

Pursuing 401

Chapter 401

“Everything will be fine with me here. You can count on me!” Sophie said confidently.

“Ms. Tanner, I know Mr. Tristan is your boyfriend, so you would like to compete to see who is the best. However, Lombard Group is good enough to be the standard in this industry. It's very difficult to reach his level!”

As a man, Victor couldn't help but be impressed with Tristan.

The man was a natural-born king. No matter what he did, he would succeed in everything.

After all, he had high expectations and excellent working capabilities.

Victor could never catch up to someone like him.

“What do you mean? Are you saying you don't even have the courage to compete? If that's the case, then I was wrong about you! Go on, leave! I'll look for someone else!”

She needed an assistant.

If Victor thought he couldn't do well, then he was welcome to leave.

“No, Ms. Tanner. That is not what I meant!” Victor was a little speechless. Does she think anyone can surpass Mr. Lombard? She has absolutely no idea how many people want to study him.

“Then follow my lead and work for me, or leave! The door is right in front of you.” She would never accept subordinates who worked just for the sake of working.

Victor knew Sophie was capable too.

However, he never knew that was her goal.

“Okay, I get it. Please be reassured. I'll do my best!” Since she trusts me, I shall not disappoint her!

“Good. I have sent the annual plan to your inbox. Go through this with the higher-ups. We'll discuss this in tomorrow's meeting.”

The reason she had come here was to deal with this issue.

“If there's nothing else, I'll be off, then.”

Sophie got up and left.

Victor saw her out.

The instant she left, Victor opened his inbox. As he went through the annual plan she sent him, his heart pumped in excitement and awe.

How can there be such a vast difference between people? She has yet to go to university! How did she even manage to produce a flawless annual plan like this?

Victor was thrilled. I think, this time, I'll be able to reach the top and catch a glimpse of the view. This feeling... I love it.

Victor immediately called his secretary.

“Inform all the senior executives to meet in the conference room. Everyone shall work overtime today!” Sophie had already done the annual plan herself, so he had to let everyone else have a look at it.

“Yes, Mr. White.”

The secretary's mood soured once she heard that they would have to work overtime later. However, she didn't dare comment because her job at Tanner Group paid very well.

Of course, this meant they had to do it no matter how tired they were. After all, no one wanted to lose their jobs.

Sophie went to Transfix Cosmetics right after she left Tanner Group.

She knew Wilma could manage Transfix Cosmetics well, but she still felt the need to drop by and check from time to time.

When Sophie arrived at Transfix Cosmetics, Wilma and her team were busy working. It was Wendy who noticed her first.

“Ms. Lineker, Ms. Sophie is here!”

True enough, when Wilma looked behind her, she saw the peerless beauty, Sophie Tanner, standing there. Instantly, she dropped whatever she was doing and went over.

“Ms. Sophie, what brings you here? Do you have any orders for us?” Wilma asked jokingly.

Sophie smiled too.

“Nah, I don't have any orders for you. It's just that it's been a while since I've seen your faces, so I popped in to see how you guys are doing. Are you having any problems with your work?”

Sophie still loved her time in Transfix Cosmetics.

After all, she was the one who made Transfix Cosmetics successful.

“Ms. Sophie, rest assured! Transfix Cosmetics is operating fine, everyone is doing their best, and our performance is getting better and better. Our salaries have gone up a lot as well! Everyone is still highly motivated.”

“Okay. When you're done with work, I'm buying everyone lunch!”

“Thank you, Ms. Sophie. Please get some rest in the office first. It's pretty warm here.” Wilma was worried Sophie would get a heatstroke.

“Oh, it's fine. I'll stay here and accompany everyone.”

Wilma was all smiles.

Ms. Sophie is really amiable and doesn't put on air at all. Even though she looks like a cold and aloof person, she's actually a warm-hearted person.

At noon, when Wilma and her team were done with work, Sophie brought them to a famous BBQ restaurant near them. The restaurant workers were surprised and excited.

The people from Transfix Cosmetics had fully booked their restaurant.

“Life is so much better under Ms. Sophie's guidance. Someone said this before, and she's absolutely right!”

“That's right! I can't even bring myself to eat here!” The food in this BBQ restaurant is expensive!

“All right, everybody. Be a little cultured while you're eating. Don't be crude,” Wilma teased.

After that, Wilma sat next to Sophie.

“Ms. Sophie, are there any improvements needed at Transfix Cosmetics?” The company was Wilma's priority.

“Ms. Lineker, you've done a great job.” Sophie was happy with her. “Honestly, your work is excellent, but you have to spend some time on yourself.”

Life is not all about work.

“Ms. Sophie, I don't want to date. I think what I'm doing now is just right for me.”

“Ms. Lineker, you don't have to worry about anything else. If you want to date, just do it. If you want to get married, go for it. And if you want to have children, take all the time you want. No matter when you come back, this position is still yours.”

She wouldn't have to worry about the workplace issues that any other working woman might have.

Wilma didn't say anything.

She was touched.

Sophie knew what she was worried about. However, these wouldn't have any significant impact on the company.

“One should have different priorities in different stages of life.”

“Okay. I understand.”

Ms. Sophie is an angel! She treats us like humans.

“You can tell everybody too that they can pursue anything they want. It's okay. They don't have to worry about these problems. They shouldn't have to worry about losing their job if they want to have a baby.”

“Yes! I will! Thank you, Ms. Sophie.”

Not many companies offered these kinds of benefits to their employees anymore.

She recalled some of her best friends who were fired after they returned to work from childbirth or were demoted to start all over from the bottom.

As such, her colleagues had said that they couldn't afford to start a family and lose their job.

In the end, everyone ate happily and contentedly in the BBQ restaurant.

They only left around ten past two.

“Ms. Sophie, where do you want to go? I'll drive you there.” Wilma knew that Sophie didn't like to drive whenever she went out.

“Oh, it's okay. You go back to your work. I want to look for Mr. Tristan.”

“Okay.”

Since Sophie was going to meet her boyfriend, Wilma knew not to be a third wheel.

At half-past two, Sophie arrived at Lombard Group, holding a cup of Tristan's favorite coffee.

Right then, Tristan was in a standoff with William in his office.

“Tristan, you have to listen to me this time. It's fine you don't like Winter, so I've found another one you will definitely like. She graduated from HF University and is a smart girl.”

William didn't want to wait anymore.

Sarah didn't want to marry, and Tristan didn't want to either. He wouldn't allow this.

"Dad, do you think I need to go on a blind date?"

William firmly nodded his head.

"Yes, you need to. After all, you have yet to get a girlfriend all this time. Don't you think you need one?"

Chapter 402

If Tristan continued to stay single, William would start wondering if there was something wrong with his son.

Tristan was rendered speechless.

"No matter what, you must meet them tonight. I've already promised them." At William's age, nothing else mattered as much as his children's health and happiness.

"I can't go tonight as I have something to do."

"You always do. Why are you always so busy? You can never earn enough money." William strongly disagreed with his son's point of view.

"Dad, I'll say this once more. You don't have to stick your nose into my business. I can handle it myself. Instead of causing someone else trouble, I'd rather stay unmarried for the rest of my life if I can't meet someone I like."

"What are you talking about? What do you mean you'd rather stay unmarried for the rest of your life? How can you do that?" William was furious. "Tell me. Do you have a girlfriend already?" If not, you wouldn't be so hesitant like this. It's just a regular meeting. Isn't it a trivial matter?

"I know what to do."

"What do you mean you know what to do? I'm telling you, you must bring your girlfriend to meet me if you already have one." Why do you never take me seriously? I'm the head of the family here.

"That's enough. You should go travel with some friends if you have nothing to do."

