

Pursuing 191

Chapter 191 A Call From Tristan

“What? You’re hurt? Where?” questioned Charmaine. As Willow was her last hope, she was immensely worried when she learned the latter was hurt. “Where are you? I’ll come get you, so stay where you are.” After the call ended, Willow remained in her spot. She knew Yale and Charmaine would side with her. That was why she decided to call Charmaine. At the same time, the owner of the restaurant, who was in his forties, silently made another plate of spaghetti for Sophie as she had requested.

That young lady doesn’t seem to be someone to mess with. That aura of hers... It’s as if she came from hell. She’s terrifying. Meanwhile, Willow glared at Sophie. I can’t believe she still has the mood to eat after what she did to me! “Sophie, no matter what, I’m still your sister. Aren’t you afraid God will punish you after what you did to me?” “Haha, speak for yourself. You did so many evil deeds, yet you’re perfectly fine, so why would God punish me?” replied Sophie as she wiped the table with tissue papers. “You—” Willow was aware she would not win against Sophie, but even so, she liked to provoke the latter. But I really lost this time. “Ignore her, Ysabelle.” Although Willow’s hand seemed severely injured, she did not deserve even an ounce of sympathy. After all, she had only herself to blame. Had she not made the first move, she would not have ended up like that. Just then, Sophie’s new plate of spaghetti was served. Taking a fork, Sophie dug in. Her movements were so graceful that she did not seem like the same person from moments earlier. “Aren’t you guys eating?

If not, then leave,” uttered Sophie casually, as if nothing had happened. Hearing that, the other customers immediately lowered their heads and indulged in their food. Not one soul dared to say something, let alone check on Willow. Seeing how uncompassionate they were, Willow cried non-stop. By the time Charmaine arrived, Sophie had almost finished her food. The older woman’s heart broke when she spotted “her last hope” slumped on the ground, her hand red and swollen. All Willow was good at was drawing. If she could no longer draw due to her injury, Charmaine did not know what she

should do. “How did you get injured, Willa? And why is it so severe? Sophie, why didn’t you call the ambulance when you know your sister’s injured? Don’t you know how precious her hand is?”

Taking advantage of Charmaine’s sympathy toward her, Willow sobbed loudly. “Sophie did this, Mom. She stuffed my hand in the spaghetti. It hurts, Mom. It hurts so much!” As Charmaine heard that, she stared at Sophie in disbelief. Why? Why is she so evil? “Why did you do that, Sophie?” No matter what, they’re sisters! When Sophie did not explain herself, Ysabelle looked at the former worriedly. “Because I wanted to.” “You... How can you be so cruel at such a young age?” “Willow was the one who wanted to harm Sophie first, Mrs. Tanner. While Sophie only injured Willow’s hand, Willow was planning to ruin Sophie’s face!” defended Ysabelle. At first, she had felt a bit sympathetic toward Willow, but it all

diminished after she saw how Charmaine behaved. What kind of mother is she? Ever since she arrived, she only cared about Willow. It's as though Sophie's not even her daughter!

"What?" Charmaine felt as if her ears were deceiving her. "Is that true, Willa?" "My hand hurts, Mom. Take me to the hospital." The way everyone stared at Willow made her feel embarrassed, so all she wanted was to escape to the hospital. Regardless of what happened, Charmaine could not bear to see her daughter like this anymore, so she asked the driver to carry Willow to the car. Before leaving the scene, Charmaine turned to Sophie. "Sophie, she's family, no matter what. Did you really have to go that far? Your grandpa will be sad if he learns about this as he values harmony in the family more than anything." Charmaine knew Sophie's sole weakness to this day was her grandfather, so she used that card. "That's none of your concern," responded Sophie. I didn't pursue the matter last time because Grandpa was in surgery, and I didn't want to concern him lest it affects him. However, Willow's the one asking for it this time. What else could I do? Had I not taught her a lesson, she would've forgotten I'm not one to be messed with. Enraged, Charmaine was about to retort, but she knew Sophie would not listen to her regardless of what she said. Hence, she left and brought Willow to the hospital. "Soph, if you're done eating, let's head back," stated Ysabelle.

The atmosphere here is uncomfortable. Sophie must be tense. Standing up, Sophie scanned the QR code to pay for their meals. "Let's return and take a rest. We have another exam later," remarked Sophie calmly. Walking behind her, Ysabelle nodded. Yeah, we have another exam. It's not worth it to let us get affected by someone unimportant. Once they exited the restaurant, Sophie's phone rang. It was a call from Tristan. "We found the one who injured Sunny. What do you want to do?" he asked, wanting her opinion. "I see. Let's hold this matter off for two days. I'll handle it after the exam." "Okay. What are you doing now? Have you had lunch?" Tristan inquired. "I just had it with Ysabelle. What about you?" "I haven't eaten anything. Everything's tasteless because you're not with me! What are you going to do to end my torment?" he flirted. Sophie was speechless after hearing him. Well, unlike him, I enjoyed my lunch. "Stop it. I'm going to end the call now. I have an exam later, and now I want to take a nap before that." She had not slept for long last night. If not for her willpower during the Chanaean exam, she would have dozed off. "All right! Let's visit Old Mr.

Tanner together later," he suggested, knowing Josiah was still in the hospital. "Okay." "Wait for me at the school after the exam. I'll pick you up. There's going to be heavy snow later." He felt uneasy about letting her drive, and he did not have faith in taxi drivers because he feared they would hurt her. "All right, I got it." With that, Sophie was about to end the call. She did not know how to act lovey-dovey at all. However, before she could, the man spoke again. "Wait! You haven't said you missed me!" Sophie was rendered tongue-tied, for she truly could not bring herself to say something like that. Blushing a bit, Sophie stared at Ysabelle, still not saying a word. "Mr. Tristan..." Can he not make things difficult for me?

The way she spoke his name was enough to make him all giddy. Since she's too shy, I'll say it. I'm the man, anyway, and I really do miss her.

"I miss you," he stated.

When he had nothing else to say, he continued, "Well, I'll hang up first."

Tristan had something to do, anyway, so he had to end the call earlier.

Seeing his reluctance, Felix nearly burst out laughing.

On the other hand, Sean remained calm even though he was surprised by Tristan's behavior, as he never expected the latter would act like that when it came to love.

"Mr. Tristan, you look like you're about to go to the school right now to wait for her until the exam's over."

"Oh, yeah, that's a good idea. I'll do that during the university entrance exam."

"I was only joking," stated Charles helplessly. He did not think Tristan would take his words seriously.

"I'm not, though. I'll go there tomorrow since my schedule today is packed," uttered Tristan in all seriousness.

"Mr. Tristan, you'll also be busy tomorrow!" Felix remarked.

There's so much to do tomorrow!

“Well, you’re here, aren’t you? You can go settle it yourself tomorrow. I’m going to take the day off.”
Why do I have to do everything myself when I have an assistant?

“I... You cannot enslave me like this, Mr. Tristan. I also want to have a girlfriend, and for that, I need to have the time to pursue someone,” Felix whined. “Why is my life so pitiful? Hey, why don’t you guys speak up for me?”

Ignoring him, Charles and Sean acted as if they were discussing Clayton’s issue.

“You guys are too much. I’ve decided to leave this organization and establish my own,” said Felix.

“Go ahead. The door’s right there,” responded Tristan nonchalantly.

Felix was stumped for a moment.

“Mr. Tristan, don’t you love me anymore? I’m your sweet little Felix. Now that you have Ms. Tanner, you’re abandoning me?”

“Get out!” hollered Tristan.

That’s disgusting.

Seeing the expression on Tristan’s face, Felix felt satisfied.

Hehe, if there’s something I’m good at, it’s to make Mr. Tristan feel disgusted.

Watching their exchange, Charles and Sean were both rendered speechless.

Meanwhile, Ysabelle and Sophie napped for over an hour at home. Waking up at half-past two, they walked to the school for their mathematics exam.

