

Pursuing 771

Chapter 771

Sarah was greeted by the sight of Juan standing with a cigarette in hand as she exited the washroom.

It felt like an eternity had passed since the last time she saw him.

She used to be head over heels in love with him.

Yet, in the end, all those years of pining came to nothing. What is he doing here now that I'm ready to give up on him?

Could he be just like every other man who constantly yearned for what they couldn't have?

Sarah would have wanted nothing more than to ignore Juan and be on her way, but he reached out and grabbed her hand.

He stopped her from walking forward.

Sarah was incensed. What's the meaning of this? Does he think he can toy with me as he pleases without consequence?

"Juan, is it necessary to make things so ugly? All things aside, we will bump into each other as long as we stay in Jipsdale. Wouldn't it be awkward if things between us were to get out of hand?"

Juan had no idea how she had undergone such a radical transformation.

"Don't you like me? Why don't we get together since both of us are single?" The truth was he had no clue whether what he felt for her was true love.

Lately, her face kept showing up in his mind. In fact, he thought of her all the time.

Everything was driving him nuts.

Perhaps giving their relationship a shot would dispel any uncertainty that he had.

Sarah scoffed.

“So what if I am still single? Do you think it's because I still have feelings for you? You sure are delusional!”

Juan's brows furrowed. How can she say that?

“Juan, I've already said this, but you mean nothing to me now. Don't ask for an explanation, as I have none. Please don't come looking for me ever again.”

Sarah pulled her hand free from his grasp.

She didn't want to have anything to do with him. Unfortunately, however, their encounter had been discreetly caught on camera.

The news portals published a juicy article about it the following day.

Yvette's face was in a rictus once she saw the intimate photos of Juan and Sarah.

She'd ended up in such a pathetic state because of them.

Are the two of them an item?

How could they be so happy when I'm suffering in silence? I will never allow such a thing to happen!

Juan is mine. Am I not his fiancée? What a shameless woman Sarah is!

What should I do for Juan to return to me?

...

Sarah was still fast asleep when she was woken by a boisterous Ysabelle holding the day's papers.

"Aunt Sarah, take a look at this! How could they publish something like this claiming Juan and Yvette broke up because of you and that you were his mistress!"

How could they defame my sweet Aunt Sarah with such nonsense?

Sarah caught onto what was happening once she skimmed through the news article and was speechless.

Oh, no.

She was truly innocent.

She might have fancied Juan in the past, but she never made a move on him when he was still with

Yvette.

"Aunt Sarah, are you all right? Don't take what you read to heart. I'll give Sophie a call in a while. Let her handle it!"

The netizens were stirred up and were more than ready to point fingers.

They had no desire to seek out the truth behind the article and were all about eating the rich.

Now that they were aware of Sarah's identity and the destitute life Yvette was reduced to, they immediately took sides with Yvette and pitied her.

There were even some who'd begun doubting the veracity of the nude photos that were circulating.

Sarah flung the papers to the side.

"We'll ignore all this nonsense." She couldn't care less about those trolls on the internet, as time would prove her innocence eventually.

There was nothing much they could do to her.

She could still live a good life unperturbed by their hubbub.

Those gullible netizens had nothing more to offer than a few curses on the internet.

"If you say so!"

Ysabelle refrained from commenting further on Sarah's attitude with regard to this matter and went to look for Sophie.

Sophie had been inundated with work from the moment she returned and had received a call from Butterfly.

Butterfly had encountered a problem that needed her help. Therefore, she was working before her computer until her doorbell began ringing. She went to get the door and saw Ysabelle.

"What are doing out here in this freezing cold? Shouldn't you be at home sleeping?"

"It's nothing. I've come here to visit you as I was thinking of you. Why? Shouldn't you be happy to see me? What's with all the questions?"

"Of course I am!"

Sophie let her in and went back to her seat in front of her computer to continue working on Butterfly's problem. Ysabelle took to scrolling through her phone in the corner at how busy she seemed.

When Tristan returned from buying breakfast, he saw that the two ladies were occupied with their respective tasks.

Ysabelle sprung up from the couch at the sight of Tristan. "Uncle Tristan, you're back!"

Tristan did not reciprocate with the same amount of excitement. After all, he did not appreciate a third-wheeler when he was with Sophie.

"Uncle Tristan, what's with you? Can't you be more joyful that your dear niece is visiting you?"

She couldn't believe he was annoyed at her for visiting so early.

"Sophie, are you done yet? If so, come and have your breakfast!" He had no idea what she was preoccupied with that she had to be glued to her computer this early in the morning.

Nonetheless, she was an independent lady who could handle her affairs well.

"In a minute."

The issue Butterfly faced was a tricky one. Sophie had to help her solve it, or else that woman would not be able to return.

"Both of you can go ahead. I'll be taking a while more."

Tristan approached Sophie seeing how hard-pressed she was.

“What is this all about? Do you need my help?”

Sophie shook her head.

“You wouldn't know what to do with it, so let me be! I'll find a way.”

He was at a loss.

What?

Is there anything in this world that I'm incapable of solving?

Nevertheless, he let it go as he took in how concentrated Sophie was.

Ysabelle was going to have breakfast when Tristan stopped her. “You should look for Felix if you want breakfast. I didn't buy for you any.”

Ysabelle instantly felt like the most unwanted person in the entire world. How could he treat me like this when breakfast was all I asked for? To add salt to the wound, the a*s was Uncle Tristan!

“Uncle Tristan, are you sure about this? Don't forget you have me to thank now that you and Sophie are together. How could you be so heartless!” Ysabelle felt truly hurt.

“What does that have to do with you? You are nothing but a third-wheeler,” Tristan shot back mercilessly.

Ysabelle swallowed her indignity without saying a word. How dare you!

“Sophie, you should discipline Uncle Tristan! He's bullying me since I don't have anyone to back me up!” Ysabelle was on the verge of tears. “Sophie, you—”

Tristan grabbed the hood of Ysabelle's jumper with the intention of throwing her out when Sophie lifted her head.

“Get out! Both of you are too noisy!” At that moment, she had no time for their antics.

Chapter 772

Tristan and Ysabelle exchanged glances with each other, and Ysabelle retreated aside silently.

All right, I'm just going to keep quiet then. I'm so pathetic. I'm just here to accompany Sophie. Why is he being so pedantic?

Seeing as the two of them finally stopped bickering, Sophie continued with her work.

Meanwhile, Butterfly was alone at Anglandur. If it weren't for Sophie, she would have been caught.

With Sophie's help, she didn't feel as terrified anymore.

Somehow, she felt fearless.

In the end, the alarm was disabled. Even the red lasers that could kill were deactivated as well. Butterfly's lips curled into a smile.

Sophie's mellow voice came through the Bluetooth earphone.

“Butterfly, enough! How can you go to such a dangerous place all alone? You've got to be careful!”

Sophie felt a burden lifted off her chest when the problem was finally resolved. That was Anglandur's armed base. She had no idea why Butterfly headed there alone.

Butterfly stuck out her tongue sheepishly.

“Okay, I know I'm in the wrong here, but I heard about a new weapon and couldn't resist checking it

out. I didn't expect the security to be so tight, but with you helping me, I'm sure there won't be any problem at all!”

It was rare that she could go on a holiday. Hence, she was determined to make the most out of her time by doing whatever she wanted.

Besides, there was nothing she couldn't do with Sophie supporting her.

Sophie knew there was no stopping Butterfly, but she was relieved that nothing serious had happened.

“All right. I'm not going to disturb you further. You should go back to sleep,” Butterfly said. After all, it was still the early hours of the morning in Chanaea. However, she couldn't help herself and exclaimed, “Sophie, it's really fun here!”

