

## **Pursuing 851**

### Chapter 851

Jamie pondered over it.

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A menacing glint flashed across Marcus' eyes.

He had spent tons of money to earn his current position. Yet, he just had to encounter such an incident.

I haven't even earned back what I spent!

“I got it. Set up an appointment with Barney for me. I want to speak to him alone.” No matter what methods I'd have to use, I can't let those three leave this place.

Barney knew things would not end on a simple note after he received the call from Jamie. When he brought Sophie and Arius here to help, he did not expect things to become troublesome.

Yet things had escalated to that point.

If the president does something that causes us not to be able to return, how will I face my two

mentees?

Barney had a worried look on his face throughout the entire afternoon, and Sophie saw right through him and knew that he was troubled.

“What are you thinking about, Dr. Smith?” The three of them were discussing a new problem that Anglandur's doctors could have solved.

Barney snapped out of his thoughts.

“You two go back to Chanaea first. I'll settle things here before going to you guys. Go now.”

The president must've known that we were leaving. That's why he specifically asked to meet me alone.

I don't mind, but Sophie and Arius should not receive any threats from anyone. The two of them still have such bright futures ahead of them.

“Dr. Smith, we came here together. It's only natural that we return together. Don't worry about it.” Sophie tried to comfort him.

“The president won't let us return that easily. After all, we are his trump cards,” Barney said as he ran a hand through his hair.

He had always been like that. He was outstanding in the medical field, but when faced with situations like the current one, he had no idea how to resolve them.

“Dr. Smith, just go if he wants to meet you. Don't worry. We won't leave you here alone.” Arius was unhappy with Marcus.

Back then, Marcus was the one who begged them to come and help, yet now, he wanted to use various excuses to keep them in the country.

Does he think we're pushovers?

“Arius, don't do anything rash. No matter what, this is Anglandur. If you cause a scene here, I'm afraid it won't do you all any good.”

No matter how great they were with their medical skills, they were still in Anglandur.

“Dr. Smith, bear this in mind. As long as Sophie is with you, it doesn't matter which country you're in. You can do anything with your head held up high. She can help you solve anything.” That was how much trust Arius put in Sophie.

Barney could not help but let out a heavy sigh as he stared at his two mentees.

Tristan, quiet the entire time, suddenly said, “Dr. Smith, you don't need to worry. I won't let them harm any of you.”

Hearing that, Barney nodded.

When he was finally alone with Tristan, he said, “Mr. Tristan, if anything does happen to me, promise me you'll take them with you and leave. Don't bother about me.”

He did not wish Arius and Sophie to participate in a political war. The two of them need only do as they should and conduct experiments.

“Dr. Smith, I'm being serious here. The president won't be able to do anything to us. You have to believe in us,” Tristan replied calmly.

When night came, Jamie went to the hotel to personally escort Barney. Barney did not wish to cause a scene. He even thought it would be better to resolve things peacefully. That way, things wouldn't be awkward for everyone.

The dinner venue was Marcus' mansion, where he had previously stayed. The car drove into the mansion's driveway.

This time, Barney did not let Sophie and Arius follow him. He was unsure what Marcus would do to them if they did.

“Dr. Smith, you don't have to be so nervous. The president doesn't have any ill intentions. He invited you for dinner tonight to thank you for your recent contribution to Anglandur.”

Jamie tried to lighten the tense atmosphere.

However, Barney was still expressionless.

“Dr. Smith, to be honest, there's something I don't understand. You're also from Anglandur. Why must you go to Chanaea? Is Anglandur not treating you well?” Jamie asked tentatively.

There was only one goal Jamie and Marcus had that night. It was to make those three people stay.

If the result of the negotiation were not up to expectations, they would have no choice but to lock Barney up.

Those people would do anything to ensure their own benefits..

“That's none of your business.” Barney had no desire to talk to Jamie. After all, the latter had never taken him seriously.

The car stopped at the entrance of Marcus' private mansion. Jamie got out and opened the door for Barney.

After Barney got out of the car, Jamie led him inside. Nothing seemed unusual along the way.

Just then, Barney's phone rang.

It was a call from Arius. Barney answered the call and asked the secretary to wait for a moment.

"I'm fine, Arius. You don't need to worry. Keep in mind what I said. If I don't return, you all must leave immediately."

He did not want them to be detained in Anglandur. Chanaea was indeed a better place. At least they could do whatever they liked there instead of becoming someone else's tools.

"Dr. Smith, why did you go there alone? Tell me where you are now. We'll meet you there!" Arius demanded. He was displeased.

The president is so arrogant and insolent. It won't be difficult for him to discard people when he no longer has use for them, huh?

"Dr. Smith, the president is waiting for you," Jamie reminded.

"Heed my words. Don't disappoint me." With that, Barney ended the call.

Arius was speechless.

Tristan patted Arius' shoulder to comfort him after seeing the look on his face.

"You don't have to worry too much. No one could stop us if we wanted to leave." It's only Anglandur. It's not like we won't ever be able to leave.

"You don't understand Dr. Smith's personality! He must've been threatened to go there alone!" At the thought of that, Arius was disgruntled.

To Arius, Barney was like a father figure. He could not allow anyone to bully Barney.

"Stop worrying! I can track Dr. Smith. We can just go look for him." Sophie was also worried about Barney. Barney did well academically but was clearly no match for those politicians.

“Let's go then!” Tristan said as he grabbed her coat. They could've left after a few days, but their plan changed since the president was eager to take action. They decided to go back that night instead.

“Arius, let's go! I'll show you what I'm capable of!” Sophie smiled as she called out to Arius. Why is he being so serious? It's not a big deal.

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Arius rolled his eyes. “Don't be rude. I'm older than you,” he snapped.

Sophie calmly retorted, “It's important to show respect to those who are more skilled than you. Since I am better at fighting, you should respect me.”

Tristan had been silent all the while, but when he heard Sophie's words, he gave an approving nod.

“Don't worry. I won't allow others to bully you as well,” he told Arius.

Arius couldn't find any words to retort them as they had ganged up against him. This is too much!

“Ugh, get out of my sight. I don't know who you are,” he said unhappily.

Arius couldn't bear to watch their public display of affection any longer, so he bolted past them. However, he quickly realized he had no clue where to go. He was forced to stop in front of the hotel. In the end, he still had to stay back to help out.

As that realization occurred to Arius, he let out a sigh.

Whenever such an occasion arose, he would feel the urge to find a girlfriend so they would stop bullying him.

Arius couldn't help feeling lonely and helpless in his single state, especially when he found himself in arguments with others and had no one to back him up.

Tristan came out of the hotel with his arm around Sophie. He broke into a grin when he saw Arius waiting for them outside.

"I thought you left to be alone. Why are you still here?"

Arius took another deep breath, reminding himself not to get angry. It wasn't the time for him to be willful.

"Tristan, let's fight when we get back!" he suggested, determined to fight with Tristan to regain his pride.

"I'm game. You can choose the time and location," Tristan readily agreed. He saw no reason to decline the offer, considering it was Arius who had challenged him to a fight in the first place.

Sophie couldn't help but express her concern, "Arius, please don't do something foolish." She wondered what could have caused him to suggest a fight.

Arius merely snorted in response and refused to look at her.

"Sophie, I treated you well, didn't I? Is this how you repay me? Won't you feel bad?" he demanded.

"I feel nothing. Besides, did I do anything to hurt you?" Sophie asked, blinking innocently.

