

Pursuing 521

Chapter 521

Sophie asked Nicholas nonchalantly, "So, why are you here? Are you here to seek revenge on me?"

She did not want to waste her precious time on insignificant people like him.

Nicholas was unbothered by her coldness and explained, "I sought you out today because I've missed you. That's the only reason."

He risked his life to meet her because he yearned for her. He would not have minded if he died because of his decision.

Sophie was rendered speechless.

She questioned how to talk sense into her admirer's head.

In the end, she threatened, "Stop following me, Nicholas, or I swear you'll die by my hand."

It was a genuine warning.

Much to her chagrin, Nicholas smiled indulgently and replied, "Oh dear, but what else can I do? I'd be happy to die at your hands."

Sophie scoffed coldly at his response.

Why must he throw himself wholeheartedly into this unrequited love? I will never accept his feelings.

He tried to garner her sympathy. "Don't be so cruel to me, okay, Sophie? I really, really like you." Can't

she feel my sincerity?

Sophie ignored him. She adjusted the grip on her textbooks and prepared to leave.

Alas, Nicholas refused to give up and followed her doggedly.

“Where are you going? Let me join you!”

He continued smiling brightly, totally unaffected by her frostiness.

Sophie warned, “That has absolutely nothing to do with you. Stop following me.”

It did little to deter Nicholas. Does she take me for a joke? I was threatened my whole life growing up!

Scrunching her brows in frustration, Sophie turned and leaped into the air, sending a kick flying his way.

Nicholas expected her attack and swiftly grabbed her leg. Before he could pat himself on the back for anticipating her actions, Sophie flipped in the air and kicked him with the other leg instead.

Her attacks were strong and fast, and even someone as skilled as Nicholas struggled to fend her off.

He staggered backward in the middle of their fight and shouted, “Stop it!”

He added, “I didn't come here to engage you in a fight, Sophie.”

Why is she hitting me without warning?

“I've warned you before. Don't come near me again, or I will really send you to your grave,” repeated Sophie.

She truly had no qualms about ending his life if he continued to pester her.

Sophie's determination cut Nicholas to the quick.

He painted a forlorn figure as he pleaded, "I flew over ten hours to come here. Do you really not want to see me?"

"Yes. I've never wanted to see you, so don't ever appear in my life again."

Sophie did not believe in rejecting people tactfully, especially if she did not like the person in question. Moreover, she did not want to become friends with Nicholas.

After her vicious parting remark, Sophie turned and left.

She spent the afternoon reading in the library, gathering information for her medical dissertation.

It was an impossible feat for most medical students.

Preparations typically began in the fourth year of their studies, but Sophie already had a research topic in mind during her freshman year.

Ysabelle came to look for her in the library with two milkshakes in hand.

She spotted Sophie silently reading from afar and ended up admiring the latter's gorgeous profile for a long moment.

How can a woman be this beautiful? It's impossible to tear my eyes away from her even though she's just sitting silently.

Ysabelle stared at Sophie as though she was in a trance.

Suddenly, she recalled how she had offended her uncle a few days ago.

She promptly took her phone from her pocket and snapped a few photos of Sophie, which she sent to Tristan.

There! I think that's enough to redeem myself.

Tristan was in a meeting when Ysabelle's texts arrived. He initially had no plans to open the message when he saw who the sender was.

Still, he knew Ysabelle was with Sophie at that moment, and concern over Sophie's wellbeing eventually spurred him to look at his niece's texts.

Photos of his beloved girlfriend filled his sight.

Sophie wore a white dress, while her chestnut-brown hair was draped artfully over her shoulder. She sat near a corner of the library, utterly absorbed in her book.

In short, she was the perfect picture of a graceful belle.

Tristan was so busy admiring his girlfriend that even Felix noticed his boss' mind wandering for the first time during a meeting.

Felix was understandably curious about what Tristan was staring at on his phone and moved closer.

He had only moved an inch before Tristan kept his phone.

"What were you looking at? You looked as if you were hypnotized. Don't tell me it's something saucy," teased Felix.

“Shut up and get back to work.”

Meanwhile, Ysabelle was pleased as punch over her attempt to get back in her uncle's good graces.

A second later, her phone pinged with a bank transfer notification.

A million!

Tristan had sent her a million to reward her for a measly photo of Sophie.

Ysabelle was dumbfounded.

Still, she was not about to complain about her sudden windfall.

She would be remiss to reject her uncle's show of generosity.

Ysabelle practically skipped over to Sophie's side.

“Why'd you take so long to arrive?” asked Sophie as her friend took a seat.

Ysabelle muttered, “I ran into some fans outside. They wouldn't let me go unless I gave them autographs and took photos with them.”

She had built up a decent-sized fanbase.

Concerned, Sophie asked, “Are you okay? Is it too much to handle? Do you need to hire more bodyguards?”

“It's okay. The fans are all pretty reasonable. They just wanted photos,” replied Ysabelle reassuringly.

“Okay, if you say so.”

Ysabelle noticed the work in front of Sophie and asked, “What are you doing, Sophie? Didn't we just start school? What's that you're writing?”

“I'm preparing a medical dissertation.”

Her answer rendered her friend speechless in disbelief.

Never mind. I shouldn't ask too many questions. I will never understand how these geniuses' minds work. Who the heck starts writing their medical dissertation as a freshman?

Sophie's existence was living proof that the world was unfair. Some people could be both prettier and more diligent than others at the same time.

Ysabelle put a straw into one of the milkshake cups before handing it to Sophie.

She complained, “Don't you find the weather scorching?”

She hated summer with a vengeance.

Her sweat glands were exceptionally active, leaving her uncomfortably sticky throughout the hot weather.

Thankfully, the library's air conditioning offered some respite from the heat. Ysabelle would not have set foot in the place otherwise.

Sophie sipped on the milkshake before asking, “Do you have an event tonight?”

“Yes.”

“Are you tired?” Ysabelle was still a university student with other priorities to manage. Sophie believed it might be prudent to cancel some non-essential events to avoid overworking the poor girl.

“I'm attending an event with Mark and the others,” Ysabelle said excitedly.

She never imagined she would one day share the stage with The Wheelers.

She reassured Sophie, “Don't worry. I'm not tired at all. In fact, keep these events coming.”

Sophie did not protest her friend's decision. She's a fan of The Wheelers. I shouldn't stop her from meeting them.

Sometime later, they left the library and headed to Jipsdale University's cafeteria.

Before they could dig into the food they bought, Nicholas plonked himself on the bench opposite theirs while asking, “Excuse me. Can I sit here?”

His audacity in approaching Sophie in broad daylight caused the latter's expression to darken.

However, she could hardly come to blows with him in public.

Ysabelle stared at Nicholas curiously and asked, “Who are you? Are you a student at our university?”

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Upon further observation, Ysabelle dismissed the possibility of Nicholas being a fellow student.

He just did not seem like a varsity student.

Nicholas replied, "Nah. I just wanted to visit the university. I'd love to study here if I have the chance."

He had an answer ready for every question that came his way.

"I see!" Ysabelle remained unconvinced.

Cafeteria food was a whole new experience for Nicholas, who had spent his life eating the finest dishes and meals designed specifically for his nutritional balance.

Still, he would happily gorge on cafeteria food if it gave him the opportunity to have dinner with Sophie.

He stared so blatantly at Sophie that it was difficult for others not to notice.

Ysabelle whispered beside her friend's ear, "He's just staring at you."

"I know. Just ignore him," muttered Sophie before returning her attention to her meal.

Nicholas shrugged off her indifference. It did not stop him from achieving his goal of sharing a meal with her.