After the exam, Ysabelle felt like crying.

I'm doomed. I'm seriously failing this exam. I didn't even understand some of the multiple-choice questions.

"D*mn it! Who the hell came up with these questions! They were so hard!"

In response to Ysabelle's explosive outburst, Sophie uttered, "Calm down."

Hugging Sophie's arm, Ysabelle queried, "What do you think about it, Soph? Did you find it hard?"

Upon seeing how expectantly Ysabelle was staring at her, Sophie did not know how to answer the former, for she found the exam easy.

If I answer honestly, will she cry? I don't want to see her cry!

"Yeah, it was kind of hard. The one who made the questions is cruel!"

Hearing that, Ysabelle nodded fervently.

If even Sophie found the questions hard, then they were indeed hard. Everything will be okay if everyone scores low.

When the students around them heard Sophie's reply, they patted their chests.

I knew it. The exam was difficult. It's reasonable we didn't answer half of it. Even one of the top students found it hard, let alone us. We shouldn't worry too much, right?

Noticing their expressions, Sophie felt a bit guilty.

When our results come out, I hope they don't kill me.

While they were conversing with each other, they were exiting through the school gate.

As Ysabelle spotted a familiar car, she questioned, "Why is Uncle Tristan here? Are you guys planning to go somewhere? Can I come along?"

Right now, going home was the scariest thing for Ysabelle.

No, I don't want to go home. I want to run away from home. Ugh, not like I have the courage, though. If I do that for real, Dad would beat me to death.

"We're visiting my grandpa. Would you like to come with us?" She always says she wants to visit Grandpa. Now that he's recovering, we can go see him.

Instantly, Ysabelle's face lit up. "I can? Yay, okay!"

Approaching the car, Sophie opened the backseat door to let Ysabelle in first before climbing into the car herself.

"Uncle Tristan, I'm tagging along. Is that all right?" Even though she had gotten permission from Sophie, she still had to let Tristan know.

He'll not be happy with me being their third wheel.

"Yeah," replied the man coldly.

See? As I expected.

Tristan's icy aura was so strong that Ysabelle felt cold, even when the heater was turned on. She could only draw closer to Sophie to feel warmer.

"What's wrong?" Sophie asked.

Shooting them a glance, Tristan voiced, "Get away from her, Ysabelle. Don't be so clingy."

At his words, Ysabelle immediately sprung to the other side of the car.

"You frightened her, Mr. Tristan."

Hearing Sophie, Ysabelle shook her head and waved her hand frantically.

"I'm not, Soph. I'm already used to Uncle Tristan being like this. I'm fine. I truly am."

If Sophie keeps on speaking for me, Uncle Tristan might kick me out of the car for real. There's no way I want that to happen.

Upon seeing Ysabelle in this state, Tristan was extremely satisfied.

They went for a meal first before going to the hospital.

Once they opened the door, Sophie was relieved when she saw how her grandfather was almost fully recovered.

"You shouldn't move around that much, Grandpa. You need to take it easy to recover."

"Got it, girl. So how was your exam? You've been taking care of me these past few days. You didn't have time to study, so I'd understand if you didn't do well. Don't put too much pressure on yourself, okay?"

The results don't matter, anyway. She's great in everything else.

"All right."

As Josiah's eyes darted toward the pretty Ysabelle standing at the side, he seemed delighted. After all, Sophie barely had friends. "Who is this young lady? Is she your friend, Soph?"

Chapter 193 Instigator

"Hello, Old Mr. Tanner. I'm Sophie's classmate and best friend," Ysabelle said cheerfully.

"Your good looks tell me you're quite blessed, young lady," Josiah praised. "Soph must really like you! She doesn't have a lot of friends, so I hope you'll get along well with her."

"Don't worry, Old Mr. Tanner! I'll always stay by Soph's side and be her strongest support!" Ysabelle's eyes were sparkling. When she spoke, her long eyelashes would flutter, which made her look gorgeous.

Josiah could tell she had no ulterior motive for being Sophie's friend, which made him like her even more.

"That's right! Even though Sophie doesn't have a lot of friends, the ones she does have all treat her sincerely, Old Mr. Tanner," Arius added. He must be joking about her not having many friends, right? Any one of her friends is enough to terrify you all!

"Mhm, that's good. With you two by her side, I know she won't feel lonely after I'm gone." While Josiah's operation was successful, he was pretty old already. It was hard to say how much time he had left.

Sophie wasn't happy when she heard him say something like that.

"Why are you saying that, Grandpa? Didn't I tell you already that the operation was successful? You'll definitely stay by my side," she uttered. Old people sure do like to overthink things.

"I know the operation is successful. All right, let's change the topic." He was happy to see her having so many friends by her side.

Then he chuckled. "Tanny, have you brought them out for a meal yet? It's about time to eat. Have you all eaten yet?"

Ysabelle almost laughed when she heard how Josiah addressed her uncle, but she managed to hold it back. I guess it's natural that Sophie's grandfather gives Uncle Tristan a nickname like that. Although, this relationship seems a bit messy!

She was a bit confused.

It was a joyous sight as a room full of people gathered around the old man.

Meanwhile, Charmaine had brought Willow to the hospital to get treatment for her daughter's hand. The treatment took a while to conclude. During the process, Willow sobbed very loudly.

A layer of her skin had fallen off.

The doctor said that it was possible her hand would never recover. Even if it somehow did, there would be an obvious scar.

Willow had always been proud of her hands. However, that had changed because of Sophie. When she saw Sophie, she wanted to tear her into pieces.

The only reason she didn't dare to do anything was that there were a lot of people around.

"You need to stand up for me, Grandpa!" She could only place her hope in Josiah. As much as Grandpa likes Sophie, he must know how serious this matter is! Sophie clearly intentionally hurt me!

When Ysabelle saw her claiming to be the victim despite being the instigator, she got angry. How can this woman be so shameless?

“What’s wrong? What happened to your hand?” While Josiah liked Sophie the most, Willow was still his granddaughter. Thus, there was no way he could ignore her injury.

“It’s all because of Sophie, Grandpa. She ruined my hand! The doctor said I might not be able to draw in the future anymore,” Willow said aggrievedly.

Ysabelle couldn’t control herself anymore and spat, “Nonsense! You were the one who wanted to hurt Sophie! She was just protecting herself.” Willow is disgusting!

Arius’ and Tristan’s expressions changed when they heard that. What? There are still people in this world who dares to hurt Sophie? Does she have a death wish?

“I’m your granddaughter too, Grandpa! You can’t just condone her actions! She hurt me because she’s jealous that I got together with Clayton!” Willow was starting to twist the truth.

Josiah was very disappointed.

Seeing that expression on his face made Willow glance at Sophie slightly smugly. “Sophie has crossed a line, Grandpa. You must stand up for me!”

“Willow, you’re my granddaughter too, but how can you act like this? Sophie is your sister. If you hadn’t hurt her, would she have hurt you? I know you’re a prideful person, but you must learn to be humble sometimes. Your abilities aren’t as good as Sophie’s.”

Willow was truly at a loss for words. She didn’t expect her grandfather to say that. “Why have you already decided to take Sophie’s side before you even learn the full story, Grandpa? How can you do this to me? I’m your granddaughter too! Why are you treating me like this? Why are you so biased?”

Sophie glanced at her sister. She acts too much.

Then she ordered coldly, "It's time for Grandpa to rest. You should leave!"

Willow glared at her. "How can you all treat me like this? Am I not a child of the Tanner family, too? Why is it that you always only pay attention to Sophie, Grandpa? What about me? What am I to you?" Even though I've worked so hard, these people still can't see my effort! How can they be so cruel?

"What are you saying, Willa? All right, that's enough. Let's go home! Your grandfather needs to rest." Charmaine was disappointed in Willow. She didn't expect her daughter to turn out like that.