After getting into the car, Arius shut his eyes, refusing to talk to them.

Realizing that he wouldn't be able to win the argument, he decided not to embarrass himself any further.

“Tristan, stop bullying Arius. Look, he's mad,” Sophie said with a mischievous smile.

Borney furrowed his brows.

She could be cheeky at times.

Tristan shrugged innocently. “Did I bully him? I don't think I did anything.”

Meanwhile, Barney was led by Jamie to the dining room in the president's private mansion, where Marcus was already waiting for him.

Upon seeing Barney, Marcus stood up with a welcoming smile.

“Dr. Smith, I want to express my gratitude for your hard work. I'm aware that you must be exhausted after working tirelessly for a while, and I'll treat you and your team to a meal soon. I requested to see you alone as there's something I need to discuss with you,” Marcus said cordially.

Barney greeted Marcus with a polite handshake. Though he knew the reason behind the president's invitation, he decided to feign nonchalance and didn't mention anything about it.

Marcus pulled a chair out and urged Barney to take a seat.

The kitchen had already prepared the food, so Jamie gave orders for them to serve dinner. They would be having steak tonight.

Barney's heart sank as he sliced his steak into small pieces. He desperately hoped that Sophie and Arius had followed his advice to leave the country.

Marcus' mansion was heavily guarded, so he knew he wouldn't be able to leave that day.



“Dr. Smith, please enjoy the steak. The chef I hired knows his way around the kitchen,” Marcus said cheerfully.

Barney merely bobbed his head and remained silent.

Jamie poured two glasses of red wine for them.

“Dr. Smith, you are our country's hope. Here's a toast to you!” Marcus raised his wineglass in a toast.

Barney had no choice but to clink glasses with him before taking a sip of the wine.

Marcus finally revealed his motive for inviting Barney over. “Dr. Smith, I understand that you intend to return to Chanaea, but the situation in Anglandur is currently precarious. I hope you can reconsider staying here. I'm willing to agree to any terms you propose as long as you're willing to stay.”

He added sincerely, “I really need your assistance. Trust me. I can agree to anything as long as you're willing to stay.”

Barney furrowed his brows.

I knew it.

“Mr. President, I returned previously to find a solution to the virus. Now that we've succeeded in getting rid of the virus, I hope you can understand that I cannot involve myself in other matters,” Barney said

honestly. He was just a doctor and not a politician, so it didn't matter to him who would be the president.

I knew it.

“Mr. President, I returned previously to find a solution to the virus. Now that we've succeeded in getting rid of the virus, I hope you can understand that I cannot involve myself in other matters,” Barney said honestly. He was just a doctor and not a politician, so it didn't matter to him who would be the president.

Marcus had anticipated Barney's response, yet his demeanor turned cold, nonetheless. “Dr. Smith, do not be too quick to turn me down. Why don't you give my proposal some thought?” he suggested.

Barney stood firm in his decision. “Mr. President, if this is the sole reason for your invitation today, I must apologize. I cannot agree,” he said resolutely.

He would never give in to Marcus' demands, especially when the latter wanted Sophie and Arius to stay.

Arius had been longing to go back to Chanaea, and Sophie had never been interested in joining the International Medical Association, so Barney wouldn't consider sacrificing them for his own benefit.

Jamie attempted to intimidate Barney by stating, “Dr. Smith, the president has humbled himself to implore your assistance. Even if you don't think about yourself, you should consider your mentees. They are still young. If something happens to them, can you live with the guilt?”

He refused to consider their suggestion when they were being nice, leaving them with no choice but to resort to unethical methods.

“Was that a threat?” Barney rose from his chair abruptly. “Didn't we come to an agreement previously? You begged for my help, so I came back without hesitation. How could you do this to me? How can you ask me to betray their trust now? This is not right.”

Barney felt a mixture of anger and disappointment toward the Anglandurn politicians, who seemed to prioritize their own gains over everything else, including loyalty.

Marcus snorted icily. “Things are different now. If you refuse to cooperate, I'm afraid I'll have to resort to unscrupulous means.”

Barney's impatience boiled over as he declared, "So, you plan to lock me up again, right? Well, I've already told Arius and Sophie to leave, so go ahead and imprison me again for as long as you like. Let's see how long it takes before you give up!"

"What did you say? They have already left?" Marcus' expression changed.

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"Yes, I have already instructed them to leave. Did you think I would give you the opportunity to use me to threaten them?" Barney replied firmly.

"Mr. President, don't worry. I've sent our men to keep an eye on the airport. They won't be able to leave," Jamie quickly reassured Marcus. They had already revealed their intention, so there was no need to hold back anymore.

"Okay." Marcus heaved a sigh of relief. "Barney, you should reconsider my proposal. Why would you choose to be imprisoned? If you agree to assist me, I can assure you that you will receive anything you desire," he promised.

Barney said naught a word.

Those who had different beliefs wouldn't get along with each other, so Barney had nothing else to say to Marcus.

His only wish was that Sophie and Arius had been able to leave safely.

Nothing else mattered.

"Take him upstairs," Marcus commanded. He was frustrated with Barney's unwavering stance, despite his attempts to persuade him.

What a stubborn man. I can't believe he rejected me despite my generous offer. D\*mn it!

The bodyguards had just arrived to take Barney away when another person came in to report, “Mr.

President, Sophie Tanner and Arius Gullifer are outside and have requested to enter the mansion.”

“What?” Marcus was taken aback by the unexpected news that Sophie and Arius had arrived at his mansion. He had assumed that they had already fled the country.

“Bring them in. See, Dr. Smith? Your mentees have made their decision. It's not easy for anyone to reject Anglandur,” Marcus said with a smirk. For many, entering Anglandur was a dream come true, and he could offer them everything they desired. He was confident that they wouldn't be able to resist his enticing offer.

Barney's face paled visibly. He was frustrated that Sophie and Arius hadn't followed his advice to leave the country. Sophie had competent fighting skills, but entering the president's residence was a risky move, and Barney didn't think they had a chance of leaving once they were inside. He couldn't understand why they were so naive.

Right then, Sophie and the other two walked in to see Barney's ashen face.

Frowning, Sophie demanded, “Dr. Smith, what happened? Did they bully you?” She didn't forget to shoot Marcus a pointed look as she said that.

Marcus quickly shook his head. “Ms. Tanner, what are you talking about? Why would I bully him? I have nothing but respect for Dr. Smith and you both,” he said politely, his previous arrogance all gone.

He was willing to do anything to make them stay, even if it meant he had to flatter them against his wishes.

Barney spoke in a hushed tone. “Sophie, didn't I tell you to go? Why did you come here? Do you realize where we are? It's the president's residence. Once you enter, you can't just leave whenever you want.”

Marcus wouldn't let them leave easily unless they agreed to his conditions.

Sophie assured him, "Dr. Smith, there's no need to be so worked up. This isn't a dangerous place, so why can't we come here? Stop fretting. You're our mentor, so there's no way we'd leave you here alone."

Arius chimed in, "Dr. Smith, I don't know what to say to you anymore. I told you not to worry, but why didn't you listen to me?"

Sophie and Tristan were around, so Marcus wouldn't be able to harm them. Yet, Barney still insisted on coming to the president's residence alone and ended up getting threatened.

Barney let out a sigh.