A short while later, Sophie and Ysabelle cleaned off their plates and stood up to leave.

Instead of following them, Nicholas continued eating his meal.

The food somehow tasted more delicious and was more bearable on the palate.

Ysabelle's mind was still on Nicholas when she left the cafeteria. She commented, "Hey Sophie, that guy we met earlier is pretty handsome. He'll be quite popular if he joins the entertainment industry."

"Sure."

Sophie's half-hearted reply directly correlated with her interest in discussing her stubborn admirer.

He's definitely not going to join the entertainment industry.

The two young women left the cafeteria and immediately ran into Tristan and Felix.

Ysabelle pouted and asked, "Why didn't you tell us you were coming? We already finished dinner."

She regretted the missed opportunity for them to dine together.

Felix piped up, "It's fine. We came to pick you up."

"Oh." As an afterthought, Ysabelle added, "Let's go! Why don't I show you around the campus?"

"Sounds good!" Felix would hardly surrender the chance to spend some alone time with Ysabelle. Tristan's presence severely limited his wooing strategies, so Felix was naturally in favor of splitting up.

Ysabelle voiced her agreement, "I'm going to show Felix around the campus then, Sophie. Don't worry about us."

"Yup, run along!"

Tristan's arrival instantly banished any unhappy thoughts Sophie had about meeting Nicholas earlier.

Seeing a loved one was clearly guaranteed to improve one's mood.

Now, Sophie was in much better spirits.

Ysabelle and Felix walked off hand-in-hand. Tristan also held hands with Sophie before they wandered around the campus.

They were such a handsome couple that even in a university campus teeming with good-looking students, Tristan and Sophie easily stood out among the crowd.

They instantly commanded everyone's attention and envy.

A photography club member who noticed the beautiful couple hastily raised his camera and snapped a photo of them.

He checked the photo and nodded to himself in satisfaction.

What was a careless shot turned out to be as good as a well-timed photoshoot.

He had only managed to capture their backs, but the composition gave the viewer plenty of room for imagination.

Unbeknownst to the happy couple, Nicholas had been trailing them after finishing his dinner.

His heart throbbed with pain as he observed how gently Sophie behaved around Tristan.

Nicholas did not want for much. He would be content if Sophie could shoot him gazes filled with such tenderness instead of hatred.

What did I do wrong? I met Sophie first! How did Tristan swoop in and steal her away?

Indignance swelled in Nicholas' chest.

The campus at that hour was bustling with students and boasted a lovely view.

By then, Sophie and Tristan had wandered to the basketball court and took leisurely circles around the court.

He held a stack of books in one hand while the other held Sophie's hand tightly.

She appeared to be listening attentively to something he was saying.

Nicholas was always lurking just a short distance behind them.

Suddenly, a stray basketball flew right at Sophie.

She had her back against the ball and did not notice a thing. Thankfully, Tristan spotted the basketball

and quickly pulled her into his embrace.

He tossed the books in his hand aside and slapped the ball away.

Several basketball players had been watching the situation closely. They had set their sights on Sophie since she enrolled in Jipsdale University, and their gazes were far from friendly when they noticed she was with another man.

One of them taunted, "Is that your boyfriend, Sophie? Looks pretty average to me!"

A woman like Sophie can have any partner she wants!

Sophie knitted her brows in response, irritated by the basketball player's attitude.

She shot back, "How is that any of your business?"

“Hey, what's with the attitude?” The basketball player addressed Tristan, “You there! Interested in a match? Let's do it one-on-one!”

Tristan immediately realized the student's intentions. He must have a crush on Sophie.

He had always known his Sophie was a stunning young woman who attracted admirers by the truckloads.

However, this was the first time someone was challenging his status as Sophie's boyfriend.

It was certainly an odd feeling.

That did not mean he was backing down. “Bring it on!”

It's just a basketball match. What's there to be scared of?

Sophie could not care less about what her hopeless admirers thought. She said, “You don't have to do this, Tristan.”

She thought it would be a complete waste of his energy.

“Don't worry. I haven't exercised in a long time. Today's a good day to clock in some activity.”

Tristan removed his suit coat and handed it to Sophie.

He asked calmly, “How should we do this?”

It had been a while since Tristan last picked up a basketball, but he would not run away from a public challenge.

“How about one-on-one, just between the two of us? I'll give you a head start of ten points.” Tristan's challenger, Jace, played for Jipsdale University's basketball varsity team, and he was extremely confident in his skills.

The young man's teammates burst into laughter after his words.

“Jace, he's still going down even if you give him a 20-point head start.”

His teammates all knew how good Jace was.

Tristan declared, “That's not necessary. You can all play together.”

He preferred solving all his problems at once instead of dragging things out.

“What?” The basketball players gawked at him in disbelief.

Does he have any idea what he just suggested?

Tristan repeated, “I said all of you can play against me at once. Don't waste my time. Understood?”

“Hmph, that's a bold request. Since you're bent on losing, we'll help you fulfill that wish. But remember, if you lose, you'll break up with Sophie immediately!”

Sophie had promptly dethroned Jipsdale University's previous campus belle shortly after her enrolment.

Of course, Sophie did not give a hoot about being crowned the new campus belle.

“Break up? That's impossible. She doesn't like any of you,” declared Tristan.

Then, he stole his opponent's ball and swiftly made a three-pointer.

At first, the basketball players did not take Tristan seriously at all.

Seconds later, they changed their minds.

Tristan easily intercepted their passes and broke down their offense.

The basketball match had attracted a crowd of curious onlookers, and many young women began squealing in admiration after witnessing Tristan's effortless moves.

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Jace roared, "Guys, block him! Don't give him a chance to counter!"

Sophie had never seen Tristan play basketball before that day.

There was a vast difference between him and the basketball players, chief of which was their age difference.

However, Tristan did not just look good on the court. He handled the ball with both style and skill, displaying real talent in the sport.

Though the basketball players were playing five-against-one, they still scrambled to defend against Tristan's attacks.

Tristan played them like a fiddle.

When his opponents were on the offense, Tristan swiftly intercepted the ball and effortlessly scored a three-pointer over their flailing defense.

The match was lopsided in Tristan's favor.

The five-member basketball team from Jipsdale University was no match for a visitor.

The young women in the crowd screamed in adoration.

Tristan was more than just a pretty face. His basketball skills were also impressive, which only highlighted the overall disparity between him and his opponents.

Sophie watched quietly from the side. She thought she could finally relate to the girls who would swarm to the court to watch their crushes play basketball.

She truly enjoyed watching Tristan unleashing his talents on the basketball court.

Nicholas, on the other hand, observed Sophie's demeanor throughout the match.

He had never seen Sophie like that before and was positively stewing in jealousy.

He envied Tristan's ability to command Sophie's entire attention.

I can play basketball well too! I just need a chance to go on the court.

“Damn it!”

The basketball players had always been popular among the girls at Jipsdale University, yet they were now being humiliated by an older stranger on home grounds.

“Get rid of him!”

Since it was impossible to win the match, they decided to resort to dirty measures. In any case, they had to warn the man that the basketball team was not to be toyed with.

Sophie knew how to play basketball and sensed the moment Tristan's opponents began hitting below the belt.

Her gaze cooled instantly.

These boys must be tired of living!

She would not let them off easy for their audacity to play dirty against Tristan.

At any rate, her concern was unwarranted. The young men were no match for Tristan, even when it came to dirty measures. Tristan nimbly dodged one of the players' attempts to break his leg.

At the same time, he shot his opponents a fearsome gaze that chilled them to the bones.

I only wanted to toy with them a little, but since they can't even play by the rules, I won't go easy on them.