Sophie was rendered speechless.

How is an armed base her personal playground? She is going too far.

However, Butterfly had always been an unbridled person. Nobody could stop her from pursuing what she wanted.

“Be careful. Call me if anything happens.”

After hanging up the call, Sophie walked over to the dining room for breakfast. However, she immediately noticed Tristan and Ysabelle sitting quietly at the table but not eating.

“Why aren't you guys eating?” She had forgotten that she was just complaining about them being noisy moments ago.

She preferred to work in a quiet environment when she was focused on something.

Ysabelle cast an aggrieved look at her.

“Sophie, are you also sick of me now?” She had finally found some free time and came here to accompany Sophie.

Sophie patted her on the head.

“Of course not. Don't overthink. Let's have breakfast together!”

“But Tristan said he didn't buy any breakfast for me!” Ysabelle immediately started complaining after Sophie made that offer.

Tristan was not intimidating at all in Sophie's presence. Hence, Ysabelle didn't have to be afraid and could speak her mind.

“There is plenty of food here, and we can't finish them all. It'll be really wasteful to throw them away.”

Hearing that, Tristan had no qualms about sharing the breakfast. He was already getting coffee for Sophie.

“Don't worry about her. She'll eat if she wants to. Just let her be.” Tristan pulled out the chair for Sophie and asked her to sit down to have breakfast.

Ysabelle clenched her fists.

Fine. Their place, their rules.

She understood she didn't have much say in the matter.

Besides, if she truly infuriated her uncle, he might really chase her out of the house.

The three of them then had breakfast together. Since it was the Christmas season, they had a lot of time to spare.

Tristan didn't have much going on and only wanted to spend time with Sophie. As they were usually occupied with work, the two of them seldom had time for each other.

He was looking forward to spending some quality time with Sophie after returning from Horington, but Ysabelle had ruined his plan by coming all the way here.

Does she not realize that she is also in a relationship? Why does she have so much free time to become a third wheel?

After finishing breakfast, Ysabelle and Sophie sat on the couch to watch some TV. However, Ysabelle was not really interested in the program.

"Sophie, it's finally holidays now. Let's go out and have fun. It's really boring to lounge at home."

"Eh, it's cold outside," Sophie mumbled. She didn't feel like going out.

Sophie finally had some time to herself and decided to take a few days to rest at home. Moreover, everywhere was overcrowded due to the Christmas season.

She didn't like going to crowded places.

"Let's go to the hot spring! It's really warm there," Ysabelle piqued. She felt like she would go insane from staying at home all day.

After clearing the table, Tristan called Felix.

"If you're free, please come and take your girlfriend away so that she doesn't become a nuisance to us," Tristan said.

"Got it. I'm coming over to take her away right now." Felix didn't actually have much to do these days.

Despite him already having a girlfriend, his family arranged for him to go on blind dates.

Hence, Felix had been thinking if he should announce his relationship with Ysabelle. Otherwise, his elders would not let him off the hook.

Felix didn't take long to arrive at Tristan's place. Ysabelle let out a huff at the sight of her boyfriend. "What are you doing here? I heard you were busy going on blind dates recently," Ysabelle said mockingly.

"Do you really want me to go for those blind dates? What are you going to do if I really fall for another woman?" Felix teased. He knew that Ysabelle was mad at him.

However, he was actually glad to see her getting mad. It meant that she truly cared about him.

"What do you mean what am I going to do? Tons of men like me. I can just find another guy I like easily," Ysabelle retorted.

Felix didn't know what to say, so he circled her into his embrace.

"How dare you! You're a naughty little minx. I don't want anyone else but you. How could you give up on me that easily?" Felix asked.

If they weren't at Tristan's mansion, Felix would have taught her a lesson right then and there.

What a heartless girl.

"No one else but me? Then why did you go on blind dates?" Ysabelle lost all rationale when she knew about him meeting other women.

She found it difficult to believe him right then.

"I didn't go. Even if my family did arrange blind dates for me, I didn't go to any of them. Don't worry. I only have eyes for you. I won't fall for another woman, no matter how pretty or capable they are," Felix reassured her.

"Really?"

Ysabelle knew she was being unreasonable. However, she couldn't help but get angry.

"Yes. Ysabelle, why don't we announce our relationship? This way, my family won't worry about me anymore," Felix suggested.

"Announce our relationship? I don't think now's a good time to do so." Ysabelle didn't want to get married so young. She could already foresee the impending problems that awaited them following the announcement.

The problem was, she was not ready to face those problems yet.

"Why don't we wait a little longer?" Ysabelle thought things were great between them right then, and there was no rush to make any changes.

Chapter 773 Tough Nut

“What's the matter? Do you not like me?” Felix couldn't help but ask upon hearing that.

“I do like you, but I think I'm too young right now to worry about so many problems.” While Ysabelle enjoyed the upsides of a relationship, she was afraid to take things further when she thought about the problems she would face.

She liked what they had at that moment, so she didn't want their relationship to change.

“You're a jerk, do you know that? I think you just want to play with my feelings and don't want to take responsibility,” he blurted aggrievedly. Why did I fall in love with such a heartless woman?

In response, she pushed him. “Are you for real, Felix? I didn't say I don't want to take responsibility. I simply think it isn't time yet.”

Felix sighed in his mind. I have no idea what to do with this cold-blooded woman. Then again, I chose to fall in love with her, so I guess I'll have to keep doting on her.

“Don't you have a home, Felix? Take your woman back with you right now!” Tristan barked. Can't I spend time with Sophie without getting bothered by them?

“It's not like you can do anything during the day, so why are you chasing us away, Uncle Tristan?” Ysabelle pouted.

Tristan's expression darkened.

When Felix caught sight of that, he immediately grabbed Ysabelle's hand and left the room with her. “Even if it was the truth, you shouldn't have said that out loud.” Doesn't she know how scary he can be?

“Coward!” Ysabelle still wanted to go back in, so Felix carried her away.

Smacking his back, she exclaimed, "What are you doing, Felix? Let me go! If someone takes a picture of us, how will you explain this when it goes viral? I'm a famous singer right now, you know?"

"What's there to explain? We don't need to say anything about our relationship to outsiders," he remarked. I'm her boyfriend. Why is she acting like it's embarrassing for us to be spotted together?

After the couple left, Tristan felt reinvigorated. Upon turning his head back, he saw Sophie staring at her computer screen. What is she doing? "Don't you think you should rest during your time off? You've been busy for the whole year."

"Do you need something?" Sophie thought the recent television programs were boring.

Thus, rather than staring at each other, she preferred to spend her time fiddling with her computer.

"I don't know what to do with you sometimes," grumbled Tristan. I thought we could spend some quality time together after chasing those two away, but she's still distracted by her matters.

After placing the laptop on the coffee table, she snuggled up against him. "What's the matter?"

"Let's take a dip in the hot spring! This weather is perfect for that," he proposed. I spent so much money buying that hot spring resort because I thought it would benefit her to soak in a hot spring, considering how easily she gets cold.

"Okay! Let's invite Ysabelle and the others to join us, too! The more, the merrier! It's boring if it's just the two of us."

"Sure. As long as you're willing to go out, we can invite anyone you like."

Immediately, Sophie called Ysabelle to invite her to the hot spring resort. When Charles and Sean learned of the news, they asked to join, too.

Upon arriving at the resort, Sophie realized Winter was among those who came.

Earlier, Winter had to coax Charles to bring her there.

Since she hadn't bothered Sophie and the others recently, her behavior had been deemed acceptable.

