

Pursuing 281

Chapter 281 Agency

"Yep." Oh boy. Willow's going to explode if she hears that. The guy didn't even see what she was trying to do. Tristan kissed her lips and held her cheeks. "Don't worry, Sophie." "Is there something I should be worried about?" "I'm a loyal guy, and I will only date one woman my whole life. Anyone and everyone else doesn't matter." If he didn't even fall for a woman like Winter, someone like Willow would have no chance to seduce him. "Oh, I'm so sorry you had to go through that ordeal, then." "Not exactly. I can take anything as long as you're with me. Willow? Willow who? Never heard of her." "You can be sharp-tongued, huh?" "Nope. I call that 'not wasting my time on people I don't care.'" He's at it again. "The girls in Transfix Cosmetics are nice to you."

"Yeah." Sophie never wanted them to get hurt because of her. Sophie and Ysabelle arrived at the airport at about five in the afternoon the next day to welcome Mark and the others. Christmas was drawing near, so Sophie told them to come back. They had families here, and Christmas was a season of reunions, after all. "I'm so excited, Sophie!" "You'll lose that excitement after you see them a few times. They're regular people like you and me." "Really? I can hang out with them?" Just the thought of hanging out with Mark and his gang whipped her into a frenzied state. The Wheelers took the VIP passage, and Sunny saw Sophie before he even emerged from the passage. "Mark, that's Sophie, isn't it? She's the welcoming committee?" The aloof Sophie came to welcome us. What an honor. Mark saw Sophie as well, and he waved at her. Eventually, the whole band approached Sophie and Ysabelle. "Thanks for all your help, Sophie, and sorry. We'll rise to the top again. We won't let you down," Mark promised quickly. Getting out of a contract with Clayton was arduous, so he knew Sophie must have gone through a lot just for them. "It's all right. We're friends here."

The reason I set up an entertainment company is so everyone can have fun with music without worries." As for profits. Well, we'll see how that goes. "Don't worry, Sophie. We're really famous, actually. And with the new song you made for us? That album is going to be a hit." The Wheelers

wouldn't let her lose money. They could even carry a whole entertainment company on their backs while they were under Clayton's tyranny. If they did everything right, fame and fortune would come their way, eventually. "You're our sponsor now, Sophie," Sunny suddenly said. "So tell us if you ever need anything." Huh. He's technically right. "Oh, and here's Ysabelle Lombard. You guys met before, and she's one of our company's artists." No contract was signed yet, but she did promise Ysabelle to take her on board, so here she was. "Hey, Ysabelle. Come to me if you need anything. I'll help." Sunny wrapped his arm around her shoulders. "Really? I can come to you if I need anything?" Ysabelle adored Sunny. He's captivating when playing the drums and only loses to Sophie in the skill by a little.

“Yeah.” “Sophie’s friend is our friend. If you need anything, we’ll help you,” Mark chimed in. “Take Ysabelle with you after Christmas, after the album is out.” Ysabelle has a lot to learn if she wants to debut in this industry. “We’re releasing the album after Christmas?” A frown furrowed Mark’s brows. That’s a bit too fast. “What? Is there any problem?” She didn’t think there were any problems at all. “No.” He was just worried about the cash flow since running a company was not easy. “I’m the sponsor here. Don’t worry about the money.” If money’s their concern, then it’s no concern at all. I have money. “I’ll use my savings on this release, Sophie.” Sunny was worried about her. Sophie’s just an eighteen-year-old girl. She doesn’t have that much money. “Yeah. We’ve been working for a while, and we all have some money for this.” Even if they lost all their money, they could just start all over again. Ysabelle was moved by their willingness to sacrifice just to protect Sophie.

“You guys should trust your sponsor, you know.” Is she really seeing herself as the sponsor? “All right, that’s enough talk. Everyone’s hungry, I bet. First, we need to go back.” “Been a while since we had some BBQ. Let’s do that at my place,” Sunny suggested. He missed the days of having simple BBQs back when they were just some poor guys. There wasn’t even any meat, but those were happy days. They were poor, but the joy was always around. “Sure.” Sophie was reminded of the good old days too. They had no money, but those were the sweeter days. Tristan sent out two cars for them, so they split into two teams. Sophie, Ysabelle, Mark, and Sunny took up one car while the others took up the other.

“We should probably get some ingredients.” It had been a while since their return, and they had nothing in their fridge. “Sure.” Sophie had no objections, so she drove them to the supermarket. Ysabelle thought it was a new experience seeing fresh BBQ ingredients. She was used to BBQs, but all of the food was already prepped. This was her first time seeing them in their original forms. Mark and Sunny were hard at work. They were wearing black masks and pushing shopping carts across the food area. Mark went for the meats, while Sunny targeted the greens. “I feel useless, Sophie. I can’t even do anything.” The guys are more useful than I am. “You don’t have to do anything besides eating.” Sophie took Ysabelle to the snacks area. It would take some time before the BBQ, so they would need some snacks to stave off their hunger. Sophie took some chips off the shelf and put them in the cart. Suddenly, her phone rang. She stopped walking and whipped out her phone. “Hello?” “Where are you?” Tristan asked. He wanted to ask her out for dinner.

“I’m getting something in the supermarket for a BBQ session with Mark and his band. What do you need?” Tristan was a little frustrated. She’s having dinner with other guys? What about me? “It’s nothing. I haven’t had dinner yet.” That was an obvious hint. Now invite me to the BBQ. “So?” Then, get something to eat. Why are you even telling me that?

Tristan suddenly felt as though someone had hit him on his head. "I can't eat on my own." He, Tristan Lombard, a cold and aloof man, had been turned into a lovelorn fool who couldn't eat without Sophie around. She was speechless. It took her quite some time before she finally found the words to speak. "We're going to Mark's mansion and will be having BBQ. You don't know them well," said Sophie. Won't he lose his appetite under these circumstances? "It'll be fine. I see your friends as my own. Besides, I know where the mansion is, so I can drive there on my own."

"You don't need to come to pick me up." Sophie couldn't speak. She remained in a daze even after she hung up the call. Why do I get the feeling that Tristan just conned me? "What's wrong? Who was it?" "Tristan." "What does he want?" "He wants to join us," replied Sophie. She had finally accepted that inevitable reality. Gah, who cares? I won't be the one who feels awkward, anyway. Mark handed his money over quickly when it was time to pay. He wanted to treat everyone that day. Sophie was going to carry one of the four heavy grocery bags, but Sunny stopped her. "Nope. You ladies are not allowed to do any chores when we're around," said Sunny. He took two bags, and Mark picked up the other two. The two ladies followed closely behind them without needing to carry anything. Mark didn't mind driving, so they had let their driver go home early. The four of them took the car back. The three musicians carried the grocery bags into the kitchen to prepare for the BBQ right away. Ysabelle followed them and couldn't help being impressed when she saw them working in the kitchen. Oh my gosh, these people are incredible! Ysabelle sighed in admiration when she left the kitchen. "I never knew that my idols could cook that well."

Sophie glanced at the three musicians bustling away in the kitchen. "Oh, they actually aren't that great. Mark's the real chef here." Mark and Sunny had gone to shower and left the miscellaneous tasks to the others. "Wow, is that for real?" asked Ysabelle. She became even more excited because the chef in question was Mark. As far as she was concerned, he was the cool guy who dominated every stage he

had been on. I wonder how hot he'll look when he cooks. Their conversation was still ongoing when Mark and Sunny returned. "Sophie, it's been a while since you had Mark's spicy crayfish, right? Oh, I gotta tell you. His cooking has gotten so good that the spicy crayfish he makes is perfect!" "Come on, stop chatting already. Let's go help the others," said Mark as he dragged Sunny away. Gah, this kid is too talkative. "Sophie, is it really okay for us to sit here and do nothing?" Ysabelle felt a little bad because she was essentially being served. "You can help if you want to, but is there anything you can do in the kitchen?" challenged Sophie. Sophie's skill truly was inferior compared to Mark's, and the others would surely chase her out of the kitchen if she were to go in. Hence, she decided to just stay put outside. She'd rather not embarrass herself, but she wouldn't stop Ysabelle from doing the same. Ysabelle couldn't reply to Sophie's question. Okay, I guess she's right. I'm just going to embarrass myself in there.

