#### Pursuing 221

### Chapter 221

It Is Good To Be My Girlfriend "All right. I'll meet you at Lombard Group later in the afternoon. Remember to come down and get me, okay?" Ysabelle had not forgotten how she was not allowed to go up to the office. Her status as Tristan's niece was not as good as being Tristan's girlfriend. "Okay. I'm going to hang up if there's nothing else. Your uncle is waiting for me to have lunch." Ysabelle was speechless. Okay, then. I don't feel too bad if she's eating with Uncle Tristan. "Was that Ysabelle?" "Yep.

She says she's coming over in the afternoon to keep me company. Since we haven't met for a couple of days, I said yes. You don't mind it, do you?" "I don't..." "Really?" Sophia asked quizzically. Why does he look like he's bothered about it? Tristan placed his arm around her shoulders and brought her over to get their food. After that, they found a table by the window and sat down. "I really don't mind it. It must be boring being around me, right? Am I a boring person?" Sophie had totally forgotten all about the conversation from earlier. What's Mr. Tristan talking about? Is he a boring person? Does he have some wrong understanding of himself? "Nope. You're not a boring person at all. In fact, you're very interesting!" she answered. How can an outstanding man like Tristan have such a major misunderstanding about himself? "That's great. I was worried you'd be bored being around me," Tristan said.

The food served in Lombard Group's cafeteria was the best, unlike most companies. In those companies, employees would order takeaway or head out during lunchtime. To solve the employees' meal problem, Lombard Group had specially hired a few five-star chefs who were well adept at cooking all kinds of cuisines. Thus, Sophie was quite satisfied with the dishes she was served. They looked good and smelled amazing. "It must be nice working for you," Sophie said as she took a bite of her food. As expected, it was on par with the food sold in restaurants out there. "It's always good to be my girlfriend," Tristan said with a smile. His words left Sophie stumped. Fine. It must be nice to be

associated with Mr. Tristan, no matter what the relationship is. Before Tristan and Sophie finished their food, Felix, who heard the news about Tristan eating at the cafeteria, immediately hurried over.

The moment Felix spotted Sophie, he could not help but say, "Mr. Tristan, this isn't nice of you. It's Ms. Tanner's first visit to our company, and you're letting her eat in our cafeteria?" "What's the problem? Is the food in our cafeteria inedible?" Tristan did not welcome Felix, for the latter was intruding on his alone time with Sophie. Why on earth did he come here for? "I'm a man. What I eat doesn't matter." Of course, Felix was relatively satisfied with the food served in Lombard Group's cafeteria. In fact, he had gotten himself some food too. "Sophie, it must be nice having your holidays now, right?" he asked. She can go anywhere and do whatever she wants the entire day. Gosh, I miss those days. It's so sad that I

can't return to those days anymore. "I suppose so." Though it was the holidays, she had been keeping herself busy. "It's nicer if someone gets lost. Why don't you just get lost?" Tristan snapped coldly. Felix's feelings were rather hurt by those words. "Mr. Tristan, you hurt my feelings. You never treated me like this in the past. Didn't you always like me?

Things are really different now that you have Sophie." Felix pretended to wipe his tears with his handkerchief. Sophie was rendered speechless by his act. "Get lost! You're not important to me, so you can get lost now," Tristan said impolitely. "No. I haven't met Sophie for many days. You might not miss me, but I bet Sophie does. Don't you, Sophie?" Felix asked. Surely girls won't be that savage? "Sorry to disappoint you, but I don't," replied Sophie. She did not bother sparing his dignity. Felix glared at the duo. "Can you two not be so heartless?" he reprimanded. This is too much. I came over to eat with them because I find it boring to eat alone. Do they really have to dislike me so much? Alas, Sophie ignored him and lowered her head to continue eating. At the same time, Tristan realized she was already too full to eat. However, she was still forcing herself to finish the food because she did not want to waste it. "You don't have to force yourself if you can't eat anymore."

Though he hoped Sophie could eat more, she was already at the limit of her appetite. She would feel unwell if he forced her to finish her food. "Okay." Sophie did not force herself to eat either. There was

still a lot of food left, even though she had asked the employee to reduce her portion. I think my appetite has gotten worse recently. "Exactly. Don't worry about it. Mr. Tristan won't mind finishing it if there are leftovers," Felix said. Isn't it normal for couples to do that? "It's fine," Sophie said. I can just throw my leftovers. We're at Lombard Group, after all. I don't think it's a good idea to let Tristan eat my leftovers in front of his employees. Regardless, Tristan still took her tray of food after finishing his. "It's okay. I'm not full, anyway." "You don't have to do this, Mr. Tristan. You're already full," Sophie said. It was not their first time having a meal together. Naturally, she knew how big his appetite was. "She's right, Mr. Tristan. If you keep this up, I'm afraid you'll go out of shape. What are you going to do if Sophie is disgusted by your figure?" Felix asked. Tristan was speechless. "Don't worry, Fatty Felix. I'm not the kind of person who'll get fat from eating," he teased.

"Mr. Tristan, you're going overboard. How could you call me that? I'm not fat, okay?" In truth, Felix was once quite fat for a period when he was about eight years old. However, he refused to think of that chapter in his life for it was his dark past. After all, Felix was someone who was exceptionally particular about his image. "You used to be a fatty?" Sophie could not picture Felix being a fat kid. Though he was not as good-looking as Tristan, Felix was quite a dashing person. "Don't you dare call me that, Sophie. Otherwise, I'm going to get mad at you." "So what if you do?" Sophie asked seriously. Felix glanced at Tristan. In the end, he had no choice but to continue eating. She was right. I won't dare to do anything to Mr. Tristan's woman—nothing at all. I can only seethe in silence. Can there be anyone in this world who feels more miserable than me? "Sophie, stop bullying him already,"

Tristan said, chuckling. Felix shot him a grateful glance. "I knew I have a special place in your heart, Mr. Tristan. What you said earlier really touched me." "You're overthinking it. I just figured I won't have anyone to work like a slave for me if you die being bullied." Felix was stumped. Sophie could not help but chuckle at those words. The way he put it makes Felix look really pitiful. Suddenly, Felix got to his feet. "I give up talking to both of you. You're too much. This is basically a fight of two against one. How can I possibly defeat you guys?" "You'll never win, even if Sophie was alone."

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Wrong Move Felix was rendered speechless. "If that's the case, Mr. Tristan, what's the point of continuing this conversation?" Sophie asked. Sophie's words made sense to Felix. Why am I bringing this upon myself? Wouldn't it be nice if I stayed in the office and enjoyed the air conditioning? Why did I have to come here to torture myself? Sophie got to her feet and was about to pick up the tray to return it when Tristan stopped her. He was never going to let her do that. "Just leave it to Felix. He'll handle it. There's no need for you to do it." With that, Tristan handed Felix both their trays.

Felix was befuddled. Did I say yes? Did I say I'd return their trays? He keeps getting on my nerves! How dare he keep bullying me? "What's wrong? Do you have a problem with it? Don't worry. I'll definitely listen to you if you tell me about it." "Really?" Felix was even more doubtful of Tristan. He was never going to believe the latter's words. "Let's hear it." Tristan smirked. Noting his expression, Felix shot to his feet. Forget it. Why should I? I'm nothing in the presence of Sophie. What's the point of talking about rights? I don't have them. I don't have them at all. Silently, Felix picked up the trays and returned them. Oh, well. I should say nothing and just do my tasks. "Mr. Tristan, don't you think you're bullying him too much?" Sophie asked. Felix looks quite pitiful. "You think so, too? I'll go easier on him next time, then." Nathan was thoroughly speechless. He quietly returned the trays to their designated spot. What on earth? This is ridiculous.