When Ysabelle saw Winter, she was a little speechless. Did she come here to torture herself? She has to know no one here welcomes her, right? Yet, she's here. "Sophie, about Winter—"

"Just ignore her. She's still Charles' sister, so if she wants to join, he can't really say no to her," Sophie interjected.

"I just don't like her! She tried to hurt you in the past." Being forgiving wasn't a trait Ysabelle possessed. No one can change what happened in the past.

"All right, just go change your clothes. Didn't you say you wanted to take a dip in the hot spring?"

After learning Sophie was at the hot spring resort, Cecelia went there too because she didn't have much going on lately.

"I'm sorry, miss, but the resort is closed today. Please visit another day," the security guard informed.

Seeing that the guard didn't appear to be joking, Cecelia called Sophie immediately as she knew it'd be pointless to argue with him. "I'm outside the resort right now, Sophie, and I can't get in. Please come out here to let me in."

"All right, I'll head to the entrance now," said Sophie before hanging up.

"Who is it?" Tristan asked.

"Cecelia. She's here too, but the security guard denied her entry." The resort was closed for the day because the gang was there.

In response, he turned to Sean. "Go get Cecelia!"

Sean had been busy recently but had some free time since it was almost Christmas. In any case, he obeyed Tristan's order and went to get Cecelia.

When Cecelia saw him, she thought, Doesn't he feel cold wearing white casual wear in this icy weather? Still, I must say, he's quite the modest and reserved man. If he were to join the entertainment industry, I bet he'd get lots of attention, even with that expressionless face of his.

Upon arriving before her, he noticed she was staring absentmindedly at him.

"Let's go!" He would always treat other women dispassionately.

"Mhm." Suddenly, Cecelia felt her heart flutter for a moment. He's handsome, but he's way too unapproachable. Besides, he's already in love with someone else. I can't fall for a man like him. Otherwise, I'll only get hurt.

When Ysabelle saw the two of them approaching the gang, she whispered next to Sophie's ear. "Sean and Cecelia look like a good match for each other."

Sophie shook her head. "Forget about it. Sean is already in love with someone else. Don't torment Cecelia." Cecelia's relatively pure. I don't want to see her get hurt.

Cecelia, who overheard their conversation, nodded. "Don't worry, Sophie. I won't fall for a tough nut like him." I'm definitely incapable of handling someone like Sean.

"All right, since everyone has arrived, let's get changed!" Originally, Tristan wanted to spend some time alone with Sophie. It doesn't seem like that's going to happen now. I guess the men and women will have to stick with their gendered group.

Chapter 774 Men Like Plump Women

Everyone went their separate ways to get changed. Tristan had already made someone prepare a swimsuit for Sophie earlier. Seeing Sophie's swimsuit, Ysabelle covered her mouth and giggled.

“What are you laughing at?” Sophie glanced at Ysabelle. What is this girl thinking about?

“I finally know why Uncle Tristan was so angry! I'm sure he didn't want anyone else to see you in a swimsuit!” Ysabelle exclaimed.

“He's not that petty!” Tristan isn't such a childish person!

Hearing that, Ysabelle was rendered speechless. You really don't know Uncle Tristan well, huh? He is actually a petty person!

Sophie changed into her swimsuit quickly and decided to wrap a bath towel around herself as the weather was too chilly.

Meanwhile, Ysabelle was still taking off her clothes. She had put on some weight recently. Since she cared about her figure a lot, she felt bitter when she saw her chubby cheeks. In an indignant tone, she muttered, “This is unfair, Sophie!”

“What's wrong?” Sophie was completely oblivious to why Ysabelle would say that. She stared at the latter with a serious expression. What's wrong with her now?

“Uncle Tristan feeds you so many delicious foods every day, yet you don't gain any weight! As for me, I got chubbier even if I only ate a little!”

Sophie was at a loss for words. Feed? Are you sure that's the right word that should be used?

“Ysabelle, I'm not your uncle's pet,” Sophie responded solemnly.

“Yeah, I know that! But Uncle Tristan's life goal is to fatten you up, isn't it? Sophie, I heard others say that men like plump women because it feels nicer to touch!” With that thought in mind, Ysabelle no longer considered gaining some weight a big deal. I'm just a few pounds heavier. It's nothing at all!

Again, Sophie was speechless. Why is Ysabelle being so blunt nowadays?

“Are you saying that I'm not nice enough to touch?” Sophie replied before getting lost in her own thoughts. I think I'm pretty fine right now!

“Hehe! That's not what I meant. I'm sure Uncle Tristan is very satisfied with you! He will like you no matter how you look. His love for you is unconditional,” explained Ysabelle. This is something that nobody can change.

“Is that so?” However, even if he likes me that much, I can't make him accept what he doesn't prefer. “Then I'll eat more in the future and do my best to gain weight.” I'll do it if plump women are what men really like.

Ysabelle didn't know how to respond to Sophie's words. She was just joking and really didn't mean it that way. “Sophie, I'm telling the truth. You're perfect just the way you are. Please don't overthink things!” If Uncle Tristan finds out that I've been telling her ridiculous things, he will definitely kill me!

Next to Sophie and Ysabelle, Winter was also changing. A self-deprecating smirk appeared on her face when she heard Sophie and Ysabelle's conversation.

Winter didn't know what was going on with herself. After finding out that Tristan and the others would spend time at a hot spring, she still tagged along even when she understood she was unwelcome.

There was no other reason for her to do so other than to stay by Tristan's side. That was all, and she truly didn't have other intentions.

Seeing Winter like this, Cecelia couldn't help but sneer. This woman really never gives up, huh? Tristan and Sophie are already engaged, but she still can't forget him! Winter sure is persistent. I'm sure she will pray for Tristan and Sophie to get a divorce even after they're married, just so she can take over Sophie's position!

“Sophie, you don't have to feel inferior! Although you're a little skinny, you're curvy in all the right places! Besides, you're not flat-chested. I bet your breasts are nice to touch!” Cecelia was even more straightforward when she spoke.

Sophie remained silent, no longer wanting to discuss this topic with them.

Yet, Ysabelle nodded instantly. “I think so, too! Sophie, the shape of your bust is beautiful!” Now that she has a swimsuit on, it looks even better.

Hearing that, Sophie couldn't help but cover herself up completely. Have they been staring at my chest all this while?

Winter had already got changed. She didn't know what to say when she was around the other ladies, so she could only leave.

When Ysabelle and Cecelia noticed that the person they disliked had finally left, they gave each other a high-five to celebrate. “She knows that none of us likes her. I don't understand why she still insists on coming here. She's making herself unhappy.” Why does she have to put herself through this? We dislike her, and she can't do anything about it.

Sophie shook her head. “Jeez, you two! As long as she doesn't mess with me, I don't mind her doing whatever she wants!”

Indeed, Sophie had never treated Winter as an enemy since Sophie knew that Tristan was loyal to her.

“Let's go!” Sophie said after Cecelia and Ysabelle were done changing.

As soon as the three of them went out, they saw Tristan and Felix waiting outside. Suddenly, Cecelia felt like she was just a superfluous existence. They're all couples. Are they just here to torment a single person like me?

“Why didn't you put on a coat before coming outside? It's so cold out here! Go back in there and get your coat!” Tristan said with a frown when he saw that Sophie merely had a towel wrapped around her. Although the hot spring is warm, it's still cold outside! If she catches a cold in that, the trip won't be worthwhile.

“There's no need. We're just a few steps away from the hot springs. It's too troublesome to get my coat.” While saying that, Sophie was being pulled into Tristan's arms.

“All right, then. If that's the case, I have no choice but to carry you there so that you won't be cold.” Then, Tristan picked Sophie up.

“Tristan! Put me down! The others are staring at us!” At once, Sophie wrapped her arms around his neck, and her ears reddened with embarrassment. This man! There are so many people around us! What is he doing?

