Tristan —”

Why is he willing to suffer for me?

Tristan also lay on the hospital bed next to her. The bed was not that big, so it was actually quite a squeeze for both of them to lie on it.

Nonetheless, it felt very warm and toasty to hug each other in the chilly weather of early winter.

“Sleep,” he murmured in his pleasant and utterly mesmerizing voice.

“Okay.”

Sophie closed her eyes and leaned against his arm.

Perhaps because she was too tired, it was not long before she dozed off.

As Tristan listened to her gentle breathing, he lifted a hand to brush the hair from her face and tucked the loose strands behind her ear.

“Sleep well, Soph,” he said softly. As long as I’m here, I’ll shield her from all the problems and worries.

Sophie woke up early the following morning. Sitting up in bed, she spotted Tristan’s tall figure curled up on the extra bed, fast asleep.

Her heart ached when she saw him sleeping so uncomfortably.

Climbing out of bed, she went over to the extra bed and gazed down at him as he slept soundly.

He must be exhausted after the past couple of days. Managing Lombard Group is already a tiring job, yet he's always by my side.

The moment Tristan opened his eyes, he saw her face close to his.

He reached out his hands instinctively and hooked them around her neck, then drew her toward him and kissed her right on the lips.

"You're awake."

"Yes."

Sophie was still a little dazed after being kissed so suddenly, and Tristan could not resist pinching her face gently when he noticed it.

"Do you have any idea how enticing you look right now? It's enough to stir one's desire to have their way with you," he murmured.

She's simply too alluring!

"I'll go and check whether my grandfather is awake or not," Sophie said quickly. I wonder whether he ate anything last night. Anyway, he must be hungry by now.

Tristan could not help but laugh when he saw her scurry off.

He then had his assistant buy breakfast from The Crown, and the latter brought back plenty of food. Since Josiah relished a lively atmosphere, everyone gathered in his ward to have breakfast with him.

Just as they were eating, Arius arrived.

"I can't believe you didn't invite me for breakfast. Isn't that a bit too much?" Arius complained. He still had one other surgery scheduled that day. It was a very tough surgery, so he had come to ask Sophie

to join him and learn from it.

"Ari! You've not had breakfast yet, haven't you? In that case, come and join us. Tanny bought lots of food!" Josiah called out. The Crown's breakfast was delicious, and he had eaten a lot.

"You're the only one who thinks of me," Arius said to Josiah, going over immediately to eat breakfast with the elderly man.

After they finished their meal, Tristan had to leave for Lombard Group as there was some business he had to attend to personally.

Since Josiah wished to take a stroll, Morgan went with him while Arius led Sophie away to prepare for the surgery.

Having heard that Arius would be performing surgery at the hospital that day, Constance had arrived early that morning to wait there. However, it never crossed her mind that she would meet Sophie, who was wearing a surgical gown.

"What are you doing here?" Constance asked darkly, her expression souring as soon as she saw Sophie.

She harbored a deep dislike for Sophie and felt the latter's appearance signaled misfortune for Mason.

"Does that have anything to do with you?" Sophie answered bluntly. She had no wish to be polite to Constance.

Constance fell silent at her words.

If it were before, there was no way she would have backed down so easily after receiving such a retort.

But now, she dared not say anything else because of Tristan.

Meanwhile, Arius thought Sophie had sneaked away when he did not see her after changing into his surgical gown. Coming out to look for her, he spotted the woman who had bullied Sophie the other day.

The second Arius saw Constance, his expression turned grim.

Why does this woman keep showing up everywhere?

“Why are you here?” he demanded brusquely.

“Come on. Let’s go in,” Sophie piped up. She had only stepped out to make a phone call, not expecting to bump into Constance.

Nonetheless, that’s all unimportant. At this moment, I couldn’t care less about Mrs. Laird.

Arius snorted coldly.

“Who are you? Why do you look at her with such a haughty and imperious expression?” he asked Constance. The way she looks at Sophie just irks me.

Furious, Constance responded in a threatening tone, “I’m telling you, you no-name doctor. You’d better show me some respect. Otherwise, I’ll have the hospital director fire you.”

Is every Tom, Dick, and Harry qualified to mock me now?

Arius was both amused and enraged.

