

Pursuing 181

Chapter 181 Romantic Rivals

Tristan and Felix alighted from their cars and walked toward Sophie and Ysabelle respectively.

“Oh my God, who exactly are these two men? Look at their cars!”

“That’s nothing. Didn’t Mason also drive such luxury cars in the past? The Laird family is pretty affluent. Regretfully, Mason can no longer walk right now. It’s really a pity.”

“Yeah! What’s there to envy? Sophie is obviously a jinx! If Mason hadn’t gotten together with her, he wouldn’t have ended up in such a state!” The girl wore a distinctly envious expression on her face, but she repeatedly emphasized that it was nothing significant.

“Ah, I’m so jealous! Why are there always so many handsome men around her? They’re all more handsome than the last!”

“Oh well, forget it! Let’s not talk about her anymore. Irritation swamps me whenever I think of her. I’ve got a few tickets for The Wheelers’ concert tonight. Do you all want to go together?”

The girl who was speaking brandished the tickets in her hand, looking all smug.

At the mention of The Wheelers, the rest of the girls started shrieking.

“Of course! The Wheelers is the most popular rock band now. I love their main vocalist! Can you give me a ticket? I’ll buy it from you.”

“Hear, hear! I don’t mind even if I have to pay you. Sell a ticket to me, please. I want to go, too! I’m a big fan of The Wheelers!”

Tristan opened the car door for Sophie. This time, he opened the door to the passenger seat.

He carefully shielded her head with his hand, afraid that she would bump her head on the frame.

“I can manage, Mr. Tristan.” It’s just getting into a car. Can he not treat me like a kid?

“I know you can manage, but I always can’t help doing such things when I’m with you. Do you mind it very much?”

That had Sophie at a loss for words.

All right, then. It doesn’t seem to be something worth minding anyway.

Likewise, Felix opened the car door to the passenger seat for Ysabelle.

“Thank you.”

At once, Felix went silent.

When he heard those two words from her, words eluded him, and he didn’t know what to say.

The Wheelers’ concert this time was held at the biggest stadium in Jipsdale.

By the time they arrived, tens of thousands of fans had already begun queuing up.

Despite the chilly weather, their enthusiasm remained strong.

They even had the logo and name of the band on their faces.

Mark and the others have really succeeded! Even after experiencing all that darkness, they still walked toward the light.

Although Sophie was no longer part of the band, a sense of pride inundated her.

“What’s wrong?” Tristan inquired as he took her hand upon noticing the change in her mood.

“I stood together with them at one time.” That was the darkest period in my entire life. If it weren’t for them, I might not have been able to walk out of it.

“Mm.”

Tristan didn’t know everything about her past yet.

However, as long as she was willing to talk, he was ready to listen anytime.

Yet, Sophie didn’t continue speaking about that. There were too many fans that they couldn’t even find a parking space.

While Tristan was looking for a parking space, Sophie’s phone rang.

“Have you arrived yet, Sophie?” Afraid that she wouldn’t come, Mark rang her up directly.

“Yeah. I’m looking for a parking space right now.” There were truly too many people, and many cars were parked haphazardly.

“In that case, just drive in. There are still a few parking spaces in the stadium. I’ll come out and meet you.”

Mark was also aware that it wasn’t easy to find a parking space.

“No, it’s okay. Just notify the staff about it. The concert is starting soon, so focus on your preparation.”

They held each concert in high regard, and Sophie didn’t want to trouble him.

“All right, then. Come and look for me backstage after you get in. They all wish to see you.” It had been two years since they had last seen her, and everyone missed her.

“Okay.”

After hanging up the phone, Sophie had Tristan drive into the stadium through a side entrance.

Mark’s manager was already waiting there.

All she knew was that Mark’s friend was coming.

The man had always been aloof, and she had never seen him so enthusiastic toward anyone.

Therefore, she was very curious.

When she saw four luxury cars driving in together, a tumult of emotions brewed within her.

Being in the entertainment industry, she had witnessed all sorts of scenes. But the instant she spotted the four luxury cars appearing at the same time, her eyes still went wide.

“Hello, I’m Mark’s manager, Chloe Meyer. Are you Ms. Tanner?” Her voice shook slightly.

Sophie glanced at the woman in front of her, reckoning that she was in her thirties and appeared pretty amicable.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Sophie Tanner. I’m sorry for troubling you.”

Indeed, she was a touch embarrassed that Chloe had to come out personally at such a time.

“Ms. Tanner, I always hear the band members talk about you, especially Mark! He really likes you a lot!”
Chloe promptly remarked smilingly.

Mark is indifferent to everyone. Only when he mentions her will the tender side of him show.

“I see.” Sophie didn’t comment on that.

Chloe couldn’t help stealing a peek at Tristan. This man looks as if he’s not to be trifled with.

“Please follow me, Ms. Tanner,” she murmured to Sophie.

She then led the four cars into the parking lot in the stadium.

Subsequently, she brought the other five people to their seats.

“Ms. Tanner, this seat is specially reserved for you by Mark. The band members had been reserving the best place for you though you never attended their past concerts.”

In fact, that had become a tradition in The Wheelers’ concerts.

Ysabelle peered at her uncle cautiously.

I wonder how Uncle Tristan feels when there’s a man who’s so attentive to Sophie. Mark seems to like Sophie a lot!

“You have too many romantic rivals, Mr. Tristan!” It’s practically impossible for him to guard against them, especially when they span industries!

Tristan said nothing, his hand draped across the back of Sophie’s chair.

Romantic rivals? Are they even worthy of being called that?

Felix couldn’t help chuckling.

At once, Tristan swung his gaze at him.

“Why are you laughing? What’s so funny?” he questioned airily.

Immediately, Felix put away the smile on his face.

“Nothing. I wasn’t laughing either. Please ignore me, Mr. Tristan. Just regard me as thin air.” Still, he couldn’t conceal his smile.

Ysabelle nudged him with her wrist, signaling him to keep a low profile.

“Mark and the others are waiting for you backstage, Ms. Tanner. Would you like to go over with me now?” As Chloe said that, she reflexively glanced at Tristan.

“I’ll be back in a jiffy.” Sophie got up from her seat, planning to go backstage for a while.

The audience seating was almost full, and the concert was starting soon.

The moment her words fell, the temperature around them seemed to have plummeted over ten degrees in the blink of an eye.

“Oh God, I suddenly feel chilly! Is the air-conditioning in the stadium not working?” Charles couldn’t help rubbing his arms.

“I don’t think you’re chilly. You’re sick of living,” Sean drawled.

“Okay. Go ahead.”

Despite feeling chagrined that Sophie was going to meet some other men, Tristan still agreed magnanimously.

Chapter 182 An Injured Hand

Charles and Sean exchanged glances, not expecting that Tristan would be so tolerant toward Sophie.

However, Sophie did not give it any thought.

When Ysabelle saw that Sophie wanted to head backstage, she rose to her feet too.

“Sophie, could I go with you? I want to meet the other members of The Wheelers. I’m really a fan of them,” Ysabelle blurted excitedly.

“Come on, then. Let’s go over there together and take a look,” Sophie replied. She did not think it was a big deal to go backstage and have a look.

Ysabelle flung her arms around Sophie and kissed her on the cheek.

“I knew all along that you’re the nicest to me. Sophie, you’ve no idea how much I adore you!”

Felix could not help flicking a glance at Ysabelle. Isn’t she being a little too bold? How does she have the guts to tease Mr. Tristan’s woman in front of him? Does she have a death wish?

Indeed, Tristan did not look too happy.

It did not please him to see others teasing Sophie, regardless of their gender. Even though that person is my niece, I still feel the same way.

However, Ysabelle had nothing to worry about since Sophie was around. With Sophie here, Uncle Tristan won't be able to do anything to me.

"Be careful," Felix cautioned. In truth, he wanted to follow them backstage, mainly because he was worried about Ysabelle. However, thinking that it would not be appropriate for so many of them to head

over there together, he dismissed the thought.