“Just let them look if they want to! It's not like we can't be looked at.” What's wrong with us displaying our affection in public? We're always this lovey-dovey, anyway.

Hearing that, Sophie stopped struggling. After all, no one could reject whatever Tristan wanted to do.

Since Ysabelle also didn't have a coat on, Felix carried her in his arms as well. “Ysabelle, I don't want to see you being jealous of others. I can give you what you want, too!”

Upon hearing that, Ysabelle was touched. Although Uncle Tristan is outstanding, my Felix is not bad, too! I feel so safe being in his arms!

Cecelia remained in her spot alone. What is going on? D*mn it! That's it! I must find a boyfriend! I'm sure I can find one with my beauty! This is too much! Can't we show more love and consideration toward each other as humans? They know I don't have a boyfriend, yet they're still tormenting me with their PDA!

Cecelia didn't feel like going back to get her clothes anymore. She jogged toward the others. Unfortunately, she accidentally tripped and fell. When she raised her head, she realized that Sean had

witnessed her tumbling onto the ground. Right then, she could feel the awkward tension in the air. My perfect image!

Seeing how Cecelia was trying to maintain her gracefulness even when she was in such a wretched state, Sean subconsciously curled his lips into a grin.

Chapter 775 Perfect Atmosphere To Drink

Why is this young lady so cute?

With that thought in mind, Sean walked over to Cecelia and held out a hand to her.

Sean had always exuded a distant aura, and there had never been a smile on his face. However, he seemed to have been entertained by Cecelia's tumble. At this moment, a trace of warmth appeared on his cold face, making him appear as if he suddenly came to life.

"You should get up. Isn't the ground cold?" Sean asked when he noticed she wasn't moving at all.

Cecelia grabbed his hand, and he pulled her up. The very next moment, she fell into his arms due to his overwhelming strength.

Cecelia was speechless. She had fantasized about this man's body before, so her head went completely blank when she was so close to him.

Yet, Sean gently pushed her away in the next second. "Let's go! It's too cold outside. You'll catch a cold if we continue to stay here."

With that, Sean walked forward by himself.

"He sure doesn't understand women," Cecelia murmured. What is wrong with this man? Why can't I enchant him with my charm? As expected, he's hopelessly clueless!

When Cecelia arrived, Sophie and the others were already soaking in the hot spring. Seeing how long it took for Cecelia to get there, Ysabelle couldn't help but complain, "Cecelia, where have you been?" What took her so long?

"It's nothing. I'm a person who doesn't have a boyfriend who can protect me. Also, I tripped and fell on my way here!" Cecelia exclaimed.

"Are you okay?" Ysabelle didn't mean to trigger Cecelia. She was only expressing her concern sincerely.

"All right, now. Come on in! You won't feel cold anymore after being in the hot spring for a while." Since the temperature of the hot spring water was high, one wouldn't feel cold after a short while.

Cecelia removed her bath towel and got into the hot spring as well.

"Where is Winter? Why isn't she here with you guys? Could it be that she went to seduce Mr. Tristan?" Cecelia couldn't help but ask when she didn't see Winter around.

However, Winter appeared behind Cecelia just when the latter finished her sentence and said, "Don't worry, Ms. Lance! The ladies from the Quigley family would never do something like seducing someone."

Cecelia was at a loss for words. It was indeed quite awkward for her to be caught badmouthing someone. Yet, she would be the last one to feel embarrassed as long as she didn't express it.

Naturally, Sophie and Cecelia didn't respond to Winter.

Sophie, Cecelia, and Ysabelle were sitting in a corner of the hot spring, chatting among themselves. They were even discussing Sophie and Tristan's wedding details as if Winter didn't exist.

Even though Winter had just gotten into the hot spring, she felt a stuffiness in her heart. It was a feeling that she couldn't control at all.

“Our wedding is still a year away! We don't have to rush the preparations.” It's just a wedding ceremony, so we don't need to spend so much time preparing.

“All right, then.” Cecelia nodded. “Are you skipping a grade when the new semester starts?” To Cecelia, nothing that Sophie did now would surprise her anymore.

“Yup!” Sophie responded.

Ysabelle was speechless and devastated when she heard that. This is university we're talking about! How is Sophie skipping grades even in university? Can't she consider the feelings of ordinary people like us?

“Ysabelle, what's the matter?” Upon seeing Ysabelle's reaction, Cecelia couldn't help but laugh. See? This is the reaction of an ordinary human.

“I'm fine. I'm perfectly fine! Anyway, I won't skip any grades. Sophie can skip all the grades she wants to by herself!” Ysabelle replied. Honestly, she reckoned that studying at a university wouldn't be too useful for someone like Sophie.

“Okay.” Cecelia covered her mouth to conceal her laugh. Ysabelle looks really cute like this. I can't believe she can still maintain her naivety after working in the entertainment industry. She's genuinely so cute.

Winter also wanted to join their conversation. She wished to join their circle in the future, which was the reason she came here without hesitation in the first place. But why is everyone just focusing on Sophie?

When Sarah arrived at the hot spring, she came over to look for the ladies. However, upon seeing Winter being alone, Sarah felt sorry for the latter and went to sit next to her in the hot spring.

“Sarah, Juan is currently pursuing you, right?” That means nothing in this world stays the same forever, right? If I can afford to wait, maybe I can wait until I get what I want.

Sarah shook her head. “Winter, you can clearly start over again. Why are you still hung up on a relationship that will never be yours? Tristan truly loves Sophie to the point that he will never give up on

her, even if she were to want to break up. Do you understand?" Thus, not all who wait will get what they want in the end.

Winter kept quiet.

"To be honest, I know how difficult it is to forget someone. But all you can do is try! Otherwise, you will never get over it," Sarah added. Why would Winter choose to torture herself like this? Sophie doesn't even care about her existence!

"I-I..." Winter stammered. She could keep putting up a facade in front of everyone else. However, it was impossible for her to do so in front of Sarah. "But I feel heartbroken whenever I see them together!" What else can I do? I want to forget him as well, yet I just can't do it.

"That's your problem. Tristan has never given you any hope, right?" So, everything is up to you, Winter. Nobody else can help you decide what you should do.

"Yeah. I don't feel too well, Sarah. I'm going back now." Winter felt like no one could understand how she felt at all. Talking about it would only make others view her as a laughingstock.

As soon as Winter left, Ysabelle spoke. "Aunt Sarah, why are you saying so much to her? She will never understand." Someone like Winter only knows how to persist pointlessly. She doesn't understand that not all relationships will blossom just because she waits.

"That's enough. She's quite pitiful as well. You should stop targeting her all the time," Sarah replied. Winter became the way she was now merely because she liked someone.

"I..." Ysabelle stuttered. Well, fine! I really dislike Winter. But no matter what, she's still Charles' sister. I shouldn't cross the line.

"Sarah, how's it going between you and Juan?" Sophie piped up to change the topic.

Sarah felt her head hurt when Juan was mentioned. "How else can it be? There's nothing special!" Just when Sarah wanted to give up, Juan suddenly wanted her again. The world worked in peculiar ways.

Nonetheless, she genuinely wanted nothing to do with Juan anymore. To her, Juan was perhaps just a person she was fixated on.

“All right, that's enough. Let's stop talking about those lowly men. Didn't we come here today to relax?” Sarah went on. She had really gotten over it now. If she couldn't get what she wanted after waiting for so long, then she would just stop waiting.

Nothing was more important than living a good life for oneself, and not everyone was worth spending one's entire lifetime waiting for.

Besides, Sarah couldn't figure out what Juan was trying to do right now. Moreover, Yvette wasn't someone who would easily give up on Juan too.