She definitely shouldn't offer to help because there was nothing she could do well. Hence, it was better if she stayed put. BBQ was easier and quicker to prepare for the party of seven, so they sat around the dining table about an hour later. Mark had made a few types of homemade sauces even though they

were just having a small party. There was an incredible selection of sauces, and a plate of delicious-looking spicy crayfish was sitting at the side. Everything made Ysabelle idolize Mark even more. "How can all of you be so incredible? These look almost as though they were made by chefs in a restaurant." "Oh, puh-lease. Those chefs have nothing on Mark at all," replied Sunny as he smiled proudly. Everyone was about to chow down when the doorbell rang. "Who could it be? I don't think anyone else knows that we are back, right?" asked Sunny as he got up to answer the door. They had always been the odd ones out in the entertainment industry, so they didn't have many friends. To his surprise, the first thing he saw after he opened the door was Tristan's incredibly handsome face. Sunny was rather hostile toward Tristan because it was obvious that the latter had his eyes on Sophie. "Why are you here? Are there any emergencies? If not, please leave. We're busy." Tristan couldn't be bothered to argue with the guy as he walked past the latter right away. Sunny ended up standing there, stunned. What the hell is wrong with that guy?

I didn't say he could come in! "Oy, you're trespassing on private property! Leave right now, or I will call the cops on you!" As far as Sunny was concerned, anyone who tried to steal Sophie from their band was a villain. That was why he couldn't get himself to like Tristan. Mark looked rather upset when he saw Tristan there as well. "Uncle Tristan, you're here!" said Ysabelle. She felt a little awkward because she was at someone else's place. It was rather mortifying that her uncle came uninvited. Ah, it'd be so embarrassing if we get kicked out of here! "I heard about how you kids are having BBQ, so I thought I'd drop by and join you." Tristan made his way to Sophie and sat down beside her. He looked at ease the entire time. "No one invited you. Isn't it a little weird for you to be here for no reason?" My gosh, are the rich always this shameless? "What do you mean? I'm invited. Sophie invited me here. Besides, she and I are family, so why can't I be here?" "You're her family?" Sunny was so angry that he wanted to kick Tristan out of the house. Unfortunately, the latter's aura was too intimidating, so he was too scared to do anything. "Yes, I am. What's wrong with that statement? Do you have a problem with it?" challenged Tristan. He acted as though what he was doing was the social norm. Sunny was so angry that he wanted to drive a fork into Tristan's eye. Oh, f*ck him! Sophie didn't even agree to be his girlfriend yet! "Ugh! Sophie, will you promise me something? I really hate that dude, so please don't accept him as your boyfriend, okay?" I will accept anyone but this annoying *sshole! "All right, come on. The meat's ready," said Sophie as she got Sunny some beef. That shut Sunny right up. As he ate, he glanced tauntingly at Tristan. See that? At the end of the day, we are the ones Sophie cares about the most. That's why she got me some beef. "I knew it, Sophie! You love me the most. That's why you remembered that beef is my favorite, even though it's been ages since we last hung out." Sophie was at a loss for words. The truth was that she only gave him the beef because it was done cooking at that exact moment. "Come on, Sunny. Stop complaining and just eat up," said Mark. Tristan didn't hold back. It was a home-cooked meal, but Mark's cooking truly was impressive, so everyone had a great time. Tristan got some beef for Sophie as well. "You should eat more." Sophie murmured an affirmative reply. Mark set his fork down and began removing the crayfish's shells for Sophie.

He remembered that she especially enjoyed eating crayfish. His movements were swift and smooth as he deshelled the crayfish. When he finished, he placed it right onto Sophie's plate. Tristan glared when he saw Mark doing that. Judging from the practiced movements, it seemed he had done it a hundred

times before. "You don't need to worry about me, Mark. I can remove the shells on my own." "It's fine. I can remove the crayfish's shell for you. You find the task troublesome, right?" Ysabelle was dumbstruck. I didn't know that Mark could be that sweet. He even helped Sophie remove the shell! If Mark's fans were to see this side of him, they would all shriek and go insane. Ysabelle couldn't help sneaking a peek at her uncle. As suspected, Tristan was glaring angrily.

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Chapter 283

Tristan Is Drunk "It's a gathering, so let's have some alcohol," suggested Sunny all of a sudden. He was too scared to outright fight Tristan, so he figured he'd settle for getting the guy drunk. The Wheelers had five members, so there was no way Tristan could out-drink all of them. "Sure." Mark got up and went to retrieve a treasured bottle of vodka. He had spent a fortune to buy that bottle. Sunny stared when he saw Mark returning with that particular bottle. Isn't that his most treasured bottle of vodka? Why is he getting it for us? Mark ignored Sunny's stare. He simply popped the bottle open and poured everyone half a glass of vodka. Sophie knew her alcohol well. Even the scent of the vodka was exquisite. She picked up her glass and sipped some. The taste was perfect. "This is amazing," complimented Sophie before she took another sip. "Is it really that good?" asked Ysabelle. She had never had vodka before, but the way Sophie appeared satisfied made Ysabelle take a sip. "Oh, my gosh!" She wasn't used to the liquor and almost spat everything out. Sophie couldn't help giggling when she saw Ysabelle struggling like that. The former got the latter a piece of tissue. "Maybe you should just stick to regular wine." The vodka was good, but the alcohol content was ridiculously high. For those who had never taken vodka before, it was easy for them to get drunk quickly. "Mr. Tristan, this is the first time we drink together. I'm sure you won't turn down our offer to drink up, right?" I'm sure the rich are acquainted with exotic vodkas like these. "Of course not," replied Tristan as he picked his glass up. He wasn't an idiot and knew that the vodka was so rare that it was virtually impossible to procure it, even with all the money in the world. He sipped at the liquor. Not bad. "Thank you for your treat today." "Come on. We're all men here, so what's with all the excess politeness? Let's just drink up," replied Sunny immediately. He had only suggested getting some alcohol because he wanted to get Tristan drunk. "Okay, if you say so," replied Tristan. He knew what Sunny was planning right away. This kid has been hostile toward me from the very beginning. It's obvious what his plans are. "I'm young and can be hotheaded sometimes, Mr. Tristan. Please don't take my rude words earlier to heart. Here, I will drink up to apologize for that," said Sunny. He downed an entire shot after that. Tristan picked up his glass and downed his drink as well. Sunny was just a punk to him, so he couldn't care less. Mark filled

his own glass. He didn't say anything, but he nodded at Tristan and raised his drink at the latter before downing it. Tristan topped up his glass and tossed back another shot. The three other band members took turns toasting Tristan. After that, Sunny started the cycle again. Ysabelle inched toward Sophie and