"You're treating me like this too, Mom? Are you all not even going to offer a word of comfort after seeing how badly my hand is hurt?"

"What else do you want? If you like, I can do the same to your other hand to make it symmetrical." Sophie was sick of listening to Willow and didn't want to hear any more words coming out of her mouth.

"You—" Willow rushed toward Sophie in an instant.

Before she could touch Sophie's clothes, Arius bolted toward Sophie and used his body to block Willow's path. Tristan was even more direct with his method as he pulled Sophie into his embrace.

"In respect to Old Mr. Tanner, you better get out of here now. Otherwise, I will take more than your life for what you've done today," Tristan threatened domineeringly.

He knew Josiah's difficult position, which was why he said that.

However, if Sophie had gotten hurt, then he wouldn't care about anyone's feelings and would've retaliated. "You should be glad she's not hurt. If she were, I would've chopped both your hands off, and no one will dare to say a thing."

Willow's impression of Tristan had always been that he was just a handsome man. However, at that moment, his domineering aura terrified her so much that she couldn't squeeze a word out of her mouth.

“You... All of you...” she stuttered.

Everyone was shaken when he spoke like that.

However, none of them doubted his words.

He really did have the ability to do exactly what he said.

“You should bring her home now, Mrs. Tanner. I suggest you keep a tighter leash on her in the future. Otherwise, don’t blame me for what I’ll do,” Tristan added.

Charmaine was shaken, too. She also couldn’t say anything as she dragged Willow away. Who the hell is that man? Why is he so scary?

Sophie grabbed Tristan’s hand. He’s really scary.

When Tristan felt her small hand holding his, he calmed down and dispelled the aura he was exuding so he wouldn’t appear terrifying anymore.

Chapter 194 Touch My People

“What are you doing, Mom? Now that my hand has turned out like this, how will I chase after Clayton in the future? Why don’t you think about me?” Willow begrudgingly ignored Josiah’s inaction, but she was still frustrated with her mother. Doesn’t she know her future depends on me?

Charmaine sighed resignedly. “Didn’t I tell you not to mess with Sophie, Willa? Why don’t you listen to me? You should already know she’s not someone we should piss off, so can’t you just leave her alone? Why did you still do that?”

The one thing rich families avoided the most was any form of flaw, and yet her hand had turned out like that.

One such example was the situation between Willow and Mason. Despite the Laird family's status, with Mason being crippled, the Tanner family was reluctant to have Willow marry him.

Did she never think of this? With her hand being like this, what rich family would accept her as their daughter-in-law?

"What do I do, Mom? You can't just ditch me! I'm your favorite daughter. You can't leave me alone!" Willow was desperate. My hands can't stay like this!

"What do you expect me to do?" It was a headache for Charmaine to deal with, too. "I wonder how Mason's legs are doing right now. Willa, if Clayton doesn't want you, Mason isn't a bad choice."

"What do you mean by that, Mom? Do you want me to marry a cripple? How can you say something like that? I'm your daughter!" In the past, Willow would've devoted herself to Mason.

However, since he had lost the ability to walk correctly, she found no reason to stay with him.

In her mind, if she got together with a cripple like Mason, she would become a joke in Jipsdale, and that was something she desperately didn't want to happen.

Constance, who was at the hospital to visit Mason, coincidentally heard what Willow said. I always thought she was a good girl and would make a great daughter-in-law. It turns out she's that kind of person!

She suddenly felt wobbly and couldn't stand still. Thankfully, the driver behind her caught her in time.

The driver asked, "Are you all right, Mrs. Laird?"

"I must be truly blind in the past to think Willow was a good woman. How can a woman like her deserve to stay with Mason?" It was then she understood why Mason never liked Willow. It seems like my son has better and sharper eyes than me.

When Willow heard Constance's voice, she turned around and saw the older woman standing behind her.

She didn't expect Constance to hear her words. "Mrs. Laird, I—"

"You don't need to say anything, Willow. Perhaps it was just my wishful thinking in the past, but it seems Mason doesn't deserve you. Please don't show up in front of us again."

In the past, Constance wouldn't have let Willow go. However, at that point, she no longer cared about Willow.

She had decided to channel all her efforts and thoughts into helping Mason to recover as soon as possible. Nothing else mattered to her anymore.

"Mrs. Laird, I—" Willow wanted to explain, but when she saw the older woman's pale face, no words could find their way out of her mouth.

In the past, Constance did treat Willow very well because she hoped Willow would end up with Mason.

It was why Willow felt guilty for what she had said.

Constance ignored her and entered the ward. When she saw her son working hard to practice walking, tears poured out of her eyes.

The moment Mason turned to the entrance, he saw his mother crying. "What's wrong, Mom? Why are you crying? Aren't I doing fine?"

He didn't feel good seeing his mother like that. What is she doing?

"I'm sorry, Mason. If I hadn't treated Sophie like I did back then, you wouldn't have ended up like this. The heavens are punishing me for my mistakes, but why didn't they cripple me instead if that is the case? Why did the punishment befall you and not me?" Constance sobbed.

“Come on, Mom. This doesn’t have anything to do with you. Stop crying, all right? I’ll get better and walk again.” Mason approached her with great difficulty as he wanted to hug and comfort her. She has endured too much recently. It’s not right for me, her son, to constantly misunderstand her.

“Really? You’ll do your best to stand up again?” Constance’s mind was shrouded with uncertainty.

“Mhm, don’t worry!”

Sophie and the others had been keeping Josiah company in the room because, despite his old age, he liked a lively atmosphere. When he saw it was already over ten o’clock, he felt it was time for him to rest and for them to leave.

“You all should head back now. Don’t you two have final exams tomorrow, Soph, Ysabelle? If you two do well in the exams, I’ll treat you to a nice meal.” Despite his unwillingness, he still let them leave.

“Mhm. You should rest early, Grandpa. I’ll come and visit you another day.” Sophie still had other things to do. However, she was truly happy with her grandfather’s recovery.

“Okay. Go on, then! No need to worry about me.”

After she left the ward, she called Sunny to the side. “Now that the culprit has been found, what do you plan to do?”

While his hand had recovered thanks to Arius’ treatment, she believed she still needed to teach the culprit a lesson.

“My hand’s fine already, Sophie. You can punish the one who hurt my hand if you want, but you should just forget about the person supporting him.” He didn’t want to give The Wheelers too much trouble.

It hadn’t been easy for them to reach their current position, after all, and he didn’t want to be the one to ruin it.

Sophie furrowed her eyebrows. "You were not like this in the past, Sunny. When did you become so tolerant?" Does life sand off a person's edges?

"In any case, I've locked up the culprit. You have two days to think about what to do. Once my exams are over, we'll deal with this again." She had made her decision.

"I don't want to drag you down, Sophie. It's just—" When Sunny saw her glare, he shut his mouth and changed what he wanted to say. "Fine, I get it. I'll think about it after I go back!"

"Relax! The culprit may have someone backing them up, but you also have someone backing you up, which is me. I do want to see who's the motherf*cker who had the gall to hurt my people."

He blushed as he stared at her. "Can't you be less straightforward, Sophie? I'm still not yours!"

There was a shy expression on his face.

Sophie was speechless. What is that expression on his face right now and why does it look so... horrifying?

"Please wipe that disgusting expression off your face, Sunny," she uttered.

He was at a loss for words. Didn't she just say I'm her people? Why did she suddenly say I'm disgusting?

It made him angry.

"You're too mean, Sophie. I'm going to ignore you now." He said that intentionally because he knew she hated it when men said things like that.

It was because she was so serious earlier that he said it. He was the face of The Wheelers, so when he said something like that, it didn't make her feel great.

Chapter 195 Playing Hard To Get

“Fine, you’re my people, and you aren’t disgusting,” Sophie replied. That’s enough for him, right? Even though he’s a young adult already, why is he still acting like a child?

Sunny felt better after she said that. “I’ll be going back now. You should head back and rest early. Good luck on your exam!”

