

Wolfless 116

Chapter 116 Rumors, Rivals, and a Slap

By the time Tessa got back to class, third period was already in session.

Luckily, it was Hamilton's class. He knew she had something come up last minute, so he just waved her in and told her to take her seat.

When the bell rang, ending the period, Ysabel grabbed her arm and pulled her toward the hallway.

"Where did you go? Do you know how worried I was? Seriously—ditching class without me?"

"Ms. Thorne, you sound a little too excited about skipping class

"I am!" Ysabel grinned. "Preferably the kind where we climb the fence."

She'd been the model student long enough. If senior year didn't come with at least one little act of rebellion, what was the point? She deserved a moment of teenage recklessness.

"Alright, one of these days, I'll help you hop the fence," Tessa said casually.

"You mean it? Tessie, I knew you were the best!" Ysabel said, gazing up at her with admiration.

Tessa didn't actually need to use the bathroom, so after Ysabel went in, she stayed in the hallway, popped in her earbuds, and started playing music.

A tap on the shoulder made her turn around.

It was Nico.

Tessa raised an eyebrow but took out her earbuds. She didn't mind Nico. Unlike most of the students at school, he never judged her for the rumors. Even though he was top of the honors track, he still went out of his way to come talk to her—always polite, always sincere, especially when asking her about physics.

They'd gotten a little more familiar just the night before, actually. She and Ysabel had been having dinner at a restaurant near campus when a server accidentally spilled hot soup toward their backs. Nico, who just happened to be there too, jumped in without hesitation and shielded them—taking the brunt of the burn

his arm.

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Neither she nor Ysabel was hurt. But Nico was.

That moment stuck with her.

"So... have you thought about it? The physics competition?" Nico asked.

"Yeah, I've decided. I'll do it," Tessa said. Honestly, she couldn't take Mr. Clark's no. The more she said no, the more he popped up, trying to talk her into it. She'd be persistent—it was annoying, sure, but also kind of funny.

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“That’s great!” Nico smiled and pulled a pack of gum from his pocket. He held it out to her.

It was her favorite flavor.

Tessa didn’t reach for it.

physics lab after school.”

Tessa blinked. Wait—when did I agree to go to the

physics lab?

Just then, Winona and a group of girls from the advanced track came out of the restroom—and caught the whole exchange.

Their faces dropped.

Nico wasn’t just top of the class—he was the guy. Smart, kind, good-looking, and from a well-known family. And now, here he was, handing gum to Tessa.

The girls were furious.

“Tessa, seriously? Could you be any more shameless? Stay away from Nico.”

“Seriously! Just because you came in second place once doesn’t mean you belong anywhere near him.”

“Nico’s way out of your league. His background, his character—he’s not someone a nobody like you should even think about.”

“You’re disgusting. Don’t drag other people down with you.”

“Enough,” Tessa snapped, finally losing her patience. These girls really didn’t know when to shut up.

“Winona, look at your sweet little sister,” one girl sneered. “She spends all day throwing herself at guys. It’s gross.”

Winona stood back and watched it all unfold, clearly enjoying every second of it.

Seeing Tessa get ganged up on? It was the highlight of her day.

But Tessa wasn’t in the mood to play along. “Looks like someone needs a lesson in how to behave,” she said coldly. “You all seem to think I’m an easy target. Let’s fix that.”

Without hesitation, she slapped each of the girls across the face—quick, clean, and before they could even

react.

“You seriously just hit us?” one of them shouted, holding her cheek. “That’s it—let’s take her down! Let’s teach this freak a lesson she won’t forget!”