

## Shadows 301

Chapter 301 Strange Illnesses Mystro , being thoughtful as always , handed Tilda a handkerchief . " Tilda ... are you okay ? " " Yeah ! I'm fine ! This is the first time I've ever learned my mentor's real name ! " Tilda took the handkerchief and wiped her tear - streaked cheeks , then smiled brightly at Mystro . " Seriously ... why does my idiot mentor keep disappearing ? Doesn't he know how worried I get ? " Mystro paused before saying , " I only heard it as a rumor . Members of the Kerrigans aren't close . We all follow really strict old traditions .

" Anyone in the Kerrigan line who's super talented is said to be born with a cursed fate . " People with that fate always clash with other strong ones . Uncle Harvey's fate is the worst . Even my grandparents died because of it . " My dad said Uncle Harvey was the smartest genius in all of Kerrigan history . There was no one else like him . " A cursed fate ? Tilda remembered seeing Harvey study stars and dabble in the occult . So he really knows all this stuff ... She also remembered that a month before he disappeared , he had read her fortune .

He said she had the Omega blood type , was tough as nails , and was born to shake the world . With that fate , even if she died because of some huge mistake , she might get a second chance and turn ruin into something miraculous . He warned her to be careful . Danger would come , and if she failed to get through it , it could take her life . He didn't say more . Saying more would break some taboo , even for someone as powerful as he was . " Fortune - telling " is something you might not believe , but sometimes it's scary how true it is . Back then , Tilda kept his words in her heart .

She never thought ... the one trying to kill her would be her own relative ! Because she wanted family love from the Jensons , Tilda let her guard down . She ended up dying in a fire with nothing left . But fate gave her another chance at life , a chance to change everything . Harvey's predictions were never wrong . " Could it be ... he left us because he was afraid his cursed fate would hurt us ? " Mystro nodded .

" Very likely . Before he died , my grandfather saw that Uncle Harvey's fate was too deadly .

He ordered that Uncle Harvey be removed from the family records . " Even if he wanted to see his younger siblings , he could only visit once a year . " Uncle Harvey came every year until my father had a car accident . He was in the ICU , barely alive . Uncle Harvey was at our house then . " It was like he realized something . He packed up and left . Not long after , my father got better and left the ICU . " Tilda lowered her eyes . " So ... he didn't disappear because of some outside force . He left to protect us , so his fate wouldn't hurt us . " Thank goodness .

At least he didn't provoke someone he couldn't handle . He vanished , wandering the world , all to protect his students . " Uncle Harvey was gentle . Even though I barely remember him , I still remember his big , steady hands patting my head . " Oh , right , Tilda . Speaking of fate - it's not just you and me . " Two months ago , I actually met another one of Uncle Harvey's apprentices ! We reunited ! " " What ?! " Tilda almost stopped breathing . Her mind felt tight , as if she couldn't think straight .. One shock after another hit her . First , I reunited with Mystro .

Then , I learned my mentor's real name . And now , I finally understand why he's traveling the world , taking students , giving them homes , and sparking their talents before suddenly disappearing ! And now , Mystro is telling me ... he found another one of Mr. Harvey's apprentices ?! What a huge surprise ! " M - Mystro ... where are they now ? " " Right now , he's on a tough assignment . He's not in Motrar . And he's a doctor , but not a normal one ..." His medical methods are very unusual . He moves through the underground , black markets , and secret groups .

They call him the Mad Doctor . " Tilda blinked . " The Mad Doctor ?" She had never heard that name before maybe only in an anime . He only takes rare , strange illnesses , and his fees are crazy high . The stranger the disease , the more excited he gets . " With his natural talent , normal cases don't interest him anymore . Strange illnesses ! Tilda's eyes narrowed sharply . " That's it ! " " Hm ? Tilda , why are you so excited all of a sudden ? " " Here's the thing ... " Tilda quickly explained Dane's unusual condition .

" I never imagined your senior would have this . If Liam hears , he'll be really interested . "

Chapter 302 Be My Model Mystro continued , " Since we're all students under Mr. Harvey , Liam has to help us with this . " By the way , he was the one who treated my constant chills . He wrote the prescriptions and seems really skilled in both modern and holistic medicine . " My condition never improved , no matter what I tried , but thanks to him , it's finally getting better . Before , in weather like this , I even had to set the thermostat to 85 degrees indoors . " " That's amazing ! I'm going to call him right now !

" Tilda pulled out her phone and started a video call with Dane . She explained everything that had happened . When Dane learned that Harvey hadn't left because of some unavoidable problem , but because of his own dangerous fate , he felt a wave of relief , just like Tilda did . At least Harvey was still alive somewhere ! Maybe he was still out there , training other talented students like Dane and Tilda . The heavy weight on his heart finally lifted . Dane couldn't talk , so he replied by text . " Tilda , are you staying in Motrar until Christmas is over before going back to Cetherland ?