How could they do this to me? Alas, he could only seethe in silence. When he had returned from putting back the trays, he said immediately, "All right. I'll get going since I've still got some work to do." "Are you sure you're going to leave just like that?" "Why not? Do I look like a masochist? Why would I make myself suffer by watching you two publicly displaying your affection for one another?" "All right. If you want to leave so much, then I shall not stop you. I wonder if Ysabelle will be bored when she comes later in the afternoon." "What? Really? Are you pulling my leg?" The cafeteria's floor was a little slippery. Before the employee could even start cleaning, Tristan grabbed Sophie's waist to prevent her

from falling. "I'm fine, Mr. Tristan. Besides, I don't think this is appropriate when there are so many employees from your company in this cafeteria." "There's nothing inappropriate about this," Tristan said. He did not think it was a big deal when he was finally showing his affection for her.

"Mr. Tristan, I know you're really nice to me. Anyway, I'm going to Quadfield for a business trip in a few days. Can I bring Ysabelle along with me?" Felix asked. Tristan raised his brow. This man is starting to forget his place just because I'm treating him a little nicer. "Felix, Ysabelle is still very young. Don't you think you're going a little too far?" "But Sophie's younger than Ysabelle," Felix could not help but mumble. Sophie feigned ignorance at those words. In all seriousness, Tristan was a gentlemanly person. Even if she was alone with him, the most he would do were giving her hugs and kisses. "Excuse me. I'm not the same as you. I've gotten her parent's approval. What about you? Have you done the same?" Tristan refuted. He was someone approved by Josiah. "Fine. You win!" Felix snapped. It was not going to be easy for Felix to date Ysabelle. After all, they had a huge age gap between them. Felix felt a little depressed. Suddenly, Sophie, who had been silent the entire time, spoke.

"Felix, I believe you'll succeed." Her encouragement cheered Felix up. "That's right. I'll definitely make it," said Felix. How could I give up when I haven't started pursuing her? Soon, the trio returned to Tristan's office. When Felix saw Sophie playing a game on her phone, he quickly hurried over. "You play this game, too?" asked Felix. He occasionally played the game when he was feeling bored. In fact, his rank was quite high. "Let's have a match," Felix suggested, taking a seat in front of her. "Sure." Hearing her agreement, Felix instantly formed a group, added her as a friend, and also added her into the group. "I've got to warn you. I won't go easy on you. Don't cry when you lose, okay?" Felix said, chuckling. Sophie was utterly baffled by his words. Where on earth did he get that confidence from? I play this game seriously, too. "Don't worry. I won't cry. Just make sure you don't." Felix took a deep breath and pulled himself together. I'm going to win one round today, no matter what. She's going to lose! Right then, Tristan walked over to Sophie. "Trash him however you want," he said. He knew Sophie was quite skilled since he had watched her playing games before. "Don't cross the line, Mr. Tristan. Haven't you seen my ranking? I've been playing this game for some time. Tsk. I wanted to go

easy on Sophie. Now that you two have said so, I guess I'll be letting you down if I don't bully Sophie." "So you want to bully her, eh?

That really depends on if you have what it takes. What's the use of just building castles in the air?" Tristan said disdainfully. "Very well. You are very brave. Since you've said so, I won't be going easy, then. Otherwise, I'll be letting your expectations down." "Cut the cr\*ap. Just start already," said Sophie, pressing the start button. Felix was on full alert, waiting with bated breath. However, the game had just started, but he looked as though he was already losing. "Pfft. How ambitious of you to want to bully Sophie with that skill of yours." Tristan could not be bothered to continue watching. After all, it was clear who was going to win. There was nothing fun about watching it. Sure enough, Felix lost terribly in the first match, while Sophie won it easily. "Sophie, you must've purchased game credits, right? I've

never bought any with my account. There's nothing to be proud of about winning this round if you've bought game credits," Felix commented. That must be the only reason she won. Otherwise, how could Sophie play so well without purchasing game credits?

"Purchasing game credits? Do you think I have the money to do that?" Felix refused to accept her answer. "Are you even human, Sophie? You must be an alien, aren't you?" Felix asked seriously. Hearing that, Sophie stared at him as if he was a lunatic. What's wrong with him? Tristan, on the other hand, could not help but laugh out loud. "Oh, please forgive him. He's never encountered such a strong opponent. In fact, it's his first time losing so terribly. It's only normal for him to go a little crazy." Felix was utterly upset. This couple is too united. I am not a match against them. Urgh, I can't even win against them in arguments. Oh, this is so sad. "Is Ysabelle really coming?" he asked.

Truth was, he was waiting there just to meet Ysabelle. "I'm not sure. Why don't you give her a call and ask her about it? You can leave if you have matters to deal with. I don't think there'll be anyone asking you to stay." Those words left Felix speechless. Forget it. I'll bear with this for the sake of Ysabelle. "Let's have another match. I must've played the wrong move just now." "Are you sure?" Sophie asked.

She had already exited the game and put down her phone. Both of them were on totally different levels. "I'm sure. Come on. I don't believe I can't win. I'm going to make you lose terribly this time."

#### Chapter 223

Password "Felix, who do you wanna beat, huh? You're really daring. How dare you lay your hands on our Sophie!" Ysabelle heard Felix's voice the moment she reached the door and rushed in at once. When Felix saw his beloved, he quickly said with a pitiful expression, "Ysabelle, you're finally here! Before you came, the two of them kept bullying me. It was really bad that there was no one on my side.

Do you know how helpless I felt?" "Oh," Ysabelle replied as she put down her bag and walked toward Sophie. Standing behind the woman, she continued, "Sophie, feel free to torture him. Don't hold back yeah!" Felix was speechless when he heard that. She had blatantly ignored his plea for sympathy. It was as if she had not heard anything he had just said. The man sighed and said, "Why is my life so miserable? No one listens to me, and no one wants to help me." Felix was wallowing in self-pity and started feeling more and more miserable as he spoke. "You..." Ysabelle was completely speechless after hearing the man's words and did not know what to say to him. "Let's start now!" Since Felix was so keen on playing, Sophie decided to grant his wish and make him lose everything he had. Felix had the upper hand at the start of the game. Feeling pleased, he said smugly, "Ysabelle, you're my lucky star indeed! My luck has started to pick up ever since you got here." Ysabelle could not help but glare at him. It's just a game. What has his luck got to do with me! "Sophie, you can do it!

Look at how smug he is. You need to show him your prowess and make him beg for mercy." What's there to be smug about? Sophie replied with an okay sign and said, "Don't worry. He won't be laughing for long." Ysabelle was utterly mesmerized by the look in Sophie's eyes when she said that. "Sophie, you're so cool! You're totally my fantasy!" Felix was slightly infuriated when he saw that Ysabelle was behaving just like a teenage girl who was talking to her idol. "Ysabelle, she's a woman." Felix could not help but remind Ysabelle. He had no doubts that if he had not spoken up, Ysabelle would really end up falling in love with Sophie. Although the man could not deny that Sophie was indeed very charming, he was not pleased that the woman he liked was also falling for her charm.

"So what? Are you discriminating against homosexuals?" Ysabelle asked without worrying that she would be judged. "No. Why would I?" Felix was at an utter loss for words. Since anything he said seemed to be wrong, he decided to keep quiet. Felix ended up losing the game miserably after being distracted. There was simply nothing he could do to turn the situation around. With that, he tossed his phone aside. His beloved had finally arrived, but she ended up becoming Sophie's ally instead. Previously, it was two against one, and it ended up becoming three against one. Is this really my fate? Why is it so miserable! "Are you willing to admit defeat now? If not, we can always go for another round." Sophie was confident that she would be able to crush Felix no matter how many games they played. Felix fell on the couch and pretended to faint. He did not feel like speaking as he needed to reflect on his life and find out why he was such a failure! Ysabelle could not help but laugh in amusement at the man's reaction. She grabbed a toothpick and took a piece of fruit for Felix. "Here, have some fruits. Don't be too disheartened. Losing a few games to Sophie isn't that embarrassing." "All right then!" Felix sat up and had some fruits with Ysabelle. Seeing that the man had perked up, Ysabelle returned to sit next to Sophie. "Sophie, how can you be so amazing!

