

Take My Breath Away by Rabbit Chapter 10

While standing with his head courteously tilted down, Tristan waited for an answer, but not a peep was heard from his boss even after a long moment.

When he raised his head in confusion to check what was going on, he noticed that the cigarette in his boss' hand had mostly burned into ash. What remained in his grip was the cigarette butt, but Carlos had yet to realize it. His eyes were glued on the screen. Out of curiosity, Tristan turned his head towards the TV; a girl was taking the lead of the marathon.

The young lady wore a green T-shirt and sneakers sponsored by Carlos' company, Hilton Group. Although her T-shirt was soaking wet from all the running, her pace was steady. Her face, on the other hand, was as red as a ripe apple. It was so adorable. One careful glance, and a person would be tempted to give it a little pinch. At least, that was what Tristan felt as he found himself watching and silently cheering for the athlete.

"Repeat your report. From the top," Carlos suddenly demanded, giving Tristan quite a start. When Tristan turned around to reiterate his report, his boss had already averted his gaze from the screen. Once again, his head was buried in a file, his eyes hidden from view, as though he was never distracted.

After some time, the one-time silver medalist managed to surpass Debbie. But this did not faze her, and 1 hour and 10 minutes later since the beginning, Debbie was ahead of everyone again. Everyone witnessed how much effort she put into each calculated step as she advanced forward. The whole venue was boiling with enthusiasm from every side.

As she gained momentum, some students from the Economics and Management School applauded her in excitement, shouting, "Well done, Debbie!" "Keep it going! You're almost there!" they yelled approvingly. Even the students who could not see everything clearly from a distance had joined in the cheering when they heard that Debbie was taking the lead again. Everything else was drowned out by the shouts, which came in waves, one louder than another. It went without saying that as much as she showed no signs of slowing down, neither did their screams of encouragement.

Ten more minutes later, only three passes were left before they hit the finish line. All of a sudden, surprised exclamations came from the crowd. Amidst a mixture of reactions, some students shouted Dixon's name.

When Debbie turned back, short of breath, she found that her friends, Jared and the rest, were nowhere to be seen. She realized that they had pulled out of the race. On the other hand, Dixon, who had been in the sixth place, had tripped for some reason. As he tried to get to his feet, it proved to be more difficult than he had thought and he failed.

Seeing this, Debbie hesitated for a second. Despite being several meters away from him — the distance growing with each step she took, she let out a low growl and then spun back towards him, sending the audience into a hysterical fit of amazement.

The moment she made the call in that split second, the former silver medalist took the lead again in her stead.

“Tom...” panted Dixon, sensing her return. “Tomboy. Don’t come... don’t... come back for me...” But before he could string a few more words together, Debbie was already standing before him with an extended hand. Looking up with a pair of apologetic eyes, Dixon fell silent, his jaw slack.

With a quick glance past Debbie’s figure, he saw that the silver medalist was still finishing the race and it brought his focus back. If not for him, he had to keep going for Debbie who had risked what was possibly already a sure win for her. Resignedly, Dixon took her hand and got up.

However, his injury seemed to be worse than he had thought. As soon as he stood up, the throb in his legs made him almost fall to his knees. Debbie was quick to catch him.

“Tomboy, listen to me,” he said between gasps. “My legs hurt.” He shook his head, feeling defeated. “I... I can’t go on. But you can still go. Run. Just ignore me.”

Looking at the scratches on his knees, Debbie encouraged him. “Doctor, it’s just a couple of scratches. You can do it. Just let me help you.”

They had been friends for years. And in those years, he never failed to be there for her when she got into trouble with the teachers. This time, however, he was the one who needed help. And like a true friend, she was not about to abandon him.

With Debbie’s stubborn insistence, Dixon clenched his teeth, and started running again. It did not hurt as much, though, as Debbie supported him the entire time for the rest of the race.

As their resilience was seen by everyone at the venue, the students screamed at the top of their lungs, “Monitor! Tomboy! You’re awesome!”

And somehow, a resounding voice stood out from the rest in the crowd. “Debbie, I love you!” It was received with a lot of giggling, and a few good-natured shaking heads, for it came from a girl.

Despite being at a disadvantage, Debbie and Dixon gradually overtook some runners in front of them. Eventually, when they reached the finish line, Debbie came third, while Dixon was fourth.

Although she did not come first, her decision to go back and help an injured friend engraved Runner #961’s compassion in the hearts of everyone at the

venue. Due to a decision that she made in split second, Debbie became a star — a hero.

The man in the VIP lounge saw everything that happened in the race. Although he did not show it, the incident appeared to affect him in some way.

The beloved female athlete was swarmed by a dozen boys. Out of elation, they carried her effortlessly with their hands, tossed her in the air, and caught her. They repeated this a few more times, and although she was helpless and exhausted, it brought a genuine smile on her face.

Carlos sneered at the sight of it. 'Look at her, ' he thought in annoyance. 'Seducing those innocent boys. How flirty can she be?'

After the race, Debbie retreated to

her dorm, and welcomed her bed with open arms. A lot had happened, but the day was not over yet.