"I came here for your sake. I don't want to trouble you guys." However, he couldn't ignore the fact that their association with him had put them in a troublesome situation. Knowing Marcus, he realized that it wouldn't be easy for them to leave unscathed.

No matter where they went, they couldn't be completely free as they were merely pawns to someone else.

It was difficult to be able to research freely and independently.

Sophie sighed. "Dr. Smith, why can't you understand that you're not a trouble to us?"

Right then, she had to acknowledge that the difference in their cultural backgrounds prevented them from comprehending each other entirely.

Tristan was present as well, assuring them, "Don't worry, I'm here to help!"

He wasn't afraid of anything. Those people would have to go through him first if they wanted to harm his wife.

“Ms. Tanner, Professor Gullifer, please calm down. I wasn't trying to harm him. I just want you to stay to help me out. If you agree, I'll be forever indebted to you,” Marcus implored.

“Oh, really?” Sophie pulled out a chair and sat down. “What will you offer us, then?”

Hearing her question, Marcus relaxed and broke into a grin. As long as she was open to discussion, he was confident in persuading her to stay.

Tristan sat down beside Sophie.

Arius let out an icy snort. Why would she want to talk to them? We should just fight our way out.

Barney was clueless about Sophie's intentions, but at this point, he had no control over the situation.

Marcus proposed, “If you decide to stay, I'll allocate ten percent of my company's profits toward your research.” He knew they needed a lot of money to fund their research. After allowing them to consider his proposal for a moment, he continued, “Moreover, when I become the next president, I can also—”

Sophie interrupted him by raising her hand. “Frankly speaking, you're not suited for the position, so I think you should abandon your aspirations. I have no desire to be associated with you,” she declared.

Marcus never imagined that someone would have the audacity to say those words to him directly.

“You—”

“I'm merely stating the truth. You don't have what it takes to be a competent president, and your actions are detrimental to Anglandur. If Anglandur had a more capable leader, it wouldn't be in this current state,” Sophie interjected bluntly. Even though it wasn't her concern, she voiced her opinion without any hesitation.

“Hey!” Marcus heaved angrily.

"How dare you speak like that? Are you even aware of who you're addressing? The nerve of you!" Jamie snapped furiously.

Marcus placed his hand on his chest, trying to calm himself down. He couldn't fathom how a woman in her twenties had managed to enrage him so effortlessly.

"Sophie." Barney shot Sophie an apprehensive glance. Knowing that Marcus wasn't a forgiving person by nature, he anticipated that he would hold a grudge against her for speaking her mind. This would undoubtedly lead to more trouble for them.

"Don't worry, Dr. Smith. I spoke the truth, so I don't think the president will be angry with me," Sophie responded while glancing at Marcus.

Marcus' voice was glacial as he said, "So no matter what I say, you won't be staying, right?"

"That's correct. No matter what you say, we won't stay," Sophie responded resolutely. She saw no point in engaging in further conversation as it would be futile.

"If that's how it is, then I'm left with no option but to take drastic measures," Marcus retorted. "I didn't want it to come to this, but you've left me with no choice."

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Within the mansion, dozens of bodyguards emerged and surrounded them all.

In a frigid tone, Marcus stated, "I genuinely want you to stay. You have nothing to fear since I won't hurt you. I merely believe that you require more time to reconsider my proposal."

Jamie agreed, "Exactly! Mr. President has gone to great lengths, so I hope you can understand him!" There was no indication of regret on his part.

"Hey!" Barney went cold with fury, but there was nothing he could do.

After all, the president had meticulously selected and trained these personal bodyguards to be highly skilled and competent individuals who would follow his instructions without question.

Sophie fished out a piece of gum from her pocket and tore off the packaging. Popping it into her mouth, she chewed on it calmly.

“Is this all the men you have? Do you really think they can stop us from leaving?” Sophie challenged, her voice dripping with disdain.

She didn't mind humoring the other party. Regardless, they would be departing today as their plane was already waiting for them.

Marcus knitted his brows. What is she talking about? Has she lost her mind? Does she not know how capable my men are?

Sophie glanced at Tristan. “Darling, it's your turn now,” she told him nonchalantly.

Knowing that Tristan had made arrangements, she remained calm.

Tristan's face lit up with a grin. He then clapped his hands, and a swarm of bodyguards flooded into the mansion.

Marcus' dozens of bodyguards were outnumbered.

“You...” Marcus was taken aback by the sudden shift in power. Despite his confidence in his own bodyguards, he had not anticipated the sheer number of professional bodyguards working for Tristan to appear in his mansion.

The enemy's bodyguards seemed even more capable than his own.

Jamie was taken aback, clearly not expecting the sudden influx of bodyguards on Tristan's side. He thought their plan would go smoothly without any hiccups, but now everything had changed.



“What are you trying to do? Do you know where you are?” Jamie's voice quivered with fear as he was a coward and didn't want to die here.

He had executed Marcus' scheme in the hopes of securing a lifetime of riches and success. If he were to perish here, he wouldn't get to relish any of it.

Jamie quickly realized the situation and tried to distance himself from it. “Please, everyone, this has nothing to do with me. I'm just a secretary who doesn't have any decision-making power. I'm only following the president's orders,” he pleaded.

Jamie quickly realized the situation and tried to distance himself from it. “Please, everyone, this has nothing to do with me. I'm just a secretary who doesn't have any decision-making power. I'm only following the president's orders,” he pleaded.

Obviously, he was trying to protect himself.

Marcus' expression changed as he shot Jamie a look. Why did I hire him to be my secretary?

“Mr. President, can we leave now?” Sophie pulled out her phone to glance at the time. “I plan on having breakfast in Chanaea!”

She looked forward to waking up the next morning in Chanaea to an authentic Chanaean breakfast, provided they could leave now.

They had arranged everything meticulously and weren't about to waste time here.

Marcus conceded, “You may leave now!” He had been thoroughly defeated, realizing that if he pushed any further, it would only lead to trouble on his end.

“Leave? Hold up. You threatened Dr. Smith, so shouldn't you apologize to him?”

They wouldn't leave until they received an apology from him. Barney was a known coward, and Marcus' threat might have frightened him.

Marcus quickly offered a placating smile.

"Dr. Smith, you know I mean well. I hope you'll stay to help me. If my actions have caused any inconvenience, I sincerely apologize," Marcus said humbly. It was a complete change in attitude from his previous behavior.

Barney bobbed his head.

No matter what, they were still in Marcus' territory, and he didn't want to make things difficult for him.

"Forget it, then. Let's go, Sophie," Barney urged. He wasn't about to humiliate Marcus as the latter was still the president of Anglandur.

"Ms. Tanner, please accept my apology. I hope you won't take this to heart," Marcus added.

Sophie agreed readily, "Okay. I'll let this slide since Dr. Smith said so. Remember, if you even think about bothering Dr. Smith again, I will make sure to completely destroy your home. I'm dead serious, and you know that I'm fully capable of doing it."

With that, she stood up and linked arms with Tristan, and they made their way out.

She had originally intended to teach Marcus a lesson for his shameless behavior but ultimately decided to let the matter slide upon Barney's request.

"Dr. Smith, let's get going. We said we would be having breakfast in Chanaea, remember? We won't make it if we keep delaying," urged Arius as Barney remained in place.

"Okay," Barney replied, still in a daze. He had no idea that the tables would turn in the end.

Since when did Tristan have this many bodyguards? Most importantly, his bodyguards seem more capable than the president's bodyguards.