You're as good as those professional players!" Although Ysabelle was not a gamer, her deskmate enjoyed playing games and would watch gaming streams whenever she had free time. As such Ysabelle knew a bit about games. "I'm just average!" Sophie replied humbly. She did not think that playing games well was a big deal. "You should have some fruits too!" Ysabelle passed Sophie a piece of fruit. Instead of taking it over from Ysabelle, Sophie ate it from the woman's hand directly. Seeing that, Felix was no longer able to remain calm. What was that??? "I want you to feed me too," Felix said to Ysabelle. Ysabelle was speechless. "Well, it's up to you whether you want to eat it or not!" Ysabelle chose to ignore the man's request. There was no way she was going to feed him. "Ysabelle, I didn't know you're someone who would show favoritism!" Felix continued eating the fruits. I need to be strong. I can take care of myself! After hanging out for a while, Tristan and Felix went to attend a meeting, leaving Sophie and Ysabelle in the office. Ysabelle started watching the videos on singing tutorials that Sophie had sent her, while Sophie turned on Tristan's computer.

However, Tristan's computer was password-protected. "What's wrong?" Noticing Sophie's inaction, Ysabelle walked toward the woman and saw the login screen. "Oh, it's password-protected! Try Uncle

Tristan's birthday? 1XXXXX," Ysabelle guessed. "Never mind! I don't have to use the computer. Or I can borrow one from the secretaries instead." Since Tristan added a password to his laptop, it was probably because he did not want others to use it. As such, Sophie decided to forget about it. "What are you afraid of? It's just a computer. If you ask for it, Uncle Tristan would gladly give you his life!" Seeing that Sophie did not reply, Ysabelle continued, "I'm serious. Trust me!" Ysabelle proceeded to type in Tristan's birthday in the password box. However, it was not the correct password. As Ysabelle's password was her birthday, she had assumed that it would be the same for everyone else! How is this possible! "Let's try my birthday instead!" Ysabelle suggested, thinking that it was possible, given that Tristan used to treat her pretty well. However, it was still the wrong password. "Could his password be your birthday instead? That would be so romantic!" "Soph, let's try your birthday!" Ysabelle said expectantly, feeling pretty sure that they would finally get it right! "Let's just forget it! I can just use my phone." Sophie had promised The Wheelers that she would write them a song. As she was feeling rather bored and happened to have some inspiration, she thought of penning something down. However, since she did not have access to a computer, she decided to write it another day instead as it wasn't urgent.

"It wouldn't hurt for us to try!" Ysabelle entered Sophie's password, but it was still incorrect. Ysabelle was overwhelmed with awkwardness when she saw that, and she even had the urge to chop her hands off that instant. That was such a stupid idea! It's so awkward now! "Ummm... Soph, Uncle Tristan is someone who doesn't think like us! So, it doesn't matter if his password isn't your birthday."

"It's fine. I'm not that narcissistic!" Initially, Sophie wasn't curious but she was really interested to know what Tristan's password was at that moment. However, she couldn't hack into Tristan's computer when Ysabelle was still around as that would seem too insolent!

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Speculation Tristan returned after getting his things and saw Ysabelle and Sophie huddled before his computer. Confused, he asked, "What's going on?" "Uncle Tristan, Sophie wants to use your computer. I tried a couple of birthdays, but none of them were correct." "Do you think everyone uses birthdays as their password like you?" Tristan strode toward them and typed quickly on his keyboard. He pressed the Enter key and unlocked the computer with a flourish. Sophie muttered, "Actually, I don't have to use it right now." A computer was considered a rather private possession, let alone one in Lombard Group's headquarters. Tristan's computer probably holds a ton of secrets! He reassured her, "Don't worry. Just use it. There are no secrets in there that you can't know about." "Really?" Ysabelle continued excitedly, "So what's your password, Uncle Tristan?"

He shot his niece a look, and she immediately dropped the topic. Fine! Just take it that I didn't say anything! I didn't do that on purpose! I was just curious. "Have fun," Tristan said to Sophie before leaving the office. Ysabelle perked up right after her uncle's departure. She complained pettily, "It's just

a password. What's the big deal?" Then, she went one step further and backstabbed Tristan, claiming, "It must be some ex-girlfriend's birthday or something. That's why he doesn't want you to know!" That must be it! Sophie was unbothered by her assumption. So what if it is? Tristan isn't that young. It won't be strange if he has ex-girlfriends. Her reaction took the wind out of Ysabelle's sails.

Ysabelle whined, "Sophie Tanner! Why do you look so unaffected? Don't you care at all?" She should show a smidge of emotion! "What kind of reaction should I be showing?" asked Sophie. "Jealousy! Aren't you even the least bit jealous when I'm talking about my uncle's ex-girlfriend? Perhaps, you don't like my uncle at all!" Or you wouldn't be displaying such a lackluster response! Oh, my poor Uncle Tristan! Sophie explained, "What's the use in being jealous? What's done is done.

Don't you think it's a waste of time to brood over the unchangeable past?" "Fine! You win." In hindsight, Ysabelle wondered why she had bothered to argue with a person as logical as Sophie. Meanwhile,

Sophie downloaded a piece of software on Tristan's computer and was satisfied with its running speed. "What are you doing?" Ysabelle who was playing a game on her mobile phone stared at the screen out of curiosity. Sophie had agreed to write a song for The Wheelers. Since she was free today, she decided to get the job over and done with. "You're writing a song?" Ysabelle was stunned. We're both in high school. How is Sophie so talented? Sophie wondered if she somehow looked like the farthest thing from a songwriter. "Why? Can't I write songs?" Ysabelle pulled a chair over and sat beside her, praising, "No, Sophie. You're a freaking genius. I would never doubt you, even if you claimed you knew how to steer a spaceship." She added, "Why don't you start? Don't worry!

I promise I won't disturb you." "Okay." Sophie did not put on any airs as she got down to work. She had already thought of a melody over the past few days. All she had to do was to write it out, make some edits, and put in the lyrics. She worked efficiently and almost produced the complete song in no time. "Do you want to listen to it?" Sophie asked an expectant Ysabelle. Ysabelle nodded immediately. "Of course! I want to!" Why would I give up such a precious opportunity? Sophie made some final edits before playing the song out. She had composed a rock song, a far cry from The Wheelers' typical genre. However, once the music played, its addictive tune immediately had its listeners' bodies pumping with adrenaline. The passion and exhilaration of the song stayed with its audience long after the song ended. More impressively, the piece was already a hit even without any lyrics. "What do you think of it?" Sophie asked Ysabelle.

"Sophie, you're the most enviable talent on the face of this earth. I swear." Ysabelle really meant every word of her praise. Sophie smiled and said, "I guess you liked it!" Suddenly, Ysabelle grabbed her friend's wrist and suggested, "Sophie, you should enter the entertainment industry! I guarantee you'll become a global hit!" "Nah. I don't want to do that." "Fine. But you better write songs for me in the future, especially my debut song." Sophie agreed. "That works." She wanted to help her friends as much

as she could before she left for the International Medical Association. Ysabelle hugged her gratefully and declared dramatically, "Sophie, what would I have done if I never met you?"

