

## **Pursuing 161**

### **Chapter 161**

When Sophie heard that, she took the chart from Arius and scanned through it, and her face fell.

“Is it because of Mom and Willow?” Sophie figured those two were the only ones who could upset Josiah.

“Who else could it be? They really went overboard. Do you know what they told Old Mr. Tanner?” Morgan answered for Josiah. He could no longer keep it to himself after seeing how affected Josiah was because of the two women.

“Morgan,” Josiah interrupted. He did not want to burden Sophie with what happened.

“Grandpa, I know exactly why they came. Morgan doesn’t have to tell me anything.” Sophie could read Charmaine and Willow like open books. The shares she had was the thing they were after.

“Don’t worry, Grandpa. I made you a promise and I will see to it that it happens. As for Willow and Mom, you don’t have to worry about them. They can’t do anything to me.”

It pained Arius to see Sophie having to tank such a heavy burden on her own.

“Soph, you should just go to Anglandur with me. There’s nothing for you here.” Arius had an impulse to just take Sophie away with him to a faraway place so he could shelter her from all the harm and threats she faced.

When Josiah heard Arius’ suggestion, he looked up at the young man and fell into deep thoughts.

So he’s back because he wants to bring Sophie to Anglandur?

“Soph, you should just go if that’s what you want. You don’t have to worry about me.” Deep in his heart, Josiah knew Sophie was no ordinary kid. She was talented and she should chase after her dream.

Sophie clenched her fists at his words.

“Grandpa, this is not up for consideration. I will be taking my university entrance exam here.” She wanted to spend more time with Josiah because his days were numbered. As for her future, she still had a long way to go.

“Come over here,” Josiah said lovingly. He knew what was in her mind and he could not help but feel sorry for the child.

Sophie walked over and let the old man pat her on her head like an obedient child.

This side of her was new to Arius. She was the luminary in Horington, so it was difficult for Arius to connect that image of her to what he saw at that moment.

Over on the outside, Tristan had just arrived at the door when Arius spoke about taking Sophie away. He did not mean to eavesdrop. It just happened that he overheard the conversation. What is going on? So he’s here to take Sophie with him?

Tristan pulled his hand away from the door handle and went over to the staircase. He lighted a cigarette and smoked on pensively.

Who is Arius to her?

Will she go to Anglandur with him?

Back at the ward, Sophie had received a call from Tristan earlier saying he would come to visit Josiah. Since she had waited for some time, she decided to just go out to look for him, leaving Arius and Josiah in the room on their own.

“So, Ari, when are you taking Soph to Anglandur?” Josiah figured he should know the details of the man’s plan.

“Grandpa, I suppose you’ve heard of Dr. Smith? He met Sophie four years ago at Anglandur and has since wanted her to be his mentee because he saw the potential in her. I came back this time not just because I had to perform your surgery, but also because I want to take her back with me.” Josiah saw the truth in what Arius said. The university entrance exam should not be just an excuse for Sophie. She was so gifted she would ace the exam. In fact, Josiah believed she could apply straight to any prestigious university in the world without even taking the exam.

That thought excited him.

I knew she is different. She’s a bright girl.

“See, Morgan. Isn’t Sophie amazing? She’s different from everyone else. That’s why I like her so much.”

Morgan was equally surprised to hear what Arius said.

Everyone had heard of the founder of the medical association, but none of them had actually seen him in person before, so it went without saying that Josiah and Morgan were astonished when they found out that a legendary figure like that man would want to keep Sophie under his wings.

“Ms. Sophie is a genius. I’m sure she will be a star in the future,” Morgan praised in admiration.

The thought of it put tears in Josiah’s eyes. All achievement comes with a price, and so will Sophie’s, but it’s okay.

I just want the best for her. It will be worth the sacrifice.

“Ari, you don’t have to worry about me. I just want Soph to get the best training.” She’s my granddaughter. She must be the best.

Meanwhile, Sophie was looking for Tristan when she saw him at the staircase, engulfed in a cloud of smoke.

“What are you doing here?” she asked gently, walking toward him. “Why don’t you just go in and see Grandpa?” Her tone naturally softened when she saw Tristan.

Hearing her voice, Tristan quickly snuffed out the cigarette.

“Don’t worry about me. I smoke sometimes too.”

Despite what she said, Tristan still put out the cigarette.

“Smoking is not good for your health. I don’t want you to be a second-hand smoker. You should get rid of that habit too.”

All Tristan could think about was her.

“I know,” she replied shortly. Although she had said that she did not mind, she still felt touched when she knew Tristan was being considerate of her. “Why didn’t you go in?”

“Oh, well. I just wanted to take a smoke,” Tristan said dismissively. He put his arm around her shoulder, pushing her toward the ward.

“Hold on a second. You reek of smoke. Grandpa wouldn’t like that.” When Tristan realized Sophie wanted Josiah to have a good impression of him, he felt she actually cared about him, and he was heartened.

They stood outside for a while more until Sophie pushed the door open.

“Tanny!” Josiah greeted him enthusiastically when he saw Tristan. It was apparent that the old man was in a good mood.

“Hi, Grandpa. I came to see you right after I finished my work. I heard someone pissed you off earlier?”

“Nah. Don’t listen to Soph. I didn’t get angry. I’ve been feeling good this whole day.” The possibility of Sophie having a bright future ahead of her lightens Josiah’s mood.

“I’ll make a move first then. I’ll see you in a bit, Grandpa.” After briefing Sophie on a few things, Arius left to attend to other matters.

After Arius went off, Tristan and Sophie sat down to talk to Josiah, but before they could even talk much, a knock came from the door.

Without waiting for anyone’s permission, the door was flung open, and in came Constance with a mountain of gifts.

The woman froze the moment she saw Tristan, but she quickly collected herself. I’m here for Mason today. I have to focus on my goal.

“Hi, Old Mr. Tanner. I’m sorry it took me so long to pay you a visit. Mason’s not doing well, so I’ve been taking care of him,” she said courteously. “Speaking of, I didn’t know Sophie knows Dr. Gullifer! She must be really well-connected to have friends like him.”

Josiah flashed her a polite smile as she walked in. He was not a huge fan of Constance.

What does she want?

“Oh, you don’t have to come all the way here, actually. You should just stay and take care of Mason.” Josiah was not even trying to conceal his dislike of the woman.

If it were usual times, Constance would have just left, but that time, she had to suck it up because she needed a favor.

“Come on, Old Mr. Tanner. The Lairds and the Tanners will soon be joint in marriage. I should show my sincerity.”

## Chapter 162 I Will Take Responsibility For Any Damages Incurred

Constance seemed to be very proud of herself when she mentioned the engagement.

She thought there was no way Josiah would turn her down now that she brought the engagement up, but the old man's face fell sunken the moment he heard that.

Mason and Willow were indeed engaged.

"Old Mr. Tanner, Mason is part of your family too. Why don't you just help him out a little? You know how Willow is crazy about him, right? She must be heartbroken now that Mason is in this state."

Josiah still did not understand what was she trying to get at. Well, what happened to Mason is not our fault. Besides, it's not like we're able to do anything for him.

"Mrs. Laird, I really don't understand what you are trying to say, but no matter what it is you would like to convey, I don't have the solutions you're looking for, so please leave."

"You can't help me, but your granddaughter can. She's good friends with Dr. Gullifer. He will definitely help Mason if she asks him to."

Constance looked at her in anticipation, hoping Sophie would crack under the pressure of Josiah's presence.

The old man finally understood why Constance came to visit.

"Grandpa, you should get some rest already." Sophie finally broke the silence. "You've heard enough nonsense."