“That's right! Today, we shall sit back and relax. As for those people who don't matter, we shall stop caring about them.” Cecelia raised her wine glass. “Cheers!”

Instantaneously, Ysabelle poured Sophie a glass of red wine. “Sophie, this red wine is pretty good. You should have some.”

Such atmosphere was perfect for drinking wine.

Chapter 776 Disgusted

Sophie took the glass and sipped the wine delicately, enjoying the smooth taste.

“Girls shouldn't drink too much when they're outside, but since everyone's having such a good time today, we can drink a little more,” Sarah commented.

Tristan and Felix were both present, so nobody would dare to do anything to them.

“Sarah, they have boyfriends, so we're the only two who don't. Don't you feel lonely?” Cecelia abruptly asked.

It seemed like the two of them were the only ones without boyfriends, despite being attractive and successful in various aspects.

They wondered why they couldn't find good men.

“Why bother feeling that way? I used to feel lonely, but now I'm content with being single and free,” Sarah replied.

She really thought so in her heart.

Once she let things go, nobody could hurt her. She was convinced that being single was a viable and fulfilling lifestyle for her, irrespective of gender expectations.

“However, you're only twenty, and you have a long future ahead of you. Be patient, and you'll find someone who loves you eventually,” Sarah encouraged Cecelia.

Even though Sarah was in her thirties, deep down, she still had hope and believed that she would find her happiness someday.

As long as one did not lose hope, there would always be hope.

“Exactly! Why bother thinking so much? Enjoy life while you still can. You're not the kind of person who dwells on the sorrows of the past.” Sophie raised her glass and clinked it with Sarah's.

Cecelia was speechless.

Fine. Perhaps I was overthinking things. Looks like focusing on my career might be better suited for me than stressing over romantic relationships.

Meanwhile, the four well-built men were lounging in a hot spring, half-naked and drinking red wine.

Their muscular physiques were the stuff of female fantasies, and they were even drinking wine elegantly.

“Mr. Tristan, Winter is just being stupid at the moment. Could you please tolerate her?” Charles requested between sips. “My grandfather’s condition is deteriorating, and I don’t know how much longer he can hold on. It would be best if Winter could stay in Jipsdale for the time being.”

Charles knew bringing Winter along that day was a mistake, but he only had one sister.

Upon seeing her in a pitiful state, he just couldn’t help it.

“Mr. Tristan, don’t worry. Sophie is so formidable that she hardly cares about Winter’s presence,” Sean reassured Tristan.

Winter posed no threat to Sophie in any aspect, so there was no need for Sophie to worry.

In front of Sophie, Winter was at most a clown.

“Exactly. I think that Winter is no match for Sophie too. Sophie is such a generous woman that she doesn’t concern herself with petty rivalries,” Charles remarked.

Tristan raised an eyebrow at the flattery being heaped on Sophie.

“Even if she doesn’t care, I don’t want her to be disgusted by others,” he declared. After all, she was his woman.

The others fell silent, envious of such a deep and devoted love.

“Mr. Tristan, I'm curious about something. You and Sophie are engaged, right? How far have you two gone? Did you guys—” Charles promptly shut his mouth upon seeing the stern look from Tristan.

At once, Charles fell silent again. Okay, never mind then! What's wrong with my question? What's so strange about a man and a woman being intimate? We're grown men, so we should be able to comfortably discuss such things. Besides, we're bros. There's nothing we can't talk about! It's really ridiculous!

Felix laughed at that. He found Charles amusing because, at first, Charles had said he had found true love, but in the end, the woman turned out to be a pretentious b*tch.

But then again, being a playboy suits him as well.

“Felix, are you laughing at me? Is it really that funny? I think I'm fine the way I am now!”

In a game of love, Charles didn't need to be responsible for anyone—he only needed to make himself happy. He wanted those girls' bodies, and those girls got everything they wanted from him, so it was fair.

“How would I ever dare to laugh at you?”

Just then, the manager of the resort came over and greeted everyone before telling Charles, “Ms. Quigley wants to leave now. She asked me to inform you.”

Charles frowned.

Wasn't she the one who wanted to come here in the first place? How long has it been since she arrived? Why does she want to leave now?

“Okay, I got it. Have a driver send her back.” It wasn't safe for a girl to go back alone.

“Okay, Mr. Quigley, I understand.” The manager then left.

At a loss for words, Charles really didn't understand what the girl was thinking.

Nonetheless, it was better for her to go back so that everyone here wouldn't be upset, and she wouldn't be unhappy either.

"Why don't you send her back instead?" suggested Sean.

Nobody knew what Winter was thinking, but it wasn't advisable for her to return home alone.

"It's okay; I'll just let the driver take her back. The people here are my people anyway."

After soaking in the hot spring, everyone went back to their rooms. They planned to stay here overnight.

As for what to eat for dinner, they all decided to have BBQ.

Sophie got changed before going back to her room. There was a fireplace in the room, which was warm and cozy. Sophie had always liked fireplaces and didn't like heaters. She felt that being able to see the flames in a fireplace was a very enjoyable thing.

After Tristan was done changing, he immediately came over to look for her. As soon as he entered the room, he saw her in a pale pink dress with her hair hanging loose. She was drying her hair by the fireplace.

Sophie had drunk quite a bit of red wine just now. Her cheeks were flushed, which made her look cute and silly.

Tristan strode over and sat next to her by the fireplace. "You drank wine?"

"Yeah, just a little bit. The red wine here is good."

"Yeah, of course." Drinking red wine was said to be good for women's health, and every woman should drink a little bit before going to bed every day. "If you like the wine, I'll have some sent back for you. You can drink some every day."

"Sure."

Sophie's hair was almost completely dry at that point.

"Winter left." Sophie spoke like she was stating a fact. She didn't say anything else or mean anything by that.

"Let her leave. If she's here, she'll only make herself and the others unhappy. It's not necessary for her to be here."

Winter was like a younger sister to him at most. But if she annoyed Sophie, that would be absolutely unacceptable.

He would never allow such a thing to happen.

"You don't have to be troubled by her. I don't care about her." Winter's status was insignificant to her. "So, in the future, if she wants to appear for any occasion, you don't have to worry about preventing her from appearing."

She didn't want him to waste time on Winter.

"Okay, I got it."

He just didn't want anyone to make her feel sick to her stomach.

Chapter 777 Never Touched Before

“You don't have to worry about my relationship with Charles either. We're comrades who have been through thick and thin, and he understands me.”

“Don't worry about me! Do I look like the kind of person who would willingly bear grievances for others to you?”

Tristan shook his head.

She wasn't the kind of person who would bear grievances for others, but she was the kind who would do it for him.

However, that was absolutely unacceptable as well.

As they sat close together, Sophie couldn't help but smile at Tristan's serious expression.

“You're even more concerned about me than my dad. My dad isn't even that worried about me!”

“Sophie, I don't want to be your dad. I want to be your man!” And with that, Tristan pushed her down and captured her cherry-red lips with his.

He kissed her tenderly, and although it was just a kiss, he cherished every moment he had with his beloved woman.

After the kiss, he held her in his arms, feeling the tenderness that was meant for him alone. Only in moments like these would he feel her need for him.

Sophie was overly independent most of the time, as she was always able to handle everything perfectly on her own.

“Speaking of which, where's Willow? Where did you leave her?” Sophie asked, realizing that she hadn't inquired about her in a while because she didn't find it necessary.

For as long as she could remember, she had been a paragon of patience and forgiveness when it came to Willow. And with the upcoming Christmas festivities, she couldn't help but feel that if her beloved grandfather were still with them, he would want nothing more than for Willow to come home and join the celebrations.