I've met my lucky star! Sophie is my lucky star! "You'll be fine even without me." Ysabelle's identity as a Lombard would still open many doors for her in the future. Surprisingly, Ysabelle shook her head and said, "No. If I didn't know you, my life would surely be a mess right now." Without Sophie, she would not have mustered the courage to pursue her dreams. In fact, she probably would have followed her father's wishes and became the Lombard family's young and unambitious daughter. Ysabelle played Sophie's freshly composed piece over and over again. She asked, "What about the lyrics? Aren't you planning to write the lyrics, Soph?" Sophie wrote the best essays in school, and the language teachers even used her essays as model answers. Writing lyrics should be a piece of cake for her. "I'll fill it in in a couple of days. There's no rush. The Wheelers are overseas right now."

She had barely finished her sentence when Mark video-called her. Sophie answered the call, and Mark's handsome face immediately appeared on her phone screen. "Hey, look at me, Sophie!" Sunny shoved Mark aside barely a second later and stuck his face before the camera. Sophie greeted them and asked, "How's everything? Are you adapting well?" Sunny shot her a radiant smile and replied, "We're used to being on the road. Adapting to a different country is as easy as pie for us. Don't worry! And hey, don't fret over the contract termination. Take it slow. If nothing can be done about it, we'll just get blacklisted. It's no big deal." The band prioritized Sophie's well-being above everything else. To Sunny's displeasure, Sophie replied, "Hand the phone to Mark." He wailed, "Why? Are you sick of me just after our extremely brief conversation? You're too much, Sophie!" "Play nice."

Her simple response immediately soothed Sunny's ruffled feathers. He asked, "Aren't you on your holidays now, Sophie? Why don't you meet us here?" "I can't. I need to handle some matters in Chanaea." After attending to some business in Jipsdale, she still had a difficult situation to solve in Horington. She definitely did not have the luxury to go on a vacation with The Wheelers overseas. Finally, Mark grabbed the phone from Sunny and got down to business. "What's going on? Are there still issues with the contract?" He knew it was going to be a tricky situation to deal with.

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Make Him Pay "Everything's okay with the contract." She had yet to use her last resort. "I have just completed the song. I'll email it to you in a short while." "All right." She acted swiftly. However, after listening to the tune, all the members of The Wheelers were astonished. "I know Sophie is a genius. Just look at this song. I'm sure it will be a hit this time." Although there were no lyrics in the song yet, Sophie had never let them down before. Mark nodded in approval. "Sophie is naturally gifted in music. To be honest, it will be a pity if she doesn't venture further into this industry." They could not understand why she did not want to pursue a career in music given her outstanding talents.

Then again, everyone had their own ambitions, and it was still her choice at the end of the day. "Mark, let's listen to it one more time." "Okay." Meanwhile, both Tristan and Felix had just returned to the office when Clayton phoned them. "Mr. Tristan, it's Clayton." Tristan took the phone. "Mr. Zales, shouldn't you be very busy at this hour? How is it you still have the time to call me?" said Tristan nonchalantly. Clayton was furious when he heard that sarcastic remark. D\*mn it! He's doing it on purpose. This is so evil of him. "I can never be as busy as you are, Mr. Tristan!" uttered Clayton. Even though he was hopping mad, Clayton had no choice but to be humble since he needed Tristan's help. "So, tell me!" Tristan sounded high and mighty. "Mr. Tristan, I don't wish to get involved with the investment anymore." "Oh, is that what this is about? It's fine. If you don't want to join in, you can always make your exit." Clayton was so infuriated that he could not respond for a moment.

"Mr. Tristan, I will agree to any of your terms and conditions without another word. I only have one request. Please let me off the hook this time around!" "Mr. Zales, I never expect to hear you beg," said Tristan with a snort. Does he really think I'm someone he can mess with? Clayton was very angry, but he did not utter a single word. "Just let Felix know what you need! I'm busy." With that, Tristan handed the phone over to Felix. "Mr. Northley, can you please put in a few good words for me in front of Mr. Tristan?" pleaded Clayton. At the present moment, he needed his funds to be returned to him as soon

as possible. Otherwise, Zales Corporation might face bankruptcy. Zales Corporation was everything to him. He could not watch his efforts go down the drain. There was no way he could let that happen. "It's like this. One of Mr. Tristan's friends is interested in The Wheelers.

He wants you to terminate your contract with them!" Now that The Wheelers was so popular, it would be difficult for them to get Clayton to terminate the contract with the band. "The Wheelers?" True enough, Clayton's heart skipped a beat when he heard Felix's request. "What's wrong? Are you not willing to do so? If that's the case, there's nothing we can do about your situation." Felix was relentless. "Of course not! Since Mr. Tristan is interested in The Wheelers, I will terminate my contract with them. I'll contact them right away." At that moment, Clayton had no choice but to do as he was told. Felix was finally satisfied. "Clayton, don't say I didn't warn you! In the future, don't ever touch anything that belongs to Mr. Tristan." What! "Yes, yes. I understand. Mr. Northley, you're right. I will never dare to touch anything that belongs to Mr. Tristan!" Felix ended the call after that. It was a waste of his time to spend even one more second talking to that man. "What's wrong?" Sophie, who had been silent all the while, finally spoke. "Sophie, do you not know what Mr. Tristan has done for The Wheelers?"

Felix felt that there was nothing wrong with Sophie knowing what Tristan had done. However, Tristan's thinking was different from that of Felix. Tristan did not do all those things to gain the gratitude of Tanner Group nor did he wish to impose more burden on Sophie. "Felix!" Tristan shot him a warning look. Doesn't he know what to say and what not to say? Felix had no choice but to keep his mouth shut.

To be honest, he could not understand what Tristan was thinking about. Now was the time to let Sophie know what he had done so as to win her heart. Ysabelle cast a glance at Felix before looking at her uncle.

"Uncle Tristan, let Felix say whatever he wants." She knew that her uncle had treated Sophie very well. He had done many things for her dear friend without asking for anything in return. As far as Ysabelle was concerned, it was all right for Sophie to know about what Tristan had done and felt moved by it. "Go! I'm feeling a little hungry. Go with Felix and buy some snacks back," ordered Tristan. "Shouldn't

the secretary be the one to do this?" Ysabelle did not want to go, but Felix dragged her along with him. Does this girl have a death wish? How dare she defy Mr. Tristan! Once they were out of Tristan's office, Ysabelle ask unhappily, "Why did you pull me out of there? You can pick up the food by yourself. Why do you need me to go too?" "Ysabelle, don't be ungrateful. I just saved your life. Aren't you aware of your uncle's style?" "I'm not afraid of him. Now that I have Sophie as my backer, there's nothing Uncle Tristan can do to me." She was well aware of the current situation. That's true! What she said is the truth. Whatever Sophie says now outweighs anything else. "Then, just keep me accompanied. It's so lonely for me to go and buy snacks all alone." Although Ysabelle was unwilling, she still ended up following Felix. Only Tristan and Sophie were left in the office.

"Now that the contract of The Wheelers has been settled, you should be able to relax. Right?" Since what happened the last time, he knew how special The Wheelers were to her. Therefore, he was willing to help her settle issues with The Wheelers' contract at any cost this time around. She had heard everything earlier on. That was why she asked, "Mr. Tristan, whatever Clayton has asked you for must have been difficult for you to agree to!" Now that things had come to this stage, it would be pointless for her to say anything pretentious. However, she was determined to take back whatever Clayton had taken from Tristan and more in the future. "It's nothing. Clayton has no other option. The outcome would have been the same even if I have agreed to his request." Right now, Clayton was trying his best to keep his company afloat. He was no longer a threat to them.

"Okay." Naturally, Sophie knew how powerful Tristan was. However, Sophie did not like the idea of her people being threatened by anyone. That made her feel very uncomfortable. Therefore, by the time Clayton managed to catch his breath, his assistant came running to him again. "Mr. Zales, something just happened at the head office again. We are unable to find out who the culprit is." His assistant was trembling all over. Who have we offended recently?