whispered, "What do we do, Sophie? The tension between the men is so high." I knew it. Uncle Tristan being here causes all sorts of trouble. Sophie poured herself another glass of vodka. She enjoyed her drink and watched from the side. "Ignore them. Just enjoy your food." "Oh, okay." Can Uncle Tristan handle drinking against all five of them? It'd be so embarrassing for him if he puked in front of Sophie. Sunny was the first one to fall after having too many shots. He collapsed against the couch and just laid there. Mark and Tristan battled until the very end. Mark was a man of few words, but it was clear he didn't like Tristan either. That was understandable since they were all super protective of Sophie. "That's enough. It's getting late," said Sophie to put a stop to everything. The two of them had drunk too much, and if they continued, they would end up in the hospital. "Okay." "Okay." Both men were surprisingly obedient. "I need to use the washroom," said Mark. He was actually having a hard time keeping up. "Are you okay?" asked Sophie in a concerned voice. Mark nodded. "I'm fine. Don't worry. I'm good," replied Mark. He ran to the toilet as soon as he finished talking. Ysabelle followed along because she was worried. All she heard was Mark retching after he entered the toilet. That's right... Superstars are still human, and he had too much to drink, so it's normal for him to puke. She left quietly. "He vomited," said Ysabelle when she saw Sophie. "Okay." Mark can hold his alcohol pretty well, and even he is vomiting. Tristan probably isn't that much better off, either. "How are you doing? Are you okay?" asked Sophie. Tristan responded by leaning on her shoulder. He closed his eyes, too tired to say another word. That was how Tristan was. He would always become extremely quiet after he drank too much. "What do we do now, Sophie?" asked Ysabelle. Everyone had indulged in alcohol, so no one could drive home. "It'll be fine. You and your Uncle Tristan shouldn't go home today. Let's just head to Wisteria Apartments instead." It was obvious that Tristan was a little drunk as well. Hence, there was no saying what would happen if she brought him back to his place in his inebriated state. She would rather take care of him in person. "Okay, then I'll call the driver," replied Ysabelle before she left to make the call. "Sophie, you and the others don't need to go home today.

Just stay here at our place tonight," offered Sunny, who felt much better after resting. They had an extra room, and he thought it was fine to just let Tristan sleep on the couch. "Nah, I'll get the driver to come and get us. You should go check up on Mark." That was when Sunny finally realized that Mark had been in the toilet for quite some time. Holy sh*t! Tristan is too good at drinking. I can't believe we failed to beat him, even though it was a battle of one against five. "Okay, then take care. I'll go check up on Mark now." "Okay." The driver showed up at that moment. Sophie helped Tristan out of the house. When the driver saw them, he got out of the car immediately to open the door for them. "Mr. Tristan, are you okay?" asked the driver. He had never seen Tristan that drunk before. "I'm fine." Tristan kept leaning on Sophie's shoulder, even after he got into the car. He had indeed had too much to drink that day, so his head was aching a little. The car drove down the road for quite some time before Sophie suddenly asked the driver to stop. The driver parked the car at the side of the road. "Is there anything you need, Ms. Tanner? I can buy it for you," offered the driver immediately. "There's no need for that. Just wait here for a while." Sophie hopped out of the car and went into the pharmacy on the other side of the road. She took a box of medicine from the shelves, paid for it, then hurried back into the car. "What were you doing?" asked Tristan. He was currently in a daze, so he had no idea what she had gone out to do. "It's nothing. I just bought some stuff. Go back to sleep. I'll wake you up once we reach Wisteria Apartments." "Okay." Tristan was especially obedient when he was drunk. When they reached the underground parking lot, the driver got out of the car to help Tristan up, but the latter turned the offer

down. "You can go home now. I'm not drunk." "Okay, Mr. Tristan." Tristan claimed he wasn't drunk, but as soon as the driver was gone, he leaned on Sophie as though he couldn't walk properly. Sophie glared at him. "Didn't you say that you weren't drunk?" "I'm not. It's just a headache," answered Tristan in a surprisingly pitiful tone. Sophie was frustrated, but there was nothing she could do about it. Resigned, she helped him to the elevator. Ysabelle was speechless. He is obviously messing with Sophie. Gah, never mind. I'll just pretend I never noticed anything. This evil uncle of mine would kick me out if I stepped on his toes. He won't even care that it's the middle of the night. Ysabelle didn't say another word. When they reached their place, she fled into her room, determined to not be a third wheel. It was not the right thing to do because men, when drunk, could turn into monsters. Hence,

leaving Sophie alone to deal with the matter was borderline cruel. The man in question was her uncle, though, so it was a different story. She suddenly wished that something more could happen between Sophie and Tristan.

Chapter 284

You Smell So Good "Hey!" complained Sophie when she saw Ysabelle running into the room, but her complaints were useless. The former was stuck with taking care of Tristan on her own, and that left her speechless. Sophie had no choice but to take Tristan to his room and help him get onto his bed. After that, she crouched down to help him take his shoes off. Unfortunately, he sat up as soon as she crouched down. That confused her a little. "What's wrong?" "Nothing. I can take my own shoes off," replied Tristan.

He simply couldn't bear to let her help him take his shoes off. Sophie couldn't help chuckling when she saw how quickly he took his shoes off. Tristan pulled her toward him when he heard her laughter. The two of them lay on the bed after that. "What are you doing? Be honest, Mr. Tristan. Is this whole drunk thing an act?" asked Sophie. Why else would he refuse to let me help him take his shoes off? Tristan closed his eyes. He refused to answer that question, but he explained himself. "I don't want you to serve me because you are the one person I want to love and spoil." That was why he refused to let her help him, even when he was drunk and feeling terrible. "I would've been okay with it," replied Sophie.

She didn't actually care. "But I'm not okay with it," said Tristan. He wanted to be with her and wanted to be the one to love and spoil her. He didn't want her to have to do anything she shouldn't have to. Tristan had his eyes closed the entire time, but his words were extremely touching. Sophie couldn't help pecking him on the lips. The way he spoiled and loved her truly caused her heart to stir. Unfortunately, that kiss became the spark that ignited the overwhelming passion in Tristan. He flipped over, pinned her under him, then kissed her fervently. She had no idea how difficult it had been for him to suppress his desires, and her kiss definitely broke his last shred of control. At first, the kiss was deeply passionate,

and it felt as though it would burn Sophie up. After the initial flames, the kiss became sweeter and softer. Sophie could still detect the sweet aftertaste of that exquisite vodka in his

mouth, and when he kissed her like that, she felt as though she were drunk, too. When their lips parted, he caressed her red lips with his thumb. "What am I going to do now?"

"I really want you," murmured Tristan. He simply couldn't hold his passions in any longer, but he had no choice. He had to bottle everything up, and that was truly horrible. Sophie rested on the bed, taking in how Tristan was struggling. "Since you're not drunk, you should go to bed. I'm going to sleep now, too." "Stay with me a little longer." Sophie fished a box of medicine out of her pocket. "Here." "What's this?" asked Tristan, who saw the medicine as soon as he opened his eyes. "It's for your headache," replied Sophie. I got this for you. Aren't I a thoughtful person? "Feed me." Sophie was rendered speechless. Despite being annoyed, she took the medicine out of the box and fed one into his mouth. "Sleep well," said Sophie. She was going to get out of his bed right away, but Tristan refused to let her go. He reached out and wrapped his arms around her waist, making it impossible for her to move. "Will you sleep here with me tonight? Don't worry. I'll behave." "Okay." "Sophie, you smell so good." "Uh, Mr. Tristan? Can you please stop seducing me?" Sophie simply couldn't deal with him when he was like that. "Huh? I'm being seductive?" He was simply speaking honestly, so he didn't think he was seducing her. "Yes, you are," complained Sophie firmly. "Okay, if you say so," replied Tristan. He didn't bother arguing with her. Instead, he swallowed his medicine. As promised, his headache eased up soon after. The second he relaxed, his mind started wandering into forbidden territory. Unfortunately, Sophie was still too young to be treated like an adult. That was when Tristan realized that asking her to stay was just making things difficult for him. Earlier, he couldn't bear to let her leave, but now he had to push her away. "I need to take a shower," said Tristan. He went into the bathroom immediately after. Sophie felt a little irritated when she saw the door to the bathroom closing. Why does he keep sending mixed signals? Ah, never mind. I could feel the change in his body earlier, so it's obvious he's having a hard time. I'll just return to my room so he doesn't have to suffer. When Tristan exited the shower, he realized that the woman he loved was no longer in his bed. He felt a little helpless about it. I didn't scare her, did I? It didn't matter how strong she was when she fought against others. The truth was that she was still just a young lady, so being frightened was a reasonable reaction. Tristan was worried