When he finished, he jumped out of the car.

The other members came out to welcome him when they saw he had returned.

They also approached Sophie when they saw her.

“Come on in and take a look inside, Soph!” Mark invited.

“Yeah! It’s been a long time since we saw each other, Sophie! We all miss you.” Another one spoke.

“I think I’ll pass. It’s getting late, and I have an exam tomorrow. Don’t worry; I’ll come by another day to eat BBQ with you all.” Sophie smiled. They all treated her so well and sincerely that she couldn’t help but act more gently around them.

Although, the gentleness she displayed undoubtedly roused Tristan’s jealousy.

The reason was that even when interacting with him, she had never behaved that gently before.

Unfortunately, there was nothing else he could do about it because he liked her too much.

There was nothing he could change about liking someone as excellent as Sophie, so all he could do was adjust his attitude.

“All right. In that case, you should head back early.” Mark glanced at Tristan. “You should never let your guard down around men because you’re too beautiful. Your appearance will easily attract men with wretched intentions.”

The person he was referring to was, of course, Tristan.

Sophie nodded. “I know. Sunny still can’t move his hands too much yet, so please take care of him for the next few days.”

“Did you all hear that? Sophie is asking you all to take care of me for the next few days, so no one is allowed to hog the Wi-Fi when I’m using it, all right?” Sunny had been experiencing connection issues when he was playing games, which caused him to perform worse.

The other members were speechless.

One of them spoke up. “Is it so hard to admit you just suck, Sunny? Even when we weren’t using the Wi-Fi while you were playing, you still ranked last!”

Sunny felt aggrieved. “Did you see that, Sophie? This is how they bully me when you aren’t around. Can you bear to see me being bullied like that? I don’t want to live here anymore. I want to quit and leave with you! Take me away, Sophie!”

Sophie wasn’t sure what to say. I think he’s exaggerating a little too much. I know he missed me a lot after I left, but he’s overdoing it a bit with his current performance.

“All right, Sunny. It’s really getting late now. I should head back.”

“Okay!” He knew she wouldn’t bring him away or stay there no matter what he said. In that case, why waste more time persuading her?

Mark patted Sunny's shoulder when he saw the disappointed expression on his bandmate's face. "It's okay. You'll have a chance to meet her again."

Sunny nodded. "You must remember that I'm your best friend, Sophie! You heard me?" With how heartless Sophie is, she may forget about me quickly! I definitely won't allow that to happen! I was okay with it when I didn't know where she was staying, but now that I do, I'll harass her every day.

The car left the mansion.

Ysabelle exclaimed, "You must have had a really good relationship with him before, Sophie!"

"Mhm," Sophie replied. We do have a great relationship. I remember there was a period when The Wheelers was my emotional support. If I hadn't played rock music with them, I think the me back then would've been very dispirited and done many things I would regret.

"Why did you leave them, then? I do think you're very compatible with them. When you play music, you look very cool, like, so cool that fans will be screaming when they see you."

"If I hadn't left, how would I have met you all? It's just a choice I made in my life."

"That's true. In that case, I'm glad you left. Because if you hadn't, you'd still be a member of The Wheelers, and I wouldn't have known you!" Ysabelle said. The most important thing is that Sophie is really amazing. No matter what she does for a job in the future, she'll definitely excel in it!

"Send me back home first, Mr. Tristan." It was getting late. If Tristan sent Ysabelle back first before sending Sophie home and then returned to the Lombard residence again by himself, it would be a pretty lengthy detour.

"I have to send Ysabelle back first. Otherwise, she'll get locked up in the house again," Tristan replied.

He didn't want to send Sophie back first and leave her alone.

He felt threatened by the people around her, so he wanted to spend as much time with her as possible.

Ysabelle kept her mouth shut because she was pretty certain if she said anything at all, her uncle would throw her out of the car.

Tristan parked the car in front of the Lombard manor.

Lincoln and Sarah exited the building when they heard the sound of an engine.

“Have you heard that Tristan has been getting close to a young woman recently, Lincoln?”

Sarah was quite interested in Sophie. However, Tristan had been hiding Sophie from his siblings and was unwilling to show her to them.

“A young woman? Who is it? Why didn’t I hear about it before?” Lincoln asked.

“You only care about your research and work all day, so of course you didn’t hear about it.” Sarah couldn’t help but complain. At that moment, she saw a female figure sitting in the passenger seat.

She narrowed her eyes. “Isn’t there a woman sitting in Tristan’s car right now? I don’t think she’s Ysabelle.”

Just as she wanted to head toward the car to investigate, Tristan had already driven the car away, leaving Ysabelle standing there.

Ysabelle asked, “What are you doing, Aunt Sarah?” Isn’t Aunt Sarah being a little too enthusiastic today? Is it necessary for her to personally welcome me back home?

“Is the young woman in your uncle’s car his girlfriend, Ysabelle?” Sarah asked.

It was then Ysabelle realized her aunt just wanted to take a peek at Sophie. I knew there was no way Aunt Sarah would welcome me back home like that. "She's not, for now."

"What do you mean? I don't understand. Hasn't your uncle been pursuing her? It's been quite a long time, yet he still hasn't gotten her to be his girlfriend?" Sarah found it hard to believe. I know how excellent my little brother is. Everyone does. I can't believe there's a woman in this world who would reject him.

"I meant he hasn't succeeded in his pursuit!" Ysabelle informed casually. She was too lazy to acknowledge her father and went straight into the building.

"Are my ears functioning properly, Lincoln? Did you hear what Ysabelle just said?" Sarah's eyes widened.

Lincoln couldn't believe there was someone in the world who could reject Tristan either.

"Maybe she's playing hard to get! You have a pretty good relationship with Tristan, but you also don't know who she is?" he asked, puzzled.

It was the first time he heard there was a woman around Tristan. Not only that, she was a young woman. It piqued his curiosity.

"He's very protective of the girl and doesn't want to let us meet her." Sarah had expressed her interest in Sophie and wanted Tristan to bring her out for a meal multiple times already. However, he refused her every time.

"Is that so? In that case, you should try to find out what kind of woman she is. Also, don't let Dad find out about this yet."

Chapter 196 Innocent

Ysabelle sent a text message to Tristan: I think my dad and Aunt Sarah saw Sophie, Uncle Tristan. They're talking about you and Sophie downstairs. You better be prepared.

Then she lay on the bed. It would be weirder if Dad and Aunt Sarah weren't curious about Sophie. After all, Uncle Tristan has never shown any romantic interest in anyone.

On the other side, Tristan was driving down the mountain. "The people you saw earlier were my older brother and sister. I'll introduce you to them at the right time."

He didn't want them to meet Sophie yet because he was worried they would scare her off.

She didn't have any plans to meet his family yet, so she kept her silence on the matter.

When he saw her like that, he knew she didn't want to meet them yet either.

"Don't worry; you've still got me! I won't let anyone hurt you, not even my family members," Tristan promised.

He would fulfill his promise no matter what.

Sophie stared out the window. Truthfully, it's not like I'm afraid of meeting his family. I just don't want to. It's not the right time to think about that. Even though I don't want to meet them, they seem to want to meet me.

After sending Sophie back to Wisteria Apartments, Tristan returned to his home. Since Sarah has seen Sophie, she's not going to let the matter go that easily. I know how stubborn she can be, and she's not going to stop asking to meet Sophie even if Sophie doesn't show up.

As expected, after he returned to the Lombard residence, he saw Sarah waiting for him in the living room. Despite the fact that the room was warm, she was wearing a pure white turtleneck sweater with a pair of blue jeans.

There weren't any signs of her age on her at all.

“Why are you still up, Sarah? I thought women would start caring a lot about maintaining their appearance after reaching a certain age. Why are you staying up late?” Tristan uttered casually.

“Are you asking for a beating, Tristan? Is that how you should talk to your older sister? I don’t need any maintenance when I look forever eighteen and naturally beautiful!”