After they left, the over one hundred bodyguards vanished just as quickly as they had appeared. If the sight hadn't been so shocking, Marcus might have thought the whole thing was just his imagination.

"Mr. President, what should we do now?" Jamie asked. The virus was under control as of now, but no one knew what would happen after this.

The Anglandurn citizens wouldn't trust them now that Barney and his team were gone.

Marcus shot Jamie an icy glare.

Didn't he betray me for his own benefits?

"Did you forget what you said earlier?" Marcus' voice was frosty.

Jamie's body trembled as he fell to his knees. "Mr. President, I was terrified earlier. I didn't mean what I said. You know I've always been faithful to you."

"Bring him upstairs," Marcus commanded.

He was not willing to take any risks by keeping those who had betrayed him by his side.

Keeping Jamie around was like having a ticking time bomb, a potential threat that could explode at any moment.

"Mr. President, please have mercy on me. I know I made a mistake!" Jamie pleaded, clearly still shaken by the earlier encounter with their enemy's large number of bodyguards.

Alas, Marcus refused to hear his pleas.

Faced with numerous troubles, he would have to deal with a lot of challenges if he wanted to continue his presidency.

Meanwhile, Tristan and the like arrived at the airport to see Nicholas waiting for them.

“What is Nicholas after? Is he plotting something?” Arius asked with concern. He was well aware of Nicholas' unpredictable behavior, so seeing him waiting for them at the airport made him feel uneasy.

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“It's okay. You guys should go ahead. I'll catch up to you in a while.” Sophie saw Nicholas and thought he had come alone.

“Okay, be careful.” Arius knew Nicholas had always restrained himself and behaved well in front of Sophie despite being a lunatic.

He gave Butterfly a nudge when he noticed her standing still.

“Hey, didn't you hear what Sophie said? She asked us to go ahead. What's wrong? Have you fallen for Nicholas?”

Why is she staring blankly like that?

Butterfly glared at him in response.

“Why are you such a busybody? It's my freedom to love whoever I want! What's it to you? Mind your own business!”

After all, Nicholas saved my life, but I haven't thanked him. Ah... Forget it. He only risked his life to save me because of Sophie. It's all because I'm Sophie's best friend. Otherwise, he would have cared less about my safety.

At the thought of that, she could not help but feel bitter about it.

After glancing at Nicholas, she didn't walk over to him but instead left with Aruis and the rest.

Nicholas expressed his disdain when he saw Tristan coming over with Sophie. "I only want to have a few words with Sophie, Mr. Tristan. What are you worried about?"

Is there really a need for such caution?

"She's my wife and not someone you can covet. You should probably go on your way now." Tristan had never spoken nicely to Nicholas.

"Haha, your wife? You two are not married yet. Who knows whose wife she would become in the future?" Nicholas made a provocative remark in return.

His words successfully caused Tristan's temper to flare up.

Without hesitation, Tristan folded his sleeves, wanting to teach Nicholas a lesson right away.

When Nicholas saw Tristan's actions, he quickly removed his jacket, ready for a fight.

Sophie was rendered speechless by their childish behavior.

"I'm being serious. You two have to stop this nonsense! We're getting on the plane soon."

Nicholas instantly felt aggrieved after hearing Sophie's words.

"Can I go with you, Sophie?" Nicholas wanted to stay next to her.

"What do you think?"

Nicholas knew he could never leave with Sophie as he wished, as he still had many things to handle in Anglandur. Moreover, the foundations of the Sable family's businesses were in Anglandur. It would be impossible for him to leave whenever he wanted to.

"Can't you go easy on me, Sophie? At least try to lie to me!" Sometimes, he felt pathetic as his affection was not reciprocated.

Seeing Nicholas' miserable situation, Tristan felt incredibly lucky to have Sophie in his life. Fortunately, when they met, Sophie wasn't in love with anyone and eventually fell in love with him.

Otherwise, he would be in the same unfortunate situation as Nicholas.

Unrequited love was the worst thing to ever happen to anyone in love.

"Don't give me that look, Tristan. We won't know who's the winner at the end of the day!" Nicholas was adamant that he was not going to give up.

"No matter what, I'm grateful for your help, Nicholas. How about this? I'll treat you to a meal when you come to Chanaea. But for today, we really need to leave now."

Sophie glanced at her watch and realized they needed to leave.

"Okay. Remember what you said. I'll meet you in Chanaea soon. Promise me you won't bring him along when the time comes," Nicholas said straightforwardly.

"All right. I promise. We'll be heading in now."

Although he was reluctant to let her go, he was not in the position to make her stay.

“Remember this, Sophie. Just give me a call no matter what difficulties you're encountering. I will definitely rush to you.”

Sophie was both speechless and exasperated at Nicholas' continued stubbornness.

“You need to live for yourself, Nicholas. Please don't put your priority on me. It's not worth it!” Sophie didn't want him to treat her too well since she couldn't respond to his love.

Then, Tristan wrapped his arm around her waist and led her inside the airport.

Standing outside the airport, Nicholas felt utterly desolated.

He wished he was the one standing next to her and was ready to give anything for that.

Richard quickly got out of the car after he saw the two leave.

“Boss, we need to leave.”

“Mhm.”

It's fine. I still have a chance as long as they are not married.

In truth, there was nothing he could do.

With his arm wrapped around Sophie's waist, Tristan went to find Arius and the others. This time, they were taking Tristan's private plane.

Hence, they could board the plane now.

“Honestly, I'm not coming to Anglandur ever again,” Arius said curtly.

We worked our asses off here, but what did we get in return? These people are terrible.

“Don't jinx it. Nobody knows what might happen the next day.” Butterfly figured he didn't need to say something unguaranteed in advance.

Hearing that, Arius rolled his eyes at her.

Whatever. I'll just ignore her.

Barney finally heaved a sigh of relief when the plane took off.

“Sophie, you should manage Chanaean Medical Association from now on. I'm getting old and not fit to make any more decisions.”

He knew his decision had put his two mentees in great danger this time.

“Dr. Smith, you're still young. You should manage Chanaean Medical Association!” Sophie wasn't inclined to take the offer.

“But I think you're more suitable for the position.”

“I'm still a student and have to attend classes, Dr. Smith.” Even if I don't study, I have to spend time dating. Otherwise, poor Tristan will feel too lonely.

“Well then. Arius, I'm leaving Chanaean Medical Association to you when we return to Chanaea,” Barney said resignedly.



Hearing that, Arius promptly shook his head.

“You've got to be joking, Dr. Smith! I don't have a girlfriend yet! I need time to find one. Do you want me to be single for life?” he snapped.

“What are you two thinking? Why are you refusing a highly esteemed position? Anyone would kill to have it!”

“Dr. Smith, I'm serious. I think you're the most suitable person for that position. Don't worry! We won't have any problems with your decisions,” Sophie said sincerely. “You don't need to take what happened this time to heart. Everything has been resolved, hasn't it?”

She knew Barney was traumatized over what happened this time. However, there really was no need for that.

They were all adults who could take responsibility for their own decisions.

“That's right, Dr. Smith. Please feel at ease with your position as the decision-maker. Sophie and I will take your instructions.” Barney Smith was undoubtedly the God of Medicine.

## Chapter 856

“Okay then! In that case, I'll still helm Chanaean Medical Association for now. However, you two should think about who'll take my place when the time comes,” stated Barney. Even though so many people desire my position, they still refuse to occupy it. I can't help but feel resigned.