"Why bother caring about her? She's not worth your time," Tristan replied coldly. Willow is an ungrateful and shameless woman who deserves to suffer. Let her spend Christmas alone on that deserted island! Christmas is no different from any other normal day for her. Anyone who dared to bully Sophie would do well to prepare for the worst, as I would not tolerate anyone mistreating Sophie.

Nevertheless, Sophie insisted, "I think my grandfather would want to see her at home during Christmas." After all, Willow was still his granddaughter.

Josiah was Sophie's only weakness.

She would make concessions for him that she wouldn't make for anyone else.

"Fine, I'll bring her back. But if she dares to hurt you again, I won't let her off," Tristan huffed, thinking that Willow was no match for Sophie anyway.

"Okay!"

I've never been afraid of her so it doesn't matter.

After months alone on the island, Willow had to learn how to farm and cook for herself.

In just a few months, she now looked like a middle-aged woman in her thirties, and her skin had become especially tanned.

Upon seeing a ship approaching, she no longer held any hope. She had sought help when she saw ships before, but this island belonged to Tristan; no one dared to come near, let alone take her away from there.

It wasn't until the ship stopped and someone came down that she heard, "Willow, let's go! You've always wanted to leave, right? It's almost Christmas, so we'll take you back to see your family!"

Willow was stunned.

Is it almost Christmas? Time flies!

"Are you coming or not? If you still want to stay here, we won't force you."

How could Willow possibly not want to leave?

She had been hoping to leave that place and never come back from the moment she got there. How could she want to stay here?

She was Ms. Willow of the Tanner family and had always lived a privileged life since she was young. Here, she had to do everything by herself.

Willow vowed that once she left, she would never come back. The thought of going through the same ordeal again was simply unbearable.

She practically sprinted onto the ship as if afraid that whoever had come to collect her would change their mind.

Five long hours later, the Tanner family received Willow in a pitiful state. When Yale and Charmaine saw her, Yale merely shook his head.

"Willow, now that you're back, you need to behave yourself. You can't mess with someone like Sophie. Not only is Sophie in a relationship with Mr. Tristan, but they're also planning to get married soon."

Despite everything, she was still their daughter, and seeing her in such a state was heart-wrenching.

Nevertheless, at the end of the day, her fate rested entirely on Mr. Tristan's whims.

Nobody stood to benefit from getting on his bad side.

Charmaine never imagined that her once-pampered daughter would end up in such a sorry state. Willow's complexion, once fair and flawless, had been marred by the harshness of wind and sun.

"Mom, I'm back. That place was so scary. I never want to go back there again." Willow's voice was not as melodious as it once was anymore.

"Then don't go back. Just stay by my side from now on." Oh, what happened to my Willow? She looks like a peasant! She's not even married yet and is in the prime of her youth, yet she already looks like she's aged way beyond her years. How on earth did it come to this?

As the group gathered around for BBQ that night, Sophie's phone suddenly rang, and it was Yale on the other end of the line.

"Soph, were you the one who brought Willow back?" Yale was worried that Sophie didn't know about this, so he decided to call and ask.

"Yeah, I brought her back." Sophie didn't want to go into detail, so she gave a brief answer. Tristan sure is quick. I just asked him not too long ago, and he's already handled it.

"Okay, good. Don't worry about her being back. I'll make sure she doesn't bother you again," Yale promised.

The current Sophie was someone that the Tanner family couldn't afford to cross.

"Okay, I got it. I'm having dinner with my friends." Sophie didn't want to continue the conversation anymore.

She did this solely for Josiah's sake, and she didn't really have any interest in the Tanner family now.

"That's fine. You go ahead and enjoy your meal. I won't disturb you any longer," Yale said meekly. Nowadays, he would humble himself in front of Sophie and would not display any arrogance.

As long as Sophie continued to bring in money for Tanner Group, Yale's life would be trouble-free, and his life right now was pretty good.

After disconnecting the call, Sophie tossed her phone aside and joined in on the BBQ.

She savored each bite of the meat and ate a lot while taking in the joyous atmosphere around her.

"You really seem to enjoy dining with everyone. You usually don't eat this much when we eat together," Tristan remarked, somewhat displeased with the situation.

He just wanted her to gain some weight.

"What's wrong? Is what Ysabelle said true? Do all men like plump women? Do you want me to gain weight as well?"

Tristan was speechless.

What's she talking about? He wanted nothing but the best for Sophie, and he simply hoped that she would stay healthy and by his side.

"You should stay away from Ysabelle in the future. She tells you all kinds of nonsense!"

"Just tell me. Do you also like plump women? Ysabelle said that chubby women feel more comfortable to touch."

Sophie hadn't touched a chubby woman before, so she didn't really know.

"I don't know. Haven't touched one before. Do you want me to find a plump woman to touch so that I can tell you?"

Chapter 778 As Long As It Is You

As soon as he finished speaking, Sophie's gaze turned cold.

"Are you sure you want to try?"

Tristan picked up another piece of lamb and put it on her plate.

"I was just joking. Don't take it seriously. No matter what you look like, I only like you. The feel of someone else's body has nothing to do with me."

Well, whether he means what he says or not, it's still nice to hear.

Indeed, all girls loved to hear compliments.

They spent over an hour eating BBQ.

After the meal, Charles wanted to invite a pretty girl to join them.

The others around him had beautiful women with them. Since he was the only one alone, he was feeling miserable.

He hadn't even made the call yet when Tristan said coldly, "Don't bring those random girlfriends of yours here."

Why did he call them my "random girlfriends"?

“Mr. Tristan, that's not fair. You're all paired up, and I'm the only one alone. And my new girlfriend is a decent girl.”

“Just don't bring anyone who you don't want to marry here in the future.” This was a place he gave to Sophie, and he didn't like random girls being there.

“Okay, I got it. It looks like I have to find a real girlfriend soon.”

Is it my fault that I haven't found true love? Man, they didn't even try to make me feel better, and on top of that, they made me feel like an outsider. It's seriously too much!

As the night unfolded, the group engaged in various games. However, Sophie didn't quite find herself enamored by the activities. She didn't think the games were interesting, but she stayed because Sarah and the others were there. She liked being with everyone.

Suddenly, Charles spoke up. “Honestly, it's not often that we have a chance to take a break, but we've done nothing meaningful. It's not really fulfilling.”

Felix replied without hesitation, “Well, if you feel that way, you can always go back to work.” He didn't care much for what others thought because he was content with his current lifestyle. He enjoyed being able to spend sweet, quality time with Ysabelle.

At that moment, Ysabelle picked up a piece of lamb and placed it on his plate.

“You should eat it yourself.”

“No, I think this piece doesn't look very tasty, so I'm giving it to you.” Did he think I had other intentions?

The man was speechless.

Fine! Oh, how foolish of me. I was so presumptuous to believe that she cared about me.

"All right now."

Sophie bit his lip gently.

"You're quite the domineering guy, aren't you?" she commented, observing Triston with newfound insight.

Despite that, he still happily consumed the meat. It didn't matter to him what her intentions were because, in the end, she did offer it to him.

Everything else didn't matter.

At eleven o'clock at night, they retired to their respective rooms, and Tristan followed Sophie to hers.

"It's late. You should head back and get some rest," Sophie advised. Tomorrow was Christmas Eve, and they would all head home to see their respective families.

"How about I celebrate Christmas with you at the Tanner residence?" Tristan proposed, unwilling to part ways with Sophie. Although they were both in Jipsdale and he could visit anytime, he didn't want to be away from her.

Sophie let him hold her, a smile creeping up the corners of her mouth.

"On a special day like Christmas, it's crucial to spend it with family," Sophie said as she remembered her grandfather's words.

