

## **Pursuing 701**

### **Chapter 701**

Ysabelle teared up when she saw Sophie walking down on her own. Oh, thank goodness! Thank goodness she's fine! Otherwise, I'd never have been able to forgive myself.

Upon learning of Sophie's return, Cecelia had specially requested a day off from the director so she could pick the former up at the airport.

Mark and Sunny were also present. They had not been able to make it to Jetrouina when Sophie got injured due to their busy schedules, so it was only natural that they wanted to be there that day to welcome her back.

Holding onto Tristan's arm for support, Sophie slowly walked toward the group. "Why are you guys here?" she asked. They're all quite busy, so they really didn't have to come all the way here just to welcome me back.

Ysabelle broke free from Felix's grasp and rushed over to hug Sophie. "You're finally back! You don't know how much I've missed you! Thank heavens you're all better now."

I wouldn't know what to do if she ended up not being able to stand or walk anymore! If that happened, there's no way I would forgive myself for the rest of my life!

Sophie patted her back. "Okay, that's enough. I've recovered already, so there's no need to keep beating yourself up about it."

Tears slid down Ysabelle's cheeks when she heard that. "Okay. I'm just so thankful you're fine now."

Going over to them, Cecelia said, "Sophie, you've been having a streak of bad luck lately, so you

should be more careful. I don't wish to see you injured again."

Ever since Sophie was a child, she had suffered a lot. Hence, everyone who cared for her wished for her to have a happy life ahead.

After studying Sophie closely from head to toe, Mark finally felt somewhat at ease.

Needless to say, Tristan noticed Mark's gaze on her. Although he was annoyed by how Mark was staring at her, he knew that Sophie cherished Mark and thus made no comment.

Meanwhile, Sunny was more unreserved. He ran up to Sophie and pulled her into a bear hug. Still feeling worried, he said, "You need to bring me along the next time you go off somewhere. That way, I can protect you even if something happens."

"Okay, got it. Let's get going. The weather is so cold, so we shouldn't keep standing here."

Christmas was just around the corner, and the weather in Jipsdale was gradually growing colder. Even though Sophie had a thick down jacket wrapped around her, she still felt the chill.

The others did and immediately started heading toward the exit. A car was already waiting outside. There was heating inside the vehicle, and Sophie felt much warmer as soon as she climbed in.

"Are you okay?" Arius asked in a concerned tone.

"Yeah. You don't have to be so worried. I feel a little chilly, that's all," she replied. I only hurt my leg a little this time, and the injury has almost healed completely. As long as I don't do any strenuous

exercise, I'll be fine.

"It's only natural that I'm worried. After all, I can't possibly risk my reputation, can I?" he responded. After all, I'm a doctor. If something happens to her while she's on my watch, wouldn't that ruin my good name?

She stared at him speechlessly. Forget it. That's how he talks. It's unnecessary to argue with him. I'll only drive myself mad if I take him seriously.

Finally, the group arrived at Tristan's mansion. As Sophie needed to be looked after, Tristan decided not to take her to the condominium near the University of Medicine as he felt he would not be able to take good care of her there. He had many housekeepers at the mansion, and Arius would be staying with them too. Hence, his mansion was the most suitable place for Sophie to recuperate in.

After everyone arrived at the mansion, they gathered in the living room, filling the place with chatter and laughter. The atmosphere in the usually quiet residence suddenly felt a little livelier due to the group's presence.

"Let's all have dinner together," Ysabelle suggested. It had been a long time since they had enjoyed a meal together. She continued, "You've been in Jetroina for so long, so you must surely miss the food in Chanaea."

"Sure!" Sophie agreed. She also missed having meals together with everyone.

As they were chatting, Sean and Charles also turned up. The pair breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing that Sophie had recovered. Tristan had something to discuss with Sean and Charles, so he led them into the study.

Meanwhile, Sarah busied herself with preparing food for the rest as she was the best cook among them. Now that Sophie had returned, she resolved to prepare nutritious food to help the former regain her health. Sophie had already been skinny enough, and she only got thinner after the incident. Sarah was not pleased to see that.

Noticing how Sarah had been bustling about nonstop since they reached the mansion, Sophie went over to her and said, "You should get some rest too."

"Don't mind me. I'm just making some stew. It's not hard work at all. Go and chat with the others," Sarah replied. Everybody had taken time off to gather there because they cared a lot about Sophie.

"All right, then. Ask the help to take care of the rest, then come out and take a break," Sophie said before heading back into the living room.

She then asked Cecelia, "Cecelia, how's the filming for your movie? Mr. Ledger is strict, so I bet it's difficult working with him, right?"

Cecelia could not help rolling her beautiful eyes at that. "Don't think so little of me, Sophie. I'm very serious when it comes to filming. I never mess around. Mr. Ledger even praised me in front of everyone else today!"

After all, the name Cecelia Lance is synonymous with exceptional talent.

She continued after a brief pause, "Besides, even if I did mess around, no one would dare to say anything. I have a wealthy backer, after all."

It went without saying that everyone knew who the wealthy backer was.

"He's so lucky to have someone like you in his life," Sophie teased.

Here, Mark piped up and asked, "Is your leg really better now? You should still be careful. It takes a long time for such serious injuries to heal, and it has only been a month since you got hurt."

"I'm really all right, Mark. Don't worry. I promise I'll be careful." In truth, she could not afford to injure her leg again as it would be beyond saving if that happened. Nonetheless, she was not about to tell the others that. She had no intention of making them worry about her.

"Just be careful. I also don't think you should return to the University of Medicine and Jipsdale University this semester," he said. Crowds are everywhere at universities, and some students can be rough and boisterous. There's no telling what could happen.

"I still have two projects to work on at the universities," she explained. Hence, she had no choice but to return.

Mark frowned. "Whatever it is, your health comes first. Just do what you can and leave the rest."

She could not help chuckling at the sight of his stern expression. "All right, I will. You've nothing to worry about. I'll take care of things as I see fit."

"How about this? For the time being, I think it'll be better if you have a few bodyguards with you when you're out," Mark proposed, thinking that the bodyguards would be able to handle things if something did happen.

His suggestion left her at a loss for words. I'm only a student. Do I really need to have bodyguards with me when I go out? Isn't that a little too much? There's no need for that at all!

She shook her head, rejecting his suggestion. "I'm no big shot. Why do I need to have bodyguards with me?"

"I'm not kidding, Sophie. I'm being serious," he replied. I mean, what's the harm in having a few bodyguards?

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"I'm serious, too. Don't worry. I can protect myself, I swear. This incident is purely an accident, and it won't happen again."

There was nothing Mark could do to persuade her.

"You won't change your mind no matter what I say, right?"

Sophie kept quiet.

She wasn't fond of Mark behaving in that manner.

"Mark, I'm really fine," she reiterated. It's just a minor injury. There's no need for everyone to be so worried.

“All right, then.”

Meanwhile, Tristan sat on the leather couch behind the desk in the study. The other three people either sat or stood around him. An unlit cigarette was placed in between Charles' lips.

“Mr. Tristan, Sophie isn't here, so why don't you let me take a few puffs?”

Charles had a severe smoking addiction. However, since they were in Tristan's territory, he didn't dare to light up the cigarette as Tristan forbade him from smoking.

Having said that, only the four of them were present in the study at that moment, so Charles wondered why he couldn't smoke.

“It's better if you don't smoke. If you really wish to do so, I suggest you do it outside.”

Charles was stumped.

He didn't feel like conversing further with Tristan. Does he not realize the weather outside is freezing? I can't believe he's asking me to smoke outside.

“Mr. Tristan, I didn't know you are someone who puts your woman before your friends.” Rendered speechless, Charles could only sniff the scent of his cigarette to satiate his desire.