about Sophie, so he called her right away. She picked up the call within three rings. "I just think I'd be more comfortable sleeping in my own room," said Sophie to explain the situation. The truth was as simple as that. "I see. If that's the case, then rest early." "Okay." Sophie couldn't help giggling after she hung up the call. Tristan chuckled in his room as well. He wondered how long he'd have to stay in the doghouse because that life was getting really tough. The good news, however, was that she was worth the wait. Tristan got up early the next morning because he wanted to buy the girls some breakfast. To his surprise, he saw Sophie already returning with breakfast when he made his way to the living room. "Why didn't you sleep in?" asked Tristan. Sophie had gone to bed late last night, so it was strange that she didn't sleep longer. "I'm used to waking up early." Sophie had always been a disciplined person and had a habit of waking up early. "Where's Ysabelle?" asked Tristan. Don't tell me she's still asleep. "I think

she's still in bed. I'll go get her to come out for breakfast." Tristan dragged Sophie back to the dining table before she could leave. "It's fine. You can ignore her. She has been sleeping until the afternoon ever since her holiday started. There's no need to go wake her up," said Tristan. She'd just ask us to eat without her, anyway. "Okay, then," replied Sophie. Tristan had already said it that way, so she wouldn't wake Ysabelle up. She simply sat down and had breakfast with him. Tristan had to go to work at Lombard Group after he had his breakfast, but he'd prefer to stay there with Sophie. Unfortunately, he had no choice. He had to leave. The man remained reluctant, even when he was by the door. "Go on." Sophie couldn't help pushing him a little when she caught him lingering. Tristan grabbed her hands. "We haven't even parted ways, and I'm already missing you. How I wish I could put you in my pocket and take you everywhere I go." Sophie was speechless. "You are so heartless. Am I that unimportant to you? Do you not feel anything at all when you see me leave?" It seemed his presence or absence didn't bother her much. "I..." "Never mind, I have to go now. Rest well at home, okay?" said Tristan before he left reluctantly. As suspected, Ysabelle slept until that afternoon. She looked around for Sophie after she freshened up. The former eventually found her friend in the study. "Sophie, we're on holiday, so why are you in the study? Don't tell me you're studying. That is insane!" When Ysabelle calmed down, she realized that Sophie was listening to the song she had given to The Wheelers recently. "What are you doing?" "I'm writing the lyrics." The song was practically done, and all

that was left to do was to get the lyrics in place. Ysabelle made her way to Sophie and snuck a peek. That was when she realized that over half of the lyrics were done. Oh my gosh, she works so fast! Ysabelle knew a thing or two about music as well, so she was humming along to the song. The lyrics fit the song so perfectly. It can inspire anyone to work harder and become better.

Chapter 285

Backer How can there be such a vast difference between two people? While I've been asleep until now, Sophie has already written all those lyrics! "I admire you so much, Sophie. Although we're roughly the same age, we couldn't be more different." Honestly, I really get an inferiority complex when I'm with her. That's because she's just incredible! "You're exaggerating. Come on. The housekeeper has probably finished preparing lunch. You can decide whether you want to eat now or wait until your uncle returns to eat with him," Sophie said. After all, Ysabelle had not eaten breakfast. "I'm not hungry. Hurry up and continue writing! I've no interest in breakfast and am way more fascinated by your lyrics." "Go and eat. Skipping breakfast isn't good for the stomach," Sophie responded firmly. Ysabelle was rendered speechless but obediently went to have breakfast in the end.

There was still some food left from what Sophie bought for breakfast, so after getting the housekeeper to warm the leftovers, Ysabelle sat at the dining table to eat. She ate a little, then went to look for Sophie in the study. Even though she had only been gone for a while, Sophie had already completed the lyrics and was in the middle of recording the demo. Ysabelle went in quietly. Not daring to disturb, she merely sat to one side to listen. I was thoroughly impressed when I heard the melody previously. But

now, hearing Sophie recording a demo live astounds me even more. Sophie's genius completely obliterates what little talent I have, reducing it to nothing. After completing the recording, Sophie spotted Ysabelle deep in thought. She walked over to the latter and tapped her on the shoulder. "What's the matter?" Why has she become like this after returning from having breakfast? In a particularly solemn tone, Ysabelle asked, "Can I really become a singer? When it comes to talent, I can't even compare to one-tenth of what you have." Seeing that Ysabelle's confidence seemed to have taken a hit, Sophie sat on the carpet too and said, "Why are you thinking so much? Do you have any idea how many singers there are in Chanaea? Not every one of them knows how to write songs. To succeed in the entertainment industry, one must possess something that makes them unique. There's

something special about your voice that makes it memorable to others. Just that is enough." "Really? You're not just saying that to comfort me?"

"Really. I'm definitely not just comforting you, nor am I any good at doing that. Just go ahead and do whatever you like without any worries. You still have me to tend to everything else, don't you?" With me around, she doesn't have to worry about a thing! Touched, Ysabelle leaned against Sophie's shoulder. "How did I get so lucky to meet someone as amazing as you? What would my life be like if I didn't get to know you?" Ysabelle dared not think about it. Sophie was silent, not knowing what to say. "I'm being serious. I'm definitely not trying to butter you up!" Sophie got up, then sent the demo to Mark. The Wheelers were in the middle of practice when they received it. "Sophie sent over her demo. Let's listen to it together." They all believed in Sophie completely. We were blown away after hearing the melody the last time, and now, she has sent us a demo! The five of them sat on the floor to listen to it, and once it was over, they were dumbstruck. "Seriously, is she even human?"

Is there anything she doesn't know how to do? And as if it's not enough that she knows how to do everything, she goes all out in whatever she does! Sophie is truly terrifying! "Let's make the decision now. This is going to be the title track for our next album." Mark was also brimming with excitement, confident that they would make waves with that song. The other four raised their hands in agreement. After listening to the demo, Sunny immediately video-called Sophie. "Sophie, you're remarkable! Also, are you really not planning to return? If you wanted to, you'd surely become a global hit with talent like yours." "I don't want to be a global hit. It's better if I'm just your backer," she replied. The position of backer interests me way more. Sunny was stunned. "All right. Having you support me in that way is also an honor." "By the way, are you all planning to go home? It's almost Christmas." Apart from Mark, the other band members were from different cities. Hence, Sophie was curious as to why they had not gone home when it was almost Christmas. "I'm not going back. Mark and I are staying here to spend it with you. The other three will be leaving tonight." "It's been ages since you went back, Sunny. You should go home." Sunny's family was in Horington, and since he was still young and in that rebellious phase, he had not been back home after leaving the last time. If it had been anyone else who said that

to Sunny, he would not have taken any heed. However, because Sophie was the one who said it, he started considering it seriously.