“What am I going to do, Sophie? I’m quaking in my boots! It took a long time before I finally got this job. My whole family relies on me to put food on the table. If I lose this job, I’ll starve to death!”

Sophie did not respond. Instead, she quietly watched Arius put on his act.

Constance was irate. “Why you—” “How dare you doubt my abilities? Do you think you can intimidate me, you old hag? If you can get the director to fire me, I’ll get on my knees and grovel!” Arius continued, interrupting her.

Would I, Arius Gullifer, be afraid of others threatening me?

“You—” Constance began, her entire body trembling with rage.

Incensed, she snarled, “Sophie Tanner, look at that piece of garbage next to you! I’m calling the director right now!”

“I didn’t hear that wrong, did I, Sophie? She dared to refer to me as garbage!”

“Watch your words, Mrs. Laird,” Sophie warned. “Don’t make the mistake of thinking that the Laird family is all that high and mighty. I can easily make the Laird family vanish into thin air.”

Constance gave a humorless chuckle and uttered arrogantly, “Such audacity! Do you genuinely think that Tanner Group has fallen into your hands? Even if you really were the person in control of the company, do you think the Laird family would take any notice of Tanner Group?”

In the Laird family’s eyes, Tanner Group is not even worth mentioning. If I wish to, I can destroy the company at any time.

“You old hag...” Arius growled, utterly infuriated.

“Is that so? Go on and give it a try, then,” Sophie replied calmly, unwilling to waste her breath any longer.

“Dr. Gullifer, everything is ready. Oh, Mrs. Laird! You’re here too! Are you and Dr. Gullifer acquainted?”

“What did you say?” Constance could not believe her ears. This young man standing in front of me is the world-renowned Dr. Gullifer?

Chapter 158 Legendary Deft Hands

“Do you not know who Dr. Gullifer is, Mrs. Laird? I thought I told you Dr. Gullifer might be able to heal Mr. Mason’s leg,” the attending physician exclaimed.

Constance froze right there. Little did she know that the man she had looked down on was the mysterious Dr. Gullifer.

“And what about the girl? That girl is probably just eighteen years old, so why is she standing next to him? How could she wear the surgical gown and follow him into the operating room?” Constance refused to believe what she had heard. That man is not Dr. Gullifer. Dr. Gullifer is a medical genius from Chanaea. Why would he associate himself with a teenage girl?

The attending physician actually did not know much about Sophie.

“I have to go in now, Mrs. Laird. The director has granted me access to the operating room, so I must take this opportunity to learn from Dr. Gullifer!” The attending physician could not hide his excitement. All doctors, including myself, want to witness how Chanaea’s best surgeon conducts the medical procedure! It’s a dream come true for me!

The attending physician was given this once-in-a-lifetime chance merely because the director owed him a favor. Otherwise, the director would not have granted him exclusive access to the operating room.

So instead of wasting time talking to Constance and letting the opportunity slip away, he caught up with Arius.

Constance’s legs weakened after she heard that, and she staggered a couple of times, only managing to steady herself by clinging to the railing next to her.

She knew she had offended Arius. Would Dr. Gullifer still help us?

Despite learning the truth about Arius, Constance refused to leave. She wanted to be there for Mason since there would be a high chance of him regaining the ability to walk.

She would do anything for Arius so long as he was willing to operate on Mason. I'll even drop to my knees before him if he wants me to! I'll do anything as long as he can heal my son's leg!

Constance was overwhelmed by mixed emotions. The doctor she had been hunting high and low for had finally appeared, but he turned out to be the man she had offended.

It was a hard pill to swallow.

While Sophie and Arius were in the operating room, the rest of the people could only watch the live stream of the procedure from another room.

Sophie glanced at Arius when she saw no other surgeons and nurses in the operating room.

"Looks like you have a lot of faith in me, huh?" Sophie said. She was concerned since the man lying on the operating table was a high-ranking official, and his survival would affect the life and death of many people.

Arius chuckled while putting on a pair of surgical gloves. "In this world, you're the only one I trust. There would be no one else I could count on if I had zero faith in you."

Many doctors and nurses were willing to assist him, but Arius had a much higher expectation of his assistant since it was an intricate surgery.

After much deliberation, Arius thought Sophie was the only one qualified to perform this procedure with him!

