

Pursuing 291

Chapter 291 They Will Not Meet Again

Sophie could not help but wonder. How was it possible that nobody from Blossom Garden was suspicious of her? Meanwhile, Butterfly could not refrain from laughing. "Ha! It's easy-peasy for a gorgeous woman like me to convince others. I told them he's a lunatic and must be tied up." Nicholas could only glare at her as his mouth was stuffed with a towel. Pfft! Have they come across any lunatic as good-looking as me? D*mn it! Sophie Tanner, you must have a death wish! How could you have the gall to treat me this way? Sophie pulled a chair over and sat right in front of Nicholas.

Catching sight of the latter glowering menacingly at her, she shrugged her shoulders, not caring one bit. "Don't worry. I won't torture you. In fact, I've arranged for others to send you back. Don't step onto this land again." Even though Nicholas could not utter any words, Sophie could sense the intense fury in his countenance. "Pull out the towel from his mouth." Since Nicholas would be sent back to Anglandur soon, Sophie exercised restraint by allowing him to speak. However, he started cussing right after Butterfly pulled the towel out from his mouth. It was outrageously unbearable for Sophie. Thus, she grabbed the towel and stuffed it into his mouth again. In an instant, Nicholas widened his eyes in disbelief. He mustered up his strength to protest but to no avail. "Initially, I thought of allowing you to say something. However, since you still haven't learned your lesson, forget about it then."

"Someone will pick him up later. You can hand him over to them directly," Sophie instructed Butterfly before she turned toward Nicholas. "Nicholas Sable, I hope we won't meet again." Hearing that, Nicholas stopped struggling. Deep down, he vowed to settle the score with Sophie after regaining his freedom. How dare she humiliate me like this! Doesn't she know that I'm a vengeful man? Irrked by the viciousness in Nicholas' eyes, Sophie kicked the chair he was sitting in. Subsequently, he almost fell together with it to the ground. At that very moment, Nicholas could barely restrain himself from unleashing his wrath on Sophie and teaching her a lesson. D*mn it! Nobody has ever dared to treat me this way! "Sophie!" Butterfly was taken aback. What on earth is she trying to do? "Don't worry. I know

what I'm doing." Sophie remained nonchalant as ever as she warned Nicholas, "Heed my words, okay? Don't appear in front of me again. If not, I won't spare you." By the time Sophie stepped out from the place where Nicholas was held captive, it was almost three in the afternoon. She had assigned someone trustworthy to send him back earlier. Now that the matter had been settled, she wandered alone on the streets. Mark might not have gone home. As the thought struck her, she made her way to Mark and the others' mansion. As she knew the passcode for the main door, she entered the mansion right away without calling ahead to inform Mark. Once Sophie opened the door, the sound of rock music blared from upstairs. She knew that her instinct was proven right. Evidently, Mark still refused to go home. She headed toward the music practice room, opened the door, and saw Mark practicing alone. It was the new song she had composed. Entering the room, she plopped herself down right on the floor. She

listened attentively as Mark played the song. As expected, he was the person who knew her the best. Hence, the way he played the song showed that he had interpreted the feelings she injected into it perfectly well. Meanwhile, Mark was not surprised when Sophie came into view. Only after he finished the song did he ask, "What do you think? Was that the feeling you wish to express?" "Yeah! That's right. Evidently, you're the one who knows me the best," she complimented. He has always been. Mark merely took two bottles of cocktail in silence. He handed her a bottle before he sat opposite her and opened another one. "Why did you suddenly come here?" He had thought nobody in the world would think of him on that day. "Why do you sound as if you're resentful?" Sophie was puzzled. He's seemingly not his usual self! "No, I'm not. I only felt a bit lonely all of a sudden. Anyway, it's just a tiny bit!" Mark gestured with his fingertips. Seeing that, Sophie took a sip of the cocktail and chuckled. "Okay, Mark, I'll drop the subject. I'm actually here to check on you. If you have nowhere to go, you can follow me home." Technically, Josiah was the only one she acknowledged as her family member at her so-called home. "Okay!" Mark gladly accepted her invitation. "Pack your things and come back with me then! Anyway, you know the situation at my house, don't you? So don't expect to seek family warmth there, okay?" Sophie emphasized. Hmph! There's no such thing at the Tanner residence. Mark burst out laughing. "I can keep Old Mr. Tanner company and chat with him then." He could not care less about others as long as she was around. Hence, Mark followed Sophie back to the

Tanner residence for Christmas that year. Josiah was quite surprised to see him. He did not know much about the current entertainment industry. On top of that, he was oblivious to Mark's popularity as he only listened to military songs. "Old Mr. Tanner, nice to meet you. I'm Mark, Sophie's friend." "Nice to meet you too. Make yourself at home. There's no need for formality." Josiah was over the moon as Sophie had scarcely brought any friends home before that. Even though Josiah had no idea how famous Mark was, Willow was on cloud nine to see the latter. After all, she was his fan too. Nonetheless, it never occurred to her that her idol would be Sophie's friend and would even follow her home to celebrate Christmas with them. Willow could not hold back any longer and piped up, "Nice to meet you, Mark. I'm Willow Tanner, and I like your songs very much!" "Thank you," Mark responded indifferently. He was back to his usual aloofness again, a stark contrast to when he was with Sophie. Because of that, Willow was in low spirits again. Why does everyone I like end up liking Sophie Tanner more? What makes her deserve that? Sensing that Willow was utterly displeased, Caleb pulled her aside. "Willow, since everyone is at home today, don't stir up trouble, okay?" Willow could not help but feel indignant. "Caleb, aren't I the most demure and obedient all this while? But why does everyone always prefer Sophie more? Is it because I'm not demure enough?" She could not fathom why Sophie was well-liked by others. Caleb felt his heart wrench at the sight of Willow's sorrow. Stroking her head, he tried to enlighten her. "Don't think of competing with Sophie in everything. You'll only end up feeling upset." Sophie is undoubtedly a genius. Even the International Medical Association looks highly upon her. No doubt, her competence is beyond imagination! What's more, her boyfriend is Tristan Lombard! Would such an omnipotent man like him fall for an ordinary woman? All these simply proved that Sophie was not an ordinary young woman. "Even you are making such a comment now? I reckon nobody at home is on my side now." Meanwhile, Yale was finally back at home. Although it was a shameful return, it was better than staying outside. Life had not been easy for him. Later, when nobody was around him and Sophie, he swallowed his pride and softened his tone. "Sophie, I know that I was wrong. Since you have your eye on Tanner Group, I'll hand it over to you. From now onwards, I'll stay home to take good care

of your grandpa.” Sophie had nothing to comment upon hearing his words. Unequivocally, he was her father. However, she could not talk herself into believing any of his words.

“You don’t have to tell me that.” To Sophie, it was meaningless for her father to make empty promises. After all, actions speak louder than words. “Sophie, I know I was wrong, and I mean it. My only wish is for our family to lead a peaceful and blissful life from now onwards. That’s enough for me!”

Chapter 292 I Missed You

After nodding in acknowledgment, Sophie proceeded upstairs. As it was Mark’s first time at the Tanner residence and he was a man of few words, he had trouble holding a conversation with the other members of the Tanner family. Hence, he ended up playing chess with Josiah, who was further impressed by Mark’s knowledge of chess. “Mark, how did you get to know Sophie?”

He had done some digging and found out that Mark was a huge celebrity. “When Sophie was in Horington, we formed a band together, and she was our drummer. Old Mr. Tanner, you probably haven’t seen her on the drums before, have you? Whenever she plays, it’s truly a sight to behold!” Josiah furrowed his brows. Since when does Sophie know how to play drums? Why haven’t I heard about it? Nevertheless, I shouldn’t be surprised, for she has excelled in all her endeavors. Due to the fact that it was Christmas, Charmaine and the housekeepers were busy cooking in the kitchen for the entire afternoon. When it was six, the Tanner family started their dinner. Josiah sat at the head of the table with Yale on his left. On Yale’s other side was Charmaine, followed by Willow. On Josiah’s right was Sophie, who had Mark beside her, and further down, Caleb. After pouring everyone a glass of wine, Caleb stood up and declared, “I’m really happy today, for it has been a long time since our family has gathered to share a meal like this. Although plenty has happened over the last few years, I’m sure that’s all in the past now. Going forward, greater things await our family.

