

Unwanted Girl Spoiled by Billionaire – chapter 31-40

Unchosen 31-40

Chapter 31 Ill take this call Leia stammered , rushing to a quieter corner as soon as she saw Harleys name flash on her phone screen .

Her heart raced with excitement and disbelief Whos she calling ! Whys she so excited ? Eli asked , noticing Leias uncontrollable joy .

Damon glanced in her direction , frowning slightly at her visible enthusiasm , but he said nothing .

Leia hadnt expected Harley to call her After all , their relationship was no more than a fleeting six months as classmates Even during holidays , when she mustered the courage to send him carefully crafted greetings , his replies were always brief and delayed .

But now , Harley had taken the initiative to contact her Leias heart pounded in her chest .

He actually called her She took a deep breath to steady herself before answering .

Hello Leia said .

Hi is this Leia Harleys cool slightly distant voice came through the line .

At that moment .

Leias throat tightened , and she felt a lump in her chest .

It was his voice .

After all this time , she never expected to hear Harleys voice again .

Since Leia didnt respond right away .

Harley asked again , his tone slightly more distant .

Leia snapped back to reality .

Yes ! Yes , its me , Leia ! she said hurriedly .

Harley , I saw in the group chat that youre coming back to attend Eston University Thats amazing Ill be going there too .

We should catch up once youre back ! y moment .

Her words tumbled out in a rush , as if she feared he might hang up at any Yeah , sounds good, Harley replied , though he was taken aback by her unusual enthusiasm .

He remembered Leia as a quiet , composed girl .

Whys she so eager now? Im sorry to bother you so late , Harley continued .

I actually wanted to ask you something Of course ! What is it ? Leia responded brightly , her excitement undimmed .

I ran into Nicolas at the mall today .

Harley began , his voice cautious .

He was with a girl .

If Im not mistaken , isnt Nicolas your fiancé ? Leias breath caught .

She hadnt even processed the joy of Harleys return before his question blindsided her No , no ! Thats not true ! she blurted , panic lacing her tone .

Harley , Nicolas isnt my fiance .

I have nothing to do with him .

Please dont misunderstand .

Really ? Harley sounded surprised .

But I thought there was an arrangement between the Sawyer and Anderson families have alliance The Anderson family and the Sawyer family do have a marriage Leia took a deep breath .

) Though she didnt want anyone to know that she wasnt Kimberlys biological daughter , in front of Harley , she was even more determined to avoid him misunderstanding the she had any engagement with anyone che Making up her mind , Leia finally spoke the truth , The one with an engagement to Nicolas is my sister , Noelle .

Shes Nicolass fancer What ? At the sound of this , Harleys voice suddenly sharpened .

He quickly asked , Noelle ! You have a sister named Noelle ? Yes .

Leia replied cautiously , sensing something of add in his reaction 1/3 9:28 AM c Chapter 31 I thought you were the only daughter of the Anderson family .

Where did this sister come from ? Harley asked , confused .

Leia gripped her phone tightly , biting her lip .

Though she disliked discussing her status as Kimberlys non biological daughter , she couldnt risk Harley associating her with Nicolas Lesa tightened her grip on the phone , pressed her lips together , and said , Actually , Noelle is Kimberlys biological daughter .

We were swapped at the hospital , and when she came looking for us , thats when I found out I wasnt Kimberlys real daughter .

As she spoke , Leia tried to keep her voice low , adding an extra touch of sadness and vulnerability , hoping to win Harleys sympathy and affection .

But to her surprise, Harleys focus remained on Noelle .

He asked again , So , Noelle only became Nicolass fiancée because the elders of the Anderson and Sawyer families arranged the marriage without her consent ? Yes Leia admitted reluctantly .

Though his words were accurate , something about Harleys tone irked her it was almost ... gentle when he said Noelles name How could they possibly be familiar with each other ? 1 Leias un unease deepened Leias frustration bubbled up p inside her .

Harley was calling her for the first time , and yet , the entire conversation was revolving around Noelle eat to catch up Wanting to steer the conversation , she said cheerfully .

Harley , since youre back , how about we old classmates meet up ! Itd be great to before school starts .

Well see .

Harley replied noncommittally , his mind still on Noelle .

When Harley learned that Noelle had been forced by family circumstances to become Nicolass fiancée , he inexplicably let out a sigh of relief And now , she was actually the daughter of the Anderson family That meant there would be plenty of opportunities to see her in the future .

With that thought , Harley felt a spark of joy .

see ... His response , though , was somewhat dismissive , and felt a wave of disappointment wash over her .

Unwilling to give up , she forced a smile and tried again , Actually, several students from our class got into Eston University .

Unfortunately , were in different majors , so we probably wont see each other much , but itd be great if we could hang out before school starts .

When the topic of school came up , Harley seemed to have a sudden realization and asked , Since you were swapped at the hospital , Noelle must be the same age as you , right ? Is she also going to Eston University ! Why was he asking about that bitch Noelle again ? Leia thought But in front of Harley , Leia couldnt let her emotions show .

She kept up her sweet persona , smiling as she answered .

Yes , Noelles also going to Eston University .

Shes in the same department as me Finance .

Really ? Harleys voice , previously so cold , now carried a noticeable trace of delight .

Im in Finance , too How coincidental Leia couldnt hide her excitement .

Maybe well even end up in the same class ! Maybe Harleys mind was already turning , considering ways to ensure he and Noelle would be in the same class , even if it wasnt by chance .

Itd be perfect if we were in the same class .

Leia eagerly agreed .

Leia , oblivious to his intentions , beamed .

If were in the same class , thatd be amazing Harley then suggested , To celebrate that were both Finance majors , lets get together this weekend Leias heart soared .

Harley had agreed to meet her ! Great she quickly responded , excited beyond words Well meet this weekend ... But before she could finish , Harley added , Since were both going to Eston University , why dont you bring your sister Noelle along as well ! Itd be nice for everyone to meet beforehand , Leia froze , words dying on her lips .

Why does this always come back to Noelle ?

Chapter 32 Alright , Leia reluctantly agreed , forcing a smile despite her confusion as to why Harley wanted Noelle to join them Then its sealed Harley said .

Ill pick you both up on Saturday Really Leias mood instantly soared .

Are you sure it wont be too much trouble for you ! their gathering .

Why does he care Not at all .

Thank you .

Harley .

Youre welcome , Harley replied .

Though hed offered to pick them up , his true motive was simple he couldnt wait to see Noelle again .

If theres nothing else , Ill hang up now , Harley added .

Alright , Harley .

Bye As Leia ended the call , her heart danced with excitement .

All her previous worries about reconnecting with Harley after his return had evaporated .

He had reached out to her first ! Could it be that Harleys been thinking about me all these years too ? Leia wondered , her thoughts swirling with hope .

After all , he hadnt called anyone else , just her .

The idea sent her spirits soaring .

Even the fact that Noelle was coming along didnt seem like a big deal anymore .

Shes only coming because Harley invited me first , Leia reassured herself .

Without me , she wouldnt even be on his radar .

Around 10 PM , Nicolas dropped Noelle e off at at home .

By then , most of the Anderson family had retired to their moms , except for Eli , who was still downstairs The moment Eli saw Noelle , his expression darkened .

Noelle , come here .

Huh ? Eli ? Noelle greeted him cheerfully , entirely oblivious to his sour mood .

She walked over with a bright smile and waved .

Youre still awake ? I brought some late night snacks .

Want some ? Eli , already simmering with frustration , glowered at her nonchalant demeanor .

You were with Nicolas all evening , werent you ! he demanded .

Eh Noelle blinked , surprised .

You know about that ! So you were planning to hide it ? to marry Nick eventually .

No , not really .

Noelle shrugged , pulling a drumstick from the bag and taking a bite .

Its not like its a big deal .

Im going to marry so its not something I could hide forever want to marry Nicolas ? Elis voice grew colder .

Hes a notorious playboy .

