

## **Pursuing 25**

### **Chapter 25 Give Me A Wide Berth**

“No.” Though Tristan’s tone was light, he did not look at her.

Sophie became even more certain of her hunch.

Ysabelle retired to her room for a shower after dinner and left Sophie and Tristan in the living room.

“Why are you upset?” Sophie asked, still puzzled.

“I want to be the first person you think of whenever you run into trouble.”

Being inexperienced in relationships, Sophie might never have known if he did not bring it up.

“I know,” she remarked noncommittedly. She was already used to solving her own problems.

Tristan did not know what else to do.

With a sudden movement, he reached forward and took her hands.

Feeling her tiny hands nestled within his vast and warm ones, Sophie felt her heartbeat race.

He made her feel very safe, as if he would be able to solve all her problems no matter what happened.

As the witness, Ysabelle accompanied Sophie to court on the day of the trial.

Upon arriving outside the court, they saw Queenie and her uncle.

The former scoffed at the sight of Sophie and Ysabelle.

“They’re the ones who have assaulted me, Uncle Jason. You must avenge me.”

Jason cast an eye on the two girls standing across him and found them both exceptional beauties.

“Relax. I’ve never lost a case.”

“I’ll see you inside, Uncle Jason.” Queenie sent her uncle in to prepare before walking over.

“I’m sure you saw all of that. That’s my uncle. You’re screwed today, Sophie.” I will put Sophie behind bars no matter how long it takes.

Sophie failed to suppress a snort.

“What’s the matter? Scared silly?” Queenie did not like the smile on her nemesis’ face. She found it nauseating.

“You’ve hurt Ysabelle, Queenie. I’m not letting you go for that. Enjoy being smug while you still can. I’m going to oblige you by putting you behind bars today.”

Some people seem to forget what pain feels like once the injury heals. She needs a scar that will never heal.

“Still in denial at this point.” Queenie strode briskly into the courtroom, leaving Sophie and Ysabelle to await their lawyer.

Jeffrey Goode saw Sophie as soon as he exited his car and hurried over.

“Apologies for being late.”

“Not at all. You’re just in time.”

The three of them entered together.

Queenie turned to Jason the moment she saw Sophie entering with her lawyer.

“Do you know Sophie’s lawyer, Uncle Jason?”

Jason looked up and saw Jeffrey by Sophie’s side.

“It’s him!” Jason’s hands that were going through the briefs froze.

“What’s wrong? Is he any good?” Queenie asked anxiously. I do not want to go to prison. My future is still filled with possibilities!

“Good? You underestimate your uncle, Queenie. Don’t worry. We’re winning this suit today.”

Jeffrey was the opposing counsel on more than one of Jason’s cases, and he had never won.

Jeffrey caught sight of Jason as well.

“We’re going up against Jason!”

“Do you know him?” Sophie seated herself, not sounding very interested.

“Let me find you a better lawyer, Sophie.”

“Why?”

"I've gone up against Jason several times before and have never won."

His last remark was heard by Jason, who was coming over to greet them at that moment.

"You're pretty self-aware, Jeffrey. Haven't I told you before to stay down when you have a case against me? It wouldn't help your reputation to be losing all the time."

Jeffrey turned green and did not offer a refute.

He is right. I am a loser. Losers have no right to any dignity.

"Don't worry, Jeff. The case is crystal clear. They will lose."

Jason smirked. "The world is not all black and white, young lady. Many things aren't as simple as you think." I can turn anything into the truth.

"How can you call yourself a lawyer?" Sophie asked.

"It's not your place to decide whether or not I'm worthy. Remember when you're in there that everything that happens is caused by you hiring a second-rate attorney."

The judge's arrival signified that the court was in officially in session. Jason returned to his seat.

"What did you say to them, Uncle Jason?"

"Nothing."

Jeffrey, on the other hand, was deathly pale.

“You’d better find someone else, Sophie.” I can’t do this. Sometimes, I even wonder if I’m suited to be a lawyer.

“I’ve said it once before,” she reiterated firmly, “you are my lawyer.” What is he afraid of? I’m the defendant, and I’m not even that nervous.

“We’ll find someone else if he can’t manage, Soph.” Ysabelle did not want to see her friend behind bars.

“It’ll be fine. There’s still me.”

Unable to refute those words, Jeffrey steeled himself and stepped forward for the opening statements.

Jason went first. “Your Honor, my client, Queenie Lane, has her nose broken by the defendant, Sophie Tanner. Here is the medical report. Furthermore, the defendant shows no remorse for her malicious assault. I believe the case is clear.”

The judge turned to Sophie.

“Do you have anything to say about the plaintiff’s version of events?”

“I did commit the assault,” Sophie admitted.

“Your Honor, the defendant has already exhibited such sadistic tendencies despite her tender age. I recommend teaching her a lesson lest she becomes a menace to society when she’s older.”

Sophie chortled at Jason’s words.

The judge’s eyes flicked to her at once. “Is the defense holding the court in contempt?”

“Your Honor, I only laughed because I find the plaintiff’s claim ridiculous. First and foremost, I do admit that I struck the plaintiff. However, the reason for my conduct has to be clarified. I will not be held responsible for the plaintiff’s damaging actions to society.”

Sophie cleared her throat. “At six-thirty on the twenty-third, I received a phone call from the plaintiff informing me that my friend, Ysabelle Lombard, was in her hands. If I did not make an appearance, she would hurt Ysabelle. Out of consideration for my classmate’s safety, I arrived at the designated location alone and saw that a dozen gangsters under Queenie’s employ had tied Ysabelle to a stool. There were visible bruises on Ysabelle’s face. To rescue the victim, I began to fight them. Though I did strike Queenie by accident, it was done entirely in self-defense.”

“The plaintiff, Queenie,” Sophie continued as she pointed, gathering steam, “has committed kidnapping in exchange for ransom. According to our statutes, kidnapping to extort or hold one hostage warrants a

minimum of ten years to life imprisonment and a fine or the confiscation of their assets.”

Sophie provided her own rebuttal before her lawyer even opened his mouth.

She then handed the surveillance footage of Queenie taking Ysabelle, the screenshot of the message sent by Harvey, and the voice recording of Queenie blackmailing Sophie to the judge.

Jason turned pale.

How was I not informed of the kidnapping?

“What is this, Queenie?” If she had told me earlier, I would still be able to prepare for it. How am I going to argue my way out of this now?