After Sophie led Ysabelle backstage, they found that it was indeed chaos there.

Even the band's manager was stupefied after taking in the situation. The concert is going to start in ten minutes. What on earth is going on here?

"What happened? Wasn't everything confirmed already? What's going on now?" the manager asked anxiously. There's a crowd of a hundred thousand people at today's concert. If something goes wrong in any one of the segments, the consequences will be disastrous!

"Sunny injured his hand." Sunny was the band's drummer. The main highlight of the band was that they performed all their music live, but now, Sunny's hand was injured, and losing their drummer meant their performance would be lackluster.

"How did he get hurt? He was fine when I left earlier, wasn't he? The company only gave us such an incredible opportunity because they believed in us. Even the biggest stars don't get this kind of treatment!" the manager exclaimed worriedly, looking like she was about to cry. How could something like this happen to me?

“What happened?” Sophie inquired. She was not convinced that it was an accident. It’s simply too much of a coincidence.

“It was so scary, Sophie. I went to the washroom just now, right? Well, a few people grabbed me and immediately hit my hand.” Sunny was the youngest in the band, so everyone’s expressions were grim after they discovered what had befallen the apple of the band’s eye.

“Do you mean some people sneaked backstage, followed you, and hurt your hand?” Sophie asked in an icy tone.

They used to be in the band together, so Sophie was upset to see Sunny injured.

Noticing the expression on her face and not wanting her to worry, Sunny smiled and said, “I’m fine, Sophie. It’s nothing serious. You don’t have to be concerned.”

Sophie walked up to Sunny. Taking his hand, she glanced at it and announced, “You can’t perform at today’s concert.”

Arius hasn’t gone back yet. I’ll get him to come and check on Sunny later.

“What? I can’t perform today? This is our biggest concert since we started The Wheelers, and everyone attending this concert is a loyal fan of the band! How can I not be a part of it?”

Sunny simply could not accept it. However, his face paled from the excruciating pain after he attempted to move his wrist.

“Don’t you care about your hands? Don’t you want to play drums anymore? If you behave like this now, how will you play drums in the future?” Sophie demanded angrily.

Sunny was also infuriated. “Then tell me what I’m supposed to do now!” I hate myself for being so feeble after what happened! Being this powerless sucks!

"D*mn it! The culprits better hope I don't get my hands on them. If I find out who did this, I'll cripple them!" Mark growled. Since he had spent some time in the entertainment industry before forming the band, there was a certain domineering edge to his aura.

Nonetheless, it was that domineering aura that his fans loved and swooned over, especially the female fans.

"Anyway, that's enough for now. We'll talk about this after the concert ends," he continued. It doesn't matter who did it. I won't spare anyone who dares to lay even a finger on the band members.

"Sophie, you used to be a drummer too. Why don't you take my place?"

"Yeah! You did so well that time at Nocturnal. Even though you haven't practiced in a while, you've still got it. Why don't you perform with us? No matter what, you're still a member of the band. Now that we're in this predicament, you wouldn't just stand idly by and do nothing, right?"

Sophie had always been the soul of the band.

"Sophie, did you use to be part of The Wheelers?" Ysabelle could not believe her ears.

"Think of it as a favor to me, Sophie. I really don't want everyone's hard work to go down the drain." Sunny, who was around the same age as Sophie, gazed at her with a pitiful expression.

"Ms. Tanner, The Wheelers signed a bet-on agreement with the company this time. If the concert fails to proceed as planned, the band will have to pay a large sum as compensation," the manager explained nervously. Back then, I thought it was a profitable deal with minimal risk for the band. That's why I dared to sign such a contract. I never imagined something like this would happen!

"What? I can't believe that happened!" Sophie uttered in disbelief, wondering if her ears had deceived her.

The manager was on the verge of tears as everyone's gazes fell on her. "Now that I think about it, it must've been a trap the company deliberately set up for us."

And what else could the reason be besides money? All the band members have worked tirelessly, so why would it even matter if they got some dividends in return?

“All they want is a compliant band,” Mark mused. But there’s no way I’d be that kind of singer. I have my own dreams. I want to take rock music to greater heights!

Realization finally dawned on Sophie as she glanced at Mark. That’s true. How could Mark possibly be compliant? Every one of the band members is ambitious, and any one of them would be perfectly capable of giving those popular singers a run for their money.

“Okay. I understand. In that case, the concert will have to go on. Sunny, give me your stage clothes. Oh, and Mark, give me the set list for today’s concert,” said Sophie.

There are only a few minutes left before the concert. Fortunately, Sunny is a drummer. I’ll be able to look at the music score, so it shouldn’t be much of a problem.

Chapter 183 Dazzling Like A Diamond

The other band members were overcome with excitement when they heard that. It had been a long time since they played together with Sophie.

They genuinely liked Sophie and had always enjoyed making music with her.

Since Sophie and Ysabelle had been backstage for some time, the latter said, “Soph, in that case, I’ll head outside first and let Uncle Tristan know what happened. Otherwise, he’ll get worried.”

“Okay. Let him know what happened, and tell him not to worry.”

Sophie had not performed onstage in a long time, and she realized she actually missed the thrill of it.

The manager asked a makeup artist to go over and do Sophie's makeup. While getting her makeup applied, Sophie pored over the music score.

What a relief! Even though I wasn't in the band for the past two years, I've listened to their songs. On top of that, The Wheelers are very popular, so their music gets played everywhere.

Seeing that they were actually going to let a girl still in her teens go onstage, the manager's assistant could not refrain from saying, "Are you sure she'll be all right? She doesn't look like she can do it."

This isn't like one of those arts and culture performances in school. It's a concert in front of a hundred thousand people! Many rookies would still find such a situation intimidating even after debuting for some time, let alone a young lady like her.

"Zip it! I told you to keep an eye on them, and what did you do? Where were you just now? If you'd listened to me, we wouldn't be in such a pickle!" the manager snapped, utterly furious. I've been closely

involved in the planning of this concert from the preparation stages until now. I only stepped away for a few minutes, and look at what happened! What on earth was this assistant of mine doing?

"I did listen to you! But Sunny wanted to use the washroom. Don't tell me I should've gone in with him!" the assistant protested indignantly.

What's the big deal anyway? I just wasn't given a chance. Otherwise, I'd be way better at singing than Mark! All Mark sings is that godawful music!

The manager watched as the makeup artist did Sophie's makeup, put a wig on her, and helped her change into Sunny's stage clothes. At the end of it all, the manager was dumbfounded to see a stunningly handsome young man standing before her.

"Ms. Tanner, you look amazing! That outfit really suits you!"

Dressed in men's clothes, Sophie exuded an irresistible allure that was enough to make one's face flush and heart race.

Sophie was rather pleased when she saw her reflection in the mirror. I look really good dressed up in men's clothes!

Meanwhile, Ysabelle had returned to where Tristan was. Seeing that she came back alone, the latter raised his eyebrows and asked, "Where's Sophie? Wasn't she with you?"

"Soph said she had something to do and told me to come back first. Don't worry, Uncle Tristan. Maybe Soph wants to give you a surprise!" Previously, Sophie had already surprised everyone at Nocturnal. This time at a concert with a hundred thousand-strong audience, Ysabelle was certain that Sophie would give them an even bigger surprise.

Felix also moved closer when he saw Ysabelle acting all mysterious.

"Ysabelle, what's Sophie up to? The members of The Wheelers are all guys, and every one of them is even more alluring than the other. In fact, that lead singer of theirs is as handsome as Mr. Tristan. Aren't you at all worried about leaving her alone with them?"

Having always seen Tristan calm and collected, Felix had a sudden wish to see Tristan jealous.

Ysabelle gave a cold snort. "Felix, do you really think the lead singer of The Wheelers is comparable to my uncle? How could Sophie ever fall for Mark Wheeler? With such an outstanding man like Uncle Tristan around, Mark is nothing," she quickly said gushingly. "All right. The concert is about to start. Pipe down and watch the concert."