Youll regret this , mark my words ? I dont care .

Noelle bit into the drumstick again , her voice muffled but resolute .

I like Nick , so I want to be with him .

Besides , he promised he wouldnt mess around with other women anymore .

The way she spoke balinally trusting and utterly unconcerned made her seem like one of those women who naively believe every sweet lie from a soundarl Elis frustration boiled over .

You actually believe that nonsense ? Are you stupid ? Do you think a man like him will ever settle for one woman ! And why not ? Noelle said confidently , her eyes wide and innocent .

Im amazing , arent I ? Eli was momentarily speechless .

Where does she get this unshakable confidence ? Taking a sleep breath , he continued , Fine , lets say youre amazing .

But what if another woman seduces Nicolas and he cheats on you ? What then ? Dont worry , Hi Noelles tone was oddly casual as she bit into the drumstick with a loud crunch , snapping the bone clearly in half .

Her eyes glinted coldly as she said , If he breaks his promise , Ill just kill him .

18 9.28 AM Chapter 32 Eli shivered involuntarily .

Why does she sound so terrifying ? Before he could respond , Noelle had already skipped upstairs with her snacks , leaving him standing there in stunned silence .

As Noelle reached her room , Leias door suddenly opened .

Noelle , wait Leia called .

Hmm ? Noelle turned , her expression curious .

Whats up , Leia Well Leia hesitated , a friendly smile plastered on her face .

A classmate of mine just returned to the country , and he suggested we all go out for a meal on Saturday .

Would you like to join us? Of course , if youre busy , thats fine too .

Leia hoped desperately that Noelle would decline .

If she didnt come , Leia could have Harley all to herself .

To her dismay , Noelle answered without hesitation , Saturday ? Im free that day ? Really ? Leias smile faltered for a split second before she quickly recovered .

Dont you have plans with Nicolas that day ? Nope .

Maybe you should make plans with him ? Leia suggested , trying to sound casual But I dont know if hes free .

Noelle replied , tilting her head thoughtfully .

You could call and ask him , Leia urged , eager to find a way to keep her fre from attending- Before Noelle could respond , Elis voice cut through the air , laced with suspicion Leia , why are you encouraging Noelle to contact Nicolas ? Leia froze , her heart skipping a beat .

She turned to see Eli glaring at her from the staircase, his expression unreadable but clearly displeased .

1 Eli ... Leia stammered , searching for an explanation : Youve always said Noelle should stay away from Nicolas .

Why are you suddenly telling her to reach out to him ? Caught off guard .

Leia struggled to maintain her composure .

I was just thinking that if Noelle spent more time with Nicolas , he might realize how great she is and change his ways .

Leia , thats naive , Eli said , his tone harsh .

Do you really think a playboy like him will ever change ? Leias checks flushed with embarrassment .

She lowered her head and muttered , Youre right , Eli .

I was being foolish .

Im so sorry .

Eli turned to Noelle , about to lecture her next , but she darted into her room and slammed the door shut before he could get a word out Eli muttered under his breath , shaking his head in exasperation On Saturday morning , Leia meticulously dressed up , determined to make a lasting impression on Harley .

Over breakfast , Kimberly couldnt help but notice her daughters effort .

Leia , you look lovely today .

Are you going out ? .

Yes Leia replied , blushing .

Harley invited me to a gathering with some classmates Harley ? Vincent perked up , intrigued .

You mean the Parker familys young heir ? Yes , Leia confirmed shyly .

Why would Harley invite you ? Eli asked , confused At this time , Eli asked in confusion .

9:23 AM C Chapter 32 Eli .

| you : know anything about your sister ! Damon cut in , his tone mocking .

Leia and Harley were classmates in high school for six months donty T : was years ago .

Eli retorted .

Who remembers that kind of stuff ? Leia clearly does Damon said with a smirk .

Harleys the one shes been pining for all this time .

Isnt that right , Leia ! Leia blushed even deeper , waving off Damons words .

Dont tease me , Damon .

Its just a friendly gathering .

Really ? Damon raised an eyebrow .

Then whyd Harley call you personally to invite you ? Sounds promising to me .

Leias heart soared at Damons words , though she tried to appear modest .

Its just a class reunion .

Besides , Noelles coming too At the mention of Noelle , everyone froze .

Noelle ! Kimberly asked in surprise .

Why would she be invited ? Isnt it a class reunion ? Vincent chimed in .

Why invite Noelle ! Eli shrugged .

Its fine .

Theyre all going to Eston University anyway .

Maybe its a chance to get to know each other better .

Damon , however , frowned deeply .

Why would Harley invite Noelle ? Whats his deal ?

Chapter 33 Damon , dont say that about Harley , Leia snapped , annoyed by her brothers blunt criticism ... Damon cast her a disdainful glance , his tone cutting .

Hes barely even your boyfriend , and youre already defending him ? 1.

Leia faltered , biting back her retort .

Damon is good at everything except keeping his mouth in check .

Hes always so rude , completely disregarding others feelings .

Sometimes , she found her eldest brother downright insufferable , Kimberly stepped in to ease the tension .

Lets not argue , Damon .

Maybe Harley invited Noelle along as a gesture to Leia .

Theres no need to overanalyze Damon snorted setting his knife and fork down Whatever .

Im done .

The teams been hounding me to return , so Im heading back to the track .

Ill be gone for about two weeks , Really Kimberly smiled encouragingly .

Another race ? Do your best and bring home another championship .

Damon .

Yeah At that moment .

Noelle finished her seafood porridge .

She set the bowl down and beamed brightly at Damon , her voice crisp and cheerful .

Good luck .

Damon ! Whens your race ! Ill come cheer for you ! Who a asked for your cheer ? Damon scoffed , though his gaze softened slightly He glanced at Leia , who was still stewing over his earlier comment about Harley .

She forced a polite smile as Damons attention shifted to her .

Good luck .

Domon , she said , her tone flat Damon wasnt fooled .

Even Noelle shows more enthusiasm than Leia , just because I said one bad thing about Harley ? A pang of frustration jabbed at his chest , but he said nothing more and left the room with a tight expression .

Around 9:30 AM , Harley texted Leia that he was almost at the Andersons front gate .

Seeing the message , Leis practically leapt off the couch , her heart racing with excitement .

Leia , is Harley here already ? Kimberly asked with a knowing smile .

Yes Leia replied , her cheeks flushed with happiness .

Leia Anderson smiled sweetly , her face flushed Thats fast ! Well , Lei , shall we head out ? To Leias irritation , Noelle stood up as well .

She couldnt help but frown inwardly .

If only Noelle werent coming , everything would be perfect .

When the two reached the front door , Harleys car was already waiting outside , The mument Harley saw them , he stepped out of the car .

He immediately got out of the car when he saw them come out He was dressed casually in a loose fitting white shirt , the sleeves rolled up effortlessly to his elbows , revealing his sculpted forearms .

The open collar gave a teasing glimpse of his collarbones .

Paired with gray blue jeans that accentuated his long , lean legs , Harley exuded a natural durm .

Even the way he shut the car door was elegant , radiating an air of aristocratic ease .

Leias heart shuddered in her chest .

After two and a half years , seeing Harley in person again felt like a dream .

He's perfect , starlight , her admiration bubbling over .

Only a man like Harley could match my taste ! Harley , dont you see ! You look taller are you 185cm now ? Leia said , trying to sound casual but elusiac as she stepped forward .

Seeing Yan Qing approaching , Leia Anderson quickly greeted him and pretended to be friendly .

Long time ENEC , Leia , Harley replied politely before turning his gaze to Nuelle .

1/3 9:28 AM c Chapter 33 A faint smile softened his typically aloof expression . You go by Noelle now ? Do you really not remember me ? I remember now , Noelle chirped .

When you mentioned two years ago , I figured it out .

Good , Harley said , his lips curving slightly .

So she does remember me Les blinked , stunned .