"All right." Josiah played along readily. Constance had always been rude to Sophie, and Josiah took it to heart, so it was obvious to the old man that Sophie would not grant Constance the favor. She must really think we owe her.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Laird. As you can see, I'm not feeling very good myself. I really need to be well-rested for the surgery tomorrow. Please make a move if you have nothing else to say."

"Hey—" Constance finally lost it. "Do you not understand what I said? The Tanners used to suck up to us to get all kinds of benefits. Don't tell me you're turning your back on us now that things are not looking good for us. You should know better." Constance lashed out at Josiah without holding back, forgetting that she was there to plead her case.

Josiah smirked at her remarks.

"You know what, I don't care what went on between you and Yale. I couldn't care less. As for you, I hope you know your place. You're not the boss here, so stop acting like one." Josiah decided it was time he toughened up against the woman.

"What did you just say?" Constance shook in fury when Josiah showed her his true color, but she still tried to compose herself.

I would've let you have a taste of your own medicine if I weren't here to ask for a favor.

"Old Mr. Tanner, you were around since Mason was still a child. Don't tell me you feel nothing for him now that he is in this state. Do you really want to see him ruined?" Constance questioned.

"As for Sophie..." Constance stopped and softened her tone. "I was wrong for trying to split you and Mason up. I promise I will not stand in the way anymore if he recovers." This was the first time Constance swallowed her pride in front of Sophie.

Tristan was angered when he heard her proposal.

What is she even thinking? Sophie and Mason? Over my dead body! He's already out of the game a long, long time ago.

"Mrs. Laird," Sophie snapped. "Do you really think I like Mason all this while?"

Constance suddenly felt the tables were not turning for good.

"Sophie, I mean it when I say I'm sorry. Please, help me. Even if you no longer feel anything for him, you should still help him for old time's sake."

"Are you serious?" Sophie scoffed in disbelief. "I never once liked him."

Sophie really did not admire him. It was true that she once thought Mason was a nice guy, but that perception was shattered when Mason betrayed her.

"He's not even worthy to be called my friend." Sophie was not planning on being cruel, but Constance had really exasperated her, and she did not want to waste any more time on the matter.

"Sophie Tanner! How dare you!" That was the last straw for Constance.

"Mrs. Laird, you might think your son is a good man, but to me, he's just a spineless boy who can't even stand up against his own mother. He would be nothing but a useless piece of sh\*t if he were not born in the Laird family." Sophie did not sugarcoat anything.

"Also, You're right in saying that Arius is my good friend. Indeed. He will help Mason if I ask him to, but why should I? Do you think I'm the kind of person who returns good for evil?"

Constance thought Sophie would budge if she apologized, but she got it all wrong. She was taken aback that Sophie had the heart to refuse her outright.

"Sophie Tanner, how could you? You're so petty!"



“A loose tongue causes trouble. Have you heard of that?” Tristan finally spoke. “Grandpa, I brought two bodyguards with me actually. Let me know if you need their help. I knew there would be pesty people here today.”

“Well, I don’t mind using their help.” Josiah was glad to hear the suggestion. He had already had enough of a nuisance for the day and he needed some quiet.

“You will not do that! You can’t do this—”

“Madam.” Before Constance could retort further, two men came toward her and gestured at her to leave.

She glared at the men and dared not move an inch.

Seeing Sophie had no intention of interceding, Constance yelled at her.

“Sophie Tanner! You can’t do this to me. You can’t do this to Mason!” The woman was distressed. She was unwilling to give up since she had done so much to find a cure for Mason, but the guards were equally adamant.

Each of them grabbed one side of her shoulder and dragged her outside of the ward.

Tristan followed after them to the door. “I don’t want anyone else to disturb us for the rest of the day. If anyone insists on coming in, make sure they learn a good lesson. I will take responsibility for any damages incurred.”

“Yes, Mr. Tristan!”

When Constance heard his warning, she was so frightened she held her breath.

“By the way, Mrs. Laird, I forgot to tell you that Sophie’s my girlfriend, so don’t even dream about shipping her with your crippled son.”

“You bast—” Constance was incensed when she heard the insult, but when she saw Tristan’s deterrent eyes, she sewed her lips immediately.

“You’d better not entertain any silly ideas in that head of yours. Who knows I might make Mason Laird vanish out of thin air?” he warned, glowering at her. “I doubt you’ll be able to have another child given your age.”

Constance felt she was engulfed by fear.

Another child? Y-yes. I’m too old to have another baby.

Constance did not doubt what Tristan said. She knew full well that he was completely capable of getting rid of Mason if he wanted to.

“P-please, Mr. Tristan. I beg you. You have to save Mason. I promise you I’ll never see Sophie again if you help me!” Constance begged with her dear life.

## Chapter 163 A Hug

“Who gave you the guts to threaten me? Why? If I refuse to fulfill your request, does that mean you can appear in front of Sophie?”

Tristan was a man of few words, but he couldn’t stop himself from speaking more than usual as the matter concerned Sophie.

“Remember. The Laird family has no right to speak before me,” he concluded in a cold tone. Constance loved using her family’s influence to force others into submission, so he was merely giving her a taste of her own medicine.

The thought of how she used to bully Sophie merely served to increase Tristan’s displeasure. They were about to suffer from his wrath.

“Mr. Tristan—”

Before Constance could say anything, Tristan spun on his heels impatiently and shut the door.

The security guard grabbed her shoulders when she took a step forward.

“Don’t you know Mr. Tristan’s temper? If you insist on angering him, I shall break your arms,” he warned.

“Hey!” Constance was furious. “Who do you think you are? You’re just a dog guarding his door. Do you think you’re that good?”

“Ha! A guard dog is better than someone like you,” the bodyguard mocked. As she was being rude, he gave her a push that sent her toppling.

“The Lombard family can afford to take someone’s life,” the bodyguard warned when Constance tried to enter the ward.

There were a few medical staff watching the debacle at the side. Constance was usually rude to them, so none of them came to help her up.

“Did you send her away?” Peace was finally restored in the ward, so Josiah was pleased to see Tristan and Sophie together.

“Yes. Old Mr. Tanner, you won’t mind what I did, right?” Tristan asked. He did that so Josiah could have some peace before the surgery tomorrow.

“Of course not. I’m satisfied with your arrangements,” Josiah replied cheerfully. “You should head out on a date. I need to take a nap.”

Tristan is a good boy. He’s the perfect partner for Sophie.

Sophie was speechless. Why did he ask us to go on a date that calmly?

“We shall leave now, Old Mr. Tanner.” Tristan took Sophie’s hand and dragged her out of the ward.

Sophie said nothing and allowed him to take her out.

“Mr. Tristan, where will we go on a date?” Sophie joked. She was obviously in a jovial mood.

“As long as I’m with you, it doesn’t matter where we go.” Sophie was joking, but Tristan was serious. Everything that concerned Sophie was his top priority.

As his gaze was too serious, Sophie didn’t know how to respond.

Right then, she noticed it was snowing outside.

After she left for Horington, she hadn’t seen any snow for five years.

Tristan realized she was staring at the snow and led her out.

Outside the hospital, Sophie flashed a grin at the sight of the falling snow.

It had been ages since she last seen a snowy scene.

Stretching her hand out, she watched as a snowflake landed on her palm and melted.

It was snowing heavily. A while later, her head and shoulders were full of snowflakes.

Tristan helped her put on the hood on her head.

Looking up, Sophie met his adoring gaze that threatened to drown her.

"Is it cold?" Tristan asked.

"Not really." Sophie rubbed her hands. She had the urge to build a snowman, but the snow wasn't thick enough.