Sarah was indeed attractive-looking, and it was the elegant kind.

She patted his shoulder and gave him a glass of red wine. “You’re not young anymore, Tristan. If you do like her, bring her back home and let me take a look at her. I only caught a glimpse earlier, which made me even more curious about her.”

“She’s still young. There’s no need to rush.”

“You really aren’t in a hurry, huh? What kind of woman is she to be able to resist a handsome man like my brother instead of jumping right into your embrace?”

Sarah wasn’t praising him for no reason. Tristan really was that handsome.

He didn’t know how to reply to what his sister said.

“Tell me, how far have you two gone? You’re not that innocent and pure, are you?” she asked. My brother has always been a fierce and decisive person, so why is he acting so carefully when it comes to romance?

“She’s still young,” he repeated.

Of course, he wanted to do all sorts of things with Sophie. After all, he was a healthy man in his prime.

However, whenever he thought about her age, he held back his desire.

It was because he liked her that he was being so careful. He wanted to protect her and shield her from any harm.

“How young? Is she younger than Ysabelle?” Their family wasn’t really that restrictive about what Ysabelle did. Even if Ysabelle wanted to start a romantic relationship, they would only think it was normal.

“Mhm, she’s a few months younger than Ysabelle.” It was then Tristan thought about Sophie’s birthday. I recall her birthday is right around the corner. It will be the first birthday I’m spending with her. Hmm, I wonder how I should celebrate it with her...

“That is quite young.” Sarah took a sip of the red wine and stared out the window.

“All right, it’s getting late. You should head up to rest now,” Tristan said to her.

As for his sister’s relationship, there was nothing he could do. He didn’t believe Juan was a suitable man for her because he thought Juan was too vicious.

However, when a person was in love, they wouldn’t consider whether their partner suited them.

That was why Sarah was left alone with her scars after the relationship ended.

“You should go and sleep first. I can’t sleep.” Sarah’s sleep quality was getting worse and worse.

“You should go to the hospital tomorrow, Sarah. There’s a pretty good doctor there. Let him take a look at you,” Tristan suggested.

“I’m not sick!” She just couldn’t sleep.

“I know you aren’t sick. I’m just suggesting you let the doctor take a look at you. His name is Arius Gullifer. Tell me when you’re going there, and I’ll give him a call.” He decided to use Arius since Arius was available.

“Fine, I get it. I’ll give you a call if I go there.” In the end, Sarah decided to visit the doctor tomorrow since she didn’t have a lot to do.

The next day, when Sophie woke up, she noticed Tristan was already in Wisteria Apartments. This man didn’t even knock before he came in! Then again, it’s not that weird since this is originally his house.

He had brought her breakfast.

“Don’t you have anything to do, Mr. Tristan?” she wondered. Doesn’t he have work today? I thought he recently took on a very big investment case.

“It’s nothing. I’m just here to visit you and bring you breakfast.”

It wasn’t until Tristan sent her to the school that Sophie realized he was there to accompany her to her exam and not just deliver breakfast to her.

“It’s just a final exam, Mr. Tristan. You don’t need to accompany me,” she persuaded. Even parents won’t accompany their children for their exams, yet he’s seriously doing it.

“It’s fine. I just want to be here. All right, you should go in now,” he urged when he saw it was about time for the exam to start. There should be enough time for her to go to the restroom. That way, when she finishes her business, the time will be just right.

“Fine. Do whatever you want.” Sophie stopped caring about what he was doing and left coolly.

He did feel a little melancholic when he saw that. Only people who don’t care about anything can achieve that kind of coolness, which is something I can no longer do.

In reality, he had hoped that he had some kind of influence on her. However, it would seem like he was just overthinking it.

He got into his car when the exam started, but he didn't leave until Felix called him.

"Where are you right now, Mr. Tristan?" Felix questioned unhappily. What the hell is he doing? I'm working my a*s off in the company, yet he's nowhere to be seen!

"I'm at Jipsdale Premier High right now. What's wrong? Is there a problem?"

"Sophie is going to be the downfall of us all, Mr. Tristan! Do you know how bloody busy I am right now? You better come back soon!" Felix was despondent. Why do I have to work overtime in the company while he's out dating? This is so not fair!

"Fine, I'll come back in a bit. Stop complaining," Tristan replied icily.

Am I complaining? I'm working hard right now, okay? Besides, this investment case doesn't only involve my family! Why is it that the other three don't have to work as hard as me? I'm so pitiful! Felix sighed.

Then, he recalled something and said, "Oh yeah, do you know Clayton's company got hacked again? Say, who do you think has a grudge against Clayton? They must have a pretty huge grudge if they keep hacking into his company's system! I bet he didn't sleep at all again last night."

Chapter 197 Her Own Life

"Probably Phantom," Tristan replied. Who else could it be but her? Although, I thought Clayton had hired a skillful network security engineer to protect his company. Even with the engineer, he still can't catch Phantom, huh?

"Is it really her?" Felix sounded a little excited. Seems like this Phantom also doesn't like Clayton.

Upon hanging up the call, Tristan glanced at his wristwatch and saw there was still plenty of time before the exam ended. Thus, he drove back to Lombard Group.

When Felix saw his boss had returned, he felt like kneeling and thanking him for coming back.

“You’re finally willing to come back. I would’ve died if you still refused to return.” Felix couldn’t help complaining again.

“Stop your whining! This is an opportunity for you to train and get better, you know? I wouldn’t give other people this chance even if they begged me for it!” Tristan exclaimed.

Felix was thoroughly speechless. Haven’t I been trained enough?

“Can you stop finding excuses for spending time with your woman, Mr. Tristan? You’re acting like an incompetent boss right now,” Felix spat fearlessly.

Tristan swiftly dealt with the problems Felix was facing.

Because Zales Corporation’s system had been under constant attack, the entire company was in a frenzy. Lombard Group didn’t even need to do anything for Zales Corporation to suspend its operations.

At that moment, Clayton was beyond anxious as he tried to solve the problem.

He didn’t have time to take a breather at all.

At half-past eleven, the physics exam was over. All the students who walked out of the exam room looked like they were heading to the guillotine.

When they finished their maths exam, they had still gathered around to talk about how perversely difficult the questions were.

However, for the physics exam, they didn’t even have the mood to discuss the questions.

Ysabelle was no different from those students.

When she walked out of the room behind Sophie, she didn't say a single word.

Sophie couldn't help but comfort her friend when she saw that. "It's all right. It's just an exam. Besides, the questions this time around are really hard. Even if you can't get good grades on the subject, it's fine."

"You don't need to console me, Sophie. When we handed in our papers, I saw yours was filled to the brim with words and numbers."

"Well, I'll tell you this, Ysabelle. You don't need to compare yourself with me. Just compare yourself to other people. You can tell how insanely difficult the paper was just by looking at their expressions." Sophie was different from other people, after all.

No one would feel confident about themselves if they compared themselves to her.

Ysabelle glanced at the students around her and saw the light in their eyes had gone out.

After all, the new year was right around the corner. If they didn't score well, the rest of the year would be miserable.

"That's true, I guess. If everyone's not going to get good grades for the paper, it's not that bad if I also don't get good grades."

When the two of them exited the school, they saw Tristan's car.

Ysabelle asked, "Uncle Tristan isn't here to accompany us for the exam, right? It's just an end-of-semester exam. Is that really necessary?"

She was already feeling pretty awful when she compared her performance on the paper with Sophie's, yet her uncle came to torture her some more. It made her feel miserable.

Sophie had known his intentions since the morning, but she wasn't sure if he had really stayed there for the entire period.

Both of them headed to the silver-gray Lamborghini.

Ysabelle opened the door to the back of the car, got in, and closed the door.

Sophie was speechless as she opened the door to the passenger seat and sat there.

"You haven't been waiting here since the beginning, right, Uncle Tristan?" Ysabelle asked.