“That's enough. It's not like you'd die if you don't smoke. Mr. Tristan, I've been following up on the collaboration with Yartran, but you're also familiar with their queen's character. She's very shrewd, so it won't be easy for us to make money.”

As Tristan had been in Jetroina, Sean was tasked to handle the collaboration between Lombard Group and Yartran. Now that Tristan had returned, the task was naturally handed over to him.

“Okay. I got it. I'll make time to meet with her.”

Yartran's queen was indeed astute, so Tristan reckoned he would need to put more effort into dealing with her.

“By the way, Princess Elyssa has been looking for you,” said Sean, casually bringing up the matter. Elyssa was young, and the queen doted on her. Even after learning about the incident at Chanaea, the queen merely gave Elyssa a light punishment.

Tristan couldn't help but frown at the mention of Elyssa. She's nothing but huge trouble.

“That's all right. Sophie is not concerned about her.” Elyssa's existence wouldn't affect anyone or Lombard Group's cooperation with Yartran.

The quartet discussed some underlying problems related to that collaboration.

The trio hadn't been able to resolve those issues, but Tristan managed to sort out those problems effortlessly in less than an hour.

“Is there any other complication? If there isn't, we should go downstairs to have our meal now.” It was already dinnertime.

“Everything is settled on my end. Let's call it a day. If there are any other problems, we can discuss them on another day since you've returned.”

Many people were waiting for them to have dinner together downstairs.

“Okay. That's right. I'm hungry too.” Charles only wished to finish his meal as soon as possible so that he could leave that place to puff on a cigarette.

“You guys may go downstairs first.”

Tristan had to make another phone call.

“Okay.”

Sean and the other two went downstairs. They noticed the others still surrounding Sophie upon descending the stairs.

Sean couldn't help but feel jealous when he took in that harmonious scene. When can I experience this kind of bliss too?

Sarah had finished preparing their dinner. When she noticed the trio, she exited the kitchen and asked, “Where's Tristan? Why isn't he coming down yet? It's time for dinner.”

It had been a long time since she prepared such a plentiful meal.

She felt a little exhausted after cooking inside the kitchen for so long. Nevertheless, no matter how tired she might be, she was delighted because of Sophie's return.

Sean answered, “He's on the phone, but he'll be joining us soon.”

“Are you hungry already? Should we eat first?” Sarah didn't feel it would be appropriate for so many people to wait for Tristan.

“It's all right. Let's wait for him.” Tristan and Sophie finally returned from Jetroina after much difficulty. Now that everyone was able to gather together, naturally, they should wait for everyone to be present before having their meal.

Tristan walked down the stairs as they spoke.

“All right now. Let's have dinner.”

Everyone went to the dining room and took their seats, including Sarah.



“Sarah, thanks for everything today.” Sophie raised her wine glass.

Seeing that, Tristan furrowed his brows. “Sophie, you can’t drink wine. You’re not allowed to consume alcohol yet.”

“I’ll just take a few sips. It’ll be fine.”

Tristan continued wearing a frown.

“No, you can’t, not even a little bit. I’ll let you drink whatever you want after you recover, but you can’t drink wine now.” Although Tristan was denying Sophie of her request, he still uttered those words with exceptional tenderness.

Cecelia envied Sophie when she saw Tristan’s demeanor. Sophie must’ve used up all her luck in this life to encounter Tristan.

“Arius, you tell him. Am I allowed to drink a little alcohol?”

Tristan shot him a death glare.

Arius shook his head.

“Sophie, although you’re my best friend, you must listen to Mr. Tristan this time. He has your best interest at heart, so you should avoid drinking wine today.” What the h\*ll? How dare I defy Mr. Tristan

when he’s glowering at me? Needless to say, I’ll agree with anything he says.

Sarah immediately poured Sophie a glass of warm milk.

"That's enough. Tristan is doing this for your own good. We will consume alcohol today while you drink this glass of warm milk."

The others nodded in agreement.

Sophie sighed. Nevertheless, she knew everyone cared about her, so she had no choice but to accept the glass of warm milk.

"Okay. I'll drink wine with all of you another time." I shall let this matter slide today.

"Thank you, Sarah and all of you. I'm sorry for worrying you, and you have my utmost gratitude for staying by my side all this while." Because of them, Sophie's life became much more vibrant.

She had always been a relatively aloof person.

Even her parents didn't like her that much. Still, those people sitting beside her at that moment were genuinely nice to her.

They had experienced life-and-death situations together and were so strongly bonded to the extent of being willing to sacrifice their lives for one another.

"Sophie, nothing is more important than your well-being." Cecelia's eyes reddened. She was an actress, but those were her heartfelt feelings at that instant.

Felix got to his feet and said, "Okay. Let's raise our glasses to welcome Sophie's safe return. All of us must stay well in the future." Others stood up too.

That's right. Everyone will be fine from now on. There will always be a solution regardless of the problem we'll face.

Sarah stood up as well after noticing everyone was on their feet. She sipped her red wine before saying, "We're all friends, so there's no need to be so courteous. Let's sit down and have our meal."

After everyone sat down, Felix lifted his wine glass and got up from his seat.

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“Sophie, I owe you my thanks after everything that had happened. If it hadn't been for you, Ysabelle wouldn't have returned safely! Thank you so much. No matter what problems you face in the future, let me know, and I'll help you with whatever I can!”

Ysabelle turned to look at Felix, who always knew her like the back of his hand, and thought what he said made sense. This time, if it weren't for Sophie, Ysabelle would not have returned alive.

“I've told you guys before that I'm just doing what I should do. If it had been someone else instead of Ysabelle in the same situation, I would've rescued them too.” That's why they shouldn't feel like they're carrying a huge burden.

“There's nothing else I have to say, but if anyone dares to bully you in the future, I'll be the first one to defend you. I won't ever let them get away with it.”

Felix was a loyal and honorable person. He would definitely keep his words.

“Okay. I'm counting on you.”

Mark, who was sitting opposite Sophie, could not help shaking his head. Sophie is too sentimental. Sometimes, I hope that she could be a little more cold-blooded. That way, she won't get hurt as much.

Following that, Ysabelle stood up, too.

“Sophie, I don't have much left to say either, but I'll remember what you did for me this time around,” Ysabelle said as she took a sip of her wine.

Ysabelle and Felix made the atmosphere turn sort of depressing.

In an attempt to lighten the mood, Sarah smiled and said, "All right. You've returned to us safely, and that's all that matters. Let's raise our glasses to welcome Sophie's safe return."

Everyone cheered and ate dinner happily.

Cecelia said, "Sarah, did you really make this? I'm surprised that you can cook so well. Can I go over to your place and freeload on food in the future?"

Sarah's cooking was no different than those of five-star chefs.

"You can, but as you know, I'm usually busy and don't always have time to cook." Not even William had the luxury to enjoy her cooking often.

"You're amazing, Sarah. You're not only an Iron Lady, but you're also an amazing chef!" praised Cecelia sincerely, for she only knew how to cook pasta.

Cooking was too difficult for her. She could not seem to master it no matter how hard she tried.

Ysabelle could not help chiming in, "Aunt Sarah makes the best meals, but I don't get to enjoy it often, either. Every time she cooks, it's for Sophie's sake."

Aunt Sarah really likes Sophie.

"Thank you, Sarah!" Sophie immediately said.

"Don't listen to that brat's nonsense! If you guys like my cooking, I can cook for you whenever I'm free," Sarah replied. That's the least I can do for them.

"Cooking is hard work. It would be best if you didn't do it often," Sophie said. It's really tiring to cook, especially today. Although we have help from the housekeepers, it's still tiring to cook for so many people.

"It's fine, really."