Sophie and Arius exchanged a glance. Neither wanted the position because they only wished to focus on conducting experiments.

They had no interest whatsoever in dealing with the matters in Chanaean Medical Association.

“Honestly, Dr. Smith, I think you should nurture Georgina rather than try to appoint one of us as the next person in charge. She has the potential to do a good job in that position,” Sophie proposed sincerely.

“Georgina, eh? All right, then! Once I return, I'll observe her for a while. If I find her acceptable, I'll do just that.” Once again, Barney sighed. I guess I can't count on either of them to take my place, huh?

As it was already nighttime, and everyone was tired, they each went to find a spot to rest.

Sophie and Tristan sat together after he adjusted her seat to lie flat. Then, he said, “I know it's still early, but you should sleep. Once you wake up, you'll be able to enjoy a delicious Chanaean breakfast.”

He knew she hadn't been eating well in Anglandur, so he had called his subordinates to prepare breakfast before boarding the plane.

“Mhm! You should sleep too,” replied Sophie. He must also be exhausted after protecting us during this period. He deserves a good, long rest, too.

After she lay down, Tristan covered her body with a blanket.

Turning toward him, she lost herself in thoughts. Frankly, he has a face I'll never get sick of staring at. The more time we spend together, the more I like him, so much so that I'm basically addicted to him.

“Are Charles and Bertram still in Fandar? You know, they didn't do anything wrong, so you should let them off,” suggested Sophie. We're heading back, yet they are still stuck in Fandar. I know this is Tristan's matter, but they ended up like that because of me, so I think it's fine if I plead leniency for them.

“I know. We can talk about it after we return,” responded Tristan.

“What's the matter?”

"I'm not happy!"

"Why?" Sophie was confounded. Wasn't he doing okay just a second ago? Why is he suddenly unhappy?

"Because I don't like you paying so much attention to other men!"

That rendered her speechless. I only care about Bertram and Charles because of him! Otherwise, they wouldn't have anything to do with me. What is he thinking?

When her train of thought ended there, Sophie explained, "I just don't want to be the reason your relationship with them sours."

"I know you're doing this for me, but don't worry. They're my comrades with whom I survived hell and high water together. It's just that there genuinely are matters in Fandar that need to be dealt with, which is why I left them there." While Tristan was a self-indulgent tyrant, he wouldn't treat his close friends that unkindly.

"I'm aware you're a man who knows what you're doing. There's no way I'd fall in love with a bad man, after all!" flattered Sophie.

In response, Tristan pinched her cheek. "You've gotten thinner lately." Even though I've been taking personal care of her, she still lost weight. It makes me feel awful.

"Maybe because it's been exhausting lately."

"In that case, once we return home, rest for half a month. Don't do anything else during that period."

"Rest for half a month? What am I going to do at home during that time? I'll get bored! Two days of rest is the most I need."

“Will you still get bored if I'm around?” asked Tristan.

Sophie blinked and refuted, “You still have matters to attend to after we return! You can't stay by my side all day long. Besides, I bet many things are waiting for you to handle in Lombard Group after spending so much time away from the company.” I can't be so selfish as to ask him to keep me company all day long and prevent him from doing what he should.

“It's not an issue,” he replied. I'm the CEO of Lombard Group, am I not? Besides, my subordinates aren't that useless. They don't need me to solve every issue. “All right, stop thinking and rest. I know it's much more difficult to sleep on a plane, but you should still try. Even if you can't fall asleep, you should rest with your eyes closed.”

“Okay.” Thus, Sophie closed her eyes. Even though she thought she couldn't slumber, she did soon after.

Tristan also shut his eyes and rested.

Meanwhile, Ysabelle couldn't sleep.

Hence, she decided to bother Felix at two in the morning.

Ysabelle: Are you asleep yet, Felix? Am I bothering you? I can't help it. I just can't fall asleep. I get too excited to rest when I think about how Sophie's returning tomorrow and that I can have fun with her again. I know I shouldn't act like this, but I just can't control myself!

Felix: It's fine. It's only two right now. You can meet your beloved Sophie in five more hours.

Then he grumbled in his mind. I don't think she has ever been this attached to me, even though I'm her boyfriend. Now that I think about it, I feel like I have terrible luck. I finally found a girlfriend I wholeheartedly love, yet I still need to compete with another woman for her attention. What a terrible fate I have.

The couple chatted until five in the morning. Ysabelle thought she could pick her best friend up at the airport, but she accidentally fell asleep. By the time she woke up, it was already half past nine in the

morning.

Upon checking the time, she leaped from the bed. D\*mmmit! How could I have overslept on such an important day? I don't think I can make it in time if I head to the airport now.

Hastily, she called Sophie. "I'm sorry, Sophie. I overslept, which is why I didn't pick you up at the airport. Mhm? Ah, yes, of course. I'll be there right away to join you all for breakfast. I can definitely make it!"

Ysabelle stood immediately, packed her things, and drove to Sophie and the others.

Unfortunately, a traffic jam delayed her arrival until noon. It filled her heart with misery.

However, when she finally reached her destination and saw Sophie, she pounced on the latter and hugged her tightly. "You have no idea how much I missed you, Sophie!"

Sophie pinched Ysabelle's cheek. "Don't you have Felix keeping you company? Is he not enough for you?"

"He can't be compared to you! In my heart, you're the most important person in my life. Other people aren't as important."

Felix happened to enter the room at that moment to hear his girlfriend's remark.

As the edges of his lips twitched, he lamented in his mind. It's just as I expected. Once Sophie returns, I lose my place in Ysabelle's heart, even though I'm her boyfriend. This sucks!

## CHAPTER 857 DID WELL

Hence, Felix silently approached Tristan. He and the others had been tending to Lombard Group when Tristan wasn't around.

Since Tristan had returned, it was time to let him take charge of Lombard Group's matters again.

"Your girlfriend stole my spot, Mr. Tristan," uttered Felix in a depressed tone. Sophie really does have unparalleled charm.

"So?" Tristan asked casually. There's nothing right or wrong about anything Sophie does.

"It's nothing." Felix understood the look in his employer's eyes and sighed in his heart.

There was nothing he could do but sulk about it in silence since it was impossible for him to win against Tristan.

"Then what are you sulking about? There's nothing I can do if Ysabelle only has eyes for Sophie. In fact, I was hoping you could control your girlfriend a little so she wouldn't cling to mine every day!"

Speechlessly, Felix thought, Mr. Tristan is overestimating me! I can't control Ysabelle!

"You've become thinner, Sophie," said Ysabelle with heartache. "You only stayed in Anglandur for a month, so why do you look so skinny? Did Uncle Tristan fail to take good care of you?"

"No, he did. This is just what I'm like. When I get busy, I get thinner. There's nothing I can do about this physique of mine," Sophie answered. "Although, I don't think it's all bad. Look, I don't even need to lose

weight. While others are busy doing that, I can eat and drink whatever I want. It's pretty great."

"No, it's not. When Aunt Sarah has her break, I'll ask her to cook delicious food for you!" Ysabelle suggested. While I don't have any talent for cooking, Aunt Sarah does!

"It's not necessary. Sarah's tired enough as it is. I don't want to trouble her. I just need to rest a few days at home, and I'll be fine."

When Sarah arrived with a bag of vegetables she had bought from the supermarket and heard that, she refuted, "It's no trouble at all! I'll prepare a tasty meal for you today. After all, you're the pride of the Lombard family, Sophie." I can't help but feel proud that Tristan found a girlfriend like her.