" " I wasn't planning to , but now that I've found Mystro and might even meet Liam , I've decided to stay in Motrar for Christmas . " " Then I'm coming too . " Tilda stared in shock . " Wait ... Mr. Parker agreed to that ?" Manfred's voice rang out . " Don't worry , Qu ... I mean , Tilda . We've wanted Professor Kerrigan

to rest for ages, but he never agreed . " Professor Kerrigan isn't a machine - he's human . He needs rest . If he keeps working like this , his body and mind won't hold up . " Professor Kerrigan is a national treasure . Rest makes him work even better .

We're happy that he's willing to step out of the lab . " " I'm glad you agree , Mr. Parker . Then it's settled . Dane , once you get to Motrar , let me know , and I'll come pick you up . " The call ended . Mystro handed Tilda a slip of paper with Liam Kerrigan's contact info . 302 Be My Model " This is Liam's number . I tried calling , but no signal . I sent a message too , but no reply . " He's treating the boss of a mafia group . There's probably a signal jammer nearby , or they took him underground . " Tilda saved the number to her phone .

" How long has Liam been gone this time ? " Not long - less than a month . He said the mafia boss's illness is very complicated . He's never seen anything like it . It might take a long time to treat . " " I understand . I'll try to track Liam down and contact him . " At that moment , Buck came over with a painting . " Mr. Mystro , just like you asked , the portrait of Mr. Liam is ready . " " Liam's portrait ? " " Yes . I painted it from memory . It's about 90 % accurate . Take a look . " Mystro snapped his fingers . Buck placed the painting on the table .

Tilda looked at it and narrowed her eyes . Liam had a boyish face . People would call it a " baby face ." His eyes were pure but empty of light , flawless like moonlight . His lips were thin and cold , his nose small and upturned , and he had curtain bangs . He wore a suit and stood quietly by a sunlit window . He looked like the " Little Prince " from a fairytale . " I'll have Buck pack this portrait and send it to your hotel . It should help you connect with Liam . " " Thank you , Mystro ... but this must be one of your treasured things .

I- " Mystro lightly touched his fingertip to Tilda's lips . " Since you are Uncle Harvey's student and my junior , it's right for me to spoil you and give you what you need . " Don't think too much . Just accept my kindness as your senior . " A happy smile spread on Tilda's lips . " I'm really lucky . All my seniors are so good to me . Now , I'm even more excited to finally meet Liam ! " Mystro lowered his eyes , hiding the ripple of emotion there . " If anyone's lucky here ... it's me . "

Mystro , what did you just say ? " " Nothing ...

If you want to repay me , be my model . I want to paint a portrait of you . Is that okay ? " He quickly changed the subject . " Of course ! It would be an honor . " " Haha ! You just won a world championship . You're just as good as me , if not better ! " While Tilda modeled and Mystro painted , it became the

longest time Mystro ever spent on one piece . The swirling strokes traced every detail of Tilda's brilliance , line by line . Her lashes . Her lips .

Chapter 303 Best Friend Tilda's eyes were deep and still , like an old , quiet well . She had fair and smooth skin , with long , flowy hair . After an entire hour , Mystro finally the portrait . He let out a long , relieved breath . " Tilda , it's done ! " " Let me see ! " Tilda leaned in , eyes wide with excitement . The moment she saw the woman in the painting - so radiant , graceful , full of charm - Tilda froze . She took a sharp breath . My God ! Is that really me ? The girl in the painting was so beautiful , almost mysterious .

She seemed wrapped in mist , with only her bright eyes shining like stars . " Well ? What do you think ? " Honestly ... Even in the Picasso Championship , Mystro hadn't felt this nervous . Winning back - to - back titles had always been normal for him . Ever since he chose this path and showed his talent , it had been natural . But this was the first time he had painted someone's portrait , and he was shaking . Not even Liam had made him feel this way . Maybe it was because the woman in front of him was his junior , the family he had finally found ! " It's amazing !

Your art is like magic , perfect in every way ! " I'm so lucky to be your model ! " If this painting got out , everyone would die of jealousy ... Can you make another copy for me ? " Mystro smiled quietly . Hearing Tilda praise him felt sweet , like honey melting on his tongue .

This feeling was better than winning a world championship . " If you like it so much , it's yours . " " What ? But Mystro , what about you- " Mystro tapped his head . " It's stored here . I can remember every detail of anything I paint . I never forget .