“Arius, people would think you’re putting the patient at risk.” Sophie might be familiar with the surgery, but she had neither received formal training in medical school nor obtained any certificates.

“Do you think I care about what others would say? I have confidence in you, Sophie. And I believe you will one day supersede me and become the best surgeon. Being the top surgeon in the country can be quite lonely, and I think it’s time for you to take over the title. What do you think?”

His remark rendered Sophie speechless.

More than twenty doctors overheard their conversation outside, and their mouths twitched. Why does he think so highly of that young lady?

All of them expressed interest in training under Arius, yet the genius doctor ignored them and gave preferential treatment to this eighteen-year-old. What logic is this?

“What if Dr. Gullifer made a wrong judgment about her? She’s just a young lady. Can she actually do this?”

They were all experienced doctors who had carried out hundreds of medical procedures. Are we no match for this teenage girl?

One of the doctors turned to the director and raised his concern. “Can we trust this young lady? The person lying on the operating table is not an ordinary patient...”

If anything goes south, everyone in the hospital will be in deep trouble.

All these doctors had worked hard throughout their careers to get to where they were. Our careers will be over if the surgery fails! We can’t allow this to happen!

The director, who sat in the middle, kept mum and did not respond to the doctors’ concerns.

“Keep quiet. The surgery is about to start.” The director had faith in Arius. He believed his most competent disciple would surpass his own achievements.

Likewise, the director dared not underestimate Sophie too. After all, Arius was the one who brought her to the hospital.

Arius might seem unreliable, but he would not take any surgeries lightly. Moreover, he would also meticulously explore all the options before making the best decision on a medical procedure.

Since Arius requested Sophie to join him in the operating room, the director had high hopes for the young lady.

“But they might put our future in jeopardy!” There were still doctors who were not willing to accept the fact that Arius was better than them. The doctor who made that remark felt that the Chanaeans had over-glorified Arius. We know he made it into the international medical association. So what? What’s the big deal?

“Oh, shut up! Why don’t you take over if you think Arius can’t do it? The man lying on the operating table was initially your patient anyway!”

The doctor immediately kept mum.

“Those who want to watch the procedure, zip it. Those who aren’t interested, feel free to leave right now.” The director shot daggers at the doctors. It took me some time to bring Arius over and arrange this live demonstration for them, yet all they do is complain!

As soon as the surgery began, the doctors who doubted Arius were stunned the moment he made a perfect incision on the patient’s body. He indeed has a pair of deft hands that work wonders!

While everyone was still astonished by the demonstration, Sophie had also made a flawless surgical incision in the patient’s heart under Arius’ guidance. All the experts could not help but gasp when they saw what she had done.

“Here. Make an incision here,” Arius instructed. Taking a glance at the spot he pointed, Sophie made another precise cut.

“Oh, my God! My eyes aren’t playing tricks on me, are they?” At first, these doctors thought Arius merely brought this young lady into the operating room because he wanted to impress her, but when she made the incision, they were taken aback by Sophie’s skills.

The director, too, could not believe his eyes.

As a mentor who had poured his heart and soul into the medical field and guided countless young doctors, the director had learned a lot just from watching them carry out the procedure in the operating room.

He was so thrilled that his hands started shaking, losing control of his emotions.

The doctor who had doubted Arius earlier was also utterly struck dumb by how well they performed the surgery.

The success rate of this surgery was less than one percent, yet at this point, everyone was confident that the procedure would be a huge success!

“This Arius is indeed one of a kind!”

“Yeah! But don’t you think the young lady is more impressive? She’s just a teenager, but her skills are insane. She’s just as capable as Arius.”

“I thought so too. Who is she? I guess the Chanaean medical field is about to witness the rise of an emerging star.”

Chapter 159 I Do Not Live Just To Please You

Sophie was the one who did the suturing at the end of the surgery. Arius knew that she had been reading up a lot on that and that she was gifted in the procedural skill. Back when she was at Horington, she practiced on animals and participated in a few surgeries. Although those were nothing compared to that highly challenging operation, Sophie still performed splendidly.

Arius's eyes gleamed with excitement as he watched her.

Dr. Smith is right. She's a gem. I can totally see why he has always wanted to be her mentor. Her fingers are dexterous and she's really good.

"Sophie, you should come with me to the medical association after your grandpa gets well."

Arius was determined on nurturing her talent.