“You should go home,” Sophie repeated. Thinking about how his grandmother was getting on in years, he decided he should go home and visit her. “All right, then. Mark, you’ll be alone in Jipsdale, so take good care of yourself.” Although Mark’s family lived in Jipsdale, the others had never met his family and rarely heard him talk about them. Hence, they did not know much about his family either. “Hmm, how long has it been since you’ve been home, Mark?” Sophie asked casually. In truth, he had not been in contact with his family since going to Horington, so it had been a good few years. “When it comes to my private affairs, I’m well aware of what’s best for me. You don’t have to bother yourself with it, Sophie.” She fell silent. Seeing how Mark was acting, Sunny immediately tried to defuse the situation. “Don’t be like that, Mark. Sophie was only showing her concern for you.” “I didn’t mean to chastise you, Sophie.” “There’s no need to explain anything.” “Then I’ll hang up now.” Just thinking about his family gave Mark a headache. Many people had tried tracking down Mark’s family members since his debut, but no one had been successful. “Mark, why don’t I just stay here and keep you company?” With everyone else gone, it’d be too pitiful to leave him here all on his own! “No need for that. I’m fine on my own. You’d only make a ruckus if you stayed here.” Sunny stared at him wordlessly. Is he saying I’m annoying now? Tristan returned right after Sophie spoke to Mark and the others on the video call. The housekeeper had prepared four dishes for lunch, and the trio sat down to eat together. Ysabelle insisted on tidying away the plates after the meal, so Sophie helped her with it. However, Ysabelle was still reluctant to leave after putting everything away. If only I could stay here with Sophie all the time! I don’t want to go back! “Sophie, I really can’t bear to part with you. I don’t want to go home at all.” Alas, her father had already called that day and issued an ultimatum. “There, there. Off you go, then. Christmas should be a joyful time with family.” Regardless, Sophie could sense that Ysabelle’s father genuinely wanted the best for Ysabelle. Hence, she was sure he would not be able to bear seeing Ysabelle miserable. “All right. Are you also returning to the Tanner residence?” asked Ysabelle. I can still pop by occasionally and hang out with Sophie if she remains at Wisteria Apartments. But once she

returns to the Tanner residence, I won’t be able to go and see her. “Yeah.” I’ll have to return sooner or later. As long as Grandpa is there, I’ll definitely have to go back. “That’s enough. What’s with all this chatter? The driver is downstairs waiting for you.” Ysabelle pursed her lips. Am I being dismissed again?

Chapter 286

Nicholas Shows Up After Ysabelle left, it was also time for Sophie to leave. Nonetheless, Tristan did not feel like letting her leave. “Let’s rest here for the afternoon. I’ll send you back after that. I’m truly exhausted.” He reasoned to himself that it was for their safety as it would be dangerous to drive while tired. “Mr. Tristan—” What’s gotten into him? Haven’t we been together the past few days?

"Let's just sleep for forty minutes, okay?" Although Sophie knew he harbored no other intentions, the nonchalant manner in which he suggested they sleep together still made her feel embarrassed. "Is that okay?" he asked again. Gosh! This is too much! When someone like him acts all cute, it's impossible to refuse him! "Oh, all right." She could not help thinking that after Tristan appeared in her life, she had forgotten all about her principles. He led Sophie into his bedroom, then embraced her as they lay in bed. That time, Tristan was true to his word and did not try anything. All he did was take an afternoon nap with her. While the pair were napping, Nicholas arrived at Jipsdale's international airport dressed in a smart suit. He had sneaked back on his own.

"Sophie Tanner, I'm going to bring you back with me this time," he vowed. There's only one purpose for my trip here this time—to bring her back no matter what it takes. Sophie had just arrived at the Tanner residence when Arius called her. "Sophie, you need to mentally prepare yourself." "What's going on? You're being so cryptic that I can't make head or tail of what you're saying." I can't read his mind, so how would I know what he means when he suddenly says something like that? "It's about Nicholas. Did you know he's missing?" "No, I didn't." As she spoke, she fiddled with the flowers in her hand. "I told you already, didn't I? His affairs have nothing to do with me." Arius felt as though he was about to go stark raving mad after hearing that. "Sophie Tanner, do you honestly think it has nothing to do with you? I heard through the grapevine that he came back to look for you, so it's highly likely that he's in Jipsdale at this very moment. Got it? Whatever it is, just stay home this Christmas, and don't go running

around." If she ends up getting dragged back there by Nicholas, she's doomed. "D*mn it! He's crazy. I can't believe he still hasn't given up after so long!"

he muttered. Sophie did not say anything, though she sniped in her head, Are you only realizing now that he's crazy? "Forget it. You don't have to worry about that," said Sophie. So what if I bump into him? This is Jipsdale, not Anglandur. What could he possibly do to me? Sophie continued arranging the flowers, unfazed by the news. However, she did not expect to cross paths with Nicholas so soon, not knowing that he had headed straight to the Tanner residence to look for her. Josiah gazed at the young man in front of him with a look of intense scrutiny in his eyes. It's the first time someone has come to the house asking for Sophie, and I sense many things about this young man that begs careful consideration. "What did you say your name was?" Josiah asked again to confirm.

"Good day, Old Mr. Tanner. I'm Nicholas Sable," Nicholas replied, behaving like a true gentleman in front of the elderly man. "And what did you say your relationship with Sophie was?" "We're dating. I know you might not believe me, but everything I've said is the truth." Morgan's eyes widened. Ms. Sophie's boyfriend? "Young man, I don't care what your motives are, but please put an end to what you're doing. My darling Sophie already has a boyfriend." "What?" She has a boyfriend already? Why don't I know about that? Who is it? Who has the audacity to date her? "I said that Sophie has a boyfriend. And just so you know, I approve of him. Regardless of your purpose for coming here, you should leave now." Josiah heartily approved of Tristan, not because of the latter's status or identity, but

because of how Tristan truly cared for Sophie. After hearing that Sophie already had a boyfriend, Nicholas could no longer control the anger within him. "Old Mr. Tanner, I think you've made a mistake. I'm Sophie's boyfriend." Josiah frowned. Meanwhile, Willow was amused as she listened to the conversation. "Do you see that, Grandpa? That shows your darling Sophie's true colors. She has such complicated relationships. How utterly humiliating," she remarked mockingly. Sophie's methods are truly something else. When Nicholas heard Willow dare to mock Sophie before him, he shot her a death stare. Willow dared not say anything else as Nicholas glowered at her. However, she was

thoroughly disgruntled. These people all have a screw loose! "That's enough. You can go now." Nicholas did not look like someone one would want to cross, but Josiah still did not take a liking to him. He has the air of a rogue. Nicholas' expression darkened as it was the first time someone had dared to talk to him in that way. However, he suppressed his anger after recalling the purpose of his visit. "How about this, Old Mr. Tanner? I won't be so presumptuous as to ask you to believe me right now. Why don't you get Sophie to come down here? The truth will be revealed once she's here, right?" "Young man, even if you really are Sophie's boyfriend, I won't approve of it." After a brief silence, Nicholas got up from the couch abruptly. "Old Mr. Tanner, out of respect to you as an elder, I've spoken to you patiently all this while. But if you continue acting like that, I'm afraid we'll have reached an impasse," Nicholas said furiously. "So? What are you going to do about it?" Josiah retorted, his temper also flaring. The tension between the two men thickened in the blink of an eye, and it seemed as though they would get into a fight at any moment. Just then, Sophie came down the stairs. Her face fell when she saw that Nicholas had actually shown up at her home. Josiah calmed down when he saw her coming downstairs. "Go upstairs, Soph. No matter what happens, I'm here," Josiah said bluntly. Naturally, Nicholas had spotted Sophie too. He piped up immediately, "Sophie, I finally get to see you." He did not even realize how happy he looked after he saw her. Since Nicholas had already appeared at her doorstep, there was no way Sophie could pretend she had not seen anything. "Let's go. Whatever it is you're here for, we can talk outside," said Sophie. After all, this is my family's house. The way we tackle our issues is quite terrifying, so my family members may find it a little hard to swallow. However, Nicholas refused to leave. "No matter what, I came all the way from Anglandur to Jipsdale to look for you. Hence, I want to stay at your house for a few days," he insisted shamelessly. "Soph, who on earth is he?" Josiah demanded. He thoroughly disliked Nicholas. "Nobody important, Grandpa. You don't have to worry." With that, Sophie walked out while dragging Nicholas behind her. "What are you doing, Sophie?" Why is she dragging me out? That's not cool at all! She silenced him with a glare. "Soph..." Despite Sophie's reassurances, Josiah was still fraught with worry.