Sean complimented her cooking as well. "Sarah, your cooking is the best!"

He seldom complimented others, yet Sarah's cooking was so good that even he could not help singing praises.

Sarah felt embarrassed by their compliments.

"Tristan's cooking is not bad, either, though he can only make a few dishes. I'm sure he'll improve with time."

A few of them were often summoned to be Tristan's lab rats, so they knew he was learning how to cook.

They also knew why Tristan was learning how to cook.

"Not bad, Mr. Tristan. You're an outstanding man." It was indeed impressive of him to learn how to cook for the sake of the woman he loved.

"I'm still learning, but if you all don't mind my cooking, you're welcome to come over and have a taste," Tristan piped up. Sarah is often busy, but if Sophie likes her cooking, I can learn how to make these dishes, too.

"I'd be honored to become a lab rat," Ysabelle said with a smile.

Tristan grabbed a piece of tissue for Sophie when he noticed she was done eating.

Sophie took the tissue from him and wiped her mouth and hands.

"Are you full?" Tristan whispered into her ear. He was very attentive when it came to taking care of her.

“Yeah, I'm full. Don't mind me. You should eat too.” He's barely eating! Instead, he's been looking after me all this while.

“Okay.”

Tristan appeared graceful even while he was eating. His elegant actions made him seem like a nobleman from a prestigious family.

The others had already finished eating, and Tristan was the only one that was still enjoying his meal.

They knew he had been tending to Sophie and did not have time to eat. Hence, they remained seated at the table and waited for him.

After dinner, everyone went home one by one when they noticed it was late.

Only Arius stayed behind.

“I'll head upstairs to rest. Call me if you need anything.” He did not want to remain as a third-wheeler in the dining room.

“Okay.”

Arius had been exhausted lately. Now that they finally got home, he had to get some sleep to replenish his energy.

After Arius retired to his room, Tristan and Sophie were the only ones left in the living room.

“Are you going to the university tomorrow?” Tristan asked. Can't she just stay at home and get some rest since we've just returned?

"There's a project waiting for me to complete at the University of Medicine. I need to go and have a look. Don't worry! I'm well aware of my own condition. I'll come home and rest if I can't take it," Sophie said patiently. She knew Tristan was worried about her.

"Okay, then."

Tristan leaned against the couch while Sophie rested her head on his shoulder.

"I'm being serious here. It hasn't been easy on you lately. If there isn't anything important at Lombard Group, you should stay home and rest."

"Okay. I will!"

Victor came to visit the next day before Sophie could leave for the University of Medicine. He had not visited her when she was in Jetrouina.

When he knew she had returned, he could no longer wait and hurried over to see her.

"Ms. Sophie, your leg..."

Sophie knew he was worried and immediately walked a few steps before him to show him that she was fine.

"Don't worry! I can walk like normal now. There's no problem."

Victor felt relieved upon seeing how Sophie could move around without problem.

"Ms. Sophie, where are you going? Do you need me to send you there?" Victor offered.

"That's okay. Tristan will send me. You go to Tanner Group first. I'll head there after going to the University of Medicine."

Recently, many occurrences unfolded at Tanner Group.

Since she was back, she would have to return to keep the situation under control so that those shareholders wouldn't give Victor a hard time.

"I have Tanner Group under control, so you don't need to worry. All you need to do is rest and get well soon."

I can handle a few shareholders. Plus, Ms. Sophie transferred me five hundred million for the company's funds. No matter what those shareholders want, I can manage.

"Go ahead first. I'll make a trip there later in the afternoon." After all, Tanner Group is important to Grandpa. How can I not go and take a look?

"All right!"

Those shareholders who sold their shares would regret it. Now that Ms. Sophie is back, Tanner Group will rise all the way to the top.

Tristan sent Sophie to the University of Medicine. Not many people were at the university since it was during semester break. However, Sophie spotted Sandra and Simon waiting for her from afar.

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"You should go back first. Also, you don't need to come and pick me up at noon." Sophie had something that she needed to settle at the university. After dealing with matters at the university, she still had to make a trip over to Tanner Group. She would not have time to be with Tristan for the day.

"Okay. Call me if you need anything. I'll come right away."



Initially, Tristan wanted to remain by Sophie's side. However, he knew she would not like that, so he went to work instead.

After Tristan drove away, Sophie made her way toward Sandra and Simon.

Sandra knew that Sophie had gotten injured. She felt relieved when she saw Sophie walking toward them.

"Sophie, we found out you were injured, but we've been so busy lately that we didn't have time to visit you."

As Sophie's best friends, they felt extremely guilty for not visiting her even once. After all, Sophie would always provide them with assistance whenever they needed it.

Simon said, "I wanted to visit you, but something happened at my dad's hospital."

It had only been a month since they last met, but it was apparent that Simon had matured a lot. In the past, he did not have to worry about anything since his father was around. However, he quickly matured now that something cropped up at his family's hospital.

"I'm fine. Besides, there was nothing you could do even if you did come. Let's go! Hugh's waiting for us inside, right?" It was winter break. Many students had returned home. Only a few were able to come to the university to help out.

"Sophie, are your legs okay?" Sandra asked as she stared at Sophie's legs. According to the news, her injuries sounded serious.

"Do I look like I'm not okay?" Sophie asked.

Sandra shook her head and caught up with them. "It's good that you're fine!"

Hugh, Hugh Langford, was already waiting inside the laboratory. He immediately stood up when he saw that Sophie had arrived.

"I know you just came back, and you should be resting, but neither of us was able to solve this problem. That's why I asked you to come." Hugh knew about Sophie's injury. Originally, he didn't want to trouble her, but the matter was too tricky for them to solve.

Sandra gave Sophie a white coat. Sophie put it on and made her way toward Hugh.

"It's fine. I've been resting a lot lately, and it's enough." She had not been doing anything since she got hurt.

"I think there's a problem with the cell wall. I'm not sure if the methods we used were wrong, but there's always a discrepancy with the data."

Hugh was helpless.

Sophie was the most talented student that he had come across. She could easily solve a lot of problems that others couldn't.

"Okay. Let me have a look."

Sophie stood in front of the microscope and began observing the cells. She then asked them to redo the experiment. At a glance, she found out what the problem was.

She quickly wrote down the problem and its solution on paper.

"Give it a try now." There shouldn't be any problems this time.

Hugh, Sandra, and Simon redid the experiment per Sophie's instructions. Sure enough, everything progressed smoothly, and they soon solved the problem.

Hugh's eyes lit up.

“Sophie, you are indeed the pride of the University of Medicine! Why don't you apply to the International Medical Association? With your abilities, I'm sure you'll get in.”

Others dreamed of entering the International Medical Association but lacked the qualification, but if it was Sophie, she would have no problem earning herself a position in the association.

“Professor Langford, I think you should try applying for it instead.” Hugh was not bad himself, too. However, he had been teaching at the University of Medicine for several years. He should go to a

hospital, where he could train and hone his skills better.

Hugh heaved a heavy sigh when he heard Sophie's suggestion.

His abilities were top-notch back when he was still studying. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to teach at the University of Medicine. However, when he recalled the incident back then, he shook his head.

“I can become a qualified teacher, but I'm unable to become a doctor.” That was the biggest regret in his life.

Words eluded Sophie.

She did not know much about Hugh's past experience.

“Professor Langford, I think you can give it a try.” Hugh had the potential to become an outstanding surgeon. It was a complete waste of his talent for him to be teaching at the University of Medicine.

Hugh didn't know what to say.

I would love to try! But ever since that incident, I've developed a serious case of phobia about operating rooms. That's why I returned to the university.

"All right. I'll leave the rest to you guys. I have something else to settle, so I'll leave now." Since the problem was resolved, he had to return to write a report. The experiment's success was considered great news for the advancement of medicine.