Hence, here’s a toast from me to everyone!” When he saw Caleb take a sip of wine, Yale, too, stood up and cleared his throat. “That’s right! Even though we have been through a lot in recent years, all those incidents will not happen again.” Watching the entire family enjoy Christmas dinner together, Josiah was filled with bliss. No matter what Yale had done, he was still Josiah’s son, and the old man could still bring himself to forgive his own son. “Let’s eat! Since it’s Christmas Eve, we’ll watch the celebrations after dinner.” As Josiah loved the program, it became a tradition for the Tanner family to watch it with him. “Mark, please don’t hold back. There’s no need to be a stranger,” Sophie encouraged

him when she saw that he had barely touched his food. “Sure.” All of a sudden, sharing a family meal caused Mark to miss home, a feeling which was rare before this. Perhaps it’s time for me to go home, for I’m still his son despite his objections. Now that I have established myself in the music industry, I’m

sure he will come around and agree with my decision. Sophie served Mark some fish. "You should pay attention while you're eating. Otherwise, you might choke." After dinner, Josiah began giving out monetary gifts to everyone, including Mark. "Old Mr. Tanner, I'm surprised that I have one too!" He had come solely for the meal and didn't expect to receive a gift, especially one that seemed to be quite generous. "Just accept it as it isn't much anyway. As Sophie's friend, you're welcome here whenever you're free." "In that case, thank you very much, Old Mr. Tanner." By the time dinner was over, it was already eight and the Christmas celebrations had already started. As a result, the family gathered on the living room couch and watched the show together with Josiah. In truth, the Christmas celebrations had grown increasingly boring over the years. Nevertheless, Josiah insisted on watching it, not because it was particularly interesting, but because of the nostalgia he felt. With the help of the housekeepers, Charmaine prepared some fruits and snacks before joining everyone to watch the show. As for Sophie, she hadn't eaten much for dinner, for she wasn't keen on the food served on such occasions. Most of the time, they were too rich for her liking. "What's wrong? Are you feeling under the weather? You barely ate just now," Mark asked with concern after noticing it. "I'm fine. The food was just too rich for me." Nevertheless, it was better for her to keep her complaints to herself. After all, it had been a tiring endeavor for those who spent the entire afternoon cooking. "Why don't you have some fruit?" Mark handed some to her. "Thanks." She had just finished a piece of pear when her phone suddenly rang. After rejecting the call, she whispered in Josiah's ear, "Grandpa, I hope you don't mind, but I'm going to take a call." "Go on then. I guess it must be Tanny. He must have just finished his Christmas dinner too." Sophie proceeded upstairs with her phone. Once in her room, she closed the door behind her and called Tristan back. "Hello, what's up?" Sophie asked, holding her phone in one hand after taking off her shoes and laying down on the bed. "Nothing much, just missing you. What are you doing?" He was struck by the sudden urge to go see her. "Oh." Sprawled in bed, Sophie wasn't in the mood to talk. "What's wrong?" he asked in concern, having noticed her reluctance to chat. "Nothing.

I just feel tired." "Why are you tired when it's still so early? I was even thinking of coming to meet you." Even though they hadn't seen each other for only one day, it felt like an eternity to him. "Not today. I have to watch the Christmas celebrations together with Grandpa." Ever since she went to Horington, she hadn't managed to spend time with Josiah. Thus, she wanted to use the opportunity to make up for lost time. "I see..." Tristan sounded a little sad. "Why don't you switch to video and let me see you?" Sophie was speechless. Since when did he become so cheesy? Before Sophie could reply, Tristan was already calling her on video, leaving her no choice but to accept. The moment the video call connected, the sight of the face he missed intensified his longing for her. "I really want to be by your side right now." "Mr. Tristan, cool yourself down!" This doesn't fit his character! Behaving like this makes him irresistible. At that moment, Tristan's door suddenly opened. When he looked up to see who it was, a sense of resignation descended upon him. "Dad, what are you doing? Didn't I come home to have Christmas dinner with you?" Why doesn't he respect my privacy by knocking on the door? "What's wrong with you? Why are you hiding in the room alone? Come, watch the Christmas celebrations with me. Also, I haven't held you accountable for sending Winter to Alendor yet!" How can he exile such a decent girl to Alendor for ten years? She'll be so tan that no one can recognize her when she returns! "Anyone who has gotten on my nerves must pay the price for it, and Winter is no exception." "At the very least, shouldn't you consider my feelings? Winter's grandfather has come and pleaded with me many times. How can you not think about the consequences when you do something like that? I don't

care. Bring Winter back now! What's so difficult about that?" "Can we not discuss this on Christmas Eve?" Despite Tristan's respect for William, he didn't like the latter interfering in his life. "Can't you do this for me? Besides, what can a young girl like her have done? All she did was fall for you. It's fine if you don't like her, but was it necessary to exile her to Alendor?" This action of his has put both families in an awkward position!

Chapter 293 Going To See My Girlfriend

"Whatever it is, please go out first. I'm on the phone right now," Tristan replied with an irritated tone. "On the phone? With who? Your girlfriend?" Otherwise, why wouldn't he want me to know? "Just go out first." When he saw the fuming look on his son's face, William had no choice but to leave. It wasn't until he was certain William was gone that Tristan picked up his phone again. "Was that your dad? Mr. Tristan, I don't hold a grudge against Winter, so you don't have to do this for me." Sophie had overheard his conversation with William.

Tristan frowned at her words. "You don't have to bother with this matter. Besides, I've already shown her mercy on Charles' account." If it hadn't been for Charles, the consequences would have been much worse. "All right now, I've got to go back downstairs. Mark is still there." Since it's Mark's first time here, it would be rude to leave him alone. "What? Mark's at your house?" "Mmm-hmm." "Sophie, aren't you playing favorites? How can you invite Mark over for Christmas and not me?" Sophie was speechless. "He was alone in the mansion, hence the invitation for him to come over for Christmas dinner," Sophie explained.

"Fine." Tristan was still upset by the news. After ending the call, Sophie went downstairs to spend time with Josiah. "Soph, look, this sketch is really entertaining." "It is." Josiah enjoyed watching sketches and poem recitations. Even though the standard of recent programs had deteriorated, his enthusiasm hadn't diminished one bit. When it was close to midnight, Mark finally got to his feet. "Mark, since it's already so late, why don't you stay the night?" Josiah suggested. "It's fine, Old Mr. Tanner. I should be going home now." Mark didn't want to impose on them any further. "Grandpa, I'll walk him out. You should hurry up and get some rest as it's already late." He shouldn't neglect his health just because it's Christmas. "Fine, I'm going to bed." At that hour, Sophie was the only one who remained by his side. Everyone else had made an excuse and left after watching the program briefly. Evidently, actions

spoke louder than words. The moment they stepped out the door, Mark stopped in his tracks. Even though it hadn't snowed in Jipsdale over the last few days, the weather was still freezing cold.

"All right, you should hurry back in. It's too cold outside." Sophie only had a red sweater on, which wasn't enough. "Okay. Be careful when you go home." "I will." Mark's heart warmed at her concern.

When Sophie returned to the living room after sending Mark off, Josiah was still watching TV there. "Grandpa, why are you being so stubborn? Aren't you supposed to be in bed?" "Just five more minutes. My favorite sketch actor is on now." Josiah refused to go to sleep. Faced with his obstinance, the helpless Sophie ended up watching the show together with him. Once the sketch was over, it was time for the poem recitation. Josiah asked in a pitiful tone, "Sophie, I'm your grandfather. How can you treat me like that?" "Grandpa, what did I do to you?" "Can I then watch for five more minutes?" Josiah added with a smile, "Even if I go to bed now, I wouldn't be able to fall asleep."