"I'm cold," Tristan told her. Before she could react, he hugged her.

Opening his coat, he pulled her into his embrace.

That was the first time someone had ever hugged Sophie. Her cheeks burned, and she couldn't stop her heart from racing.

The snow kept falling, and the scenery was gorgeous, but Sophie was no longer enjoying the scenery. She only had eyes for Tristan.

"Let's head in. My feet are freezing." No matter how pretty the snow was, one would freeze after standing in the cold for too long.

"Mm." They both turned to leave. Sophie wanted to walk alone, but Tristan refused to let go of her hand. He gripped her hand tightly.

"Mr. Tristan, let me walk alone."

"The road is too slippery, and I'm afraid I'll fall. Thanks for supporting me," Tristan lied through his teeth calmly.

Sophie rolled her eyes in exasperation. Forget it. He can say whatever he likes as he's handsome. I shall stay quiet.

They soon arrived at the ward that was heated. Sophie could finally warm herself up.

She stood in front of the window and enjoyed the gorgeous scenery outside. The scene outside was very much to her liking.

Tristan helped her to take off her down jacket. He shook off the snow and hung it up.

Josiah's surgery was tomorrow, so Sophie was overcome by uneasiness. She couldn't help but grow annoyed by the feeling.

However, she couldn't disturb Josiah, for he was most probably asleep then.

"What's wrong? You look worried. Is it about your grandpa?" Tristan asked gently.

She needs to calm down. Alas, she's too involved to realize it. Old Mr. Tanner matters a lot to her, so she can't calm down now.

"Yes." If it was someone else were to ask this question, Sophie wouldn't have poured her thoughts out. Since it was Tristan who posed the question, there was no need for her to hide her feelings. "I'm very worried about him."

Hearing that, Tristan took her hand and brought her into his embrace.

"It's fine. I'll be by your side, so we'll keep him company together," he promised.

He dared not tell her that the surgery would be a success, for that was out of his control.

No matter what the result would be, they would face it together. That was one thing he could promise her.

"Hm." Sophie leaned onto his chest quietly and fiddled with the corner of his shirt.

Right then, someone knocked at the door. Tristan released Sophie and went over to answer the door.

Arius was standing outside. He let out an icy snort after seeing Tristan there.

"Aren't you busy, Mr. Tristan? Why are you spending your days in the hospital? Do you want to be a doctor?" he mocked. Tristan was feared by many, but he was an exception. He was annoyed that Tristan remained by Sophie's side.

"That's none of your business," Tristan responded. His tone was harsh, but he still looked as elegant as ever.

"Sophie, he sucks. Don't give him any chance, all right?" Arius didn't bother hiding his dislike for Tristan. "How are you doing? The surgery is going to commence tomorrow."

He came to see her hoping to stop her from thinking too much.

"I'll be operating on him, so you don't have to worry. He'll be fine," Arius assured her. He was actually afraid that something would crop up, but Josiah would be in grave danger if no one were to operate on him.

"Mm. You should get some rest and do well in the surgery tomorrow. I'm fine." It seemed ridiculous that the primary attending surgeon was there to offer her some comforting words.

## Chapter 164

"Stop being delusional. I was bored and came to visit you. I'm not here to comfort you!" Arius scratched his head shyly.

Without warning, a commotion sounded outside. Sophie furrowed her brows. Josiah was asleep, so she couldn't help but wonder who had created a ruckus outside.

“Let me find out who it is,” Tristan offered.

I’ve stationed my bodyguards outside. I can’t believe someone dares to cause a commotion! Tristan went out to see Yale insisting on entering the ward.

“Who the hell are you? Who hired you? My father is inside. Why can’t I go in? If you refuse to let me enter, I shall call the police!” Yale snarled.

He had no idea who the bodyguards were. They might seem menacing, but he had to enter the ward for the sake of Tanner Group.

“You’re not welcomed here. Please leave right away.” Tristan scowled when he saw Yale outside.

Yale’s expression was twisted in fury.

“It’s you again. You plot to stay with Sophie so you can get Tanner Group for yourself, right?” he barked furiously.

Tristan never knew someone would accuse him of going after Tanner Group. Seriously? Do I even need to go to this extent just to get Tanner Group?

Arius and Sophie emerged from the ward and immediately spotted Yale.

“Do you need anything? If the answer is no, please leave. You’re not welcome here,” Sophie snapped.

Her father was obviously here with an ulterior motive.

“Sophie? What do you want? Why won’t you let me see your grandpa? You want to keep all the Tanner family’s assets for yourself, right? My god, our family is unlucky enough to have someone like you!” he complained.



Sophie was speechless. Indeed, no one but Yale wanted Tanner Group, for it wasn't even worth that much.

"You may leave now." There was no need for Yale to come here if all he wanted was the company, for Sophie didn't want to waste time with him.

"What do you mean by I may leave now? I demand an answer! Why would I leave? I will allow Dad to go for surgery, but first, he has to decide the heir of Tanner Group. If anything happens to Dad during the surgery—"

"Shut up!" Sophie's voice was so vicious that she sounded like Hades in person. "Ever since Grandpa decided on the surgery, have you ever said anything nice? Yale, you are nothing but a beast!"

If Yale hadn't gone overboard today, Sophie would not have flown into a fit of rage.

Each and every word he uttered proved he wanted nothing more than Josiah to die on the operating table.

Yale's expression was grim after getting yelled at by his daughter in public. However, he refused to leave.

"I'm not cursing Dad. Someone is greedy enough to help outsiders get our money. I have to put my guard up," he argued and shot Tristan a pointed look.

Arius let out an angry snort. Never in his life had he seen someone like Sophie's father. Is he even her biological father? How could he be this ridiculous?

"Do you know who he is? Your family's wealth is nothing to him. Stop humiliating yourself, Yale!"

Yale remained stubborn. "I don't know who he is, and I don't wish to know. All I want is to guard Dad's wealth."

“Mr. Tristan, tell him to leave.” Sophie didn’t think it was necessary for them to continue the conversation, for no one would share her father’s sentiments.

“Wait!” Yale refused to give up just yet. “Sophie, Tanner Group is mine. No one can get it from me!” he announced.

Tristan made a phone call. Soon, Felix arrived with a bunch of men.

Yale gaped in disbelief when he saw Felix.

Tristan was a stranger to him, but he had met Felix once previously. He couldn’t hide his shock when Felix showed up.

“Mr. Northley? Why are you here?” he blurted out.

Felix shot him a look.

“Mr. Tristan, the men are here.” Ignoring Yale, Felix strode over to Tristan.

“Mr. Tristan?” Comprehension dawned on Yale. So this young man who Dad calls “Tanny” is the infamous Mr. Tristan?

“Soph, is he really Mr. Tristan?” Yale still refused to believe his ears and eyes.

“Take him away. Release him only after Old Mr. Tanner recovers from his surgery,” Tristan ordered.

“Got it, Mr. Tristan,” Felix replied politely.

Yale panicked at once.

“Mr. Tristan, I was wrong. I didn’t know it was you. I wouldn’t have said those words if I do. Please forgive me!” he pleaded.

His legs were trembling in fear.

Everyone knew that Tristan was a formidable presence in Jipsdale that no one should cross, for he was capable of deciding anyone’s fate.

Alas, Felix’s man didn’t give him a chance to even speak.

“Mr. Tanner, please don’t make things difficult for us as you’re Ms. Tanner’s father.” If they were to take action without sparing his reputation, Sophie would be affected as well.

“Just take him away,” Sophie ordered. She wouldn’t let anyone affect Josiah’s mood before his surgery.