Sandra could not help sighing at the mention of the professor's issue.

"To be honest, I feel sorry for Professor Langford. I can't imagine how devastating it must've been for him to have to deal with such an incident during his first surgery. He could've been an excellent surgeon if things had not turned out that way."

"What happened?"

Sophie did not like to gossip, but she thought Hugh was truly talented and should not waste his talents teaching at the university.

"He was involved in a medical dispute for his first surgery. Back then, the success rate for that patient's surgery was merely twenty percent. No one in the hospital was willing to perform the surgery. However, Professor Langford, who had just graduated, was unwilling to give up on the patient, so he volunteered to perform it. The surgery went on for a long time, but he still failed to save the patient in the end. The patient's family members, who had been begging on their knees for someone to save the patient, put all the blame on Professor Langford, accusing him of killing the patient. The hospital did not side with the professor either. Since then, Professor Langford gave up on being a surgeon."

As outsiders, they appeared indifferent while recounting the incident.

However, to Hugh, what happened back then was catastrophic.

"I see."

“Professor Langford is actually a kind person. Although he looks cold and unapproachable, he's nice to everyone,” Simon chimed in.

Back when Simon was a freshman at the University of Medicine, he spent his days fooling around as a spoiled scion and never paid attention to his studies, but Hugh never gave up on him.

Sophie helped them solve a few more questions. Time passed, and it was soon noon. The three of them locked up the laboratory and went out for lunch.

“Simon, how's your family's hospital?” Sandra asked out of concern. She knew something had happened at Simon's family's hospital, but unfortunately, she could do nothing to help.

“Everything's fine now. You don't need to worry.” In fact, Simon was worried sick, but worrying wouldn't help resolve the situation.

In the past, he did not care about anything.

After all, no matter what happened, someone in the family would help him deal with it.

However, upon witnessing how his father had aged overnight because of the unfortunate incident, Simon thought he should work harder so he could be of help to his family.

“What happened? Do you need my help?” Sophie had just returned, so she did not know what had happened to Simon's family.

“It's nothing. My dad will take care of it.” Simon felt his heart clench. I'm already an adult, yet I can't do anything to help.

## Chapter 705

“Okay. Let me know if you need help!” Seeing Simon was hesitant to talk about it, Sophie did not probe further. She left first after finishing lunch as there were matters to be settled at Tanner Group.

It would take Sophie considerable time to walk out of the university because the campus was huge. Hence, she decided to save time by using a mobile app to rent a bicycle and cycle her way out.

She had not even reached the school gate when Tristan's call came. Thus, she stopped cycling and answered the phone while propping the tip of her foot on the ground.

“Have you eaten?” A deep magnetic male voice traveled from the other end of the line. Sophie's lips curled into a subconscious smile when she heard the voice.

“Yup. I just had lunch with Sandra and the rest. How about you? Have you eaten? You haven't returned to Lombard Group for a while. You must be busy with work today, right?”

Given Lombard Group's vast extent of operations, there were several matters to attend to daily. Although Sean had been helping to fill Tristan's shoes during his absence, a tremendous backlog awaited his clearance.

He must be exhausted now! Sophie could not help but worry.

“I'm fine. You know Sean. He's capable, and he managed to handle most of the matters.”

However, a few major development projects needed Tristan's decision. Hence, he was engaged in meetings the whole morning and had no time to check on Sophie.

“Remember what Arius said to you. You've just recovered, so you should watch your diet.” Tristan had specially called to remind her since they were both busy, and he could not stay by her side all the time.

“I know. Don't worry about me.”

“Okay. Are you heading to Tanner Group right now? I'll get the driver to send you there.” The weather was cold now that Christmas was around the corner. Tristan was worried that Sophie would have difficulty hailing a taxi in this weather and catch a cold in the process.

"It's fine. I'd rather hail a taxi than wait an hour outside for your driver." She would feel warm once she got into the taxi.

"All right, then. I have some meetings to attend in the afternoon. Come over to meet me if you finish everything early. We'll go back together." Tristan reckoned that he would not be able to fetch her that day.

"Got it. You should get back to work. I'll be hanging up now. It's freezing cold outside."

"Okay. Take care of yourself."

Tristan initially thought of asking Sophie to wait there, but he knew she disliked troubling people, so he didn't send someone to go and pick her up.

Sophie took a taxi to Tanner Group. The receptionist came out to welcome her when she saw her arriving.

"Ms. Sophie, you're back!" the receptionist exclaimed excitedly.

"Yes. Is Mr. White in?" Victor was currently in charge of managing the majority of the matters in Tanner Group. Thus, Sophie needed to meet him first before calling for a meeting.

"Yes, Mr. White is in! Let me get the elevator for you, Ms. Sophie!" The receptionist helped Sophie to press the elevator button. Once the elevator door closed, the receptionist immediately whipped out her phone and informed everyone in the company group chat of Sophie's return.

Everyone in the company was ecstatic upon hearing the news.

On her way to meet Victor, several people approached Sophie to greet her. Out of courtesy, she nodded at everyone in response while wearing a calm expression.

Only upon reaching Victor's office did she have some peace and quiet.

“Ms. Sophie, are we calling for a senior management meeting today?” Victor asked. It had been some time since Sophie came to the company.

Upon seeing Sophie's return, the senior executives stopped slacking off and focused on working.

“I have time in the afternoon. Please help to make the arrangement.” The main purpose of her visit was to conduct the meeting.

“On it. I'll ask the secretary to make the arrangement now.”

Just then, an internal call came in.

“Mr. White, someone called Wilma is asking to meet Ms. Sophie.” It was a call from the lobby receptionist. She knew Wilma was the general manager of Transfix Cosmetics.

“Wilma wants to meet you. Should we let her come up here?” Victor asked Sophie. He undoubtedly knew who Wilma was.

“Sure!”

After a short while, Wilma arrived. Her eyes reddened when she saw Sophie.

“Ms. Sophie, you have no idea how worried we were after learning what happened to you! I came here just to see how you're doing.”

Sophie smiled faintly, touched by their concern. “Ms. Lineker, don't worry. I'm fine now.”

“Good, good. We're all glad to see you doing well. By the way, Ms. Sophie, I'm getting married.” Another purpose of Wilma's visit was to hand her wedding invitation to Sophie.



Wilma was doing well in her career, especially after Sophie placed her trust in her and empowered her in the decision-making for Transfix Cosmetics. Her current demeanor was a vast difference from what she used to be—timid and indecisive.

However, despite being busy with work, she kept Sophie's advice in mind, and after a period of time, she happened to meet her Mr. Right. She thought it was finally time for her to get married.

“Is that true? Congratulations, Ms. Lineker!” Sophie was delighted to hear the good news. “When will the wedding be held? Please make sure to inform me then.”

“It'll be before Christmas! I'll certainly let you know by then. Ms. Sophie, I would also like to let you know that I'm pregnant. As such, I don't think I can assume my role anymore. Please get someone suitable to take over my job. If you can't find anyone suitable, I can recommend someone as well.”

“Ms. Lineker, you don't have to worry about this. You're still capable of doing your job. If you encounter any difficulties, just hand the task over to the subordinates.”

“Ms. Sophie...” Wilma did not expect such generosity from Sophie. She was mentally prepared to lose her job after giving birth.

“Don't people normally take leave a month before delivery? Ms. Lineker, if there's anything that you find inconvenient to do, let the subordinates do it. You only need to make the decisions.”

Sophie was well aware of Wilma's contributions toward Transfix Cosmetics. That was why she wanted to treat her well and give her what she deserved.

Wilma was touched. “Ms. Sophie, thank you so much for giving me this opportunity!”

Pregnancy discrimination in workplaces was common, and pregnant employees were often replaced.