"You think too much," Tristan replied.

She really didn't feel like she was overthinking it.

Then she turned to Sophie and asked, "You said you were going back to Horington after the exams ended, right, Soph? When are you going back? Can I join you?"

"Mhm. I do want to go back, but my business here isn't settled yet."

The shareholders' meeting for Tanner Group was about to start soon.

Transfix Cosmetics' products were all the rage recently, and the new ones had been selling really well.

All that was left was to wait for the shareholders' meeting to commence.

Once everything had been taken care of, Sophie would spend a few days in Horington.

"Will you be coming back for the new year?" Tristan, who had been keeping silent, spoke.

"I should be back by then. Grandpa's about to be discharged from the hospital, and he will definitely want me to be around when the new year rolls around."

"Ah." Tristan didn't say anything else.

Ysabelle became very suspicious when her uncle didn't say anything else. Does he not want to go to Horington with Sophie?

Tristan brought the two of them to lunch at a nearby restaurant before sending them to Wisteria Apartments to rest.

When Ysabelle was alone with Tristan, she couldn't help but ask, "Don't you want to go to Horington with Sophie, Uncle Tristan? Aren't you curious about what kind of environment Sophie grew up in and what happened there back then?"

There was a reason why she asked that question. If she went to Horington with her friend alone, her father wouldn't agree to it. However, if her uncle went with her, then there would be no problem.

"I don't want to go. She has her own life and her own matters. Don't keep following her around all day."

It made Ysabelle even more suspicious of her uncle, but, of course, she wasn't going to question him.

Thus, she remained silent.

"You should go back home immediately when the driver comes to pick you up after the exam. Don't piss off your dad," Tristan reminded.

"Okay," she replied dejectedly. I want to go to Horington too! I don't want to spend my holiday at home. Is there anyone more pitiful than me right now in this world?

The last exam was the Ustranasion paper. It differed from the university entrance exam because it involved a listening test.

After she had listened to the recording, Sophie spent less than half an hour completing the paper.

Since it wasn't time to hand in the answer sheet yet, she decided to sprawl on the table and sleep.

When she woke up, the other students had already handed in their answer sheets.

When the invigilator arrived in front of her, she pulled out the answer sheet below her exam paper and handed it to the teacher.

"Are the questions not difficult for you at all, Sophie?" The invigilator was coincidentally the Ustranasion teacher for Senior Class 8.

The teacher felt bitter when she saw Sophie sleeping.

However, when she glanced at the answer sheet, she noticed all of Sophie's answers were correct.

Despite the difficulty of the essay question, Sophie still managed to complete it well.

It was supported by logic, and all the terms used in the essay were professional.

The teacher was shocked to read that after she saw Sophie sleeping.

Despite the short amount of time Sophie used to complete the paper, she still did it excellently, which impressed the teacher.

Even if I were tasked with writing the essay, I wouldn't be able to do it this flawlessly and beautifully.

"It's okay." Sophie had no intention of showing off because she really did feel the exam was standard.

The teacher was very excited. Sophie really is someone to look out for. Perhaps Jipsdale Premier High will finally produce a principal graduate!

"Can I leave now?" Sophie needed to pick up Sunny. It was about time they dealt with the culprit who attacked him.

"Sure, you can leave now," the Ustranasion teacher said.

When Sophie left the school building, Tristan's car was already waiting outside the school entrance.

Upon entering the vehicle, she said, "Go to The Wheelers' mansion!"

"Okay," Tristan replied.

It was clear that she was going there that day to resolve the matter of Sunny's injured hand, so he wanted to join her.

"You don't need to keep sticking to me, Mr. Tristan." She could take care of the matter herself.

He nodded and drove to The Wheelers' mansion.

When Sunny saw Sophie's arrival, he got really excited. "Let me give you a tour of our base, Sophie."

Chapter 198 The Way To Solve The Problem

"Okay!" Sophie did not turn Sunny down.

The latter dragged her away excitedly, leaving Tristan alone in the living room with Mark. It was indeed a spacious living room casually designed with well-defined partitions.

Mark was devoid of expression as he cut to the chase and spoke to the man in front of him. "Since you've sent her here, you may leave now."

Tristan sat on the couch, unperturbed by Mark's tone. "I'll wait for her here. How could I be at ease when she's alone with all of you here? Not to mention, she's the only female here."

In the meantime, Sunny took Sophie to have a look around the three-story mansion before leading her to the room specially prepared for her.

"Sophie, ever since you left, we've been reserving a room for you no matter where we go." The next second, Sunny pushed the door open.

Surprisingly, the design of the room matched Sophie's style perfectly. Apart from that, there were a lot of items she had used before.

"Initially, I couldn't fathom why you left us abruptly. Anyway, Mark has kept all these things nicely for you," Sunny explained.

Mark is obviously sentimental despite his usual look of indifference. Sophie touched the drum she had used before, missing those memorable moments with everyone from The Wheelers.

"Sunny, thank you so much," Sophie thanked Sunny earnestly. She was grateful to them for taking her side all the time and never leaving her alone regardless of anything.

In an instant, Sunny blushed crimson. "Sophie, why are you suddenly talking to me with such formality? Don't you know it sounds odd, and I can't get used to it?"

"All right. I'm here to get the matter of your hand getting injured resolved. Let's go!" Sophie urged him.

Hearing that, Sunny gazed at her, looking troubled. "Sophie, forget about it. After all, my hand has fully recovered. Let's not dwell on it anymore, okay? We went through a lot before our band rose to fame. Thus, I don't wish to put all of you in deep water."

Sophie was rendered speechless.

"I know you're very concerned about me. However, we have no choice but to go with the flow in the entertainment industry," Sunny added resignedly.

If the incident had occurred years back, he would not think twice about retaliating. Nevertheless, after going through ups and downs for years in the entertainment industry, his mindset had changed a lot.

"Sunny, you all have been through a lot all this while," Sophie stated sorrowfully.

She could imagine how hard they had strived along the way without anyone backing them up financially.

"It doesn't matter. Inevitably, everyone grows up as time elapses. I only became more mature after going through all these," Sunny responded.

In actuality, he was only a nineteen-year-old young man forced to be mature after what he had been through.

"It's all right. I'll keep my word to resolve the matter for your sake. Regardless of who the culprit is, I'll back you up. Hence, there's nothing for you to fear," Sophie reassured him.

Sunny was well aware that Sophie was a strong-minded person who kept her word.

"You know Clayton Zales, don't you? He's the one coming at us this time around."

There was hardly anyone who could go up against Clayton in Jipsdale.

"Yeah, I know him. So what?" Sophie shrugged her shoulders.

"Sophie, you really haven't changed at all. I'm not worried about anything happening to me. However, The Wheelers has been through a lot before gaining fame. Thus, I don't feel like taking the risk to seek him out for payback," Sunny elucidated. To him, there was no way for one to be free from indignance in their lifetime.

"Sunny, it's all right. There's nothing to be afraid of. It's just Clayton," Sophie replied nonchalantly.

"Sunny, no matter what, the management has to give us an explanation on this," Mark ch

imed in after overhearing Sunny's words.

Sunny was the youngest in the band. It never occurred to Mark that he would be the most thoughtful too.

"Mark, I don't wish to see all of our efforts going down the drain just because of me," Sunny emphasized. They had never thought of giving up even during their darkest moments, so why should they do so now?

"Sunny, bear in mind that we are a team. The moment someone inflicted harm on you openly, it inadvertently means they're hurting our band too. If my band members have to sacrifice themselves for our success, I would rather let go of glory and fame!" Mark stated resolutely. He was protective of his band members, vowing he would not let anyone put them in a tight spot.

"Besides, the management is prejudiced against us. If we don't talk things out with them this round, I bet something similar will occur again. By then, they might target another person in our band!" Mark pointed out. Of course, they won't dare to lay a finger on me. After all, I'm still the lead vocal. But what about the others?