He should be grateful that they were only locking him up elsewhere without harming him.

“Soph, I’m your dad! How could you do this to me? Where are they taking me? You can’t do this to me!” Yale yelled.

His voice was so loud that Sophie’s expression turned dark.

“Grandpa is asleep. He said he didn’t want to see you. If he wishes to see you after his surgery, I’ll bring you to him,” came Sophie’s icy reply.

“Soph—”

“Take him away!” Sophie no longer wanted to hear his voice. Sometimes, she couldn’t help but wonder if Yale was truly her father, for he was nothing but a coward.

After Yale was taken away, the hallway was silent once more.

“Mr. Tristan, I’ll take my leave now,” Felix said.

Tristan nodded, and Felix left with his men.

Arius let out a sigh.

“Soph, I don’t think there’s anything in Jipsdale that’s worth your time. After the surgery ends, follow me back to Anglandur!” he suggested.

Tristan shot him a frosty look but said nothing else.

“Let’s talk about that after the surgery.” Sophie didn’t want to think about that for now.

“Why don’t you sleep in my room? The director renovated it previously, so it is much more comfortable than being in the wards.” Arius didn’t want her to spend a night together with Tristan in the same room. Just the mere thought of it made him upset. Why does she treat Tristan differently?

“No, thanks. I’m doing fine here.” Sophie rejected his offer.

Tristan had the urge to kill Arius on the spot, but he quickly calmed down after hearing Sophie’s reply.

No matter how much Arius sacrificed, he wouldn’t mind as long as Sophie’s heart belonged to him.

Tristan put his arm around Sophie’s shoulder and led her into the ward. He didn’t even bother talking to Arius and slammed the door in his face.

Chapter 165 Extraordinary Talent

“F\*ck it!” Arius cursed under his breath. Tristan is savage! He’s declaring war, huh? ”Tristan, do you seriously think I’m afraid of you? Let me tell you. I...”

Hearing his yells, Tristan opened the door and stared at him without a word.

Arius rubbed his nose awkwardly and pretended to glance at someone else in the corridor before leaving silently.

Fine. I’m not as strong as Tristan. I didn’t forget how Tristan beat me up back then. Why am I this unlucky to run into someone as savage as Tristan? I, Arius Gullifer, am the most capable doctor in the medical association!

Huh, what is it with my ass luck?

After he left, Tristan shut the door and turned to see Sophie staring at him wordlessly.

He shrugged. “I didn’t say anything. He was too noisy.”

“Mm, you’re right. He’s quite talkative,” Sophie admitted.

“Do you like men who are talkative?” Tristan asked suddenly. If she nods, I’ll have to figure out a way to make Arius disappear.

However, Sophie shook her head. “No.”

Tristan was satisfied with her response.

The surgery was going to be held at nine in the morning. After snowing the whole night, the sky was clear. Sophie woke up really early morning to chat with Josiah.

She didn't talk much, for Josiah did most of the talking. However, she wanted to spend more time with him.

Suddenly, Josiah fell silent.

Sophie glanced at him curiously. The surgery is about to begin soon. Is he worried?

"Soph, come here!" Josiah said solemnly. Sophie had never seen him that serious before.

She went to him obediently and took his hand.

"Grandpa, you'll be fine," Sophie said firmly. She had to be strong. "I'll keep you company during the surgery," she promised.

Arius was there, so she had the privilege to do so.

Josiah told her, "Soph, don't go in later. I don't want you to take part in the surgery."

Arius said she was talented. If she were to participate in his surgery but failed to succeed, it might affect her future. He didn't want that to happen."

"Grandpa!" Sophie shot him a disapproving look. "I promised to stay with you!"

No matter what, I'll keep him company throughout the surgery.

Josiah let out a sigh.

"Soph, don't you know you'll get hurt easily with your personality? I'm delighted to learn that you're talented in medicine, but I want you to be happy, all right?"

"I know. Don't worry, for I'll be happy," Sophie promised despite not knowing what happiness was.

If that was what Josiah wanted, she would fulfill his wish.

"I know you're capable, and you've done everything you promised me you would. On the other hand, I promised to protect you when you were young but ended up breaking my promise." He wasn't there when Sophie needed him the most, and he would never forget that.

Seeing how worried he was, Sophie reached out to stroke his furrowed brows.

"Grandpa, you didn't break your promise. The incident that happened five years ago wasn't that bad. If it hadn't happened, I wouldn't be who I am today. I'm quite satisfied with myself. Stop blaming yourself, all right?"

She knew Josiah had been blaming himself for his absence for not being there for her, so she wanted him to know that she was doing great.

"Soph. Oh, my dear Soph. You're so kind," Josiah lamented. She never wanted anything, but the others in the family don't understand her at all. Soph never wanted the Tanner family's wealth!

"Don't say that, Grandpa," Sophie implored. She didn't want to see him acting as though he wouldn't survive the surgery.

Josiah squeezed her hand.

"I'm really useless, huh?" he remarked softly. Despite being in his old age, he was still a coward.

No one in the Tanner family was Sophie's match.

Sophie shook her head.

“Grandpa, everyone is afraid of dying.” She had been on the verge of death previously and could understand his feelings.

Her eyes seemed as though they could see through his heart, so Josiah promptly looked away.

“Promise me. If I can’t survive the surgery, take care of the Tanner family.”

He knew she was capable enough and wasn’t interested in the family, but he had worked hard to build Tanner Group.

Thus, he didn’t want to see Tanner Group go downhill.

“Grandpa, that won’t happen. It’s almost time and Arius should be ready.” Sophie changed the topic.

Everything was ready, so all Josiah had to do was play along.

To her surprise, he refused to leave his bed.

“Promise me. I don’t want to die with any regrets,” he insisted. Yale was his only son, so there was no way he could ignore his son’s plight.

“Okay. I promise you,” came Sophie’s answer.

She would do her best to fulfill Josiah’s requests no matter how hard things would be. Besides, this request was pretty easy to complete.

“Mm. Your dad caused a ruckus yesterday, right? Tell Tanny to release him.” Josiah wanted Yale to stay by his side at that moment.

“Sure.” Sophie agreed right away.



When Josiah was pushed out of the ward, Yale and Charmaine were already waiting outside the operating room. Willow was also there.

For the first time in his life, Yale felt a wave of agony wash over him. He strode over to take Josiah's hand.

"Dad, you must survive this," he said.

He didn't even feel the pinch previously and only changed his mind after seeing his father being pushed to the operating room.

Yale belatedly realized that his seemingly invincible father was really getting old.

Josiah gazed at his son.

"Yale, you're my only son. I used to have high hopes on you, but you're too ordinary. When I'm no longer here, let Soph run Tanner Group. You should just take your dividends instead of creating a ruckus," he said solemnly.

"Dad, what are you talking about?" Yale's voice was trembling.

"Your daughters are all grown up. Why are you crying? Stop it. Don't embarrass me," Josiah chided.

"Dad, you'll be fine," was the only thing Yale could say.

Josiah was pushed into the operating room. As Sophie was nowhere to be seen, Willow told Charmaine, "Mom, Sophie didn't even show up for Grandpa's surgery. She doesn't even care about Grandpa! Grandpa adored her so much. What an ingrate."

Chapter 166 Breathtakingly Beautiful

“Willow, mind your own business,” Yale warned. Tristan was too scary. They didn’t hurt me, but I was locked up and couldn’t make any calls with my phone. That was a horrible experience.

“Dad, I was being honest. I feel bad for Grandpa,” Willow responded with pouted lips.