Her praise embarrassed Sophie a little. "I didn't do anything special, Sarah. I just so happen to be knowledgeable about that."

"You're too humble, Sophie!" Ysabelle shook her head with a smile and stared at her friend with admiration. "You're always amazing, no matter what you do!"

As it had been a while since they saw each other, they had a lengthy chat. When Sarah finished preparing dinner, everyone ate in the dining room.

"I'm glad you two are finally back in the country," Felix uttered. Even though Anglandur has been dangerous recently, the two of them still went there without hesitation and helped out so much. It's impressive.

Smiling, Sophie replied, "Thanks for your and the others' hard work when we weren't around." He

must've been busy managing Lombard Group and Tanner Group during our absence.

"What I did is honestly incomparable to what you achieved." Felix was very impressed with her. She never ceases to amaze and surprise others.

After the meal, Ysabelle still didn't want to leave but had to after her manager called her about the music video she had to film during the afternoon.

Disappointed, she bade Sophie goodbye. "Take good care of yourself, Sophie. I'll head to work now." No matter what, TS belongs to Sophie, so I must do a good job.

Sophie nodded. "See you, then! Stay safe!"

Felix wrapped an arm around Ysabelle's waist. "All right, let's go! Otherwise, you'll be late. If the reporters take photos of that, they'll say you're acting haughty again." Even though Ysabelle's great and always does her best, there are still heartless reporters trying to defame her. That's how the world is, I suppose. Regardless of how hard you try, there will always be people who don't like to see you doing well.

"Do you think I'm afraid?" Ysabelle shrugged nonchalantly. I just really like to sing. The entertainment industry, on the other hand... I don't like the environment. It's too complicated. Thankfully, with my background, those reporters won't dare to mess with me.

After also receiving a call, Sarah departed from the mansion. Thus, Sophie and Tristan were the only ones left.

"Since you're back, you should visit your dad. He's been worried about you, after all," suggested

Sophie.

"I know. Don't worry. I know what to do," Tristan answered. Of course I'll visit him, but I've been busy since I left the plane.

"I'll come with you!" I should visit him since Tristan and I are engaged, and Old Mr. Lombard did care very much about me when we were in Anglandur.

Hugging her and taking in her fragrance, he said, "Oh, you." Why is she just so lovable? It's fine for her to be willful, but she always returns the favor if someone treats her nicely, even if just a little.

The edges of Sophie's lips curved upward. "Well, I brought someone's son to a dangerous place. Now that we're back, it's natural I'll have to go ask for forgiveness." I wonder if Old Mr. Lombard will accept my apology.

"You're correct, and you should! You dazzled someone's son so much that he can't even tell up from down!" Tristan grinned.



During the afternoon, he brought Sophie to the Lombard residence.

William knew they had returned, but because he still hadn't seen the couple, he was pissed. Turning to the butler, he grumbled, "What's the point of raising a son? Even though I worried about him when he was in a foreign land, he still hasn't visited me after returning to the country!"

"Perhaps he's simply too busy, Old Mr. Lombard. I'm confident he'll visit you once he's free," the butler replied. While Mr. Lombard isn't an emotional person, he's a filial son.

"Whatever! He forgot all about me once he got a wife! I bet I don't even have a place in his heart anymore. There's nothing more I can say about that."

Just as the butler accompanied William in taking care of the flowers in the courtyard, they heard the sound of an engine.

When the butler turned around, he saw Tristan's car driving in and sighed in relief. I don't know what Old Mr. Lombard would do if Mr. Lombard took longer to return. Although, I suppose it's normal for someone to grumble constantly after growing old.

Then, he informed, "Look, Old Mr. Lombard. Mr. Lombard's back with Ms. Tanner!"

"I see!" Despite William's complaints about his son not visiting him, he seemed indifferent when his son arrived.

Tristan approached his father with Sophie and spoke. "We're back, Dad. We'll be having dinner with you tonight." He said that because he knew what his father wanted.

"Mhm." Nodding, William commented, "You did well in Anglandur this time, Sophie."

CHAPTER 858 TROUBLED FELIX

William wasn't someone who particularly enjoyed praising others. Therefore, he meant precisely what he said when he complimented Sophie.

“Thank you, Old Mr. Lombard.” Despite receiving praise, she remained collected.

The couple stood at the side as William continued tending to the flowers. Even though William didn't say much of anything, he did order the butler to ask the chef to prepare a few more dishes Sophie liked.

It was a clear display of his affection for her.

In the past, he didn't like her. But, he found himself adoring her more and more nowadays. However, he was a prideful man, so he found it difficult to lower himself and speak to Sophie further.

The difference between how he used to treat her and how he treated her at that moment was drastic.

That night, Sarah and Ysabelle also returned home for dinner. Felix came too, but William seemed dissatisfied with the former.

It was because William thought the age gap between Felix and Ysabelle was too significant.

Therefore, he didn't treat Felix nicely for the whole night.

Upon approaching Tristan, Felix asked, “Did I offend your dad? Why do I feel like he's upset with me today, Mr. Tristan?”

“What did you expect? Of course he'll be upset after a hog like you snatched the precious sweetheart he doted on for two decades away. You should be glad he didn't just kick you out.”

“Why am I a hog now? Don't you think I suit Ysabelle well? Besides, you're also much older than Sophie, so why didn't he complain about you? Why is he only upset at me?” Felix was speechless.

Narrowing his eyes, Tristan questioned, "What do you mean by that? Are you comparing me to you right now? Do you think we're even comparable?"

Felix was at a loss for words. The members of the Lombard family are just so mean! What's so wrong with me? I'm considered a promising young man in Jipsdale, so why doesn't Old Mr. Lombard like me?

"All right, that's enough. Once you take care of Ysabelle, you don't need to mind what others think. All that matters right now is her attitude toward you."

"That's more like it. Now you're acting like my friend," remarked Felix. There's no way he can't tell how I feel about Ysabelle. Besides, he never opposed my relationship with her before!

During dinner, William intentionally commented, "You're an adult now, Ysabelle. You know, I think that boy from the Lane family suits you well. You should interact with him more."

He completely ignored Felix because he was just that dissatisfied with the latter.

Meanwhile, Ysabelle was dumbstruck. I haven't told my family about my relationship with Felix yet, but I'm certain they can tell we're a couple. In that case, why did Grandpa say that in front of Felix?

"I'm still young, Grandpa. I'm not in a hurry to get into a relationship." She felt a little helpless when she said that while glancing at Felix. He sure seems calm.

Upon noticing Ysabelle was looking at Felix, William scoffed, "Indeed you are, which is why you shouldn't be fooled by awful old men. I'm saying this for your own good, understand?"

Old men? I'm the same age as Mr. Tristan! As much as Felix wanted to refute William, he couldn't, so he pretended not to hear anything.

Sarah glanced at Felix. I bet he's pissed off right now.

Concurrently, Sophie also peered at Felix with a gloating look.

That all made Felix feel gloomy. These people... They're so mean! Why aren't they helping me at this critical moment?

After dinner, Ysabelle went to a secluded spot with Felix.

"You know how my grandpa is. As for the blind date, don't worry. I won't attend it." She knew he felt insecure, which was why she comforted him.

"Am I really that old, Ysabelle? I'm the same age as Mr. Tristan, so why does Old Mr. Lombard seem to disdain me so much? I don't get it!" Felix frowned.

