

## **Pursuing 41**

### **Chapter 41 Proving Her Wrong**

“Mr. Langston, I can no longer teach her,” Carrie insisted.

Right then, Derrick showed up at the office, panting heavily. He had run all the way to the principal’s office after learning about the matter.

“Mr. Langston, this must be a misunderstanding!” He huffed and panted.

“Mr. Hayes, I’m glad you’re here. I can no longer teach your class. Never mind if they ranked last in their batch; now someone even cheated in the test! Find someone else to take over my position!” Carrie announced.

“Mrs. Fletcher, we don’t know what happened yet. How could you accuse my student of cheating?” Derrick argued.

“I don’t think even I can score full marks for the test this time. How could she score full marks? Are you kidding me?” Carrie retorted.

Derrick responded, “You’re not capable enough, that’s why. I can’t believe you have the face to say that out loud.”

“Hey!” Carrie fumed.

“Why don’t we do this? I have a set of physics competition questions with me. Sophie, please solve them.” Andy pulled out a set of physics quiz questions that were sealed. “Mrs. Fletcher, you should solve them, too.”

“Mr. Langston, you want me to solve it together with her?” Carrie might not be as capable as Aaron from Senior Class 1, but she found it humiliating to be asked to solve the questions with her student.

“Just do it. You think you’re capable of teaching the honors classes, right? It’s time for you to show me your ability. If you’re capable enough, I’ll allow you to teach the honors classes,” Andy told her.

Andy unsealed the file and gave them both the papers.

“Sophie, if you can score fifty marks this time, I’ll admit that you didn’t cheat. I’ll also apologize to you,” Carrie said after taking a look at the papers.

The questions were difficult, so she was pretty sure Sophie couldn’t solve them.

“Mrs. Fletcher, stop talking. Go solve the questions there.”

Sophie took the papers and returned to her spot on the couch. She grabbed a pencil and started scribbling the answers down without even using a draft paper.

Carrie, on the other hand, started using the draft paper for the first multiple choice question.

I need to perform well this time. They think I can’t teach the honors classes, right? This is the time to prove myself.

After completing the multiple choice questions, Sophie moved on to the subjective questions. She was good at mental arithmetic, so she could write out the steps on paper and calculate the answer mentally without needing any draft papers.

They were given two hours to complete the physics quiz, but Sophie completed everything in one hour.

She placed her pencil on the table and put on her earphones casually.

“Mr. Langston, see that? She gave up as she didn’t know how to answer any of them! How dare she listen to music here? I’ve never seen anyone as arrogant as her!” Carrie complained.

“Mrs. Fletcher, you should hurry. There is only one hour left, but you have yet to complete many questions,” Derrick chimed in.

He couldn’t bring himself to stay quiet anymore.

Since Sophie came to this school, Carrie had been making life difficult for her.

Derrick had talked to Carrie a few times privately, but she still refused to change her attitude.

Carrie shot Derrick a glare before returning to her questions.

The further she got, the more difficult the questions became. Carrie’s expression turned dark.

She couldn’t solve two subjective questions. Her initial plan was to perform well. Alas, her plan had gone down the drain.

However, this was a physics competition paper. The reassuring thought made her relax immediately.

The questions were too difficult to begin with, so it had nothing to do with her ability.

Andy invited the physics teacher of Senior Class 1 and also the Head of Physics, Aaron, to mark their papers.

Aaron marked Carrie’s paper first.

He quickly finished marking the multiple choice questions. She got them all correct.

Carrie heaved a sigh of relief at the results.

Aaron made the calculations as he marked the subjective questions.

In the end, Carrie scored seventy-eight marks.

“Mrs. Fletcher, you’re quite weak in physics,” Aaron commented. As the Head of Physics, he kept reminding the other physics teachers to solve physics questions during their free time. However, Carrie kept brushing him off.

Carrie turned grouchy after getting reprimanded in public.

Derrick handed Sophie’s paper to Aaron.

Sophie got all the multiple choice questions and the fill-in-the-blank questions correct.

She also got all the subjective questions correct.

Thus, she scored full marks on the quiz paper.

Aaron could barely hide his shock, for he couldn’t even score full marks if he were to do the quiz himself.

“How did she do?” Andy queried.

“Mr. Langston, she scored full marks!” Aaron reported happily.

Did our school hit the jackpot? Is she a genius?

“What? Mr. Elswick, did you make a mistake?” Carrie refused to believe it.

Sophie completed the questions an hour ago, so it seemed impossible for her to score full marks.

“Mr. Langston, please allow me to tutor Sophie. I’ll register her name for the physics competition this year!” Aaron implored excitedly. He had always been an ambitious teacher but had never come across any smart students in his teaching career until now.

“Mm. We’ll talk about that later.”

Andy was surprised, too. He only took Sophie in as a favor to the Northley family, so he had no idea he would hit the jackpot.

“Sophie, you can leave now. We know that you didn’t cheat.” Andy’s voice grew increasingly gentle.

“I’ll be off now.”

After Sophie left, Andy returned to his seat.

“Mrs. Fletcher, I’m afraid you can’t be a physics teacher in our school with your ability,” he said.

Carrie only scored seventy-eight marks, so it was pretty obvious she wasn’t capable of teaching the students.

“Mr. Langston, I...”

Carrie had no idea she would shoot herself in the feet today.

“You’ll be in charge of managing the dorms from today onward. For now, work hard on your physics. You’ll take the final examination with the students. If your level is still the same, then you’ll keep managing the dorms. I can’t allow an unqualified teacher to teach the students. Of course, if you aren’t satisfied with my arrangement, you can resign now. I’ll approve your resignation right away,” Andy stated firmly.

Carrie was seething inwardly. D\*mn it! I wouldn’t be in this state if it wasn’t for Sophie!

“Mr. Langston, let me continue teaching Senior Class 8,” she answered weakly.

Andy asked, “Mr. Hayes, as the homeroom teacher of Senior Class 8, do you think Mr. Elswick can teach them physics?”

“But Mr. Elswick is already teaching three classes! Won’t it be too much for him to teach my class too?”

“No, it isn’t too much! I can do it. I can teach your class,” Aaron interjected swiftly.

After Sophie returned to Senior Class 8, everyone turned to look at her quietly.

“Soph, how did it go?”

As she said naught a word, Ysabelle began packing up her stuff. “Soph, let’s go. There’s no point studying in such a school,” she huffed.

Sophie grabbed her arm.

“Where are you going? I don’t have to leave.” Having said that, Sophie returned to her seat calmly.

“Really? Didn’t Carrie—”

“Ysabelle, I’m fine. I didn’t cheat, so she can’t expel me.”

Derrick then entered with Aaron behind him.

“Everyone, quiet down. From today onward, Mrs. Fletcher will no longer be your physics teacher. Mr. Elswick will be your new physics teacher,” Derrick announced.

The students gaped in disbelief.

“What happened?”

“I thought Mr. Elswick teaches the honors classes?”

“The results for the monthly test are out. You can find out your results on the bulletin board. Next Monday will be the day of the parent-teacher conference. It’s very important, so one of your parents will

have to show up.”

After learning that the results had been released, the students of Senior Class 8 rushed out of the classroom before Derrick could even finish his announcement.

## Chapter 42 Just Like That

“Willow, let’s go. The results are out, so we should go take a look.”

At the same time, Senior Class 1 received the news, too.

“Bailey will come first, and Willow will either be in the second or third place. They won’t be curious about their results.”

“Let’s go. We should take a look together. This time, the test was quite hard.” Willow got to her feet. Instead of her own results, she wanted to see Sophie’s scores.

She was certain that Sophie wasn’t her match.

When Willow and her friends arrived, the bulletin board was crowded.

“Scram! Your results are that way!” The students from Senior Class 1 started chasing the others away.

The top hundred students were usually from the honors classes, so there was no reason for the students from the other classes to crowd this spot.

“It’s fine. I can check out Sophie’s results first. She’s my sister, so I hope she did well.”

Willow went to the end of the bulletin board, certain Sophie didn’t do well in the test. She knew how bad Sophie’s results were back in Horington, and it was impossible for one to improve that swiftly in such a short amount of time.

“Willa, how could you be this kind? You treat her nicely, but she might not appreciate your gesture. She has a bad reputation, so you should be careful not to let her drag you down.”

The upper-class society cared about their reputation a lot.

“I don’t mind. No matter what, she’s still my sister,” Willow insisted.

“Didn’t she rank last?” Everyone assumed Sophie was going to come last, for the students at Jipsdale Premier High were pretty smart.

Willow’s smile nearly slipped when she couldn’t find Sophie’s name among the last ten students.

They moved up the list.

“Willa, how bad did your sister do? Her name isn’t even on the list!”