"Do you think I'm being nosy now?"

When Sophie arrived at the ninetieth floor, she was stopped by the secretary.

"Is Tristan still in a meeting?"

Sophie had just ended her sentence when the door to the CEO's office swung open. William exited the office, and Tristan was right behind him.

With how sharp William's eyes were and the fact that Sophie was never a lady whose presence could be easily ignored, the former stopped in his tracks upon seeing her.

He proceeded to say, "Hello, young lady. What's your name, and why are you here?"

Sophie was stunned. Great. I can't believe I just bumped into Old Mr. Lombard. If I had known earlier that he was here, I wouldn't have come.

Suddenly, an idea occurred to Sophie, and she held up the coffee she was holding. "I'm here to deliver coffee."

William glanced at Tristan. A coffee delivery? Is there no coffee available in Lombard Group? Is buying coffee from a shop outside necessary?

Sophie quickly passed the coffee to the secretary. "Sorry for the late delivery."

The secretary accepted the coffee that was being handed to her and didn't know how to react.

After saying her piece, Sophie turned around and walked away.

"It's a pity for a young lady with such a pretty face to be delivering coffee," William said after letting out a sigh.

Hearing that, Tristan was at a loss for words.

It was Sophie's first time meeting William.

After getting downstairs, she went to have a seat at the cafe opposite the company building and ordered a cup of coffee for herself.

She sat there until Tristan called her.

"Where are you? My dad has gone home. I'll come and meet up with you."

"I'm at a cafe opposite your company. It's called Peninsula Cafe."

"All right. Stay there. I'll come look for you now."

Sophie waited for Tristan there.

Ten minutes later, Tristan appeared at Peninsula Cafe.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have come looking for you without calling you first." He has always refused to let me meet Old Mr. Lombard. This time, it's indeed my fault for being so careless.

“What are you talking about? Were you startled? I didn't introduce you to Dad yet because I'm afraid he'll make things difficult for you. Don't overthink it.”

“Okay. What would you like to drink?” Sophie handed him the tablet.

Tristan ordered a cup of black coffee and accompanied Sophie to sit at the cafe.

“Do you have anything else to do later in the afternoon? You can go on with your work if you're busy. I just wanted to visit you. There's nothing important.” Sophie simply felt a sudden urge to visit him at work. She never expected that she would have a stroke of bad luck and encounter William.

“Don't worry. It's fine that you've bumped into him. I just don't want you to get upset. I can even introduce you to him right now.” Tristan was determined to stay together with her for the rest of his life.

He just didn't want her to bear so many matters when she was still young.

“Did meeting him startle you?”

“Do you think I'm a coward? Besides, your dad isn't some kind of monster.”

“That's good to know.”

“Did he come to find you because something had happened? I can tell you were both in a bad mood when you came out of the CEO's office earlier.”

“It's nothing. He's just here to rush me into marriage.” Since William had nothing else to do nowadays, he would spend his days worrying about when Tristan and Sarah would find a partner and get married.

“Oh, I see.” Sophie didn't express any opinion on this matter. After all, she had no plans of getting married at the moment.

She then asked, "Tristan, am I troubling you?"

"What are you thinking about? What is there to be troubled about? I will get married whenever I want to." Tristan held Sophie's hand. I must listen to my own thoughts on this matter.

"But I feel you must be extremely stressed out."

"Well, just make it up to me properly then. I rejected my dad's request for me to go on a blind date."

"Actually, it's fine even if you go," Sophie said graciously.

Tristan didn't know how to respond to that.

"What's wrong? Are you angry? I really think you can go take a look so as to not make your dad unhappy."

"Why should I suffer just to make him happy? Besides, I already have a girlfriend. Isn't it wrong for me to go on blind dates? Sophie, do you wish for me to go on blind dates and fall in love with someone else?" This is ridiculous. It really makes me angry when she does this.

Sophie immediately shook her head. She cupped his face and replied in all seriousness, "Don't say that. You're mine. Why will I wish for you to fall in love with someone else?"

Her words made him feel better.

That's right. I'm yours, and I will never belong to someone else other than you.

Since Tristan had another meeting to attend in the afternoon, he brought Sophie back to Lombard Group and let her play video games there while waiting for him.

While Tristan was working, Sophie was busy playing games to relieve her boredom.

Just then, she received a video call from Arius.

“Why are you calling me at this hour instead of sleeping?” It's currently nighttime at Anglandur, right?

“I'm trying to match your time zone, okay? You really caused significant damage to Nicholas this time.” Arius chuckled.

“I merely taught him a small lesson. Let's see if he still dares to do that to me again next time.” It feels fantastic to prank someone without letting them know who did it.

“He's quite busy now, so he doesn't even have time to cause trouble for me.” It's only a while ago that he kept insisting on capturing me.

“Well, isn't that nice? By the way, didn't you say you want to come back last time? Have you considered it?” Sophie placed the phone on the stand to free her hands.

“I really wish to go back. But I'm sure you know this isn't as simple as it sounds. There's a lack of manpower here currently, so I can't walk away so soon.” Barney was Arius' mentor. Now that there was a lack of manpower there, Arius couldn't leave so easily.

“It's up to you then. Just make sure you've thought this through.”

There were people who couldn't do anything willfully, and Arius was one of them.

Chapter 403

“No matter what, you must steer clear of Nicholas,” Sophie warned.

Nicholas was a psycho who would do anything to achieve his goals. He was not an easy person to deal with.

“Okay. Don't worry. I don't think he has time to capture me now. However, he won't give up that easily. You have to watch out too.”

No matter what Nicholas did, his sole purpose was to force Sophie to show her face.

“All right, I got it. Don't worry about me. It's almost time now. You should go to bed.”

Arius' line of work was a matter of life and death. He had to rest well.

“Okay. Remember to call me. Don't make me worry,” Arius reminded Sophie. Gosh, I sound like her mom!

Later that night, Sophie and Tristan went back to visit Josiah.

Josiah's mood instantly improved when he saw her.

“Soph, I haven't asked you how you did in the exam. Tell me, how was it?”

Like other parents, Josiah was concerned about Sophie's results in the university entrance exam.

“It should be pretty good,” she replied.

Josiah finally heaved a sigh of relief after hearing that.

“Oh, Soph! Listen to me. You still have to perform well at university. Tanny, you must wait for her.”

Looking at Sophie tenderly, Tristan replied, “Don't worry, Old Mr. Tanner. No matter how long, I'll always wait for her.”

This girl is worth waiting for.

Josiah was glad to see the expression on Tristan's face.

Seeing their interaction, Willow felt as if she was an outsider to the family. She looked out of place since Sophie returned.

Thinking of Clayton's promise, Willow clenched her fists.

If this is the only way I can get everything I want, then I have no choice but to do it. Who can blame me for that?

Seeing Willow's pale expression, Charmaine asked worriedly, "What's the matter, Willa? Are you feeling unwell?"

"Don't worry, Mom. I'm fine."

With that, Willow got up and headed upstairs.

She did not dare to look Sophie in the eye as she felt that her younger sister could see through everything.

I'm a goner if she figures out what I'm planning to do.

"By the way, when can I meet up with your family? You two can confirm your relationship and get engaged first!" Josiah spoke up out of the blue.

At his age, he could not predict what might happen the following day.

Josiah wanted to give Sophie a guarantee.

“Engagement?” Sophie's jaw dropped when she heard that.

How troublesome! Do I have to get engaged now?

“Don't worry, Grandpa. I'm very confident in myself. Besides, if a man is to have a change of heart, not even marriage can stop him, let alone an engagement!” Sophie replied.

She knew Josiah was trying to give her a guarantee.

Nevertheless, she did not need it.