Now that we've found each other , I can see you whenever I want . Life is long . You'll model again plenty of times . " And I want to see how I look in your hands too . Can I be the model of a world champion ? " " Of course ! " After walking Tilda out , Buck returned to the villa . Mystro was in the living room , sipping red wine . " Is Tilda back safely ? " " Yes , Mr. Mystro ... " Buck hesitated . Mystro set his glass down and said calmly , " Buck , if you have something to say , say it . " Buck bowed . " It's nothing . It's just ... you look so happy .

I haven't seen you smile like this in a long time . " " Buck , you know , ever since my parents died , I've been alone . " I was their only child . They were already old when I was born . Aside from Uncle Harvey , who taught me as a boy , I've had almost no relatives , no friends . " Most people can't follow how I think , and they keep their distance because of the Kerrigan bloodline . " But now ... I've met Tilda . She came into my life , and so did Dane and Liam . " For the first time , I feel not alone . My gray life has color . I finally have something to hold onto . " So ... Tilda .

The one I should truly thank is you . If I hadn't met you , I wouldn't have seen all these bright colors in life . You are the white stag , rare and unexpected , like music that brings spring to the soul . Tilda went back to the hotel with both paintings .

She told Andy everything that happened . " Ahh ! " Andy suddenly cried out . Tilda jumped . " Andy , what's wrong ?! " " I ... Damn it ! I'm happy you found a new senior ! " But it means more people fighting for your time , ughhh ...

" First Una , then that jerk , Jude , then Theo , then Maurice ... and now two more seniors ?! " It feels like my fun Jeselton trip with you will never happen Despite being 6'3 " , looking like a noble vampire , Andy was crying like a six - year - old , completely heartbroken . Tilda rolled her eyes so hard that it hurt . I thought something serious had happened to Andy . But it turns out he's just jealous . Seriously ? In the end , Tilda had to comfort Andy like a child . She escorted him back to his room . When she got back to her own , she collapsed face - first on the bed .

Gosh , I'm exhausted ! What now ? Well , I chose this best friend , so I'll just have to pamper him till the end ! After resting a bit , Tilda sat up , opened her laptop , and logged into her hacking software . Using the phone number and sketch Mystro gave her of Liam , she quickly traced Liam's flight . Found it ! Liam took a flight from Motrar Airport .

Chapter 304 Follow Your Lead Liam's destination ... Endralsia . Tilda mumbled , " Damn , why is it the same place I'm heading to talk to Dominic and Blair ? Forget it , Tilda . Stay calm . Liam has nothing to do with the Jenson's - he's just going there to treat a mafia boss . " Before , Tilda wouldn't have cared much . But since cutting ties with the Jenson's , bad luck seemed to follow her . She always ended up tangled with them somehow . Especially now , with the Jenson's acting like maniacs , bothering her in every way possible . It was so different from her old life .

Tilda finally found Liam's arrival record in Endralsia and checked the cameras . She realized he had been taken to a place with no signal or cameras . The trail went cold . All she could do was mark the area in red . " At the center is an old military research base from the last century .... " Drones can't get in - it's several floors underground . That must be it . " While tracking Liam , Tilda noticed he had strong backup . At least two separate teams were secretly protecting him , following him everywhere . Liam only wanted to study rare and strange illnesses .

Ordinary cases didn't interest him . But he never meant to risk his life for it . He loved his work , sure , but if he died , none of it would matter . A small smile appeared at the corner of Tilda's lips . She logged onto the dark web and pulled up her friends ' list . She had met a trusted friend in Endralsia during a previous dark - web mission . She texted him and asked him to investigate the old military base . She also asked him to crack the signal jammer if possible . That would let Tilda hack her way in .

For now , no one knew when Liam would leave the base . On top of that , the base had tight security , and being underground made it worse . Without someone on the inside , even Tilda couldn't hack the base's cameras to see what was going on with Liam . She told her friend to name his price . Not long after , a reply came . " It's an honor to help you , Queen . No payment needed - consider it payback for the help you gave me before . " I'll take care of it . When I crack the jammer , I'll send you a message .

" " Thank you . " Now that preparations were ready , it was just a matter of waiting . Several days passed quickly . Snow fell softly from the sky . Christmas had arrived . Everyone seemed to be in a festive spirit during this period . The streets were full of Christmas trees , jingle bells , Santa figures , and reindeer . With snow falling , the air was peaceful and full of joy . Tilda and Mystro waited at the airport , The moment she saw Dane and the others come out , Tilda smiled widely . She ran straight into Dane's arms . " Dane ! " Dane caught her easily . He patted her head gently .

Then , he looked at Mystro . Mystro smiled faintly and held out his hand . " Hi , Dane . Nice to meet you . I'm Mystro . " Dane nodded slightly and shook it . The small crease between Dane's eyebrows relaxed . It was as if he had confirmed something . He pulled out a notebook and wrote a line .