Yale snapped, “Your grandpa can decide that himself.”

Charmaine cast him a dubious look. What’s with him? He used to despise Sophie. What happened to him today?

Before Willow could say anything, Yale chided her harshly and stopped her from saying anything else.

Willow fumed silently. Why is everyone going against me?

“Mom, I feel a little unwell. I’ll go and get some fresh air,” she said.

Charmaine gave her a disapproving look.

“Willow, your grandpa is in the operating room. Don’t be willful,” she chided. Willow was unlike her usual obedient self that day.

“Mom, I am supposed to meet Mr. Zales later,” Willow explained. She had no idea why she got lucky. Clayton took notice of her after she appeared by his side deliberately.

“What? Really?” Charmaine was elated. “Go, then! Seize the opportunity, okay?”

“But Grandpa...”

“There are plenty of people here. The doctors are here too, and you can’t be of any help. Just go!” Charmaine urged.

If we get to establish connections with the Zales family, Willow will get a chance! The Zales family is much more influential than the Laird family!

Willow knew what her mother was thinking. After gaining Charmaine’s approval, she sneaked away quietly.

Arius and Sophie had changed into surgical gowns. They were disinfecting themselves for the last time when the doors slid open.

Sophie turned at her shoulder to see Barney Smith, a renowned doctor, the founder of the medical association, and also Arius’ mentor.

“Dr. Smith? Why are you here?” Arius was surprised to see Barney here, for the latter was recently busy with an important experiment in the lab. I can’t believe he made time just to be here!

“I received a call from Mr. Lombard and rushed here immediately. As I was busy in the lab, I didn’t know about Old Mr. Tanner. Why didn’t you tell me about his condition?”

If he knew about it earlier, he would’ve come here at once. Fortunately, he had arrived just in time for the surgery.

“I was worried you were busy. Besides, I’m confident of undergoing the surgery myself, so I didn’t bother informing you,” Arius explained.

Barney turned to Sophie and reprimanded him, “Sophie, didn’t I tell you to come to me for help no matter what? You didn’t come to me even though Old Mr. Tanner is in danger.”

“Dr. Smith, you were too busy, so I didn’t ask for your help,” Sophie clarified.

Barney sighed. "Don't say that. I might want you to be my student, but I won't coerce you into doing anything you're not willing to do."

Arius rolled his eyes. "That's because you know coercing her won't work!"

He knew his mentor well and was embarrassed to hear those pretentious words.

Barney glared at him.

"B\*stard! Is it fun to humiliate me? Did you forget that I am your mentor since I haven't punished you for too long?" he snapped.

Arius argued, "Dr. Smith, you're wrong. I'm merely telling the truth. You have been dreaming of making Sophie your student every day, right?"

Oh my... life is tough and I can't even tell the truth.

Barney glared at him and huffed, "Yeah, you're da\*n smart!"

Sophie chuckled out loud after hearing their exchange.

She was reminded of the times they shared back in Horington.

Arius got Barney a surgical gown and helped him to put it in. Barney then began scrubbing his hands.

"Can I come in?" Tristan asked suddenly. He wanted nothing more than to be with Sophie.

The only thing he could do for her was to invite Barney over.

Even though he couldn't be of help, he didn't want her to leave his sight.

“Mr. Tristan, do you think we’re having fun inside? This concerns someone’s life. Do you think it’s an exhibition?” Arius declared.

Tristan ignored him and kept staring at Sophie.

“Why are you so talkative? Mr. Tristan can watch the surgery if he wants. He won’t affect you!” Barney chided.

Back in the medical association, Arius wouldn’t stop anyone from watching any of his surgeries.

Sophie nodded.

She knew Tristan was worried about her and wanted to stay by her side.

After the preparations were made, the four of them went to the automated glass doors. The doors slid open, and Barney brought Arius into the operating room.

Sophie halted in her tracks momentarily.

“Good luck! Everything will be fine,” Tristan assured her. He wanted to give her a hug, but she had to enter the operating room soon, so he couldn’t do that.

“Mm. I’ll head in now.”

It was pointless to say anything at that moment.

Sophie’s priority was to focus on the surgery.

Tristan stared at her fragile figure stepping into the operating room and felt his heart ache at the sight.

He could only pray that Josiah would be all right.

He didn't even want to imagine how Sophie would react if Josiah couldn't survive the surgery.

After Sophie headed in, and the surgery began.

Barney didn't take part and would only provide guidance from aside.

"Sophie, help Arius." Her hands were extremely important in the surgery, for even Arius' hands weren't as nimble as hers.

Sophie nodded.

The anesthesiologist had already injected Josiah with the anesthetics, so he was lying in bed with his eyes shut.

Arius was ready.

"Good luck!" he told Sophie.

Sophie gave a firm nod. Arius and Barney—both renowned doctors—were here in the operating room, so Josiah would be fine.

The surgery began. Sophie and Arius worked well with one another.

Their actions were very much in sync.

That was the first time Tristan saw Sophie performing surgery.

Each and every action she did was devastatingly attractive.

Sophie was breathtakingly beautiful when she was focused on doing one thing.

The surgery went on smoothly. Barney couldn't help but wish he could bring Sophie back to Anglandur after seeing how nimble her hands were.

"Here, it's your turn," Arius told her.

That was the most important part of the surgery—to remove the bullet fragment.

Sophie looked up. He wants me to do it?

"You're the only one capable of doing it," Arius explained. He knew she was very precise, so the surgery would end faster if she were to do the deed.

"You can do it, Sophie," Barney encouraged her. After this surgery, she'll know the significance of becoming a doctor!

Everyone trusted her immensely, so Sophie knew she couldn't back down.

"Okay."

She focused on removing the bullet fragment. It was tiny but had tortured Josiah for many years.

Thus, she was determined to remove it to end his suffering.

Chapter 167 Uncontrollable

In twenty seconds, Sophie removed the bullet fragment deftly and without mistakes.

After the removal of the bullet fragment, follow-up work was just the usual routine.

When the operation was over, Josiah was pushed into the observation room.

Sophie and Arius went to shower and change. However, Sophie found herself leaning against the wall, her hand trembling uncontrollably.

Sophie bit her lip as she watched her trembling hand.

Tristan had already showered and changed and was waiting outside for her.

The moment he set eyes on her, Tristan noticed that something was not right, and he held her hand.

"It's okay, now. You did a great job," Tristan said, consoling her.

Sophie leaned gently on his body and slowly closed her eyes.

Performing such a delicate operation was exhausting both mentally and physically, and she was totally drained now.

"It's okay, now. You did well. Now, go and get some rest." Seeing her in this condition, his heart ached for her. On the operating table, Sophie's skill was so extraordinary that no one could take their eyes off her but she was his woman and he wished that there would be less pressure on her.

Some might judge him for being selfish but all he wanted was for her not to be so exhausted.

"I'll go and see Grandpa first." No matter how tired she was, she wanted to see her grandfather before going back to rest. The operation was done but recovery would depend on close observation and aftercare.



“Okay, I’ll accompany you to see Old Mr. Tanner first. After seeing him, you can go back to rest. I’ll stay there and everything will be fine.” He could take over her place to watch over him.

Sophie did not protest as she really needed to rest for a while. Besides, Josiah would take several hours before waking up.

Josiah had been wheeled into the observation room and visitors were not allowed in. So, she went in alone.

“Grandpa, I’ve done all that can be done. It all depends on you now. You’ve always been my hero so I am sure you can pull through. You won’t let me down, will you?”

Her grandfather was a veteran. He had been through the war and was an indomitable hero. If it was not for that tiny bullet fragment, he would not leave his beloved job.