She looked from Harley to Noelle , her mind racing .

Harley ... you know Noelle ! Yes Harleys eyes remained fixed on Noelle as he answered .

She saved my life .

What ? Leia exclaimed , gaping at Noelle .

You saved Harleys life ! Noelle raised a finger to her lips , shushing Harley , Whats wrong ? Harley asked , puzzled .

How clueless is he ? Noelle thought with a sigh Noelle straightforwardly grabbed Harleys arm , pulling him to one side .

But because he was much taller than her , she had to tug at him , saying .

Lower down a bit .

Oh .

Harley obediently bent down , bringing his ear closer to her .

Noelle leaned in and whispered , Dont tell anyone about my time at Thunder Unit .

Why not ? Because my identity is sensitive , and it could cause trouble if word gets out This was what Nick had told her .

Noelle had promised Nicolas she wouldnt casually disclose her past , so she figured it was best to warn Harley too Alright Harley said after a moment .

He realized she was right sharing her Thunder Unit affiliation could indeed create complications Good , Noelle said with a satisfied nod .

Dont forget As Harley studied her up close , he realized this was his first time seeing her in such detail .

Two years ago , shed always been clad in the stark black uniform of a military instructor , her hair hidden beneath her cap .

Back then , she was just a sharp , capable young girl .

Now , her features had matured slightly , though they retained a youthful charm .

Her delicate face was framed by soft waves , and her blue and white Lolita dress made her look like a doll straight out of a glass display case .

Shurs adorable , Harley thought , his chest tightening with an unfamiliar emotion .

Is this my type ? Seeing the way Harley and Noelle were getting along .

Leias hands , which hung at her sides , clenched so tightly that it almost felt like she was going to tear her skirt apart .

How did things end up like this ? Leia thought .

She had thought that Harley was only bringing Noelle along because of her , but now , with their intimate interaction , it seemed like she was the for who had been tagged along as an afterthought .

Her fare twisted with frustration , and a dark , venomous gleam flashed in her eyes .

Damn Noelle .

She was becoming more and more of an eyesore Les forced a smile and stepped closer .

Noelle , she said in a sweet but pointed tone , dont forget youre Nicolass fiancée .

You shouldnt be getting so close to other men .

If Nicolas finds out , hell be upset .

Youre right .

Noelle said , immediately stepping back to put some distance between herself and Harley .

She had promised Nick she wouldnt get too close to other men , and she intended to keep her word .

While Leia felt triumphant at Noelles compliance , Harleys face darkened .

2/3 9:28 AM Chapter 33 Leia , oblivious to his reaction , batted her lashes at him and asked .

Harley , you said Noelle saved your life .

What happened ! Harley had never thought much about Leia before , but now her presence grated on his nerves .

Why does she have to be so annoying ?

Chapter 34 Its none of your business .

Harley said coldly Without another word , he walked to the car and opened the passenger door .

Turning to Noelle , he said , Noelle , sit here Leias eyes instantly reddened .

She had spent hours preparing for this moment waking up early , meticulously applying makeup , and agonizing over her outfit just to leave a lasting impression on Harley Yet now , he barely even glanced at her .

It was painfully clear : Harley hadnt come to see her .

He was here for Noelle .

Whats so special about her ? Leia fumed internally .

Shes just a gutter rat .

How could someone like her catch Harleys eye ! As for the lifesaver thing , there must be some misunderstanding .

Harley must have been deceived by Noelle ! Alright .

Noelle replied , about to climb into the passenger seat But Leia grabbed her arm , her voice soft but firm .

Noelle , dont you know ? The passenger seat is a very intimate position .

It can easily be misunderstood .

Why dont you sit with me in the back instead ? Is that so ? Alright then , Noelle said , nodding in agreement .

She didnt know much about such social nuances and saw no reason to object .

Leia walked with Noelle to the car , flashing Harley a sheepish smile as they approached .

Sorry , Harley she said sweetly , but Noelle is engaged .

and sitting in the front might give the wrong impression .

Shell join me in the back .

Harleys cold gaze landed on Leia , his patience wearing thin .

Is she always this fake ? Until now , he had thought Leia was the picture of innocence quiet and gentle .

But now , her charm felt like a mask , hiding the sharp edge of subtle manipulation beneath .

Still , Leia had a point .

The passenger seat was a bit too personal .

With a curt nod, he relented .

Do as you like .

Harley moved to the back door and opened it .

Get in .

Leia beamed triumphantly and slipped into the car , throwing Harley a coy smile .

Thanks , Harley .

Harleys expression remained indifferent .

This woman really has no shame .

Suppressing his irritation , he turned to Noelle and said , Your turn Coming .

Noelle chirped , climbing into the back with ease .

As the car began moving .

Leia tried to make conversation .

Harley , where are we going ? Star Club Harley replied , his tone distant .

Leias brows knitted together .

Star Club ! Isnt that place known for its adult activities ? Are you sure its appropriate ? If you think its inappropriate , you can stay behind , Harley said bluntly Leia bit her lip , her voice softening .

Im fine with it , but Noelles still so innocent .

Im worried it might not be suitable for her .

Im fine with it Noelle suddenly exclaimed , her eyes sparkling with excitement .

Adult activities sound fun ! Do they have strippers there , Harley ? Leia nearly choked .

Is this woman for real ? What kind of proper lady talks like that ? Harley glanced at Noelle through the rearview mirror , amused by her enthusiasm .

He let out a low chuckle .

Dont get your hopes up beading to the clubs clean zone its full of thrilling activities , but nothing risqué ? Aw , really ? Noelle dellated , slumping slightly .

No adult zone ? Nope , Harley said firmly .

He wasnt about to let her step foot in a place filled with questionable characters .

Were When they arrived at Star Club , the receptionist immediately recognized Harleys gold membership card and ushered them through the VII entrance to the clean zone .

1/3 9:28 AM c Chapter 31 This is the clean zone , the receptionist explained .

We have various entertainment options here .

Let me introduce them to you .

That wont be necessary , Harley interrupted .

Well handle it ourselves .

You can go Understood , the receptionist replied , bowing before leaving Tollow me .

Harley said , motioning to Noelle .

Okay ! Noelle eagerly followed , with Leia trailing behind .

As they reached a set of grand golden doors , a uniformed doorman opened them with a how , revealing a bustling room filled with young men and women .

Harley A cheerful voice called out .

Connor was already waving enthusiastically from across the room .

Harley led the group over Connors eyes lit up when they landed on Noelle .

Hi , Noelle Before he could finish , Harley elbowed him sharply in the ribs .

Connor doubled over , clutching his side .

Watch your mouth Harley muttered under his breath before turning to Noelle .

This is C is Connor , a friend of mine Nice to meet you , Mr.

Gordon , Leia said I politely , seizing the chance to make a good impression Connor waved dismissively , still holding his side .

No need to be so formal .

Were the same age just call me Connor .

Alright , Connor .

Im Noelle , she said breezily , skipping the formalities entirely .

Connor grinned .

We met the other day .

Do you remember ! Nope .

Noelle replied bluntly , her expression guileless .

She hadnt thought twice about him .

Connor burst out laughing .

Wow , youre brutally honest ! Are we starting soon ? Harley interjected .

Yeah , almost , Connor replied .

Leia , still unsure of what was happening , looked around in co confusion .

What exactly are we doing here ? Connor turned to her , his easygoing grin intact .

Leia , right ? N Mind if I call you that ? Sure ... Leia agreed , though she inwardly bristled .

Harley hasnt even called me by my first name , and here you are acting all familiar .

How annoying Great ! So , Leia , Juve you ever done an escape room before ? Connor asked .

An escape room ? Leia echoed , taken aback .

Before Connor could elaborate , a gunshot rang out .

Everyone looked up to see a fla see a flamboyantly dressed host on the second floor , microphone in Welcome , escapeest the host announced theatrically .