Hearing that, Willow sighed.

Her name isn’t even on the list? That means Sophie did really bad!



Meanwhile, Ysabelle dragged Sophie out of the classroom to check out their results.

“Oh my god! Soph, am I seeing things?” Ysabelle rubbed her eyes incredulously.

She opened her eyes wide and stared at the list again. Sophie had come in second, only scoring ten marks lesser than Bailey.

“Soph, how did you score that high?” Ysabelle was shocked.

Isn't Soph a terrible student and a delinquent? How did this happen?

“Just like that,” came Sophie's nonchalant answer.

She hadn't wanted to come first and had done several questions wrong on purpose. Otherwise, Bailey wouldn't even be her match.

Willow came over to them and sneered, “Sophie, why isn't your name on the list? Did you do so badly that the teachers refuse to let others see your results?”

“Willa, just ignore her. She isn't worth your time.”

“I guess no one in Jipsdale Premier High had ever scored this low, so the teachers were too embarrassed to release her results to the public.”

Willow's friends burst out giggling.

Ysabelle was so furious she let out a snort. How dare they look down on Soph?

“Why are you snorting?” One of Willow’s friends, a girl wearing glasses, spoke out. “If you suck, you should stay in your classroom instead of embarrassing yourself in public.”

“I’m laughing at someone who’s blind. Sophie’s name is really obvious, but someone is too blind to see it.”

“Hey!”

Willow went over to the top of the list.

Bailey came first as he scored seven hundred and twenty-five marks.

Sophie came second for scoring seven hundred and fifteen marks.

Willow ranked third for scoring six hundred and eighty marks.

“How is this possible?” Willow couldn’t believe her eyes. Did Sophie rank second? She scored thirty- five marks more than me!

Everyone else came after seeing Willow’s reaction. They were at a loss for words after seeing Sophie’s results.

“Seriously?”

“Willow, isn’t your sister a terrible student?”

“Yeah! I thought she loves to fight? What is going on?”

“Ha! Why? Are you jealous? Sophie can fight and study well! She’s an all-rounder!” Ysabelle announced proudly. In fact, she was so delighted as though she was the one who came first.

“Impossible.” Willow shot Sophie a disbelieving look. “You cheated during the test, right?”

Sophie laughed icily. “Cheat? Do you think it’s possible to cheat when the test is so hard? I don’t think you can memorize the answer to the last question in the physics test even if you were given the answer beforehand!” she mocked.

Willow scowled.

How could this be? Sophie did poorly back in Horington!

“Ysabelle, let’s go back to class.”

Sophie led Ysabelle back to their classroom.

Willow stood rooted to her spot. Many things had changed since Sophie’s return, and she was about to lose control of everything.

“Willow, are you all right?” her friend asked in concern.

“I’m fine.” It’s just a monthly test. Never mind. I can work hard to defeat Sophie.

She was dealt another blow when their Chanaean teacher read Sophie’s essay out loud in class.

The teacher kept lavishing praises on Sophie’s writing.

For the next few classes, Sophie’s answers were used as a template for the students to learn and improve. Willow couldn’t help but feel jealous.

That night, she went home to Charmaine, who asked her about her monthly test results.

“Willa, you haven’t told me about your results.” Charmaine had hired many famous teachers for Willow as she wanted her daughter to get admitted into a top university. Nowadays, eligible bachelors from the upper-class society would consider their future partners’ education level and IQ as they wanted their next generation to inherit good genes. Thus, Charmaine had always paid attention to Willow’s education.

“Not bad.”

Willow dared not tell Charmaine that Sophie had done better, afraid that Charmaine would focus on Sophie’s good results.

“What’s wrong? Did someone bully you in school?” Charmaine asked worriedly.

Willow seemed to be in low spirits tonight.

“I’m fine. I think I didn’t get to rest well as I worked too hard for the test. I’m a bit tired,” she explained.

Charmaine told the housekeeper to heat a glass of milk for her.

“Willa, I know it’s hard on you. You need to work hard as that’s the only way you can get what you want. Think about Mason. You’ve always liked him, right?”

Doesn’t she know what kind of wife the Laird family prefers?

Charmaine added, “Besides, you’ve neglected painting recently. You need to paint more. I’ll organize an art exhibition for you one day.”

“Mm. I know.” Willow perked up at the mention of that.

Indeed, having good results wasn’t enough. The upper-class society wanted more than that from women.

For example, Mason's mother, Constance, was a painter of some renown. With her painting skills, she was better than most women of her age.

"Mom, the parent-teacher conference will be held on Monday. Are you free to attend it? If you aren't, it's fine." This time, Willow didn't want her mother to attend the conference. She didn't want Sophie to get to gloat.

"Monday? Sure, I'll be there," Charmaine promised.

"If you attend it for me, what about Sophie? You should just stay home instead of showing up."

Charmaine assured her, "Will, you're my only hope. Sophie is no match for you!" Sophie has a bad reputation. She's hopeless.

Hearing that, Willow leaned into Charmaine's arms.

"Mom, thanks. I won't disappoint you," she vowed.

"Good. You must marry Mason. I'll figure out a way to get the twenty percent of shares from Sophie to be your dowry."

## Chapter 43 Conference

That Friday night, the Lombard family returned to the Lombard residence for dinner with William.

William sat at the head of the table as a dozen of them took their seats. Although William was over seventy years old, the aura he had amassed over the years since he became an entrepreneur was still strong.

"Tristan, I've heard that you're rather conspicuous recently."

Tristan put down his wine glass and replied, "Dad, since you've handed over Lombard Group to me, I'll handle everything. You can put your mind at ease and enjoy gardening at home."

"Tristan, how can you talk to Dad like that?" William's eldest son, Lincoln, chided Tristan for disrespecting their aged father.

"That's right, Tristan. Dad wanted to remind you for your own good. Others won't let you off the hook once you harm their interests." Soon, William's second oldest, Sarah, chimed in.

"Sarah, I know what I'm doing. Don't worry about me."

Tristan was confident and had made the necessary preparations for the drastic action.

"Sarah, how are things going between you and that brat from the Quigley family? You're not getting any younger. If he's not okay, you—"

"Dad, please don't bother yourself with this matter." Sarah felt a little frustrated once William brought it up.

"Do you guys think I want to poke my nose into your business? I'm worried about all of you!"

"Grandpa, I'm well-behaved!" Ysabelle interrupted after she had been eating quietly for some time.

William put on a smile when he saw his beloved granddaughter.

"You're right. You're such a good girl."

"Grandpa, I have a friend in Jipsdale Premier High. I'll bring her here on my birthday. I'm sure you'll be fond of her."

“Sure.”

“By the way, the parent-teacher conference will be held next Monday. Dad, will you be going?”

“Monday? I’ll be in Mapleton that day. Let Uncle Tristan go on my behalf.”

“Uncle Tristan? Are you free to join the conference?” Ysabelle thought Tristan was busier.

“Okay.” Much to her surprise, Tristan agreed.

After dinner, Tristan was chatting with Sarah in the greenhouse.

“Sarah, Juan isn’t the right man for you.” Among the siblings, Tristan and Sarah were the closest to each other.

Sarah put on a wry smile once Tristan finished.

“Tristan, sometimes you find yourself unable to do anything when you’ve fallen for someone.”

As if I don’t know what kind of a person Juan is. Despite that, I can’t control my heart.

“I don’t want to see you get hurt.” Tristan could settle everything for Sarah except for this.

“All right. Don’t be bothered by my business. People are saying that you’ve been quite close with a young lady lately. Why didn’t you tell me? Let me evaluate her for you!”

“Who said so?”

“So it’s true? Bring her home someday. I’m eager to meet her.”

“Sure, but don’t let Dad know.” Since William was bad-tempered, Tristan didn’t want Sophie to get hurt.

“I understand. Dad is indeed bad-tempered.”

On Monday morning, Ysabelle came up to Sophie once Sophie arrived in class.

“Soph, which of your family member will come to the parent-teacher conference this evening?”

“No one.” Since Josiah was getting on in the years, Sophie didn’t want him to be troubled by the trivial matter. As for Yale and Charmaine, she hadn’t told them about the event.

“I see. My uncle will be coming later. I’ll ask him to bring Felix along to help you.”

“No need for that.”

“No worries.”

“There’s really no need for that.”

“Soph, you’re my friend. My uncle is also your uncle.”

Sophie was rendered speechless.

At noon, Tristan and Felix came to Wisteria Apartments to have lunch with Sophie and Ysabelle.

Sophie’s and Ysabelle’s lips twitched when they saw the dressed-up men.

It’s merely a parent-teacher conference. Do they have to dress up like this?



“What’s wrong? Ysabelle, do you want to rate my outfit today?”