Meanwhile, the other band members emerged from behind the door. They had been eavesdropping on the duo's conversation and finally decided to open their mouths upon hearing Sunny's words.

“Sunny, it’s no big deal. Worse comes to worst, we’re back to square one and will have to start all over again. Anyway, the management must give us an explanation this time.”

“Yeah! After all, we’ve led such a life before, and we’re not afraid of hardships!”

They would never sacrifice anyone as their current prominence was the result of their joint efforts.

No words could describe how touched Sunny was as he gazed at them.

“Come on, cheer up and be positive! Since they had the guts to inflict harm on Sunny, I vow to let them pay the price for their ruthlessness!” Sophie piped up. She was incredibly touched at the sight of their close bond with each other.

Many bands ended up disbanding not long after shooting to fame due to various reasons.

However, Sophie believed everyone from The Wheelers would be able to compose music together for the rest of their lives.

“You have a point! As long as we’re together, there’s nothing we can’t do!” Sunny hugged his team members one by one. Moments later, the five members of The Wheelers embraced each other in a group hug.

Sophie also walked over and wrapped her arms around them. It had been quite a while since she last felt such warmth flow into her heart.

Later, Tristan hopped into his car with Sophie and Sunny. At the same time, Mark got into his car with the other three team members. They set off right away.

When Mark and the others came into sight, Clifford Larson, the man who attacked Sunny, started struggling frantically. He had been held captive there for two days and had not been given either food or water.

“Mark Wheeler, what are you up to? Don’t you know it’s against the law to abduct anyone? Heed my words. If you let go of me now, I’ll treat it as if nothing happened. If not, you’ll be doomed!” Clifford shrieked at the top of his lungs. He was still behaving insolently even though he was currently in a precarious state.

“You know who’s the mastermind manipulating me, don’t you? Anyway, I didn’t hurt Sunny that seriously. Hasn’t his hand fully recovered? Let go of me now, and get me some food!” Clifford had a bad reputation even in the underworld. He was willing to do anything as long as he was well-paid.

On top of that, he was not the slightest bit intimidated by the members of The Wheelers, knowing that those in the entertainment industry cared most about their reputation.

If I flee this place and tip the reporters off about what The Wheelers did, they will be doomed! They don’t even have the courage to do anything to me after holding me captive here for two days. I’m sure they won’t have a choice but to set me free in the end!

“Clifford Larson, how can you still be so arrogant after injuring Sunny’s hand? You must be thinking I’ll never lose my temper, don’t you?” Mark fumed. I bet the management targeted my band members because of my bad temper!

Chapter 199 Plead For Forgiveness

“Stop wasting time talking bullsh*t. Let go of me immediately. If not, I’ll surely settle the score with you later!” Clifford bellowed. D*mn it! I’m almost starving to death! It’s f*cking unbearable!

“Mark my words. You’re aware of who’s the one who gave me this order, aren’t you? If you still wish to continue gaining fame and glory in the entertainment industry, you should practice self-discipline from now onward. Don’t try to be funny and go against the management’s will,” Clifford mocked.

The self-assured man was convinced that there was no one in Jipsdale who could lay a finger on him. Ha! Even the police can’t do so, let alone a lowly band! Hmph! What do they think they can do to me? Since they can’t do anything, why don’t they set me free at once?

“Enough of that! What’s the point of wasting time bickering with him?” Sophie finally broke her silence, repulsed by Clifford’s words.

“Since your hand was injured because of him, I’ll pay him back in his own coin. It’s not considered going overboard by demanding him to pay the price with his hand, am I?” Sophie sounded airy, but her words sent a chill down Clifford’s spine.

“Missy, what do you intend to do? Do you know who I am? Huh? You must have a death wish to demand that!” Clifford scoffed. He was sure as h*ll that the young lady was only bragging and trying to give him a scare.

“Does it matter who you are?” Sophie advanced toward him and loomed over him.

Right that instant, her penetrating gaze scared the wits out of the middle-aged man, who was notorious for his viciousness.

“Don’t you dare lay a finger on me! Mark my words. I’ve been in prison numerous times. If you dare to even touch me, I’ll—”

Sophie struck at him before he could finish his words. She grabbed his wrist, exerting a great force discreetly. It was as though she only touched his hand for a second.

Nevertheless, Clifford broke out in cold sweat due to the excruciating pain in his wrist. He could not even twist it.

“What have you done to me?” His voice quivered in fear. My goodness! What a terrifying young lady!

“Don’t worry. It’s only one of your hands. However, you might not be able to jerk off anymore by using this hand,” Sophie responded indifferently.

Inwardly, Mark gasped. Am I hearing things? How’s it possible for those words to escape such a young lady’s lips?

At the same time, Sunny lamented inwardly, Oh my! What happened to our innocent young lady?

Meanwhile, Tristan was bereft of speech.

The young men could only talk themselves into getting used to Sophie's boldness. Ah! We should have known that she's no ordinary young lady!

"You!" Clifford could not utter any words to retort.

"Hmm? Are you doubting my words again? Spit it out now. Who's the mastermind manipulating you in the dark?" Sophie raised her voice and whipped out a voice recorder.

"I..." Clifford did not dare to tell her anything, fearing that he would be in trouble by infuriating his manipulator.

"Oh? Do you not want your other hand too? Just a heads-up for you to be mentally prepared. Your wrist will never be able to recover again!" Sophie was confident in her skill.

Meanwhile, Clifford did not dare to doubt her words at all.

"Missy, I had no choice but to get the mission accomplished as I was paid. Please let go of me. I promise I won't appear alongside The Wheelers again, no matter where they are. Is that not enough?" He tried to speak up for himself. They are all as petrifying as ferocious beasts. I can't take the risk of getting on their nerves!

"Since you're reluctant to spit it out, I have no choice but to use another method." Sophie sounded nonchalant as usual, but her words were horrifying indeed.

"Missy! I'll tell you the truth now, okay?" He tried to appease her. Why am I so unlucky? I carried out the mission for only fifty thousand. Why did I come across such a vicious young lady?

"It's Clayton Zales. According to him, Mark Wheeler and his band members have not been cooperative lately. Hence, he wanted to teach them a lesson." Clifford could not refrain from opening his mouth.

"I've told you everything I know, so can you let go of me now? But please don't let Clayton know I'm the one who told you this. If not, he won't let me off the hook. Don't ever step on his toes either. Don't you know how scary that man is?" Clifford babbled.

The moment Clayton's name was mentioned, even a notorious man like Clifford felt a shiver go down his spine.

"Okay, I got it." Sophie pressed a button on the voice recorder and tossed it to Mark.

Next, she turned to ask the young man who had been silent so far. "Sunny, what do you think we should do to him? It's all right. I can make the arrangement if you don't wish to get your hands dirty, so

feel free to speak your mind!"

Clifford's face turned ashen as he pleaded, "Mr. Sunny, please let go of me! I won't dare to do that again! I swear it!"

Wearing a look of sheer grimness, Sunny sneered, "Clifford Larson, have you forgotten your revolting words in the restroom? Didn't you plan to force yourself on me? How about now? Pfft! Have you chickened out?"

All along, he had been keeping mum about it so as not to put the others in hot water. Now that Clifford had revealed the truth, he did not think he needed to keep anything from the others anymore.

In an instant, there was a drastic change in the countenance of all the members of The Wheelers. A hint of ferocity flickered in Sophie's eyes.

"Mr. Sunny, please let me off! I was only pulling your leg at that time. Please let go of me!" Horror-stricken, Clifford wet his pants.

“How dare you!” Mark moved forward to grasp his wrist and bent it backward harshly.

“Argh!” Clifford let out a blood-curdling yowl in pain.

At the same time, the other members of The Wheelers drew closer to surround him at once. They had always doted on Sunny like their own younger brother. Knowing that Clifford had such designs on him, they blew a fuse.

Consequently, Clifford was beaten to a pulp in scarcely a few minutes.