Thus, Wilma was mentally prepared for the same thing to happen to her.

“You're competent, and Transfix Cosmetics is lucky to have you as an employee.” Sophie felt that everyone had to go through different experiences at different stages in their lives, including getting married and creating a family.

In Wilma's case, she had reached the stage where she should be settling down and having a family.

It just so happened she met the right person, and Sophie could not be happier for her.

Sophie chatted a little while more with Wilma, and the latter updated her regarding Transfix Cosmetics' recent affairs.

“Ms. Lineker, I mean what I say. I'm at ease knowing that Transfix Cosmetics is in your hands. So, I hope you will return to work for us after you give birth!” Sophie recognized Wilma's capabilities and her passion for this industry. Therefore, she genuinely hoped Wilma could continue working for her.

“Of course, Ms. Sophie. I'll definitely return as long as you need me!” Wilma was overwhelmed with happiness. Transfix Cosmetics was a dream come true for her, so how could she give it up?

## Chapter 706

Victor already had his assistant inform the employees about having a meeting at three-thirty. When they heard about Sophie's return, they were all thrilled and overjoyed.

“I know you have other matters to attend to, Ms. Sophie, so I'll head back first.” Wilma didn't want to hold up Sophie's time.

“Did you drive here? If you need a ride, I can ask someone to give you a ride back.” It's difficult to hail a taxi in this weather.

Wilma beamed gleefully.

She never knew pregnancy would bring her such bliss.

In the past, the sight of pregnant mothers would always arouse pity within her heart, for she thought they must be exhausted. However, she never knew why they wore blissful smiles on their faces.

"I drove here. I'm only one month along, so it doesn't affect much," Wilma assured with a smile.

Sophie felt happy for Wilma, seeing the joyful look on her face.

"Be careful then. It's dangerous to drive in this weather. I'll drop by Transfix Cosmetics in a couple of days when I'm free."

Sophie hadn't been visiting the company much since it got on track. She wondered how everyone was doing there.

"Sure, Ms. Sophie. I'm sure Wendy and the rest will be thrilled if they know you'll drop by."

The girls in Transfix Cosmetics like Ms. Sophie a lot.

Sophie hummed in response and saw Wilma off.

After Wilma left, Victor was done making the necessary preparations and notified Sophie, "Ms. Sophie, let's head to the conference room. Everyone has been waiting for you."

"Okay."

Relief washed over the executives when they saw Sophie step into the conference room. They were all happy to see her return safely and soundly.

"I know the company's been through a lot recently, and some shareholders have divested, but that's fine. Those matters aren't going to affect Tanner Group's development. I hope everyone in this room can work together to take Tanner Group to a new height!"

Sophie's voice wasn't booming, but every word she uttered was impactful.

Her encouragement convinced her subordinates in the room of the bright future ahead of them and provided them with confidence.

“Rest assured, Ms. Sophie. We'll work even harder. I'm sure Tanner Group will achieve greater heights!”

“That's right, Ms. Sophie. Those shareholders who divested lack insight. They'll regret it one day.”

“Thank you all very much for your trust in me. You still being here means you're confident with Tanner Group's prospects. Christmas is just around the corner, so let's work hard for a few more days before we get to enjoy the holiday.”

It had been an eventful year.

For most people, surviving the year safely was challenging enough, much less earning a profit.

However, despite the economic recession, Tanner Group managed to maintain steady earnings.

Naturally, the credit for that achievement went to Sophie's excellent management and the employees' hard work.

“I guarantee that you all will be satisfied with the year-end bonus.” Sophie was aware that the economy was the driving force behind the employees' motivation.

The terrible economy that year resulted in the bankruptcy of numerous smaller companies. Surprisingly, Tanner Group could still afford its employees' annual bonuses.

“Ms. Sophie, we're grateful enough to have a secure job.”

“Don't worry. With me here, Tanner Group will not fall, so everyone can rest assured. I can afford your annual bonuses too.”

Knowing they would still have an annual bonus despite the year's hardships, happiness radiated through the employees of Tanner Group.

That's how a leader should be. Ms. Sophie is too remarkable.

Victor immediately had his secretary pour Sophie a glass of warm water when they returned to his office.

“Thank you for your hard work, Ms. Sophie. Year-end bonuses are quite high in recent years, so it's not going to be a small amount if you're planning to reward every employee.”

Victor knew every employee was excited about receiving their bonuses, but it would cost the company a fortune.

“Don't worry, Victor. We'll regain the funds by February next year. Trust me.”

Sophie reached for her glass and took a sip. The office was warm with the heater on, so she only wore a thin black garment, which made her appear even younger than she already was.

It was surprising to think that such a young lady who wasn't even twenty had the capability to manage the company well. In fact, not even one of her employees had a single bad thing to say about her management.

“All right. Got it.”

“Have the finance department do the accounting and grant everyone their bonuses.”

“Will do, Ms. Sophie.” Naturally, Victor had no objections to that. He would, of course, respect Sophie's decision.

“Will you come to the annual party and give it to them personally?” Victor knew how busy she was recently.

Also, her leg hadn't completely recovered.

“We'll see by then. Has the date been set for the party? Let me know once it's set. I'll come if I have the time.”

I should attend such a crucial event and celebrate with everyone.

“Sure. I'll have the finance department do the accounting and ensure everyone gets their bonuses before Christmas.”

Everyone would get to celebrate their holidays with joy if they received their bonuses after a busy year.

It was common knowledge that the employees' salaries of a big company like Tanner Group wouldn't be meager.

However, the fact that they worked in the big city meant their cost of living was high. Some employees had to rent their accommodations and pay for their daily expenses. By the end of the year, they wouldn't have much savings.

Moreover, a majority of the population was living from paycheck to paycheck.

That was why the staff was so excited after hearing that they would get their bonuses.

They had to buy Christmas presents for their family, after all.

Otherwise, they would've been embarrassed to return home empty-handed with everyone knowing they worked in the city for a large corporate.

It was only half past four by the time Sophie settled the affairs of Tanner Group. She decided to meet up with Tristan. On the way out of the building, every employee beamed at her as they greeted her.

Their bright mood and happy faces lifted Sophie's spirits as well. The cold mask she usually wore was absent as she reciprocated each of their greetings.

"I seriously think we're so lucky to work for Tanner Group. A few of my friends got fired because their companies didn't want to give them their employees bonuses."

"Yeah! I heard about that too! Many companies are coming up with all kinds of excuses to fire their employees due to their unwillingness to pay their employees' paychecks and bonuses."

"Ms. Sophie is my goddess! I was worried about how I should explain to my parents when I return home for Christmas. I felt bad for going home without any savings when I've been working in Jipsdale for a whole year."

Others wouldn't understand how they felt.

It might seem like they had high salaries, but so were their expenses. As such, it wasn't a surprise for them to not have any savings.

Sophie left Tanner Group under the grateful gazes of her employees and headed to Lombard Group. Since the employees of Lombard Group were well acquainted with Sophie, they greeted her as she walked into the building.

## Chapter 707

Sophie made her way straight to Tristan's office, finding him still buried in paperwork.

He had been falling behind on work these days.

"How much longer do you need?" she asked, wrapping her arms around him from behind.

"Just half an hour, tops," he replied.

"It's all right. I don't have anything to do tonight, so take your time. Do you need me to help?" Sophie offered to assist with the work, knowing she was more than capable to peruse the documents.

"No need. You've been working all afternoon at Tanner Group. You must be exhausted. Just wait for me over there," he said, gesturing toward the seating area.

Sophie wasn't having it. "No way. I want to stay here with you," she insisted, behaving willfully, which was a rare sight.

Tristan had never seen this side of her before and found it intriguing.