Follow Your Lead " Pleased to meet you , Mystro ." With Dane were Manfred and River . All three were dressed very simply . Manfred stepped forward . " Tilda , as we talked on the phone , we've arranged the cars . This way , please ." " Okay .

" The group left the airport , chatting and laughing . " First , we'll get Dane and the others to the hotel , drop off luggage . Then at noon , we'll have a homemade Christmas feast . " In the afternoon , the biggest amusement park has special events for Christmas . Dane , do you wanna go ? " " I'll follow your lead , Tilda . " As River drove , he glanced at Manfred and spoke quietly , " Mr. Parker , won't the park be too crowded ? This is still Motrar - I'm worried about Professor Kerrigan . " " We'll see . With us protecting him and extra people in the shadows , there won't be a problem .

" At the end of the day , Professor Kerrigan has the right to move freely . We can't lock him down . " Since Manfred agreed to let Dane spend a few days in Motrar for the holiday , he made every backup plan . For Dane's safety , Manfred used every contact , negotiating with generals for two days and nights , even asking Tilda for advice . He even brought in a top - level commander to oversee everything . Dane was now Cetherland's pride , a national treasure - nothing could happen to him ! The country itself was ready to use resources to protect him . Meanwhile , they all trusted Tilda .

And Mystro , after several days of investigation , was fully cleared of suspicion .

Chapter 305 Rogue Fighters Manfred figured that , as long as they kept a close watch on Mystro , Dane's holiday trip would go perfectly . Back at the hotel , after getting Dane and the others settled , Tilda was about to call Andy to join them for Christmas dinner . She knocked on his door for a long time , but no one answered . Tilda frowned slightly . " There's no way Andy is still asleep , right ? " Just then , a hotel staff member came up and spoke fluent Cetherese . " Excuse me , are you Ms. Tilda ? " " That's me . " " This is an envelope .

The occupant of this room asked me to give it to you before leaving . Please accept it . " The staff handed Tilda the letter Andy left behind and walked away . Still curious , Tilda opened it . " Tilda , Henry says I've been gone too many days , and he's so busy he's practically going mad , so I had to sneak off first . " Enjoy some happy , carefree days with your seniors . I won't be the third wheel . " But remember ! I'm being generous this time ! Once we're back in Cetherland , take Una with you and come visit me in Jeselton ! " Love , Andy . " Tilda laughed .

" This guy , writing me a letter ? What era is he living in ? He could have just sent a text . " After the special Christmas dinner Tilda had prepared , she took everyone to the city's biggest amusement park . River glanced at the huge crowds , his brows tightening . " There are too many people , Mr. Parker ... " " River , have you ever seen Professor Kerrigan smile this happily before ? " Manfred's one line left River speechless . River looked at Dane , wearing a cap , scarf , and sunglasses , dressed casually . Tilda and Mystro were right beside him . They were chatting , smiling freely .

River went silent . " To protect Professor Kerrigan's happiness , we just have to work harder and make sure he doesn't " And ... Tilda is Queen . If she brought Professor Kerrigan here , she thought it through . get tired . No one cares more about his safety than Queen - she even cares more than you or me . " Manfred patted River's shoulder . Tilda had the best time with Dane and Mystro . They went on ten rides in a row , including the roller coasters , drop rides , and carousel . They tried everything . It was pure fun , with no limits .

Finally , Tilda led Dane and Mystro into the park's arcade . " I heard they have lots of new games here , exclusive beta tests that aren't even out yet . " You guys want to try ? " Mystro smiled faintly . " Sure . If you want to go , we'll go with you . " Dane nodded . " Haha ! Then let's go ! I'm super curious . " Una's dreaming of opening her own esports club one day . She wants to design games and be her own boss . I'll film some of this for her so she can feel it . " Tilda ran inside . Dane and Mystro exchanged a glance , soft smiles forming , and followed her .

After all , this was their beloved junior - they'd follow her anywhere , even when it would hurt them . The only ones suffering were Manfred and River . They couldn't enjoy anything because they had to scan the surroundings and protect Dane . At their age and experience , none of this was fun anyway . Inside the arcade , Tilda recorded a video and sent it to Una . " Una , this is the arcade you've always wanted to visit ! I filmed it for you - no need to thank me ! " Soon , Una replied with a voice message . Tilda wisely lowered the volume and held the phone a bit away .

The second she pressed play , Una's excited voice exploded . " Ahhh ! Why didn't I get to travel abroad too ! Ughhh ... I'm so jealous ! " Tilda , try the Rogue Fighters for me ! "

That game is from a Cetherland developer - he also made a viral hit called ' Smack the Brats ' ! " The gameplay is simple , the story isn't hard , but the fighting feels amazing ! You've got to try it ! " " Okay , sure ! " The game Rogue Fighters already had many players ! Tilda sat at a machine , and someone immediately sat across for a match .