A countdown timer had appeared on the big screen.

Holding their breaths in anticipation, the audience began to count down along to the timer.

Some of them even erupted into loud shrieks of excitement. Finally! We're here at the venue for The Wheelers' concert! We're finally going to meet our idols!

A platform lift slowly rose in the center of the stage, and the five members of The Wheelers appeared onstage together. They were decked out in gorgeous costumes, and they were all slender and tall with long legs.

After the platform lift stopped, Mark walked over to the microphone. At the same time, Sophie, who had a mask on, shot a glance at Tristan, who was sitting among the crowd, before going over to sit behind the drums.

“Oh my goodness! What happened? Did Sunny get an injury on his face? Why is he wearing a mask?” someone exclaimed.

Another person said, “Wait a minute... That’s not Sunny! Sunny is a little taller than that guy. What on earth is going on? However, that mysterious hottie appears to be very handsome too!”

“You’re right! He’s so handsome! The mask adds to his charm, doesn’t it? What am I going to do? I think I’m falling for another guy!”

Although Ysabelle had already known Sophie would go onstage, a wave of excitement still washed over her as she saw the latter standing there in a mask.

“Is there something wrong with my eyes? Why does it seem like that’s Sophie on the stage?” Felix could not help but rub his eyes. My eyes aren’t playing tricks on me, are they? Just like that, Sophie was about to perform at a concert in front of a hundred thousand people.

Since her appearance onstage, Tristan had not uttered a single word. Even with a mask on, he could tell it was her with just one glance. There were just some people who possessed such a strong presence.

He continued fixing his gaze on Sophie.

That’s what my Sophie deserves. She deserves to shine brightly. Anywhere she goes, she’s bound to be the center of attention, dazzling like a brilliant diamond.

Meanwhile, Sean mused, “That really is Mr. Tristan’s girlfriend. I never paid much attention to the entertainment industry before this. What’s her relationship with The Wheelers?” Sean was a man of few words, but Sophie had too many identities, and he could not resist the urge to find out more about her.

Charles shrugged, also looking puzzled. “I know as much as you do. Everything that I know, you do too.”

There are too many intriguing things about Sophie Tanner.

While they were talking, the concert had begun. The first song was a rock tune, and Sophie playing the drums was an incredibly captivating sight.

“That’s so cool! What should I do? I’ve fallen in love with Sophie again!” Ysabelle exclaimed, her sentiments echoing those of all the other female fans present.

Felix was very upset when he heard that.

I always thought my love rival would be a man among men. But lo and behold, it turns out to be Sophie!

Ysabelle grasped Tristan’s hand in excitement. “Uncle Tristan, do you see that? That’s our amazing Sophie! She’s truly incredible! You have to make her yours, got it?”

“Of course.”

Sophie is like the brightest star in the galaxy. No matter where she goes, my eyes will always go straight to her at first glance. That must be what they call “attraction.” That’s right. I’m fatally attracted to her. Even if I have to scale mountains or dive into deep seas, I’ll definitely find her and stay by her side to protect her.

Chapter 184 Trying To Be Cheeky

After Mark finished singing the first song, he removed the microphone from the stand.

“Everyone, thank you for coming to our concert! Let me introduce the first-generation member of our band, Tanner!”

The moment he said that, Sophie stared at him. What the hell is he doing? Doesn't he know that I have no intention of appearing in front of the crowd?

“I would say The Wheelers will not be here if not for Tanner. Because Sunny has gotten injured, Tanner is here today to replace him. Tanner, we are very happy to perform with you once again.”

Mark looked at Sophie with deep affection.

Just as he finished talking, the fans started screaming wildly.

They were completely impressed by Tanner's performance earlier on.

Even if all she did was sit there in silence, every move of hers seemed to drive the fans into ecstasy.

Before they realized it, they were totally bowled over by her.

“Coming up next will be a solo performance by Tanner.” That segment was meant for Sunny. Now that he could not make it, Mark had deliberately given that opportunity to Sophie.

Sophie could not help but sigh.

However, she still nodded and agreed.

Since he had already said it out loud, there was no way she could turn him down. Otherwise, news of discord within The Wheelers would definitely become a trending topic the next day!

After being with them for nearly a year, she knew how much they loved to perform for their fans.

"F*ck! Have they rehearsed this before? I doubt that. There was simply no time. Soph has been called on to the stage at the last minute!" Ysabelle could not believe Mark would pull such a stunt. Is he not worried?

"There's no need for any rehearsal. I'm certain that she will pull it off wonderfully." Tristan was very confident about Sophie's performance.

As far as he was concerned, Sophie had always surprised him and excelled in whatever she did.

The drumsticks seemed to have become alive when they were in Sophie's hands.

That was Sophie's solo performance, and she had to finish it on her own.

Sophie had written that song herself, and it took her quite some time to complete it.

Yet, it fitted right in.

"Have all of you ever heard this song before?"

"No! That's so cool!"

"That's right! There are no lyrics in this song. Yet, it manages to make my blood boil with excitement."

"Yea! This song will definitely become popular!"

"I can't believe I have never heard of this song before."

"This must be The Wheelers' new song! They must be warming up for the new album if they are playing it now."

All of the fans had fallen in love with the new member of the band.

“This is freaking cool,” Ysabelle also could not help but mumble.

“Mr. Tristan, you have such good taste. I have always thought that you are with her because of her pretty face. Now, I realized that Sophie is so much more than that!”

Sophie is so good with the drums!

Awesome! Fu*king cool! Unbelievable!

The song had finally come to an end.

Thunderous applause rang out and screams erupted among the crowd.

“Boohoo... What am I supposed to do? Looks like I will have a new idol now.”

“Me too. Sorry, Sunny. But, this time around, I’m in love with someone else.”

On the stage, the other members of the band exchanged glances and smiled.

That’s right. The Sophie we knew is back. That cool and awesome Sophie is finally back.

“Tanner, I know you will never let us down,” said Mark proudly.

“All right. Up next, ‘Crazy’ for all of you.”

Mark returned to his position and started strumming his guitar.

Naturally, the song “Crazy” was equally explosive, and everyone in the audience even sang along too.

Ysabelle started singing too.

When Felix saw her so happy, a smile appeared on his face too.

That was the Ysabelle he knew!

Carefree and daring!

When she was with Sophie, she seemed genuinely happy and free of restraints.

The concert hit one high after another.

Soon, it was Mark’s solo performance, so the rest of the band went to change their costumes.

The few of them were used to removing their clothes the moment they went backstage. They had forgotten that Sophie was there until they heard her clear her throat.

It was only then they stopped whatever they were doing.

“Sophie, we are sorry! We have forgotten that you are here. Why don’t you go in there and change your clothes?” Changing rooms were available. However, they changed right there and then in order to save time.

Sophie nodded before taking Sunny’s clothes in with her.

Once she was done and came out, she found that the rest of them were gone.

Tristan, on the other hand, had snuck backstage quietly.

“What are you-”

Before Sophie could finish her question, Tristan pulled her into his arms.

“I don’t like the smell of other men on your body.”

He was aware that she was wearing another man’s clothes at that moment.

Sophie did not attempt to struggle. She allowed him to embrace her as he wished.

“Mr. Tristan, it’s about time I get on to the stage.”

Mark’s solo only lasted for around five minutes. Sophie had spent too much time backstage and could not afford to delay anymore.

“Ms. Tanner, I’m jealous.” If that’s the case, shouldn’t she comfort me a little?

Sophie felt helpless.

“Mr. Tristan...”

What kind of comfort does he need?

There was no way she would abandon The Wheelers. After all, they were there for her during her darkest days.

“Just one kiss will do.”

Sophie was speechless.

He isn't jealous. He's just trying to be cheeky.

Knowing that she was running out of time, she gave him a light peck on his lips and nothing more.

"Will this do?" asked Sophie.