Ysabelle sat on the couch and replied, “My god. Others might think you’re going to attend an award-giving ceremony!”

“Don’t I look good?”

Tristan had faith in his appearance, for he was known to be a handsome guy.

Sophie didn’t say a word. She knew that Tristan would remain handsome and eye-catching even if he wore some ordinary clothes from the thrift store.

“Mr. Northley, thank you for acting as my parent.”

Felix rubbed the back of his head awkwardly.

Didn’t Mr. Tristan tell her I’ll act as Ysabelle’s parent? Her parent will be Mr. Tristan!

After a while, it came to Felix’s mind that Tristan would probably act as Sophie’s future husband.

Since Tristan didn’t reveal it, Felix certainly wouldn’t say a word about it.

“You’re welcome. I don’t have much work to do today anyway.”

“Sophie, you don’t have to thank him. I asked Uncle Tristan to bring him along.”

“Ysabelle, do you have a problem with me recently?”

Ysabelle scoffed at that but didn't utter a word in response.

"All right. Come and have lunch already." Just then, Tristan interrupted and stopped their nonsense.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, the driver drove Charmaine and Willow to Jipsdale Premier High. Since the parent-teacher conference was being held today, no cars were allowed to enter the building.

Hence, the driver stopped at the entrance for Charmaine and Willow to get out of the car.

Since the students of Jipsdale Premier High came from wealthy or prominent families, the entrance was packed with many luxury cars.

Even the Tanner family's car wasn't the best one.

"Willow, you have to get close to the Laird family. It's the only way that the Tanner family can prosper." Oftentimes, humans would not feel satisfied with what they already had.

"Mom, I understand."

Willow was a well-known student in Jipsdale Premier High, for she was always among the top three students in her grade.

As they headed toward the classroom, many parents who knew Charmaine came and commended Willow for being beautiful and clever.

At that moment, Charmaine thought she had made the right choice.

Willow is the one who can bring me great honor.

Meanwhile, Willow was also pleased at their praises.

Yes, I should always be in the limelight. No matter how excellent Sophie is, no one will care about her because of her embarrassing past.

Just then, a white Porsche Cayenne pulled over at the entrance of Jipsdale Premier High.

The well-dressed Felix hopped out and quickly opened the door for Ysabelle.

The next moment, a silver Lamborghini stopped right behind the Porsche Cayenne. After the driver opened the door, Tristan and Sophie got out of it.

As both were good-looking, the people around began to stop and stare at them.

Some young girls even screamed in excitement. My god! Are these movies stars here for filming?

Hearing the commotion, Charmaine and Willow also stopped walking and turned around.

Charmaine's expression turned grim once she saw Sophie.

"Let's go." Charmaine grabbed Willow's wrist to continue walking. She couldn't tolerate the thought that people would ridicule her because of Sophie. After all, she always treated Sophie as a disgrace.

In the meantime, Charmaine's reaction sparked joy in Willow's heart.

Just as I thought, Sophie has become an embarrassment. No matter how hard she tries to prove herself, she will always be a nobody in the Tanner family!

"Soph, don't be sad. You still have me." Noticing Willow and Charmaine's disdainful reaction, Ysabelle quickly held Sophie's arm.

## Chapter 44 Feel Sorry For Her

After a while, the four people arrived at the classroom of Senior Class 8.

“Ysabelle, where is your seat?”

“Here.”

Felix sat in Ysabelle’s chair upon hearing that. Not bad. This spot is just right for Ysabelle since she isn’t a tall girl.

“And you?”

When Sophie brought Tristan to the last row, he took the seat.

Other students continued to come in with their parents, mostly in their thirties or forties. Unknowingly, they dared not breathe too loudly upon seeing Tristan.

After a while, some parents who knew each other began discussing their children’s results.

“Did you hear the news? Previously, Senior Class 8 was the second last in physics. However, the class’ performance deteriorated since a student named Sophie came.”

“Yes, I’ve heard about that. My daughter told me that Sophie is a delinquent. She has been living together with some random men since junior high.”

“How can such a student come to Senior Class 8? Since today is the parent-teacher conference, I plan to discuss it with Mr. Hayes. Our children are now in their senior year, which is a crucial year. We can’t let a rotten apple spoil the barrel! Our children’s exam results mustn’t be affected!”

“I agree. Let’s raise our concern with Mr. Hayes together.”

Since they talked loudly, other parents also heard their conversation.

With a cold expression, Tristan kept tapping the table with his index finger.

“You two should leave the room for now.”

“Okay.”

With that, Sophie and Ysabelle left the classroom.

“Soph, don’t be bothered by what they said. They will regret it upon seeing your results.”

“I don’t mind. Let’s buy some canned drinks at the canteen!”

Sophie and Ysabelle headed toward the canteen.

At two-thirty in the afternoon, the conference officially began. Derrick showed some slides to present pictures of the students since the school opened. Besides, he even thoughtfully added captions.

After Derrick finished the presentation using dozens of slides, the parents had a rough idea about their children’s performance at school.

Derrick then walked upstage to welcome the parents and explained some crucial aspects to which students in their senior year should pay attention. After some time, the long-awaited moment of announcing exam results finally arrived.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I will now distribute the students’ report cards and analyze the monthly test results with all of you.”

Before he could distribute the report cards, one of the parents stood up.

“Mr. Hayes, I heard our class has enrolled a dropout from Horington High this semester. Since when has Jipsdale Premier High become a school that accepts trash? How could the school enroll the student after even a substandard school like Horington High kicked her out? Moreover, our students are in their senior year, which is an important year. However, the arrival of the delinquent has severely affected our children’s studies. Hence, we hope that the school can expel the student.”

Derrick couldn’t help but frown upon hearing the parent’s overly offensive and impertinent remarks.

“You must be Lenora’s mom. I understand that all of you are concerned about your children’s studies. Indeed, their studies are more important than ever since it’s their senior year—”

“Mr. Hayes, you agree with me, right? In that case, why doesn’t the school expel that Sophie girl? I can’t let my daughter study in the same class with a piece of trash.”

“Ma’am, how can you make such an impudent remark? As far as I can see, you’re worse than a piece of trash.”

Felix couldn’t stand it any longer. Is this what Sophie has had to endure since she started studying at Jipsdale Premier High?

“You—” Lenora’s mother, Matilda, was pissed off. Since Lenora always badmouthed Sophie, Matilda certainly believed her daughter. “This is not just my personal opinion, right?”

“Indeed! Mr. Hayes, she’s not wrong. What kind of a place is Horington? How could the school accept a student rejected by Horington High and destroy our children’s future?”

“That’s right. My kid is aiming to attend one of the best universities in the country! We spent so much to send our kids to Jipsdale Premier High not because we want to see a delinquent student.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, Sophie is a well-behaved student. No one can ascertain if the rumors are true. Nonetheless, the truth is Sophie has done well recently.”

“Mr. Hayes, we know you’re a good teacher and wish to protect your students. However, the news about what Sophie went through in Jipsdale is true. Even her parents find her embarrassing because of that.”

Meanwhile, Tristan couldn’t help but sneer when he realized that the adults in their thirties and forties were so hostile to an eighteen-year-old girl.

Moreover, he felt sorry for Sophie once he imagined how she had to endure the mental torment alone.

If she had been beside him at that moment, he would have hugged her without hesitation.

How old was Sophie when others accused her of debauchery five years ago?

A thirteen or fourteen-year-old kid was criticized and even abandoned by her family in Horington.

As Tristan recalled the look of determination in her gaze and how she endured everything, he couldn’t help but get emotional.

“Felix, check the backgrounds of those who insulted Sophie. Have the lawyer sue them for slander!”

Leaning back in the chair, Tristan still maintained his composure.

However, he was infuriated deep down.

Under normal circumstances, Tristan wouldn’t get angry, for he would ensure those who irritated him suffered hell on earth.

Hence, it was his first time experiencing anger because of Sophie.

“You have some nerves! Are you Sophie’s parent? Don’t you feel ashamed of yourself for having such a kid? Moreover, since many of us share the same opinion, can you sue all of us?” Matilda mocked Tristan, still unaware of who he was.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please look at the monthly test results. Sophie ranks second in the whole grade. How could she affect your children’s studies? It won’t be an overstatement to say that she can help your kids instead!”

Derrick finally regained his voice and quickly distributed the report cards.

“Mr. Hayes, is that true?”

Matilda glanced at the report card— Sophie was ranked first in class and second in the whole grade.

In comparison, her daughter Lenora was ranked thirtieth in class and over five-hundredth in the whole grade.

“I understand that you want the best for your children. However, please be objective and speak based on the truth. Sophie isn’t a delinquent student.”