Since the machines were back - to - back , she couldn't see who it was . She looked at the buttons for a moment , then used her natural talent to pick them up quickly . She started winning again and again . Gradually, more people gathered around . The main attraction was that this masked player was just too strong ! Her build , long hair , and striking side profile with her fox - like eyes only added to the draw ..

Chapter 306 King Tilda was a real , drop - dead gorgeous beauty ! A stunning gamer girl like her would turn heads no matter where she was ! Just then , a man walked up to sit across from Tilda . He wore a skull - print mask , a cap with " K.O. " written on it , stood at least 6'2" , and was dressed all in black . He dropped in coins and hit start . Time for a showdown ! Gasps went around the arcade . " It's King ! He's here ! " The moment he appeared , the whole arcade buzzed with excitement . Mystro raised an eyebrow . " Looks like he's the real deal .

" Dane was about to write in his notebook . But a local standing nearby overheard and joined in . " Hey , no kidding ! You must be visiting , right ? " Around here , King's the reigning champ . Well , we gave him that nickname ourselves . " If he touches a game , he masters it . No exceptions . His skill seems impossible . " Once , a pro gamer from Motrar Club tried to act like a rookie here and hustle us . He then met King and got destroyed . 3 " The gamer didn't win a single round , even after spending 100 tokens .

He left embarrassed and soon announced retirement , saying King killed his confidence completely . " Mystro , wrapped in a scarf , mask , hat , and a big puffer jacket , looked like any tourist . No one could tell who he really was . Motrar winters were freezing , and his outfit fit right in . Dane thought for a moment , erased what he was going to write in his notebook , and jotted down something else . " This guy's from Cetherland . He's young and not much older than Tilda . Probably about 23. " " Agreed . " Mystro and Dane had both studied under Harvey .

They could read people like a book .

Even with King hidden by mask and hat , they noticed details others missed . Tilda sat across , with two machines in between . She couldn't see his face . But after their first game exchange , she raised an eyebrow . This guy ... had serious skills . His combos weren't just smooth ; every hit chained perfectly , like clockwork . He was precise and relentless , like a machine . In the first match . Tilda lost . " To push King that far ? This girl's impressive . " " Yeah , she even took half his HP .

" " King lives up to the name . He rules this arcade . Lately , gaming forums are full of posts about him ! " The crowd buzzed . Tilda didn't flinch . She dropped another coin . Round two . Lost . Round three ... Round four ... All the way to round seven . " Wow , she's still not giving up ? " " Is it my imagination , or are her combos getting sharper every time ? " " And King's health bar - it keeps getting shorter . Feels like he's barely winning ." Even King noticed . His opponent was learning too fast . At first , King could tell Tilda hadn't played this game before .

She only learned fast because of her raw gaming instincts . She didn't even know some of the basic combos that all the regulars use . But when she saw King use one , she memorized it instantly and used it back perfectly . Every move he revealed , every trick , became her weapon in the next round .

She wasn't holding back . After all , nobody could half - play and still keep up with King . This was simply her first time playing , and she had so much to learn . And with King in front of her , Tilda's growth was scary fast .

Finally ! The word " Victory " flashed on the screen . This time , it wasn't King's name . It was Tilda's . The arcade went silent . No one thought King could lose . But it just happened right before their eyes . Everyone was stunned . Mystro gave a low whistle . Tilda kicks ass ! he thought . Dane stayed calm , almost gentle . For them , her victory wasn't surprising . Though they felt a little sorry for King . Anyone raised under Harvey wasn't normal . His students learned faster than anyone else . Not just in gaming . In any field , they grew faster than so - called " geniuses .

" Behind his mask , King's expression darkened , a flicker of defiance showing .

Chapter 307 Christmas Race King dropped another coin into the slot immediately . But now , Tilda had mastered the moves . Facing King , her win was almost certain . At first , she barely scraped by with narrow wins . Soon enough , King couldn't even take half of her health bar anymore . After spending 20 coins , King finally understood just how badly he was losing . He jumped up and walked straight to Tilda .

The eyes under his cap were intense as they locked on her . " I want to challenge you in another game . " " Sorry ! I'm here with my friends today . Can't keep them waiting .

" " Your skills are amazing . How about we exchange contacts ? We could play online sometimes . " Tilda rubbed her chin . She respected this guy's talent . If he wasn't already a pro gamer , maybe she could have recruited him . He'd be useful to Una in the future . " Hmph ... " King just snorted coldly . He shoved his hands in his pockets and turned away . " This time I lost . But next time , I won't ." Tilda arched a brow . Feisty little guy , huh ? She didn't mind it at all . Tilda stood and turned to her two seniors . " Alright . I'm done here . Let's go . " " Not gonna play a bit more ?