She was the most gifted person he had ever seen.

"We'll see," Sophie replied casually without taking her eyes off her hands.

It was her principle to always give all her attention to a patient when she was performing surgery.

She would not allow even the slightest mistake.

After closing up the wound, Sophie put aside the needle driver and looked at her suture work with a satisfied smile.

Seeing that Sophie was someone who derived joy from her work, Arius was confident that one day she would willingly join him.

"Good job. You may leave the rest to them," he said.

The doctors and nurses came in in scrubs after Arius spoke. When they saw how the surgery was done, they could not help but marvel at the fine work.

When they looked back at Sophie, they could not see any expression on her face because she was still wearing a face mask and surgical cap. All they could see was a pair of cold eyes above the mask.

She walked out with Arius and went on to clean and tidy herself up. When she came back in a new set of clothes, she saw that the director was amazed by how well the surgery was done.

Sophie was not surprised to see the man's expression. When people in Horington realized her talent, people from different sectors marveled at her ability and wanted her to join them as well.

The director walked toward her nervously, rubbing his hands together. He was thinking about how he could persuade the girl to apply for medical school and work for his hospital.

"Hi, um, Ms. Tanner. I believe you already know who I am. You see..."

Arius saw Sophie listening uninterestedly to the director when he came back out again.

He almost laughed at the sight because it reminded him of the past.

"Come on, you're making her feel intimidated. She's only in her senior year!" Although Arius dissuaded the director, he knew in his heart that Sophie would be a renowned doctor if she set her heart on studying medicine, but despite how much potential Sophie had, Arius still thought the man was being too pushy.

He would only scare her away.

The director pursed his lips and cleared his throat uneasily.

He's right. I sound too desperate.

“What about this?” the director asked after a slight pause. “Come again tomorrow and we will talk about this after your grandpa’s surgery. Is that okay?”

Arius was left speechless. You still seem too desperate. Her grandfather has major surgery tomorrow and you’re talking about sending her to study. This is ridiculous. You’re only interested in getting her to work for you.

“Well... I’m really tired after this whole day. I think I could use some rest,” Sophie finally said.

Indeed, Sophie was spent. Although she was skilled, she was still inexperienced. Besides, she did not manage to have a good night’s rest before the surgery, so it went without saying that she was exhausted.

Arius felt bad for her seeing how worn out she was.

Being a doctor, especially a surgeon, was a taxing job. Every surgery was a test of one’s stamina.

“All right. All this can wait. Let’s go back and rest first. We’ll go see your grandpa later,” Arius interrupted.

“Arius, I don’t care if you leave for the medical association on your own, but she has to stay.”

Arius looked at the stern man and shrugged.

“You speak as if she belongs to me, but she doesn’t. Yes, it is true that she needs to learn under someone, but I’m sure that will be at the medical association. That’s the best for her.”

“But—” the director wanted to speak up and keep Sophie at his hospital, but he knew what Arius said was true.

“She will be Dr. Smith’s successor,” Arius cut him short. That was what Barney wanted. Despite how good Arius was, he would only remain a mentee to Barney. The latter never once thought of making Arius his successor, but it was a different case for Sophie.

Barney wanted to make her his successor.

With that said, Arius stamped out the last shred of hope the director had.

“Fine...” he sighed. He would have tried his best if it were someone else, but he knew he stood no chance in that case.

It was the founder of the medical association he had to compete with. Anyone within the medical field would know they should back off.

“There’s no need to be disappointed. I’ll introduce you to a few good doctors,” Arius promised.

It was because of the director that Arius came to meet his mentor, so in some sense, Arius was still indebted to him.

The director felt compensated when he heard that.

“All right. That’s better than nothing.”

Seeing Arius had diverted the director’s attention away from her, Sophie went off on her own. When she stepped away, she found out that Constance was still standing there, waiting. When Constance saw her, she dashed toward her immediately.

“Sophie!” she cried out. “That man. The one who stood beside you. Is that Arius?”

Sophie looked at her from the corner of her eyes as she continued walking toward the ward. All she wanted was a good rest, not talking to her, but Constance was unwilling to let her go without having her

question answered.