After Derrick finished, Matilda sat down. Her face was a deep red, and she had never felt so embarrassed before.

At that moment, she was deeply ashamed of herself for accusing a student in second place of affecting her daughter’s studies.

After Derrick told the parents about other aspects that required their cooperation, the parent-teacher conference finally ended.

A few parents stayed in the classroom to discuss their children’s performance with Derrick.

After Tristan and Felix walked out of the classroom, Felix quickly stopped Matilda.



“You’re Mrs. Wagner, right?”

“What is it? What do you want to do in broad daylight?”

So focused was Matilda on slandering Sophie earlier that she hadn’t noticed the strong aura they exuded.

“You were the first one who slandered Ms. Tanner. Well, here is her lawyer’s name card. He will contact you very soon.”

It was a black name card with a few golden words that read “Burtons’ Law Firm” with Sean’s name below it.

Even if Matilda lived under a rock, she had heard of Burton’s Law Firm before. Sean was the best lawyer in Jipsdale and had never lost any cases.

Chapter 45 Drinks Her Milkshake

“Mister, you’ve misunderstood me! I never intend to slander Ms. Tanner!” Matilda tried to speak up for herself, her hands trembling uncontrollably.

Tristan snickered. “I don’t give a heck whether you intend to do so or not. I’m here to enlighten all of you today. You shouldn’t have gotten on my nerves by slandering Sophie.”

“Mister!” Matilda was about to grab Tristan’s arm. However, she retracted her hand when Tristan shot her a frigid glance.

Standing rooted to the ground, she could only fasten her gaze on Tristan and Felix’s retreating figures.

Right that instant, Lenora advanced toward her mother and was astounded by how the latter's face was as white as a sheet. "Mom, what's wrong? Are you feeling unwell? How about I call the driver to send you to the hospital now?"

In response, Matilda gave her daughter a tight slap.

Caught off guard, Lenora covered her cheek and stared at her mother in disbelief.

"Mom, what's the matter with you? Why did you slap me?" she squealed. That was the first time her mother slapped her.

"Plead with Sophie now so she won't sue me!" Matilda's voice was quivering. My goodness! Sean Burton's relentlessness is known to everyone. The Wagner family will be doomed if he helps Sophie Tanner to file a lawsuit against us!

"Mom, there's nothing to be scared of. Sophie is like the Tanner family's abandoned child, and they give no hoots about her. Even if she's still considered the third heiress of the Tanner family, their family

is obviously incomparable to ours!" Lenora refuted matter-of-factly.

"Kneel and apologize to her! Don't you know you've put me in deep water by provoking her?" Matilda fumed. Never had she expected that she would indirectly step on the toes of such an omnipotent man.

After Tristan and Felix stepped out of the classroom, the latter gave Ysabelle a call.

They headed straight to the milkshake bar after knowing that Ysabelle and Sophie were there.

"Mr. Tristan, I'm impressed by your beloved Ms. Tanner's excellent result! Didn't the others claim that her results are poor? Well, I'll be d\*mned! She's in second place in the whole grade!" Felix gasped admiringly.

In an instant, Tristan's face lit up with a sense of pride. Yeah... She's mine! Sooner or later, she will be mine!

Shortly after, the two men reached the milkshake bar adjacent to Jipsdale Premier High. It looked different from the usual milkshake bar. Since the students of Jipsdale Premier High were from wealthy families, the place was lavishly designed with booth seating.

The moment Tristan and Felix stepped into it, they caught a glimpse of Sophie and Ysabelle sitting at the table next to the window. Thus, the duo walked toward them at once.

Tristan took the seat next to Sophie, whereas Felix took the one next to Ysabelle.

"Thanks a lot for standing up for me just now. Let me buy you both milkshakes," Sophie thanked Tristan sincerely.

"Sure." The next second, he took a sip of Sophie's milkshake despite his dislike for sweetness.

Astounded, the others gazed at him in bewilderment.

"Uncle Tristan, aren't you a germophobe? You never use anything touched by others, don't you? Aren't you aware that this is Sophie's milkshake?" Ysabelle asked quizzically. She could not fathom why Tristan had been acting weirdly lately.

Felix, who was seated next to her, could not resist laughing discreetly. Was Mr. Tristan trying to kiss Ms. Tanner indirectly? Ha! It never occurred to me that the assertive Mr. Tristan could be so adorable!

Meanwhile, Sophie was staring at Tristan doubtfully, too.

Tristan responded nonchalantly, "Sorry for that. I'll order another glass for you."

"Sophie, you're incredible to be in second place in the whole grade!" Felix complimented, giving her a thumbs up. After all, it was no mere feat for her to have such achievement at Jipsdale Premier High.

"It's nothing," Sophie responded humbly. Deep down, she really did not feel that it was something special.

"Yeah! Soph is amazing!" Ysabelle echoed proudly.

At the same time, Tristan ordered another milkshake for Sophie.

Shortly after, the waiter served them two glasses of milkshakes.

Felix had barely taken a few sips of it before putting it aside. He could not talk himself into savoring the young girls' favorite drink.

On the other hand, Tristan had finished the milkshake that Sophie had drank earlier, while she was savoring the new one he had ordered for her.

"Oh yeah! Have you decided which university to enroll in?" Felix asked the two young girls curiously.

"No idea yet," Ysabelle replied briefly. She did not feel like pouring out to them about how she felt like leaving Jipsdale and exploring the city in the southern region instead. Her parents hoped she could enter Jipsdale University, but she had other preferences.

"How could you not have any idea on that?" Felix chuckled. No doubt, he wished Ysabelle could enter the university in Jipsdale. Nevertheless, it did not matter which university she chose. He would be supportive of her and follow her wherever she went.

"I really don't have any idea! I don't know which university I should choose and what's the ideal occupation for me. I can't seem to find my direction in life," Ysabelle emphasized.

Felix switched to question Sophie, "Soph, how about you? I bet there won't be any problem for you to enter Jipsdale University with such excellent results."

"I have no idea as well," Sophie responded candidly.

"It's all right. There's plenty of time left before the university entrance exam. You can take your time to finalize your decision," Tristan reassured her.

He did not mind even if Sophie had no plan to pursue her studies or look for a job later. As long as she was willing, he was more than happy to support her financially.

"Come on. Let me take you guys for dinner. Aren't you attending the self-study session in a while?" Tristan suggested. Knowing that all the students in the senior year were striving hard for their exams, he was particular about Sophie's meal.

After they left the milkshake bar, Sophie realized that she had left her phone in the class. Hence, the others waited for her outside the school while she went back to her class to retrieve it.

Unexpectedly, she bumped into Charmaine and Willow going up from the ground floor.

Charmaine was relatively displeased to see Sophie. She could not help feeling ashamed of the latter and did not wish to run into her elsewhere.

Sophie continued to climb the stairs, turning a blind eye to them.

Willow wailed, "Mom, how could Sophie have such a bad temper now? She didn't even greet you! She's the one who committed the grievous mistake five years ago, and yet, she has the audacity to be so haughty—"

"Stop mentioning what happened five years ago, and don't bother about her too. I doubt she can continue to behave so insolently for long!" Charmaine cut her daughter off, reluctant to hear a single word about the incident five years ago.

She continued, "Willow, you're still in second place in your class this round. Keep it up! I'm convinced you'll be able to enter Jipsdale University. When that happens, I'll hold an art exhibition for you. I'm sure Mrs. Laird will like you even more then."

Moments later, Sophie headed toward Tristan and the others after retrieving her phone.

Felix had left earlier with Ysabelle. Tristan got off his car and opened the door for her to get in. After she was seated properly, he hopped into his car again.

Meanwhile, Charmaine and Willow went to look for the homeroom teacher of Senior Class 1. When they stepped out of the school again, they caught sight of Sophie hopping into a car with a man.

“Who’s that?” Charmaine narrowed her eyes. The others had not forgotten about what happened five years ago and were still gossiping about it at times, causing her to feel embarrassed. D\*mn it! How could she have the cheek to fool around with another man again?

“I don’t know him. But she seems to be closely acquainted with him since I always see them together,” Willow explained.

“I see.” Charmaine responded placidly.

“Mom, do you think Sophie has given up on herself? That man seems to be filthy rich. Do you think he’s only toying with her?” Willow asked.

“I’ll find a time to have a chat with her. No matter what, I can’t let her affect your advancement,” Charmaine stated resolutely.

At the same time, Felix and Ysabelle were now seated in a restaurant not far from Jipsdale Premier High. When Tristan and Sophie reached there, they came across Winter. Her face fell when she realized Tristan was taking Sophie there for a meal.

“Oh? Mr. Tristan, you’re here for a meal too? What a coincidence!” she greeted him, plastering a smile.

Tristan simply nodded impatiently at her.