After speaking a few words, Sophie came out of the observation room as she could not stay long.

Yale saw her coming out. Immediately, he asked with concern, “Soph, how is your grandpa doing? After he was wheeled out, we asked many doctors, but they were not familiar with the case.”

At that point, Yale’s attitude toward Sophie improved a lot.

Realizing that Tristan was on her side, Yale did not dare to show any disrespect. After all, the Lombard family was very prominent in the city of Jipsdale.

“The operation was a success, but we will only know the whole picture after Grandpa wakes up.” After all, he was advanced in age. Younger folks may take a few days to recover, but he would take longer.

“The successful operation is a good thing,” Yale mumbled, almost to himself.

Charmaine glanced at Yale in surprise. That was the first time he was so cordial to Sophie.

“Okay, you’re tired. Go and rest.” Tristan did not want her to stay and talk for too long. The operation had already sapped too much of her energy.

Sophie stopped talking and went off to the VIP ward nearby accompanied by Tristan.

“Why are you so nice to Sophie today? Is there something I do not know?”

She did not understand the present situation at all. What is going on? She did not like that feeling at all as she liked to be in control of every situation.

“Have a better attitude towards Sophie in the future. The entire Tanner family can only rely on her in the future.” Yale had not expected that after he spent so much time and effort on Willow, the boss turned out to be Sophie in the end.

Charmaine frowned. “Why? I don’t understand.”

“You don’t need to understand.” Who was Tristan after all? He did not even know if Tristan would mind others finding out about his relationship with Sophie.

It did not matter what Tristan thought of Sophie, they could no longer ill treat Sophie.

Even if Sophie was just a pet kept by Tristan, no one would dare to harm his pet.

Furthermore, no one really knew what Sophie meant to Tristan.

“What was that about? Can’t you tell me the truth?”

We are one family, aren’t we? Why is it necessary to be so secretive and hide the truth?

“Don’t question me. Just do as I say, that’s all.”

Charmaine was rather upset. She was his wife, after all. Why does he always use the same reason to shut me up?

Tristan led Sophie to the ward. He had to see her lie down with his own eyes.

“Sleep well, so I won’t worry about you, okay? I shall go over to Grandpa now and watch him. There won’t be any problem.”

“Mr. Tristan, I really appreciate this.”

She felt at ease having him around.

“You don’t have to mention that with me.”

Tristan tucked her in, closed the door and left.

Soon, she fell asleep and had a dream. The dream went on for a long time.

In the dream, she was about seven or eight years old. Her grandfather went down on all four and dotingly carried her on his back.

The memory became vivid and it was difficult to differentiate between a dream and reality.

Nonetheless, she had smiled sweetly in the dream.

Then, the dream changed and it was about the recent surgery but was a failure.

“Grandpa—”

Sophie woke up in fear from the nightmare, drenched with perspiration.

Sitting up on the hospital bed, Sophie gasped violently. With one hand placed over her beating heart, she reached out for her phone with the other to check the time.

She had slept for more than forty minutes.

Unable to go back to sleep, she dressed up and went outside. Tristan was standing guard outside and saw her the moment she appeared.

He walked toward her, frowning in disapproval. How long did she sleep? Why is she up already?

“Why don’t you sleep a bit longer?” He led her to a bench nearby and seated her. Seeing her covered in perspiration, he could not help looking at her with concern. “What happened? Did you have a bad dream?”

“Mr. Tristan, is my grandpa alright?” As someone who was knowledgeable in the field of medicine, she knew that the operation was very successful, but as Grandpa’s beloved little girl, she actually asked a silly question.

Knowing that she was worried about Josiah, Tristan held her hand tightly.

“Didn’t Arius say it’s a completely successful operation? You took part in it yourself.” She knew everything, but that did not stop her from worrying.

Sophie nodded. That’s true! She knew everything, from beginning to end. She knew it all.

Yet, she could not help but worry. In fact, she was even fearful.

Sophie leaned on his shoulder.

"I know that this is not good but I can't help it. I can't control myself." She did not like it but she cared too much for her grandfather, so she became all worried and felt awful about it.

## Chapter 168 Human Emotions

"Worry has driven you into a mess, but you have really done a good job." After all, humans were born with emotions and desires, and there was no way to have total control over them.

She had done very well.

At that very moment, Arius and Barney came over. When they saw her in that state, Arius could not help but shake his head.

"Soph, don't you trust me? As your mentor, I was right beside you throughout the operation. It was totally faultless."

Sophie rose to her feet.

"Dr. Smith, thank you very much for coming here," she said gratefully, knowing how busy he was.

Barney burst out laughing.

"My dear, I don't know when you will take me as your mentor. However, I'll wait, no matter how long it will take." As a leading figure in the medical field, Barney founded International Medical Association.

The medical association had a lot of medical experts from all over the world under its umbrella.

From the time he met Sophie, he had always wanted her to helm his medical association.

"Just give her some time. You're almost there." After going through so much, Sophie could think of nothing else but her grandfather.

“Fine, I will not rush you. For your sake, I have mastered Chanaean. I’ll leave it to you.” At that point, he spoke Chanaean well, but with a foreign accent.

Arius shook his head. His mentor seemed totally obsessed with Sophie. However, Arius could understand Barney’s feelings.

Sophie was indeed the most gifted medical prodigy they had ever come across.

“Sophie, Dr. Smith has to leave now. I’m sure you know how much work he has at the medical association.”

“Dr. Smith, let me see you out.” Sophie decided to walk him to the entrance because he had come such a long way.

“You stay here. I’ll walk with him.” Tristan knew how much she wanted to stay with her grandfather, so he offered.

“Neither of you need to do that. It’s good enough that Arius is with me.” Barney understood how she felt, and he did not want her to do that. “Tristan, you stay here too.”

Tristan had already done a lot to bring him over.

“Sophie, you stay here and watch your grandpa. Don’t worry. I’ll stay until he wakes up.” He didn’t want to go off just like that.

“Thank you, Dr. Smith,” Sophie said sincerely. Anyhow, she was grateful that he had come all the way.

At that moment, Constance turned up. She had heard that the founder of the medical association was visiting. Even though Arius was unwilling to help her, there was hope for Mason’s legs to recover as long as Barney agreed to help.

What she had not expected was that she had no way of reaching that level.

Nonetheless, that was a rare opportunity to meet the foreign expert.

“Hello, may I know if you are Dr. Smith? My son’s legs are broken. Can I ask you—”

Before Constance could finish speaking, two bodyguards came over immediately and caught hold of her.

Seeing that it was her, Sophie’s expression was particularly cold, while Tristan just glanced at the two bodyguards.

“This must not happen again!” Tristan warned them sharply.

The two bodyguards were so afraid that they broke into cold sweat. They were well aware of Tristan’s fiery temper. Furthermore, they could not give him any satisfactory reply for Constance’s intrusion.

The woman had already entered the room and that was an indisputable fact.

“Sorry, Mr. Tristan.” The bodyguards apologized for their mistake, but the damage was done.

“Take her away!”

“Dr. Smith, if you can heal my son’s legs, I can give you whatever you want,” Constance yelled for that was her last chance.

Barney frowned.

He did not like the woman’s attitude. There was nothing he wanted that he could not have so far.

The name Barney Smith was synonymous with absolute power. Where fame and fortune were concerned, he had everything.

If there were anything he wanted then, it was Sophie.

Constance was taken away even while she was still trying to convince Barney.

“Soph, you must come to visit me in Anglandur. Even if you do not wish to join the medical association, you can at least check it out.” He was confident that the moment she visited the medical association, she would definitely be fascinated by what she would see.