She grabbed Sophie's hand in frustration. "Hey! Can't you see I'm talking to you? Mason is still unable to walk, and his doctor said Arius is the only person who could help him. He said Arius is—"

"What does this have to do with me?" Sophie's blatant question put the agitated woman to a stop.

What did she say? Did she just say she has nothing to do with Mason?

Constance frowned at Sophie's cold expression. How could she be so cold toward him!

"Sophie, you grew up with Mason ever since you were a kid. Don't you feel sorry for him now that he's in this state? How could you be so cruel?"

Constance was disgruntled that Sophie felt no pity for Mason.

"Well, that's me for you. You never liked me and you still don't, and I'm not interested in making a good impression either. What you think of me has nothing to do with me. I don't live just to please you."

"Please, Sophie! I'll stop interfering in you guys' relationship if he can walk again. I'll really just let y'all be!"

Sophie scowled at her.

"What makes you think I will help him?"

"What do you mean? I thought you've always liked Mason. I'm giving you a chance to be with him! Stop being so arrogant!" Constance was a proud woman. Although she was at a disadvantage and needed a favor, she still did not know what it meant to ask nicely. She thought by approaching Sophie and asking for help was already enough. To her, Sophie should have accepted her request since she had asked.

Sophie looked at the arrogant woman and pulled her hand back.

"I'm sorry. You must have misunderstood. I'm not interested in Mason, so please stop bothering me. Don't tell me you need me to take an oath again to prove that I don't like him at all."

Constance was shocked. She recalled how she humiliated Sophie five years ago when she forced her to take an oath to never see Mason again.

Chapter 160 Infuriated

Just as the situation was caught in a stalemate, Arius came out from the operating room and walked toward them.

"Excuse me, madam, may I know what are you trying to do? I can see that you've been bothering my friend. Do you have anything personal against her? Because if you do, you might want to stop before anything happens." Arius pulled Sophie away and stood face to face with Constance. Sophie stood behind him quietly as if Arius was a defensive mother hen.

Constance was frightened when she heard Arius' warning. He was not someone she could afford to offend.

She slumped to the ground on her knees, begging Arius to treat his son.

"Dr. Gullifer, please! I'm sorry I was rude. Please forgive me. I really didn't know you were the person I wanted to see. I would never say something so insolent if I knew it was you." Arius and Constance were not expecting things to take such a dramatic twist.

A frown settled on Arius' face as he thought about what Constance just said.

"Does who I am even matter here?" he asked. He was not interested in getting an answer. Instead, he turned toward Sophie and gestured at her to leave. "Come on. We should get some rest. It's been a long day."

“Sure.”

Both of them completely disregarded Constance’s request. To them, her going on her knees meant nothing.

Constance, on the other hand, got upset when she saw them leave. She clung to Arius’ trouser cuff.

“Dr. Gullifer, please! I beg you! Please save my son. You’re the only hope we have!” Arius was the last resort Constance had, so she did her best to implore the man to change his mind, but as a doctor, Arius was already desensitized to the inevitability of death.

“Let go,” he said curtly.

To him, there was no way he would agree to help her after what she did to Sophie. After all, Arius never once thought he was a benevolent saint who had the obligation to be kind to everyone.

He pulled back his leg and walked off with Sophie, leaving the distraught woman on the ground, speechless.

Her shoulders slumped in devastation as she watched them walk off. That was her last hope and losing it shattered her pride.

She could not believe that the person she once belittled turned out to be the same person she had to count on to save her son.

Since they had turned her down decisively, she could not think of any other way to solve the problem at hand.

The opportunity was so close, and yet she failed to seize it.

Just as she was at her wits’ end, she suddenly thought of Josiah. Sophie had always listened to everything the old man said. Yes! I should go talk to him!

Meanwhile, Sophie went to see Josiah despite how tired she was.

When she arrived, Charmaine and Willow were already there. Sophie did not greet them but walked over to Josiah straight.

“Grandpa, you should get some rest. You have surgery tomorrow.”

“Don’t worry about me. I know what I can and can’t do.” Indeed, Josiah took good care of himself. This surgery was a priceless opportunity for him to recover, but he knew the stakes were high. If things went wrong, it would be the end of him.

“Soph, Willow and I are just here to see how he’s doing. That’s all.” Charmaine broke the ice trying to explain their visit when she saw that Sophie was being cold toward them.