Tristan held on tightly to her waist, pulled her into his arms again, and gave her a completely different kind of kiss.

"Remember something. This is how a real kiss should be. Go on! I'll let you off for now."

Sophie was dumbfounded.

She suspected that he might have eaten up all of her lipstick in that one passionate kiss.

When Sophie went out, the makeup artist was already waiting for her. She immediately touched up her lipstick the moment she saw it was gone.

"Where's Uncle Tristan?" Ysabelle had been focusing all her attention on Mark's performance just now that she had forgotten that her Uncle Tristan had disappeared.

"He must have gone backstage!" There was no way Felix would believe that Tristan had gone to the washroom.

Just then, Tristan returned to his seat, looking nonchalant.

Felix teased him, "Mr. Tristan, you can't bear to let Sophie go for a few minutes? Come on!"

Charles chimed in, “Mr. Tristan, since when did you become so pathetic? I guess you didn’t get what you want! Shall I arrange for a few ladies to serve you tonight?”

“Even if you kidnap a fairy from Heaven right now and give her to him, she will never be as good as Ms. Tanner,” teased Sean.

Tristan was absolutely enamored with Sophie. He certainly had no time for other women.

“Am I just like all of you? Even in the past, I was nothing like any of you.” Tristan was a clean freak. Therefore, he never had the habit of sleeping around even before he met Sophie.

Charles was at a loss for words.

Chapter 185 Lonely Nights

“All right.” Charles had nothing else to say, for it seemed like he was really the only one who was wasting his life fooling around.

“Ysabelle, what do you think of Charles?”

Ysabelle blinked.

“Charles? Isn’t he a little too old?” Has he forgotten Charles’ age, or has he forgotten my age?

“Okay, Sophie has started performing now, so quiet down.” Why are they being so loud instead of watching the wonderful performance!

Charles, Felix, and Sean all fell silent at that.

The three of them could only rub their noses awkwardly while looking at Tristan's solemn expression.

The concert began at eight and ended at half-past eleven. Even after the last song, the fans were still glued to their seats, not wanting to leave.

"Thank you, everyone," said Mark, who had always been someone cool and aloof.

The Wheelers then bowed and thanked the audience.

By then, the fans below the stage had started crying.

"That's insane. Are fans that scary nowadays?"

"How is that insane? Every single member in The Wheelers is amazing. They're worth going crazy for!" Ysabelle instantly defended.

"Okay, you guys head back first. I'll wait here for Sophie."

Tristan did not have the patience to keep hearing them talk nonsense.

"Let's go. It looks like we're doing nothing but wasting time here," Sean blinked at the others.

Huh, someone doesn't want us here.

"Uncle Tristan, can I wait with you for Sophie?" Ysabelle was still reeling in from the thrill of the concert. She had tons of things to talk to Sophie about, and she really did not want to head back before meeting her.

"It's late, and the concert was four and a half hours long. Do you think that Sophie still has the energy to talk to you?"

Being involved in the concert was a tiring job. Moreover, she had not even had the chance to practice the songs before going on stage. There was no way she would not be exhausted by then.

“Oh, you’re right. I’ll go back first then. Uncle Tristan, you have to take good care of Sophie.”

Ysabelle could only force the words down her throat and leave with Felix.

When Felix saw how reluctant Ysabelle was, he grabbed her hand and pulled her into his arms so that no one could crash into her.

Ysabelle’s face turned bright red at his gesture.

“Felix, I can walk by myself.”

However, Felix still did not let go of her.

“There are too many people here, and the fans are truly fanatics. I’ll let go of you once we get outside.”

Since he had said that, she did not insist. If she did, things would become awkward.

Thus, Ysabelle had no choice but to let Felix shield her in his arms and walk out of the venue with difficulty amidst the crowd.

Meanwhile, after Sophie changed out of her clothes and removed her makeup before she went out, about to look for Tristan.

To her surprise, Mark and the others were waiting outside.

Sunny’s hands had yet to be treated.

“Sophie, your performance was amazing today!” Sunny cried out. Indeed, no matter how much time had passed, Sophie was still the same person as ever—she could perform wonderfully at any time and any place.

However, Sophie frowned when she looked at his swollen hand.

“Why aren’t you at the hospital?”

Didn’t I ask him to look for Arius at the hospital? Why is he so heedless about his condition? Is he planning to never use his hand ever again?

“It’s fine. I can go to the hospital tomorrow to get it checked out.” Sunny then scratched his head with his other hand.

It had been too long since he caught a glimpse of her performance, so he was reluctant to leave. He wanted to watch her for a little longer, but he ended up watching until the concert ended.

“Don’t worry, Sophie. I’ll take him to the hospital tomorrow.” Most doctors are done with their shifts by now. Even if we are popular, we can’t possibly drag the doctors out of their beds, right?

“How can you leave this matter until the next day? Don’t you know how important his hand is?” Sophie uttered, her volume was getting louder without her noticing it. Who did this? I have to find out who the culprit is. I’ll never let this matter go.

Sunny could not help but feel touched by how she reacted.

He had been around Sophie for a year, so, naturally, he knew that underneath her cold exterior was a caring soul.

“It’s okay, Sophie. It doesn’t hurt that much. If I go tomorrow, I’ll be able to see a specialist instead.”

“We’re going right now! The rest of you should go back. I’ll take Sunny there.”

“Sophie!” Sunny cried out, tears welled up in his eyes as he was really touched.

“That’s enough. Stop looking at me in that way. Let’s go.” Sunny had already removed his makeup, and once he put on a mask, she was sure that they would not attract unnecessary attention even if they were to go to the hospital.

“I’ll come with you.” No matter what, Sophie was still a girl, and it was unsafe for her to be out this late at night. The others were certain that she would not be able to find a specialist at the hospital to give Sunny a checkup. However, Sunny could only give in at her insistence.

“It’s fine. My friend is waiting for me outside. I’ll go with him. Sunny, come on!”

“Mark, I’ll be leaving now then. Head back and rest earlier. All of you must be tired from the performance. Don’t worry about me. My hand is really fine.”

With that said, Sunny went out with Sophie through the back door.

Mark was still worried, and he tried to go after them, but his teammates stopped him.

“Forget it, Mark. You know how Sophie is. No one can change her mind about the decisions she has made. It’s good that she didn’t let you go. You’re the representative of The Wheelers, and many people know you. If fans recognize you at the hospital, it’ll be a big problem.”

Mark knew that the members were right, but he just could not be at ease.

After Tristan received Sophie’s call, he drove out. As Sophie and Sunny came out through the VIP lane, not many fans were there to see them.

Tristan did not say anything when he saw her exiting with a young man.

“This is Sunny—The Wheelers’ drummer. His hand is injured, so we’re taking him to the hospital,” Sophie explained to Tristan before calling Arius.

Just as the call went through, Arius’ voice traveled out of the speakers.

“Sophie, you’re calling me so late at night. Are you feeling lonely? Do you want me to go and warm your bed?” teased Arius.

“Arius, do you still want to go home?” came Tristan’s icy voice.

Immediately, Arius hugged himself.

This man is so boring! It’s not as if I’ve said anything!

“Mr. Tristan, what are you doing? I dare you to lay a finger on me. Let’s see if Sophie’s going to let you off. Sophie and I are really close. She’ll definitely decimate anyone who dares to hurt me!”

There’s no way you can threaten me!

“Is that so? Then you should ask her who’s the more important person to her—you, or me.” Tristan was very upset. Does everyone I come across have to make a comparison with me? They’re really getting

on my nerves.

“Sophie, look, he’s bullying me again! Say, who’s more important to you—me or him?” At that moment, Arius looked as if he was going to end both Sophie and his own life if she were to tell him that he was not important to her.

“That’s enough. Can you stop with the nonsense? Where are you right now? Are you at the hospital?” Sophie was done entertaining the two childish men.

“What’s wrong? Are you hurt, or is it that arrogant Mr. Tristan? I really hope he’s the one who’s hurt.” He’s always trying to steal her away from me! I hope he’s injured in a way that he can’t be treated!