Consequently, the cocky basketball players fell for Tristan's tricks time and again, losing the last shred of their dignity in the process.

The female students at Jipsdale University continued cheering Tristan on.

He had practically cast a spell over them.

Finally, the match ended with Jace falling after a particularly strong shove from Tristan.

"F*ck! You did that on purpose! You looking for a fight or something?" Knowing a win was impossible, Jace jumped to his feet and decided to challenge Tristan to a fistfight instead.

Tristan replied disdainfully, "You're the one looking for a fight! Of course, it would be rude of me not to respect your wish."

Jace was infuriated. Who the heck does he think he is, spouting all sorts of nonsense at our university?

He rushed forward to punch Tristan, sputtering, "You—"

Tristan merely seized Jace's neck in a chokehold, cutting off whatever the young man meant to say.

"Just who exactly do you think you are? Think you can call the shots in front of me?" He would not have entertained such childish challenges if Jace had not been foolish enough to attack him.

"You—"

Jace was bewildered. He did not expect Tristan to be as skilled in fighting as he was in basketball.

His teammates panicked at the sight and rushed forward to help. "What do you think you're doing?"

A vicious glare from Tristan was all it took to keep the four players frozen to their spots.

"You think this was my intention? You forced me to retaliate, no?" Tristan retorted fiercely.

Jace piped up fearlessly, "You're in a university, man!" I bet you can't do anything to me on campus!

"So what? Getting into Jipsdale University must be the greatest honor of your life, huh? Why don't I get you expelled, then?"

Tristan's threat rendered Jace speechless with shock.

What did he just say?

Unable to believe his ears, Jace stammered, "Did you think that joke was funny? Who the heck do you think you are? The master of this school?"

Christopher happened to walk past the basketball court then. He recognized Tristan on the court just seconds after spotting Sophie.

The chancellor immediately approached Tristan and asked, "What are you doing, Mr. Tristan? Have the students done something foolish to upset you?"

He had never seen Tristan so utterly drenched in sweat.

It was a far cry from his usual attire of elegant and sharp suits.

"Mr. Tristan?"

Jace was flabbergasted. He never imagined the man he had challenged was the infamous Tristan Lombard of Jipsdale. Everyone in the city knew who he was.

Meanwhile, Jace's teammates began quaking with fear at the chancellor's words.

Tristan shoved Jace aside and replied, "Mr. Olsen, this year's basketball team is wrought with attitude problems. I would suggest you replace some of the members, lest they end up ruining Jipsdale University's good name."

After that, he returned to Sophie's side. She had pulled out some tissues from her bag and stood on her tiptoes to dab at the sweat on his face.

Tristan was moved by her gesture.

He truly adored the tender side of her personality.

While carefully cleaning the sweat off his face, Sophie muttered, "You're covered in sweat."

She enjoyed exercising, but that did not mean she relished being covered in sweat.

"I'll just go home and wash it off. Anyway, it's getting late. Let's go!" suggested Tristan.

"Okay!"

Christopher felt defeated after failing to squeeze in a single word during the couple's conversation.

One of the basketball players mumbled, "Mr. Olsen, we were only—"

"That's enough," Christopher interrupted curtly. "I don't need to hear your excuses. All of you have zero foresight. Didn't you know Mr. Tristan is the one person you should never offend in Jipsdale?"

The chancellor mulled over Tristan's earlier words. Jipsdale University isn't lacking in talents. If these boys can't stay in line, I'll just have to switch them out.

The players had not even represented the university in the varsity friendlies yet.

If the chancellor kicked them out of the team now, they would have no such opportunity in the future. With that thought in mind, they pleaded, "Mr. Olsen, we know it's our fault! We—"

Alas, Christopher mercilessly cut them off. "Enough. I don't have time to discuss these nitty-gritty matters with you."

I'll just go through your coach.

The five basketball players could never have imagined a simple taunt ending their varsity sports careers.

Before he left, Christopher added, "Oh, right. I advise you all to keep Mr. Tristan's identity to yourselves!"

Tristan and Sophie left the university on foot, and Nicholas continued stalking the couple, though he put more distance between them.

The pair arrived at Sophie's residence and entered the building together. Only then did Nicholas stop and light himself a cigarette.

Are they living together already?

Just the thought of it felt like a knife slashing across his heart.

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Nicholas returned to his mansion in Jipsdale. At that moment, he decided to move all of his forces back here.

That was his only way to contend against Tristan while in Jipsdale.

It was only a matter of time before a war started between them, so he had to be prepared.

He saw Javier in the living room as soon as he got there. Instead of greeting the latter, he sat down on the sofa.

He was feeling grumpy, so he didn't feel like speaking at all.

"Nicholas, are you going to ignore everything I said? Go back to Anglandur with me right now!"

Does he have a death wish? To have made my son like this, Sophie sure is a harbinger of misfortune!

"I'll not go back. Also, I'm warning you. You better not lay a finger on Sophie, or else I would never forgive you even though you're my father!"

He wasn't lying. All he wanted at that moment was Sophie, and he would risk everything to get his hands on her.

"Is this a threat? If killing her is the only way to make you submit, so be it."

Nicholas saw red.

"As I said, either you leave her alone or be killed by me!"

"You—"

Javier was fuming.

"You will come home with me today, you impudent child!" He knew Tristan would never let things slide if he knew Nicholas was there.

Javier had brought along a few of his trusted subordinates as he thought he would have to resort to violence to settle the situation.

That was just the norm for the Sable family. They wouldn't waste their breath on anything that could be settled using violence.

Nicholas got into a brawl with Javier's subordinates.

Throughout the years, he had also gotten himself some loyal subordinates, who then joined the fray upon noting the situation.

In the end, Nicholas proved himself the better of the two by slaughtering all of Javier's men.

The living room was covered in blood.

By then, Nicholas was in a frenzied state.

“Do you have anybody else with you? I will kill everyone around you if you lay a finger on Sophie!”

“You...”

Javier had never expected things to turn out like that.

“How dare you kill all of my subordinates? What are you planning to do now? Are you planning to kill me too?”

He was shaken by how ruthless Nicholas was as the latter went all out.

“Weren't you the one who taught me to be such? You're always telling me never to go soft on others.”

Nicholas thought he was merely honoring his father's wishes by growing into the man the latter had always wanted him to be.

“Bring the old man upstairs. He is not to leave the room without my permission.”

“Are you putting me under house arrest? Don't you forget that I'm your father, Nicholas!”

“I won't do anything to you if you obey me. However, I won't be as lenient if you repeat the same mistakes.”

“Haha...”

Javier couldn't help but let out a mirthless chuckle. His interest was piqued, and he wished to know what his son would do to him exactly.

“Keep in mind that I'll kill you two if my father escapes.”

By that point, Nicholas was like an embodiment of the devil. He was devoid of compassion and would kill anyone that got in his way.

Even Javier feared Nicholas upon taking in how savage the latter was.

Yet, Nicholas' behavior was a testament to Javier's success.

After all, it had been his wish to groom Nicholas into someone like that.

Nonetheless, he still regarded Sophie as someone to be dealt with, for her existence was an unwanted variable.

After his many years in the underground, he disliked such variables.

He figured he could perhaps hire the world's top assassin.

Given how the world worked, people could do as they pleased as long as they were wealthy.

The next day, Sophie noticed Nicholas waiting for her as soon as she arrived at the University of Medicine.

She wasn't surprised by his presence. After all, he had traveled from abroad just to find her.

“Good morning,” Nicholas greeted her smilingly.

While he might be cold to everybody else, he was passionate toward Sophie.

However, Sophie ignored him completely while proceeding with her daily routine.

“Have you moved in with that man?” Nicholas had seen them enter together last night.