"But your leg has just recovered. It's best that you don't stand around for too long," he reminded her, concerned for her health.

"Then I'll wait for you over there," Sophie conceded, making her way toward the seating area as she didn't want to worry him too much.

As she settled in, her phone rang. She frowned when she saw it was Charles, for it was unusual for him

to call since they were merely acquaintances.

"What is it?" she answered, getting straight to the point.

"Sophie, I've never asked for anything from you before, but now, I need a favor," Charles said urgently.

Although Charles was often unreliable, Sophie knew that as Tristan's assistant and the second son of the Quigley family, he wouldn't beg for help unless something serious had happened.



"Just tell me what it is," she replied. They were friends, after all, and Sophie was in a relationship with Tristan, so she wanted to do what she could to help.

"My grandpa is very ill, and he wants to meet Winter. I know she was wrong in the past, but I hope she can come home this time no matter what," Charles explained.

"Okay, got it," she agreed, willing to help out.

Sophie thought that it was reasonable for a grandparent to want to see their grandchild when they were ill.

"But Mr. Tristan..." Charles said nervously.

He knew that Tristan only ever listened to Sophie, which was why he threw caution to the wind and made the call.

"I will talk to him about it. Let her come back, but tell her to behave herself. You know how Mr. Tristan

is. I'm worried that whatever I say will be useless if she does anything reckless again," Sophie replied.

Tristan was quite an easygoing person, but not even Sophie could appease him if someone crossed the line.

Things would get ugly when that happened.

"Don't worry. I'll keep an eye on her when she returns. Besides, I think Winter understands that she can't force someone to love her after the incident. She should be sensible enough to let go now," Charles said.

"Okay." Sophie didn't comment further and hung up.

Sean patted Charles on the shoulder when he saw how relieved the latter looked. "See, didn't I tell you? Sophie is nice."

Moreover, they were Tristan's friends, and Sophie was always kind to his friends.

"I know she's nice. I'll go and arrange for Winter to return to the country."

Grandpa is seriously ill this time, and with Christmas approaching, I'm hoping he'll make it through.

Even though Juan was Walter's favorite, Charles couldn't turn a blind eye to Walter's condition. At the end of the day, Walter was still his grandfather.

"Don't worry. Everything will be fine," Sean said in an attempt to console his friend.

He knew that one couldn't fight fate. No matter how rich or powerful one was, one would eventually succumb to sickness and death when one aged.

There was nothing anyone could do about it.

Meanwhile, all the way in Anglandur, Winter cried tears of joy when she found out she could finally return home.

"Charles, is Grandpa very ill?" she asked, concerned for her grandfather, whom she knew adored her. She was, after all, not a heartless person.

"Don't think too much about it. I've arranged for someone to book your flight ticket home and will send you the details in a bit. You don't need to prepare anything. Just come straight home," Charles said, trying to console her.

"Okay, got it. Thank you, Charles," Winter replied, grateful for all that Charles had done for her.

Tristan finally agreed to let Winter return home.

She never wanted to leave her home country ever again after her difficult experience surviving alone in a foreign country, especially when the first country she landed in was Alendor.

“Okay. Winter, I must remind you, don't act so recklessly this time, and stay away from people you can't afford to mess with.”

Winter kept quiet at that.

“You should know by now that Mr. Tristan doesn't like you, and there's nothing you can do about it. In fact, what you do will only make him hate you more.”

“Okay, Charles. Don't worry. I know what to do. I won't put you on the spot.”

There was nothing she could do no matter how reluctant she was to accept reality.

She would have to wait until she returned home to sort things out.

There was no point in dwelling on the matter now.

Meanwhile, Tristan noticed that Sophie had been staring at him for a while now, which distracted him from his work.

“What is it? Who called?” he asked.

It must be because of that phone call just now! She has been staring at me ever since she ended the call.

“Mr. Tristan, I've made a decision on your behalf,” she said. She knew it wasn't her place to make such a decision, but the person in question was Charles.

She believed that, given his close friendship with Tristan, she was in the best position to make the decision for him.

Tristan replied, "You can decide anything for me as long as you don't sell me off." He had always considered Sophie as family.

"I've agreed to let Winter come back home." Sophie got straight to the point. "Old Mr. Quigley is sick. I think it's quite serious this time."

"What does that have to do with you?" Tristan asked.

Tristan was immediately displeased when Winter's name was mentioned, as he hadn't forgotten what she had done to Sophie.

"This reminds me of my own grandpa, Tristan. So, just let her come back at times like this, okay?"

Tristan nodded.

"Okay, I understand. She's just a nobody. I don't care if she comes back or not."

Humming in response, Sophie walked over and planted a kiss on his lips. "Besides, she's Charles' little sister. We should compromise on Charles' account."

"You did it for me, didn't you?" Tristan knew that Sophie wasn't particularly close to Charles.

"It doesn't matter. I agreed to it anyway. The matter's already decided," Sophie replied.

Tristan carried her in his arms and placed her on the study table before bending over to kiss her. Things started to heat up as their passionate kissing session continued.

“Sophie, what am I going to do with you? Let's get engaged right away!” he exclaimed.

We'll get engaged first and then get married. I can't possibly wait any longer.

Chapter 708

“Mhm!”

She initially wanted to get married after graduating from university, but after what happened to her, it did not seem like a bad idea to carry her plan forward.

There were only so many decades in a person's life, and she did not want to have any regrets.

“Really? You're agreeing to this?” The joy and excitement were audible in Tristan's voice.

“Mhm. Let's get married.” What other thoughts could I possibly have about this?

“Okay! I'll make preparations right away!” All of a sudden, frustration inundated Tristan, for he had not done any preparations whatsoever.

“What preparations? My grandpa's gone now. The rest are just procedural stuff.”

Sophie loved him, so those traditions did not matter.

“Of course I have to make preparations! I haven't proposed to you yet!” He had only casually mentioned it in the heat of the moment and was not expecting her to agree to it.

“Did I get you wrong? I thought you were proposing to me,” Sophie said with a chuckle. “Tristan, since we've decided to be together, let's just skip the details.”

Sophie never liked troublesome affairs.

“How can we not take things seriously when this is a once-in-a-lifetime milestone? You have to have what others have.”

Tristan stubbornly insisted on giving her a grand ceremony. Sophie was the woman he loved, so naturally, he would not be stingy in providing her with the luxury others got to enjoy.

“All right, as long as you're happy,” Sophie relented. She didn't really care about those ceremonial affairs.

That night, instead of spending time with Sophie after sending her back to the mansion, Tristan returned to the Lombard residence.

When William saw him, he began taking jabs at him again.

“Tristan, are you really my son? Think long and hard about this. How long has it been since you came back to visit me? Other children go home to see their parents every day, but what about you?” William uttered in displeasure.

He had two sons and a daughter, but every one of them was too busy to keep him company. Hence, he was lonely.

“Dad, I've been really busy lately. That's why I didn't come back to visit you.”

Tristan had been in Jetrouna recently, and the moment he was back, he had to settle Lombard Group's matters. He didn't have the time to visit William.

“That's right. All of you are so busy, and I'm the only one who has too much time on my hands. That's why everyone leaves me behind.” Old people tended to lose control over their tempers. If William had been younger, he would never have thrown a tantrum and said something like that.

“Dad, I'm here to tell you about something.”

"What is it?" William had never seen Tristan behaving so solemnly before.

"Sophie and I are getting married."

William fell silent.

So he's only back because of Sophie. If it weren't for their upcoming marriage, he wouldn't have come, huh?

"So what are you trying to tell me? Are you here to ask for my opinion, or are you here to inform me about it?"

"Dad, regardless of everything, you're my father. You were the one who raised me, so I still hope to get your blessings for this." It did not matter to him, but it was not the same for Sophie.