“How about we have a meal together?” Winter suggested boldly.

“No, thanks,” Tristan rejected right away and stepped into the private room with Sophie.

Winter remained on the spot in sheer embarrassment. Since her friends had their eyes on them, she thought he would accept her invitation. However, things did not turn out as expected.

“Winter, isn’t that Mr. Tristan? D\*mn! The young girl beside him is a beauty! I bet she can have her debut in the entertainment industry at any moment!” one of her friends started babbling excitedly.

#### Chapter 46 Who Do You Think You Are

“Is she really that pretty?” Winter asked gloomily as she felt a rush of jealousy surging from within her.

“Her good looks are beyond description. I never thought there’d be such a beautiful young girl in Jipsdale!” another of her friend chimed in admiringly.

“You guys go ahead. I don’t have any appetite.” Winter could not take it any longer. Don’t they know that I like Tristan? Are they complimenting that girl deliberately to irk me?

One of her friends grabbed her hand. “Don’t be mad. Regardless of how beautiful she is, she’s only a young girl. How’s it possible for her to be comparable to you, our fabled perfumer? All the products of your new perfume were sold out recently, right?”

Hearing that, the sullen look on Winter’s face softened.

“Come on! Fill up your stomach first, so that you would have the energy to pursue the man you like.” Her friend cheered her up and dragged her away.

Winter fell silent. Still keeping her eyes glued to Tristan, she walked away with her friends reluctantly. Yeah... She has a point! How can that young girl be comparable to me? I’m still the ideal woman for Tristan!

When Tristan led Sophie into the private room, Felix and Ysabelle were playing games on the phone. Like the gentleman he always was, Tristan pulled out a chair for Sophie.

Felix had placed an order for the food, so they only needed to wait for it to be served.

"I need to use the restroom." After a while, Sophie stood up and walked out of the private room.

The moment she stepped into the restroom, she saw Winter touching up her makeup.

Out of courtesy, Sophie nodded at her slightly. Winter put away her lipstick, but she did not leave immediately.

By the time Sophie stepped out of the toilet, she was still there. Cutting to the chase, she asked, "You're Sophie Tanner, right?"

Sophie looked up at her in response.

"Do you like Mr. Tristan?" Winter questioned directly.

Sophie whipped out a piece of gum from the pocket of her school uniform and stuffed it into her mouth. After that, she crumpled the wrapping paper before throwing it into the dustbin and asking, "Who are you?"

It never came across Winter's mind that the young girl would act so arrogantly.

"Who am I? Sophie Tanner, are you pulling my leg? Don't you know who I am? Nobody in Jipsdale dares to get on the Quigley family's nerves!" Winter scoffed.

"The Quigley family? You mean one of the four major families?" Sophie pondered for a while before saying, "So, what does that have to do with me?"



“Hmph! What a naive girl! Heed my words. Stay away from Tristan. If not, you only have yourself to blame when I make you disappear without a trace,” Winter hissed. The only reason she had stayed in the restroom was to deliver that threat to Sophie.

As the heiress of the prominent Quigley family, Winter had always had a sense of superiority since she was young. She looked down at young girls like Sophie.

Sophie burst into laughter as she chewed her gum.

“What are you laughing at? There’s nothing the Quigley family can’t do in Jipsdale!” Winter snapped at her.

“Is that so? Just give it a try then.” Sophie shrugged. Is she threatening me? What a ridiculous woman!

“You...” Boiling with rage, Winter was about to lash out at her.

“What’s taking you so long? Our food is served. Let’s go back to have our meal now.” Tristan’s voice sounded abruptly outside the restroom.

“Okay.” Sophie stepped out and walked away with Tristan without sparing Winter another glance.

Instead, it was Tristan who shot Winter a meaningful glance before leaving.

“What’s the matter? Was she picking on you?” he asked on the way back to the private room.

Sophie could not resist letting out a laugh. “No. Do I look like someone others can easily pick on?”

“Of course not.” Tristan chuckled. Since Winter was Charles, his playmate’s younger sister, he would more or less exercise restraint for his sake.

Meanwhile, Winter clenched her fists in exasperation. It's only been a short while, but Mr. Tristan already stepped out to look for her! Is he serious about her?

Back in the private room, all the dishes had been served. Felix and Ysabelle started scooping food onto Tristan and Sophie's plates.

Seated facing a table of delicious dishes, Sophie did not have much appetite. She was low in spirits after taking a few mouthfuls.

Even so, Tristan continued to scoop food for her.

"Mr. Tristan, you don't have to serve me. I'll scoop the food myself." Sophie turned him down nicely.

"Why are you taking so little?" Tristan knitted his brows. To him, the amount that Sophie was eating was barely enough to feed a kitten.

Sophie could not help but heave a sigh.

She could only give in by swallowing some more of the food and finishing a half bowl of mushroom soup.

"Ysabelle, your birthday is around the corner. How do you plan to celebrate it?" Felix asked enthusiastically. Her eighteenth birthday was the red-letter day she stepped into her adulthood. As such, he minded a lot about it.

"I'll celebrate it with Soph," Ysabelle replied casually.

Hearing that, Felix fell silent and he could feel his temples start to throb. That's one of the most momentous moments in her lifetime. Doesn't she know she should spend it with someone important to her? Whatever... I could only say that she's one dumb girl.

"Soph, you must attend my birthday celebration, okay? Otherwise, I'll cut ties with you!" Ysabelle said.

“Sure. I’ll be there on time,” Sophie replied.

After the meal, the foursome stepped out of the private room and ran into Eustace Sheppard.

Eustace had been wanting to meet Sophie ever since she helped him with Dr. Yarren’s matter. However, no matter how hard he looked, he could not find any information about her.

He never expected that he would bump into her while stepping out for a meal with his friends.

“Ms. Tanner, can I have a few words with you?” Eustace asked politely. There was even an unmissable hint of respect in his tone.

Sophie, too, did not expect that she would bump into Eustace again. After all, Jipsdale was a huge place, and the probability of bumping into someone by chance was fairly small. Nonetheless, she was not repulsed by him.

“You guys go ahead first. I’ll go to school myself later,” she told the others.

Tristan only flashed Eustace a look before descending the stairs without saying anything.

Meanwhile, Ysabelle fastened her gaze on Eustace. Who is he? And how did he know Soph? He doesn’t look like an average Joe...

Felix dragged her away, breaking her reverie. “What are you looking at? Is he more good-looking than me?”

“Yeah. He’s more good-looking than you. No, this won’t do. I must turn back to find out why he’s looking for Soph. Ahh... it seems like my dear Sophie is too eye-catching. That being said, they do look like a perfect match for each other,” Ysabelle blabbered.

Rendered speechless, Felix flashed a glance at the man walking ahead. Huh? A perfect match?

He could hardly refrain from shouting at her. My goodness! She's indeed slow-witted. Can't she sense that her Uncle Tristan has feelings toward Soph? How could she have the audacity to say that?

"Felix, send Ysabelle back to school," Tristan instructed.

"Sure. I'll definitely send her back safely," Felix replied, heaving a sigh of relief after seeing that Tristan was not mad.

"Uncle Tristan, I'll wait for Sophie," Ysabelle protested.

Tristan threw her a warning glance.

Fine! Intimidated by his imposing aura, Ysabelle had no choice but to walk away sheepishly.

"Mr. Sheppard, do you have any more questions?" Sophie asked.

"I wish to request your help, but I don't have your phone number. Would you mind giving it to me?"

Coincidentally, one of his friends stepped out for some fresh air. Overhearing Eustace's words, he could not resist laughing heartily and teasing him, "Captain Sheppard, you should speak up if you have feelings for her. My, my. What a beautiful young girl!"

"Get lost!" came Eustace's reply.

"All right, all right! I'll get lost right away! I won't want to be the third wheel now," the man uttered ambiguously before walking away.

Eustace was undoubtedly mature for his age. Even though he was only twenty-eight years old, he was already holding such a high position. In fact, his competence was known to everyone.

Surprisingly, he could not help blushing in front of the eighteen-year-old girl.

“Don’t take it to heart. He’s only joking. There’s really something I need to ask you,” Eustace muttered.

To that, Sophie replied, “Give me your phone.”

Eustace passed it to her as requested, and she keyed in her phone number right away.

“Sophie, are you interested in joining our SWAT team?” he asked eagerly. He needed a competent member like her.

Sophie shook her head. “I’m not interested.”

“Well, I really hope you can think it through and join the SWAT team.”

#### Chapter 47 Tanner Group Shareholders’ Meeting

“By the way, where are you heading now? I’ll take you there.”

Eustace planned to go back to the private room to get his jacket before sending her wherever she wanted to go.

“No need for that. I’m going back to school. Carry on with your work!” Sophie replied.