Sophie said nothing.

Did he stalk me? I've had enough of this. How long is this going to drag on? Why do things always end up like this?

“Does it concern you? Who I am with and if we're living together concerns no one else but myself. Why do I need to report it to you?”

He never seems to know his place. This isn't something good.

Nicholas wasn't surprised by her treatment of him and how impatient she was.

It was as if her patience was only offered to Tristan and no one else.

“I'm trying to show you that I care. You need to know that you're still young, so there's a lot that you have yet to learn. You'll be hurt easily if you get together with him just like that!” He just couldn't bear to see her with another man. That was all there was to it.

“I don't need this. I don't need your concern. I believe you know this better than anyone else, Nicholas. Stop putting on a caring facade, or rather, even if you do have true feelings for me, they aren't what I

want. You don't have to waste any more time on me!”

She figured he didn't need to put them through all the drama.

"It is my right to love you."

This is something she can't interfere with no matter how impressive a woman she is. She can't control these kinds of things.

"I'll go to class with you. To be honest, I'm rather interested in how lessons are taught here!"

Nicholas had left for Anglandur at a young age and had received foreign education ever since.

The main reason he made that suggestion was that he wanted to know everything about her and live through the same experience as her.

"You better not follow me around."

She couldn't just bring a stranger to class without reason.

"What is it? Are you worried that Tristan might get jealous? He's not around now. He wouldn't know even if you're together with me."

Sophie remained silent.

Her patience for someone as stubborn as him had worn out.

"Are you picking a fight with me?"

She believed that nothing couldn't be solved with a fight.

If he wants to fight me so much, I don't mind bashing him here and now.

“Why must you treat me like this, Sophie? I've thought things through. Since I've returned, I will get my hands on you, no matter what!” Nicholas declared obnoxiously.

So what if she already has Tristan? I've come back to Chanaea, and I will take her back by all means necessary.

“Are you insane? Must I ruin you before you give up on me?”

“You're wrong! I won't give up on you even if you ruin me completely. I'm telling you I will never, ever give up on you!” Nicholas didn't care, even if it meant either Tristan or he had to die.

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Truth be told, Sophie wasn't at all touched by Nicholas' passionate declaration of love. She merely felt troubled.

“I think you're just delusional, Nicholas. Since when did I offer you even a sliver of hope? I wouldn't fall for you even if Tristan didn't exist! The sooner you understand this, the better!”

“That's impossible. You would definitely be with me if Tristan didn't exist! It's all his fault!”

Nobody would be able to change his mind regarding something he firmly believed in.

“Hah! You can try all you want if that's what you think.” Sophie left with her books in her arms.

She no longer felt like wasting her breath with him.

Seeing that she wasn't able to talk any sense into him, she figured she would cease talking to him altogether.

However, Nicholas didn't care at all and followed her to class.

The class was held in a lecture hall. Nicholas didn't sit next to Sophie even though he wished to do that. Knowing her temper, he refrained from pushing her buttons lest he made things difficult for himself.

He sat in the row of seats behind Sophie, his gaze fixated on her.

Nicholas had extremely attractive features that could charm practically anyone.

During class, he sat there languidly without his sunglasses while looking enamored.

Naturally, that garnered him the attention of many girls. The bolder ones would even deliberately sit in the same row as him to get a chance to ask for his number.

Yet, they soon realized that he was as aloof as he was handsome, offering them no chances at all.

Even though they sat in the same row as him, none of them dared approach him. Instead, they admired him from a few seats away.

Nicholas was satisfied with that.

This is how girls should react when they see me. I should be like a magnet to them! The one who made me taste failure is Sophie. I wonder when she'll finally spare me a glance.

"Sophie is so shameless! Wasn't she with another man some days ago? She's gotten herself another one now! Her reputation is beyond awful!"

"That's right! She's such a seductress! No wonder she was cast out to Horington back then!"

Rumors about Sophie were widespread.

Meanwhile, Nicholas would never tolerate people gossiping about Sophie like that.

He slammed down hard on the table, shattering it as he did.

The girls who were gossiping shut their mouths instantly. None of them expected him to be able to shatter a table with just a slam.

"I can see that you like to gossip. Did you assume that she's an easy target for you? Do you have a death wish?" Nicholas threatened mercilessly.

He would never allow some random strangers to speak nonsense about the girl he fancied.

All the while, Sophie couldn't care less about what was going on behind her.

After all, she never was bothered by those rumors about her.

"You've interrupted my daily life, Nicholas. I think you should leave." Sophie sounded stern.

"I want to attend the lecture! This is none of your business! You will only get to order me around once you agree to be my girlfriend!"

He wouldn't mind giving her the authority to order him around if she agreed to be his girlfriend.

He would only ever offer her such a privilege. Anybody else would be out of the question.

"Should I thank you?" Sophie asked mockingly.

She had no idea what it was about her that caught Nicholas' attention.

“Tell me what it is that you like about me, Nicholas. I promise to change those parts of me!” She was at her wit's end when it came to Nicholas.

After all, she wasn't allowed to kill him.

Yet, both his presence and the sight of him greatly annoyed her.

“You won't be able to change anything. I like everything about you. Even the air around you smells sweet. Isn't this how love toward another person feels like?”

Sophie didn't respond to that.

To be exact, she no longer knew how to respond to him.

Why must I be the one he fancies?

Meanwhile, everybody else who heard the declaration of love by a man as bloodthirsty as Nicholas felt jealous of Sophie.

Why is Sophie lucky enough to secure this man's affection?

Sophie no longer wished to speak to him. At that moment, the lecturer entered.

It wasn't that uncommon for boys to accompany their girlfriends to classes at universities.

Thus, he didn't comment about the uninvited guest in the lecture hall but began the lecture instead.

The lecturer was good at his job, for he was able to make an in-depth topic easily understandable by

giving simple explanations about difficult things.

Sophie was able to learn a lot.

He sure befits his title as a lecturer at Jipsdale University. Not only is he good at his job, but he's also humorous.

Aside from those who spent the night before partying, nobody dozed off during his classes.

However, Nicholas wasn't paying attention at all.

He only had eyes for Sophie alone. Moreover, he hadn't come here to study.

Ever since the lecture began, Sophie didn't even spare him a glance, which was a fact that depressed him.

Does she hate me so much? I would be overjoyed if she would just spare me a glance! Why won't she do that?

Finally, the class was over, so Sophie packed her stuff and left the hall. Nicholas followed behind her immediately.

"Where are you going to, Sophie? How about I buy you a meal? You need to eat no matter how busy you are!"

Sophie continued walking as if she hadn't heard him.

I can't fight exactly fight him while on campus! I've always been hoping to have a peaceful life while in university, so I can't disturb the peace.

Nicholas reached his hand out in an attempt to grab her wrist, but she evaded him.

“Didn't I tell you not to touch me? Didn't you hear me?” Sophie frowned. She disliked being touched by others.

Nicholas' face fell.

“Why can't I touch you? You don't seem to have a problem with Tristan touching you when you're with him!”

“Who is he, and who are you? How dare you even compare yourself to him? You have no right to do that!”

Nicholas had an even more grim look on his face upon hearing her words.

“Don't keep on hurting me just because I like you,” Nicholas begged humbly.

His life up until that point was without obstacles, and Sophie was the only roadblock in his path.

Therefore, he felt bitter about that.

“I don't give a damn about your feelings!” Sophie showed him no mercy.

I can't lie about my feelings. He can't possibly do anything to me, nor am I going to allow someone else to make my decisions for me.

Just then, Tristan arrived.

After busying himself with work all morning, he stopped working and hurried to Sophie as soon as it was noon, hoping to catch lunch with her.