Sophie only stepped forward after the members of The Wheelers vented their anger. By then, Clifford was trembling all over as he stammered, “I-I...”

Never had he expected he would be in such a pathetic state one day.

“Stand up!” Sophie stated authoritatively.

Clifford struggled to his feet, but she kicked him hard in the stomach. The next second, he fell to his knees clumsily.

“Sophie, I’m fine. Don’t worry about me. Stop that, okay? It’s not worth getting your hands dirty because of him.” Sunny chuckled. Seeing how united everyone was, he was extremely touched. It was as though they were back to the days when they were still striving for their future in Horington.

“Okay.” Sophie stopped. “Anyway, he’s merely a tool manipulated by Clayton, and everything is not over yet.”

She snorted inwardly. Clayton should be the one paying the price for striking at Mark relentlessly!

“Sophie, Clayton is no ordinary man, and this is solely The Wheelers’ problem. Please don’t interfere,” Mark advised her. He could not help but worry about the young lady, who was not even nineteen years

old. She has a bright future ahead of her. I mustn't let her seek the heinous man out for payback, putting herself in a precarious situation!

Sophie furrowed her brows, feeling displeased. She tried to convince him patiently. "Mark, I'm part of The Wheelers too. No doubt, I didn't debut in the entertainment industry together with you guys and even left for so long. However, I'm always with you all. In other words, everything about The Wheelers is related to me too. I can't let any of you suffer!"

Didn't I make the choice at that time so I could be mighty enough to shield everyone around me against any harm? If I can't even protect them, what's the point of me striving hard to get through those moments in that hell-like training camp back then?

Chapter 200 How Terrifying

"Soph!" Sophie's words had touched Sunny. "You'll always be a member of The Wheelers. But we want to celebrate our achievements with you, not drag you into trouble."

People often took offense to Mark's words and behavior. But isn't this the characteristic of a rock band's members?

All rock band members had strong personalities, and they would not do anything against their will.

Mark shook his head. "Soph, I know you're doing this for us, but I hope you can stay away from this mess."

He was worried something bad might happen to Sophie.

Sophie was unhappy to hear that. What do they take me for? On the one hand, they said I'll always be a member of The Wheelers, but on the other hand, they want me to stay out of their affairs!

Tristan, who had been observing them, finally voiced his thought. "Why should we be afraid of Clayton?" Does he think I, Tristan Lombard, am scared of an insignificant man like Clayton? What a joke!

“You—” Mark was surprised that the man, who had all this while been quiet, made that remark.

“Since you can’t work with Clayton anymore, why don’t you terminate your contract with him? There’s no point continuing this partnership.”

More importantly, Clayton’s company would be in deep waters soon anyway. Tristan thought they should get off the sinking ship.

“What? Terminate our contract with Clayton?” I don’t think he’ll let us off so easily! Based on the contract, they would still need to work with Clayton for another year. There’s no way he will release us!

“I’ll take care of it.”

Tristan would not turn a blind eye to Sophie’s problem. To Tristan, getting Clayton to agree to the contract termination was not a difficult task.

“You’ll take care of it?” Mark could not believe what he heard. This man does look capable, but can he take Clayton on?

“Yes, you should leave this to Mr. Tristan since he’s willing to help!” Sophie would have been able to solve the problem, but since Tristan had offered his help, she thought she might as well reveal his identity.

“Mr. Tristan?”

Sunny could not believe his ears. The man whom we treated with hostility is Mr. Tristan from Lombard Group in Jipsdale?

“Yes. Lombard Group can take care of your contract, so don’t worry!” Sophie said bitterly. She was still upset that the band members had no confidence in her, even though she could tackle this problem without Tristan’s help.

“Why do you want to help us?” Mark asked. Why would Lombard Group help us? Does he not know it’s a tough row to hoe? I guess he’s doing this for Sophie.

“I just want to help. That’s all.”

Mark did not know what else to say. He still could not believe Sophie had befriended an influential figure like Tristan.

“All right, Soph. Let’s go home. I’ll get Eustace to handle this man,” Tristan said. Eustace has nothing to do anyway. This will keep him busy for a while.

“All right!”

Tristan gave Felix a call. “Ask Eustace to come over right now.”

When Eustace arrived, he noticed how disheveled Clifford was.

Eustace was aware of what Clifford had done in the past, but he would typically ask his subordinates to deal with him. After all, he would not want to waste his time and energy dealing with such an insignificant person.

“Take him away!” Eustace ordered his subordinates.

“Captain Sheppard, why does the SWAT team have to handle that small fry?” What a waste of resources!

“Zip it. Just do your job, and stop questioning the boss.”

Meanwhile, Danny had just arrived.

“Captain Sheppard, I think I saw Ms. Tanner. What’s she doing here? I wonder if she has anything to do with this.”

“Sophie Tanner?”

“Yeah! I’m pretty sure it’s her!” As one of Sophie’s biggest fans, Danny could recognize her with his eyes shut. However, he had not gone over to her because she was with a group of people.

“I’ll go and take a look.”

To Eustace, Sophie was a capable but mysterious woman. He had been wanting to get to know her better but was always caught up with work.

Eustace never had a chance to reach out to her because he had been busy handling a few international cases recently.

When Danny saw Eustace run out in haste, he could not help but tease, “Did you see that? I told you Captain Sheppard was intrigued by Ms. Tanner, but you didn’t believe me. Now you know I’m telling the truth.”

“That’s enough, Danny. You better not let Captain Sheppard catch you spreading rumors about him.” They had learned their lesson in the last round.

Danny pouted. “He has already gone out to look for Ms. Tanner. Pretty sure he didn’t hear what I said.”

“You seem to have been too free lately, Danny. I need to station a technician at the borders. Should I send you over?” Eustace overheard what Danny said when he came back.

Danny immediately made a zipping motion with his hand and kept mum. “I didn’t say anything.”

Eustace had indeed run out to look for Sophie, but there had been no signs of her.

He believed Danny had told him the truth since there was no reason for him to lie. But what is Sophie doing here? Did she beat Clifford to a pulp?

Tristan sent Sunny back to the mansion, but the latter refused to get down from the car.

“Thank you very much, Sophie.” It was rare to see Sunny being this serious.

“Don’t mention it. All right, it’s getting late. Go and take a rest. Mr. Tristan will take care of the contract, so don’t worry.”

Nothing was impossible with Tristan. Sophie did not want them to worry because she knew Tristan would handle the matter well.

“Sophie, I know you’re doing this for us, but please don’t go against your principles.” Sunny did not want Sophie to do anything against her will, and he was not afraid to say this in front of the famous Tristan Lombard.

Sophie chuckled. What an adorable young man.

“I understand your concern. All right, go home now. Mark and the rest are waiting for you!”

“Don’t you want to come in?”

It was not often that they got to get together. Besides, Sophie’s final exam was over. Why don’t we hang out and have a jam session?

“Not today. I still have other things to do.”

“What is it? We can lend you a hand.” They wanted to be a part of everything that Sophie was involved in.

"It's not a big problem, so no worries. It's a family issue and not something outsiders should intervene in. You guys should focus on making your next album."

Being too focused on making music was how Mark got into the mess in the first place.

Sunny got down from the car and met up with the rest of the members of The Wheelers.

"Mark, I noticed changes in Sophie. I mean, she's still the same righteous person like she used to be, but there's just something different about her."

"Yeah. I noticed that too." Mark also felt there was something unusual about Sophie. But what can we do if she refuses to tell us what exactly happened to her? After all, we can't poke our noses into her business.

"We want her to be happy with her life. Nothing else matters." But would Tristan treat Sophie well now that they're together? Would that man bully her?

"What if Mr. Tristan is the kind of man who would take out his frustrations on Sophie?" Sunny expressed his concern.

Everyone in Jipsdale knew who Tristan was and what he was like. I cannot imagine how terrifying it could be to be in a relationship with him.