"Didn't I tell you not to mind what my grandfather says? He simply doesn't want me to stay with you. Besides, it's not like I can retort him in that situation," reminded Ysabelle. Why doesn't he still

understand after I said so many things? Is it fun for him to overthink things?

"Kiss me, then. I think my self-esteem is wounded." He continued to act coyly.

After surveying her surrounding to ensure no one was around, Ysabelle stood on her toes and pecked his lips before swiftly pulling back. "Are you satisfied yet? Have you stopped feeling angry?"

The kiss is kind of plain, but... Felix answered, "It's acceptable. Why do I feel like I'll encounter many obstacles if I want to marry you?"

"Obviously. If you're afraid of trouble, feel free to give up now. I won't blame you for it." His attitude was starting to get on her nerve. It's not like I'm to blame for this! This is starting to irritate me. Why hasn't he felt better after I comforted him for so long?

"You're a heartless little thing, you know that?" he spat. I've been afraid all this time because I'm concerned we may not be able to stay with each other. Yet, she has the nerve to say such a callous thing.

“Hmph! Go home, Felix. I don't want to talk to you anymore today.” Upon ending her sentence, she ignored him and headed upstairs. Why does he act like he's the only one with problems? I'm under a lot of pressure, too, okay?

Felix sighed before calling Ysabelle on the phone.

However, she refused to accept the call because her patience for the day had run out. If he thinks it's a pain to stay with me, he can just leave me. I'm not a clingy person.

With no other choice, Felix returned home, lest he risked bumping into William again and receiving a lecture from the old man.

Meanwhile, Tristan and Sophie stayed at the mansion for the night to keep William company. After all, they had just returned.

After Sophie finished her shower, she saw Ysabelle stepping into her room with teary eyes and a pillow.

“What's the matter? Did Felix bully you?” she asked as she dried her hair.

Ysabelle's voice was choked as she exclaimed, “Men are pigs, Sophie! They're so ridiculous!”

“Did Felix really bully you? Actually, can he even bear to do that? Did you bully him and then feel aggrieved?” questioned Sophie. Based on what I know of Felix, I don't think he can bring himself to bully her.

“How can you say that when I came to you for comfort, Sophie? I admit I may be a little temperamental occasionally, but I love Felix. There's no way I can bring myself to bully him for real! I want to stay with him. However, sometimes, I'm not certain about the future. I don't know if we can reach the end together. After all, many people have a wonderful relationship when they first start out but still break up in the end.”

CHAPTER 859 KEEP YOU COMPANY

"You really don't need to overthink it. No one can guarantee what'll happen. As long as you want to be his girlfriend, then cherish your time with him. There isn't a single person in this world who can predict the future, after all," advised Sophie.

"Is that so? Even though I want to stay by his side my whole life, I'm not confident about it. I genuinely love him. I wouldn't feel so conflicted if I didn't," Ysabelle replied.

In response, Sophie patted her friend's cheek. "Don't overthink, Ysabelle. Just focus on the present."

"Okay, got it. Did I disturb your rest?" Ysabelle wiped her tears away. I'm aware she didn't get much rest lately because she's been so busy, but I still bothered her with my matters. What a lousy friend I am.

"I'm fine. You can talk about any emotional matter bothering you with me. I may be unable to help you solve all your issues, but I can certainly be a good listener."

Ysabelle nodded.

"Oh yeah, isn't your album coming out soon? You should set your feelings aside and focus on that first."

"Don't worry, Sophie. I won't let this or any other issues affect my work. I like singing, and I want it to be done well."

"I'm glad to hear that."

"I'll be heading back now. You should rest early." Ysabelle smiled. As much as I'm still bothered by this, I can't keep disturbing Sophie.

"You can do this, Ysabelle. Whether it's love or singing, you can handle it well."

"Thank you, Sophie. I'm glad that I met you. Without you, I don't know what I'd do. You helped me so many times."

"You know, you aided me more times than you realize." Sophie grinned. Ysabelle's a warm person. She may not notice it, but her presence often brings a sense of comfort to people around her.

After Ysabelle left, Tristan entered the room. He had arrived much earlier but didn't go in because he knew Ysabelle was inside.

It wasn't until his niece left that he approached Sophie and inquired, "What's the matter with her?" Can't she just focus on her romance instead of constantly bothering Sophie?

Knitting her eyebrows slightly, Sophie answered, "I don't think anything major happened, but I'm not sure. There's a chance she quarreled with Felix." While Felix isn't someone who often argues with Ysabelle, it's inevitable in a relationship. Sometimes, emotions appear and vanish rapidly.

"You should focus less on her matters in the future. She should solve her relationship issues herself. There's nothing anyone else can do for her."

"Don't be like that. Ysabelle didn't disturb me. Often, she's the one helping me and not the other way round."

"Fine, then." Tristan held her waist. "By the way, you're visiting the University of Medicine tomorrow, right?" Even though we've finally returned to the country, we're still so busy. In any case, I'm certain she needs to deal with her course skipping there tomorrow. It's impressive she can do that at a place like the University of Medicine. My woman really is outstanding.

Nodding, Sophie answered, "Yep. The dean knows my intention to skip courses, but a few professors there disagreed, so I have to convince them tomorrow." She found no reason to waste more time at the university. After all, she had already grasped everything she needed to learn during her second and third-year courses.

"Do you want me to go with you?" he offered. If anyone dares to disagree, I'll have a chat with them.

"No need. This is my matter. I can handle it. You should focus on Lombard Group," she insisted. There are definitely many things waiting for him to handle after he left the country for so long.

"I'm worried they'll bully you."

Tristan's response amused Sophie. Does he not understand what kind of person I am? "They can't even if they want to. In fact, they should be grateful I won't bully them."

He pecked the edge of her lips. "I know you're amazing, but I still want to protect you and stay with you whenever possible. "

Promptly, Sophie stood on her toes and kissed his lips. "Fret not. I can handle these minor issues. You don't need to keep worrying about me. It's unnecessary." We must learn how to face our own problems, after all.

"Very well!" Even though it was a gentle kiss, it still made his heart race. I wonder if I'll only become less unrestrained after getting married.

As he stared at her, an idea popped into his mind: to pounce at her.

Before Sophie realized it, she was already pinned to the bed by him as he kissed her.

Ysabelle didn't mean to disturb them. However, after she returned to her room, she realized she had left her phone in Sophie's room.

Hence, she returned to Sophie's room without giving it too much thought. Because she was in a hurry, she forgot to knock on the door before entering the room.

When Tristan heard the sound of the door opening, he used his body to prevent the intruder from catching sight of Sophie.

"What are you standing there for? Get out!" Even though his voice sounded cold, it couldn't conceal his tremendous lust.



It was then Ysabelle snapped back to reality. "I'm so sorry, Uncle Tristan! I didn't know you two were..."

For a moment, she couldn't think of an explanation. Is today the day I die? Still, she eventually muttered, "I didn't mean to barge in, Sophie. I'm only here to grab my phone!"

Hastily, she darted into the room, grabbed her phone, and sprinted out.

Ysabelle felt her heart beating rapidly after returning to her room and reprimanded it in her mind. Why are you thumping so fast? Sophie doesn't have time to put you back in if you thump so hard that you jump out of my chest!