Chapter 186 I Just Want To Get Laid

“Don’t worry. I’m not hurt, and Mr. Tristan isn’t either,” Sophie muttered, exasperated by Arius’ childishness. “I don’t care where you are right now, but come to the hospital instantly. One of my friends is injured.”

“Okay, I got it. I’ll go to the hospital right away. Don’t panic. As long as I’m there, nothing’s a problem. Ask Mr. Tristan to drive slower. It’s fine if he dies, but I’m not going to let him off the hook if you’re injured.”

“Arius, I hope you’ll have the courage to repeat this in my face later.”

Indeed, Tristan was gradually becoming more and more childish around Sophie. It was mainly because Arius was someone special to Sophie, so he could not actually hurt him, for Arius mattered a lot to Sophie.

Otherwise, he would have murdered Arius countless times by then. The other man was simply annoying. Hence, Tristan mulled over how he was going to get Sean to make arrangements and teach the annoying man a lesson later.

“Sophie, he’s threatening me!” Arius complained.

Sophie was speechless, so she just hung up the call.

Arius gasped when he heard the telltale sound of the call being ended.

“Holy cr*p, Sophie! What kind of attitude is that? How can you do this to me? This is too much!” Arius was not amused.

What did I do wrong? Am I not the most important person to Sophie? How can she do this to me because of this evil man? This is too much! She's crossing the line! I'm never going to believe in her words anymore.

Arius was heartbroken, but the moment Sophie appeared at the hospital with Sunny, he had gone back to his normal state.

"Sophie, is he your friend?" Arius looked at the young man from head to toe.

"Yes. His hand is injured. He's a drummer, so his hands are important to him. You'd better take a good look at it." Sophie pushed Sunny over to Arius.

"All right. Leave this to me. As long as I'm the one on this case, these hands, even if they were broken, can be fixed and will be as good as new," Arius reassured confidently.

Sunny knew that he was not as popular as his leader. Seeing that the man in front of him was Sophie's friend, he went ahead and introduced himself, "Hello, I'm Sunny."

"Sunny, let's go. I'll take you to do a checkup now."

"Sophie, you should go back first. I'll send your friend home once I'm done with his treatment."

"Okay. Don't be mean to him."

Both were speechless, and Sunny mused, Do I look like I'm an easy target?

"Sophie, can you not think of me as a monster?" Arius grumbled. Do I look like an evil man who is interested in minors?

"Okay, we're leaving now. He won't dare to do anything nasty." Tristan then grabbed Sophie's hand and turned to leave.

“Let go of her, Tristan. Don’t touch her! I have to worry about you being with her. Sophie, don’t listen to his nonsense, got it? A man like him is clearly a douchey man,” Arius hissed.

However, Tristan shot him a look, and Arius instantly grabbed Sunny’s hand.

“Sophie, did you see that? He keeps glaring at me! I’m so scared!”

“Hahahaha!”

Sunny burst into laughter looking at Arius.

“Oh my, Sophie, this friend of yours is very interesting.”

Arius then turned to glare at Sunny, who was beaming.

“Boy, I’m a doctor, and the fate of your hand lies with me. What’s with that bright smile on your face? Do you not want to get your hand treated anymore?”

Sophie sighed.

No one could stand the way Arius acted.

“I’m leaving.” Not wanting to waste her time on Arius anymore, Sophie grabbed Tristan and left.

The corner of Arius’ lips twitched.

Does Sophie not love me anymore? Did she just leave without saying goodbye to me? Why is she doing this to me?

“Let’s go, Sunny.” Nevertheless, he took Sophie’s friend as his friend too, so he was friendly to the young man.

Arius then wrapped his hand around Sunny’s shoulder and went further into the hospital.

Sophie did not let go of Tristan’s hand until they were out of the hospital.

“Mr. Tristan, you can head home by yourself.” Sophie was planning to just take a cab home.

At that, Tristan arched a brow. Where is she going so late at night?

“It’s late, and it isn’t safe for you to stay outside alone. Let me send you home before I go home.”

“It isn’t safe for me? I think those people who bum into me should be worried about that,” Sophie joked, but what she said held a tinge of truth in it.

“Are you going to look into Sunny’s matter? Leave this to me. I’ll deal with it in a way that you’ll be satisfied with.”

The people at Sky Media has gone too far.

He could not believe that they actually had the guts to hurt Sophie’s friend.

“Okay, I trust you.” Since Tristan had told her that he was going to deal with it, Sophie was certain that she would receive a satisfactory outcome. After all, she had great trust in him.

After sending Sophie home, Tristan called Charles.

The Quigley family was involved in the entertainment industry, so he was the best person to carry out the investigation.

At midnight, Charles was with a young model.

The young lass had a fantastic figure, and she was all in to have a good time.

Right in the middle of their passionate moment, and just as they were one step away from the real deed, Charles' phone rang.

"F*ck, who the hell is that?" Charles wished he could murder the person on the other end of the line.

"Who is it?" he bellowed into the receiver. "I really hope you're calling because of an emergency!"

Oh my, I am about to have a jolly good fu*k. The ringtone nearly frightened my dick into oblivion!

"Charles!" Tristan furrowed his brows. Who is he losing his temper at?

Upon hearing that it was Tristan, Charles quickly put on his clothes.

"Mr. Tristan, what's the matter? Please don't make me suffer even if you're feeling aroused but didn't get laid at this time of the night."

Charles was distraught.

Why do I have such a tough life to have encountered a lunatic like Tristan? His practice of abstinence has nothing to do with me. I need a good fu*k now!

The young model then came closer to Charles again, but he pushed her away.

She fell to the ground and pouted at him.

However, after seeing Charles' facial expression, she dared not approach him anymore.

She was all naked...

"There is something I want you to look into, and I want the results by tomorrow."

"What is it?"

Charles sobered up when he heard that something serious had actually happened.

Tristan then told him about what happened earlier that night.

"All right, I got it. I'll send someone to look into this."

Anything in relation to Sophie had to be dealt with immediately.

Otherwise, they would have to face Tristan's terrifying wrath.

Once Tristan was done with the call, Sophie poured a glass of hot water for him.

"Sorry for the trouble and thank you," she said, for he had helped her friend out.

Tristan pulled her into his arms.

"Okay. Although I don't want to let you go, you've worn yourself out tonight. Hurry up and take a shower then go to bed."

"Okay."

Performing at a concert was truly a test of stamina. It was especially so with The Wheelers, for they performed everything live. Hence, Tristan was right about Sophie being knackered.

After Tristan adjusted the water temperature and filled the bathtub, he pushed her into the bathroom.

“Enjoy your bath. I’ve added two drops of essential oil in it.” That essential oil could help Sophie sleep better.

“Okay, you should head back.” When did he become such a strange person?

“Okay.”

Tristan then closed the door behind him.

Sophie only took off her clothes after hearing the door close. Then, she stepped into the bathtub.

Tristan had filled the tub with water of the right temperature, so she was completely at ease soaking in the tub.

After the bath and by the time she came out of the bathroom, it was almost one in the morning.

Right then, her phone rang.

Chapter 187 Exposed

“Hey, Butterfly. What’s the matter?”

It was late, and something must have happened for Butterfly to look for her at a time like that.”

“Bad news, Phantom. Someone found our headquarters.”

“What?”

Their headquarters was located in a remote spot, and no one would be able to find it.

“I’m contacting the others right now. There are only a few middle-aged people at the headquarters right now.”

“Who did that?”

So what if they find out the location of Wings of Light’s headquarters? What is most precious in that place are not the computers but the members.

The Diamond members were all away from the headquarters, so they did not have to panic that much.

“Clayton Zales. You’ve heard of him, right? He is from the Zales family in Jipsdale.”

“Okay, I understand.” Sophie knew what was going on upon hearing that name.

“Do we need to change our location?”