Is Phantom Attacking Lombard Group "What?" Clayton could barely believe his ears. He had just sacrificed his reputation to appease Tristan, but now a problem had occurred in the headquarters. "Who the f\*ck is this? He's making my life a living hell!" Clayton couldn't help but curse out loud. Ugh, I'm so unlucky recently. Who is trying to sabotage me behind my back? "Is it not Tristan?" "No, it isn't him. I had someone keep an eye on Mr. Tristan. I didn't know someone would sabotage us secretly!" The person they kept an eye on didn't take action, but someone else in the dark dealt them a blow. Clayton was exhausted. "All right, I got it. Head to the headquarters now.

I'm afraid I will be fired from my position as the CEO if I can't handle this properly!" He was having a crisis now and didn't have time to find out who had done this to him. His priority was to resolve the problem at the headquarters before dealing with the other issues. Sophie was pleased as she managed to teach Clayton a lesson with just a phone call. Since Clayton upset her, there was no way she'd allow him to live in peace. After dealing with him, she was about to write the lyrics for The Wheelers' song when Felix hurried in. That was the first time Sophie had ever seen Felix in a hurry, so she immediately placed her work aside. "What's wrong? Why are you in such a hurry?" she asked. Despite his demeanor, Felix was a capable man as he was working for Tristan. Sophie couldn't help but get curious when she saw him in a flustered state. "Where is Mr. Tristan? I need to talk to him now!" He wouldn't have run all the way here if it wasn't urgent.

"Something came up, so he went out." Sophie wanted to head out with him, but he refused to let her tag along as the weather was too cold. Thus, she had no choice but to stay here. "Shit. Mr. Tristan isn't around, so we're doomed!" That was the first time Felix had ever felt as if it was the end of the world. "What happened?" Felix is acting unusually. Whatever it is, he'll have to say it so we can find a solution together. "Someone is trying to hack into Lombard Group's system. I suspect it is Phantom.

Nevertheless, we didn't offend Phantom recently. Why is he or she doing this?" Felix revealed. He actually admired Phantom and wished to work with the mysterious figure in the future. "Phantom?"

I'm right here. Who else in the world can masquerade as me? "You won't know even if I tell you who that is!" Felix pulled his phone out to call Tristan. Lombard Group's system might be indestructible, but they shouldn't ignore the fact that a professional hacker was trying to hack into their system. The consequences would be dire if any of their confidential information got leaked. I know Phantom. He won't believe me if I claim to be Phantom now. Ignoring him, Sophie went to Tristan's laptop and sat down. Felix was engrossed in his phone call and didn't notice what she was doing.

If he saw the laptop screen, he would be shocked by Sophie's skills. Felix immediately reported what had happened to Tristan when the latter answered his call. "Are you saying that the IT engineers we paid millions to are nothing but accessories?" Lombard Group would only hire elites, so if they couldn't solve the problem, the company wouldn't have spent that much money to hire them in the first place. "Fine.

I've already reported the situation to you, so don't blame me if anything happens." Felix sounded helpless. "The hacker seems to be Phantom. I'll leave it to you." "What? Phantom? I'll be back right now," Tristan replied instantly. After all, Phantom was practically invincible, and his highly paid engineers weren't capable enough to stop his attacks. "Mm." Felix was pleased with Tristan's reaction. I can't be the only one panicking here. It's a serious situation if Phantom is really the one hacking into our system. Beside him, Ysabelle asked, "Felix, is Phantom that capable?" Uncle Tristan went on full alert when he heard the name. That sounds like a capable hacker.

"Mm. Phantom is a legendary hacker. It is said that he or she is one of the most capable hackers in the world. No one knows if Phantom is a man or a woman." "Oh, that sounds mysterious." Ysabelle's interest was piqued. "Sophie, have you ever heard of this hacker? I never knew such a person exists!" She knew Sophie was capable as the latter previously got the video from Willow's phone. "No, I don't know," came Sophie's icy answer. "Oh, never mind. There's no way you'll know that mysterious hacker. I wonder if Phantom is a man or a woman. I like the name. If possible, I'd like to be his or her friend!"

Someone was masquerading as Sophie to hack into Lombard Group's system, so there was no way she could ignore the matter. No matter what, she wouldn't allow anyone to misuse her name to do such a thing. Sophie chatted with them as she swiftly entered a bunch of codes into the laptop.

The hacker was good but not as good as her. Sophie hacked into the hacker's laptop and left a warning on the screen. The hacker who was pretending to be Sophie fumed as he stared at the message on his screen: Who are you to masquerade as me? He got so mad that he nearly tossed his laptop away. "What does this mean? Is that really Phantom?" the hacker's client asked. "How the f\*ck do I know if that's Phantom? Didn't you tell me that Phantom has nothing to do with Lombard Group? I warn you, don't you dare expose my identity. Otherwise, I shall make you pay for your actions!" the hacker roared. His client retorted, "Look how hot-tempered you are when you lack the necessary skills! It's just Phantom. If you can't deal with him, how dare you claim to be a hacker?" "D\*mn it! Do you know who Phantom is? Phantom is like the best hacker of all time! I'm not his match!" The client asked, "What about your laptop?"

It seemed to have broken down. "How would I know? I'll just throw it away if it doesn't work anymore." The hacker frowned. Why is he getting worked up over one laptop? "Is there no one who has better skills than Phantom?" the client demanded. He must infiltrate Lombard Group's database because he needed to get some secret information. "Yes, my mentor. But he has retired for a long while. Let's see if you're capable enough to change his mind." The hacker pulled out a cigarette and lit it up. I've lost to Phantom every single time. Who the h\*II is Phantom? I'd die to find out their identity.

Survival Instincts "Your mentor? How can I contact him?" the client urged. No matter what, I must destroy Lombard Group. "I don't know. He often travels. The last time he contacted me, he said he was in Xemrich." "I'm leaving. I didn't accomplish the mission, so I won't take your money!" The hacker spun on his heels and strode away. One day, I shall beat Phantom up to a pulp! The man said nothing and watched as he left. He knew how it felt to be defeated by someone else. "Tristan, don't you worry. I shall make sure you get a taste of your own medicine!" the man vowed viciously. When Tristan arrived at Lombard Group, the problem had already been solved. "What? Another person popped up and hacked into the hacker's laptop?" Tristan couldn't believe his ears. If the engineers I paid handsomely to protect my company's system are helpless against Phantom, who else is capable enough of hacking into his laptop? "Was that really Phantom?" he asked doubtfully.

Tristan couldn't believe that the hacker was Phantom. He had never offended Phantom, so there was no reason for Phantom to attack Lombard Group suddenly. "I don't know either. The engineers were the ones who said that!" Felix wasn't good with computers and wasn't a match for the hackers. When Tristan came over to Sophie, the latter quickly deleted all traces on the computer. "What are you doing?" Tristan asked. He noticed she was busy since his arrival. "Nothing." Sophie clicked into a game calmly and pretended to play it. "You must be bored. I shall bring you and Ysabelle out to have some fun." It was the holidays now, so they should be having fun. Her winter holidays have just started. It will last for around ten days. That's too little. "I'm fine. I'm not bored. You should go back to work. Don't worry about me." She wasn't lying when she said she wasn't bored. The hacker was slightly less capable than her, so it took her some time before she successfully hacked into his computer. However, she knew she would only improve whenever a capable rival appeared. Otherwise, it would be boring to stay the same. It was lonely to be unbeatable at the top.

"Tell the engineers to wait for me in the conference room," Tristan told Felix. Felix scratched his nose as he knew the engineers were in deep trouble. The engineers were paid handsomely to work at Lombard Group. In Chanaea, they were the highest-paid engineers. "Mr. Tristan, you shouldn't give them a hard time. No one else will be at the top forever!" Sophie tried to defend the engineers. The hacker was almost as good as her, so it was natural for the engineers to not be his match. "Nevertheless, as they are in charge of Lombard Group's network security, I think they aren't good enough at their job." "That I know. That's why I've never stopped looking for Phantom. Alas, this hacker is too mysterious." Why did he suddenly mention Phantom? "I heard that Phantom is a loner who won't accept any offers from any companies," Sophie revealed. She loved leading a carefree life and didn't want any company to restrict her freedom. Even after establishing Wings of Light due to boredom, she couldn't be bothered to manage it and got Butterfly to manage it for her.