The doors have been locked , and the escape room challenge is about to begin ! Whoa ! Noelle exclaimed , her excitement reignited .

This looks fun ! Harley Harned to her , a faint smirk tugging at his lips .

You like it ? Tlove it ! Then lers win together .

Okay ! Meanwhile , Leia stood frozen , completely out of her element .

Who am I ? Where an And why am I stuck in this ridiculous game ?

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Chapter 35 | _ Leu was on the verge of a mental breakdown Shed imagined todays gathering as a cory meetup in a serene cafe , sipping coffee while catching up .

Naturally .

Noelle , who probably didnt even know how to order coffee , would embarrass herself , giving Leia the perfect chance to subtly undermine her and shine .

But reidity had thrown her plans out the window .

se room game The worst part ? Noelle seemed genuinely excited about this ridiculous escape room .

Unwilling to be outdone .

Leia plastered on a bright smile and chimed in .

An escape room ! Ive always wanted to try one , but my family thought in was too intense for me .

Really Connor raised a brow , intrigued .

Leia , you like escape rooms ? You seem so calm and quiet I wouldnt have pegged you as a fan of Leta blinked , feigning a bashful yet playful demeanor , I love exciting games like this ! Im just not very fit , so dont be mad if I slow you down during the escape .

No problem Il stick with you and protect you , Connor offered gallantly .

Thank you .

Leia flashed him a sweet smile before glancing expectantly at Harley .

Harley , lets do our best together ! Harley spared her a brief glance .

Noelle and I will be moving quickly we cant afford to linger on each floor .

You and Connor can catch up at your own pace .

Leias smile faltered Whats the point of playing this stupid game if I cant be with Harley ? Connor , sensing the tension , laughed and teased Harley , Hey , before you went abroad , didnt you get knocked out on the tenth floor in this game ? Planning to clear all fifteen this time ? Of course Harley smirked coolly , How many people have completed it since Ive been gone ! Not many probably fewer than five .

But last year , some genius cleared it in 37 minutes , setting the fastest record ever Not even an hour ? Harley raised a brow , genuinely impressed He glanced at Noelle , his expression turning competitive .

Noelle , well have to step it up .

Piff, ray Noelle scoffed, glancing up at the towering building Fifteen floors ? I break that record in 30 minutes .

Whoa , Noelles amazing ! Connor cheered , clearly entertained .

Leia pulled her eyes internally .

Shes all talk Nearby : other participants overheard Noelles bold claim .

Did you hear that ! That girl says shell clear it in 20 minutes ! Hah ! Anyour can talk big those skinny arms and legs ! Shell be lucky to make it past five floors Generous .

Im betting she barely clear three A gumabot echoed through the air The hosts voice rang out Participants , please gather at your respective em entrances .

When the signal gun fires again , the e escape begins ! The crowd dispersed to their designated starting points .

a fugitive is caught and forced to Each floor of the Facape Gaine is filled with obstacles , and the ruthless butchers appear out of nowhere .

Once a fugitive wear a tracker , theyre climinated from the gamir .

The difficulty increases with each floor , and the main challenge lies in dealing with the butchers .

1/3 Chapter 35 Regular staff members played the butcher on the lower floors , but as the floors climbed higher , the actors portraying the butcher became more formidable These roles were often taken by tough guys , retired special forces soldiers , and hulking strongmen .

Escaping from their grasp was no easy feat At the sound of the second gunshot , the host announced , Escape begins now ! The participants surged toward the staircases like a tidal wave Leia barely had time to react before she was nearly knocked over by the rushing crowd .

Carefull Connor steadied her just in time .

Thanks , Lesa said , breathless , before scanning the throng .

Wheres Harley ? Theyre already way ahead What the Noelles so fast ? Before Les could fully process Connors words , a burst of confetti erupted nearby .

The hosts excited voice boomed through the speakers : First floor clearance ! Time : 12 seconds and 54 milliseconds What the hell ! Thats insane ! Who did that ? Some tiny girl .

She slipped past the butcher before he could react ! Must ve been a fluke . The murmurs of the crowd were constant and buzzing Connor , however , smiled confidently and said , Its definitely Noelle : No way Lea , who had climbed the stairs with Connor , retorted in disbelief .

Connor raised an eyebrow at Leia and said , Theres nothing impossible about it .

Your sister is incredible more than you could ever imagine .

Leia couldn't help but think Connor was losing his mind .

Earlier , when he greeted Noelle , she didn't even recognize him , yet here he was acting as if he knew her well .

It was all too fake .

Breaking through the first floor was easy enough As Connor and Lea made it to the second floor , the fireworks went off again .

The host excitedly announced , The first person to break through the fifth floor No way .

We just got to the second floor , and someone's already made it to People around them started to murmur in surprise .

Unbelievable : That were the butchers doing ! Just watching someone pass through has emerged , in 3 minutes and 46 seconds to the fifth ? Theard the persons really skilled none of the butchers on the lower floors were e Letsser low last they can keep going when they reach the higher floors even a match .

By the time they hit the truth floor , the number of people breaking through dwindled .

With fewer contestants , the butchers were able to focus their efforts more and catch them one by one .

Leia , being physically inept , was already winded by the time they reached the second floor .

Normally , she would have taken the elevator or escalator , but climbing the stairs had her panting by the second floor .

2/3 9:28 AM c Chapter 35 If it weren't for Connor , she'd have probably quit at the first floor .

As she huffed her way up to the third floor , the host's excited voice rang out again .

The first person to break through the tenth floor has emerged .

in 8 minutes and 17 seconds .

Oh my God .

8 minutes and 17 seconds ? Is that even Inuman ? There's something fishy going on .

There has to be Even without interference , it's hard to believe someone could make it up ten floors in eight minutes Whos this incredible person ? I heard from the advance team it's a little No way .

Noelle's absolutely killing it .

little girl As Noelle kept breaking records , the chatter around them never stopped .

Lela , annoyed , couldnt understand why people were making such a big deal .

So what if she set a new record ? Everyone was acting like it was the end of the world .

As Leia was stewing in her thoughts , a large , dark figure wearing a leather headpiece suddenly charged in front of her , carrying a rusted , massive axe on his back exactly like the terrifying butcher from the game .

Leia screamed in fright .

Oh my God ! The butchers here ! Run ! The crowd scattered in all directions .

Connor shouted , Leia , run ! But Leias legs were too weak to move .

She couldnt even manage to flee , let alone run .

Connor tried to save her , but he was grabbed by the butcher too.

Both of them were quickly tagged with the tracker and eliminated from the game .

Just then , the hosts triumphant voice echoed from the top floor .

Congratulations to our first winner ! The total time : 15 minutes and 2 seconds , setting a new record for the fastest escape Leia could only feel numb Leia thought .

This ridiculous world needed to end , and fast ever since the game began .

Chapter 36 Hey , did you hear ? The record breaking winner this time was a petite girl , and apparently , shes super cute .

I saw her Shes like a real life doll absolutely stunning No way ! Is she really that pretty ! Think she flirted her way through the game ? Actually , people suspected cheating and demanded footage .

Guess what happened ! What Turns out , shes a beast .

On the seventh floor , there was this two meter tall bodybuilder .

The guy charged at her , and she took him down with a single shoulder throw .

No way ! Yep .

That dude weighs at least 300 pounds , and she flipped him like it was nothing .

Thats insane .

Im genuinely impressed Leia and Connor sat in the waiting area after being eliminated , waiting for Noelle and Harley to come down .

As players filed in , the buzz about Noelles performance filled the air .

Leia sat stiffly , her face frozen as if someone had stolen her sense of reality .

Noelle really he Could really be that good ? Leia thought .

The final results confirmed two winners : Noelle , with a record breaking time of 15 minutes and 2 seconds , and Harley , clocking in at and 52 seconds When the game officially ended , Noelle and Harley emerged from the elevator together .

Noelle was carrying a gleaming gold trophy , bouncing happily .

She practically radiated joy .

