

That Can Be Arranged chapter 2

Chapter 2 Setup

Five years later, Tessa sat in the lounge of a luxurious private yacht treading through the waves of the expansive, glittering blue sea. She had an arm around her mahogany-colored violin as she quietly tuned it.

The other members of the orchestra took up their own space around her, chattering excitedly among themselves about the owner of this very yacht, who happened to be the regaled Little Prince of the Sawyer family.

Rumor had it that the Little Prince was already worth billions even though he was barely over four years old, and his great-grandfather—Old Master Sawyer—did not hold back when it came to celebrating the young boy's birthday. In fact, this very yacht was his gift to the Little Prince, and he bought it without so much as batting an eyelash.

"Hey, why do you think the Sawyers appointed our orchestra to perform during the Little Prince's birthday celebration? I mean, there are plenty of other orchestras more famous than ours!"

"Who knows? I only heard that it was the Little Prince who hand-selected us to perform today. It's only thanks to him that we get to perform on a glamorous yacht like this one, and our fee practically quadrupled for this event!"

At the mention of this, the other members of the orchestra began to sound off their envy. "We should all be so lucky to have only one-tenth of the Little Prince's riches. Think about how easy our lives would be then!"

"Destiny favors some over others, and the Little Prince seems to have taken almost all the favor! Our jealousy of the little boy is all we have to our name."

.....

Upon hearing this, Tessa felt the corners of her lips curl up in a bitter, humorless smile. Indeed, she thought darkly, there are those whom destiny favored and granted them victory from the moment they were born, just like the Little Prince of the Sawyer Family.

Then there were those like her, who had fallen behind before the umpire could even shoot the blank and start the race. Tessa's father was a piece of scum who fooled around behind his wife's back and ignored all the things she had done for him, abandoning her and forgetting their past struggles together as soon as his business peaked in its success.

When Tessa's mother passed away, Tessa and Timothy had no one else to rely on but each other.

As a result, Tessa had been forced to sell her own flesh and blood just to get the money for Timothy's medical treatment. I never even got to see my baby... she thought ruefully. Every time she was reminded of this, a searing pain tore through her heart, threatening to rip her to shreds.

Now that she thought about it, her baby ought to have turned four this year, which was around the same age as the Little Prince. I don't even know if it's a dashing baby boy or an adorable baby girl. I don't know where the baby has gone or if he's doing well...

Suddenly, her eyes grew misty, and she couldn't help the prickling sensation in her nose that signaled oncoming waterworks.

Just then, a shrill cry pulled Tessa out of her thoughts. "Tessa! What are you doing here?"

The mistiness in Tessa's eyes cleared as she turned in the direction of the voice, only to see someone whom she wished she never had to see for the rest of her life—Sophia Reinhart!

Sophia was dressed in an elegant evening dress, and her face was delicately made-up. There was a haughty tilt to her chin as she looked down her nose at Tessa, just like she had six years ago.

Tessa grimaced in disgust at the sight of Sophia, for she didn't expect to see her here.

"Hah! So it really is you!" Having made sure that the woman in the lounge was Tessa, Sophia crossed over to her, the sound of her stilettos clicking against the floor echoing throughout the room. When she came to a stop in front of Tessa, she sneered arrogantly, "I didn't think you'd still be alive. Why, I was under the impression that you and that useless brother of yours died a long time ago!"

Timothy... Tessa gritted her teeth. If Sophia and her mother, Lauren, hadn't so brutally cut off Timothy's medical funds, Tessa would never have needed to give birth to that man's child, let alone go through the devastation of parting with her own flesh and blood.

This vicious mother-and-daughter duo is responsible for all my tragedies!

Hatred flashed in Tessa's eyes as she retorted snarkily, "If you and your b*tch of a mother are still alive and kicking, then of course, Timothy and I are perfectly fine as well. We're just waiting for lightning to strike the both of you heartless witches dead!"

"You—" Sophia was at a loss for words, stunned by Tessa's retort. As far as she remembered, Tessa had always been too timid and unsure of herself to fight back. "It's only been a few years since we last saw each other, but it looks like time sure has made you a vicious shrew."

"No, I'm not as vicious as you and your mother," Tessa replied coolly.

Right now, her priority was to make sure the performance went on without a hitch, and this was not the time to be bringing up the past. With that in mind, she rose to her feet so she could seek out a quiet place to practice, not wanting to spend another minute longer with the eyesore that was Sophia.

Sophia, on the other hand, grew even more incensed at the sight of Tessa's graceful indifference. She couldn't help but recall how hard she had worked alongside her mother to throw Tessa and Timothy out of the Reinhart Residence.

She thought she had won. But for some reason, she still felt as if she was beneath Tessa even as she stood here before her, all glamorous and dolled-up.

Be it the looks or the grace, Tessa was the true winner between the both of them!

At the thought of this, jealousy flashed in Sophia's eyes. She's supposed to rot away on the streets as soon as we cast them out of the family! How dare she show up here at this lavish event like the world is her oyster?

Sophia's gaze fell upon the extremely valuable violin that Tessa was currently carrying, and malice colored her features. Looking around to make sure no one was paying attention to her, she slid her foot out over the floorboards.

"Ah!" Tripping, Tessa hurtled forward, caving into gravity as she crashed to the floor unceremoniously. Following her fall, a tuneless sort of grunt came from the violin as it toppled to the space in front of her.

High-pitched tweaking sounds emitted from the broken violin as two chords strained and snapped in quick succession.

Coincidentally, Trevor Oswald—the orchestra manager—came through the door at that moment, and when he saw the scene before him, all the color drained from his face. Horrified, he exclaimed, "Tessa! I can't believe you broke the violin! Madam Sawyer was the one who lent it to us out of goodwill, and there's only one of it in the whole world! We wouldn't be able to pay for it even if we sold the entire orchestra!"

Tessa blanched. "I-It wasn't my fault!" She scrambled to her feet and turned to glare balefully at Sophia, snapping, "It was hers! She was the one who tripped me on purpose!"

"Me? Don't make up lies to cover your own backside!" Sophia put her hands up, denying the allegations with utmost innocence. "You tripped over your own feet, so don't go around accusing me for your own mistake!" Then, she crossed her arms as she eyed Tessa with wicked amusement. "If I were you, I'd go apologize to Madam Sawyer right away and beg for her forgiveness, then quit the orchestra altogether. I'm sure you don't want your mishap to drag the orchestra's reputation through the mud."

"She's right! Come with me right now, and we'll go ask Madam Sawyer for forgiveness." Trevor reached for Tessa's wrist and began to pull her out the door.

“Also, you don’t have to go up on stage after this. Our orchestra has no need for a musician as clumsy as you, so leave after the performance today!”

Leave the orchestra? This made Tessa’s blood run cold, and she was ashen-faced as she thought wildly, No! If I lose this job, I won’t have the money to feed myself and Timothy. I can’t leave the orchestra!

“Mr. Oswald, I really didn’t—”

But just as she was about to plead her case with all her might, a childish but calm and collective voice sounded from the doorway. “Why should she be the one to apologize? The one who should go in her place is that lady over there!”