Chapter 287 Following Her

"Grandpa, don't worry. I'll handle the situation," Sophie said. This is Jipsdale, not Anglandur, so Nicholas can't do anything here. Once they were outside the living room, Sophie crossed her arms before her chest, glaring at Nicholas. Nicholas was unfazed. "You've been hiding for so many years, Sophie. Finally, I've found you." Sophie was rendered speechless. Have I been hiding? Did I need to? "Nicholas, I don't

care why you're here, but I'm not going back with you. Go back to where you came from, will you?" Sophie was unwelcoming. "I heard you have a boyfriend now. Is that true?"

Nicholas suddenly changed the topic. "What does that have to do with you?" Sophie replied indifferently. Nicholas' gaze darkened when he heard that. It seems like her grandpa was telling the truth. "You're mine, Sophie. Have you forgotten about that?" Nicholas was very adamant about Sophie being his. No one can take her away from me. Sophie couldn't help but chuckle coldly. "I'm yours? Since when? Nicholas, have I not told you before that I'm mine alone? No one owns me." Nicholas smiled. "Well, I own you." Sophie was lost for words in the face of his persistence. "All right. It's been a long time since we saw each other. Let's have a meal together, shall we?" He had come straight to the Tanner residence the moment he landed, so he hadn't eaten anything yet. Sophie frowned and answered, "I don't have the appetite for that. Eat on your own! Since I was once your friend,

I think I need to remind you about something. This is Jipsdale, not Anglandur. You better not act like how you do in Anglandur." "Are you worried about me? I think you are! You're worried about me." Suddenly, Nicholas was over the moon. "I'm not worried about you; I just don't want you to disturb my life here. Nicholas, I'm warning you. Stay away from the people around me." Nicholas acted like he couldn't care less. "Sophie, you should know that I'm in danger by being here, right?" "That's your problem. No one asked you to come here." Jipsdale was Tristan's territory, and Nicholas was a big shot in Anglandur. There was no way peace could exist if these two men were in the same place. "Sophie,

how could you be so heartless? No matter what, we've been through thick and thin together. Since I've come to your territory, don't you think you should treat me to a meal?"

Before he came, he had already thought about all the ways he could use to bring her back. However, he had decided not to use them when he saw her again. "Either way, I know where you live. If you don't go out for a meal with me, I'll just eat at your place." Sophie went silent. Is he threatening me? "Please don't see it as a threat. To be honest, I don't like your sister," he added. How dare she talk bad about Sophie behind her back! "Are you done, Nicholas? Let's just fight, shall we? If you lose, get your *ss back to Anglandur." Sophie wanted to settle the matter by using the quickest way possible. In response, Nicholas smiled and answered, "Sophie, I didn't risk my life and come all the way here to fight you." He couldn't possibly tell her that he had come to kidnap her. "Then will you leave now?" Sophie wasn't afraid of a big shot from Anglandur. "If that's what's on your mind, perhaps I should just cancel my hotel booking and stay at your house. I haven't spent Christmas here in a long time, and I miss it," he said. Hearing that, Sophie ran out of patience and attacked him.

Since he's not listening to a word I'm saying, I'll use violence. Nicholas just kept dodging her because he wasn't there to fight her. "All right, all right. I'll go to my hotel so that you can calm down," he said. I think my sudden appearance caught her off guard! That's okay. I can give her more time to slowly

accept my presence. I'm not going to give up on her, though. After watching Nicholas leave, Sophie felt her mood worsen. He's actually here in Jipsdale! All this while, I thought he would never dare to come here. I never expected him to ignore all the risks and come here. What is he going to do this time around to get me to give in? At this point, I have no idea what he's incapable of doing. After going back to her room, Sophie immediately gave Arius a call. "What is it?" Arius was half asleep when he answered the phone as he had still been sleeping. "Nicholas is in Jipsdale." "What?" At once, Arius jolted awake. "Does that mean you've met him? Are you okay, Sophie?" Arius knew how despicable Nicholas was, so he was worried about Sophie. "I'm fine." Arius sighed and said, "I don't know why Nicholas is being so persistent." Like Sophie, he didn't think Nicholas would have the courage to go to

Jipsdale. Did he just ignore all the risks in his bid to see her? "F*ck! Nicholas is really a sick man!" Arius wanted to go to Jipsdale as soon as he could. "I have an idea! Since I don't have any missions these days, I'll head over to Jipsdale to help you. It's always good to have one more person looking out for you." "That's not necessary. This is just a small matter, so I don't need you to come back for it." Besides, if they were to fight, Arius was no match for Nicholas. "Why did you call me, then? You're just making me worry about you, and you won't even let me help you!" "I'm just informing you." Sophie wasn't that confident in handling Nicholas. If he could achieve so much in Anglandur, I bet he's not easy to deal with. "Perhaps you should tell Tristan about this. I don't think Nicholas would dare to do anything if Tristan is involved." That was the only plan Arius could think of. "There's no need for that." "Why not? Don't you like Tristan?" "There are some things I would rather keep from him." "Sophie, it might not be a good idea to keep this from him. What if he wants to know about it?" Arius asked. So, it seems like Sophie has really fallen for Tristan. That's why she's being so cautious. "I'm not hiding it from him. It's just that he has nothing to do with what happened between Nicholas and me. Hence, I shouldn't drag him into it." Arius kept mum for a while. I can't believe a woman like her exists in this world! Why doesn't she just depend on her boyfriend? Isn't that what he's for? "All right. I'm ending the call here." "Hey!" Arius sighed in response. How could she do this? She woke me up in the middle of the night but now won't talk to me anymore. How am I supposed to sleep now? After leaving him with that, Sophie hung up. That night, Tristan went to fetch Sophie because they were meeting a group of people for dinner. After Tristan drove for around fifteen minutes, Sophie noticed that Nicholas was following her.

Chapter 288 Nicholas And His Threats

When he realized that Sophie had spotted him, he texted: Is that man your boyfriend? Sophie clenched her fists when she saw the text. Tristan noticed the change in her mood. "What's wrong?" he asked caringly. "Nothing." Sophie then texted back: It's none of your concern. You better stop following me. In response, Nicholas texted back an unfathomable smiling emoji. "What is it?" Tristan noticed how absent-minded she was. "I'm fine." Upon arriving at Blossom Garden, Sophie received another text from Nicholas saying: No wonder you refused to eat with me. You're eating with someone else! Sophie, I'm not happy about this. "F*ck!" Sophie cursed. She couldn't keep control of her emotions anymore. "What's wrong?" Tristan had never seen her so angry before.

Sophie took a deep breath and answered, "I'm all right." Nicholas was just as capable as Tristan. If they were to get into a fight in Jipsdale, the consequences would be dire. "Are you sure?" Tristan asked. How is she all right? She's obviously infuriated. "I said I'm fine." Tristan brought Sophie to a private room. That day, Sarah was there as well. She looked a lot better than before, her complexion radiant and glowing. "Sit here, Sophie! I need to ask you something," Sarah said when Tristan and Sophie walked in. Sophie went to sit next to her. "I like the perfume you gave me last time. Where did you buy it? Mine is finishing, so I want to buy another bottle of it," Sarah uttered. "I'll give you a bottle of it in a couple of days," Sophie answered. "How much is one?" Sarah asked. Since it's so good, it has to be expensive. Sophie is still in her senior year. I can't burden her financially. "Sarah, a friend of mine made it, so it's free," Sophie uttered. It's not like it can be bought in the market either.