401 minutes Harley walked beside her , exuding his usual cool demeanor .

But his head was tilted slightly , his gaze never leaving Noelle .

The subtle smile on his lips betrayed a warmth that made his interest clear .

Harley , Noelle , youre finally back ! Connor sprang to his feet , waving at them .

Connor Sorry to keep you waiting Noelle replied , her voice bright and sunny as she smiled at him .

* Noelle , youre amazing , Connor gushed .

Fifteen minutes to clear all fifteen floors ? Youre the fastest player in the history of The Escape .

Im in Noelle tilted her chin up proudly .

Of course ! Im super awesome She wasnt the type t to downplay her achievements .

Compliments were like fuel to her fire she thrived on them .

Leia , meanwhile , seethed internally .

Whats there to brag about ? Sure , Noelle might have some physical talent , but she was so tacky about it .

There wasnt a shred of grace or decorum in her behavior .

Noelle , now that weve finished this game , should we check out another activity ? Harley asked , his tone warm .

Sure ! Noelle nodded enthusiastically Leia couldnt hold back .

Wait , youre playing more ? she blasted .

Harley turned his cold gaze on hier .

If youre tired , feel free to rest , Leias chest tightened at his dismissive tone , but she forced a smile and said softly , You misunderstood me , Harley .

Im not tired ; Im just worried about Noelle .

Shes already climbed fifteen floors I dont want her to overdo it Really ? Harleys lips curved into a mocking smile .

He didnt believe her for a second .

9:28 AM Chapter 36 Leia batted her lashes innocently .

Of course ! Noelle is my sister .

Im just looking out for her .

Connor chimed in .

Leias right .

Noelle might be tough , but shes still a girl .

Its better to rest a bit before starting another game .

Connor looked at Leia with admiration and said , Leia , youre a girl after all .

Youre more thoughtful than us boys .

Leia shot Connor a grateful smile , then turned to Noelle .

What do you think , Noelle ? Tim fine either way .

Noelle replied nonchalantly .

She suddenly perked up and handed her phone to Harley .

Harley , can you take a picture of me ? Harley blinked , caught off guard .

Uh , sure .

Noelle struck a simple pose : holding her trophy in one hand and flashing a peace sign with the other .

It was a cliché , but her radiant smile and doll- like features made the shot irresistibly cute .

Harleys heart skipped .

She was adorable .

Is it done ? Noelle asked .

Harley snapped back to reality and clicked the shutter .

Yeah , got it .

Let me see ! Noelle ran over , beaming as she reviewed the photo .

Wow , Harley , youre such a good photographer ! Harley stared at her , speechless .

How is she getting cuter by the second ? Connor leaned in , grinning .

Noelle , taking a picture to commemorate your win No Noelle replied cheerfully .

I just want to show Nick my trophy .

The atmosphere shifted .

Nick Connor repeated .

Oh , you mean Nicolas You guys seem close .

Harleys expression darkened .

Leia seized the moment .

Linking arms with Noelle , she giggled and said , Oh , Connor , you dont know the half of it .

Noelle is crazy about Nicolas .

Dad wasnt keen on their engagement , but Noelle insisted on marrying him Connor looked uneasy .

He glanced at Harley , whose clenched fists and stormy expression screamed displeasure .

Harleys voice cut through the tension like a blade .

Noelle , do you really like Nicolas that much ? Super like ! Noelle chirped without hesitation , her eyes sparkling .

Is that so ? But from what I know , Nicolas has had plenty of women around him .

It seems like hes never been without one Although Harley wasnt very close to Nicolas , his reputation as a ladies man was well known in Reniam City .

So ? Noelle tilted her head , genuinely confused .

Doesnt that bother you ! Dont you think hes ... dirty ? Harley ey asked bluntly .

Noelle blinked .

Dirty ? Thats easy .

Just clean him up .

Harley .

Conor , and Leia were speechless .

Before anyone could recover , Noelles phone buzzed .

It was Nicolas .

Nicolas : [Elly , are you at Star Club ?] Noelle : [Wow , Nick ! How did you know ?] 9:28 AM ch
Chapter 36 Nicolas : [That trophy in your hand only escape game winners get that .

] Noelle : [Youre so smart , Nick ! You figured it out right away : Nicolas [Nothing smart about it .

I own Star Club .

Of course Id know .

] Noelle .

[This is your place ! Nicolas [Still there ?] Noelle : [Yep !] No wonder Nicolas : Is that so ? Im
here too , do you want to come over ?] Noelle : [Yes ! Nick , where are you ? Im coming to find
you] Nicolas : [Come find me in the lobby .

Bryan will bring you up .

Noelle : [Great ! Noelle tucked her phone away , her eyes sparkling .

Nicks here ! Im gonna go find him .

You guys have fun ! Connor gaped .

Wait , youre leaving ? Uh huh ! Bye bye ! Noelle waved , already dashing off Noelle was always
someone who did things her own way , and now that her mind was completely on Nicolas , she
didnt care about what the others thought .

Without a second thought , she bolted for the door , waving as she ran .

Tim off , bye ! Before her words even finished , she was already a blur , disappearing in the blink of
an eye .

Harley and the others were l left standing there in stunned silence .

Leia was overjoyed .

Finally , shes gone .

Feigning concern , she turned to Harley .

With Noelle gone , its just us now , Harley .

Shall we keep playing ? But Harley wasnt having it .

His voice was icy as he said .

Play by yourself .

I have something to do .

Without sparing her another glance , he left .

Leia stood frozen , her smile faltering as fury boiled beneath her polite façade .

Elsewhere in Star Club , Bryan led Noelle to a grand conference room .

As the doors opened , Nicolas stepped out , surrounded by an entourage .

Spotting him .

Noelles eyes lit up like fireworks .

Without hesitation , she sprinted toward him and threw herself into his arms .

Nick she exclaimed , hugging him tightly in front of everyone ,

Chapter 37 A collective gasp rippled through the crowd as Noelle launched herself into Nicolass arms without a hint of hesitation .

The crowd thought , What the hell ! Who is this fearless little girl who dared to throw herself at the boss ? While Nicolas might have a notorious reputation as a playboy , the inner circle of Star Club knew the truth : Nicolass flirtatious image was a smokescreen for the public .

In reality , he was meticulously self controlled so much so that rumors swirled about his ... pristine state .

But what happened next left everyone even more floored Rather than pushing Noelle away .

Nicolas smoothly wrapped his arms around her , his face softening with a smile so tender it practically dripped with affection Kan through fifteen floors , huh ? Did you wear yourself out ! he asked , his tone warm and low .

Nope ! Noelle tilted her face up , her voice as sweet and light as a bell .

Her crescent moon eyes sparkled as she beamed at him.

Fifteen floors were breeze for me i thought so Nicolas chuckled softly.

Uh ... Boss , whos this ... Someone in the group finally dared to ask , unable to suppress their curiosity any longer .

Nicolas seemed to suddenly remember they werent alone .

Glancing at the onlookers , he introduced her casually .

This is Noelle , the daughter of the Anderson family .

She was switched at birth in the hospital and only recently returned to her family As if to underline his words , Nicolas loosened his embrace just enough to ruffle Noelles soft hair , his actions so intimate they might as well have been in their own little world .

Elly , these are the key staff members of the club trusted insiders .

Noelles face lit up with a bright smile , and she greeted the group enthusiastically , Hi , everyone ! Im Noelle .

The introductions began : Miss Anderson , nice to meet you .

Im Jude Russell Hello , Miss Anderson .

Cody Griffiths here Archer Francis pleasure to meet you you ? Finally , the lone woman in the group stepped forward , her lips curving into a playful smile .

Hi , Miss Anderson .

Im Miriam .

Weve met before do you remember mer Noelle blinked at Miriam before her eyes sparkled with recognition .

Oh ! Youre the lady who came out of Nicks room that day ! Miriams uile deepened .