He approached her the moment he saw where she was.

Chapter 526

“How do you think he will react if he knows I came here looking for you?”

Nicholas was indeed very curious about that.

Sophie's gaze turned cold.

“Why should I stop you if you're not afraid of death?”

“You don't think I'm Tristan's opponent, do you?” Is she so confident about Tristan's abilities?

Sophie ignored Nicholas and walked over to Tristan, completely disregarding Nicholas' threat.

Tristan wasn't incompetent. If Nicholas truly wished to court death, that was his problem and no one else's.

When Tristan was five or six meters away from them, Nicholas ultimately turned around. He knew his power had yet to return to its prime.

He couldn't face Tristan head-on at that moment, but that didn't mean he was afraid of him.

Someday, he would let Tristan realize how formidable he was, and he believed that day would arrive soon.

“Who's that?”

From afar, Tristan noticed Sophie talking to a man, but he couldn't see his face clearly.

"He's just someone asking for directions."

She didn't intend to lie to him, but his and Nicholas' backgrounds were too sensitive. She figured it would be best to keep them separated.

"Oh, is that so?" Was he just a person asking for directions? "Let's go and have our meal." I came here to share a meal with her, right?

"Okay."

The two went to the cafeteria of the University of Medicine. It had been years since Tristan had last enjoyed cafeteria food.

He went to the university cafeteria mainly to keep her company.

"How is it? Are you getting used to the food here?" Tristan gazed at her skinny arm, constantly fearing she might not be well-nourished. "How about I hire someone to take care of you and Ysabelle here?"

In his opinion, always eating cafeteria food wasn't a healthy option.

"Tristan, that's not needed. The meals here at the university cafeteria are not bad. I'll show you around and let you taste the food."

"Okay."

He did not insist. I'll give it a try. If the food is really not good, I'll hire someone to take care of them. After all, her body doesn't belong only to her since she has to be responsible for my future. She can't always act so willfully.

Tristan was willing to follow her wish in any matter except for issues related to her health.

The University of Medicine cafeteria also served freshly prepared dishes. Since she was having her meal with Tristan, Sophie went to the freshly prepared meal area instead of the stall where packed food was sold.

“What do you want to eat?” She was always a little indecisive when choosing what to eat.

“Go over and take a seat. I'll place the order.” Taking in her dithering demeanor, he asked her to sit first.

“Are you sure?” This is his first time here. Does he know what's good?

“I'm sure.”

He reckoned she must be tired after attending classes for the entire morning, so he didn't want her to continue to stand idly there.

“All right, then.” Sophie didn't dwell on that matter either. Indeed, there wasn't any need for two people to order the food, as one could get the job done.

Tristan ordered two dishes and a soup. Then, he reminded the cook of a few things to take note of before returning to Sophie's side.

The freshly prepared meals at the University of Medicine were well-known for being delicious, but at the same time, they were also infamous for being expensive. Nonetheless, that wasn't a problem for the students there.

Most of the tables were occupied.

“To be honest, this is also my first time here.”

As they would have to spend more time there, Sophie and Ysabelle would go to the other place selling packed food to swiftly purchase their meals and finish their lunch instead of wasting too much time placing orders for freshly prepared food.

“You can come here more often. I'll ask them to prepare yours and Ysabelle's food ahead of time so you can have your meal right after class.”

He knew she was busy, but one must always spare some time to have their meals.

“That's not needed. I'm staying in school to have my meal because I want to avoid trouble.” Sophie and Ysabelle were people who disliked trouble.

“What's the trouble in doing that?” In his opinion, that matter wasn't an issue since all he had to do was to hire a chef there.

Tristan had already planned to contact Felix to arrange for a five-star chef to work at the cafeteria to prepare meals for Sophie and Ysabelle.

Soon, the dishes were served.

Although the food couldn't be compared to cuisines made from established restaurants outside, the dishes were appetizing nonetheless.

“As expected, these dishes look better than the packed food downstairs.” Tristan thought the color of the food seemed more inviting.

He helped serve half a plate of pasta to her.

“This is the minimum amount you have to eat.”

Her appetite was too less, and that had always been one of his prime concerns. He always hoped she could eat a little more.

Seeing that half plate of pasta, Sophie smiled.

“Okay, I got it. Don't worry. I'll finish this half plate of pasta.” We're just having a meal.

The dishes tasted quite well. Tristan also found the food relatively tasty, not as terrible as he had imagined.

By the time they finished their meal and exited the cafeteria, it was already one-thirty in the afternoon. She had one more lesson later, and it was already too late to return to her accommodation.

“You can go back first. I'm not joining you because I have another important lesson later.” Traveling back and forth would take more than twenty minutes. She didn't want to waste time on the road.

“I'm not going back too. I'll stay here to keep you company. Is there any place to rest at the University of Medicine? I'll go there to take a break.”

An afternoon break was essential.

“There is!”

Sophie brought Tristan to the legendary, mysterious forest. Indeed, that was a very suitable place to rest.

They sat on a lawn with a large tree atop them to provide shade. The place was truly a great place to relax.

“Take a nap.”

“Okay.” Sophie didn't speak further. She immediately leaned against his shoulder and shut her eyes while he put his back against the tree trunk.

However, after a short while, she heard moans.

Hearing that, Sophie froze. The scenery was genuinely pleasant, but she couldn't believe she had forgotten some couples were fond of engaging in explicit activities there.

She figured Tristan must've heard the lewd sound too.

He frowned. Are students nowadays so open-minded? They're actually doing it in the wild!

“I think we should go somewhere else.” She stood up and offered him her hand.

“Okay.”

He grasped her hand and pulled himself up.

After getting his mood for the afternoon ruined, naturally, Tristan wouldn't let the disturbers have a good time, too, so he deliberately raised his voice.

As a result, that man's shaft lost its rigidity instantaneously.

“Someone's here!” he uttered in a panic.

“Ah! What's there to be afraid of? There are so many people going at it here.” Evidently, the woman was yet to be satisfied. She wanted to continue their actions, but that man picked up his pants and left in a hurry.

Meanwhile, Tristan and Sophie exited the forest. Her cheeks were flushed.

She didn't do that on purpose or anticipate running into others sharing their intimate moments there.

"Why is your face so red? You're not the one being caught red-handed anyway." Taking in her appearance, Tristan felt she was incredibly adorable.

"My face is not red!"

Tristan placed his arm around her shoulder, and they headed out of the forest together.

"How about I accompany you to your afternoon class?"

"What?" Sophie thought her ears were playing tricks on her. "Why would you suddenly want to do that?"

Chapter 527

"I simply want to keep you company since I don't have anything to do in the afternoon. Felix can handle the rest." He merely wanted to accompany her there.

"That's not needed. I'm here to learn. Besides, you shouldn't push all the responsibilities onto Felix. He needs to have some time to go on dates too."

Felix and Ysabelle were still in the honeymoon phase of their relationship, and time was their most needed resource.

"That is his duty. How can you say I'm pushing all the responsibilities onto him?" Tristan grinned. At the thought of Felix's aggrieved expression, he felt the urge to laugh.

"Okay." Sophie didn't dwell on that topic. She had anatomy lesson in the afternoon, and she had already learned that subject from Barney previously.

However, since she was determined to study medicine, Sophie took all her lessons seriously.

A few boys in her class puked when they saw a real human cadaver for the first time. At the thought that they would have to dissect the corpse, none of them dared to move forward.

On the contrary, Sophie was no stranger to a person's dead body.

"Come here and touch the body. Feel it for yourself!" the professor said to the students in the class.

Colors drained from the faces of a few girls.