"I know, but it doesn't hurt to try. Phantom is the only hacker in the world who can guarantee my company's network security," Tristan responded. "Mr. Tristan, did you misunderstand Phantom? No one can guarantee anything in this world." Truth be told, Sophie thought they had made her a legend when

she was just better than the average hacker. "Soph, you have no idea how capable Phantom is!" Tristan told her. That was the first time Sophie had ever heard Tristan lavishing praises on someone. "Is he or she that capable?" "Mr. Tristan, stop it. Sophie will get jealous if you continue praising Phantom!" Felix joked. No one would want to hear their boyfriend praising another person, though the person's gender remained unknown. Sophie shot Felix a look, and the latter immediately shut up. "Fine. Pretend you heard nothing from me." Tristan might be scary, but his girlfriend was scarier. It only took a look from her to scare Felix into silence. Sophie was pleased as he finally fell silent. "Sophie, stop bullying Felix! Look how pitiful he is. Never mind if Uncle Tristan picks on him. Why are you doing the same thing to him?" Ysabelle couldn't help but feel bad for Felix. Hearing that, Felix hurried over to her and took her hand. "Ysabelle, I knew it.

You're the only person in the world who cares about me. Look at how they bullied me! Poor me. Why did they make things difficult for me?" Ysabelle rolled her eyes. "Fine, you're the most pitiful man in the

world!" she responded in resignation. Poor guy. He got bullied by Uncle Tristan, and now Uncle Tristan's girlfriend bullied him, too. "Ysabelle, didn't the son of the Ackhurst family take a liking to you? He seems like a good man. Why don't you try dating him? Doesn't that sound like a good idea?" Tristan suggested suddenly. Felix nearly spat out blood in frustration. Mr. Tristan is doing this on purpose!

He knows I like Ysabelle but said that out loud. This is too much! He has gone overboard! "Uncle Tristan, I don't want to get into a relationship for now!" Ysabelle rejected his offer immediately as she glanced at Felix subconsciously. Seeing that, Felix relaxed. He felt better to know that Ysabelle was on his side. "I'm not telling you to find a boyfriend now. It won't do you harm to get to know another friend. I don't want you to get scammed by someone else." Tristan gave Felix a pointed look when he said "someone else." "The world is a dangerous place. It is impossible to judge someone's heart from his face," he added. "Dad, please forgive me!" Felix apologized immediately without caring about his dignity. I'll never complain that they bully me. They treat me well. Ysabelle and Sophie were at a loss for words. His survival instincts are kicking in, huh? "Mr. Tristan, if you don't mind, I shall introduce you to someone!" Tristan was a great help to her, so Sophie wanted to repay his favor.

Tristan arched a brow. Felix couldn't help but say, "Sophie, don't tell me you're going to introduce a girlfriend to Mr. Tristan. He loves you. Finding him a girlfriend is too..." The moment he felt an icy gaze on his back, however, he trailed off and pretended he hadn't said anything. He was a man who knew when to relent and when to persist. I'm nothing compared to Mr. Tristan!

Release Her "Your company needs a network security engineer, right? I know a friend who is good at this. Why don't you give him a chance?" "You know someone who is in this field?" Felix blurted out. "Yes, I do. You can interview him. If he isn't suitable, then you don't have to hire him for my sake." She was confident that the person she recommended would be perfect for the job. "Okay. You can ask him to come for an interview." Despite agreeing to her suggestion, Tristan wasn't really interested in that candidate. For the past few years, he found many experts who ended up disappointing him. Phantom was the only one who had roused his interest. Sophie knew Tristan only agreed to give the person a chance on her account. Obviously, he didn't trust her when she claimed the candidate was capable enough. Never mind. He'll soon know how capable the person is.

All my friends are competent and can handle difficult situations on their own. "If that's the case, cancel the meeting with the engineers." After all, they did their best, but they just weren't good enough. Thus, they didn't live up to his expectations. "Sure, Mr. Tristan. Can we go have lunch now?" Charles and Sean were still waiting for them. "Let's go. By the way, can you pick Sarah up, Felix?" Tristan asked. Sarah had called him a while ago. When she learned that Sophie was with him, she insisted on having lunch together with them. "All right. Ysabelle, come with me!" Felix whispered in Ysabelle's ear, "You need to come with me. I don't really have any common topics with Sarah, so it will be boring if I were to go alone." "Felix, how dare you say it's boring to be with Aunt Sarah? She'd definitely teach you a lesson!" Ysabelle retorted. Sarah was an incredible woman. "Hey, Ysabelle. How could you do this to me? Are you bullying me just like them?" Felix protested. Did I do anything wrong? I like Ysabelle, but that's not a crime. Why are they all bullying me? "Fine, I shall come with you.

Uncle Tristan, Felix and I shall go pick Aunt Sarah up!" After Felix and Ysabelle left, Tristan asked, "You don't mind having lunch with them, right?" Sophie shook her head. "It's fine. I don't mind." It just so happened that she had something to hand to Sarah and could do so during today's meeting. After all,

she would be busy starting tomorrow. "Let's go. We shall head to Blossom Garden first. Charles and Sean are already waiting for us there." Tristan took her down jacket and helped her to put it on. He even pulled out her hair that got stuck beneath the down jacket and put her hat on for her. They had to put on proper clothing that was warm enough for the weather. After that, Tristan put on his own jacket and led her out. When Daphne saw that they were leaving, she bade them goodbye politely, "Goodbye, Mr. Tristan. Ms. Tanner, please visit again some other time!" Mr. Tristan becomes gentle when Ms. Tanner is here. He isn't that scary at work anymore.

"Everyone can get off work on time today. Get some rest back at home," Tristan told Daphne. "Got it. Thanks for your concern, Mr. Tristan!" Daphne responded happily. Ah, finally I have time to go on blind dates! Daphne was a great woman, but work kept her busy. Therefore, she didn't have time to get herself a boyfriend. "Ms. Castillo, find yourself a boyfriend in your free time. Don't just focus on your work." Daphne was hired by Lombard Group right after she graduated from university. Later, she was assigned to work for Tristan and poured all her efforts into work. She was a great secretary. It was an

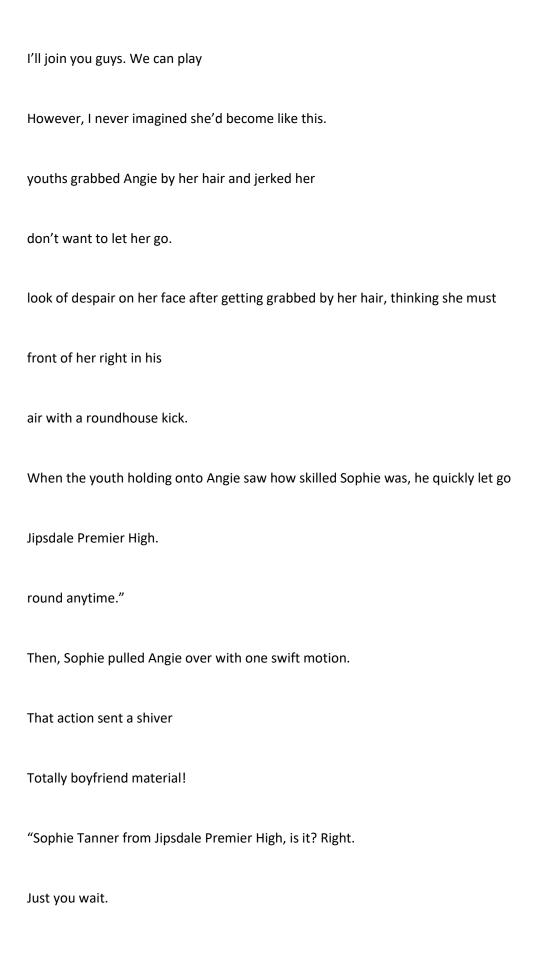
awkward moment for Daphne. "Mr. Tristan..." she trailed off in embarrassment as her employer had just mentioned her personal life. "I hope you find your partner in life soon. When you get married, I'll give you a month off!" Tristan was of the opinion that women would still need a family no matter how capable they could be. Daphne nodded. "Thank you for your concern, Mr. Tristan. I'll do my very best!" Daphne knew she was no longer young. Many of her peers' kids were already toddlers. Alas, she had yet to find the right man. Tristan put an arm around Sophie's shoulders and led her into the elevator. "Oh, dear. Look how gentle Mr. Tristan was! I never knew he would act this way when he's in love!" "Yes! I entered his office to get him to sign a document just now, and I saw him helping Ms. Tanner put on her jacket and hat! Oh, I can't believe such a man exists.