Without replying to Sophie, Josiah turned to Tristan. “Tanny, is my request too much?”

Tristan beamed at him and replied, “It's fine, Old Mr. Tanner. I don't mind if you want to hold an engagement ceremony.”

As long as it was a request made by Josiah, Tristan would be willing to do anything.

Moreover, this request was not too excessive.

Sophie frowned upon hearing that.

Why are they making a big deal out of an engagement ceremony?

“Look at Tanny. He has no problem with that. You shouldn't oppose this idea either,” Josiah said with a grin.

The most important thing for Josiah was that Tristan treated Sophie well.

“Grandpa, I don't want any engagement ceremony. I still have to go to university! You're trying to make everyone know about me. How can I face others when I go to university?” Sophie protested.

Tristan is such a well-known figure. I don't want to become that famous too!

“You're right. That was inconsiderate of me,” Josiah admitted.

Just then, more than a dozen military vehicles stopped at the entrance of the Tanner residence. Then, an armed officer got out of one of the vehicles.

The housekeepers were scared witless when they saw the scene.

“Oh my gosh! What on earth is going on? Why are there so many people?”

“That's right! We've always been law-abiding citizens!”

“Enough with the chatter! Hurry and inform Morgan about this!” The housekeepers were in no place to handle the current situation.

When Morgan came over, he was also shocked by the scene even though he had been on the battlefield in the past.

Opening the door, he walked up to the officer.

“Excuse me. Who are you looking for?” Morgan tried his best to stay calm.

“Is this Ms. Sophie Tanner's house?”

“Yes. Why are you looking for Ms. Sophie?” When Morgan heard that it was related to Sophie, he became even more worried.

Ms. Sophie has been acting strange since she returned from Horington. Who did she offend this time?

“Our leader would like to meet Ms. Tanner. Is she free now?”

“Did Ms. Sophie do something wrong?” Morgan was still not at ease.

“Oh, it's nothing. Our leader just wants to meet Ms. Tanner. Please lead the way,” the officer replied politely.

Left with no choice, Morgan could only open the door and allow one of the cars to enter the residence.

When the man got out of the car, everyone was flabbergasted.

Many of them had seen this leader in the news. They never expected to meet him in person that day.

Yale came out after hearing the commotion outside. His legs turned to jelly when he saw the bigwig.

The great leader's secretary immediately informed, “Everyone, please refrain from taking pictures.”

Upon hearing that, the onlookers immediately nodded. They would not dare to disobey the order.

Yale was still in a daze. “Mr. Lar—”

Before Yale could finish his words, the secretary, who was standing beside the great leader, asked, “Is Sophie here?”

Yale immediately nodded.

There was only one thing on his mind at that moment. I must catch this big fish.

Yale led the great leader inside.

The great leader was surprised to see Tristan there. He naturally knew who the latter was.

Tristan frowned upon seeing the new guest. What is he doing here?

“Dad, the great leader is here for Sophie,” informed Yale.

Josiah had thought the great leader was there to meet Tristan. He didn't expect such an important figure to come to look for Sophie.

“Soph, what's going on?” Josiah probed.

Sophie narrowed her eyes. This must be the favor that Eustace has asked for!

“I'm Sophie Tanner. How can I help you?” Sophie introduced herself. It makes no sense for Eustace to tell him about me!

“Mr. Tristan.” Despite his status as the great leader, the man was still very polite to Tristan.

“May I know what is your relationship with Sophie?”

Tristan frowned at that question.

What's my relationship with her? What sort of question is that?

"I'm her boyfriend," Tristan said straightforwardly.

The great leader laughed awkwardly at that response.

"Ms. Sophie, I heard you took the university entrance exam this year. The results are not out yet. What are you planning to do in the future?" the great leader asked. She's undoubtedly a talent. If she joins

us, I may have finally found my successor.

Sophie answered honestly, "I haven't thought about it yet."

Chapter 404

"Sophie, how could you talk to the leader in that tone?" Yale scolded. "He's an important man, for goodness' sake! If we get into his good books, we'll have an excellent chance of becoming a prominent family."

Alas, Sophie was utterly indifferent to her father's fuss.

"It's okay, Mr. Tanner. Sophie is still young. There's nothing wrong with being a little wild at heart!" the great leader remarked as he waved off Yale's concern. "Sophie, may I speak to you in private?"

Sophie nodded.

He's already here, so how can I possibly say no? I'd be lying to myself if I thought I could get out of this...

A frown crept across Tristan's face, but he managed to hold himself back from stopping the leader. After all, even he had to show the latter some respect. "I'll wait for you outside. Give me a call if you need anything."

Given that it was the first time the great leader had seen such a reaction from Tristan, he quickly broke into a bemused smile. "My, my, is that necessary? Do you honestly think I'd take advantage of the young lady?"

Even though the great leader was only joking, Tristan glared at him, visibly annoyed. “What the hell do you want?”

Having been in a position of power for so long, the great leader barely flinched at the sudden outburst.

“Sophie, your boyfriend's not a good fit. My son, on the other hand, is around your age. How about I introduce him to you?” he teased.

This idea is brilliant! If Sophie becomes my daughter-in-law, she'll also be a member of my camp. What a superb arrangement!

Unfortunately, that only spiked Tristan's anger.

He could put up with many things, but he'd never allow anyone to lay a finger on Sophie.

“Try it if you dare, and I'll remove you from your position!” Tristan said arrogantly.

Naturally, he didn't fear the consequences of his words. After all, he could afford to be arrogant.

“You...” The leader's secretary could not take it anymore. How dare Mr. Tristan be so rude toward the great leader!

Tristan merely shot him a glance. Is he itching for a fight? Bring it on, then! There's nothing in this world that I fear!

To everyone's surprise, the great leader didn't seem to mind the commotion.

“Don't be too complacent, Tristan. You may be Sophie's boyfriend, but I fail to see how you guys are compatible. You're a lot older than her, aren't you?” he remarked, bringing up one of Tristan's major sore points.

Tristan's gaze turned cold and deadly almost immediately, to the point where even Sophie could sense the change in him.

She quickly grabbed his hand and held it tight. "I like Mr. Tristan. He's the only one for me."

Fortunately, Sophie's words managed to get through to Tristan even though she sounded casual and calm.

"Wait for me outside! I'll be back in a while," she added as she led the great leader to the study.

Once the great leader was out of earshot, Josiah finally breathed a sigh of relief. Otherwise, he knew Tristan would've blown his top.

"Tanny, do you know why the great leader came to look for Sophie?"

"Don't worry, Old Mr. Tanner. No matter what he's here for, Sophie will always have me by her side," Tristan replied. As long as I'm around, I won't let anyone hurt Sophie.

Upon hearing Tristan's reassurance, Josiah began to feel slightly more at ease.

He knew very well that it wasn't necessarily a good thing to be acquainted with people in power.

The more powerful they were, the more they weren't to be messed with. Even the slightest misstep could cost one's life.

Yale, however, was like a cat on hot bricks.

"Dad, if we can get on the great leader's good side, our family will be set for life! I know you love Sophie, but you can't let her do as she pleases. You have to persuade her to listen to the leader!" Yale exclaimed.

No matter how I look at it, this is a good thing! It has to be! Why else would the great leader grace us with his presence?

Having heard the commotion and seen the crowd, Willow was hoping Sophie had gotten into trouble and was about to be arrested.

However, when she overheard the great leader wanting to introduce his son to Sophie, she almost flew into a rage.

Even now, she was hiding in a corner and eavesdropping on their conversation.

Argh! I can't believe Sophie's luck! Why does she always get to meet such influential people? Why can't these things happen to me too? This is so frustrating!