Im flattered you remember me .

Of course ! Noelle nodded vigorously .

Then , with innocent excitement , she added , You said next time wed hang out together you , me , and Nick .

When are we doing that ? The room froze .

What did the just say ? the crowd thought All eyes darted to Nicolas , Miriam , and Noelle .

Together ? All three of them ! the others thought .

For a moment , Nicolass squeaky clean reputation in their inner circle teetered dangerously .

Was this the real Nicolas ? Had his gentlemanly façade been a front all along ! Even Miriam wasnt expecting Noelle to bring that up .

She blinked , startled , before quickly recovering with a sultry smile .

Tossing a playful look at Nicolas , she purred , Well , Im always available .

Its just up to the boys .

Nick Noelles eager gaze swung to Nicolas .

Her face practically radiated hopefulness , as if one word from him could set the plan into motion .

Nicolas sighed inwardly , pressing his fingers to his temple .

This girl .

With a soft flick , he tapped Noelle lightly on the forehead .

What are you thinking ? Didnt I already tell you ! Youre too young for thines 9:29 AM c Chapter 37
Kily doublact like kid kid ? Noelle pouted , putting out her cheeks indignantly .

Nick , Im an adult now ! Maybe legally , Nicolas teased , his voice soft but firm , lait mentally , youre still a child .

So , no ? Hearing yet another rejection .

Noelles cheeks puffed out even more , resembling an adorable , grumpy pufferfish .

II Nicolas wasnt fared .

If there was one thing he excelled at , it was coaxing Noelle .

Stirling his arm around her shoulders , he leaned in close and said , You must be starving after all that running around .

Thad Bryan prepare a feast lots of meat .

Lets go eat ? Meat Noelles sulk evaporated instantly .

Her eyes lit up , and she followed his lead , asking eagerly .

I want wagyu steak 5A grade ! Nicolas sand , Done And roast chicken ! The kind with crispy skin and juicy meat inside ! And lamh skewers ! They need to be sizzling and covered in cumin and chili powder .

All of it .

Whatever you want Nicolas asked .

Still mad ? Satisfied .

Noelle nodded .

Okay Im not mad anymore .

Nicolas smirked , guiding her toward the dining area while she happily babbled about food .

The staff left behind stared in stunned silence .

Tve never seen the boss dote on anyone like that , one of them murmured .

Right ? Is Miriam the one he used to rely on to scare women away ? What happened ? Miriam , who had been silently watching , let out a dry laugh .

Her gaze lingered on Nicolass retreating figure , a hint of melancholy in her eyes .

Gurs Miss Anderson is special ; she said lightly , masking her feelings es with a shrug .

Didnt the boss swear he wasnt interested in marrying into the Anderson family ? Looks like hes changed his mind .

I dont know , but it looks like the boss really likes Miss Anderson , the group murmured as they left .

One person stayed behind , standing next to Miriam .

In a calm voice , they asked , Miriam , are you Okay ! Although Miriam was technically just a pawn in Nicolass game for show , Archer knew deep down she genuinely cared for the boss Tintine Mariam smiled and shrugged .

Since shes the one the boss picked , there must be something special about her .

As long as the boss likes ber , of course , I wish them well bering Miriam unile so carefree , the man couldnt help but secretly relax .

He asked , Miss Andersons here now , so the boss probably wont anymtatate .

How about we go grab a drink ? How ? Aar pus treating ? Miriam raised an eyebrow Till treat said the man .

Tm in , Mirjam sand need us Meanwhile , back at the Anderson family estate , Leia was licking her wounds after Hark Harleys rejection .

Lela , your back early , Kinderly noted with surprise What about Noeller Didnt she come back with you ? Mom : Leias eyes reddened as she prepared to spilt her tale .

9:20 AM Chapter 37 At that moment .

Eli descended the stairs , catching the tail end of their conversation .

Leia feigned a helpless sigh .

Noelle left to meet Nicolas .

She walked out right in the middle of the gathering , and Harley ..

Well , he probably thought it was disrespectful and left too .

The whole thing was a disaster .

Its my fault I shouldve stopped her .

Eli's face darkened , his voice rising .

Leia , are you telling me Noelle went off to find Nicolas again ? Ah ! Eli ! What are you doing here !
Feigning surprise , Leia widened her eyes .

Oh , Eli, I didnt realize you were there .

Im sorry I really tried to stop her , but she just wouldnt listen .

Shes so wrapped up in Nicolas that she ignores everyone else .

Its all my fault .

Please , just blame me

Chapter 38 Zij sock spent the cistine day glued to Nicolas , only returning home late into the night .

pod out of the car , she turned to wave at him with her signature sunny smile .

Nick .

Im heading in .

Dont forget to text me when you get mectical , his expression soft and indulgent .

Got it .

You had a late night , so dont dawdle .

Go wash up and get to bed early .

Ill text you once 1 Noche Chirpol , her agreement immediate and obedient like this whenever
Nicolas told her to do something , shed listen without question .

class heart every single time .

Watching her now , looking so sweet and docile , he felt a familiar , warm ache in his chest .

Rising moment , he had to resist the urge to pull her back into the car , just to hold her close a little longer .

Nicolas suddenly piped up , as though a thought had just struck her .

Did the Anderson family finish sorting out your school nu .

Noodle confirmed a trace of amusement tugging at the corners of his lips .

e starting soon ! Nicolas exclaimed .

Remember , dont tell anyone about your past .

You promised me , Okay ? You have to stay low- me Noelle said .

Even Leia tried to fish for details , but I didnt say a word .

Nicolas praised , ruffling her hair affectionately .

But remember be extra careful around Leia .

She doesnt like you , and shell do 100 cause trouble .

Dont get too close to her an eyebrow, a cold chuckle escaping his lips .

Family ? Leias no family of yours .

Shes just a thief who stole your life and doesnt want Blood doesnt lie , Elly and she doesnt have it andened as though Nicolas had just delivered a divine revelation .

Nick , youre amazing ! You figured that out so quickly ! evened genuinely in awe , as if this realization hadnt crossed her mind until now , dior Meolas muttered , pinching the bridge of his nose .

You really didnt figure this out before ? Metle and brightly , her honesty as sharp as ever .

the corners of his mouth twitching upward despite himself .

Her bluntness was both maddening and endearing seringed dont make the mistake of turning her into an enemy .

The Anderson family still dotes on her , and if you openly clash with her , her tint .

then Noelle tilted her head , utterly lost .

Am I supposed to stay close to her or not ? temples .

Why is she so clueless ? the surface , he said patiently .

Dont actually trust her .

Dont do what she at she tells you to do , and definitely dont parrot her said again , his voice softening .

Now , get inside .

the skipped toward the mansion .

returned her wave , his gaze lingering on her retreating figure .

clad been silently olnering from the drivers seat , finally broke the silence with a teasing grin .

You know , the way you handle Miss mit to him , Falung an eyebrow , Hilarious ! How ! wirdened Most couples look like ... well , couples .

But you two ? You look like a father doting on his clueless kid .

Its kind of sweet , really 9:29 AM Chapter 38 Nicolas was still reminding Miss Anderson to go to bed early and teaching her who the good guys and bad guys were , and how to outsmart the bad Thats not something a couple should be doing , right ? Nicolas thought .

It felt more like a fatherly kind of care .

Thinking of Noelles clueless expression , Bryan couldnt help but laugh .

Is that funny to you ? Nicolas asked , his voice deceptively calm .

Bryan swallowed hard , a nervous smile plastered on his face .

Uh ... no , sir .

Not funny at all Drive , Nicolas ordered , his tone cold enough to send shivers down Bryans spine .

As the car pulled away , Nicolas rolled down the window , letting the cool night air brush against his face .

look like a father he thought , almost bitterly , It wasnt like he wanted to micromanage Ellys life .

But what choice did he have ? She was sweet , naive , and utterly oblivious to the complexities of relationships .

And then there was the Anderson family .