He's rich and thoughtful!" "Right! That's new to me!" Daphne chuckled when she heard the other secretaries chatting about how Tristan treated his girlfriend. He's right. It's time for me to date a man. I can't stay single this long. "Ms. Castillo, you've worked for Mr. Tristan the longest. This should be his first girlfriend, right?" one secretary asked curiously. "All right, we should stop gossiping. Pack up your

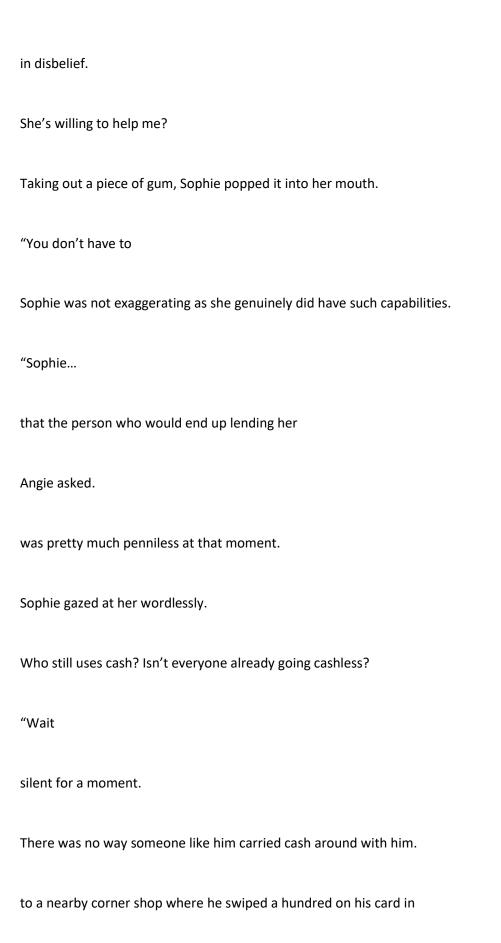
stuff and get off work. You used to complain about working overtime, right? Mr. Tristan said we can get off work early today!" Instead of joining in their discussion, Daphne started packing her stuff to leave. Just like the others, perhaps I will go on blind dates to find a suitable man. We'll then get married one day. Tristan drove Sophie to Blossom Garden. On the way there, Sophie suddenly asked him to stop the car. "What's wrong?" Tristan cast her a confused look. Sophie pointed at Angie, who was surrounded by a few young men. "Who is that?" Tristan didn't know who Angie was, so he couldn't be bothered about her plight. "A classmate of mine.

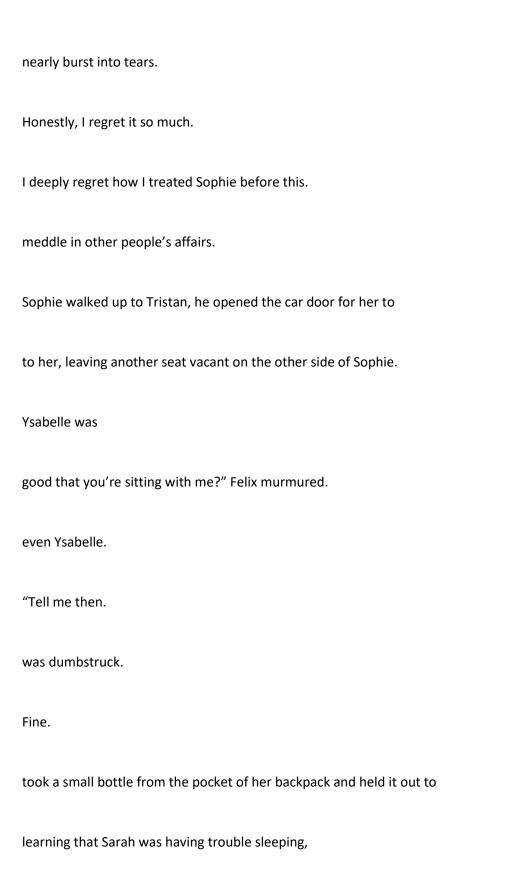
Wait for me. I'll go find out what happened!" The post on the forum was Willow's idea, and Angie was just a scapegoat. Sophie got out of the car and went over to them. The young men weren't afraid when they saw a pretty woman coming toward them. In an arrogant tone, they asked, "Gorgeous, want to have fun with us? It's fun to beat someone else up!" A slap landed on Angie's cheek following their words. At once, blood trickled down the corner of Angie's lips. She stared at Sophie and wondered why the latter was here. It was Sophie and Willow's fault that I ended up in this state. I'd still be in Jipsdale Premier High if it weren't for them. I'd be able to get into a prestigious university. However, my life changed completely, no thanks to them. "Let her go!" Sophie commanded icily.

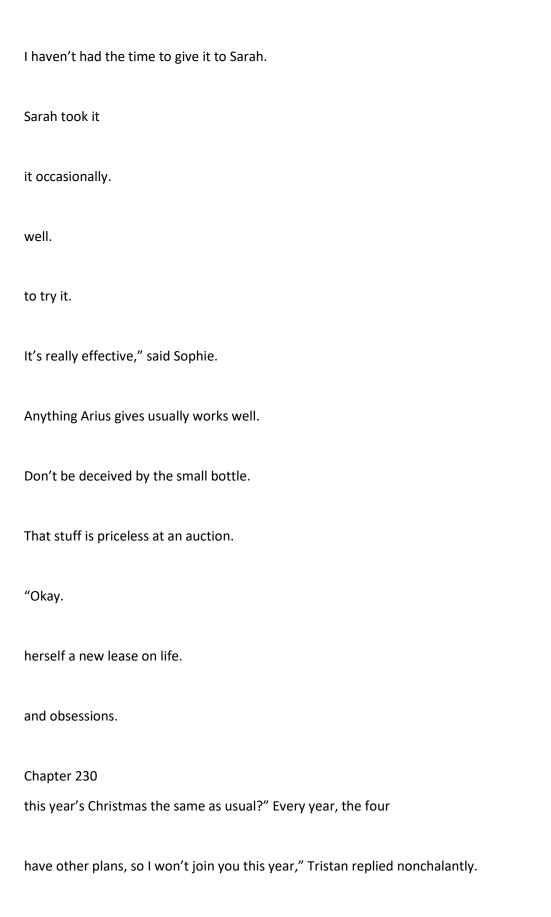
The young men shared a look in silence. Even Angie shot her an incredulous look. Is she here to help me instead of watching me make a fool of myself? "Why? Don't you understand me?" Sophie added impatiently. She didn't want to repeat herself. "Oh, young lady. If we let her go, are you going to join us?" The young men glanced at her lecherously when they realized how curvy her body was.