Meanwhile, in the study, Sophie invited the great leader to take a seat while she stood on one side.

"So, Mr. Larkin, what brings you here? I don't believe we're acquainted."

"I've come today to thank you, Sophie! If it weren't for you, I'd have died!" Cillian Larkin replied. Of course, I had to come in person. How can I not thank my savior?

Sophie frowned. "Who told you about it?"

Was it Eustace? Then again, I doubt it. I've helped him quite a bit, so he has no reason to betray me.

"That's not important. What's important is that you were the one who saved my life," Cillian said. "By the way, let me know which university you'd like to attend. No matter how you fare on the examination, I'll guarantee you a spot in it."

"No, thanks. I can get in through my own efforts," Sophie retorted. Besides, the university entrance exam is already over, and the results will be released soon!

Of course, Cillian was more than aware of Sophie's capabilities, so he decided to reveal the real reason for his visit.

“Don't you want to follow my path in the future? If you do, I can teach and guide you. You are, without a doubt, a very talented young lady. If you embark on this path, I believe you'll accomplish even more than I have.”

Everything suddenly became clear to Sophie. Ah, so he's trying to get me to his side.

“To be frank, Mr. Larkin, I still have no idea what I want to do in the future. But I already have quite a lot of work on my hands. As you know, I'm the CEO of Tanner Group.”

“Don't be so quick to turn me down. You're still young, and who knows what the future might bring? If you follow in my footsteps, you'll be able to achieve so much more,” Cillian urged. He truly admired Sophie and was determined to help her get a head start in life.

Alas, Sophie merely shrugged it off.

Why do so many people want me as their heir? I'm just an ordinary girl, for goodness' sake!

“If possible, I hope you can attend military school!” Cillian added.

Upon hearing that, Sophie furrowed her brows.

She didn't like people dictating how she should live her life, especially when she was the one who knew herself best.

“I already have a university in mind!”

“Why don't you try attending military school for a few days? Who knows? You might like it!” Cillian insisted. Given her talent, the military school would be a piece of cake for her!

Unfortunately, Sophie was just as unyielding. "What's so great about military school? I refuse to go!"

"You!"

Cillian had dealt with all kinds of people in his life, but now that he was facing his savior, he realized he was tongue-tied.

Moreover, it was Sophie's life, and she had every right to make her own choices.

"Are you sure you don't want to give it a try? Military school is a lot of fun!" Cillian suggested as a last-ditch effort. "Or do you think the training would be too tough?"

Chapter 405

Surprisingly, Cillian began provoking her.

"Mr. Larkin, to be honest, I don't think I can learn much in military school." Even the teachers in school might not be able to hold themselves against her when it came to fighting.

If that was the case, she saw no reason to waste time on the endeavor.

Cillian didn't know what to say, not having expected such a response from her.

This girl sure can be cocky. But oddly enough, it's not annoying. On the contrary, I like it a lot.

"I'm serious. I don't need to go to military school if I want to learn how to fight." She had had to survive for a long period in places far more ruthless than military school, so she didn't see much value in what the lessons in military school could bring her.

"Eustace is right. You aren't easily convinced by others. No matter the case, I do owe you a big one this time. Come to me directly if you need something in the future."

Cillian gave her his private phone number.

“This is my private phone number. I will be the one to pick up if you contact this number!”

He had plenty of time. Besides, he wasn't expecting to convince Sophie right away.

“Okay.” Sophie didn't refuse that offer.

After all, his offer would make things much easier in Jipsdale.

She showed Cillian out after that.

Yale asked immediately, “Soph, what did Mr. Larkin say to you? He seems to have taken a liking to you. How did you get to know him?”

He was extremely curious.

“I just happened to save his pet, so he came to offer his gratitude.”

To save herself some trouble, Sophie didn't intend to tell him she had actually saved Cillian.

“I see.”

Yale believed in her.

However, Josiah didn't, but he didn't press for the truth upon noticing that Sophie didn't want to talk about it.

“Soph, how does Mr. Larkin intend to show his appreciation?” Yale was ultimately more interested in that. Nothing else mattered as long as he could reap the benefits.

“He wanted to offer me some money, but I didn't take it.” The question was already grating on Sophie's nerves, so she escorted Josiah inside instead.

“Soph, I don't need you to be anyone outstanding or powerful. All I wish for is your safety and happiness!” Josiah was aware that being acquainted with people like Cillian wasn't necessarily a good thing.

“Don't worry, Grandpa. I know what I'm doing.”

Working alongside powerful leaders came with its own risks.

The more powerful they were, the harder they were to deal with.

After Josiah was escorted inside the house, it was time for him to rest, so Tristan and Sophie sent him back to his room before leaving the Tanner residence.

In the car, Sophie asked, “Don't you have any questions for me?”

“Do you have anything that you'd like to talk about?”

He would gladly listen if she needed an ear, but he wouldn't push if she didn't wish to touch on the topic.

After all, he was never someone who liked to push other people.

“Eustace needed a favor from me, which came in the form of Mr. Larkin. I saved his life. Now, he wishes for me to follow in his footsteps.”

"I see. Mr. Larkin is quite a force to be reckoned with. Besides, he's a just man who also happens to wield some power within Chanaea."

"But I turned down his offer. I will forge a future for myself by venturing down my own path in my own way! I don't need help from anyone!"

She was equipped with the necessary skills for that.

"You've got some guts!" Tristan commented while looking at her with pride.

"Of course! Have you forgotten whose girl I am?"

I have Tristan as my boyfriend!

"He will probably show up again. He's incredibly persistent, so expect a second encounter with him now that you've turned him down this time."

"It's fine. I know what I should do."

Because the university entrance exam had ended, Ysabelle had nothing to do at home. Still, her father didn't want her to go loitering elsewhere, so Tristan and Sophie had to go fetch her at the Lombard residence.

Sophie tagged along, but she stayed in the car and didn't take a step out of it when Tristan went to get Ysabelle.

When Sarah noticed her figure in the car, she teased, "What made you bring her along? Aren't you worried that Dad might find out about her?"

"I'm not worried about that!" Tristan had always been a bold one. He just didn't want Sophie to feel annoyed.

“Jeez, I heard that Dad urged you to go on blind dates! You'd better handle this carefully.”

Sarah liked Sophie a lot, so she wished for the latter to be well cared for.

“Sarah, I've always been very nice to you, haven't I?” Tristan asked abruptly.

“Yeah. Why ask? You're my younger brother, so shouldn't that be a given?” She never once questioned that. “What is it? Do you have a favor to ask? Spill it out. I don't like when people beat around the bush.”

“Sarah, it's annoying that Dad is constantly pushing for me to get married. You're not getting any younger either, so why don't you go on blind dates?”

“You brat! What are you talking about? How dare you speak of me like that? I've made up my mind to remain single for life and will not get married. You should introduce Sophie to Dad soon! I heard he bumped into her at Lombard Group during his last visit there, no?”

Tristan was speechless.

“Sarah, we're bound to get married sooner or later. You can't be like this forever just because of Juan!” Seriously, who is he anyway? He has no right to make Sarah do this!

“Don't judge someone's happiness based on if they're married!” Sarah reminded him.

“Fine! Suit yourself.” He wasn't serious about it and still wished for Sarah's happiness.

After all, they shared a good relationship since young.

Meanwhile, Ysabelle trotted over to Tristan, knowing that he had come for her. Lincoln had no objections, seeing that she would be leaving with Tristan.

“Tristan, I know you've always doted on Ysabelle, but there's a limit to that. Her career choice doesn't matter, but she has to at least enter Jipsdale University.”

Tristan wasn't impressed by his brother's demands.