Thus, it's futile for you to insist." Even though Sophie didn't say another word, her expression was enough to send a shiver down anyone's spine. "Fine. I'll stop watching and go to bed. Are you satisfied?" Josiah had no choice but to give in. Watching the exchange, Morgan couldn't help but smile. In this whole wide world, only Ms. Sophie is capable of ordering Old Mr. Tanner around. While Morgan helped Josiah up the stairs, Sophie cleared the mess in the living room before heading up herself. By then, it was already past midnight. She gave her social media a quick surf before lying down to go to bed. Suddenly, her phone lit up. It was Tristan calling again on video. Even though the room light was off, Sophie still answered it. "Why are you still up at this hour?" "I was just about to sleep and wanted to call you before that." Christmas, to Tristan, was a boring affair where everyone simply ate and drank. "In that case, I'll hang up now." Sophie was truly exhausted. "Mmm-hmm, good night." The purpose of his call was just to bid her good night. "Good night." Despite the simplicity of the greeting, it was enough for Sophie to feel her cheeks burn. The next morning, by the time Tristan woke up, William was already practicing yoga. "Youngsters like you are just too much."

Don't you realize how late it is?" William grumbled at Tristan, who proceeded to take a simple breakfast. "Dad, I'm busy in the afternoon, so I won't be back for lunch." Stumped by the comment, William threw him a glance. "It's Christmas now. What is there to do? Don't tell me that the employees of Lombard Group don't get a break?" "It's personal. You don't have to worry about it." "Personal? For someone who doesn't even have a girlfriend, what can it be?" The mere mention of a girlfriend frustrated William. "Tristan, you're getting older now. Don't be like Sarah. It's time for you to get married."

These kids never fail to make me worry about them. "That's enough. You don't have to concern yourself with me. When it's time to get married, I definitely will." "You don't want me to interfere, and yet, you only give me more cause to worry. At this rate, who's going to marry you?" All he does every day is work. "Tristan, let me tell you, don't just engross yourself in work. When it's time for a relationship, you need to take time out for it, do you understand? Winter seems like a good girl to me. I really don't know what's wrong with you to reject someone like her."

It's one thing to not be interested, but why did he have to send her to Alendor? "Stop! Don't bring up that person in front of me. She has to stay in Alendor for the next ten years." I don't mind forgiving her for offending me. Too bad for her, she had the audacity to attack Sophie. Therefore, I would have failed Sophie if I didn't exile her to Alendor for ten years. After Tristan had left, William—who was done with

his yoga session—was resting on a rattan chair. By then, Sarah had woken up. “Good morning, Dad!” “Sarah, does Tristan really not have a girlfriend? Other than seeing a girl, why would he need to be out on Christmas Day?” The more William thought about it, the more puzzled he became. Sarah couldn’t help but laugh when she saw the look on his face.

Dad. I didn’t expect you to be so nosy. Besides, even if that son of yours has a girlfriend, do you think th

Chapter 294

An Unforgettable Love “Dad, I’m your precious little girl. I’ll definitely not lie to you.” Sarah was solidly behind Tristan and Sophie, for she had taken a particular liking to the latter. “Precious little girl? I’m surprised you’re not embarrassed to say something like that now. All this while, you keep turning down my suggestions to get married. Why? Do you plan to wait for that Quigley kid for the rest of your life?” She’s no longer young. After a few more years, she’ll be past the ideal childbearing age.

“Dad, enough talk. I’m going out for my morning jog.” In no mood to discuss the matter, Sarah swiftly slipped away. The moment she left, Ysabelle came by. “Good morning, Grandpa!” “Ysabelle, you’re awake! Since it’s rare for you to have a holiday, why don’t you sleep in?” Ysabelle was William’s favorite at home. She walked up to William and gave his shoulders a massage. “I’ve had enough sleep. Grandpa, are you going to your old comrade’s house later? I want to go out too; it’s just that Dad...” Ysabelle put on a pitiful expression. “Ysabelle, let me tell you, you’re free to go anywhere you want for Christmas. Ignore your dad. Let me know if he dares to reprimand you, and I’ll give him a piece of my mind.” In that house, he was the head of the family. Ysabelle gave William a peck on the cheek at once. “Grandpa, you’re the best!” William’s heart melted when the cute Ysabelle put on an adorable expression on purpose. Consequently, he was willing to do anything for her at that moment.

Meanwhile, Tristan had arrived at the entrance to Sophie’s home. It wasn’t until he noticed that it was only slightly past nine that he realized how anxious he was. He then retrieved his phone and gave Sophie a call. Sophie was in the midst of adding a firewall to the Wings of Light when she answered his call. After putting him on speaker, she placed her phone on her desk while continuing with her work. “Good morning.” “I’m at your door.” “What?” Sophie’s hand froze as she was taken by surprise. Hence, she quickly wrapped up her work and walked to the full-length window with her phone in hand. Upon glancing outside, she saw Tristan’s car there. “Mr. Tristan, what are you doing?” Why is he here on

Christmas Day? “Are you going to come out, or am I to go in?” Sophie was lost for words. He’s not giving me any choice in the matter at all! “Wait right there. I’ll get changed.”

No sooner had Sophie ended the call than she put on a different set of clothes and headed out. The moment she stepped out the door, she was greeted by the sight of the casually dressed Tristan. He was in a white sweater and a black double-breasted coat. His dapper appearance made him look like a model straight out of the cover of a fashion magazine. When she laid eyes on him, Sophie suddenly began to miss him. Upon her approach, Tristan, too, walked up to her before wrapping his hands around her waist. "Sophie, I missed you." The speechless Sophie felt as if she would melt from his teasing. As he finished speaking, Tristan gave her a kiss on her forehead. "Didn't your dad ask you to keep him company at home?" "I prefer to be by your side today. So, do you have anything planned?"

"I do!" She did indeed have something to do. "Today, we'll be going to visit my deceased Grandma." Given that Sophie's grandparents had enjoyed a close relationship, her grandfather would visit her grandmother's grave every Christmas Day. "I see. Can I go with you?" Sophie knitted her brows. "Why do you want to go? Besides, in what capacity are you going to go in?" It's too early for this! "Isn't going as your boyfriend enough?" "Mr. Tristan, I don't remember ever agreeing to be your girlfriend. After all, given my age, it's still too early to discuss such matters. Considering the amount of uncertainty surrounding their situation, she wasn't able to give him an answer yet.

"Sophie, I don't deny that you're still young, but unlike you, I don't have that luxury. Having said that, I'm still willing to wait till you agree to marry me when you're older. Despite the unpredictable future, I have already decided that I'm yours for eternity." Sophie was naturally spoilt for choice, but Tristan would ensure he ended up being her only choice. Consequently, Sophie's heart throbbed at his words. What was going through his mind when he said those words? Am I being too unreasonable? "Therefore, take me with you!" "Fine, come along then." Sophie relented, for the expression on his face had unwittingly melted her resolve away. "Does that mean you agree to be my girlfriend?" Tristan pressed his luck. "Let me think about it." "Sophie, haven't you considered it long enough?" "What's

wrong? Are you growing impatient? If you can't wait, we'll just forget about it and remain friends." "D*mn it, I don't want to be your friend!" Tristan grabbed her by the waist and gave her a passionate kiss.