Since they entered medical school, they had known they would face something like that sooner or later. Yet, now that a corpse was placed before their eyes, they still couldn't help but tremble.

"What's the matter with you all? Do you intend to learn or not? If you cannot accept this, leave this classroom and return home to live your pampered life instead of squandering my time! So, who's going to do it first?"

He didn't have so much time to waste on a group of students who were unwilling to learn.

"I'll do it," Sophie drawled before stepping forward to feel the dead human body.

A few female students were outraged when they saw Sophie volunteering before anyone else.

"What a showoff! What's so impressive about that? She's not acting like a girl at all."

"That's right. She thinks she'll stand out by doing this. What a disgusting person."

At the thought of Sophie stealing the limelight at that moment, the few girls felt uncomfortable, and even their manner of speech turned unpleasant.

“Cut that crap. If you're so capable, why don't you do it, then?” a usually taciturn boy retorted.

Someone else is doing something they don't have the guts to do, yet they're being sarcastic now. Do they think their behavior is of any significance?

“You—”

The few girls didn't anticipate that untalkative boy to criticize them.

Just as they were about to scold him, they noticed him glancing at them coldly.

That emotionless gaze prompted the girls to shut up afterward.

Sophie gained the spotlight for the rest of the anatomy class.

Even the professor couldn't help but clap his hands at the sight of her fantastic technique.

“Sophie, you were amazing. This is the most excellent dissection I've seen.”

The professor had taught many students throughout his career, but that was the first time he had witnessed such a masterly technique.

Even the best surgeon in Jipsdale wasn't as skillful as her.

All the boys were astounded when they saw her expertise.

They couldn't believe a delicate beauty like her could stay so calm when facing a human cadaver.

In contrast, those boys appeared ridiculous and incompetent when compared to her.

“Mm.”

Sophie didn't care to give a lengthy response after receiving the compliment.

“Professor, I have some matters to attend to. May I leave early?” Since she had completed her task today, she assumed her request would be approved.

“What's the hurry? I wish to discuss another anatomical position with you.” The professor was reluctant to see her leave.

He had heard about Sophie being the top student in her year's university entrance exam, but he didn't expect her to be so accomplished in dissection.

“Will the discussion take a long time?”

Tristan was probably still waiting for her outside, and she didn't want to keep him waiting for too long.

“This might take some time because this problem has been troubling me for a long period, but never mind. We can discuss this another day since you're busy.”

“Tell me what's the problem.”

Sophie did not think she would require a long time to solve any issue.

The professor described the problem to her and led her to one side to investigate the issue together.

After he finished talking, Sophie picked up the scalpel and immediately demonstrated the solution, perfectly solving his conundrum.

The professor stood rooted to the spot, stupefied.

“Sophie, you're truly a genius. With your presence, Chanaea's medical advancement will certainly improve by leaps and bounds, surpassing even Anglandur!” She's indeed a prodigy!

“Is there anything else? I really need to leave now if there's nothing else.”

“Okay. You may go now.”

The professor was in an excellent mood, so he didn't mind Sophie taking off early.

The other girls wanted to leave early as well after seeing Sophie's request was granted.

“Professor, I also have something important to do today. Can I leave now?”

He glanced at the girl who spoke. She wants to leave even though she has yet to touch this corpse since her arrival.

“Are you not planning to dissect the human body today?” The professor was trying his best to control his temper.

“Professor, why can't I leave if Sophie can? You're being biased.” The girl acted coy.

“Are you comparing yourself to Sophie?” Are young ladies nowadays that ignorant of the limits of their abilities?

“If you're not interested in studying medicine, you may drop out of school now instead of wasting your

parents' time and the university's resources!" This is not a theme park or a place she thinks she can come here to have fun.

Not expecting the professor to respond in such an exaggerated manner, the girl was momentarily stunned.

All I did was request a leave. Does he have to be so uptight? He's obviously treating his students with double standards.

"Professor, since you allowed Sophie to leave, why can't I go as well? Even if I waste my parents' money, they are delighted to spend their riches this way."

The girl felt especially aggrieved.

"Is that so? In that case, you don't have to attend my classes anymore. Your parents may be willing to waste their time and money on you, but I'm not your parents. I won't condone such terrible behavior of yours." There are so many people who wish to enter the University of Medicine, aspiring to become the world's best doctor. Unfortunately, those people were not given the opportunity to study here because of students like her. Yet these people who successfully enrolled here are not appreciating their chances. How can I not be mad?

The girl didn't dare to utter another word.

Indeed, her parents were very proud that she could make it into the University of Medicine. They would be utterly disappointed if she were expelled at that moment.

The professor disregarded the girl after she fell silent.

Meanwhile, Sophie exited the hall and saw Tristan waiting outside at first glance.

"Didn't I tell you not to pick me up?" I can go back on my own. He doesn't have to waste his time doing this.

"I need to attend a charity dinner tonight. Do I have the pleasure of asking you to be my companion?"

He had never involved her in those aspects of his life in the past, but the charity dinner that day required their guests to bring along a partner, and he didn't want any other woman to join him.

Chapter 528

"What charity dinner is that? Why haven't I heard you mention it?"

"I didn't want to participate in the event previously, but my father requested my presence, so I have no choice but to go."

His father was most likely trying to arrange a blind date for him.

Tristan had had enough of William's behavior. The latter was aware that his son had a girlfriend, yet he was still arranging blind dates for him. Tristan wasn't planning on going along with his father's scheme.

"In that case, I'll certainly accompany you to attend the event." Sophie was unfazed about joining a charity dinner.

"I knew you would keep me company. I've already prepared your outfit, so you just need to get some makeup done later. But let's go and have a light meal first." Although food would usually be served at a charity dinner, one could never eat peacefully on such occasions. "Also, no matter what happens at the charity dinner, you mustn't get angry, okay?"

"Do you already know what will happen?" Sophie found his statement baffling because he was implying he had already foreseen what would happen even before they departed to the event venue.

"My dad may not be pleased with you, but the problem lies with him, not you."

"So what? How is this matter related to him or the charity dinner tonight?"

"He arranged a blind date for me at the charity dinner tonight."

“A blind date?”

Truth be told, Sophie was slightly taken aback when she heard Tristan mention he would be going on a blind date.

“It seems that your dad really doesn't like me.” Otherwise, why would he ask his son to go on blind dates even after knowing Tristan has a girlfriend?

“Are you mad? Didn't I tell you his opinion is of little significance? What matters is my stance. You are the only woman who can be my wife in this life. No one else can take the spot.”

Tristan honestly didn't wish for her to face those situations, but his father was committed to doing things others could never accept.

This time, Tristan wanted to let everyone in Jipsdale know that Sophie was his girlfriend.

He would only dedicate his love to Sophie and no one else, so the others should give up on trying to win his affection.

“Is it appropriate for you to bring me along to your blind date? Doing this may cause your dad to dislike me even more.”

“Didn't I tell you his opinion is of little significance? What matters is I love you.” Have I not repeated this many times? We shouldn't care about others' opinions. “Are you angry right now?” Tristan asked carefully, fearing Sophie might genuinely be furious.

Taking in his cautious demeanor, Sophie couldn't help but feel her heart ache.

“Actually, you don't have to mind me. I'm fine. Don't worry. Regardless of why your dad is not fond of me, I'll work hard to turn the situation around because I don't want to see you getting caught in a tight spot.”

She had never been one to care about others' views, but because William was Tristan's father, she decided to try to change the current circumstances.

He shook his head. She doesn't need to change a thing.

"This is something I want to do."

After finding out her grandfather had arranged for Tristan to go on a blind date, Ysabelle was dissatisfied.