She regretted not spending more time with him before he passed away.

Once someone is gone, you can't make up for lost time.

"Okay, I'll take you there tomorrow," Tristan agreed, even though seeing Willow might not be pleasant for Sophie.

He couldn't understand why Sophie wanted Willow to be back.

That woman was nothing but trouble, and he couldn't help but worry about her nefarious intentions.

"You really don't need to worry about me. I'm not one of those delicate young ladies from wealthy families." Sophie could handle women like Willow.

"I know you can handle her, but I don't like that you're wasting your energy on those irrelevant people!" He just didn't like it.

"All right now."

Sophie bit his lip gently.

"You're quite the domineering guy, aren't you?" she commented, observing Tristan with newfound insight.

"I'm not trying to be domineering. I just want what's best for you," he protested.

"I understand," Sophie reassured him, planting a gentle kiss on his lips.

Tristan was powerless against her charms and was unable to resist her. Even if she were to demand the impossible, he'd still do his best to grant her wishes.

"Will you go back to your room to rest now?"

"Why do you always push me away? Can't we just stay here together?" They were engaged, after all. Sharing a bed wouldn't even be an issue.

"I just don't want you to be uncomfortable later," Sophie confessed.

He was unable to resist his urges, yet he wanted to be close to her.

In the end, it was Tristan who would suffer the consequences of his own desire.

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In the end, it was Tristan who would suffer the consequences of his own desire.

To punish her, he nibbled on her earlobe, knowing it was her most sensitive spot.

"You little rascal," he muttered. "Are you enjoying yourself watching me squirm?"

Feeling his lips on her ear, Sophie was close to becoming a puddle of goo.

Tristan knew exactly how to make her weak in the knees.

Thus, whenever he made a move, she was utterly helpless to his advances.

They roughhoused on the carpet for a while, and eventually, she surrendered to Tristan's embrace after expending all of her energy.

Despite his desire, Tristan maintained a level of self-control and only kissed her, taking pleasure in his ability to resist temptation.

Sophie thought that she was right. Look, he's indeed getting uncomfortable now!

Breathing softly in his arms, Sophie couldn't resist asking, "Are you uncomfortable yet?"

There was a touch of pleasure in her tone, as if she was enjoying his misfortune.

Tristan responded by biting down hard on her lip. "I am, so? Does my discomfort bring you joy?"

This was the woman he held dear, so even if she said yes, he still couldn't do anything about it!

"No way, I just pity you." They had a long road ahead of them, and it would be a while before he could finally let loose!

"It's fine. As long as it's you, I can afford to wait." Hence, he wasn't too bothered about the temporary discomfort.

The next morning, Tristan took Sophie to the Tanner residence since it was Christmas Eve that day, and she had said she wanted to go back to the Tanner residence.

With Sophie back, Yale had to stop fooling around with his lover and return home.

Although his lover threw a tantrum because of that, he decided to return home nonetheless.

Willow had already put on the clothes that Charmaine bought for her, but even though the clothes were new, she still looked different from before. Despite wearing fancy clothes, she no longer resembled her former self.

She now appeared like a woman in her thirties who had lived in the countryside for a long time, and she had lost the fair complexion of a youthful girl.

As soon as Sophie came into her view, her hands clenched into fists without her even realizing it. If it weren't for Sophie, she wouldn't have ended up like this!

Chapter 779 Unable To Return

As soon as Sophie entered, she saw Willow standing behind Charmaine, looking nervous and afraid.

It was the first time Sophie had seen Willow like this, but it was understandable.

No matter how tough she was, she couldn't continue to be arrogant after experiencing what she had gone through.

Sophie looked away.

"Since today is Christmas Eve, you should go back now!" After all, William was still waiting for Tristan to go back for dinner.

"It's still early. I'll stay here with you for a while," Tristan said. Willow had returned, but he still hadn't given her the warning he needed to give, so how could he leave now?

"Okay. Then go and pay your respects to my grandpa." Given that it was Christmas Eve, Josiah's framed photo had already been decorated and set up.

"Sure."

Tristan naturally had no objections and went to pay his respects to Josiah before going to Sophie's room with her.

"Do you want me to come and pick you up later tonight? I know you don't like staying here." Sophie never liked staying here even when Josiah was here, let alone now that he was gone.

"You don't have to worry about me. You should go back quickly!" She just didn't like these people very much, but it was not like they could do anything to her.

“Okay!”

Tristan went downstairs and saw Willow. “Willow, come here!”

When Willow heard him, she shrank back. What else does he want from me? I haven't done anything wrong, have I?

“Mr. Tristan, is there something you want to talk to me about?” Willow was very nervous.

Tristan sneered upon noticing her timid behavior.

“I just want to tell you not to trouble Sophie anymore. She doesn't like you, so don't bother her. Otherwise, I won't go easy on you.” He wasn't someone who would repay enmity with kindness.

Willow felt bitter in her heart. She had been living a life worse than death on that deserted island and had just returned a while ago, yet all he was concerned about was Sophie being troubled by her.

How is Sophie this lucky? No matter what Sophie had experienced before, there was now a man who would care for her and wouldn't let her suffer any grievances.

They were both daughters of the Tanner family, so Willow wondered why she couldn't have all of this as well.

As for Sophie, she didn't need to do anything to have everything.

“Mr. Tristan, rest assured! I know Sophie isn't someone I can mess with, so I won't bother her.” Willow promised him since she could only lie low for now. What else could she do?

She didn't want to go back to that place anymore.

Moreover, if she went out now, those socialites she used to be close with would definitely mock her!

“Good then. Remember, Sophie may not kill you, but I will not hesitate to do so. As long as you dare to do anything that upsets her, I will make sure you disappear from the face of the earth without her having to say a single word.”

What I did this time is for Old Mr. Tanner's sake.

Tristan then immediately left without giving her a chance to respond. Meanwhile, Sophie was still upstairs as Tristan didn't let her come down to see him off.

It was cold outside, so he didn't want her to catch a cold.

After Tristan left, Willow stood alone in the cold with no expression on her face. Soon, Charmaine came out and saw her there. “What are you doing out here? It's so cold outside! Come inside!”

There was heating in the house, and it was much more comfortable inside, so Charmaine wondered why Willow was standing outside in the cold.

“Mom, I don't want to go back to that place again. I just want to stay by your side in peace.”

Seeing Willow like this, Charmaine naturally felt her heart ache.

“Okay, I'll go talk to Sophie later, and I'll plead with her.” She could beg for Willow's sake.

“I knew it—you're the best, Mom. I was foolish before, and I shouldn't have done those things. I really regret it.”

“Okay, it's all right now. From now on, I'll protect you.” Charmaine just wanted to protect her well.

Due to the fact that Yale and Sophie were home, the housekeepers didn't dare to mess around. Hence, the Tanner family's Christmas dinner was exceptionally sumptuous.

Last year, Josiah ate Christmas dinner with everyone, but this year, he was gone.

Before dinner, Yale paid respects to his father.

“Dad, don't worry! From now on, our family will be fine, and I will take care of this home.”

Yale and Charmaine bowed in the front, whereas Sophie and Willow bowed behind the couple. The whole reason for Sophie being there that night was to pay her respects to Josiah.

After that, the family sat down to eat.

“Sophie, we are family. No matter what had happened before, we are still family in the future.”

Yale received so much in dividends that year that he had no objections to the issue of Tanner Group's management rights.

He felt that everything was fine the way it was.

“Willow, since you're finally back, you should go to school after some time!”

Willow nodded in an especially temperate manner. Following the recent events, she no longer possessed the same level of boldness she did before.