He needed to remind her that he wanted to be her man instead of her friend. Just when both of them were sharing an amorous kiss, Morgan appeared at the door at Josiah's instruction. However, greeted by the sight of the two lovebirds, he couldn't help but blush. "Ms. Sophie, Old Mr. Tanner wants to see you," Morgan informed. The sound of Morgan's voice caused Sophie's blush to intensify. "Okay." A minute later, Sophie turned around and calmly led Tristan inside. Tristan's arrival naturally delighted Josiah. "Tanny, it's great that you're here! We were just about to pay our respects to Sophie's grandmother. Why don't you come along?" Since Josiah had already accepted Tristan, he hoped to introduce the latter to his late wife, Mary. "Sure, Old Mr. Tanner." Considering how docile Tristan was in front of Josiah, it was hard for Caleb to equate what he saw with Tristan's image as one of Jipsdale's most powerful men. Once everyone was done with breakfast, they went to the public cemetery in two

cars. Josiah and Morgan rode in Tristan's car with the latter driving them personally. Along the way, Tristan even stopped at a florist. "What kind of flowers does Old Mrs. Tanner like?"

Usually, people would buy roses for visits to the grave, but Tristan wanted to buy something Mary liked. Lilies. Sophie didn't have many memories of her grandmother. Nevertheless, the only thing she co

Chapter 295

Visiting The Grave On their way to the cemetery, there was barely a soul to be seen, for it was rare for people to pay their respects on Christmas day. By the time Tristan's group arrived, Yale and the others were already there. At the sight of Tristan's car, Yale hurried forward to open the door and help Josiah out. Given that it was still cold in Jipsdale, Sophie quickly alighted and wrapped a scarf around Josiah's neck. With the help of his walking stick, Josiah walked toward Mary's grave step by step. Sophie followed him from behind with a bouquet of lilies in her hands. Once he reached Mary's tombstone, Josiah's eyes began to redden. Tristan, too, came up from behind to stay with Josiah and Sophie. In the meantime, Yale and Caleb began to clear the weeds around the grave, while Charmaine and Willow dusted its surroundings. After everything was done, Josiah said a prayer.

"Mary, it's been a while since I last came to see you. Please don't blame me for it. Not taking good care of you is the biggest regret of my life. "Perhaps we'll have better luck in our next life. Previously, I never believed in such a thing. But now, I do hope that it's true, for I'll be able to see you again. When the time comes, you're not allowed to avoid me, all right? I'll come and ask for your hand again with a big bouquet of lilies. In our next life, I'll definitely try my best to be more romantic." Morgan handed Josiah a tissue. "What's that for? I'm not crying. Besides, I don't think I have much time left, so I'll probably be seeing her soon." Morgan—who had served Josiah for many years—naturally knew how intense the latter's relationship had been with Mary. "Mmm-hmm, soon. We're both old now,"

Morgan lamented. Meanwhile, Tristan was particularly touched by Josiah's words. No one really knew if there was still life after death. Therefore, he resolved to treasure and never let go of the girl he loved. With Tristan holding her hand, Sophie could feel the warmth he exuded. In that instant, she felt blessed to have him by her side. After finishing his soliloquy, Josiah began to tire. Hence, Morgan helped him to the graves of his former comrades to clear them up. All of a sudden, Tristan released Sophie's hand and bowed in front of Mary's tombstone. "Old Mrs. Tanner, it's a pleasure to meet you. I'm Tristan

Lombard, and you can rest assured that I'll be taking care of Sophie and Old Mr. Tanner going forward." Tristan's sudden gesture caused Sophie's heart to skip a beat. After baring his soul to Mary, Tristan returned to Sophie's side. "Do you still want to stay with Old Mrs. Tanner a little longer?" As everyone else had returned to the car, Tristan and Sophie were the only ones left. Also, the weather was freezing

cold since they were on top of a hill. "I'm done. Let's go home." As Josiah had already been out a while, it was time for them to go home.

"Okay." With that, Tristan held her hand as they walked down side by side. When they finally got back to the car, Josiah—just as expected—was already waiting inside. On the way home, the latter remained silent throughout the journey. When they reached the Tanner residence, Sophie and Tristan helped Josiah back to his bedroom. "Grandpa, you should take a nap. I'll get Morgan to wake you later." "All right. Now, shoo! You youngsters should go out on your date. There's no need to waste your time on me." "Grandpa..." "Go on then. I'm tired and want to get some rest." Every time they came back from visiting Mary's grave, Josiah would behave that way. After coming out of Josiah's room, Sophie led Tristan downstairs. Yale—at the sight of Tristan—suggested in an obsequious tone, "Mr. Tristan, why don't you stay for a meal? The food is ready to be served." "I'll pass." Having no intention of staying for food, Tristan walked out together with Sophie.

Even though the snub had left Yale feeling particularly uncomfortable, he naturally didn't dare complain as he was fearful of Tristan. Caleb, after observing his father's behavior, naturally knew that Tristan wasn't someone to be trifled with. Within the Tanner family, Tristan seemed to only respect Sophie and Josiah. As for the others, they were like nobodies to him. Therefore, faced with Tristan's attitude, he had no idea how to solicit the former's help. To be honest, this is going to be tough. "Dad, it's all right. Mr. Tristan is busy and doesn't have time to eat in our home," Caleb consoled his father, who snorted in response. "Forget it. Big shots like him won't bother with common folk like us." Despite that, I'm still Sophie's father! How dare he not show me any respect? Meanwhile, Sophie had walked Tristan back to his car. "Isn't the physics competition starting soon? When are you leaving?" He remembered that the competition was after the holidays. "We'll be leaving in two days." After the holidays, they had to attend

training. Since the physics competition was conducted at the national level, Aaron insisted on the training out of his concern for them.

"Will Bailey be there?" "Yeah." "Oh." "What's that supposed to mean?" I'm only going to participate in a physics competition, so what's with that look on his face? "Nothing. It's just that I can't go together with you." He was tied down by a huge project on hand. "It's only for one week. There's no need for you to be by my side." What does she mean by "it's only one week?" Doesn't she know that it feels like an eternity? "Would things have been better if I were your age?" That way, he could do many things together with her. Sophie gave him a dubious look. "Mr. Tristan, what are you saying? You're not old. Besides, I like men who are a little older than I am." "Really?" Fine! As long as she likes it, I don't mind being older at all. "Yup." Faced with his delighted expression, Sophie couldn't bring herself to refute her words. After she gave him a nod, Tristan wrapped his arms around her waist and gave her forehead a peck. "All right, go back in now." "Okay. You be careful on your way home." Tristan made sure Sophie had gone back in before getting into his car and driving off. Back at home, he was greeted by the sight of Ysabelle watching TV with William, which was a rare occasion as she seldom watched war films with the

latter. "Uncle Tristan, you're home!" Noticing that it was already five thirty, Ysabelle was filled with excitement. "Mmm-hmm." Tristan gave her a cursory response. Just as he prepared to head upstairs, Ysabelle quickly caught up with him. "Uncle Tristan, did you go and see Sophie? Why didn't you invite me along?"

He has gone overboard by leaving me at home. Why would I take you when I'm going to see my girlfrien

Chapter 296 Not An Ordinary Man

As expected, the mention of Bailey's name left Tristan seething with rage. "So? Are you intentionally trying to ruin my good mood?" Even though Bailey doesn't pose a threat, I'm still upset that an outstanding guy like him has feelings for Sophie. To make matters worse, they're the same age too! "Oh, I wouldn't dare! I'm here to help you, Uncle Tristan!" Ysabelle replied with a chuckle. "Listen, since you can't accompany Sophie, let me go in your stead! I'm still on my break, anyway. As long as you help me deal with my father, I'll help you keep an eye on Sophie! Isn't that a brilliant idea?" My goodness, I ought to applaud myself for being such a genius! I guess spending all that time with Sophie really does make one smarter! "All right.

Go on and get ready, then. I want you to attend the training camp with Sophie," Tristan ordered. As it turned out, there was a mandatory training camp before the competition, which meant Bailey would be there too. "Yes, sir!" Ysabelle replied with a soldier salute. "Don't worry, Uncle Tristan! I'll make sure not to let any men go near Sophie." Despite having doubts about his niece's promise, Tristan knew he'd feel more at ease with Ysabelle escorting Sophie. Meanwhile, Sophie was surprised when Whitlea contacted her during Christmas. As soon as she realized it was the latter calling, she wanted nothing more than to hang up the phone. "Come on, Sophie, I'm only asking to meet up. I'm not that scary, am I?" Whitlea quipped. Naturally, Sophie wasn't keen on answering her. After all, whether Whitlea was scary or not had nothing to do with her. In the end, however, she still agreed to meet up at a cafe of Whitlea's choice. As soon as she arrived, the latter merely shot her a glance from the table.