Meanwhile, when Tristan saw Sophie's ears turning as red as a tomato, he gently bit them. "I'm sorry. I forgot to close the door. Next time, I'll be sure to lock it."

She grinned. "Okay!"

While she did feel somewhat embarrassed by the incident, she suddenly felt like it was nothing notable when she saw Tristan like that.

"Don't blame Ysabelle." She didn't want Tristan to reprimand Ysabelle for something her friend didn't intend to do.

"Relax, I won't trouble her," assured Tristan. Still, that girl's getting more unruly. Doesn't she know she should knock on the door before entering someone else's room?

Sophie flipped them around and lay on top of him. "I'm being serious. Her new album is coming out in the next few days. I don't want you to affect her."

"Okay, I understand. Although, do you realize your current position is very..." He trailed off and wrapped his arms around her waist tight when she tried to change position, immobilizing her.

"What are you doing? It's late. I'm going to sleep."

"I'll keep you company, then!"

## CHAPTER 860 DO NOT BEG ME FOR HELP

"Go sleep in your room! Because of you, Ysabelle has gotten the wrong idea..." Sophie grumbled. Argh! Ysabelle must've thought there was some hanky-panky going on between us!

"What's there to be afraid of?" Tristan replied. "You're now my fiancée, so why should anyone care what we get up to around here? It's none of their business."

Oh, come on. Do I need everyone else's permission to be in a relationship?

"A while more. Let's cuddle a while more, and I'll leave," he added, a far cry from his usual authoritative self.

Upon seeing how beguiling the man was, Sophie gave in and took the initiative to hug him.

Fine... I can never reject him when he plays dirty, anyway. In fact, I don't think I can ever bring myself to turn him down.

Meanwhile, Ysabelle had rushed out with her phone in hand, only to be stopped by Sarah before she could enter her room.

"Why are you running? What on earth could be chasing you at home?"

"Aunt Sarah, I..." Ysabelle mumbled, her face red with embarrassment.

Then again, how could she not be when she had walked in on another couple doing the deed? Even though she and Felix were also dating, the latter never went beyond hugging and kissing her.

Naturally, she'd be mortified to witness such an intimate scene!

"What's the matter with you? Are you not feeling well? Do you want to see the doctor?" Sarah asked worriedly when she saw the flush in Ysabelle's cheeks.

For a moment, the young woman touched her face and bit her lower lip as she lapsed into silence. "I'm all right, Aunt Sarah."

Sarah, however, remained doubtful.

"What's wrong with you, then?"

"I-I'm done for, Aunt Sarah. If Uncle Tristan threatens to kill me tomorrow, will you please protect me?"

"Why? What happened?"

"Earlier, I barged into Sophie's room without knocking on the door. Then..." Ysabelle muttered before her voice trailed off.

"Oh, my goodness! Shouldn't you be old enough to know basic etiquette? You must always remember to knock before entering anyone's room!"

Well, it's perfectly normal and understandable for couples to be intimate. Besides, hasn't Dad been longing for grandchildren? I can't believe Ysabelle ruined that moment for Tristan and Sophie!

Ysabelle nodded. "Yes. I know."

Argh! Why am I being blamed? I was already feeling down in the dumps today and only returned to Sophie's room to grab my phone. How did I know I'd catch them in such a compromising situation? I didn't do it on purpose!

"All right. Don't worry too much," Sarah reassured. "It's getting late. Go to bed soon. You have an upcoming album release, don't you? You ought to be in good shape for that."

After all, looks were important in the music industry, so a singer like Ysabelle had to have ample rest.

"Okay," the young woman mumbled before darting into her room with her phone.

Sarah was also about to retire for the night when her phone suddenly rang. Alas, she couldn't help but frown as soon as she realized who the caller was.

What on earth is Juan up to? I was in love with him before, but he always treated me indifferently. However, now that I've given up on him, he won't stop pestering me! What's the point of this?

Sarah instantly declined the call, but Juan soon called again, clearly refusing to give up.

Annoyed, Sarah texted: Juan, what do you want? Haven't I already said that things aren't going to work out between us?

Juan: Why not, though? I wasn't aware of my feelings for you in the past, but now I know. Don't be afraid, Sarah. Besides, you don't have to do anything this time. I'll go to you.

Sarah: Is this fun for you, Juan? You ignored me when I was so madly in love with you, but now that I've chosen to walk away, you refuse to let me go. Do you truly like me, or are you just being resentful?

As it turned out, that was what troubled Sarah the most.

She had pursued Juan romantically for a long time, but he never reciprocated her feelings.

Therefore, wasn't it odd that he sang a different tune only when she had given up?

Was it true love, or was he merely bitter at the turn of events?

Juan: Sarah, we're still friends, aren't we? Isn't it normal for friends to call each other?"

Deep down, Juan knew he had gone overboard in the past, so he didn't want to push Sarah too far.

All I can do now is take things one step at a time. Even though we're both in our thirties, there really isn't much time to waste. Then again, I suppose that doesn't matter. We have the rest of our lives ahead of us, and I'm sure I can convince her of my feelings one day.

Sarah: That's enough. I've already said my piece, and I don't think there's a need to waste any more time.

Sarah had, in fact, already decided to be single for the rest of her life.

She was enjoying her life as a single woman and loved that she didn't have to care about anything else.

All that mattered was her own happiness.

Furthermore, many of her friends were sure they had married the love of their lives, yet their marriages still didn't turn out well.

After hanging up the phone, Sarah grabbed a facial mask and settled in for the night. Since she was already in her thirties, it was all the more reason to maintain a beauty routine.

The next day, when the entire family gathered for breakfast, Ysabelle was so scared of Tristan punishing her that she didn't dare look at him.

As such, she kept her head down and quietly tucked into her food.

That, however, only made William curious. "What's the matter with you, Ysabelle?"

Hmm... How odd. Ysabelle has always been very chatty, so why is she so quiet now?

Shocked to have suddenly been singled out, it took a while before Ysabelle snapped out of her daze.  
"I'm fine, Grandpa."

"You can tell me if something's wrong. Did someone bully you?" William asked. "Is it Felix? Was he upset because I mentioned wanting you to go on a blind date yesterday?"

Hmph! That must be it! I knew I didn't like Felix for a reason.

"Grandpa, will you stop being so biased against Felix? He treats me well, and I like him a lot," Ysabelle answered.

Even though there was no guarantee that they'd be together forever, she knew her feelings for him now were genuine.

"Oh, you silly child! Felix is too old for you. All I want is for you to live happily ever after."

"Aren't Uncle Tristan and Felix the same age, Grandpa? Moreover, Sophie is two months younger than me!" Ysabelle retorted, annoyed at William's double standard.

Just then, she felt Tristan's death glare on her, and she instantly bit her lower lip, realizing she had misspoken.

Argh! I've offended Uncle Tristan again. That's it. I'd better go to Felix right after breakfast... I reckon he's the only one who will save me now!

Upon seeing the change in Tristan's expression, Sophie couldn't help but smirk. She had always thought that only women were sensitive about their ages, but who knew men cared just as much about it?

Realizing he was about to blow his top, Sophie quickly grabbed his hand to calm him down.

“I think our ages are perfect! Don't worry! I don't think any less of you.”

Sure enough, Sophie's reassurance worked wonders, and Tristan's mood instantly improved.

“Ysabelle, don't ever ask me for my help again. I won't agree to it,” he said as he glanced at his niece. Why must she drag me in when she's talking about Felix? How annoying!