Leia was a conniving snake , and the familys loyalty still leaned toward her.

If Nicolas didnt guide Noelle .

shed be eaten alive in that house .

Fatherly or not .

Nicolas knew he couldnt let that happen i and a faux innocent Leia .

Meanwhile , back at the Anderson estate , Noelle was greeted by a stormy faced Eli a Noelle , Eli snapped , his tone sharp and accusing you still remember where home is , huh ? Oh , this again ... Noelle muttered under her breath , already sensing where this was going .

Leia stepped forward , her expression the picture of contrition .

Tm so sorry , Noelle .

I didnt mean to tattle , but I just couldnt stand by while you stayed out so late with Nicolas .

Its really not proper Whats improper about it ? Noelle replied flatly .

Nicks my fiance .

Isnt it normal for me to spend time with him ? And Leia , if you didnt mean to tattle , then why did you ? Le blinked , her face falling into a well practiced look of hurt .

Are you blaming me ? she asked softly , as if she were the victim .

Yeah Noelle said simply .

Just dont do it : again .

Alright ... Elis scowl deepened .

Noelle Leia was just worried about you .

And this is how you talk to her ? I dont get what the big deal is , Noelle retorted .

Nicks not some monster whos going to eat me Youll regret it when something bad happens ! Eli barked , his voice rising- Elis voice grew sharper as he said , I heard from Leia that Nicolas was at Star Club today .

Didnt you say he wouldnt flirt around ? Then why was he there ! Do you still dare say hes not messing around ? Thes not inessing around Noelle pouted Star Club was Nicolass lasiness , and he was there for a routine inspection .

Shed wanted to go to the adult section , but Nick had dragged her away .

There was nothing like what Eli was imagining .

But since Nicolas had kept his role as the owner of Star Club a secret , Noelle couldnt explain it to Eli .

You're will making excuse for it I think you've been brainwashed Star Clubes adult section was well known , and although there was a clean area , Nicolas going to Star Club didn't scream going to the clean zone .

It clearly looked like he was up to no good .

so annoying Frustrated that she couldn't explain , Noelle felt like her head was about to explode .

2/3 Chapter 38 She snapped , Dad doesn't care about me being with Nick , so why do you keep pestering me about it , El ? You're so nagging , it's driving me crazy What did you say Eli froze , as if struck by something .

Leia , seeing her chance , immediately stepped in with a feigned sigh .

Noelle , how can you speak to Eli like that ? Of all the people in the Anderson family .

Eli cares the most about you .

He doesn't want you getting close to Nicolas because he's worried about you .

But now you're turning on Eli for an outsider ? That's too much .

I'm not turning on Eli Noelle was starting to get confused .

Eli was just being so annoying , always following her around and arguing .

She'd only spoken the truth .

Fine , I get it .

Im the one who's clueless Eli sneered , his eyes filled with a mix of hurt and self mockery .

From now on , you can be with whoever you want .

I won't interfere .

I won't care anymore .

With that .

Eli stormed upstairs without looking back .

Eli Noelle called after him , but he ignored her .

Once he was out of sight , Leia walked up to Noelle , acting all sympathetic .

Noelle ... you really hurt Elis feelings .

You'd better be more careful in the future Noelle stared at Leia , speechless .

In her mind , Noelle thought , If it wasnt for you snitching , would Eli even know about me and Nick ? And now youre saying all this ? Leia , youre so annoying

Chapter 39 Noelle realized Eli was really upset et with he her .

her , heading downstairs without In the morning , she waited by the door , hoping to greet him as he came out .

But when he did , he walked right past he even acknowledging her presence At breakfast , things got worse .

Eli usually sat next to her , but today he chose the seat beside Leia , chatting and laughing with her instead .

Leia , you should eat more .

The shumai is really good today , he said , placing a couple on Leias plate Thank you .

Eli , Leia replied sweetly .

Dont mention it , Eli said , smiling .

School starts in two days .

If you run into any problems on campus , just come to me , okay ? Got it .

Leia said with a smile .

Hearing this , Noelle chimed in brightly .

Eli , which department are you in ! I can come find you too ! But Eli barely spared her a glance before turning back to Leia .

It was as if he hadnt even heard her .

He casually picked up a slice of cake and placed it on Leias plate .

Leia , have some whole grains theyre good for you Okay , Ill listen to you , Leia said , her tone syrupy sweet .

Noelle pouted , her lips forming a dramatic arch .

Noelle thought , Great .

J Just great .

She thought theyd finally made progress in building a bond .

Now , it felt like all her efforts had been wiped clean , putting them right back at square Kimberly , who had been observing the exchange , set down her utensils and asked Eli directly .

Eli , whats going on ? Did you have a fight with Noelle ? Ells expression remained neutral as he replied , Nothing like that , Mom .

Dont worry about it .

Kimberly sighed .

Theres no such thing as an irreconcilable grudge between siblings .

If theres a problem , talk it out , okay ? Dont keep things bottled up Eli chuckled faintly , his tone light but sharp .

Mom , Im not holding any grudges .

I get along just fine with Leia , dont I ? You Kimberly said , exasperated .

Turning to Noelle , she added with a ge agende smile .

Noelle , make sure you eat plenty too , okay ? gaze flicking across the room Ol ..

okay .

Noelle mumbled , her gaze With the older brothers away on business , the dining table today was sparsely filled just Kimberly Kimberly , Vincent , Eli , Leia , and herself .

Despite the Anderson familys improved attitude toward her , it was clear where everyones loyalties lay .

They all gravitated toward Leia , leaving Noelle alone Still , Noelle wasnt discouraged .

There was plenty of time before the six month deadline .

She wouldnt give up that easily .

Soon , it was the first day of school at Eston University .

Eh , having his own car and a valid drivers li license .

was tasked with driving his two sisters to campus .

Leia naturally slid into the passenger seat beside him , chatting and laughing as though she were the star of the show .

Noelle tried to join the conversation at first , but Eli deliberately ignored her .

Every attempt she made to chime in was met with silence .

Leia didnt make any effort to include her entier , leaving Noelle to sulk quietly in the back seat .

Eli , you said youre the vice president of the student council , right ? Youre going to be promoted to president this year , arent you ? Leia asked , her 1/4 9.29 AM Chapter 39 voice honeyed with admiration (Yeah , Eli replied , his eyes on the road .

The current presidents graduating and focusing on internships and his thesis .

At the next council theyll officially hand the position over to me Leia bramed .

Thats amazing , Eli ! Youre so accomplished nieeting .

Eli caught a glimpse of Noelle in the rearview mirror .

She had fallen silent , her face turned toward the window .

Normally so bright and animated , she now seemed oddly subdued .

Her usually sparkling eyes were half lickled , her expression unreadable .

For a fleeting moment , Elis heart skipped a beat .

It wasnt just her silence that unnerved him it was the unsettling aura she exuded .

Despite her sunny exterior , there was something dark and unbalanced lurking beneath , a shadow that Eli li couldnt quite put his finger on .

El ! Eli ! Leias voice snapped him back to reality .

What ? Eli said , glancing at her .

Leia poured , her tone half teasing , half annoyed .

Ive been talking to you , but youre off in la la land .

Whats so fascinating in your head ? Nothing .

Els said quickly , brushing it off .

What were you saying ? want to join the student council , but Im afraid I wont make the cut .

Ell , youll help me , right ? Youll be fine .

Youre plenty qualified , Eli assured her .

But I want to skip the lower ranks and start as an officer , Leia said , her voice taking on a coy note .

Straight to being an officer ? Le looked at him with wide , hopeful eyes .

Can I ? Eli sighed but relented .

Ill see what I can do .

Leias face lit up instantly .

Thanks , Eli ! Youre the best ! Eli chuckled softly and added , After the opening ceremony today , each class should elect its student leaders and start organizing activities to help everyone get to know each other .

Starting tomorrow , youll have two weeks of military training .