“Alright, I will certainly pay the medical association a visit,” Sophie promised.

Arius sent Barney to the airport personally. Tristan had made arrangements for his flight.

“Mr. Tristan, Old Mr. Tanner is awake,” a staff came over to report.

When Sophie heard that her grandfather was awake, she went over immediately. She went in and saw that he was indeed awake.

Seeing Sophie, Josiah raised his hand slightly. He was awake, but still unable to talk.

She went to him and held his hand.

“Grandpa, don’t worry. The operation was a success. After a few days of rest, we can go home.”

When Arius came back and found out that Josiah had awoken, he came immediately to examine him. After a series of tests, Arius looked rather pleased.

“You’re recovering well. So, don’t worry, Old Mr. Tanner. Rest well for a few days, and be sure to listen to the nurses!”



Josiah nodded slowly as he listened to the doctor.

At his advanced age, he felt weak after going through such a major operation, but his mind was still sharp.

“Grandpa, just close your eyes and rest,” Sophie advised after seeing how weak he was.

Josiah’s eyes were on Sophie all the time.

He knew that she was undergoing a lot at that moment. Since he was awake, she should go and have a good rest.

“Grandpa, I’m fine.” She could see that he was worried about her.

“Grandpa, don’t worry. I’m here for her. She’s going to be fine.” Tristan gazed steadily into Josiah’s eyes.

When Josiah heard that, he heaved a sign of relief. For some unknown reason, he trusted Tristan and took him at his word.

Josiah fell asleep again.

Arius patted Sophie on her shoulder.

“It’s all good. Now that Old Mr. Tanner has awoken, you can stop worrying.” The truth was that when Josiah woke up, Arius felt relieved too.

He was worried about any mishaps that might happen. After all, every surgery involved certain levels of risk. That type of surgery Josiah had was especially risky.

“Thank you, Arius.”

He waved his hands in reply.

“Sophie, if you continue doing this, I’ll get angry. There is no need for you to stand on ceremony.”

Sophie did not say a word, but smiled instead.

“All is well and I’m tired. I’m going to sleep for a while.” He was not going back yet, but he would leave only after Josiah’s condition had stabilized.

Arius had gone to rest and Morgan noticed that Sophie did not look well. Immediately he told Tristan, “Mr. Tristan, let me watch Old Mr. Tanner. You send Ms. Sophie to get some rest.”

With Morgan there, the others need not worry.

“Morgan, I’m fine.” She knew they were worried about her but she felt fine.

“You should go home. I’m sure you don’t want Old Mr. Tanner to wake up and see you exhausted or he’ll feel really bad.”

## Chapter 169 Irresistible

“In that case, I’ll go back and shower. Call me if there are any problems.” She, too, wanted to shower at home. Regardless of how luxurious the VIP ward was, she didn’t like bathing there.

“All right, go on ahead,” Morgan replied respectfully.

After Tristan returned to Wisteria Apartments with Sophie, he, too, took a bath when Sophie went to take a shower.

Despite spending the last few days in the hospital, he only managed a single quick bath. After all, the conditions at the hospital were considered terrible for someone like him.

When he was done showering, he heated up a glass of milk for Sophie and estimated the time she needed before knocking on her door.

Upon hearing the knock, Sophie opened the door, wrapped only in a towel with her hair still dripping wet.

The wet look and perky bosoms that greeted him felt like a siren song calling out to him.

Tristan, unable to help himself, gulped before feeling embarrassed by his own reaction.

“Have a glass of milk before you sleep. We’ll be going to the hospital again tomorrow.”

When Sophie received the glass from him, she brushed against his warm fingers, causing her to flinch in reflex.

Under such circumstances, it was all too easy for both of them to feel awkward.

“After a grueling few days, you can finally get some proper rest.” Sophie’s gentle voice continued to claw at his heart.

Tristan nodded. “Mmm-hmm. I’ll be next door. Call me if you need anything.”

With that, he came out of her room reluctantly.

Sophie’s gaze trailed his silhouette until he returned to his room before drinking the warm milk he had prepared.

After lying in bed, Sophie slept especially well, probably due to the effects of the milk.

By the time she awoke, it was already three in the morning.

Hunger was what had woken her up. With her stomach growling, she couldn't help but feel annoyed.

In the end, she decided to get out of bed. The moment she opened the door, Tristan heard her movements, causing him to come out too.

"What is it? Where are you going in the middle of the night?" he asked anxiously, worried that something might have happened to Josiah.

Sophie's heart was warmed by the concerned look on his face.

"It's nothing. I'm just feeling hungry, as I had barely eaten during the day."

However, she wasn't sure if there were still any food delivery services available at night.

"I plan to order some food. Do you want anything?"

I don't remember him having eaten much too. Given that he's one point eight meters tall, shouldn't he be hungrier than I am?

"Oh, in that case, let's have supper together."

After going downstairs and taking their seats in the living room, Sophie opened a food delivery app.

Despite browsing through it for a long time, she couldn't come to a decision.

"Come on. Let's eat out instead."

Sophie looked in his direction.

“Who goes out for supper at this ungodly hour?” Isn’t it too late for that?

“You and me!” Why not? As long as we fancy it, who’s to say that we can’t?

Sophie nodded.

“You’re right.”

“Wait for me. I’ll go get changed.” Regardless of how brazen she was, there was no way she was going out in her pajamas.

As Tristan waited in the living room for her, a smile broke out on his face.

Who knew that this is all it takes to be happy? Even though he was just waiting for her to go out for supper, a sense of bliss had descended upon him.

As long as they were together, he would be easily contented regardless of what they did.

Meanwhile, Sophie had put on a red hoodie topped by a black down jacket.

Due to how cold Jipsdale was, she didn’t tie her hair.

Given how juvenile she looked, Tristan felt guilty being together with her.

He couldn’t help but question himself on whether he was too old for her.

“What’s wrong?” From the moment we entered the elevator, he hadn’t peeled his eyes away from me.

“Nothing, you just look very good in your outfit.”

Sophie was rendered speechless.

How should I respond to that?

“I think I look good all the time.”

Not expecting such an answer, Tristan was stunned.

“I’m just kidding.” Sophie couldn’t resist laughing.

It’s been a long time since I’ve felt so at ease, and this feels wonderful!

Tristan brought Sophie to a high-end barbecue restaurant.

Unlike those by the street, it had a wonderful ambiance and looked like a place Tristan would frequent.

Nonetheless, they didn’t expect to run into Felix and the others.

At the sight of Tristan, Ysabelle ran up to them.

“Soph, how is Old Mr. Tanner? I want to visit him too.” Over the last few days, her dad had grounded her at home. If it weren’t for Felix, she wouldn’t even have the opportunity to come out.

“He’s fine. What about you? Are you still grounded by your dad?”

Ysabelle sighed at the topic.

How did I end up having him as my father? Being grounded sucks!

“Let’s not go there, as I get a headache just thinking of it. My dad is just too bullheaded. No one can change his mind.”

“Mr. Tristan, you should stay by Sophie’s side for the next few days. I’ll hold the fort for you at the office. In return, this meal is on you,” Felix grumbled the moment he saw Tristan.

“Fine, I’m buying. I’ll make sure you go home drunk, or my name isn’t Tristan.”

Felix was stumped. I was just making a casual remark. Getting drunk is such a horrible feeling to have.

“Mr. Tristan, I’m sorry. You win. Please let me off the hook!”

When Charles and Sean saw Felix’s cowardly reaction, they burst into laughter.