Eustace lapsed into a thoughtful silence as he watched her leave. This girl really is something else!

After going downstairs and walking out of the restaurant, Sophie noticed that Tristan was still waiting for her outside.

He was standing there with a cigarette between his fingertips, seemingly pondering over something.

However, with such a good-looking and charming man standing there, even the sight of him smoking was pleasing to the eye, so he naturally attracted a lot of girls, who flocked around him.

Despite that, no one dared to approach him due to his domineering aura.

Sophie walked up to his side.

“Didn’t I tell you guys to leave first? Why are you still here?”

“Waiting for you,” he replied curtly.

Tristan did not ask further since someone had already driven his car outside. The two went out, and he opened the door for her.

“I’ll send you to school?” It was almost time for the night self-studying session.

“Okay,” said Sophie.

He waited so long just to take me to school!

On Friday, Sophie returned to the Tanner residence to have dinner with Josiah.

“Soph, do you want to attend the shareholders’ meeting on Monday?” The annual shareholders’ meeting was on Monday. Sophie held twenty percent of the company’s shares and had reached the age of adulthood at eighteen, so she could attend.

“She’s too young to understand anything, Dad. I can exercise her rights by proxy. The company is not her personal playground.”

The thought of his father skipping him to give Sophie the shares made Yale very upset. I'm your only son. How could you be so distrusting of me?

"Indeed, Grandpa. Soph is still young. Those shareholders in the board meeting are all cruel and heartless. It's better not to let her participate!" Willow chimed in. I have nothing now. If Sophie went to the shareholders' meeting, wouldn't I look even more pitiful? I'm clearly better than her in everything!

"Willow is right, Dad. For Soph's safety, I think she shouldn't participate!" Charmaine also disagreed with Sophie going.

"This is your own matter, Soph. Just decide for yourself." Josiah completely ignored their protests. "Also, since I've given you the shares, I won't interfere with whatever you do with them as long as you're happy."

"Dad—"

That's the company I've worked so hard for all my life. How could Dad treat it so casually?

"Are you done eating? Accompany me to the study for a chat when you've finished your food."

Josiah brought Sophie to the study as he found the other three at the table too noisy.

"What should we do now?" Charmaine asked. Sophie has always been rebellious. What will we do if she doesn't listen to us on the day of the shareholders' meeting?

"Look at the daughter you bore! Look at what she has become. She's blatantly disrespecting me, her father!" Yale remarked.

Isn't it only natural for me to manage her shares?

"You speak as though I'm to blame for this matter. Do you think I conceived her on my own?"

“Enough of that. Just make sure Willow behaves. With the support of the Laird family, I don’t think a young girl like her is capable of doing much.”

Even without the Laird family, Yale still had forty percent of the shares in his hands and was still the largest shareholder of Tanner Group.

“Come. Write a few words. Let me see if your lettering has deteriorated,” said Josiah.

Sophie obediently went to get the ink before spreading the writing paper on the table. She then took a calligraphy pen and dipped it into the ink.

Josiah watched from the side and was satisfied with her performance.

She wrote a few letters on the writing paper before placing the pen down.

“You’re truly blessed!”

Sophie’s penmanship was elegant with clean lines, which greatly satisfied Josiah, and it was for this reason that he doted on her so much.

This girl has been smart since childhood. She has always been able to be the best in anything she wanted to do.

“Your parents are short-sighted, Soph. Don’t take it to heart. Tanner Group will be destroyed eventually in your father’s hands. At present, the company has already lost its former glory.”

Due to his old age, there were many matters that he could no longer take into his own hands.

“Don’t worry, Grandpa. Tanner Group won’t fall into ruin,” Sophie assured.

Since it’s something that Grandpa cherishes, how can I see it be destroyed?



"I hope that you can inherit the company. Your brother Caleb is currently in a research institute abroad. He is talented in research, so I don't want to make things difficult for him. Your father's ability, however, is too average, and he is simply unsuitable to become the CEO of Tanner Group."

Hence, at present, Josiah could only place his hope on Sophie.

"Okay..."

She was aware of Yale's capabilities.

"I hope that you can become the CEO of Tanner Group in the future."

He believed that his granddaughter could do well.

"All right. Understood. You're not well, Grandpa, so don't think about these things all day," Sophie replied.

"Will you blame me for this, Soph? Girls your age should be living a happy and carefree life, yet I've given you such a heavy burden."

"How can I ever do that? You're the one who loves me the most."

When Sophie left the study and went downstairs, Yale was still in the living room.

Upon seeing her coming downstairs, he stood up.

"Since your grandfather has given you twenty percent of the shares, just take the dividends, Sophie. I, as your father, will handle Tanner Group's affairs, so you shouldn't interfere."

He had waited so long for her down there for this very reason.

"It's better that you don't attend Monday's shareholders' meeting!"

"I can decide that myself. I don't need others telling me what to do."

"I'm your father, Sophie!" Yale was infuriated. She has always been like that, doing as she pleases without the slightest bit of good behavior and sensibility.

Sophie snorted in response and walked off. All he cares about is his interests. When has he ever thought of me, his daughter?

Angered by Sophie's behavior, Yale smashed everything he could in the living room.

How could a mere brat dare to treat me like this? Where did she get the courage to do that? Josiah heard the commotion in the living room and came downstairs.

Upon seeing his father, Yale stopped smashing things around.

"You've truly disappointed me, Yale," Josiah remarked. How can he manage a company when he can't even control his own emotions?

"Hah! Indeed. I've always been the one who made you disappointed. You've never been pleased with me. That's why you gave your shares to Sophie."

"She's your daughter."

"So what? Does she listen to me? That girl is insanely ambitious. I'm afraid she wants the entire Tanner Group!"

"If it's what she wants, give it to her. She'll certainly manage it better than you," Josiah replied.

So what if she's young? This society only recognizes one's abilities.

"No. Even if it results in great losses on both sides, I still won't let her have it. Tanner Group is mine."

Josiah shook his head. He was utterly disappointed in his son.

"I'm warning you, Yale. Don't hurt Soph. She's your daughter."

The old man left only these words and went upstairs alone.

Yale scoffed. "If she hurts me, I won't care whose daughter she is."

## Chapter 48 Delicate Skin

A heavy downpour suddenly started while Sophie was on the way back.

As she had not brought an umbrella, nor had she gotten the Tanner family's driver to send her back, she ended up getting drenched by the rain.

After she returned to Wisteria Apartments, she took a shower and felt a slight headache.

Sophie settled onto the couch and watched TV. She did not know how much time had passed, but by the time she woke up the next day, it was already past nine o'clock.

She felt groggy and lethargic, so she nestled on the couch again after boiling a cup of hot water.

Her phone rang, and she answered the call upon seeing that the caller was Ysabelle.

“Why didn’t you come to school, Soph?” Ysabelle sounded very worried on the other end. “What’s wrong? Did something happen?”

“I’m fine.” As soon as Sophie spoke, she realized that her voice had changed and her throat was hurting badly.

“Did you catch a cold?”

It took some effort for Sophie to reply, “Yes. Please help excuse me from class. I won’t be going to school today.”

Every time she had a cold, she did not like to take medicine.

It doesn’t matter if I do or not, it’ll still take me one or two weeks to recover, so it’s no use taking medicine at all.

“Okay. I’ll do that. Why don’t I take the day off and head over to keep you company?” Ysabelle suggested.

“No need for that. Focus in class. I just want to sleep, so it’s pointless for you to come here.”

“All right, then. I’ll hang up now. Remember to drink more warm water.”

In actuality, Ysabelle wanted to say that accompanying her for a nap was also fine!

After all, warm water cures all diseases.

After explaining Sophie’s absence to Derrick, she posted on her Instagram: My best friend is sick, and I’m so bored alone. How I wish I was sick too!

Felix was constantly keeping an eye on Ysabelle's Instagram, so as soon as she made that post, he immediately knew about it and called Tristan.

"Where are you, Mr. Tristan?" he asked the moment Tristan picked up the call.

If I do Tristan a favor now, he'll also help me in the future! I still have a long way to go to win Ysabelle over!

"At the Lombard residence. What's the matter?" Tristan was having his breakfast at that moment and had an urgent meeting to attend not long after.

"Sophie is sick, and she should be alone in Wisteria Apartments right now!"

"Got it."

"Girls are the easiest to win over when they are sick, Mr. Tristan. I'll await your good news. I'm rooting for you!"

Tristan could not be bothered to listen to Felix's nonsense and promptly hung up.

William, who was doing yoga in the courtyard, could not help but frown when he saw Tristan walking out.

"It's the weekend, and you're still going out?"

"Mhm. Something came up."