“Mom! You don’t have to explain yourself to her. We’re just here because we care about Grandpa.” Willow was resentful toward Sophie because she lost everything because of Sophie, so it went without saying that Willow could not keep her calm when Sophie was around.

“I don’t care about what brings y’all here. Just make sure you’re not disrupting his rest,” she said, turning toward Josiah.

“Grandpa, I’ve had a long day, so I’ll go rest first. I’m just right next door. I’ll come again with Arius in a bit. Is that okay?”

“Sure. You don’t have to worry about me. Go on and get some rest.” Josiah did not want to keep her any longer. He could tell from her face that she was dog-tired.

“All right. See you in a bit.”

With that said, Sophie walked out of the room without saying goodbye to Charmaine and Willow.

“Grandpa! How could you be so unfair?” Willow was dissatisfied when she saw their interaction. She never understood why Josiah gave Sophie everything when both Sophie and she were his

granddaughters.

Josiah kept quiet. He actually wondered why the two women came to see him that day. He doubted that they came just because they cared for him.

“Dad, how could you give such a huge portion of your shares to Sophie? You’re going through surgery tomorrow. What will happen if, you know, anything goes wrong?”

That was enough for Josiah to know the true motive of their visit.

His heart chilled at the realization. He could not help but wonder if he brought his children up the wrong way. His son, and even his granddaughter, were only interested in the inheritance they would receive from him.

None of them actually cared about his wellbeing.

“Willow, do you still not know why I like Sophie better? You know she will never ask me anything like this. She never once coveted what the Tanners have.”

Anger rose within him as the old man spoke.

“I’ll say this once and for all—Tanner Group will go to Sophie. None of you is changing my mind on that.”

The door suddenly opened, and Morgan came in. When he saw that Josiah was flustered, he quickly came over to calm him down.

“What’s the matter? You need to calm down. This is not good for you. There’s a surgery coming tomorrow.”

“Morgan, please see them out. I don’t want to see them again,” Josiah instructed without having another thought.

Josiah thought he would be able to come to terms with their greed since he had already seen much worse over the many years of his life, but when he actually heard them utter it, Josiah was still incensed. In fact, he was so furious his body started shaking.

Morgan was dismayed when he saw that. He looked at the two women disapprovingly.

“Mrs. Tanner, Ms. Tanner, I’m sorry but both of you might have to leave. Please do not come to visit Old Mr. Tanner again.” The butler had served Josiah for years and had always followed his master’s words to the letter.

Charmaine and Willow were appalled when they heard such harsh words from Josiah.

“Grandpa, we don’t mean it that way. We just want to—”

“Get out.”

The two women looked at each other uneasily. They had no choice but to leave.

“What should I do now, Mom?” Willow fretted in disappointment after they went out of the ward. “No one from the four important families will ever set eyes on me now that I have nothing. How could Grandpa be so unfair!”

“Hush. I heard that the chances of getting through the surgery are very low,” Charmaine said.

Although she tried comforting her daughter, Charmaine was still worried. She felt everything was not going her way, but there was nothing she could do either.

"It's no use complaining anymore," she told her daughter. "I will hold an art exhibition for you. Mrs. Zales is also an oil painter, just like Mrs. Laird, so she will be interested in your works. We'll see what we can do from there."

Charmaine had already given up on the Laird family. She had decided to put all her eggs in the Zales family's basket.

Charmaine's suggestion put Willow at ease. The thought of marrying Clayton cheered her up. Well, jokes on you, Sophie. I'll marry Clayton one day.

"I will work hard, Mom. I'm really good at drawing oil paintings. My teacher even complimented me the other day." Willow's teacher was also an eminent oil painter. She had promised to bring Willow with her to an exhibition a few days later.

Charmaine felt relieved when she heard that. She patted Willow's head in approval.

"Good. I'm counting on you, Willow. Don't disappoint me."

Although sometimes Charmaine still wondered if she betted on the wrong child, she knew there was no point thinking about the what-ifs anymore.

Things had already turned out that way, and Sophie was not someone she could control, but she could with Willow.

Over in the other ward, Sophie felt energized after taking a nap.

After she woke up, she went over to conduct a final check on Josiah with Arius.

"Grandpa, don't tell me you were upset just now," Arius asked knowingly as he looked at the charts. "You know you can't get agitated before surgery right."