“Mr. Tristan, Sean and I will be taking our leave as we’re done. As for Felix, go ahead and torture him,” Charles suggested with a grin.

Felix was upset.

“F\*ck, after I invited you out for supper, is that how you repay me? Charles, you had better not cross the line.” Felix rolled up his sleeves as if he was going to get into a fight with them.

Ignoring him, Sean gave Charles a tug before leaving, with Felix brandishing his fists in the air behind them.

“All of you should stop bullying Felix. Don’t you think he’s really pitiful?”

Upon hearing the remark, Felix snuck a glance at Ysabelle, for that was the first time she had ever stood up for him.

Even Tristan shot her a look.

“Felix, you should send her home already. Given how strict her dad has lately been, she might be grounded for life if she doesn’t get home soon.” Tristan knew his brother’s character like the back of his hand.

Upon hearing his comment, Ysabelle, who had wanted to linger a little longer, felt her enthusiasm fizzle out and resigned herself to reality.

“Soph, once Old Mr. Tanner recovers, I’ll visit him again. As of now, I won’t bother him yet.”

Sophie nodded in acknowledgment.

“Mm-hmm. Go on now.” Poor girl.

After being reluctantly led away by Felix, Ysabelle would turn around with a pitiful look on her face every few steps she took.

## Chapter 170 I Like You This Way

When she saw Ysabelle’s miserable expression, Sophie couldn’t help but ask, “Mr. Tristan, as Ysabelle’s uncle, can’t you put in a good word for her?”

There’s nothing wrong with joining the entertainment industry as long as that’s where her passion lies. Considering the Lombard family’s position in Jipsdale, no one in the industry would dare take advantage of her in the event she does.



“Mm-hmm, I’ll talk to my brother about it in a few days.” As he was occupied with Josiah’s matter, he had no time to spare for Ysabelle’s affairs.

Nonetheless, since Sophie had made a request, he would definitely get to it.

After leading Sophie to a private room, both of them sat and waited after ordering.

The moment Sophie went online, Butterfly’s messages came in.

Butterfly: Phantom, you’re finally here. Have you been busy? Why haven’t you come online recently?

Phantom: I’ve been busy taking care of things at home. Did something happen? How are things at Wings of Light?

Butterfly: What’s wrong? Do you need our help? If you do, just press 1.

Sophie couldn’t help but smile at Butterfly’s joke.

Phantom: I’m fine. My grandpa has just gone for an operation. There’s nothing you can do even if you’re here.

Butterfly: I see. In that case, I’ll visit him tomorrow. Just give me the address.

Phantom: That’s not necessary. He’s still recovering and needs a lot of rest.

Butterfly: All right then. I’ll visit him when he’s better, as I’ve been planning to see him for some time. Please keep me updated.

Phantom: Is everything all right with Wings of Light?

Butterfly: It's fine. Their influence has been expanding under my leadership, so there's nothing for you to worry about.

Phantom: Okay, I'm logging off now. You should rest early too.

I know Butterfly is a night owl, but why isn't she sleeping yet? It's almost dawn now.

Butterfly: I can't sleep as I just broke up. From the look of things, I'm really not suited to be in a relationship.

Sophie was at a loss for words.

She goes through a breakup once a month. I really have no idea what to say.

Butterfly: Ah, I just keep meeting lousy men. It's not my problem, but the men I keep seeing are terrible.

Phantom: I have to go, as I'm about to eat.

Tristan's gaze was fixed on her as she was chatting with Butterfly from the moment she sat down.

After logging out of her phone, Sophie put it aside.

"Who was it?" How can there be someone who has a greater hold on her than me? To the extent that she just can't put down her phone?

"A friend." As Tristan still didn't know that she was Phantom, it wasn't the right time to tell him about Butterfly yet.

"Fine." Sensing her reluctance, Tristan didn't press on.

When the food was served, Sophie grabbed a skewer of grilled meat and took a bite.

Even though it was delicious, she didn't feel that it tasted much better than one from a street stall.

Since spices were the most important ingredient in a barbecue, she enjoyed the particular restaurant's spice rub.

Sophie, who noticed Tristan wasn't eating, handed a skewer to him.

"Aren't you hungry too? Dig in!"

Instead of receiving it, Tristan grabbed her hand and took a bite from her skewer.

Sophie was rendered speechless.

Does he want me to feed him? She let out a sigh.

This is such a pain. Must I also feed him during meals whenever we're together?

Even though she was famished a while ago, she became full after just a few skewers. In spite of that, Tristan ordered a serving of mashed potatoes for her.

After taking a few mouthfuls, she could no longer move a muscle.

As for Tristan, he finished her leftover mashed potatoes instead of the untouched barbecue skewers.

After both of them exited the restaurant and got into the car, they saw Willow and Clayton appear in front of it.

When Sophie was certain the lady beside Clayton was Willow, she couldn't resist snorting in laughter.

Isn't she in love with Mason? What changed? Does she not fancy him anymore after what happened to his leg? That aside, why is Clayton with her?

The fact that Clayton was behind the assassination attempts on Tristan wasn't lost upon her.

At the same time, Tristan's expression darkened.

There's no reason for Clayton and Willow to be in the same social setting. Now that he has her by his side, what is he planning? Who is he targeting?

Tristan didn't forget the incident outside Blossom Garden, where Clayton discovered how special Sophie was to him.

Therefore, he suspected that Sophie was the reason why Clayton had Willow by his side.

As Sophie watched Willow, the latter, in turn, saw her and noticed the way Sophie was looking at her. As a result, Willow cracked a smug smile.

Is Sophie already jealous when I haven't even done anything? All I'm doing is show up by Clayton's side. In that case, wouldn't she rage in jealous envy if Clayton and I really got together?

Taking her attention off Willow, Sophie wound up the window to screen the latter out from her mind.

I don't care what happens to Willow, but now that I control the Tanner family, there's no way I'm going to let her harm the family's interest.

It went without saying that Clayton, too, saw Tristan and Sophie. Consistent with what everyone's thoughts were, Sophie was the reason why he had Willow by his side.

Given how important Sophie was to Tristan, hurting the former was the equivalent of doing the same to the latter.

After all, his only goal in life is to crush Tristan like an insect.

“Clayton, it’s getting late. Let’s...” Willow offered herself to him. Since he kept her by his side, she was certain of his desire for her.

After all, it wouldn’t make sense for a man to do that and not lust after the lady, especially one that was of the nubile age of nineteen.

For someone like Clayton, it would be impossible for him to resist.

When Clayton checked the time, he realized that it really was getting late.

In truth, even though Willow’s beauty was undeniable, Sophie’s presence made her look ordinary, smoldering any lust that he initially harbored for the former.

“It’s getting late. Your parents must be worried. I’ll get the driver to send you home.”

“Clayton, I don’t feel like going home. Where are you going? Let me come with you. My parents are busy these few days, so they don’t have time to bother about me.”

Since the opportunity for her to stay by his side didn’t come by easily, she was reluctant to leave just like that.

“Clayton, I—”

Willow swallowed her words.

She was willing to sacrifice anything as long as she could stay by Clayton’s side, even if it meant giving herself to him.

Suddenly, Clayton grabbed her chin.

“I heard that you and your sister fancied Mr. Mason, and now, you’ve already changed your mind? How long has it just been since he was hospitalized? Willow, are your feelings for me really sincere? How are you going to prove it?”

Despite the pain from his brutish grip, Willow had no choice but to maintain her longing stare at him.

“Clayton, before I met you, I always assumed that I liked Mason’s type. But after getting to know you, I realized I’m actually attracted to ambitious men like you. As for Mason, he’s nothing but a mommy’s boy.”