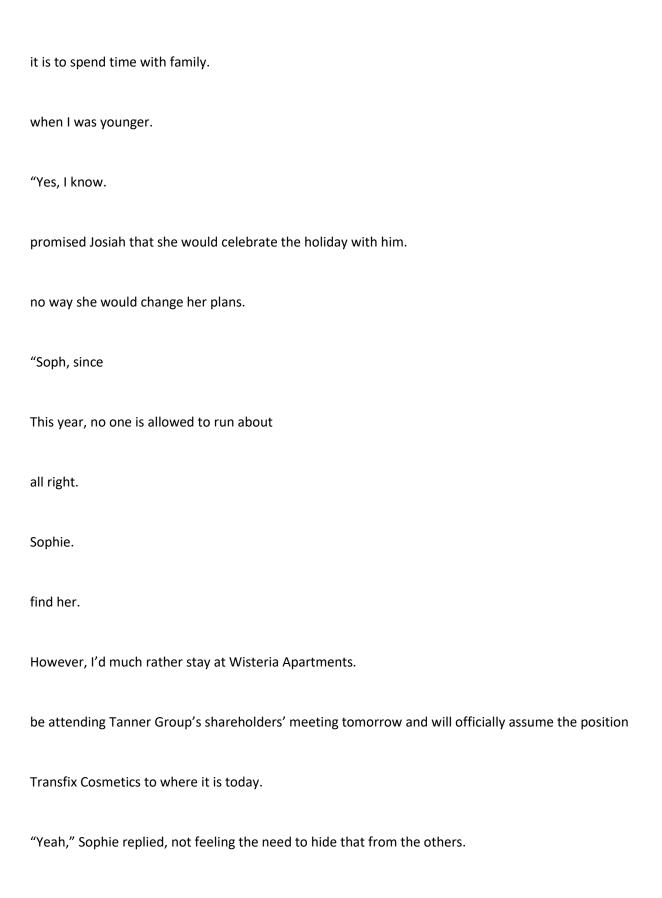


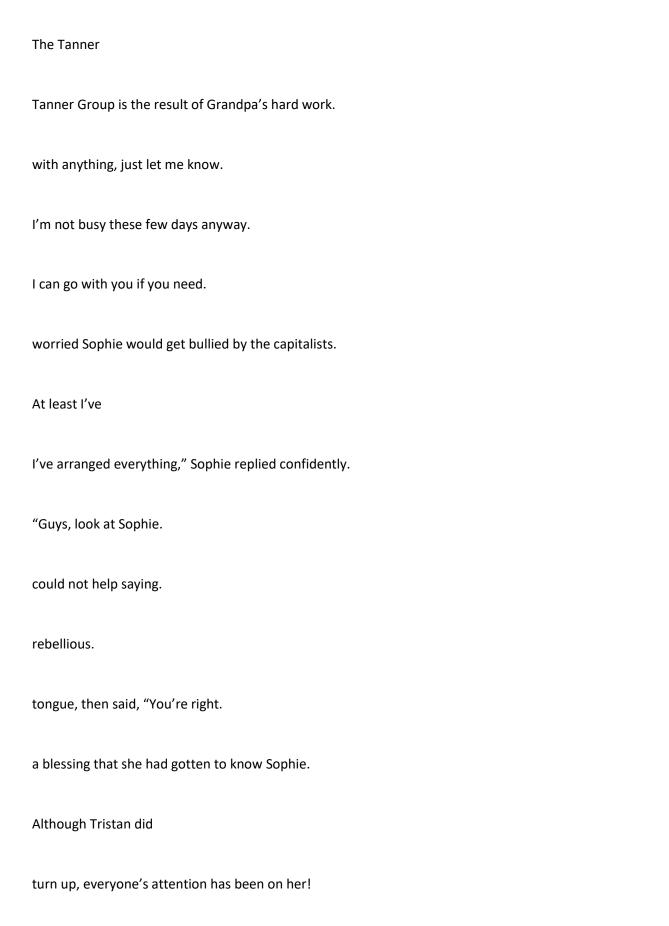


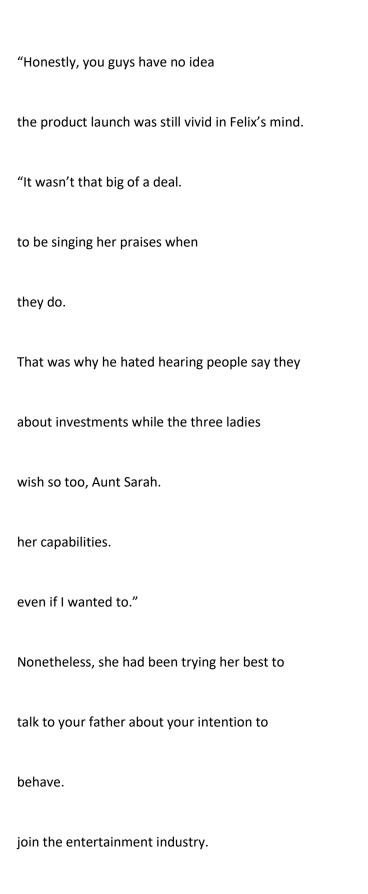


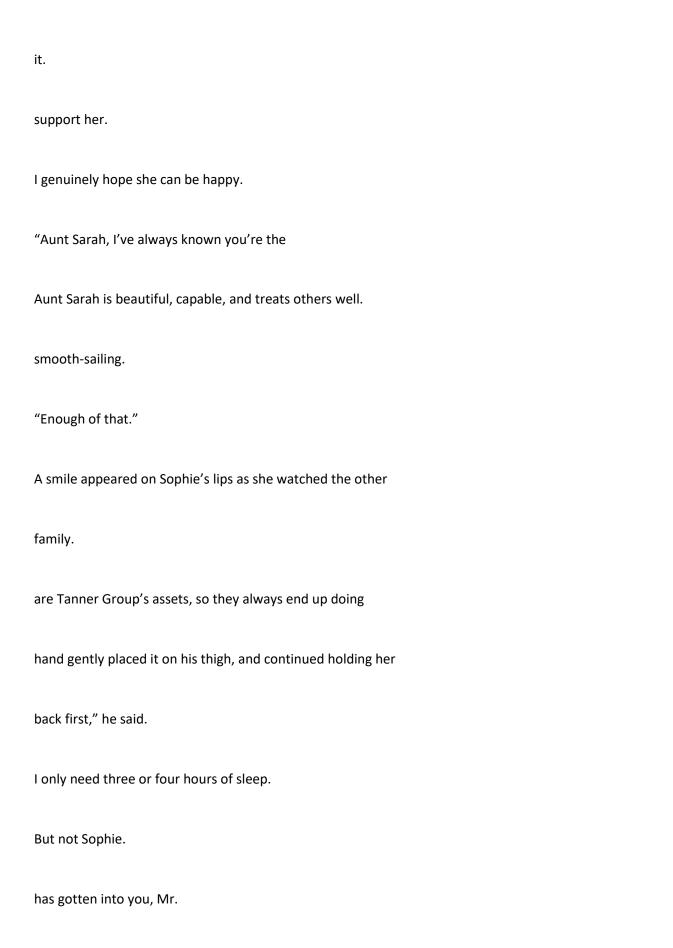


The other three were silent and could
really forget all about their friends after getting a girlfriend.
That's no fun.
"Don't look at me.
I'm busy and won't be with Mr.
Tristan," Sophie responded.
they?
"Huh?"
Felix could hardly believe his ears.
them! How awkward!
Suddenly, Felix felt a little
Ms.
is a time for family.
Everything else doesn't matter.
up.









Tristan?" Felix protested.

However, since he got to know Sophie, his self-control has been shocking!.