The Christmas dinner was indeed sumptuous, but Sophie didn't particularly like the food that was served.

Seeing that she wasn't eating much, Yale couldn't help but worry.

“Why aren't you eating? Is it not to your liking? Do you want me to have the cooks make you a few more dishes?” If it was a matter of the dishes not suiting her taste, it could be resolved.

“It's okay, you guys eat! I'm full!” Sophie didn't eat much as she really didn't have an appetite.

Charmaine didn't say much during dinner. She just hoped that she and Willow could live peacefully.

As for Sophie, what she did was her own business, and they had nothing to do with her anymore. Charmaine was well aware that she and Sophie would never see eye to eye.

After finishing dinner, Sophie went upstairs. In the past, she would watch the New Year's Gala on TV in the living room with Josiah after their Christmas dinner.

But now, no matter how much she wished to do it, she could never return to the past.

After she went upstairs, Yale said to the other two, “Remember, we will be relying on Sophie for our livelihood in the future, so be nice to her!”

If Willow was the only one showing attitude, it would have been fine. But Charmaine was also terribly unreasonable.

She's not young anymore. Can't she show some concern for her own daughter?

“Dad, I'm sorry. I...” Willow didn't want to go back to the deserted island anymore. She didn't want to be there alone as life was too harsh in such a place.

“It's okay. You don't have to say anything. Sophie is a generous person. As long as you don't cause trouble, she won't harm you!”

Willow didn't know how to respond. Is that really enough? Would Sophie really let me go if I just stayed out of trouble?

“Will you stop criticizing Willow? You also agreed to those decisions back then, but now you're pushing the blame all onto her. Is that fair?” Charmaine snapped.

Chapter 780 No Right

Was Willow in the wrong? No, Willow did nothing wrong! She only did all that because we agreed to it!

Yale was not very happy when he heard what Charmaine said.

“What are you talking about? You'd better not bring this up in front of Sophie in the future, Charmaine!”

Yale had initially wanted to head out after dinner, but he dropped the idea when he recalled that Sophie was here.

Not wanting Sophie to know about his affairs outside the house, he decided to stay home instead.

Charmaine was furious, but there was nothing she could do about it. Because Sophie was the one calling the shots in the Tanner family, Charmaine and Willow had no choice but to put up with everything.

“I'm sorry for putting you in such an unpleasant situation, Mom,” Willow said apologetically. Mom is my only source of support right now, so I can't let her abandon me!

Charmaine gave her an affectionate pat on the cheek.

“You're my daughter, so it is only natural for me to protect you. She won't come after us as long as we leave her alone, so we should just behave ourselves from now on.”

As much as she hated Sophie, she knew that Sophie wasn't the unreasonable type who would attack without provocation.

Therefore, Sophie would not go after them as long as they left her alone.

“Don't worry, Mom. I know that she isn't someone I can afford to mess with, so I won't mess with her ever again!”

“I'm glad you understand. All right, I'm tired after a long day, so I'm going to head upstairs. You can either go back to your room or stay here and watch some television.”

Josiah was the only one who would want to watch the New Year's Gala. Charmaine and Willow didn't like it at all, but they used to watch it with him just to keep him company. Since Josiah was no longer around, they weren't about to sit around and watch that show by themselves.

However, Sophie came down the stairs before they could head upstairs. She then sat down on the couch and switched on the television.

“Are you planning on watching the New Year's Gala, Ms. Sophie?” asked one of the housekeepers upon seeing Sophie.

“Yeah. You guys can carry on with your tasks. Don't mind me.” Sophie used to find it boring when she watched it with Josiah back then, but she suddenly felt a strong urge to watch it with him after he was gone.

She didn't even care if the show was boring. All she wanted was to spend time with Josiah again. Unfortunately, that was no longer possible.

Charmaine figured it would be inappropriate if she went upstairs immediately after Sophie came downstairs, but she couldn't bring herself to watch the New Year's Gala with her either.

As such, she had found herself facing a dilemma.

Yale immediately came downstairs the moment he found out about Sophie watching the New Year's Gala. “Your grandpa loved watching the New Year's Gala! He probably loved it more than anything else in the world!” he said with a sigh while sitting down next to Sophie.

Sophie simply kept quiet and continued watching the show.

“What are you two doing standing around? It's our family tradition to watch the New Year's Gala! Come sit down right this instant!” Yale shouted when he saw Charmaine and Willow preparing to leave.

They don't have anything to do upstairs, so they might as well watch television with us!

Willow clenched her fists as she took a deep breath and sat down on the couch.

Charmaine, too, decided to join them as she had nothing to do upstairs anyway.

Although the four of them were seated together on the couch, they had nothing to talk about. Given how badly damaged their relationship was, there was absolutely no way to repair it anymore.

Fortunately, Caleb's call came in before things got too awkward between them.

“Hey, Dad. Is everything all right at home?” Caleb had been so focused on his research that he never came home ever since Josiah passed away. He only called home to check on them when he recalled that it was Christmas.

“Everything's fine at home, Caleb! Remember to take good care of yourself out there. Sophie's here with us, so you don't have to worry about a thing!” Yale replied.

He knew that they would be able to solve any problems easily with Sophie around.

“That's good to hear. You guys have to take good care of yourselves now that Grandpa is gone. He wouldn't be able to rest in peace otherwise.” Caleb was overseas all by himself, so there wasn't much he could do for them.

“How much longer will that research of yours take, Caleb? You're not getting any younger, you know? It's about time you find yourself a decent woman and get married!” Yale asked. While he was proud of

Caleb for getting into a research facility in Anglandur all by himself, he didn't want his son to spend his entire life working either.

“Don't worry, Dad! I have a girlfriend, and we're in a steady relationship at the moment. She's a fellow classmate at the research facility. We will get married eventually.”

“I'm glad to hear that, Caleb. Make sure to inform us when you get married. We'll be sure to attend your wedding!” Yale said affectionately. After all, Caleb was his only son.

Unfortunately, Yale hardly had a chance to communicate with Caleb as the latter was overseas all the time.

“Where's Willow? She's at home, right?” Caleb asked. He knew Willow was prone to taking things too far, so he couldn't help but worry about her.

“Yeah, she's right here. We're all gathered in the living room to watch the New Year's Gala!”

“All right, then.”

Caleb had wanted to speak with Sophie, but he didn't know what to say when he recalled how cold she was.

Still worried about Willow, he asked, “Could you pass the phone to Willow, please?”

Yale did as told and handed the phone over to Willow.

Willow made her way over to a corner before answering the phone, “Hey, Caleb. It's me.”

Hearing her voice made Caleb feel like it had been ages since they last talked. “Hey, Willa! Regardless of what happened in the past, you should be grateful that our family is now reunited. Don't mess things up again, okay?”

Willow didn't know what else to say in response to that. After all, she was no longer in a position to do or say anything.

"I just want you to be happy, Willa."

"Caleb, I don't think I'll ever be able to find happiness in this life." Given everything that had happened, it would be difficult for her to even marry a decent man, let alone a wealthy one.

She no longer had anything that could add value to her or make her desirable.

"Come on, don't be so pessimistic. I'm sure you'll be able to find your own happiness if you behave yourself."

Of course, she knew what he was implying.

"Yeah, I know. Don't worry about me, Caleb. I'll take good care of myself."

She knew nobody in the Tanner family would care about her sentiments, so she didn't feel like speaking her mind too much.

At the moment, she just wanted to keep a low profile in order to increase her chances of survival.

"Could you pass Sophie the phone? Actually, never mind. She doesn't like talking to me unless absolutely necessary."

"Would you like to speak to Mom?" Willow asked. She couldn't help but wonder if Caleb had forgotten about their mother.