She deserved the best things in this world.

Thus, no matter what, Tristan hoped that his father could accept Sophie into the family and not make things difficult for her.

"Fine. You're not that young anymore anyway. If you want to get married, then so be it. I have no

objections, but you have to make the wedding a good one."

Tristan was his son, and the Lombard family had a reputation to keep in Jipsdale.

"Dad, the two of us will discuss the wedding details between ourselves. You don't need to worry about it."

Hearing that, William became annoyed. What does he mean by that?

“If my memory still serves me well, I'm your father. What do you mean when you say I don't need to worry about it?”

There was finally something William could intervene in, so there was no way he was going to stay out of it.

When Sarah came home to the hostility between the father and son, she sighed.

“What's going on? It's rare for Tristan to come home, so can't the two of you talk things out in a civil manner?”

“Sarah, perfect timing. I want to hear what you think about this. He said he has decided to marry Sophie, and I'm fine with that. But why can't I get involved in the wedding planning?”

Sarah glanced at Tristan.

“I thought she hasn't graduated yet. Why are the two of you suddenly getting married?”

Sophie's only twenty this year. She's still too young. They should wait for a little longer.

“I don't want to wait anymore, not after what happened this time. I want to be with her. Since we're going to be together for the rest of our lives, what's wrong with getting married a little earlier?”

“I understand what you mean.”

After all, they had indeed gone through a life-and-death situation.

Anyone would want to get married to the person they loved after experiencing something like this.



“Dad, the wedding is something between the two of them. We'll help them out if they need our help, but if they don't, then all we have to do is attend the wedding.” Young people have their own ideas for planning a wedding, and they don't necessarily share the same ideas with the older generation. We should respect young people's preferences.

“You... I shouldn't have gotten you involved in this conversation! The two of you grew up together, so of course you're going to be on his side!”

William was exasperated.

It had been a long while since the last happy event in the Lombard family, and William thought he could get involved in the planning of the event.

“Dad, you can do whatever you like with my wedding in the future, all right?” Sarah offered with a giggle.

“Forget about it. I don't know how long I'd have to wait until you get married.”

Well, Tristan has finally settled down. I wonder how things will turn out for my daughter, however.

“By the way, Sarah, do you have anything to do with Juan's matter?” By then, news regarding Yvette had spread like wildfire. Even an old man like William had more or less learned about the incident.

Nevertheless, Sarah did not expect her father to mention that man.

“Don't worry, Dad. There isn't anything between me and Juan. We're not even in contact with each other right now.”

Sarah had chosen to bury everything in her past six feet under her.

“No worries, Dad. I'm all recovered now. I'm going to find someone who truly loves me from now on.”

She was no longer averse to new relationships.

Upon hearing that, William breathed a sigh of relief. "I'm glad that you're better now. You're my precious daughter, so don't make yourself so miserable because of that man, okay?"

"Mhm. I know."

In the meantime, Ysabelle was thrilled when she found out that Sophie was going to marry her uncle.

"Sophie, have you really made up your mind? But you're still so young! Are you really going to step into the tomb of love?"

Everyone says that marriage is the tomb of love!

"Yes, I've made up my mind. Regardless of what marriage is, as long as I'm with him, I'll still step right into it."

People tend to say that things change after marriage, but nothing matters as long as Tristan is by my side.

"Fine, then. I never thought you'd be the first to marry, though," Cecelia commented, still surprised.

## Chapter 709

Ever since Sophie went to Horington, Cecelia thought that the former would never get married.

After all, all the pain and suffering that Mason had caused her had been bone-deep.

If it weren't for Mason and Willow, Sophie would not have been thrown to Horington and would not have needed to go through all that suffering.

Moreover, she changed drastically after she came back.

Hence, Cecelia was immensely glad to see that Sophie could still feel joy.

"I, too, thought I would never fall in love again before I met Tristan too," Sophie said as she recalled the suffering she had to go through. If those torments she experienced were what led her to Tristan, she thought it was worthwhile.

Meanwhile, Butterfly was still reeling in from the disbelief.

"You should still think it through. You're still young, and you can afford to wait a little longer." Even though Sophie had always been an independent individual, something in Butterfly's mind kept telling her that Tristan had tricked Sophie into marrying him.

Right then, Tristan came back. When he heard Butterfly's words, he shot her a cold look. Despite being someone who had been through a lot, Butterfly still felt a chill traveling down her spine upon meeting the man's icy glare.

"You're back!"

Sophie quickly rose to her feet and went over to him to take the coat he shrugged off.

"Mhm, I'm back."

When Tristan noticed that the guests present were all women, he said, "I have a video conference to attend, so I'm going to head upstairs first. Make yourselves at home. I'll get Blossom Garden to deliver some groceries over, so do stay for the meal."

"Sure!"

Only after Tristan went upstairs did Butterfly let out a relieved sigh.

“Sophie, Mr. Tristan's too aggressive. But honestly, you're the only one who can match his aura.”

All he did was give Butterfly a look, and that was enough to make the latter's heart almost stop beating.

“That's because you said something you shouldn't have.” Even Ysabelle was petrified of her uncle.

She knew how her uncle disliked hearing them talking nonsense about things that concerned Sophie.

“Okay, okay, I'm sorry.”

Butterfly was certain that Tristan would have taken action against her if she had not been Sophie's friend. That was how scary he was.

“Sophie, what kind of wedding do you want? A modern one or a traditional one?” Cecelia curiously asked.

Cecelia worked in the entertainment industry, and she had worn countless wedding dresses due to her roles in movies. She thought that a traditional wedding was a good idea, for the dresses looked gorgeous.

“Is it that complicated?” Sophie had never thought about it.

“Since you've decided to get married, these are things you should consider.” In fact, Cecelia was already starting to fantasize about the grandeur of Sophie's wedding.

“She's right. Sophie, you should start thinking about it. You have to tell us if there's anything you need from us!” Ysabelle was exhilarated. “Also, one vote from me for a traditional wedding!”

They were Chanaeans, and she agreed with Cecelia about the beauty of traditional wedding dresses. Sophie was an attractive woman, and Ysabelle was convinced that Sophie would be downright gorgeous in a red dress.

"That's still a little too early. Tristan's thinking of getting engaged first." He wants us to take this one step at a time.

"Honestly, I'm impressed by Mr. Tristan. I'm surprised that he's so patient when the one he's going to marry is an alluring woman like you!"

Does he truly love her? Nowadays, most men can't wait to get to home base after winning over a woman's heart. But Tristan managed to hold back until now!

"Sophie, have the two of you not done that?" Cecelia asked without beating around the bush.

Sophie, who usually had an apathetic look on her face, turned bright red immediately.

"Cecelia, what are you talking about?" Frankly, Sophie did not mind giving it up to him before marrying him, but Tristan did not want her to.

There was nothing she could say about that.

Ysabelle shook her head.

"I'm curious about this too. I'm really shocked that my Uncle Tristan actually managed to hold himself back in the face of an irresistible woman," Ysabelle teased. She used to be pure and innocent, but she was influenced by Cecelia and the others.

"I'm serious about this. Is there something wrong with Mr. Tristan?" Butterfly blurted out, shocking everyone with her crazy assumptions.

Sophie was rendered speechless. Why didn't I realize that Butterfly is someone like this in the past?

"Ms. Sekelsky, it's best not to say something like this if you don't want to get thrown out of the house by Tristan. He's healthy and fine!" Sophie hastily clarified. The many cold showers Tristan had to take to calm himself down had not been for nothing.

Still, those were details she was not going to share with the others, for they were private matters that only she and Tristan should know about.

Cecelia then took out her phone and showed Sophie various kinds of traditional-style wedding dresses.