" \*\* " Nah . You two don't seem that into it . How about we try the claw machines ? You guys win me a plushie . " " Deal ! " King stormed out of the arcade . He went to the men's restroom . 04 After getting into a stall and closing the door , he ripped off his mask and cap . Then he slammed his fist into the door with a loud thud . The guy peeing outside nearly jumped out of his skin . " I've never lost this badly ... since Santiago ... Damn it .... " Ugh ... " King couldn't hold it in and started crying .

He'd just been beaten by a girl who looked younger than him ! It was utterly humiliating ! Right then , his phone rang . Seeing Santiago's name , King wiped his face and answered . " Santiago , what's up ? " " Where are your manners ? I told you to call me Mr. Jenson now that I'm your mentor ! Or have you forgotten how you were crying and begging me a year ago , asking me to teach you how to game ? " And weren't we supposed to meet at 8 p.m. on the Rocky Mountains for the race ? They've got a special Christmas track . Where are you ? " " I - I didn't forget . Send the address .

I'll head over now . " " Wait . You sound weird . You've been crying , haven't you ? Who messed with you ? Tell me , and I'll go teach them a lesson ! " Santiago knew Harry Donoghue always looked cold outside . But inside , he was soft and easily hurt . He cried a lot and was very dramatic . It drove Santiago crazy . But Harry was his best friend . If Harry got bullied , Santiago would never let it slide . He'd always had Harry's back since the day they met . " I - I wasn't crying ! Just send me the location . I'm hanging up ! " Harry hung up quickly . He wiped his tears before stepping out .

Then he splashed cold water on his face and patted his cheeks . After putting his mask and cap back on , he walked out . Man ... I want to see Santiago race that girl . She learns so fast . He might not beat her . Damn it ! I was too worried about my dignity earlier , and I didn't get her contact info ! What a waste ! In a big country like Motrar , even the amusement park was overflowing with people that day . The crowd was overwhelming . Finding Tilda in that endless sea of faces was like searching for a needle in a haystack .

Harry's chances were doomed from the start . As night fell , Harry drove his car up to the Rocky Mountains . Santiago was already there , with a woman . When Harry arrived , Santiago waved and walked over . " Took you long enough ! Have you eaten ? " " Grabbed some fried chicken on the way . " Harry glanced at the woman and waved . " Hey , Amanda . Been a while ." She nodded coolly , saying nothing . Her short , sharp haircut framed her face . Purple crystal earrings shone on her ears . She wore all black and polished shoes . Her aura screamed one thing - badass .

" Santiago , you signed up for tonight's race , right ? " Harry's eyes lit up . " Where do I register ? I want in too ! " " Are you kidding ? Did you forget ? Tonight's Christmas race needed advance registration . Didn't I warn you ? " Look at you , clueless as ever . I bet you totally forgot ! " Santiago rapped Harry's head with his knuckles . Harry blinked . " Wait , really ? Why don't I remember ? "

Chapter 308 Think You Can Stop Him ? Santiago and Amanda Lowell looked at each other helplessly . " Because you were busy playing a video game ! " " Ahem ... fine , you're right ." Harry remembered . That really happened . He was testing a new game Santiago had made . It was called Rogue Fighters . Another game Santiago made was Smack the Brats , code name SJ . 6. For a gamer like Harry , having a best friend who could design and make amazing games was like winning the lottery . He felt as if he could soar up and high - five the sun ! " So ... I can only be your lucky charm .

Who's gonna let me ride shotgun ? " " Amanda , since you're a girl , I'll graciously take the seat next to you . No need to thank me ! " Harry struck a pose , thinking he looked cool . " Idiot . " Amanda tossed the word over her shoulder , hands in her pockets , and walked off . She was colder than the winter mountains . Harry froze . She felt embarrassed to be shot down by a girl , and his heart felt crushed . " Uh Santiago , ahem ... I don't mind being your lucky charm either ... " " Forget it . Don't ruin my car . If you're my lucky charm , we'll crash before the night ends .

" Santiago shut him down , roasting Harry mercilessly , then turned to get ready . Harry was crushed . Tears ran down his face . " Hey ! You two ! You can't just gang up and roast your best friend like this !!! " Meanwhile , Tilda arrived at the Rocky Mountains with Dane and the others . " Tilda , are you really entering this Christmas race ? " Mystro had heard about it . " Yeah . I want the champion's prize . " " But the passenger seat only has room for one ... Dane , Mystro , who's riding with me ?

" Mystro and Dane's faces instantly changed . Mystro spoke first . " Ahem , Dane's got a special status . Even though the track's cleared , there's fresh snow , and the roads are slick . Something could happen ! " So I should ride with you ." River and Manfred nodded in agreement . Dane grabbed his notebook and wrote , " I want to ride with Tilda and watch her race !!! " He even used three exclamation marks . " Uh

... Professor Kerrigan , this race is dangerous , and there's only one seat . Let Mystro go instead . " River didn't want Dane in danger . Dane scribbled , " No way !!!