“Lincoln, aren't the three of us successful enough? Ysabelle is still a kid, so let her do as she pleases. Her happiness is of utmost importance!”

Happiness is the most important thing, isn't it?

Lincoln frowned.

“No way!”

“Lincoln, Ysabelle wants to join the entertainment industry. I'm telling you, she'll be making her debut soon! Don't be taken aback by then!”

Lincoln didn't know what to say to that.

Why is she making a debut when I haven't even agreed to that?

Ysabelle dared not utter a word upon taking in her father's countenance. However, she really had a passion for singing.

“Dad, I'm going to be a singer no matter the case. This is my only passion. I hope you'll offer me your support as my father!” Ysabelle mustered all her courage. I won't be able to deal with all the troubles within the entertainment industry if I don't even have the courage to face him! Sophie's right. I need to stand up for myself for the sake of my passion!

“Don't throw a tantrum, Lincoln. She's a grown-up now and has her own opinions. Let her go forge her own future! We shall back her up no matter what happens!”

Nobody will lay a finger on Ysabelle if the Lombard family backs her up!

Chapter 406

"How could you disgrace the Lombard family like this? From now on, don't tell people that you are my child if you choose to sing. Deal with all the mess you made in the entertainment industry by yourself. I will not clean up after you." With that, Lincoln strode off in anger.

The resentment within Ysabelle intensified as she watched her father's retreating figure.

I only want to sing. It's not like I'm doing something terrible. Why won't he let me?

Sarah patted Ysabelle's cheeks as the latter looked forlorn.

"Hey. You're going to be all right. You know your dad has a bad temper. Just ignore him and do what you're passionate about. You can count on your Uncle Tristan and me," Sarah said encouragingly.

"Thank you, Aunt Sarah." Ysabelle hugged Sarah.

The only people who understand me are Aunt Sarah and Uncle Tristan. I love singing and will never give it up. That's it.

"Okay. Let's go. Sophie is still waiting for you in the car." Tristan wrapped his arm around Ysabelle's shoulder and led her out.

Then the two hopped into the car.

Sophie rolled down the window and greeted Sarah before they left.

"What's wrong?" Sophie asked upon noticing Ysabelle's expression.

“My dad still doesn't want me to make my debut! Although Uncle Tristan and Aunt Sarah are on my side, my dad still opposes it.”

“It's okay. He will slowly accept it in the future once you do well. Some people just have conservative values, and they can't change their views at once.”

Sophie felt they should let it be since there was nothing they could do to change Lincoln's mind. With time, everything would get better.

“Sophie, do you think I will really be successful? Like very successful? Or is this my wishful thinking?”

Ysabelle still found it hard to believe.

A crease appeared between Sophie's brows.

“Why are you still struggling on this matter even after you've decided to debut? Put aside these useless thoughts and work hard.”

All she should do is give her best as she marches toward her dream.

Nothing else matters.

Ysabelle nodded.

“All right. I got it.”

She knew what Sophie said was right.

Tristan drove to TS Entertainment. Starting today, Ysabelle would be receiving comprehensive training here.

Sophie brought Ysabelle to the company today to get familiar with the place.

Tristan had nothing else to do, so he tagged along.

Knowing that this was her first time coming here, Mark and his band stayed in the company to welcome Ysabelle.

As soon as they saw her, Sunny handed a bouquet of roses to her.

“Welcome,” Sunny greeted warmly.

At last, TS Entertainment would have another artiste other than The Wheelers. He believed the company would do even better in the future.

Ysabelle took the flowers and said, “Thank you, Sunny!”

To that, Sunny patted on her shoulder.

“Sing well since you like to sing. Feel free to ask us anything if you have any questions,” he said sincerely.

Ysabelle nodded.

“Okay. You guys should go on with your work.” Sophie told Mark and the boys. She thought they must be busy with work and didn't want to take their time.

“Sure, we'll be off now. Don't worry. No one will dare to bully Ysabelle with us around,” Mark said.

“Jonathan, don't you think they have too packed a schedule recently? Don't just focus on publicity, the members' health is important too!”

Since the release of their new album, the members had been promoting it and hadn't been resting well.

“Now's the golden time for promotion. How can they rest now?” Jonathan responded immediately. He knew how tired The Wheelers had been lately since he had been by their side, but it was inevitable.

That was the only way to survive in the entertainment industry.

Everything would be over the day the fans stopped giving the artiste attention. By then, one could rest all they wanted to.

“Take it easy. Give them a day off.” The members seemed to be unable to handle their hectic schedules any longer.

Sunny felt emotional.

“Sophie, I'm being serious. You're the best boss in the world. How can there be such an outstanding boss like you?”

A person's health should be prioritized although earning money is just as important.

Jonathan nodded at once.

“Sure. I'll make the necessary arrangements right away.”

Clayton had never said something similar before.

Indeed, people are vastly different from one another.

Mark had been feeling exhausted recently, so he didn't refuse her suggestion.

Anyhow, health is of the utmost importance.

“As their manager, Jonathan, you should make arrangements like this yourself. Don't make me remind you again.”

“Do I have the authority to do this?”

“Yes. I said so.” Sophie would be worn out if she had to do everything herself.

“All right.” Jonathan was excited.

His authority had always been limited even though he had been working as a manager for a long time.

There were many things he couldn't decide on his own.

Jonathan had always hoped for The Wheelers to do even better, but his proposals were rejected each time.

Finally, he had his chance.

He sincerely believed that The Wheelers would become the top band in the music industry under Sophie's lead.

Suddenly, he was full of confidence.

“Jonathan, you must be thrilled! Aren't you glad that you followed us to TS Entertainment?” Sunny said jokingly.

Jonathan nodded at once.

“Yes! Coming to TS Entertainment with you boys is the best decision I have made in my life,” he answered excitedly.

“All right. Go on with your work.”

Sophie felt that this was her duty.

Making money was important, but making the employees happy was also very important.

Before leaving, Mark said to Sophie, “I'll see you later. Wait for me.”

“Sure. I'll wait for you to return before I leave.”

Why can't he tell me over the phone?

Then, Sophie brought Ysabelle to her office.

Her office was huge and was decorated according to her style, simple and clean.

“I can't believe it, Sophie! You've really become a domineering CEO.”

How can there be such a vast difference between us?

“Ysabelle, you should go for your training now.”

Right after Sophie finished her sentence, a girl in a high ponytail knocked on the door and entered the office.

"Ms. Tanner, I'm Samantha Jones."

"Just call me Sophie." Sophie wasn't used to people addressing her that way. "By the way, this is Ysabelle Lombard. She is going to be a singer signed under TS Entertainment. You should handle her for now."

"Sure, Ms. Tanner," Samantha immediately responded. "Hello, Ms. Lombard. I am Samantha."

"Samantha, please bring Ysabelle to see Mr. Tannen in the practice room."

"Mr. Tannen?" Ysabelle was stunned.

Is it the person I'm thinking of?

"Yes. What's wrong?" Sophie thought she had made herself clear.

Ysabelle swiftly shook her head.

No. It can't be the person I'm thinking about. Mr. Tannen has announced that he wouldn't sign with any company.

Chapter 407

However, when Samantha brought her to the practice room, and she saw it was indeed Richie Tannen, she lost her composure. Richie used to be one of the best love song singers in the past.

Sophie is too well-connected. How is she capable of inviting all these fantastic people? This is crazy!

Ysabelle was shocked to her core.

“Are you Ysabelle, the girl Sophie introduced to me?” Richie asked. He was very famous back then. Regrettably, he didn't enjoy over-exposing his private life, so he gradually faded from the entertainment industry.

“Hello, Mr. Tannen. I'm Ysabelle Lombard. I'll be in your care from now on.” She hastily bowed to him.