After saying that, Tristan went to the underground garage and drove his silver Lamborghini to Wisteria Apartments. On the way, he also bought Sophie some chicken noodle soup from The Crown.

Upon reaching Wisteria Apartments, Tristan rang the doorbell, but no one came to the door. In the end, he could only open the door himself.

Once inside, he discovered Sophie lying on the couch, looking flushed.

Tristan placed the bag down and crouched beside the couch.

“Wake up, Sophie. I’ll take you to the hospital.”

As soon as Sophie opened her eyes, she was met with a close-up view of Tristan’s face.

“Has anyone told you that you’re extremely handsome, Mr. Tristan?”

Sophie seemed to be delirious as she reached out to touch Tristan’s face.

He froze for a moment. Am I, a mature man of twenty-eight, being teased by an eighteen-year-old girl?

“Such delicate skin.” Sophie’s hand gently stroked his face.

For a moment, Tristan wanted nothing more than to pounce on the daring girl.

However, as soon as he touched her forehead, he immediately came to his senses.

The girl is running a high fever right now! How can I have such an outrageous thought?

“I’m taking you to the hospital.” Tristan picked her up, intending to get her to change into a new set of clothes, but she shook her head.

“I’m fine. I don’t need to go there. I never go to the hospital when I’m sick.”

“All right. We won’t if you don’t want to.” After all, he could still get his private doctor to come over.

After placing her on the bed, he immediately called the doctor.

“Have you had breakfast yet?”

It’s past ten o’clock now. Judging from her condition, she probably hasn’t had breakfast yet.

Sophie shook her head.

“I have no appetite.” At that moment, she did not feel like eating anything and just wanted to sleep. “Go back, Mr. Tristan. I’ll be fine after a nap. It’s like this every time.”

It was the same when she was in Horington. She had never cared about colds and fevers.

“I’m very angry now, Sophie. You’d better behave yourself.”

“What’s there to be angry about when I’m sick? If you think it’s troublesome, you can leave now. No one is keeping you here.”

It’s not as though I told him to come over. Who does he think he is? What right does he have to get mad at me?

Hearing her response, Tristan’s anger instantly vanished.

“Sorry for my poor behavior. Be good and have some chicken noodle soup.”

Sophie harrumphed.

“Come on. Be a good girl and have some chicken noodle soup.”

Seeing that Tristan had given in, Sophie also did not stay angry and allowed him to feed her some chicken noodle soup.

Dr. Zimmerman came over and gave her some cold and fever medicine. He then left after giving some instructions.

By then, Sophie had fallen asleep.

Tristan brought a cup of warm water over and placed it on the bedside table. He then sat on the bed and helped her up to lean against his body.

Sophie was jolted awake.

“What are you doing?”

“Take your medicine.”

Tristan showed her the medicine in his hand.

“Open up.”

Sophie could not help but frown upon seeing the pills. Those white pills scared her the most as she could tell from one look that they were bitter.

“Can I say no?” To be honest, she was not afraid of knives and guns. However, she did not like taking medicine.

“No. If you refuse, I’ll feed you with my mouth.”



If her high fever persists, she'll become even more delirious!

Sophie glared at him as though he was her mortal enemy.

"Seems like you're looking forward to my kiss."

With a snort, she promptly opened her mouth.

Tristan gave her the pills and also fed her some water.

"That's my good girl."

"I'm not yours. I don't belong to anyone but myself."

"No. You're mine. One day, you'll willingly be mine."

"You're so confident in yourself."

Sophie was too lazy to be bothered by him and closed her eyes.

Tristan bent down and kissed her lips.

Although it was merely a peck, it made her shudder.

Opening her eyes, she glared at him.

He, on the other hand, gave her an unsatisfied smirk.

“All right. Get some sleep.”

Sophie closed her eyes but opened them a while later.

“How am I supposed to sleep when you’re here?”

“Do I affect you that much? Why don’t I get in and sleep with you? I don’t have anything to do today anyway.”

Looking at her speechless expression, Tristan could not help but smile.

“Sleep well. I’ve no interest in a little hedgehog that’s about to combust.”

Only after he left her room did Sophie close her eyes. His taste still lingered on her lips.

Tristan? He... wants me?

As she drowsily fell asleep again, Tristan instructed the housekeeper to make some light lunch for her before heading upstairs again.

He touched her head and found that her temperature had gone down.

However, her sleepwear was drenched with sweat.

Tristan opened her closet to look for another set of sleepwear.

Seeing the undergarments, he was caught in a dilemma.

Should I take them or not?

## Chapter 49 Change Your Clothes

In the end, Tristan took everything with him.

He crossed the room to wake Sophie up. Sophie woke up feeling much better.

“What are you doing?” she asked with a hoarse voice. Her throat felt sore every time she talked.

“Helping you change.”

Sophie didn’t respond to him.

“Go on. Take off your wet pajama first.”

Sophie didn’t do as he demanded and merely stared at him coldly.

“What’s the matter?” Tristan didn’t think there was anything wrong with his request.

“Do you always flirt with girls like this, Mr. Tristan?”

“I don’t have to do anything. I just stand there and women will flock to me. I never needed to flirt.”

Sophie was speechless at his answer.

“Fine. Seeing as you’re feeling much better, change into these yourself, then come down for lunch.”

Tristan left the room after that. Sophie finally swung her gaze from Tristan to the clothing he brought her. It was her pajama and lingerie.

She could feel the heat on her face, thinking about how he had touched her most intimate articles of clothing. The always composed Sophie had lost her cool then.

Feeling uncomfortable with the sweat on her body, Sophie took a quick shower and changed into a fresh set of clothing.

After drying her hair, she finally went downstairs.

"Lunch is ready, Ms. Tanner. I'll be heading back now. You can leave the dirty dishes after you've finished. I'll clean them in the evening when I come over."

"All right."

After the housekeeper left, Tristan was still in the study, so Sophie took a seat at the dining table.

Tristan answered a call and told his assistant to reschedule all his meetings that day.

He left for the kitchen after that. At the threshold, he saw Sophie already seated at the dining table.

Tristan walked over and scooped some pasta for her.

"You didn't take more than a few bites this morning, so eat more now."

Sophie held a fork in her hand and looked at him.

"Don't you have something to do today?"

He doesn't have to accompany me.

"If you have something to do, you can leave after eating. I'm feeling much better now." It wasn't even a big deal. It was just a fever.

"I'm free today."

Collaboration worth billions can't compare to the girl sitting in front of me.

"Fine then."

Sophie didn't try to persuade him anymore since he said so.

"Have some too, Mr. Tristan. Don't just stare at me."

Only then did Tristan pick up his spoon, but he didn't start eating. Instead, he started scooping more food for her.

After he was satisfied that she wouldn't go hungry, he finally dug into his food. The crease on Sophie's forehead deepened with every bite. The food tastes quite bland today.

"What's wrong? Is the food not to your liking? Shall we change the housekeeper?"

Sophie shook her head.

"It's fine." This housekeeper is quiet and professional. I feel comfortable when I'm with her.

"I'll just have her add some condiments next time."

"You have the numbers for The Crown and Pegasus Pavilion, so just give them a call for food delivery if you don't like the housekeeper's food."

"I'm not that particular." I'm fine as long as it's filling. I'm not picky with food.

After finishing lunch, Sophie couldn't sleep anymore, so she settled onto the couch and watched the television.

Tristan cleaned up the dining table, then took a seat beside her.

He gently patted her head.

"I'm fine now."

"That's great to hear."

Even though it was just a common cold and fever, I was worried sick when I saw her lying unconscious on the couch. She didn't even know how worried I was.

Tristan left in the evening after getting an urgent call. He even ordered her to rest at home before he left.

After he drove away, Sophie changed her clothes straight away. Ysabelle's birthday is tomorrow, and I haven't even bought her a present yet. I was too busy the past few days.

Since she had already taken leave that day, she decided to spend the remaining time buying Ysabelle's present. She got on her new bicycle and pedaled her way to Monarch Mall.

After a period of observation, Sophie had a basic understanding of Ysabelle. A rich girl like her won't lack presents, so finding a suitable gift for her will be challenging.

Sophie entered a jewelry store, thinking of picking something out for Ysabelle.

Dressed in a plain white t-shirt, black slacks, and canvas shoes didn't get Sophie any warm greeting from the sales assistant. The sales assistant merely nodded at Sophie when she entered, then pretended she didn't exist.

Couldn't care less about the sales assistant's attitude, Sophie slowly studied each piece of jewelry on the shelf.

Willow and a few of her friends were out shopping as well. She didn't have to take any classes on Saturday, because she had art lessons.

Yet, one call from Louisa and she skipped her lesson.