" Mystro tried to persuade him . " Dane , I'm younger than you . Can't you let me have this one ? " His face was full of pleading . He figured Dane wouldn't say no , now that he was playing the emotional card . Dane didn't give in . " Fine ! I won't be the eldest anymore ! You can take my spot . Now let me ride with Tilda ! " Mystro was stunned speechless . River and Manfred's mouths twitched as they held back laughter . Dane looked exactly like a six - year - old denied candy . His whole aura screamed , I must get in that car ! I've gotta get in that car!

River gave Manfred an uneasy glance . Manfred silently signaled back , Don't look at me . I can't handle Professor Kerrigan . Quiet as he seems , if he lost his temper , nobody could stop him . Only Tilda could calm him . " Alright , you two . I'm just teasing . " Even though the rule says one passenger , there's room in the back for two more . " I already got the organizers ' permission ! " Tilda looked smug . Mystro and Dane pouted . " Tilda , that's not cool . You kept that from us , " Mystro mumbled . " Agreed , " Dane wrote .

Hands in pockets . Tilda grinned widely . " Can't help it ! I love watching you two fight for my attention ! I'm obsessed ! Wahahaha ! " Mystro and Dane froze . But since Tilda was their junior , they'd pamper her till the end . River whispered to Manfred , " Mr. Parker , are we really letting him ride ? Isn't this too dangerous ? " Manfred shot him a look . " Think you can stop him ? I know I can't ." River wasn't sure what to say . Mr. Parker , don't give up hope so fast ! Waaaah ! Soon , Tilda registration .

With Dane and Mystro , she walked to her beloved car - a custom AE86 . " When it comes to racing , nothing feels better than driving an AE86 . " Hop in , it's about to start . " " Okay ! " Dane and Mystro climbed in first .

Chapter 309 Real Speed Shows in the Corners Tilda was just about to get into the car when a girl in black punk clothes walked up . It was winter in the Rocky Mountains , but she acted as if she didn't feel cold at all . That alone made her stand out . Tilda noticed and couldn't stop glancing at her . Amanda saw Tilda looking , and their eyes met . For a moment , Amanda's breath hitched . From Tilda , she felt something intense , almost overwhelming . " Do you need something ? " The usually cold Amanda spoke first . Tilda smiled faintly . " No , I just think you're really pretty ! " " Ahem ...

" This was the first time Amanda had been stared at and complimented so directly by someone so mysterious . She froze for a second , her heart beating faster . " Um , thanks . " Amanda wasn't used to this kind of attention . Especially from someone she didn't know . She quickly opened the door and got into her car . Tilda looked at her . So , she's racing tonight . Amanda was driving a classic black Ferrari

718 . The modifications were top - notch . It fit her vibe perfectly . It was cold , stylish , all black , and sharp as a blade . Mystro , who was sitting at the back , asked .

" You interested in her ? " Tilda nodded . " I've been into girls who are cool and mysterious lately . "

Also , Amanda's face seemed oddly familiar . As if she had seen her somewhere before . Mystro's heart skipped a beat . He paused before asking , " You're not into girls , are you ? " Inside , Mystro was soothing himself . Calm down . This isn't a big deal . He wasn't against LGBTQ friends - he just didn't want Tilda to be hurt . Tilda cleared her throat and said , " No . I just admire her .

I'm still straight . " Dane wrote , " Tilda , I don't want you to marry too soon . I wanna spend more time with you . " Tilda felt speechless . What is he talking about ? I'm only 19 . Dane is thinking way too far ahead . Soon , the track was cleared , and roadblocks were in place . Four sports cars for this round rolled onto the track . There were too many sign - ups , so the organizers filtered racers by skill and car type . In the end , 12 drivers were chosen . Four cars per group , three rounds total ! The one with the fastest overall time tonight would win the championship .

Santiago was in the second group , while Amanda was in the first . He sat in the lounge , watching the drone livestream with Harry . Harry leaned forward eagerly . " Santiago , who'll win - you or Amanda ? " Santiago shrugged . " I don't know . Depends on tonight . Amanda's trained hard . She loves racing more than anything . " Winning didn't matter much to him . All that mattered was giving his best . Still , out of the four cars , Santiago noticed the AE86 . In this day and age , someone treating an AE86 like a treasure had to be a die - hard Initial D fan .