"Aunt Sarah, my grandpa is really getting old, isn't he? How can he do something as despicable as this?"

Ysabelle had never known William to be so stubborn in the past.

"Stop talking nonsense. Your grandpa will be sad if he hears you."

Sarah felt extremely helpless as well.

"Aunt Sarah, will you attend the charity dinner too? Why don't we go together so that we can support

Sophie?" How can we allow Sophie to participate in such a grand occasion on her own? What if someone bullies her?

"Why are you going? Don't worry. Sophie can handle this. You must have faith in her. If you go now, I'm afraid your grandpa won't be happy."

William had made the arrangements.

If they went there to support Sophie, he wouldn't be pleased and would instead place the blame on Sophie. Their effort would result in a worse loss.

"We're just going there to take a look, not to stir a commotion. I'm just afraid someone will bully Sophie. You're also aware of how troublesome Uncle Tristan's blind date partner, the lady from the Whitley family, can be!"

That woman was not to be taken lightly.

"Frankly speaking, my grandpa is really getting old. I can't believe he wants her to date my uncle!"

The Whitley family's daughter was undoubtedly competent as she successfully managed her family's company with excellence.

However, Ysabelle figured Tristan needed to be with a woman he was genuinely fond of instead of a career lady since he was more than capable of handling a company well on his own.

"Aunt Sarah, let's go together. You also don't want to see others bully Sophie, right?"

Ysabelle acted coy.

She was adamant about tagging along.

"Fine. If you don't want to bring me with you, I'll ask Felix. I'm going by hook or by crook."

Sarah could do nothing about Ysabelle.

"Okay. I'll bring you with me."

That night's charity dinner took place at the Whitley family's hotel, and all the attendees were either affluent or influential. After the banquet, a charity auction would be held.

That was the typical behavior of wealthy people. After they amassed a certain level of riches, they would wish to garner a good image.

Under normal circumstances, men were tasked with earning money while women busied themselves with hosting charity dinners and similar events.

This time, the organizer was the Whitley family's daughter, Jennifer Whitley.

Jennifer was filled with anticipation after knowing her father had arranged a blind date for her with Tristan. She was the family's only daughter.

In recent years, she had been helping her father to manage the family's business and had done a splendid job, earning her the reputation of an iron lady.

She had fancied Tristan since she was in high school. She even argued with Winter after knowing the latter was also interested in Tristan.

Jennifer was thrilled when she learned that Winter had been banished to Alendor by Tristan afterward.

Winter has always thought too highly of herself, but she was still exiled to Alendor in the end. Jennifer reckoned Winter deserved that outcome because of her incompetence.

After she waited for so long, Williams finally contacted her father and arranged for her to go on a blind date with Tristan.

She stood by at the entrance, hoping to meet Tristan sooner, even before the charity dinner began.

Sarah and Ysabelle saw Jennifer standing at the door right after they got out of the vehicle. The latter was dressed in a party dress, enhancing her feminine side and dampening her usual career-woman vibe.

Jennifer assumed every man would yearn to be with gentle, sweet-tempered women.

Since she liked Tristan and was finally getting to meet with him that day, she needed to put in more effort to preen herself.

“Look at how eager she seems. Don't tell me she genuinely believes Uncle Tristan is interested in her,” Ysabelle uttered straightforwardly.

In her opinion, Tristan belonged only to Sophie, and anyone who dared to meddle in their relationship would be her enemy.

“Hush!”

Sarah felt Ysabelle's behavior was inappropriate because the Whitley family was the host of that night's charity dinner.

Ysabelle stuck out her tongue in response. At that moment, Tristan's car arrived. After his car door was opened, he got out of the vehicle.

Chapter 529

Tristan looked dapper in a black custom suit, and his hair was styled neatly.

Jennifer was captivated the instant she saw her crush.

For a moment there, she did not know how to react. She had been passionately in love with Tristan for ten years.

It's been ten years! How many ten years can a woman have?

Just as she was about to step forward to greet him, she saw him gently helping a girl out of the car.

The tall and slender girl had braided hair and was exceptionally beautiful.

Not only that, but she was also wearing a dress that matched the color of Tristan's tie.

What exactly is their relationship?

Jennifer's expression turned sour.

Isn't Mr. Tristan here for our blind date? Why did he bring such a beautiful girl with him?

Naturally, other young ladies from wealthy families also attended the charity dinner that evening. However, instead of entering, they lingered at the entrance to take another glance at Tristan.

Upon witnessing the scene, those young ladies, who had been very jealous of Jennifer, started to mock her. "I know you've been in love with Mr. Tristan all this time, Jennifer, but you should know he has high

standards. Look how beautiful the girl next to him is!"

Jennifer clenched her fists.

"What do you mean by that?" Are they saying that I'm not attractive enough?

"Nothing. I just wanted to say that you shouldn't be upset even if Mr. Tristan doesn't like you. It's certainly not your fault! His standards are just too high!"

Even though they were words of consolation, the one who spoke made them seem harsh and cynical.

"You—"

By then, Tristan had already brought Sophie over.

Since they stepped out of the car, those wealthy young ladies had been fixing their eyes on Sophie. Jennifer, especially, had murderous intent written all over her face.

Sophie stood before Jennifer right then and gave her a nod. "Hello, Ms. Whitley. I'm Sophie Tanner, Mr. Tristan's girlfriend."

She did not like others questioning her identity, so she was upfront about it to stop them from fantasizing about him.

Jennifer felt as if she had been slapped hard in the face.

Mr. Tristan's girlfriend! I've never seen him admit to having a girlfriend even though I know there's no way he would be without a woman at his side, given the number of admirers he has. Could this young girl be his lover for real?

"Mr. Tristan, is what she said true?" Jennifer ignored Sophie. Who does she think she is? What right does she have to tell me all that?

Tristan was utterly displeased with Jennifer's attitude toward Sophie.

"Yes. Sophie is my girlfriend!"

His direct acknowledgment of Sophie's identity was not what Jennifer or the other ladies had anticipated.

"Are there any more questions?"

"No."

Jennifer was dumbfounded. Yet, at that point, she knew she could not stir up any trouble. She could only let the guests in first, lest she embarrass herself further.

Tristan put his arm around Sophie's slender waist and led her in. Sarah and Ysabelle immediately followed.

“Are you two planning to announce it to everyone?” The latter two had never seen the couple display their affection so openly.

“Yes!” Sophie responded.

If this is the only way to prevent other women from hitting on Tristan, I'll gladly make it known to the entire world that Tristan is mine. No one is allowed to have any fantasies about him.

Ysabelle was incredibly delighted with Sophie's response.

“That's the way to do it, Sophie! You must let everyone know. Otherwise, they'll still believe that anyone can be Uncle Tristan's girlfriend!”

The charity dinner began.

Although the Whitley family had prepared a lavish dinner, the daughters and wives of wealthy families were not there to eat but to help their families expand their networks.

They barely touched their food.

Ysabelle, on the other hand, did not care about any of that.

She had not had dinner and was very hungry at that moment, so she ate with relish.

“Have some, Sophie. It's quite tasty!” she remarked. As expected of a five-star chef. The food is pretty good.

“I'm not hungry,” was Sophie's reply.

She and Tristan had already eaten before heading there.

You can't possibly expect me to eat on such an occasion, right?

Tristan gave her a glass of milk.

"Have some."

"Okay."

Despite her thoughts, she still listened to his words.

Jennifer was seated at the same table as them. Even if she knew Tristan had a girlfriend, she could not care less and wanted to join in their conversation.

As long as I can marry into the Lombard family, it doesn't matter how many women Mr. Tristan has outside!

However, the three members of the Lombard family were paying so much attention to Sophie that she had no chance to speak.