“It’s fine. I’d like to see what Clayton’s trying to do.”

“Phantom, regardless of everything, these people aren’t people we should mess with. I’d say it’s best for you to not go online for the next few days.”

Clayton was clearly trying to nab Phantom by creating such a ruckus.

After all, there were an infinite number of people like Clayton, who wanted to find out who Phantom was.

Clayton had caught them off guard, and that was why things had turned chaotic.

“It’s all right. It’s quite late now. You should rest earlier. This isn’t anything important.”

It’s just Clayton. I don’t even need to dwell much on him.

In the meantime, Clayton was standing in the courtyard of a dilapidated house.

“Are you sure that Phantom is in a rundown place like this? I’ve been passing by this place so many times, but I never thought that the famous hacker Phantom would be here.” Even then, Clayton did not believe that the headquarters of Wings of Light was located there.

“Clayton, their main base is really here. I’ve only found out about this by chance.”

If not for the reliability of his information source, he would not have believed the news too. After all, the net worth of each member in Wings of Light was tens of millions, let alone the Diamond members. All of them were people that major corporations around the world wanted to hire.

Right then, Felix arrived with his men.

When he saw Clayton, he could not stop himself from mocking, “Clayton, why are you here instead of sleeping? It’s midnight.”

Clayton looked at him warily.

He had only just arrived after receiving the news. In fact, he had yet to enter the place, but Felix was already there. Could it be that he found out about the base too? Clayton knew all along that Lombard

Group had been searching for Phantom.

“Mr. Northley, I’m only here for a stroll because I’m bored. However, I would like to know why you’re here,” Clayton replied.

Felix had evidently brought more men to the location than him.

Thus, confronting Felix head-on would be a bad idea.

“Sorry, Clayton, but this is the spot that Mr. Tristan is interested in, so go home and don’t come here again. You should know that Mr. Tristan doesn’t like to see you around.”

“You—”

Clayton’s subordinates could not bear it anymore, so they dashed toward Felix.

“Mr. Northley, we were the ones who found this place, so stop trying to lord over us!”

Felix did not even bother sparing them a glance.

“So it’s yours just because you found it first? Why don’t you ask Mr. Zales if he dares to say this in front of Mr. Tristan?”

Felix was Phantom’s big fan, so when his subordinates found out about the place, he rushed over immediately.

He was glad that he had come in time. Otherwise, Clayton would have taken his favorite hacker away.

By then, Clayton’s facial expression looked pretty awful.

Disregarding everything, Clayton was a man of power and status in Jipsdale. Thus, Felix’s words embarrassed him.

On the other hand, Felix was delighted to see the infuriating scowl on Clayton's face.

"What's the matter? Am I not speaking the truth?"

"What's there for you to be gleeful about, Felix? Did you think that you'd be anyone if not for Tristan?" If the Northley family had not relied on the Lombard family, they would not have achieved anything. Who gave you the courage to act high and mighty despite having the need to rely on someone else in life?"

"Do you all see that? That's jealousy! You want to butter the Lombard family up too, but Mr. Tristan didn't give you the chance to do that." Felix did not think that it was anything embarrassing to be closely connected to the Lombard family at all.

He still felt that Tristan was the top banana in Jipsdale, and Tristan was more capable than anyone of them.

Clayton only became even more irked at Felix's expression.

"What's the matter? Are you still not going to leave? Are you still trying to go head-on against Mr. Tristan?" Felix taunted with a grin.

"You—" Clayton was livid, and he wanted to give it to Felix. Unfortunately, the power he had did not allow him to do so.

"We're leaving." Clayton still could not challenge Tristan, but that was all right. One day, he would certainly get Tristan to go on his knees before him.

"Ha!" Felix was thrilled to see Clayton and his men leave. He immediately called Tristan, "Mr. Tristan, are you really not going to come here? If you're not, I'm going to go in and meet Phantom."

Tristan was just done with his shower when Felix called, and he only had a towel wrapped around his body.

He had such a great body. His Apollo's belt was simply enticing to anyone who saw it.

As Tristan dried his hair, he said, "Do you think that you'll be able to meet Phantom if you go in now? You've been going after Phantom for such a long time, but you still don't know how well Phantom can hide from us?"

Felix turned quiet, but he did not give up yet.

He was sure that he would be able to finally meet Phantom.

"I'm not going to talk to you anymore. I'm going in." With that said, Felix ended the call and headed upstairs. However, upon entering, he was greeted with the sight of a flawlessly renovated place with not a single soul around.

"F*ck! I've deliberately given up on my sleep and come all the way here only to see this?" Felix roared at his men.

"Mr. Northley, we don't know why things turned out this way too. This is indeed Wings of Light's headquarters, but there isn't anyone around at all."

It's not as if we're feeding you the wrong information!

Felix then walked around to scan the surroundings.

"No one's allowed to touch anything here. These are all Phantom's possessions."

How can ordinary people like them touch Phantom's devices?

"Mr. Northley, they're just computers."

Isn't he overreacting?

"What do you mean by 'they're just computers'? Is the computer the main point? The main point is the person who has been using these computers!"

To sum it up, Felix was truly a hard-core fan of Phantom.

He worshiped Phantom's skills.

Thus, his men hastily reassured, "Alright, we won't touch anything!"

It's no joke! He's completely head over heels for Phantom!

Felix wanted to turn on the computers to find out what was in them.

However, when he thought about how the computers belonged to Phantom and about how he had a favor to ask of Phantom, he kept his hands to himself.

That night, Sophie fell into a deep sleep.

When she woke up, Butterfly called again.

"Phantom, someone else came, and no one dared to touch all our things after that."

"I see," Sophie muttered flatly. "Who was it?"

"It was Felix Northley, the CEO of Northley Group." Everyone who came to our base is a big shot!

Chapter 188 Gaining Fans

“Okay, got it. Keep Clayton busy. Otherwise, he will just bother us if he has nothing to do.”

“All right,” replied Butterfly.

“Also, no need to change location. No one would dare disturb you,” added Sophie with a yawn.

“Phantom...” Butterfly knew how formidable Phantom was, but this matter was not that simple.

“Just trust me.” Holding her phone in one hand, Sophie pushed the bathroom door open with the other.
“I’m going to take a bath now, so I’ll hang up first. Tomorrow is the final exam.”

“Final exam?”

Realization dawned on Butterfly. Had Sophie not mentioned that, Butterfly would have forgotten she was only an eighteen-year-old girl.

“Yeah. Don’t worry; no one would dare harm you.” Sophie was sure no one would have the guts to mess with her people.

“All right, then.”

She’s right. Their target is Phantom, after all. Nobody has ever seen her in person, though, so even if they find the Wings of Light’s headquarters, they can’t do anything.

By the time Sophie went to school, it was already half-past eight. Once Ysabelle spotted her, she pounced on the latter. Had Sophie not reacted fast enough, she would have been knocked over.

“Sophie, if you have a fan club, I want to be the leader of it,” she expressed. Sophie is too impressive. She totally rocked that concert yesterday!

“What the hell? What did Sophie do to deserve a fan club? You’re out of your mind, Ysabelle.”

“Yeah, even if you want to be someone’s fan, at least idolize a beautiful young man like Tanner.”

“You are the ones out of your minds! What does me being someone’s fan have to do with you? Mind your own business!” Ysabelle retorted, clearly discontented.

They don’t know who’s in front of them now. I wonder how they’d react if they found out the Tanner they mentioned is the same Tanner in Sophie Tanner, but I guess Soph doesn’t want her identity to be exposed.

“Besides, Sophie is just as amazing as that Tanner,” uttered Ysabelle proudly.

“How dare you say that? Do you know who our Tanner is? He’s The Wheelers’ drummer. Not only is he tall, but he’s charming as well. That man is unmatched. It’s a shame we didn’t get to see his face. If I could see what he looks like, I’d die in happiness,” stated the girl regretfully. She was clearly a big fan of Tanner.