Sophie promptly walked over and sat down opposite Whitlea. "Well, what can I do for you, Mdm. Dixon?" Ha! There's no way we can enjoy a cup of coffee together. I'm sure she wants something from me. To her surprise, Whitlea pulled out a card and placed it on the table. Upon seeing that, Sophie almost burst into laughter. Ha! This is just like one of those cliché scenes in television shows! Art sure is imitating life. "Give up on this physics competition!" Whitlea demanded. "There's five million in this

card. You can spend it however you like." Since it was the first time anyone had tried bribing with money, Sophie wasn't sure how she should react. "Mdm. Dixon, do you think I'm short on money?" Whitlea frowned. "Is that not enough? So long as you quit the physics competition and never contact

Bailey again, I'll be happy to throw in an additional five million." I'll pay any amount to get rid of Sophie. I don't like her one bit! "I think it's pointless for us to carry on this conversation," Sophie remarked as she stood up. The next second, however, a dozen men in black shirts suddenly rushed into the cafe.

"Don't push your luck with me, Sophie," Whitlea warned. Doesn't she know that I'm ready to do anything for Bailey? Even if I'm missing an arm, I'll still make sure to teach her a lesson! "Sorry to disappoint you, but I'm not pushing anyone's luck here. Though I must say, I'm curious to see what actions you'll take," Sophie scoffed. What a joke! This group of men doesn't scare me at all. Needless to say, Whitlea was furious and ready to do whatever that was necessary. "Do it," she ordered. With that, one of the men swiftly pulled out a gun. As hardened gangsters, they knew very well that guns would be more effective against someone as skilled as Sophie. The latter, however, remained calm and collected. Huh? Isn't she a little too calm? Girls usually freak out at the sight of guns, so why isn't she doing the same? Ah, maybe she's too terrified to move! Yes. That must be it! "What's this? Are you trying to scare me with a gun? I suggest you keep it right now. Otherwise, it won't be a pretty sight if it misfires,"

Sophie warned. "Quit acting tough, Sophie," Whitlea fumed. "Isn't it better to accept the money and agree to my requests? Why must you make things difficult for everyone?" Sophie's lips instantly curled into a half smile. My, my. To think she can threaten others and still be so self-righteous about it. Wait a minute. Shouldn't there be surveillance cameras in the cafe? "What about the surveillance cameras here?" "Ha, such naivety! I've already removed all of them. Now, be a smart girl and leave with the money. Otherwise, I'll have to resort to other tactics to make you miss the competition." "I refuse to." Oh, how laughable! Does she think she can coerce me that easily? This isn't my first rodeo, for goodness' sake! "Attack," Whitlea once again ordered. Now that she knew there weren't any surveillance cameras, Sophie decided to take action and snatch the gun. She moved so quickly that

the gun was already in her hand before anyone else could even react. "So much for thinking this was some good stuff," Sophie grumbled while fiddling with the weapon. "I can't believe you'd threaten me with this useless piece of junk." The man, who had just lost his gun, was utterly shocked. How did this woman steal it right under my nose? I didn't even see what happened! Without hesitation, Sophie took off the safety lock and pointed the gun at Whitlea's head. "Mdm. Dixon, if I had known you liked playing such games, I'd have humored you right from the start." By then, Whitlea was already shaking with fury. After all, that was the first time she had a gun pointed in her face. "Tell me what you want, Sophie. Don't do anything reckless." Sh*t. I don't want to die! There are so many more things I've yet to accomplish. I must stay alive! "Reckless? Aren't you the one who's being reckless?" Sophie scoffed. "Besides, I don't see why you should be scared if you have the gall to pull something off like this." The other men, too, were worried to see Sophie pointing a gun in Whitlea's face. "Ms. Whitlea..." Whitlea, on the other hand, still didn't believe that the young woman would dare shoot her. "If you pull the trigger, it'd spell the end of the Tanner family. There's no way the Tanners would acknowledge a daughter who is a murderer!" To her horror, Sophie aimed at her leg and fired off a round. "Ah!" Whitlea screamed, her face pale when she realized the bullet had pierced through her leg. "Well?

Do you think I dare?" "Y-You..." Whitlea stammered. She had been through a lot in life, except she always had the upper hand in any situation. Never once did she imagine she'd be bullied and threatened by someone else. "What should we do now, Ms. Whitlea?" "You're a bunch of idiots!" Whitlea yelled. I'm the one who has the gun in my face, yet they're still asking me for advice. How the hell should I know?

So, do you still dare to be this insolent? Sophie asked, an evil grin tugging at her lips. Just then, the cafe

Chapter 297

Tristan Is Jealous

Alas, Whitlea failed to get through to Bailey. "Mom, have you had enough?"

Sophie is just a student, so why do you keep picking on her? What's the point?"

"Where's your conscience, Bailey? Can't you see that my leg's bleeding? Do

you think I shot myself?" Whitlea retorted, not knowing if she should laugh or cry

at her son's ridiculousness.

When he saw the blood trickling down Whitlea's leg, Bailey quickly turned to

Sophie.

"I'm sorry, Sophie. It's all because of me that you've had to suffer so much," he

muttered. I like her, yet all I've done is let her suffer. I feel so awful!

The next second, he grabbed Sophie's wrist and pulled her along. "Come on.

Let's leave this place."

"Bailey Dixon!" Whitlea bellowed.

However, Bailey refused to look at his mother and continued to lead Sophie out of the cafe.

"What now, Ms. Whitlea?"

"Take me to the hospital!" Can't they tell I'm injured? Must they keep asking me for instructions? Do they not have a shred of common sense?

"Yes, Ms. Whitlea," one of the men hurriedly replied. Even now, they were still shocked that Sophie had such impressive skills. She didn't seem like an ordinary student at all!

Meanwhile, outside the cafe, Bailey and Sophie had decided to sit on a bench under a large tree.

Since leaving the cafe, Bailey hadn't said a word and merely sat in silence.

Sophie, too, did the same.

After a while, Bailey finally blurted out, "I'm sorry, Sophie." Other than

apologizing to her, he didn't know what else he could do.

Sophie glanced at him. "Come on, Bailey, this has nothing to do with you. It isn't

healthy to keep putting all the blame on yourself."

"Sorry. I've made you upset again."

"You... Fine. I don't know what else to say. Let's do our best at the training

camp."

Since he's so stubborn, there's no point wasting my breath on him right now.

"Okay," Bailey mumbled. "Are you leaving?"

"Of course. My grandfather's still waiting to eat with me," Sophie replied. She

had been out for quite a while, and it was time to head home.

"All right, goodbye," he said. He had always been a confident man, but for some

reason, Sophie changed him.

Deep down, the latter did find it a pity.

After all, Bailey was talented in physics, and if he continued to work hard in that area, there was no doubt he'd excel in the future.

His current state of mind, however, was a cause for concern.

"Put your mother aside and answer me truthfully, Bailey. Do you like physics?"

Nothing is as important as passion, and I'm sure he's passionate about physics.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have accomplished so much despite his mother's words and actions.

"I do," Bailey replied. How could I not? Physics and Sophie are my biggest passions.

"If that's the case, you have to go all out for this physics competition! Don't worry. I have no intention of giving in to you. May the best person win!"

"Okay!" Bailey answered, confident of his capability when it came to physics.

With that, Sophie left in a taxi, leaving Bailey alone on the bench and engrossed in his thoughts.