The AE86 was hard to modify . From the drone , Santiago couldn't see clearly . to pass the organizers , that AE86 had to be very well tuned . He thought he might find its driver later to trade notes - he wanted to build his own AE86 someday . Harry sneered , " Tch ! Quit acting cool . I'm betting on Amanda ! She'll win ! You'll eat her dust ! " Santiago shot daggers at him . " Are you begging for a beating ? Keep it up , and no more playing my new games for you ! " Harry shrunk . " No !

Sorry , I was wrong ... The race began ! Four sports cars shot forward like arrows . Their taillights streaked across the mountain roads like glowing trails . Amanda took the lead as her Ferrari roared . In a flash , she left the other three far behind . Tilda was last . But she wasn't nervous . She gripped the wheel and stayed close . She wasn't falling too far back . Mystro and Dane sat in the back , buckled up .

Even at deadly speed , they calmly studied the course map . " The start's straight , but there will be lots of curves later .

AE86 has less horsepower , so Tilda's at a disadvantage now , " Mystro said quietly . He made sure Tilda couldn't hear , so she stayed focused . Dane wrote a note . " Anyone can go fast on a straight . Real speed shows in the corners ! " Mystro smiled faintly . Compared to Mystro and Dane's calm confidence , River and Manfred were breaking into a cold sweat as they watched the livestream .

Chapter 310 Insane Move River and Manfred couldn't help but think , Damn it ! This mountain road is way too dangerous ! There are barely any lights , and sharp turns everywhere . And it just snowed ! Even though the snow was cleared , the road was still wet and slippery . Speed up too much, and the tires could easily slip . Racing fast on a mountain like this was like walking a tightrope thousands of feet above the ground . One tiny mistake , and it would be a disaster . That was why the organizers were super careful when picking drivers and cars . Anyone in this race wasn't weak .

They were all pros . Manfred and the others trusted Tilda completely , But if something went wrong , it would be unforgivable . Lab Seven could lose two national treasures in a heartbeat . Harry was sweating just watching . He was really worried about Amanda " Holy crap , Santiago . You're racing here ? This is insane ! " 3.Santiago raised an eyebrow . " What ? You scared ? Weren't you offering to ride with me as my lucky charm ? " Harry scoffed . " Um , no , thanks . I actually want to live . I'm terrified of dying . And you want me in this ? No way .

I'm not like you crazy thrill - seekers ." Santiago smirked . " Relax ! The organizers are strict . You wouldn't even qualify . " Harry cursed . " Damn you ! " The race pressed on , the tension unbearable . Finally , they passed the straight section . Now came the bends . Even the fastest drivers slowed down . The road was too slick , so speeding here was suicide .

Amanda slowed , carefully steering with steady hands ..

Right then , Tilda , in her AE86 , cut the bend at a daring angle and drifted past everyone with a razor - sharp overtake ! She took the corner through the drainage line ! She looked like an arrow shot from a bow , roaring / and screaming . She was so fast that the streetlights couldn't catch her car . Wind gusts flew past as her red taillights streaked like blades of light . Layer by layer , she passed cars . She went from third place ... to second place ... to first place ... She even overtook Amanda ! The commentators went wild . " My God ! Did we just see that ?

" " The AE86 just overtook on a bend through the drainage line ! " " And she's still speeding ! Is she crazy ? " Manfred and River's hearts nearly stopped when they heard the commentators . Queen , Tilda , please ! Don't race like this ! Overtaking on a bend at that speed ? One slip , and you're dead ! She might enjoy it , but we're dying inside ! Harry could only stare , not understanding the technique . " Holy crap ! Amanda just got passed ... It was too fast ! " Santiago's face darkened . " This isn't just fast . That AE86 driver is practically betting their life !

" Even Santiago wouldn't dare overtake on a bend like that . Racing is about thrill , not suicide . Clearly , the AE86 was on a path of no return . And yet , she pulled it off ! Nobody knew if she was even 100 % sure she'd make it . Amanda was stunned . Never did she think anyone could pass her on such a narrow curve . And perfectly , too . She thought of Tilda's confident and dominating face . A fierce desire to win surged in her chest . There were five hairpin turns up ahead . Tilda couldn't keep full speed . Charging through would be suicide .

Amanda could use her car's power to take the lead again . She had a temporary setback , but the finish line wasn't near . Just as Tilda neared the hairpins , she shouted to the backseat , " Hold on tight ! " She yanked the gear , slammed the brakes , and jerked the steering wheel . The AE86 carved a perfect arc , drifting elegantly into the curve . One rotation straightened the car . And with another drift , she dove into the second turn . The commentators were speechless . My God ! What kind of insane move is this ?

She drifted through all five hairpins , something even world - class racers wouldn't dare to do ! And the speed ! She's going at 150 miles per hour and shows no signs of slowing ! If she makes a mistake and hits the guardrail , the car will flip instantly ! Amanda , now in second place , couldn't even see Tilda's taillights anymore .