“Aren’t you being a little exaggerated? What about your Sunny? Haven’t you always worshiped him? Why did you suddenly jump ships?”

“People change. As of now, I only have Tanner in my heart.”

Sophie would never have expected she would gain fans just by merely being a guest performer.

“You’re incredible, Sophie,” Ysabelle uttered in admiration. “If you decide to join the entertainment industry, you have to bring me along, okay?”

Just then, Willow arrived.

As the others noticed her presence, a gloating look appeared on their faces. “Willow, haven’t you always boasted about Mason being your fiancé? Now that he’s in the hospital, how could you go and seduce another man?”

“Watch what you’re saying. What Willow does has nothing to do with you. What rights do you have to talk to her like this?” defended one of Willow’s minions.

“Excuse me, I’m talking to Willow here. You don’t need to speak for her. Didn’t you say you loved him to death, Willow? Now that he’s in the hospital, suddenly you don’t love him anymore? Your love is only superficial. You’re disgusting.”

Blinking her doe eyes at the girl who spoke, Willow acted pitifully.

“I do love him, but I can’t do anything because the person he has always loved is Sophie. All I can do is give up.”

There was no way she would mention her past with Mason because she did not want Clayton to learn about it. Men like Clayton cared a lot about a woman’s past.

If he found out how much I loved Mason previously, I’d stand no chance.

“Really? I think you’re just avoiding Mason because he’s a cripple now.”

“Mason doesn’t deserve Willow, anyway. If you don’t abandon a half-hearted man like him, would you rather keep him forever, then?”

They had witnessed how Mason treated Sophie, and to them, Willow leaving him was reasonable.

“Besides, Mason is nothing compared to Mr. Zales.”

“Mr. Zales? You mean the one from Zales Corporation? Stop pulling our legs. How would he even be interested in Willow?”

Hearing that, Willow was immensely delighted.

Heh, it doesn't sound believable, right? But it's the truth.

"Yes, it's him, and he's the one who approached Willa first. You guys can go be jealous in the corner." Our Willow is just this outstanding.

"Really?" The other party still found it hard to believe.

"Yup, we're trying to date now," Willow confirmed, throwing a glance at Sophie smugly.

As long as I can be with Clayton, compared to me, Sophie doesn't even amount to a speck of dust.

"How shameless. Clayton is nothing. Soph's boyfriend is even more—"

"Ysabelle, stop," Sophie interjected, for she found it useless to argue with Willow. "The exam is almost starting. Let's head in."

In Jipsdale Premier High, the students' seats during the examination were arranged according to their grades, so Sophie, Willow, and Ysabelle were placed in the first examination hall.

"You're such a marvelous person, Willow. Not only are you pretty, but you have good grades as well, unlike a certain someone. If not for luck at that time, it would've been embarrassing for her. Now that she's in the first examination hall, let's see how she'll cheat."

Even though Sophie had excellent grades the last time, people thought it was the result of her cheating, as they did not believe she could do this well.

"Your jealousy is showing, girls. Trust me; even if Sophie doesn't study for a week, she'll still surpass all of you," uttered Ysabelle, not even bothering to conceal her proudness. There was no need to, anyway.

“Pfft, we know you’re merely bluffing. Do you know how strict the invigilation in the first examination hall is? Also, phones are not allowed in this time, so somebody here is doomed.”

Not wanting to hear their nonsense any longer, Sophie pulled Ysabelle inside.

“See how guilty she looks, Willa? If she didn’t cheat and had gotten her good grades honestly, she wouldn’t have escaped. If you do well this time, you’ll definitely crush that shameless girl.”

“Don’t talk like that. She’s my sister,” said Willow, putting on an act once more.

Grades mean nothing when I have Clayton by my side. Sophie will still lose to me either way.

Willow was so full of herself that during the examination, she was busy coming up with ways to get Clayton to fall for her. When she snapped out of it, one and a half hours had already passed.

She did not have enough time to complete the essay.

Exiting the hall, Willow looked a bit absent-minded.

My god. I’m going to have bad grades. How will I face Mom when the time comes?

Chapter 189 Not Our Last Encounter

Once the students left the examination hall, they started complaining and swearing.

“D*mn it! Who the hell came up with those questions! There was this one question that I couldn’t understand at all!”

“Yeah, and that essay as well. I didn’t know what I was answering.”

“Darn it! It’s over. I’m going to fail.”

“My mom is going to force me to study during our already short period of holiday. Ugh, why is my life so hard!”

“What did you think of the exam, Willow?”

Since Willow was an excellent student, her friends were curious about her opinion.

Upon hearing their conversation, Willow, who was initially worried, was relieved.

Since they found the exam hard, I’m sure Sophie didn’t do well, too. As long as she also fails, my reputation won’t be tarnished.

“Yeah, the questions were hard this time,” she stated with a faint smile.

Just then, Sophie and Ysabelle walked over to them, and the group immediately stopped talking.

Noticing that, Ysabelle let out a snort.

“Were you guys gossiping about Soph? Well, it doesn’t matter because she’ll defeat all of you in this examination,” said Ysabelle, not afraid she would cause trouble at all.

“Hah! You think she’s a genius or something? The exam was difficult for everyone, but it’s easy for Sophie?” one of the girls refuted, enraged.

“Yeah, it wasn’t difficult,” responded Sophie nonchalantly, successfully rendering everyone speechless.

What the... Can’t she at least fake modesty?

“Let’s go. We have a math exam next. Let’s go back and take a nap.” This round of examination was the same as the university entrance exam—they had a few hours gap between each paper.

“The questions were hard, Sophie,” Willow remarked, as she could not bring herself to believe that Sophie found the exam easy.

“Maybe for you, but not for me. Even so, we can’t do anything about it, can we? Different people have different levels of intellect, so you don’t have to brood over it.”

Ysabelle was stumped by Sophie’s words.

Hahaha! Soph is too vicious!

Willow clenched her fists when she heard that.

“Why are you so proud, Sophie? Don’t you think we’d know if the questions were easy? Now I seriously doubt where you got your answers in the last exam. How did someone who can’t even distinguish between hard and easy exams get good grades? I think you just didn’t understand the questions!”

“Something’s wrong with you,” uttered Sophie.

Not wanting to entertain Willow further, Sophie pulled Ysabelle away.

Hearing what Sophie said about her, Willow wanted to make a fuss, but upon recalling what had happened to Angie, she decided against it.

“That Sophie is way too audacious.”

Why does such an arrogant person exist!

“Don’t mind her, Willow. You’ve been studying hard recently, so you’ll surely surpass a failure like her.”

At that, Willow’s expression darkened.

Since her full attention had been on Clayton recently, she had had no time to study.

“I’ll go first.”

Exiting the school and entering the car, Willow fished out her phone and looked at it.

Hmm, Clayton still hasn’t called. Is he not interested in me anymore?

When the driver was about to drive away, he spotted Clayton and Sophie conversing. “Ms. Tanner, isn’t that Mr. Zales?”

Willow looked over, and upon seeing how Clayton smiled at Sophie, she felt perturbed.

“Why does Sophie always get the things I can’t, even when I do it by all means?”

She had done everything she could to please Clayton, but the latter still remained indifferent toward her.

“Don’t worry, Ms. Willow. You’re better, so you’ll definitely get Mr. Zales.”

Meanwhile, Ysabelle stared at the person in front of her warily. “Who are you? What do you want?”

Of course, she knew the man was Clayton, but she could not figure out why he had approached them.

“I mean no harm. I just find Ms. Tanner here interesting, and I’m here to be friends with her.”

Even when Ysabelle was wary of him, Clayton did not take it to heart. Instead, he stared at Sophie smilingly.

"I'm not interested in being your friend," responded Sophie with a shrug. She did not mind her manners when it came to the people she disliked. "Also, your girlfriend's watching."

Sophie glanced in Willow's direction. Of course, Clayton noticed the latter as well.

"She's not my girlfriend," he clarified.