He was my favorite male singer when I was little. I didn't expect to become his disciple one day.

“Sophie has told me about your situation. All you have to do is focus on learning from me. You don't have to overthink other matters. Although being blessed with opportunities is crucial in achieving success in the entertainment industry, working hard is equally important.”

“I understand, Mr. Tannen. I'll listen to you obediently.”

“I didn't expect Sophie to be acquainted with an adorable girl like you.” This young lady is quite cute when she's serious. “All right, why don't you try singing a few lines?”

What? He wants me to sing right away?

Ysabelle was dumbfounded. Still, she cleared her throat. She could read sheet music, so she sang a few lines according to the music sheet.

“Not bad, but you're obviously lacking in your lung capacity. Your voice wavers whenever the line is too long.” Richie's words hit the nail on the head. “I suppose Sophie has arranged for you to undergo physical training. You must exercise diligently.”

“Understood, Mr. Tannen.”

Ysabelle had the urge to cry. I can't believe I really need to undergo physical training! Seriously? I'm trying to become a singer, not an athlete.

“Actually, you can try swimming. I assume you know how to swim, right? It'll be sufficient to maintain a daily one-hour swimming routine. If not, jogging is not a bad exercise too.”

Meanwhile, inside Sophie's office, everyone had left except Sophie and Tristan.

He sat on the couch, watching Sophie as she dealt with her work.

This is not how a girl who has just finished her university entrance exam should behave. She won't even agree to my suggestion of taking a two-day break.

Sophie made another phone call before she sat down beside him.

“Mr. Tristan, you should go about your own business. I still need to wait for Mark and the others here.” She had plenty of work left to do due to the many pending decisions related to TS Entertainment's

management.

Only after addressing the issues could the company continue to operate as usual.

“It's fine. You can continue what you're doing. I enjoy seeing the earnest way you look when you're working.” Tristan's eyes twinkled like a starry night.

Sophie smiled.

“Okay. Whatever floats your boat.”

Right after she finished her sentence, Tristan's phone rang. It was a call from Felix.

“Mr. Tristan, you should return to the office. There's a problem I can't settle.” Felix was genuinely desperate and had no other choice but to contact Tristan.

“You're useless!” Tristan was speechless.

“That's enough. Mr. Northley must've called you because it's a truly urgent matter. Go on with your work.” He's not carrying out his duty as the company's CEO.

Tristan held her hand.

He truly didn't want to leave her alone there.

“Then call me once you're done here. I'll come and pick you up.”

“There's no need to go to all that trouble. I'll go back to Wisteria Apartments right after I'm done with my work. You can straightaway return home too.”

Sophie reckoned they shouldn't waste much time traveling on the road.

After all, both of them were busy. He didn't need to fetch her.

“It's no trouble at all. I'll drive here to pick you up later.” Tristan was very firm in his stance because he thought it was a given for him to pick his girlfriend up after work.

That was his right as well as his obligation.

“Okay. Be safe on the road.” Sophie sent him to the door. “I won't be accompanying you downstairs, then.”

“All right. You can get back to your work now.” It is my own fault for finding a girlfriend who's busier than me. She has even more tasks to attend to than me.

Sophie beamed at him in resignation.

She had to take care of everything now, as she wouldn't have that much free time once she entered university.

Besides, she had also promised Arius she would visit the International Medical Association.

Barney was undoubtedly a highly competent man. Sophie knew she would learn a lot from him since he was a widely recognized expert in the medical field.

It'll be even better if the International Medical Association's headquarters can be moved here. Perhaps I should discuss this matter with Barney. If their headquarters is here, the doctors here in Chanaea will be able to gain more knowledge and acquire more chances to interact with members of the association.

Shortly after, Xandra came to meet with Sophie.

"By the way, I'm afraid that the task you assigned me concerning the recruitment of Cecelia is becoming a little trickier because her previous agency is reluctant to part ways with her."

"Are you sure you're having trouble handling a simple matter like this?" Sophie arched her brow.

She had expected Xandra to figure out a solution on her own since she was now in charge of that matter.

"Why are you so unhelpful? Although you've paid me, you can't just let me face this issue alone." Xandra felt speechless.

"This is because I have faith in you. Is there any problem you can't resolve in the entertainment industry?" Sophie believed Xandra could sort out any difficulty as long as the latter put her heart into it.

"That's enough. Stop trying to butter me up."

This girl is brilliant and eloquent. It was exactly because I had listened to her that I gave up my comfortable life to take up this position as her company's PR manager.

"To be honest, you enjoy this kind of life, don't you? Are you sure you can leave this lifestyle behind you?" Sophie was sure she could successfully hire Xandra because the latter took pleasure in that job.

Xandra was at a loss for words. I can't hide anything from her because she knows me too well. It's as if she can read my mind.

"That's right. I cannot leave this lifestyle behind me." Why would anyone return to living a mundane life after they've experienced the best things life has to offer? "You know me too well!"

Sophie grinned at her in response.

She understood Xandra's character well, so she knew Xandra couldn't give up those responsibilities.

"Let me know if you face any difficulty. I'll come up with a solution." Sophie wasn't as irresponsible as letting her employees deal with all the problems without offering to help.

"This matter is quite troublesome. But since you have so much faith in me, I'll make sure to acquire Cecelia for you. By the way, is there any other talent you're targeting besides Cecelia?"

"Nope. I only need Cecelia." Sophie reckoned she shouldn't be so unmerciful toward her competitors by dominating the entire market, as that would be too inconsiderate.

The two then discussed some existing problems in TS Entertainment, and Sophie proposed ideas for amendments and improvements to Xandra.

By the time they finished talking, it was already half-past eleven in the morning. At that moment, Mark and the others returned.

“You're still here, Sophie!”

Sunny was exhausted. He immediately slumped onto the couch after entering the room.

“What other activities do you have in the afternoon? If there aren't any, you all should go back and get some proper rest.” If they continue to work themselves so hard, I figure it won't be long before they expire on stage due to fatigue.

“We have one more activity left.”

Chapter 408

“Jonathan, is this event very important?”

“We've already signed the contract. If they don't attend it, people will surely think that they are putting on airs!”

Jonathan was aware that the members of the band were exhausted, but since they had already signed the contract, they had no choice but to go.

“Sophie, it's fine. I can just take a nap in the office. I will be able to carry on after that.” Sunny fell asleep on the couch right after saying that.

The band had been extremely busy attending events lately.

However, that also meant that their popularity was off the charts.

A crease appeared between Sophie's brows.

Since the contract had been signed, it wouldn't be nice to back out at the last minute. After all, a business agreement is meant to be honored.

“Jonathan, take note of their workload in the future. I don't think we should attend events that are unrelated to music.” Even though attending variety shows did help with increasing the band's popularity, those activities took up too much energy.

Jonathan nodded at once.

“Sure. Don't worry. I will make the arrangements accordingly.”

As Mark had something to talk to Sophie about, both of them headed to Sophie's office.

“Go on! What's the matter?”

“Actually, it's nothing. I just wanted to talk to you.”

“Has it been very exhausting lately?” Sophie was rather concerned about the man's health. It would not be a good sign if the leader of The Wheelers was worn out.

“I'm fine. The level of exposure for us is normal. Don't feel like you have to take extra care of us!”

“Mark, I don't care about making profits. I just want you guys to enjoy making music!”

If she could not even do that, what was the point of her managing The Wheelers?

“Sophie, you...”

After a brief moment of contemplation, Mark decided to hold his tongue.

“Is there something you would like to say? If there is, feel free to speak your mind. There's no need to beat around the bush with me!”

"I would like to rest for a while," Mark said straightforwardly.

Sophie was confused.