Focus on getting through that first Got it .

Leia nodded I earnestly , then playfully added , But you better come visit me during training , Ell : If I have time , I will , he replied casually .

Got a Leia agreed , her tone bubbly class on At the university parking lot , Eli parked the car and turned to Leia .

Ive got to head to a student council meeting .

Youll be fine finding your c your own , right ! .

Leu waved him off playfully .

Tm not helpless , Eli Good .

After the opening ceremony , go to your class and meet your classmates .

Then head to the field for orientation .

Will do ! Byr , El ! Noelle , who had remuined quiet the entire ride , suddenly perked up .

She waved cheerfully at Eli , her usual brightness returning Bye , Elir Eli hesitated for a fraction of a second , his gaze lingering on her .

Leia noticed and tensed .

Is he about to forgive her ! But Eli quickly turned and left without another word .

2/4 0.29 AM c Chapter 39 Relieved , Leia smirked inwardly .

Feigning concern , she turned to Noelle and said , Dont feel too bad , Noelle .

Im sure Elis just mad for now .

Once he cools off , hell talk to you again .

Noelle tilted her head , studying Leia with an expression that sent a chill down her spine , Leia felt a chill under Noelles steady gaze .

She twitched her lips awkwardly and asked , Why are you staring at me like that ? Noelle suddenly leaned in close .

Leia flinched , startled , her nerves spiking .

Then , in a crisp , sincere voice , Noelle said , Leia , dont talk in that tone .

You soun sound so fake .

Leia blinked , confused .

Before she could respond .

Noelle turned and sauntered ahead , leaving Leia behind with a storm brewing on her face .

Leia glared daggers at Noelles back , her expression dark and venomous .

With a cold laugh , she muttered .

So , the little brat finally wants to go toe- to toe with me ? Perfect , Ive been waiting for this .

Noelle and Leia headed to their assigned classroom , per the schools pre term instructions .

By the time they arrived , quite a few students were already there .

A lively group of girls crowded around the window seats , chatting animatedly with someone seated there Hey , whats your name ? Im Laincy Stanton .

Come on , handsome , were in the same class ! Dont be so aloof Just say something , wont you ? The boys nearby snickered , tossing jokes among themselves .

Man , girls these days ! Theyre bolder than us guys when it comes to making a move .

kidding .

But look , the dude over there hasnt said a single word to them .

Whoa , wait a sec .

Look at the door two more stunners just walked in ! Someones loud exclamation drew everyones eyes to the entrance .

crap , what a pair of beautiest Holy c Theyre like straight up movie stars Leia felt the boys gazes lock onto her , and a smug sense of vanity bubbled up .

She straightened her posture , holding her head high like a proud little peacock .

But then , someone said , Honestly , I think the shorter one is prettier .

Agreed .

Both are gorgeous , but the shorter girls looks are on another level .

Totally Count for in for in on that .

Leias face darkened , her pride pricked .

Whats wrong with their eyes ? she thought bitterly .

How could they think Noelle is better looking than me ? Just then , one of the girls near the windows called out , Wait , where are you going , handsome ? The crowd parted as the guy y theyd been flocking around stood up and walked out .

Leias jaw dropped when she saw who it was it was Harley .

hapter 40 Harley Leias face lit up with surprise and delight when she saw Harley in the same class .

Forgetting his cold attitude from a few days ago , she eagerly waved at him Wait , do they know each other ? Wow , they look like such a good match handsome and beautiful , Cluess we dont stand a chance .

The girls overheard Leia calling Hailey by name , and their curiosity peaked .

Harley , who had been indifferent to everyone else , immediately walked straight toward Leia as soon as she entered .

two was obvious .

The familiarity between the two was Whispers rippled through the crowd .

Are they a couple ! They sure look like it .

Totally a perfect match .

Leias heart swelled with pride upon hearing someone describe her and Harley as a picture perfect pair .

Her chin lifted slightly higher , her steps carrying an extra air of triumph To everyones shock , however , Harley didnt address Leia first .

Instead , his sharp gaze softened , and a cool smile played on his lips as he greeted the girl standing behind Leia .

elle .

What a coincidence were in the same class , Huh ? Noelle glanced up at him , a little surprised .

Ever since running into Harley at the mall , it seemed fate had a funny way of throwing them together .

First , he turned out to be Leias high school classmate , and now they were in the same university class .

After a moments thought , Noelle decided it wouldnt hurt to get along with Harley .

A radiant smile spread across her face .

Yeah , what a coincidence Harley , it seems like were really fated to be friends .

Can you believe we ended up in the same class It does feel like fate .

Harley replied , his thin lips curving upward in a genuine smile .

Fate , indeed he had spent 100 thousand dollars to make sure theyd end up in the same class .

I thought Harley and the other girl were a couple , but it turns out hes interested in the one behind her .

Its a pity that the girl was so enthusiastic , but it turned out to be wishful thinking Oh no , that poor girl she must be so embarrassed now Lesa suffered at the whispers swirling around them , her cheeks burning .

As the Anderson familys beloved princess , she had never experienced such humiliation before .

Harleys indifference cut deep What had she done to deserve this Why was Harley treating her this way ! As her eyes brimmed with tears of frustration , Harley suddenly turned to look at her .

Leia , I left in a hurry the other day without saying goodbye .

Im sorry , he said , hes totally neutral .

Leia blinked , stunned .

Harley was apologizing to me ? She hadnt even been upset about his sudden departure , but the fact that he remembered and cared enough to bring it up rekindled her hope ..

He still cares about me Leia thought , her heart swelling with sweetness .

Her smile brightened as she shook her head .

Its okay , Harley Dont worry about it .

You mustve had something important to do . I managed just .

fine on my wall How about I treat you both to lunch today as an apology Harley offered casually ,
1/2 9:29 AM c Chapter 40 Leia beamed .

Youre too kind .

Its the least I can do .

Harley replied .

Harley didnt exactly like Leia , but he wasnt oblivious to the fact that storming off the other day had been a mistake .

Besides , Leia was Noelles sister , and for Noelles sake , he couldnt afford to let things sour too much between them .

With these considerations in mind .

Harley decided to apologize .

Harley thought , And as a bonus ? The apology could double as an excuse to invite Noelle out for a meal .

Two birds , one stone The class soon headed to the field for the opening ceremony .

Harley naturally walked beside Noelle , while Leia hovered close to his other side .

However , Harleys attention was almost exclusively on Noelle .

He kept a subtle but protective watch over her , steering her away from potential collisions with the bustling crowd .

Leia couldnt suppress her jealousy any longer .

Forcing a smile , she said , Harley , Noelles not a child .

You dont have to coddle her so much itll only spoil her .

Huh ? Noelle , who hadnt noticed Harleys attentiveness , tilted her head and looked at him curiously .

Harley , whats up ? There are a lot of people around .

Just being careful so you dont get bumped , Harley replied , his tone matter of fact Noelle frowned slightly , clearly unimpressed .

Are you doubting my reflexes ! Harley said .

I didnt mean I could walk through this crowd with my eyes closed , and no one would touch me .

Watch .

Before Harley could react , Noelle shut her eyes and began weaving through the crowd with confident , fluid movements , her petite frame slipping through gaps effortlessly .

Noelle ! Harley started to move after her , but a low murmur from nearby stopped him in his tracks .

Whoa , whos that ? Is she a freshman ? Shes adorable .

Harley turned his head to see a group of male students staring unabashedly at Noelle , their eyes practically sparkling It wasnt surprising .

Noelles beauty was striking , but there was also an air of innocence about her that drew people in .

Her petite stature , porcelain like skin , and delicate features made her look like a living doll under the morning sunlight .

Even the faint peach fuzz on her cheeks only added to her charm .

Shes stunning .

Quick , take a picture ! One of the boys pulled out his phone , but before he could snap a shot , a hand shot out and blocked his Startled , he looked up straight into Harleys cold , cutting glare .