At this time, Willow had already exited the car and was nearing them. Upon hearing Clayton say such a sentence, she felt her heart shatter into pieces.

She had been worried about the man not liking her, and he had just confirmed it for her.

However, upon thinking Clayton might take a liking to Sophie, she knew she could not let that happen.

Hence, she straightened her back and walked toward Clayton, stopping in front of him. Putting on a smile, she stated, "Didn't you say you'd wait for me? This is my younger sister, Sophie. Sophie, this is Mr. Clayton Zales."

Upon hearing that, Ysabelle could not help but sneer. What is she doing?

"What are you doing, Willow? Introducing your boyfriend to your sister? Such a shame, though, because Mr. Zales just admitted you're not his girlfriend," Ysabelle mocked.

Although I don't like Clayton, I love to see Willow being put in her place. She was so smug about it earlier, only to end up like this. Serves her right! She's always wanting to brag in front of Sophie, but she has nothing to brag about in the end. How pathetic she is.

“Clay, I—” She had never addressed him in that way before, but now, all she could do was look at him pitifully in the hopes that he would notice the other two girls were her bullies.

However, she was blatantly ignored when Clayton turned to Sophie instead. “You sisters look so different!”

Sophie had no intention of wasting any more time with him, so she held Ysabelle’s shoulder and started walking away, planning to go have lunch.

“Excuse us.”

Seeing Sophie’s proud behavior, Clayton felt drawn to her. It had been a long time since he had last met such a character.

Everything about her attracted him, be it her looks, figure, or personality.

Whether Sophie was playing hard to get or not did not matter to him—he liked her.

“Sophie, this will not be our last encounter. Remember my name. I am Clayton Zales!” he yelled.

When Willow heard that, her expression turned ugly. How could he say that right in front of me? What about me? Why did he approach me first?

“Clay, have you seriously taken a liking to Sophie? She—”

“Don’t, Willow,” the man interrupted. “Seeing as you’re Sophie’s sister, you can come to me if you need any help, but I’ll be honest. I have no feelings for you.” Clayton could see Sophie had no affection toward Willow, so there was no way he could get to Sophie through Willow.

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At his words, Willow's expression darkened even more.

As I suspected, he likes Sophie for real.

"Haven't you heard about her, Clay? She might be my sister, but I must say she doesn't deserve you and isn't a match for you. She's nothing but a sl*t."

Clayton's expression changed when he heard that as he stared at Willow in disbelief.

Thinking he was convinced, Willow breathed a sigh of relief.

"I know I shouldn't have said that, but I was telling the truth. I really like you, Clay, and I don't want you to be deceived by people like her. Hence, I had to tell you this even though she's my sister."

"Watch your words, Willow. You shouldn't go around spewing nonsense like that. One more bad word about Sophie, and I'll get mad." Clayton's eyes narrowed dangerously.

Initially, he did not have that much of a bad impression of Willow, but after hearing her say that, he found her disgusting.

"I didn't take you as an envious person because I thought you were a simple girl. Well, that did it. From now on, even if you need help, don't bother to come to me." I hate people who pretend to be innocent the most.

With that, he turned around, wanting to leave, but Willow grabbed his hand.

"Don't be like this, Clay. I really like you, and everything I told you is the truth. You have to believe me," she uttered, sounding immensely upset.

Pulling his hand back, Clayton roughly pushed her aside, causing her to land on the ground.

“Disgusting.”

Willow’s expression became extremely gloomy.

I’ve always had the upper hand. How did it end up like this? What should I do now?

Watching Clayton’s car driving away, Willow directed her anger toward Sophie.

Sophie. It must be her. She must’ve seduced Clayton. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have treated me in this way.

In the meantime, Ysabelle and Sophie were having their lunch near the school entrance.

Sophie liked the spaghetti from this particular restaurant. It was just that there were too many customers, so they had to wait for a long time.

When the spaghetti was finally served, Ysabelle handed a fork to Sophie.

“Dig in! It’s yummy!”

Taking the fork, Sophie was about to eat when Willow suddenly appeared and grabbed the former’s hair, planning to slam her head in the spaghetti.

It must be because of this face! It must be because she’s too pretty that everyone’s spellbound by her! Everything will change if I ruin her face!

“Soph...” Witnessing the scene, Ysabelle was anxious. She wanted to help, but she found herself completely powerless.

Willow’s action caused a bloodthirsty glint to flash across Sophie’s eyes.

“Let go!” she roared.

Like a madwoman, Willow continued to press Sophie’s head down.

Furious, Sophie grabbed Willow’s hand and immediately stuffed it into the spaghetti.

As the food had just been cooked, it was scorching hot.

“Ah!” Willow did not expect Sophie would still gain the upper hand even in this situation.

Her hand was in so much pain that tears rolled down Willow’s cheeks.

Every student in the restaurant was shocked by the scene.

At first, they did not think Willow had this crazy side. Then they were frightened when Sophie took action. At this moment, she seemed like a demon straight from hell.

Her murderous aura was so strong that no one dared say a word, so the entire restaurant fell deathly silent.

Even when the owner of the store snapped out of his shock and approached them, he still did not dare to say anything upon noticing the look on Sophie’s face.

“Haven’t I given you a chance? You thought I didn’t have the guts to do anything to you, huh, Willow?” Who does she think she is to lay a hand on me? No one else would dare lay even a finger!

Ysabelle was also taken aback by this side of Sophie.

After all, Sophie had always remained calm, regardless of the situation.

Willow's ear-piercing shriek echoed throughout the store, but nobody dared say a word other than Ysabelle.

"Soph, you need to let go!"

If she doesn't relent, Willow's hand will be ruined.

Hearing Ysabelle's voice, Sophie released Willow's hand, revealing how red and swollen it was.

Her skin was even peeling back.

"Sophie, I'm your sister," cried Willow bitterly. "How could you be this ruthless toward me? You—"

"Weren't you the one who made the first move? You're lucky I only did it to your hand. You, on the other hand, planned to ruin my face! What? Can you not stand my face that much?"

"Hey, she has to go to the hospital now. Or else, her condition will only worsen," uttered the owner of the store, finally having enough courage to speak.

"Don't worry. It's only a hand. As I know how she is, money can easily resolve this issue, as always, and I can afford that."

That's how she always handles things, anyway—with money.

At this time, Willow's face lost all color.

"You're slandering me, Sophie."

“Am I? You were the one who sent Angie those photos on the forum, were you not? Angie must be suffering now. Don’t you want to help her?”

“What? Willow’s the one who sent the photos? My god, how could someone hate their sister this much?”

“Yet she’s always pretending as if she cares about her sister when she’s actually envious of Sophie!”

“No wonder. There’s also that issue with Mason. She used to claim she loved him, but the moment he was crippled, she went and pursued Clayton. She’s such a bad person.”

“Yeah, she’s a hypocrite.”

Faced with everyone’s comments, Willow felt as if she was choking and running out of breath.

“Why don’t you just faint? If you do, you won’t have to listen to them anymore,” uttered Sophie, agonizing Willow even more.

“She’s such a fake.”

“That poor Angie. It’s such a pity she was used by someone like Willow.”

“Had Angie not gotten involved, things would’ve been fine for her. Now that she’s at that school, she’s totally ruined.”

“Mister, can I have another plate? I won’t eat this one.” Putting the dirty spaghetti away, Sophie sat down calmly. “Take a seat, Ysabelle.”

Looking at Willow, who was in pain, Ysabelle asked, “What about her?”

“Don’t mind her. She has her own phone and can call whoever she wants because two can play this game. Many people witnessed how she tried to ruin my face, anyway. Also, mister, I believe there are surveillance cameras here, right?”

Willow was about to call the police, but upon hearing Sophie’s words, she thought about what had happened to Queenie. In the end, she had no choice but to give Charmaine a call instead.

“Mom, I’m hurt. I...” Not ending her sentence, Willow burst into tears upon hearing Charmaine’s voice. She could not hold her emotions back any longer.