If I continue studying this field, will I have an opportunity with Sophie in the future? She's truly gifted, and even though she has said she doesn't like me, I don't want to give up just like that. We're both still young, anyway. Who's to know what the future might bring? There's always a chance that she might fall for me over time, isn't there?

At the thought of that, Bailey visibly cheered up.

That night, when Tristan went to pick Sophie up, he found out about her meeting with Bailey.

As much as he was annoyed, he knew there wasn't anything else he could say.

Sophie, however, had already realized he was quietly seething.

Ha! I'm getting better at understanding his temper.

"Don't worry! Bailey and I are only classmates. I don't have any romantic feelings toward him."

"Really?"

"Yes. You can trust me."

“Fine, I believe you, but it’d be better if you don’t meet him so often.”

In all honesty, that was the first time Sophie had experienced how overbearing

Tristan could be.

She had always known he wasn’t one to be messed with, but who knew he

could be that jealous?

“We’re about to participate in the physics competition. How are we supposed to

meet less?” Sophie retorted.

There’s no way I’d make promises I know I can’t keep!

Tristan sighed. “Sophie, can’t you just take it as you’re appeasing me?”

Eventually, the latter relented, even though she still wasn’t fond of making empty

promises.

When Sophie stopped trying to appease him for the rest of the journey, Tristan

became incredibly glum.

He kept one hand on the steering wheel and grabbed Sophie’s hand with the

other.

“Remember. You’re mine and mine alone,” Tristan mumbled. He had become

fixated on Sophie, and it was clear no one could change his mind.

Interestingly enough, those words instantly reminded Sophie of Nicholas.

Why was I so annoyed when Nicholas said those exact words in the past?

Now that it’s Tristan saying them, why do I get this warm and fuzzy

feeling? What’s wrong with me? It’s scary how I don’t even recognize myself

anymore! I must admit Tristan is growing on me. If this continues, I might not

even be able to pry myself away from him. Argh! Is that a good or bad thing?

When Tristan and Sophie finally arrived at Nocturnal, they saw that the others

had already gathered there.

Even Sarah and Ysabelle had also turned up.

After all, that was the last party before Sophie had to leave for the physics

competition, and everyone knew Tristan wouldn’t be in the mood for fun when

she wasn’t around.

“Give it your best shot, Sophie! I have confidence in you!” Sarah commented.

With Sophie being such a whizz in her studies, even Sarah had to admit she was becoming increasingly pleased with the young lady.

On top of that, the more time she spent with Sophie and the more she got to know her, the more she liked her.

“Thank you, Sarah. I’ll do my best!”

I still don’t think the physics competition is a big deal, but since everyone is so excited for me, I can’t possibly disappoint them, can I?

“Oh, you’ll do just fine, Soph!” Ysabelle bragged. “You’re invincible!”

Upon hearing that, Sophie laughed out loud.

Meanwhile, Charles was happily playing billiards with Felix when Winter called.

It was the first time the latter wasn’t spending Christmas in Jipsdale, and the thought of her being so far away in Alendor made Charles miss her even more.

“How’s everything? Are you adapting well?” Charles asked as he walked away

to a corner, his voice soft and gentle.

As soon as she heard the concern in her brother's tone, Winter felt even worse.

The next second, she burst into tears. "Charles, I've realized my mistake. I'm

not doing well in Alendor at all. Life is so tough, and I miss everyone! Can you

please beg Mr. Tristan to let me return home?"

Chapter 298

You Have A Death Wish

For someone who was used to the splendor of Jipsdale city life, it was really

depressing to stay in Alendor for a change. "All right. I will tell Mr. Tristan when I

have the chance."

Charles threw a glance at Tristan who was sitting beside Sophie. Since Tristan

had sent Winter to Alendor, Charles reckoned that she would not be able to

come back for quite some time.

"Charles, you guys are at Nocturnal, right?" Winter grew alarmed at the sound

of the music on the other end of the phone. "All right, I'm going to hang up now."

Charles' mood turned foul after hanging up the call. It was indeed pitiful for

Winter to be all alone in Alendor. Sean came over and patted him on the

shoulder. "Was that Winter?"

"Yes." Charles did not hide the fact that he had been talking to Winter. After all,

she was his sister, and there was no way he could just ignore her.

"Let's find a chance and try to talk to Mr. Tristan again." No matter what, they

had grown up together, and they were still friends with each other. However,

Winter should not have offended Sophie in the first place.

"Thank you," Charles muttered.

Sean patted his shoulder again.

"All right, that's enough. Let's not ruin the vibe. Look on the bright side. It's great

that she gets a chance to steel herself in Alendor. She's too spoiled for her own

good anyway," Sean said.

Charles knew Sean was right.

Winter was too proud and entitled for thinking that she could get anything and everything she liked.

She was oblivious to the fact that love, or in this case, the lack thereof, could not be rationalized.

Similarly, nobody knew that Tristan would change completely after knowing Sophie.

It was not a bad thing, per se. However, he was a changed man and was completely different from his past self.

Because of that, he had become a much more approachable man.

Sophie sat on the couch and played with her phone. She was not in the slightest interested in everything that was going on in Nocturnal.

Tristan was sitting beside her as he put his hands on the couch, essentially circling her in his embrace.

Ysabelle watched the two from aside and smiled. "Aunt Sarah, I did not expect that Uncle Tristan will act so lovey-dovey when he's in love."

“Tell me about it. He’s so serious about this relationship,” Sarah quipped. She

knew that Tristan was a man who took relationships seriously. He had been

alone all these years, but he fell hard for Sophie when she came into his life.

“But Sophie deserves it,” Ysabelle said as she watched the couple gleefully.

Sophie felt her ears turning red when she noticed that Tristan had been staring

at her.

“Do you have something to say?”

“Sophie, do you really find the phone in your hand to be more interesting than

me?” That’s disappointing.

Sophie kept her phone and turned to look at him.

When their eyes met, sparks of electricity sizzled in the air.

“I’m going to kiss you if you keep looking at me like that,” Tristan said. Sophie’s

beautiful face was a sight to behold, and the lighting at Nocturnal only served to

accentuate her charm and make her seem all the more alluring.

Fine.

Since Tristan said so, Sophie did not think it was appropriate to keep staring into his eyes and averted her gaze.

Not far away from them, a man was showing off his six-packs, and Sophie happened to see him when she glanced around the bar. She did not intend to check him out.

However, before she could react, her head was turned to the other side by Tristan.

“Don’t look!”

Why look at that sleazy muscular man? He’s got nothing to show!

Sophie sighed.

“Mr. Tristan, what do you want me to do then? I can’t look at you, and I can’t look at other people as well,” Sophie groaned.

“Just look at me if you have to. That man’s six-packs aren’t even worth looking at. His lines are not even that defined!” Tristian grumbled.

Sophie was rendered speechless.

“What? It’s true. I’m going to show you mine if there’s a chance. I’ll show you

what defined and perfectly chiseled muscles look like,” Tristan protested.

“Actually, I didn’t get the chance to have a good look at his six-packs. Why don’t

you let me have another look so that I know how to gauge yours?” Sophie said.

She only caught sight of that man for a fleeting moment.

“I told you he had nothing to show. It’s great that you didn’t get to see it properly.

It saves you the trouble to wash your eyes.”

“Ah, I see,” Sophie mumbled nonchalantly.

Sophie was actually not interested in the muscular man. Hence, she did not

bother to turn back around to have another look.

“Uncle Tristan, I didn’t know you were so possessive! It’s just one look. It’s no

big deal. Did you have to forbid her from taking another glance?”

Felix dragged Ysabelle aside as he wondered if she had a death wish. How

dare she tell Mr. Tristan off!

Sophie pried off Tristan's hands which were cupping her cheeks when she

heard Ysabelle's words.

"Let's go and dance!" Ysabelle said as she took Sophie's hand and led her to

the dance floor.

Nocturnal was bustling with life that night, and Ysabelle was tempted to join in

on the fun.