Louisa loved shopping for luxury goods. The Yarborough family was wealthier than the Tanner family. Moreover, Louisa was the only child of the Yarborough family, hence the excessive love and pampering they gave her.

A few other girls were following behind Louisa and Willow. With Louisa's generosity in gifting the girls small presents, they would agree to her request for an outing every time she asked.

They didn't mind carrying the shopping bags for Louisa. Louisa would gift them luxury goods if she was in a good mood.

"What's wrong with you lately, Willow?"

"It's all Sophie's fault," Willow complained. She never hid anything from Louisa. "You knew she was back, right? Grandpa even gave her the company's shares. It's pointless no matter how hard I try."

"It's only twenty percent of the company's shares. Just marry Mason when he gets back. Once you married him, the Tanner family will be nothing to you."

Louisa was Mason's cousin. That was why Willow was so close to her.

“Oh, cut it. Mason might not even like me.”

Mrs. Laird dotes on me, but no one knows how Mason thinks of me.

“Willow, don’t worry so much. Wasn’t Mason quite concerned about you before he left the country? You also have me as your wing girl.”

Louisa patted Willow’s shoulder reassuringly.

“Isn’t that the b\*\*ch, Sophie?” Louisa’s steps paused when she saw Sophie.

Willow halted too.

“Come on, let’s go in and have a look.” Louisa intended to cause trouble for Sophie.

At that moment, a bracelet caught Sophie’s eyes.

“Hi, can I have a closer look at that bracelet?”

“Miss, are you sure you’re going to buy it? Our goods are pricey.”

Sophie’s brows furrowed.

“I said I want a closer look at that bracelet.”

Sophie was feeling impatient with the sales assistant’s attitude but still repeated her request.

“Do you know how much this bracelet costs?” The sales assistant still refused to take the bracelet out.



Then, Louisa led Willow and the rest into the jewelry store.

“Show me that bracelet,” Louisa demanded arrogantly the minute she stepped into the store.

The sales assistant knew Louisa was the only daughter of the Yarborough family and had made repeated purchases from the store. She knew Louisa would buy anything she liked no matter how costly it was.

“Yes, Ms. Yarborough. I’ll take it out for you immediately.”

Louisa would spend a lot every time she came. It looks like my sales performance will skyrocket again today.

“I saw this bracelet first,” Sophie said coolly. What’s with my luck today? Why do I keep bumping into disgusting people no matter where I go?

“You saw it first? But have you paid for it? This bracelet costs eight million,” the sales assistant continued to mock Sophie. “Miss, if you’re planning to buy a bracelet, you can go to the gift shop outside and get one. Our items here don’t suit you.”

Chapter 50 It Hurts

“Show me that one.”

“I want that too.”

Louisa was determined to mess with Sophie that day. She never liked Sophie.

“This one—”

“I’ll take that too.”

The commotion had even gotten the sales manager's attention.

"Ms. Yarborough, are you sure you want everything? All these already add up to ten million."

I know the Yarborough family is wealthy, but I don't think she has that much allowance.

"What do you mean? Are you implying I can't afford them?" Louisa's temper spiked at the sales manager's words.

"Miss—"

The sales manager shot Sophie an apologetic glance. Ms. Yarborough is a tough nut to crack.

A cold grin stretched across Sophie's lips.

"Louisa, are you sure you want all of it? Is your credit card limit enough?"

"That's none of your business!"

Louisa instantly took out her card and set it on the desk.

"Wrap everything up for me."

The sales manager reached for the card and went to the register to settle the bill. However, she returned shortly after.

"Sorry, Ms. Yarborough, but your card limit isn't sufficient."

“What? How is that possible?” Louisa’s expression darkened.

“Louisa, why don’t you just choose one from those?”

“I heard Ms. Yarborough would get her hands on everything that caught her eye. It’s a mere ten million. I’m sure she has enough with her other cards.”

Louisa was caught between a rock and a hard place. Without a choice, she took out her credit card.

Her heart ached when the sales manager swiped the card. This costs me ten million! How long will it take for me to settle the debt? My monthly allowance is only around half a million.

“Does Ms. Yarborough still wants to make more purchases?” Sophie smirked.

Louisa was infuriated at Sophie’s taunt, yet she couldn’t show it.

Why am I seething here while victory is seemingly on my side?

“What are you smug about, Sophie?”

“I’m not smug about anything. Oh, right. I forgot to tell you this store belongs to the Tanner family.”

Sophie had decided to visit a few jewelry stores under the Tanner Group to check on their sales. She didn’t expect to run into the idiotic Louisa.

“Thank you so much for contributing ten million to Tanner Group’s sales today.”

Louisa’s expression darkened even further.

“Have a nice day.”

Sophie was in an excellent mood. Louisa's dark expression efficiently lifted Sophie's mood.

"Also, about the ten million. Your father will probably want to have a chat with you about where that money went. If he knew about your actions, I figured you wouldn't be living your best life in the near future."

Sophie had a thorough understanding of Louisa's father.

"Louisa, I didn't know." Willow was oblivious to the fact that the store was under the Tanner Group.

Without another word, Sophie whirled around and stomped away. I got tricked by that b\*\*ch, Sophie.

Willow immediately chased after her.

"Louisa, don't be mad. We can ask for a refund."

"Ask for a refund? Sophie is still inside right now. Won't I just be humiliating myself if I ask for a refund now?"

"What should we do then?" That's ten million. It's not a small amount.

"It's fine. At most, I'd live a slightly difficult life for the next few months. Despite that, I can't humiliate myself."

"Louisa, you wouldn't be in this state if it wasn't for me."

Louisa wrapped her arm around Willow's.

“Don’t worry. Sophie was planning to drive a wedge between us. I won’t let it happen. Willow, tomorrow is the birthday of the young miss from the Lombard family. My dad had given me an invitation. I’ll bring you with me tomorrow.”

Many people wanted to be acquainted with the Lombard family.

The Lombard family was planning a grand celebration for Ysabelle’s birthday. However, they only gave out a hundred invitations. Her father had spent a lot of effort to get his hands on one.

“You can do that?”

The Lombard family is the real big boss. I’ll get to truly enter the upper society if I can get acquainted with them.

“Sure. The bracelet I bought today was a present for Ms. Ysabelle.”

“Okay, I should prepare a present for her too.”

Maybe I can meet Tristan this time. If I can marry that legendary man, that’ll be the peak of my life.

After the girls had left the store, Sophie turned her gaze to the sales assistant.

“What’s your name?”

“I’m Nora Baum,” Nora answered. I have nothing to fear. She’s just Sophie Tanner, the unwanted third daughter of the Tanner family. This store does belong to the Tanner Group, but Sophie can’t do anything to me with her current status.

“You fail as a sales assistant.”

“Haha, Ms. Sophie. You’re just a kid. It’s not up to you whether I fail or pass.” Nora had someone backing her up, so she wasn’t afraid of Sophie.

“Shut up, Nora!”

The sales manager glared at Nora. Ms. Sophie can get Ms. Yarborough to spend ten million here. How dare a sales assistant like Nora challenges her?

Nora felt wronged.

“I didn’t do anything wrong. I sold ten million worth of goods today and brought a huge profit to the company. The company should give me a bonus. How can they fire me?”

“Fire her. The Tanner Group doesn’t need an employee like this.”

“What did you say? What right do you have to give that order? Do you truly think you’re a daughter of the Tanner family?”

Sophie didn’t want to waste another breath with her and summoned the store manager.

“Your employees here aren’t eligible to work here. I’ll give you one month, and if they still behave this way, I won’t keep anyone currently working here, including you.”

“Miss, you—”

The sales manager quickly whispered something to the store manager.

“I understand, Ms. Sophie.”

The day after the next was the shareholders’ meeting. No one was sure who would be the next CEO of the Tanner Group. The store manager didn’t dare to offend Sophie.

“Have her fired immediately.”

Sophie turned around to leave.

Nora’s face paled.

“Manager, she’s just the unwanted third daughter of the Tanner family. You won’t actually fire me, right?”

“Go back first. I’ll see how it goes once the shareholders’ meeting ends.”

No one knows what changes will befall the organizational structure of the Tanner Group after the shareholders’ meeting. The same goes for Ms. Sophie, so I won’t make any decision before the meeting.

Sophie continued her shopping at the Monarch Mall and finally spotted a unique rock in an antique store.

That tiny rock was exquisite. It was clear and shiny on the surface, but inside was a picture of the beauty of nature.

Sophie figured it suited Ysabelle a lot.

“You have good taste, Miss! This rock might look tiny, but it’s priceless.”

“Can I have a look?”

The sales assistant took out the rock and gave it to Sophie.

“How much is it?”

“Fifteen million.”

“Ten million, and I’ll take it. If you agree, then pack it up for me.”