Arius specially made that for me. "Oh, I see!" Sarah was interested in that friend of hers. "Who is it? Will you introduce me to your friend? I would like to meet him." "Sure!" However, it was very unlikely because Arius was seldom back. Right then, Sophie received another text. It read: Sophie, I don't want to eat on my own. I'm in the private room next to yours. Come over! Sophie was rendered speechless. I think I'm going to kill someone today. Standing up, she said, "I'm sorry. I need to go to the restroom."

"Are you okay? I'll go with you." Ysabelle stood up as well. "That's unnecessary. You stay here and chat with the others. I'll be back in a while." With that, Sophie left the private room. "What's with Sophie today?" Felix noticed that Sophie had been acting weird as well. "I don't know," Tristan answered. "That's not right, Tristan. How could you not know? Sophie is your girlfriend!" Sarah wasn't happy with Tristan's answer. "Sarah, you can't say that. When Mr. Tristan is with Sophie, he's practically useless. If Sophie doesn't want to tell him something, there's nothing he can do about it,"

Felix uttered. "Felix, do you think it's appropriate to talk about Uncle Tristan that way?" Ysabelle asked. Meanwhile, Sophie had arrived in the private room next door. Although he was alone, Nicholas had ordered a lot of dishes. As he was sitting at the head of the table, he smiled when he saw Sophie walking in. "That's more like it! I've come all the way to Jipsdale, so I think it's only fair that you have dinner with me." Sophie narrowed her eyes and crossed her arms. "Nicholas, I've warned you, haven't I?" They weren't standing in each other's way before this, but he had really angered her this time around. Nicholas poured a glass of wine for himself and said, "Sophie, you're the one acting out of line. Have I asked for anything unreasonable? I've merely asked you to have a meal with me. Must you act this way?" "Ha!" Sophie was both amused and enraged. "Don't be angry, okay? I don't like you angry," he said. "Nicholas, I really think there's something wrong with you." Sophie didn't want to spend another second in there, so she turned around to leave. Right then, Nicholas said, "Sophie, if you leave, I'm going over. I don't care if that man is Tristan. It's hard to say who would emerge victorious, isn't it?" Indeed, he had already found out about Tristan. Sophie sat opposite Nicholas and slammed her hands on the table. Nicholas was enraged when he saw that. "Do you really like Tristan?" Tristan sounded dangerous and angry. "I do." Nicholas was slightly stunned because he didn't expect her to give him such a direct

answer. At that moment, he was even at a loss for words. "Nicholas, I don't care how you feel about me now. I already have someone I like, so stop pestering me." All along, Sophie either liked or disliked someone. There was no in-between. Infuriated, Nicholas clenched his hands into fists. At the same time, he was trying with all his might to control his emotions. Otherwise, he would really destroy everything in sight. "It's okay. If you come with me, you'll forget about him." Nicholas was

determined to do everything in his power to make Sophie forget about Tristan. Upon hearing that, Sophie frowned. This guy is so stubborn it's borderline obsessive. Nothing I say will work. "Go back to Anglandur, Nicholas! If Tristan knows you're here, he's not going to let you off," she said. "Oh? Is that so? Do you think I'm going to let him off?" Nicholas was having a terrible headache. I'm going to destroy everything! "Ha! Touch him, then. I dare you." Sophie wasn't going to let anyone harm the people around her. A stinging pain spread out from Nicholas' heart, and he found it hard to breathe. "If you had to choose between me and him, who would you choose?" Nicholas was still not giving up. As far as he was concerned, Sophie had always been his and his only. Then one day, she was gone. After losing what was his for a long time, he finally found her again. Before he could feel happy about it, she told him that she was no longer his. He just couldn't accept that. "Why has Sophie been gone for so long? Could it be that something has happened to her?" Seeing that Sophie had been away for quite a while, Sarah was getting worried. "Sarah, this is not Sophie's first visit to Blossom Garden. Nothing's going to happen to her." "Tristan, check on her, will you? What if something bad has happened to her?" Sarah asked. She can't possibly spend so much time in the restroom! "Okay. I'll go and check on her." Tristan obliged obediently.

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Chapter 289 Tied Up

Before Tristan could open the door, someone did so from the outside. Sophie saw him standing behind the door, so she asked puzzledly, "What's wrong? Are you going somewhere?" Tristan shook his head. Since she had already returned, he wasn't going anywhere anymore. "You've been gone for so long, so I was actually going to look for you. Since you're back, let's sit and eat!" Everyone in the room was waiting for her. "I'm sorry to have kept you all waiting," Sophie apologized.

It took me longer than expected to deal with Nicholas. Seeing that Tristan was too shy to ask, Felix questioned, "Sophie, did you need that much time in the restroom? Where exactly have you been?" Sophie kept quiet and shot Felix a look. Why is he such a busybody? Seeing as Sophie didn't seem inclined to answer, Sarah then lightened the mood by saying, "All right. Let's eat, everyone. I'm famished!" Felix wanted to say something, but he changed his mind when he saw Sophie's expression. Fine. Mr. Tristan isn't even asking. Why should I? Ysabelle, who was sitting next to him, stomped on his foot with all of her might. "Ouch!" Felix cried out in pain and turned toward the person who had injured

him. "What was that for, Ysabelle? I didn't even do anything wrong! Why are you being such a bully?" "How could you say that you haven't done anything wrong? Is it any of your business what Sophie does? If you've annoyed her, you've annoyed me!" Ysabelle was quick to defend Sophie. "Since when have I annoyed her? I was just worried about her!" "Bullsh*t! I bet you were just trying to butter Uncle Tristan up!" Ysabelle retorted. I don't see Charles and Sean asking Sophie questions. Finally, Felix kept his mouth shut. Fine! I was just asking on behalf of Mr. Tristan.

I'm sure he would also like to know the answer to my question. "Come, Sophie. Sit down. I'm sure you're hungry!" Sarah knew Sophie well. Everyone has something they would rather keep to themselves. Since Sophie doesn't feel like telling us about it, we shouldn't keep asking. When she's ready, she'll talk. Sophie went back to her seat and sat down. Tristan sat down next to her as well. It was as if Tristan hadn't heard Felix's question. As they ate, he was still putting food on Sophie's plate.

With Tristan, Sophie could do whatever she liked. When she felt like talking to him, he would always listen attentively. However, he wouldn't force things out of her if she refused to speak. Seeing him like that, Sophie felt relieved. Meanwhile, Nicholas was tied up to a chair in the private room next door. Besides that, a towel had even been stuffed into his mouth. At that moment, his eyes were filled with resentment. I never thought something like this would ever happen to me. I underestimated her. I thought she would treat me differently, but she's just as merciless toward me. Regret overwhelmed him. I was careless! Otherwise, I wouldn't get tied to a chair by a girl. My reputation is ruined! He couldn't eat, so he could only look at the table full of dishes. I'm so hungry! It was a horrible feeling because he was drooling so badly. "What do you think is on Mr. Tristan's mind?"