Sophie did not share her sentiment. However, seeing as Ysabelle was excited

to get on the dance floor, Sophie relented and went along with her.

Tristan did not stop Sophie. He knew that given her age, she was supposed to

enjoy herself.

Nonetheless, he did not expect that she would get herself in trouble.

Sophie was not interested in dancing. Hence, even when she was dragged by

Ysabelle to the dance floor, she merely rocked herself gently to the beat.

Ysabelle, on the other hand, removed her coat and exposed her tight black

clothing underneath that showed off her alluring curves. Her presence on the

dance floor immediately incited ecstatic whistles from the onlookers.

Before they were on the dance floor, Louisa and her friends had been the center

of attention. However, the men immediately turned their attention to Ysabelle

when she showed up. Though Sophie was keeping a rather low profile, her

beautiful face had managed to garner the attention of some men as well.

Louisa grew agitated at the sight, especially when she thought about how

Mason still could not walk on his own, and yet Sophie was already out partying

at Nocturnal.

Hence, she deliberately bumped into Ysabelle, making the latter stumble to the

floor.

There were a lot of people on the dance floor. Louisa and her friends did not

stop at knocking Ysabelle to the ground. Instead, they continued to dance and

“accidentally” stepped on Ysabelle’s hand.

Louisa and her friends were in heels, and naturally, Ysabelle squirmed from the pain.

She wanted to get up from the ground. However, there were too many people crowding the dance floor. In addition to Louisa and her friends' deliberate efforts, Ysabelle struggled to stand up.

Sophie's face sank when she noticed that Louisa and her friends were targeting Ysabelle. She pushed Louisa aside and crouched down to help Ysabelle get up.

Incidentally, the music stopped right then.

The others watched on as they noticed that the girls were about to engage in a cat fight.

The notion of a group of pretty girls fighting excited them.

Louisa was unfazed when she noticed that Sophie was trying to stand up for her friend. After all, the Yarborough family was quite influential in Jipsdale, so much so that nobody in their right mind would dare to cross Louisa.

"Oh, I'm so sorry! There are too many people here. You're not hurt, right?"

Louisa asked in a provoking tone. In fact, she was extremely pleased to see

Ysabelle's swollen hand.

Pfft, what's so special about Sophie? I don't give a d*mn about the Tanner

family.

"Louisa, I see that you have a death wish," Sophie said through gritted

teeth. Since she has a death wish, I might as well make her wish come true.

Chapter 299

Dance Battle

"What do you mean, Sophie? There are so many people here on the dance

floor, so it is normal to bump into others, all right? Do you have to make a

mountain out of a molehill? If you must behave in such a petty manner, I

suggest you go home and complain to your mom about this. Oh, I'm sorry. I

forgot that your mom doesn't care about you. I suppose she won't entertain you

even if you talk to her about this."

Louisa genuinely despised Sophie as she could not fathom what was so great about the latter.

“You—” Ysabelle had always been a sweet and well-tempered person, but even she was infuriated at that moment. “You obviously did that on purpose. Do you know how to dance? Was that even dancing?”

Louisa snorted. “Are you kidding me? Did you say I don’t know how to dance?

Just so you know, I started learning ballet when I was five years old. If I can’t dance, then are you saying that you can? Or perhaps she can? I believe everyone here has witnessed their ridiculous moves earlier. It is plain to see that they can’t even follow the music’s rhythm,” Louisa retorted arrogantly.

Louisa began learning ballet at a young age. Everyone who knew her praised her extraordinary temperament, an acquired quality that she credited to picking up ballet when she was little.

“What a joke. How dare you say you started learning ballet at the age of five when you’re such a terrible dancer? Are you sure you’re not an idiot?” Ysabelle

snapped in response, reluctant to admit defeat. She could not stand Louisa's

contemptible demeanor.

"Ha! Everyone can talk big even if they have nothing to show. Since you all think

it is my fault for accidentally bumping into you, let's settle this matter using the

practice here!"

"What kind of practice?" Although Sophie had visited Nocturnal on a few

occasions, that was her first time dancing there.

"Dance battle!"

That was not the first time Louisa and the others had a conflict with another

party in Nocturnal. Nocturnal had an unspoken rule for partygoers who had a

dispute on the dance floor to resolve the issue through a dance battle.

"What's the matter? Do you dare to accept my challenge? I reckon you all do

not have the guts to do so. Someone like her is only adept at fighting, so there's

no way she would know the graceful performing art of dancing." After saying

that, Louisa and her group of girls laughed mockingly.

“How do you plan to carry out the dance battle?”

“Soph?” Ysabelle grabbed Sophie’s arm. I’ve heard of people sorting out an

argument through a dance battle. Louisa acquired the skill in dancing when she

was little, not to mention she frequented this kind of place. On the other hand,

I’ve never seen Sophie dance. At this rate, it is apparent that we have no

chance of winning this dance battle.

“It’s very simple. We’ll battle at the same time. Then, the loser will have to do

anything the winner demands.” Louisa felt secretly delighted when she imagined

how embarrassed Sophie would be later.

Everyone in the Tanner family are jerks. How can that d*mned Willow ignore my

cousin, Mason, after he got hurt? I can’t believe I used to think of her as one of

my best friends.

“Sure!”

I’ll teach you a lesson today, Louisa.

Meanwhile, Tristan strode over to look for Sophie and Ysabelle because the two did not show up even after a long while. Unexpectedly, he was met with the scene before him.

“What’s going on?” Tristan asked when he saw Ysabelle’s swollen arm.

“It’s nothing.” Ysabelle lacked the courage to confess the trouble she stirred.

After all, she was the reason that altercation occurred.

“So? Do you dare? Hurry up and leave if you’re just a coward. Stop wasting my time here,” Louisa uttered rudely.

“You—” Taking in Louisa’s haughtiness, Ysabelle had the urge to step forward and brawl with her. “Soph, forget it. I’m fine.”

Ysabelle did not want Louisa to get the chance to mortify Sophie.

“Ha! I know you two are cowards. Fine. I shall not make things difficult for you.

Since you’re too scared to face me, all you have to do is apologize to me. I’m a magnanimous person, so I’ll forgive you two.”

“Are you crazy, Louisa? You want me to apologize to you after you stepped on

my hand? I think you’re getting tired of living!” Ysabelle grew up in a conducive

and educated environment. As a result, she was not skilled in chiding others.

Nevertheless, she was so enraged that she had a strong desire to curse Louisa.

“I’ll be your rival.” Ysabelle is hurt, so she cannot compete with them. Since they

are targeting me, I shall gladly accept their challenge.

Louisa smiled smugly upon hearing that.

She might be afraid of Sophie if they were taking part in a different contest.

However, Louisa was confident she would not lose in dancing.

Felix heard Sophie agreeing to the dance battle just as he walked over.

He could not help but wonder. To be honest, Sophie is a capable person, but

can she dance? She’ll have no problem facing others in a fight, but to compete

against others in a dance contest sounds rather far-fetched.

“Sophie, let’s just beat them up.” Why is she wasting her time arguing with this

woman? Felix was displeased after seeing Ysabelle getting bullied.

He would not mind hitting Louisa even though she was a woman because she dared lay a finger on Ysabelle.

No matter what, he wanted anyone foolish enough to harm Ysabelle to pay the price.

“Ha! Do you think you’re impressive for being acquainted with a few men? Do you deal with your problems by allowing men to stand up for you, Sophie? I was under the assumption that you were very formidable.” Louisa was not at all afraid. After all, she was acquainted with a considerable amount of people in Jipsdale. If the situation boiled down to a fistfight, all she had to do was to summon more people to her aid.

Ysabelle was overwhelmed by an urge to slap Louisa’s face when she saw the latter’s derisive mien.

“Louisa, you’re f*cking crazy.”

“Remember what you just said. If you lose, you’ll do whatever I ask of you, is

that right?"

"That's right, and that's a promise," Louisa replied. How can I possibly lose? I've

been dancing for over ten years. There's no way I'll lose to a thug like her.