“Look, Sophie. I think these dresses suit you perfectly!” Cecelia said, already browsing through wedding dress designs. She then wistfully said, “Honestly, Sophie, we even said we were going to get married together back then. It's such a pity I don't have anyone I'm seeing right now. Otherwise, I'd really want to get married at the same time as you.”

She was an A-list actress, and she had above-average looks.

But, unfortunately, she was not interested in any of her suitors.

Yet, her urge to get married reached its peak when she saw how blissful Sophie was.

Meanwhile, both Butterfly and Ysabelle were standing behind Cecelia, looking at the dresses as well.

“I'll be frank with you, Sophie. I think these dresses are way better than those modern dresses,” Ysabelle said. When I get married in the future, I would want a traditional wedding, too.

Butterfly inclined her head in agreement.

“Just look at Sophie's face. Even if she turns up in rags, she'll still be the prettiest girl in the room.”

That was an undeniable fact.

The three of them engaged in a heated discussion as Sophie watched them quietly.

She thought she wouldn't care about all these details, but after seeing the beautiful dresses, she was starting to look forward to her wedding as well.

A while later, Sarah came back from work. She had been working overtime, and when she found out that Ysabelle and the others were at Sophie's place, she decided to head over too.

However, right as she came down from her car, she spotted Juan. It had been over a month since she last saw him.

She was not expecting to see him in such a haggard state, but she guessed that it had to be because of Yvette.

Regardless of everything, Yvette's incident still managed to affect him.

He must be here for me.

Not seeing the point in avoiding him, Sarah walked over to him. "Juan, are you here for me?"

The thoughts that ran across Sarah's mind were no longer the same as the ones she used to have when seeing Juan again.

"Sarah, can we talk?"

It was then Sarah noticed the cigarette between his index and middle fingers and the numerous cigarette butts scattered by his feet.

She frowned.

"Smoking is bad for you, Juan. Try to do it less often."

It looks like Yvette's matter has affected him quite a bit. Moreover, Old Mr. Quigley's sick right now. I'm sure he's having a tough time.

"I broke up with Yvette."

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That was well within her expectations.

The prominent families in Jipsdale had always placed a huge emphasis on sexual purity, so they would never accept Yvette after finding out about her indecent sexual history.

Besides, Walter never liked Yvette right from the start, so there was no way he would approve of her after that incident.

"I don't see how that has anything to do with me," Sarah said.

She wasn't the one who released those pictures of Yvette, so it was pointless for Juan to tell her about this.

"Sarah, did you really have feelings for me?"

"It's pointless to bring that up now. Anyway, they're all waiting for me inside, so I'll be on my way."

Regardless of whether she had feelings for him, it was all in the past, and she wanted to keep it that way.

The damage he had done to her was more than enough to crush whatever feelings she had toward him in the past.

Sarah was about to leave when Juan grabbed her by the arm and said, "I don't know what came over me in the past, but I promise you that I will come see you once I have everything figured out."



"It's cold outside, so you should head on in," he added when he got no response from her.

Sarah couldn't understand what he meant by that.

Why would he come back for me? Does he take pity on me or something? I don't need his pity, though. Love and pity are two very different things. If he doesn't love me, then there's no point in coming back to me!

Sure enough, everyone was waiting for Sarah by the time she came in through the door.

"I'm sorry for being late. I got held up at work."

Sophie stood up and motioned for Sarah to take a seat at the table. "Hurry up and come join us, Sarah!"

"I bet you guys have been discussing the wedding all afternoon, right? Well? Would you prefer a traditional one or a modern one?" Sarah asked curiously.

It was common for women to be excited about weddings, and Sarah was no exception.

"A traditional one. We all think it would be more meaningful that way," Ysabelle replied.

"I like traditional weddings too!"

"Do you know how to ride a horse, Mr. Tristan?" Sophie asked. It would be nice to have him pick me up on a horse!

"Yes, I do."

Tristan knew he had made the right decision when he saw how happy Sophie looked.

However, he was quite troubled because the previous marriage proposal was such a spur-of-the-moment decision that he didn't even get her a ring.

As such, he wanted to make it up to Sophie with a proposal that she would remember for the rest of her life. That way, she would never feel envious of any other proposals that she might see.

Unfortunately, coming up with an idea for such a memorable proposal was no easy task, so he was still working on it.

Later that night, Tristan asked Sean and the others out to discuss it.

All three of them were shocked when they found out that he was asking about the proposal.

"Mr. Tristan, are you really going to get married?" They knew his relationship with Sophie was going strong, but they didn't think he would be tying the knot so soon.

"Yeah, it has all been decided, but I want to give her an unforgettable proposal before the big day."

That was something Tristan insisted on doing no matter what. He didn't want to skip any details.

"I may have dated a lot of women in the past, but I have never proposed to any of them," Charles said.

He had yet to find a woman whom he wanted to get married with.

Sean shook his head as well. "I don't have such experience either."

Although they were all incredibly successful men with countless women dreaming of marrying them, they had no experience in proposing to anyone.

“Why don't you just look up marriage proposals online and see how other people do it?”

While he couldn't exactly replicate someone else's proposal, it would still do him good to use them as a reference.

“That's a good idea! You should check out how others propose!”

“Is there even a need for you to propose, though? Sophie has already agreed to marry you, hasn't she?”  
If she has already said yes, then why not just skip the proposal and go straight for the wedding ceremony?

“No, that simply won't do. Such procedures are essential in life!” Tristan couldn't bring himself to disappoint his beloved woman in the slightest.

“All right, then.”

Sean couldn't understand why Tristan insisted on proposing to Sophie.

The only thing that matters is to live happily with each other. What's the point of marriage proposals?  
Well, I suppose I'm not one to talk. If the love of my life returns to me, I'd probably do anything I can to

make her happy as well.

“I've been watching a lot of romantic dramas with Ysabelle lately. From what I've seen, they usually go down on one knee and propose with a huge bouquet of roses and a wedding ring. I think that's good enough.”

Charles had been looking up a lot of proposal methods online, but Tristan wasn't satisfied with any of them.

He found them all too old-fashioned or cheesy for someone like Sophie.

Eventually, the three of them had run out of ideas and ended up sitting there staring blankly into space. Tristan's request was simply too much for them to handle.

“How about you just consult a wedding planner instead? They're bound to have tons of ideas.” They had been so busy making money that they didn't have time to educate themselves on such matters.

“Forget it, I'll try to think of something,” Tristan said. He was surprised that the four of them couldn't come up with a satisfactory marriage proposal even after putting their heads together.

The preparations for the establishment of the Chanaean Medical Association had been going smoothly as they had found the right people for the job.

However, its capability was nothing compared to the International Medical Association.

Not only did the International Medical Association refuse to acknowledge Barney, but they even accused him of a crime.

As such, Barney could no longer return to the International Medical Association.

He had personally recruited and trained all of those people, so he didn't expect them to betray him like that.

As the Chanaean Medical Association had just been established, the International Medical Association came up with various ways to cause them trouble and give them a hard time.

Arius knew that Barney had been really exhausted lately, so he didn't want him to worry about such things.

“The International Medical Association has practically fired us both, so you should just ignore them, Dr. Smith!”

Some people refused to join the Chanaean Medical Association after hearing about that from the International Medical Association.

Barney nodded in response. "I know. I just don't understand why they would do such a thing. There should be no boundaries between countries when it comes to medicine!"

Why would they be so cruel to a newly-established medical association? What could they possibly stand to gain from doing this?

Sophie, who had just arrived at the Chanaean Medical Association's temporary office, overheard their conversation from outside the door.

"What they say is none of our business, Dr. Smith. You don't have to worry about it at all. They won't be able to do anything to us if our research on this disease yields results."