Charles asked. Although he hadn't said anything earlier, he knew that everyone could tell there was something up with Sophie. After all, they weren't a bunch of dimwits. "Don't meddle in Mr. Tristan's business!" Sean was never one to stick his nose in other's personal matters. When it comes to relationships, others should stay out of it. Otherwise, people are just going to get offended. "Sean, I wonder if you would still be so calm if you were to meet someone you like! However, I doubt you'll ever meet someone. Since you're so smart and logical, why would you ever go crazy over a woman?" That was how Charles truly felt. Sean shot him a look in response. "Why don't you worry about yourself? With so many women around you, you might get infected with STDs!" Charles was rendered speechless. Must he be so mean? After dinner, they all went to a clubhouse. While the four men were playing pool, the three ladies were chatting over milkshakes. "To be honest, I think I'm going to put on weight if I keep hanging out with you guys!" Sarah uttered. Unlike me, Sophie and Ysabelle are still young, so they don't have to worry about getting fat. I'm in my thirties! I need to look out for my weight. "Sarah, don't worry! You're not going to get fat!" Sophie answered confidently. "Really?" Sarah wasn't convinced. How is it possible that I won't put on weight? My age is a huge factor here. "Really! Even if you get fat, I have ways to help you lose weight. Hence, just enjoy your milkshake!" Sophie uttered. "Aunt Sarah, you're overthinking. What's the point of living if we don't enjoy our lives? How are you going to be happy if you keep worrying about these things?" Ysabelle knew how important it was to

have fun. "Okay. You're right. Fine! I'll enjoy the night," Sarah replied. It's so important for a woman to have self-discipline. What else can a woman do if she can't even manage her weight? However, I really want to have fun with these two tonight. I'll just eat and drink whatever I want and ignore what others would think of me. I'll worry about my weight tomorrow! Besides, I'm not even that fat. By the time they stepped out of the clubhouse, it was already eleven. No matter how much fun they were having, Tristan wouldn't keep Sophie out past midnight. She should have a fixed routine. After everyone had left, Tristan opened the car door for Sophie to get into the vehicle. "I'll drive you back, okay?" "Okay." Upon arriving at the Tanner residence, Sophie immediately called Butterfly. "How's everything? Did you take him away?" After tying Nicholas to the chair, Sophie had texted Butterfly and told her to take him away. When Sophie called her, Butterfly was applying a facial mask. She put the call on speaker mode and continued her ministrations. "Do you ever need to worry about my efficiency?" "No." Sophie was confident in Butterfly's capability. "Still, Sophie, he's Nicholas Sable. You've just kidnapped an international big shot. What are you planning to do next?" Butterfly asked. If we don't handle this right, Nicholas is going to kill us in revenge! "Don't worry, okay? I'm here!" Sophie answered. Although it's a hassle to deal with Nicholas, I can still handle him. "All right! So, what now? He's still tied up!" Butterfly hadn't known what to do with Nicholas after bringing him back. Therefore, she hadn't even untied him.

Chapter 290 Angry Man

"Just keep him tied up, and we'll see what to do about him tomorrow," Sophie answered. Nicholas' father is a maniac. If something happens to Nicholas in Jipsdale, he'll surely come here. That's why I haven't done anything to Nicholas yet. However, I really want to just end his life so that he won't show up in front of me again. I'm getting sick of his attitude. Earlier, when Tristan was sending her back home, he had seemed troubled. Sophie knew what was on his mind, but she couldn't tell him about Nicholas. I don't want him to have to make an enemy out of Nicholas because of this. As soon as Tristan came into her mind, Sophie felt even more troubled. It was as if he had occupied a spot in her heart and was a lot more important to her than she thought.

He was just talking less, and I'm already overthinking things. This is bad. After taking a shower, Sophie got into bed and opened her WhatsApp. She then texted Tristan: You seemed unhappy. Is something wrong? Upon arriving home, Tristan went to shower. After that, he went to the study because he had to go through some documents. By the time he returned to his room and saw the text, it was already past one. She texted me so long ago. If I text back late, how will she react? Although I didn't do it on purpose, I wonder if she would overthink things if I didn't reply for a long time.

However, it's already two in the morning. She should be asleep already, right? Should I still reply her? After some hesitation, he still replied: I wasn't. You're just overthinking. Tristan ended up having trouble sleeping because Sophie wasn't replying to his text. Hence, he texted again: I was showering, so I didn't

see your text. Half an hour later, Sophie still hadn't replied to his texts. Tristan couldn't help but laugh at himself when he recalled how he was acting. What has gotten into me? Am I that childish? I'm losing sleep because she hasn't texted me back! I must've gone crazy! While he was in bed, he couldn't sleep, and all he could think about was Sophie's behavior that day. She must be dealing with something! That was the first time I'd seen her like that. Before this, she has always been as cool as a cucumber. What exactly happened today? Why is she not telling me? She still doesn't trust me, does

she? I've been working so hard, but it seems like I've still failed to get her to open up to me. At that point, he was feeling defeated. After Sophie texted him, she went to sleep because he didn't text her back. When she woke up at seven the next morning, she saw his messages.

Sophie couldn't help but chuckle when she imagined what he was like when he texted her the night before. She then replied: I'm sorry, but I was drained last night. I fell asleep after I messaged you. Right after she texted him, Tristan video-called her. "Have you just woken up?" Tristan sounded cute because he was half asleep. Sophie nodded. "I wasn't purposely ignoring your text last night," Tristan explained. "Did I say you did it on purpose? It's all right. My grandpa is asking me to head downstairs for breakfast. I'll go now." Seeing that she was about to end the video call, Tristan reminded her, "Remember this, Sophie! No matter what you're dealing with, I'm willing to help you! I want to share your burdens with you!" "Okay. I know." She had spent a lot of time with him, so she knew what he was talking about. "Sophie, I'll just tell you as it is! I see you in my future plans. Hence, I also hope that you can see me as the person who's closest to you. I want you to be able to trust me." Sophie fell silent because she didn't know how to react to Tristan's heartfelt words. Tristan was calm when he saw her reaction. "All right. Go downstairs and have your breakfast." It was Christmas Eve, so he had to have dinner at the Lombard residence that night, meaning he couldn't go over to visit her. "By the way, please tell your grandpa that I won't be able to drink with him tonight. I'll see him tomorrow instead!" "Sure!" It was a Chanaean tradition to have Christmas Eve dinner with family members. That was why Josiah was hoping that Sophie could be back to have dinner with the others. As she was walking down the stairs, she saw everyone else waiting for her. She then calmly walked toward Josiah and sat down next to him. "Didn't I say you guys should eat first?" Sophie put some food on Josiah's plate. "Here, Grandpa." "Didn't you know we were going to have breakfast together? What took you so long to come downstairs? Sophie, you're doing this on purpose, aren't you?" Willow fumed. "Willow, go upstairs if you don't want to eat. You're not regretting your actions at all." Ever since Josiah found out about what happened at Transfix Cosmetics, he had ordered Willow to stay home and reflect on her actions as a punishment. Willow felt aggrieved. "Grandpa, you're blatantly spoiling Sophie. Why are you only

punishing me?" "That's enough, Willow! It's Christmas! Must you cause a scene?" Caleb uttered when he saw how angry Josiah was. Can't everyone just live in harmony? It's Christmas! "Caleb, even you?" Willow stood up at once and ran back to her room. Caleb sighed in response. I shouldn't have come back for Christmas. Everything is a mess here, and it's so frustrating. "Soph, eat up! Since she's not going to eat, that means she's not hungry. When she gets hungry later, she'll come down." Josiah was still very unhappy with Willow. What a spoiled child! We've truly failed to educate her. After breakfast, Sophie

was heading out. As soon as she walked out of the living room, she saw Caleb waiting for her outside. Caleb saw her and walked over to her instantly. "Soph, since it's such a rare occasion for me to be back, I hope Dad can spend Christmas with us." "Caleb, as you've said, it's a rare occasion for you to be here. I was chased out of here back then while you ran off on your own accord. How many times have you been back over the past few years? What right do you have to feel disappointed with how the Tanner family has become?" Sophie demanded. Caleb has always been self-centered. Caleb was embarrassed when he heard that. Indeed, he had been self-centered ever since he was a child. However, he still felt embarrassed because Sophie had called him out. "Let him come back, then! Grandpa wants him here as well. However, if he harms Grandpa again, I'm sending him to prison," Sophie warned. "That won't happen again. Dad has already promised me that he won't do that again." Sophie scoffed in response. Nothing would've happened if Yale could keep his promises. After that, Sophie went to the place where Butterfly was keeping Nicholas. When she opened the door, she saw him still tied to a chair. Wait. Isn't that the chair from Blossom Garden? "Why and how did you bring the chair back as well?" Sophie questioned.