Sophie took off her coat under everyone's watchful eyes.

The crowd was amazed after she removed her coat.

"Oh my god! She could become a model with that body!"

"That's right. She looked gorgeous with her coat on. I did not expect her to be

more captivating after she takes off her outerwear."

Regardless of their gender, all the onlookers were enthralled by Sophie's

beauty.

Some of them even started whistling at her.

In contrast, Tristan was not a fan of the turns of events.

In his opinion, he was the only person who could indulge in Sophie's

magnificence, yet those random strangers dared discuss her figure in front of

him.

Then, Sophie handed her coat to Tristan and said, "Hold this for me."

The annoyance he felt moments ago dissipated following Sophie's gesture.

"Good luck, Louisa. You can do this. Sophie's so full of herself. She probably

thinks she's better than everyone else just because she's slightly good-looking."

"Don't worry. I may not have the confidence to secure a victory if we compete in

something else, but no one can win me in terms of dancing."

Louisa was quite familiar with Sophie's background. She figured the latter did

not receive any exposure to dancing thus far in her life.

"Good luck, Louisa."

When those girls in Louisa's group saw how handsome Tristan and Felix were,

they grew more jealous of Sophie and Ysabelle, hoping more fervently that

Louisa would be able to teach them a lesson.

Louisa walked up to Sophie and whispered, "Sophie, I'm going to thoroughly

humiliate you today in front of everyone, you vain and materialistic woman."

Mason is such a nice person, but he ends up in his current miserable state

because of Sophie and Willow. I'll never forgive them.

Chapter 300

Teach You A Lesson

"So eager to make me suffer, aren't you? We'll see if you're capable of such a

feat!" Sophie could not care less about Louisa. She had never been afraid, no

matter what the bet was.

"Is that so?" Louisa remarked. How dare she utter such words even when she's

backed into a corner? I won't show her any mercy later. By then, several of

Louisa's friends had already asked everyone to leave the dance floor.

Tristan and Felix also followed suit. Although Ysabelle felt that Louisa should be

put in her place, she was also worried about Sophie. After all, she had never

seen Sophie dance before.

"What should we do, Uncle Tristan? It's all my fault. If I hadn't insisted on

dragging Sophie over to dance, she wouldn't be in this situation." After a short

pause, she asked, "Aren't you being a little too calm now, Uncle Tristan?"

Is he not worried at all? "What's there to worry about? Sophie isn't a fool. The fact that she accepted the challenge means that she's confident in winning."

Ysabelle felt a little more relieved upon hearing Tristan's words. Back on the stage, the music started, and the previously nonchalant person seemed to change into a completely different person after hearing the tune.

It was a jazz piece, and the two of them danced to the rhythm of the music after hearing it. However, Louisa was astonished by Sophie's dance from the very beginning.

Even the onlookers forgot to breathe upon witnessing the latter's dance moves. Does this girl really not know how to dance? What's going on now?

Every single movement of hers is in tune with the music. Look at her supple waist and nimble hands. Every movement goes perfectly with the music.

Tristan was yet amazed by Sophie once again. Sure enough, she doesn't

disappoint in everything she does. Just then, the song changed to a very sensual tune.

Sophie's movements slowed down, and within that change, she seemed to have transformed into the sexiest vixen in the world with her enchanting movements and seductive gaze.

Although Louisa's movements were indeed very professional, they did not fit so well with the music. Sophie's dance moves became bolder, and at the end, she turned and faced Louisa directly.

The two of them danced face-to-face, and gradually, Louisa became overwhelmed. Sophie's gaze was too wild and her movements so fiery that it was almost as if she wanted to set the other woman on fire.

In the end, Louisa made a mistake and fell to the ground on her bottom. "Boo..."

The crowd of onlookers began to boo. Louisa sat on the ground in a pathetic state and glared at Sophie. "You're so despicable, Sophie. I can't believe you pretended not to know how to dance in front of me just now. How can there be

such a shameless person in this world?”

Hearing Louisa uttering those words to Sophie, Ysabelle immediately shot back,

“D*mn it! You’re the shameless one! Do you think everyone likes showing off

like you? So what if you started dancing at the age of five? There’s nothing

fantastic about your moves just now.”

How unexpected! Truly unexpected indeed. Sure enough, Sophie has never

disappointed me in whatever she does. “How dare you say you’ve never

learned to dance, Sophie!” Louisa was still disgruntled and refused to admit

defeat.

“It’s true that I’ve never learned dancing. I just learned by observation after a

while. What’s the matter? Don’t you find it embarrassing that I can beat you

when I’ve never learned how to dance before?” Sophie said bluntly.

“You—” Louisa fumed. The girls that were with Louisa noticed the humiliating

state she was in and did not come over. Louisa got up from the ground by

herself. Having suffered such humiliation, all she wanted to do was to quickly leave the place.

However, before she could do so, Felix blocked her path. Do you think you can leave after hurting Ysabelle? Do you truly take us for accessories?

Louisa eyed the man standing before her. "What are you doing? How can a grown man like you bully a woman?" she growled. "Bully you? Is this bullying you?" Felix shrugged before continuing, "You hurt her. Do you think I'll let you go easily today?" Is she stupid?

"So what if I hurt her? Do you know who I am? Listen here. Should you lay a finger on me today, my dad will never let you off!" Even then, Louisa was still uttering threats in vain.

"Tell him who is my dad, Sophie." "Hah! I'm not your mom. How would I know who your dad is?"

"You..."

Louisa's face was pale with anger, and the other onlookers were laughing

mockingly. This girl took the initiative to provoke the other in the first place, so

she brought it upon herself.

“What’s the matter? Did I say something wrong? Have you forgotten the bet you just made?”

Weren’t you being so arrogant just now? So now that you’ve lost, you’re thinking of sneaking away?

After making a fool of herself in front of so many people, Louisa wore an ugly scowl. “Don’t cross the line, Sophie.”

“I insist on doing so. What can you do about it? You were the one who took the initiative to provoke me in the first place, so I won’t let you off so easily.”

“What the h*ll do you want?”

“It’s simple. Apologize.” She was making a reasonable request. “I’m sorry,”

Louisa uttered unwillingly. It’s fine. I’ll get payback for all the embarrassment I suffered today.

“Do you call this an apology? Fine! Now put your hand on the ground and let me step on it, and this matter is over.”

If she didn’t do it on purpose, I wouldn’t be so angry, but I saw how she had bullied Ysabelle just now.

“Don’t go overboard, Sophie. I’ve already apologized, so why do you have to be so unreasonable?”

“How is this going overboard?” Sophie thought otherwise. Wasn’t she the one who set herself up for a beating in the first place?

Sophie was sweating all over because of the dance battle earlier on.

Seeing that, Tristan came over with a tissue, pulled her to him, and wiped her sweat.

“All right. Leave it to Felix. He’ll deal with it for Ysabelle’s sake.” After wiping her sweat, he led her out.

“Okay.”

She did feel quite uncomfortable being drenched in sweat.

“Don’t be too soft on her, Felix. She needs to be taught a lesson.”

Only after saying that did Sophie left with Tristan.

“How would you like to deal with this, Ysabelle?” Felix asked the girl beside him.

Ysabelle had never been a vengeful person, so since Louisa had already apologized, she felt that there was no point in dragging the matter further.

“Forget it. I’m tired. Let’s go back.”

Felix scoffed after hearing her response.

“Do you think your family is very powerful, Louisa?”

His remark gave Louisa a sense of uneasiness.

Felix did not continue to give her a hard time.

The best way to upset her is to make her lose everything she’s always been

proud of, and I can do that.

“Come! Let’s go back. I can’t believe you got bullied just by dancing. How

useless.” Felix was truly disappointed with Ysabelle.

She trailed behind him, a little aggrieved. Why is he acting like this? I'm already

hurt, and he didn't even offer me some words of comfort. Must he talk like this?

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