"Mark, what do you mean by that?"

"I want to leave The Wheelers!"

Sophie kept mum.

"What's the reason for that?" He must have his reasons for wanting to leave!

"Sophie, please don't ask any questions!" Although The Wheelers was indeed extremely popular then, and Mark was very happy that he got to spend time with Sophie, he did not wish to carry on living like that.

Sophie remained silent.

The other band members must have felt the same way when I left previously!

"Do the others know?"

"They don't know yet!" Mark was completely worn out. He had been out too long, and it was time for him to return.

Even if it was back to doing what he hated, it was indeed time to go back.

If he did not do that, the rest of the band members as well as Sophie would be dragged down.

“Mark, aren't we best friends? Can't you tell me the real reason?” Sophie did not want to guilt-trip Mark.

However, she had a feeling that something was amiss.

Mark was the soul of The Wheelers.

If he left the band, The Wheelers would no longer be The Wheelers.

Mark shook his head and replied, “I'm just tired and feel like resting. Besides, I'm quite sick of the entertainment industry after being in it for so long.”

He did not want to say too much.

“Fine! It's all right if you don't want to tell me the reason. But are you saying that The Wheelers should disband?”

What about the other band members? What would happen to them?

Mark fell silent.

He had thought a lot about it.

What would happen to the other band members after he left?

“Don't think too much. Just take a few days to rest. Maybe you're just tired.” That was all Sophie could say. “Let's not tell the others first! They would be devastated to know that.”

The Wheelers have been through a lot recently.

If he were to leave now, what would happen to the rest of the band members?

“Sophie, I'm so sorry!”

Mark did not want to put the woman in a tough spot, but he had no choice.

“Mark, you don't have to apologize to me. No matter what your final decision is, I will support you fully.”

She would not demand anything from him just because she had established TS Entertainment.

“I'll take my leave now, then.” Mark left the office and headed to their lounge, where he saw the others sleeping on the couch.

Mark walked out again and went to the corridor before lighting a cigarette.

He rarely smoked.

Even though he enjoyed playing rock music, he did not like to smoke.

Previously, all the band members did not smoke much because of Sophie's presence.

However, at that moment, Mark had the urge to smoke.

In the afternoon, Ysabelle went to look for Sophie after her practice session ended.

“Let's go! Let's get lunch! Uncle Tristan is already waiting downstairs,” Ysabelle said with a grin. She

was famished after spending the entire morning practicing.

“Sure. Let's go!”

Sophie stood up after tidying her desk.

Mark's words were still ringing in her head.

What exactly is the reason? He has never mentioned that he wanted to leave. There must be a reason why he wanted to leave all of a sudden. It's just that he's not willing to tell me.

“Sophie, what's on your mind?” As Ysabelle was getting no response from Sophie, she had no choice but to stop in her tracks.

Sophie snapped out of her daze and replied, “It's nothing. Let's go!”

The two of them left TS Entertainment and got into Tristan's car.

Sophie did not speak a word during the journey.

Noticing that, Ysabelle kept quiet as well while Tristan kept his eyes on the road.

The man knew that Sophie was troubled.

What exactly did Mark speak to her about that landed her in such a state?

When they returned to Wisteria Apartments, Susan had already finished preparing lunch.

Ysabelle was overjoyed. She sat down immediately after seeing the sumptuous spread that was laid out on the table. She had never felt that hungry.

“Susan, your cooking tastes so good!” Ysabelle was a smooth talker, and Susan was delighted to be complimented by her.

“I'm glad that you like it. Let me know if there's any food that you're craving. I'll make it for dinner!” Susan said with a smile.

“I like everything you make!”

Tristan scooped a bowl of soup for Sophie.

Sophie only drank a little soup and ate half a bowl of pasta, barely touching the other dishes.

After lunch, Ysabelle helped Susan with clearing the table while Tristan took Sophie to the study.

“Did something happen? Why do you seem so upset? You hardly ate anything just now,” Tristan asked with concern.

He could notice even the slightest change in Sophie.

“Mark wants to leave The Wheelers.”

Although Tristan was surprised to hear that, he knew that it was entirely up to the man whether he wanted to leave or not. No one else had the right to interfere with his decision.

“Did he tell you why? You'll just have to accept it if he has a good reason for that, right?”

“He didn't tell me the reason, but I feel that it's not that simple.” Sophie knew how deeply Mark felt for The Wheelers, and it did not make sense for him to want to leave so easily.

“What do you intend to do, then?” She established TS Entertainment just because of The Wheelers.

"I don't know."

Sophie knew that things were not as simple as they seemed, but she did not want to force Mark.

She was at a loss as to what she should do.

Chapter 409

"Don't rush it. Perhaps Mark said that out of impulse. Just talk to him again after a few days."

"I don't think so. I think he's considered it for some time now."

"Is it because you rejected him?" If that were the case, Tristan could understand Mark's decision.

"That can't be."

That can't be the reason. Mark is not that kind of person.

"All right, I'll help you check out what's happening." The matter could only be solved if they got down to the cause of it.

"Let me do it myself."

Sophie's bond with the members of The Wheelers was way more profound than anyone thought. She wanted to handle the matter alone.

"Okay, I understand." Tristan respected Sophie's wish for him to stay out of The Wheeler's matter. However, he didn't want to see her unhappy. "Do you want me to talk to Mark?"

The man felt this topic would be best left for the men to discuss.

"No. I don't want anyone else to find out about this yet. Don't worry. I can handle it myself." Sophie only wanted Mark to follow his heart. She didn't care much about anything else.

"Okay."

There was no sight of Mark in the following days. The Wheelers' workload had been reduced, so the members could finally rest well.

After the much-needed break, The Wheelers got back in action again. A few hours of sleep was all they needed because they were young. Their new album was wildly popular, and The Wheelers were slowly achieving their goal, much to Sunny's delight.

"Mark, we are in a great place now. I really hope it stays like this," Sunny exclaimed excitedly as they had a barbeque on the top floor. "Too bad Sophie can't join us. How can we celebrate without her?"

"That's right. We had it hard in Sky Media, yet we didn't give up. Now, giving up is not an option."

"Mark, what's on your mind? Why are you so quiet?" Sunny elbowed Mark when he noticed the latter was silent.

Mark knew he had to bring up that topic himself. However, he couldn't bear to let them down. After all, the members trusted him so much.

If I tell them about my decision now, what will they do? I can't imagine!

The members felt uneasy seeing their leader, the pillar of The Wheelers, behaving as such.

"Mark, do you have something on your mind? Are you in a bad mood? If you are, we can get Sophie to give us time off and we can go traveling."

"I'm leaving The Wheelers," Mark declared. No matter how difficult he found it to say that, he knew he had to do it.

The room fell into silence. All that could be heard was each other's breathing.

Sunny dug his ear, then asked with a smile, "What did you just say, Mark? Can you say that again? I didn't hear you properly."

"No. You've heard me, but I will repeat myself again. I want to leave The Wheelers. I'm not going to stay in the band and fool around with you guys anymore," Mark uttered his words slowly.

This time, Sunny could no longer pretend that nothing was happening anymore. His voice got louder as he questioned, "When did you make that decision? How long did you plan this? How could you do this? We've been together for so long. How can you quit just like that?"

Are we even friends? How can he quit the band without informing us?

"Don't do this, Sunny. Everyone has their own path to follow, and I'm at the end of my path with The Wheelers. I'm so sorry."

"Mark!" Sunny roared. "Do you know what you're saying? Do you know it's not easy for us to reach where we are today? I was nearly beaten to death because of The Wheelers, yet I never thought about giving up. How could you, the leader of The Wheelers, say you want to quit the band now? What should we do when you're gone?"