The closing ceremony of the half marathon was going to take place in a matter of hours, including an awarding for winners. What was more, the special guest to award the medals was the CEO of the Hilton Group, Carlos.

Upon hearing Carlos' name, she bounced up like a spring. "What?!" Debbie could not help but shout out loud in disbelief. 'Carlos?' she thought angrily. 'Seriously! Why is he everywhere?' The young lady brooded in her bed, obviously biting her lip while deep in thought.

Casting her a sympathetic look, Kasie said, "I have to say, Debbie. Carlos and you seem to have a special connection. It's like wherever you go, he appears to be there as well!" Debbie sighed. 'A special connection?' She could not help but snort. 'He and I are, after all, legally bound together, ' she thought to herself.

"Now I'm worried that it might get ugly between the two of you at the award ceremony," Kasie was saying, as Debbie got out of her thoughts and looked at her. "I won't clash with him at the ceremony," assured Debbie. "Just that... well, who'd have thought that he'll be awarding the medals?" Huffing in a grumpy manner, she added, "Since I wasn't going to be the winner, I should have just let someone else take the third place. At least then I wouldn't have to see his face."

Granted, third place was not bad. But as long as she did not place first, a part of her still felt that it was a loss nonetheless. She was just competitive that way. And coming third meant she had lost her bet with Gail. Blowing at her new polished nails, Kristina chimed in, "Actually, Debbie. I envy you. How lucky you are to get to run into Carlos so many times! He's so handsome, so rich. He's just everything. It's like fate." Then, the dreamy look which had been present on her face a moment ago, disappeared. It was replaced by a pout as she continued, "But when I think of how badly things ended every time you two saw each other, ugh, I'd rather not have such fate. Just like that, I don't envy you anymore." 'Only Debbie is bold enough to mess with Carlos.

Is her background more powerful than Carlos'?

There's no way that's possible.' Shaking her head, Kristina chased that thought away from her mind. In Alorith, no one had dared to mess with Carlos except Debbie.

Sluggishly clutching a cushion, Kasie asked, "Tomboy, Carlos is actually very handsome. I just don't understand why you're not attracted to him." She then tilted her head in a curious way, and asked, "Why do you two hate each other so much?"

The smile on Debbie's face faltered. The first time she had laid eyes on him, she was indeed attracted to his good looks. There was no doubt that the man was handsome. But later on, every time they saw each other, he managed to make it easy for her to dislike him. Why? Every time they met, he would run his mouth off, and his sarcasm would get on her nerves. Also, why on earth did he have to make such a fuss out of a kiss? When it came to kissing, should it not be the woman who was at a loss? She thought that as a man, he should not be so narrow-minded. On the other hand, he thought that as a woman, she should be more refined and less flirtatious.

In a way, it appeared that they had gotten off on the wrong foot. Yet both seemed to be too stubborn to admit their flaws.

"I don't understand," Debbie whined. "Why is he everywhere? Why does he even show up at the award ceremony of a marathon?" She rolled her eyes. "Does he not have to work somewhere? Isn't he some CEO of a multinational group? Shouldn't he have some company-related things to attend to? Why does he have the time to dilly-dally around?" After her rantings, Debbie folded her arms in anger and glared at nothing in particular.

"Debbie, Hilton Group is the biggest sponsor of this marathon," Kasie told her. "They sponsored the clothes, sneakers, and the prizes. As the boss of Hilton Group, of course, it's only natural that Carlos is invited to the ceremony."

"Also, Hilton Group is keen on sport. They have sponsored a lot of sports meetings," Kristina added. "It's not surprising at all to see Hilton Group at a marathon event." Even though Debbie believed them, she was still surprised by the fact that they knew so much.

Both girls were often up to date on news regarding Carlos. In fact, most girls were. He was, after all, the richest bachelor in Alorith. Only Debbie seemed to be repulsed by him at the moment, and given their status situation, the irony was not lost on her.

At the award ceremony, Debbie calmly stood on the third-place platform. When the crowd started to scream, she looked around, and saw Carlos coming into sight.

Wearing a suit and brand-new black leather shoes, the man got onto the stage at a steady pace.

The autumn sun cast a golden hue on everything. In the sunlight, with his distinguished aura and elegant demeanor, he looked even more gorgeous than was usual. Every single woman off stage kept screaming in excitement. To her chagrin, even Debbie could not take her eyes off him for a while.

If things stayed this way, if they did not argue at all, he would be so perfect. Unobtainable, dashing, and influential. No wonder so many women were crazy about him.

When he drew closer, the host's eyes glistened with enthusiasm. "Now, let's welcome Carlos," she announced, her voice trembling from the sheer thrill of being near him, "who we are lucky to have here with us. He will now be awarding the medal for the gold medalist."

One by one, the man presented the medals. When it came to the bronze medalist, Carlos inched towards Debbie, accompanied by the host. His face remained nonchalant as though he had never met the woman before. When he stood in front of her, she lifted her head to face him. Bearing in mind that everyone's eyes were now on them, a smile crept on her lips, but there was no joy in her eyes.