Caylie, Jennifer's mother, was seated with them as well, and she looked grumpy the whole time, evidently displeased that Tristan had brought along a companion.

In the end, when she realized that Tristan was giving her daughter the cold shoulder, she got up and left.

Jennifer knew that her mother was angry, so she immediately chased after her.

"What are you doing, Mom? That wasn't very polite of you!"

“Jennifer, I know you've been interested in Mr. Tristan all this time, but you saw his attitude toward you. We've already agreed that you two will be having a blind date today, yet he ended up bringing another woman. Do you think he will truly love you?”

Jennifer was the Whitley couple's only daughter whom they had pampered since she was young. There was no way they could accept anyone mistreating her.

“I don't care, Mom. As long as I can marry Mr. Tristan, I can endure anything!” Jennifer exclaimed. It's fine as long as it's him.

“You—”

How could she put herself in such a humble position?

Caylie left unhappily. She can stay here and torment herself. In any case, I can't bear to see my daughter in such a miserable state.

As soon as Caylie left, Jennifer made a phone call to get someone to find out Sophie's identity, and only after learning about the latter's past did her expression relax a little.

How can the Lombard family ever accept Sophie's colorful past? I finally understand why Old Mr. Lombard told Mr. Tristan to go on a blind date. Clearly, he's not satisfied with Sophie, so he gave me this chance!

Jennifer could not help but chuckle.

The Tanner family? They're pretty insignificant in Jipsdale. Mr. Tristan is merely fooling around with her. She'll never be able to enter the Lombard family!

Jennifer returned to her seat with a flawlessly courteous smile on her face.

Ysabelle's face fell when she saw the other woman's smile. This woman is quite virtuous! I can't believe she got over it so quickly!

"I have a question for you, Sarah. May I?" Jennifer finally found a way to bring up the topic.

Chapter 530

Since it was the Whitley family's banquet, Sarah had to respect Jennifer and let her speak.

Jennifer deliberately asked a business question to demonstrate that part of herself to Tristan and let him know how exceptional she was.

No one in this world, other than me, Jennifer Whitley, is worthy of Mr. Tristan.

Of course, Sarah could answer Jennifer's question. She responded with a smile and knew what her purpose was for doing so.

Jennifer is still too innocent. Men don't like you just because of how good you are. Not all men like strong women.

There was no way a perceptive woman like Sophie would fail to discern Jennifer's motives. She found the other woman's behavior somewhat ridiculous.

"What's the matter? Are you feeling bored? I'll take you out for a walk!"

There's still some time before the auction, and it'll indeed be boring to keep sitting here.

"That sounds great!"

Sophie did not wish to continue sitting there listening to Jennifer's nonsense, so she got up and left with Tristan.

Jennifer was stunned.

She did not expect Tristan to leave the table early because of Sophie.

Sarah could only stop talking when she noticed that Jennifer was in no mood to listen.

“Are you all right?” Jennifer was the daughter of the Whitley family after all, and the pitiful look she had at that moment made Sarah feel quite sorry for her.

“I’m sorry, Sarah. I didn’t mean it.”

She’s explaining something to me, yet I’m having this look on my face.

“You don’t have to apologize to me. You didn’t do anything wrong. I just want to tell you that Tristan truly loves Sophie. I know you love him, but love is never based on wishful thinking.”

Sarah was making a last-ditch effort to prevent the matter from causing tension between the two families.

“I understand that.”

It was for that reason that she had never expressed her feelings all these years and kept waiting for an opportunity to do so.

However, just when she finally had the opportunity, she realized he already had a girlfriend.

“You should know that since Tristan brought Sophie here on such an occasion, it can only mean that

he’s serious about the relationship.”

Otherwise, he wouldn't have brought her here.

Jennifer merely hummed in response, her expression grim.

Undoubtedly, she had become the biggest laughingstock in Jipsdale, and all the socialites and wealthy ladies were mocking her for overestimating herself.

Meanwhile, Tristan and Sophie had already come out, and sure enough, the air outside was much better and invigorating.

"Is it all right for us to come out like this?"

Truth be told, Sophie did not care much about it, but she still asked the question.

"Why not? I didn't want to come to such an event at all anyway."

The reason I brought you here in person today was to let everyone know that I'm already taken and that they shouldn't approach me anymore.

"All right, then!"

Although William did not attend the event, he knew Tristan had brought Sophie over.

"What in the world are you doing now? Do you have any respect left for your father? I merely asked

you to go out on a blind date. I didn't ask anything else of you. Do you know you've made things awkward for everyone because of what you've done?" he berated his son over the phone.

Tristan showed no sign of backing down as he argued, "You knew I have a girlfriend, yet you still made such an arrangement. Shouldn't you have expected this outcome?"

“Tristan, you—”

Why does this rebellious boy always make me so angry?

“All right, you should rest early now that you're getting older, or you'll ruin your health from blowing a fuse.” Tristan was not about to waste time talking to him. He hung up immediately after that as there was nothing left to say.

William's temper spiked when he heard the disconnect tone.

This brat doesn't have any respect for me, and now he even dares to hang up on me! No. I must go over and have a look. I can't let him destroy the relationship between our two families!

In the restroom, Sophie saw Jennifer as soon as she entered.

The latter made no attempt to conceal her animosity toward Sophie.

Since we're love rivals in the first place, being nice to her will be so fake!

Sophie also did not put on an act to greet Jennifer. She could clearly see the hostility in her eyes.

“Don't try to step into a social class that is not your own. You'll only embarrass yourself!”

The Tanner family was not part of the upper class in Jipsdale, so they were no match for the Lombard family in any way.

Sophie placed her hand under the faucet, and warm water flowed out automatically when the sensor detected her body heat.

She did not even spare Jennifer a single glance as she washed her hands.

Since birth, Jennifer's life had been smooth sailing. She had never experienced such blatant disregard from others.

Clenching her fists discreetly, she found the need to make it clear to the other girl.

"Your identity and your past will only embarrass Mr. Tristan. You're not worthy to stand by his side!"

After washing her hands, Sophie shook them lightly to flick the water off them before turning around to stare into Jennifer's eyes.

"Aren't you being too presumptuous, Jennifer? Do you genuinely believe that only having a few duties in your family's business makes you a capable, independent woman? So what if you are truly a strong woman? No matter how capable you are, it has nothing to do with Tristan because he has no interest in you. Also, I must say that I am certain that I am the only one on this planet who is worthy of him!"

Sophie was not a patient person in the first place, so she left as soon as she finished speaking.

Jennifer's face contorted with rage.

She's truly overestimating herself! Other than her appearance, what else can she boast about? Since she's so arrogant, she'll become so self-absorbed if I don't teach her a lesson!

Sophie went out and walked over to Tristan when she found him at the entrance of the restroom.

"Why are you here? I was just going to the restroom. You don't have to follow me all the time," she said. So what if this is the Whitley family's turf? What else can they do to me?

"I just happened to come over, so I decided to wait for you outside."

When Jennifer came out of the restroom and saw Tristan talking to Sophie gently, she feigned nonchalance.

Deep down, however, she was afraid that Sophie would complain to him about her.

Yet, when Tristan said nothing, she felt relieved.

“Mr. Tristan, the auction is about to start. Let's go in!” Jennifer informed him as the host of the banquet.

“You go in first. We'll be there in a while.” Tristan did not show Jennifer any respect since he felt he had no obligation to care about the feelings of someone he did not love. All he cared about was Sophie.

Jennifer paled. She gritted her teeth and left.

It's fine. I'll teach Sophie a lesson later at the auction. Does she really think that anyone can get into the upper class?