Didn't he consider all these things beforehand?

Mark's mood took a nosedive when he saw Sunny's reaction. He wanted to pat the latter's shoulder, but the latter took a step back.

"It's okay if you want to leave. But I want to know the reason." Sunny had been upset when Sophie left. He couldn't believe that even Mark would be leaving them.

“Calm down, Sunny. You're just too impulsive. You have to keep your emotions in check when I'm not around, all right? You still have Sophie. She will find a suitable lead vocalist. The Wheelers can survive even without me.”

Sunny sneered in response. “You've planned everything. You're not discussing this matter with us. You're merely informing us.”

Even though Mark felt bad, he could only nod in the end. “Everyone has the right to make their own decision. I hope you can respect me!”

Sunny slammed the beer bottle beside him on the ground in response to Mark's words. “Okay. I will respect your decision. There is no point in us searching for any lead vocalist. We shall disband during our most glorious period!”

If disbanding is a wise decision, then so let it be. I have nothing else to say. After all, maybe I'm the only one who cares about The Wheelers.

Mark replied helplessly, “Sunny, I've already told you not to be impulsive. You guys can survive even without me.”

“Mark, do you really have to do this? Have you forgotten how hard it was for us to reach where we are today? Why do you have to do this now that our career is finally on the right track?” Another member of The Wheelers spoke, unable to accept Mark's words.

“Don't be rash, Mark. No matter the problems, we'll solve them together,” one member advised.

“He's right. We should all calm down. We've been through so much together. Now that the circumstances have improved, I'm sure we can solve any problem together.”

Sunny's tears fell to everyone's surprise. The man had never cried, even during those days when Clayton had nearly beaten him to death. Yet, he could not stop his tears from falling now.

“I'm sorry, Sunny,” Mark said.

I'm the one quitting halfway. I'm the one who broke my promise.

Sunny shook his head, unwilling to continue the topic any longer. "Don't apologize to me. You didn't wrong me."

Not wanting the others to see him cry, Sunny turned and returned to his room.

"Sunny..." The members couldn't help but call out, "Sunny," when they saw his expression.

Sunny merely waved his hands dismissively in response. He wanted some time alone to calm himself down.

"What's going on? We all pulled through during the most challenging times. Why did things turn out this way when our career finally got on track?" The rest of the members were resentful of Mark's decision too.

Our dreams have just begun. Why did it end up like this?

There was nothing that Mark could say. Everything boiled down to him in the end.

Chapter 410

Sunny bawled his eyes out when he arrived in his room.

We've been through so much together. How can I just watch as The Wheelers disband like this?

He locked himself in the room, ignoring everyone who came looking for him.

Having no other choice, Mark could only call Sophie. She immediately rushed over after that.

"He knows about it, doesn't he?"

Sophie knew the only possible reason for Sunny's extreme reaction was because he learned about Mark's decision to leave.

Mark nodded. He felt that everything had happened because of him and that he had failed to handle things appropriately.

"Get some rest. I'm here. Nothing will happen to him," Sophie whispered.

"Thank you, Sophie. I'm sorry for creating this mess," Mark said. He didn't want things to end up this way.

I really hope to see The Wheelers thriving and succeeding in the future, but so much has stirred up because of me today!

"Don't overthink this, Mark. Sunny just can't think straight for the time being. That's how the world works. No one will stay with you forever. When it's time to go, it's time to go. It doesn't matter how unwilling you are."

They are just upset because they don't know the reason for Mark's departure.

"Yeah. I'll find another place to stay these few days. Don't worry if you can't reach me. I just want to have some alone time," Mark said.

My family wants me to return home, and it's time for me to do so now.

Sophie furrowed her brows. "What do you mean? Are you leaving? Where are you going?" What would the other members think if he left just like that? "Mark, I'm sure you know that I'll support you in all your decisions. But you can't just leave without making things clear."

Mark knew he shouldn't be doing this, but he had no other way. Unable to speak more about it, Mark could only say, "You don't need to worry about anything else. I'll be safe and sound no matter where I am."

"You can't do this to us, Mark. I told you guys the reason when I left, didn't I?"

"I'm just tired. I need to rest for a while. Besides, I'm starting to get tired of the life of being in the entertainment industry," Mark stated. He knew nobody could say otherwise if he insisted on this very reason.

"Why don't we talk about this again tomorrow? What's important now is talking to Sunny." Sunny was the youngest among The Wheelers, and he had the tendency to take things the hard way.

Mark nodded. "Take good care of Sunny. I will leave him in your care."

He speaks as if he is going to leave without ever returning...

However, Sophie had better things to take care of now. She turned and knocked on the door. "Sunny, it's me. I know you're in there. Open the door for me now. Do you hear me? If you don't open the door now, I'm going to break it down. I'm serious! Sunny, for the last time, open the door now!"

Sophie banged on the door, yet Sunny didn't move at all. He had totally immersed himself in his world.

What should I do now? We were doing well. How did it end up like this? Why can't we make more music together? Why is everyone leaving? Did I do something wrong? If I really did something wrong, I can change! I promise I won't be impulsive in the future.

The other three members were worried sick, seeing that Sunny was unwilling to open the door.

"Sophie, do you think Sunny would end his life?"

Sophie's face paled the moment someone mentioned the possibility. "Let's just break down the door."

The other three members tried to smash the door open together, but the door was too sturdy. It refused to budge even after the members had used all of their strength to break it down.

"Let's just call the police."

Sophie glanced at him. "You guys are popular celebrities. If you lodge a police report now, your fans will go crazy if they find out."

Their album had gone off the chart, and they had gained many fans. It would badly affect The Wheelers' image if these people found out about their situation now.

"Get out of the way. Let me do it," Sophie said.

"Sophie, you're a woman. You don't have the strength to smash it open!" How could she possibly break the door down when the three men couldn't even do it?

"All right, stop spewing nonsense. Get out of the way." Sophie was determined. She knew what she was doing.

The three members had no choice but to move out of Sophie's way. They thought they should let her try and that she would give up if she couldn't do it.

Sophie moved backward before kicking the door. The door shook for a few seconds, then fell inward.

The three members were dumbfounded.

What? This is so embarrassing. The three of us couldn't even smash the door open, and here Sophie is, opening it with just one kick.

“Why do I feel slightly awkward now?”

“Me too!”

“Sophie, we will leave Sunny to you. He listens to you and speaks to you the most. Just comfort him

and talk to him nicely. We'll talk about Mark's decision tomorrow.”

Sophie nodded. “Rest up, you guys. Don't think too much and leave this to me. No matter what happens, we will always be a part of The Wheelers.”

Even though Sophie had left the group, she still cared about The Wheelers greatly.

She walked in to see Sunny sitting on the windowsill. He looked deep in thought, with confusion written all over his face.

Sophie walked over quietly so as not to disturb him. She sat down on the windowsill opposite him and didn't say anything. She merely accompanied him silently, as she knew he probably wouldn't heed her advice now.

And so they sat there until it was nearly dawn. Sunny raised his head when the rain started falling outside.

“Sophie, does Mark want to leave the group because I did something wrong?” That was the only reason Sunny could come up with.

If that's the case, how am I going to forgive myself? The Wheelers is my pillar of support. I can't stand to see us disband.

“Sunny, it's time for you to grow up. No matter his reasons, if he wants to leave, if he's happy after he leaves the group, we should support his decision. We are his best friends. Shouldn't we be on his side? If we cannot do that, who else will? Am I right?”

Sophie was truly considering the best option for Mark.

If he decides to leave, I won't say anything as long as that's what he wants.

Sunny's eyes reddened. "Does that mean I'm the one who's being selfish now? I only think about myself without caring about others."