

Always Been Yours Chapter 368

Chapter 368 Argument

Nicholas ignored him and went into the residence.

Remus was waiting in the resplendent living room. His butler told him that Nicholas had returned, and when his grandson came in, he picked his teacup up and sipped from it. "You're back," he said majestically.

"What's with the engagement?" Nicholas stood in the living room, looking at his grandfather coldly, and tension rose in the air.

Remus paused, and he looked at Nicholas in displeasure. "Are you questioning me?"

"If you want to think like that, then yes." Nicholas didn't deny it. He said calmly, "There are some lines you should never cross."

"Are you telling me what to do?" Remus' face fell and he slammed his cup down. He insisted, "You're going to get engaged whether you like it or not."

"I won't do it." Nicholas was even more stubborn. "If you want to go on with it, then do it. But there won't be a groom during the engagement banquet."

"Are you threatening me?" Remus flew into a rage. "I know what you're thinking. You don't want to get engaged because you want that Reinhart woman to be your girlfriend, don't you?"

"As long as she's not someone you want me to marry." Nicholas didn't give him a straight answer, but refusal was written all over his face.

Remus was livid that Nicholas was going against him time and again. "That wench must have deceived you. I will never allow you to marry that woman! The lady of the family must come from an equally powerful family!"

Nicholas looked angry as well, and his patience ran out. He simply laid all his cards on the table and shot back, "Gregory is Tessa's son. Why can't she be my wife?"

At once, Remus' face fell. "So you knew."

"You weren't being discreet. If I couldn't even find that out, I would have failed your teachings," Nicholas mocked.

Remus snorted. "So what if she's Gregory's mother? She abandoned him for money. That's proof that she's a gold digger. I will never allow someone like that to be a part of us."

While they were arguing in the living room, someone appeared on the porch, but they didn't see her.

Hayley was petrified. She never expected Gregory to be Tessa's son. So that's why he likes her so much? There's no way I can make Gregory like me now that he's met his own mother. Not like she'll let me either. With this thought in mind, Hayley left immediately.

Nicholas and Remus were still arguing, and the tension would snap at any given moment. "Do you want me to have a heart attack, Nicholas? Everyone knows you should get a wise woman as a wife. What kind of help can someone like Tessa give you?"

"I don't think the family has declined so much that it needs to sacrifice my marriage to sustain it," Nicholas retorted.

Remus felt a stab of pain coming from his chest from all the fury he was feeling.

The butler quickly called Tobias and his wife, telling them to come over as soon as possible. Then, he went back to Remus and patted his back. At the same time, he persuaded, "Master Nicholas, this is for your own good. Miss Stone is wise, smart, and cultured. There's no better woman out there who can help you. Just go with it, alright?"

"Only a useless man needs his own wife to help him." Nicholas looked at the butler coldly, the mockery thick in his voice.

Remus laughed mirthlessly, and he looked at Nicholas. "That's arrogance."

The air around Nicholas seemed to turn cold, and he chuckled. "I could say the same to you, Grandpa."

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Chapter 369 White Lie

"Why you little..." Remus was too angry to come up with a reply.

Fortunately, Tobias and Stefania came just in time. They noticed the tension in the air the moment they came in, and they smiled at Remus. "Dad."

Remus snorted. "Good. You're here. Persuade him to marry Hayley. He thinks it's a bad idea. Well, I don't think so." Then he told his butler to take him upstairs.

Tobias and Stefania looked at each other. They could guess what had happened, so after Remus was gone, they asked Nicholas to take a seat.

Nicholas didn't move, and his parents didn't force him to.

Eventually, Stefania stepped up and persuaded, "Nicholas, just do as he says, alright? He's really doing it for your own good. And Hayley's not a bad woman. Her family's on the same level as us. You won't find any better woman out there."

"That has nothing to do with me," Nicholas answered coldly, and his patience finally ran out. "Gregory is still waiting for me. I'll be going now." He walked away before Stefania could say anything else. When he came out of the residence, he had a dark look on his face, and a storm was brewing in his eyes. He walked to his car and got in.

Edward noticed the anger coming from Nicholas, and he gulped carefully. It had been a long time since he saw Nicholas looking that angry. Then he remembered something, and he reported, "Sir, Hayley showed up earlier, but she left in a hurry. She probably heard something."

Nicholas snorted. "Good."

The black Rolls-Royce left the residence, and Nicholas' anger subsided ever so slightly. His phone rang, and it was from Tessa. He calmed himself down a little and picked it up.

Tessa's face appeared in the video call, and she was smiling. "Have you guys landed, Nicholas?"

"Yes." He nodded, his voice still tinged with anger.

Tessa noticed something wrong, and she saw the anger on his face. She asked, "Are you angry, Nicholas? What happened?"

"Nothing."

He didn't want to tell her, but she was worried, and she guessed, "Did your family find out about your trip?"

That was the thing she worried most about. The Sawyers objected to her being Nicholas' girlfriend. If they knew that they were already a couple, the Sawyers would do anything to separate them.

Nicholas saw the worry in her eyes. He hid his anger away and smiled. "Don't think too much about this. It's not about the trip, and you have nothing to do with it."

"Really? Why do you look so angry then?" Tessa was still suspicious.

"It's because of the company," he lied to assuage her worries.

Tessa didn't know that, and she gave him a concerned look. "What happened? Is it serious?" Nicholas had always looked like he could handle anything about the company with ease. It was the first time she saw him looking so angry. It must be serious.

"It's fine. I'm already handling it."

Tessa could see that he didn't want to talk about it, so she just said, "Well, since you're already handling it, then I guess it'll be settled soon. Don't worry about it. Relax."

Nicholas nodded with a smile, but she could see that he was feeling down. She smiled. "I got a new music sheet today, and I just learned how to play one of the tunes in it. I think I played it decently. Do you want me to play it for you?"

"Sure."

"Give me a minute then. I'll take my violin."

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Chapter 370 The Stones' Plan

She quickly went to take her violin. A while later, the car was filled with the soothing tune of her violin. It was sometimes slow, sometimes happy, and sometimes melancholic, though it sounded great overall.

Nicholas felt calm for some reason as he listened to her play. It was like her music had magic.

Once she was done playing, she looked at him with anticipation. "So, how was it?"

"Great."

"Are you feeling better yet?"

Nicholas looked into her eyes, and he felt warm. He knew she was trying to cheer him up, so he smiled. "A lot better."

Tessa looked at him closely and noticed that the anger on his face was gone. It was replaced by a smile instead. She started talking about how the orchestra celebrated her birthday earlier in the day.

Nicholas listened quietly and would pipe up at times. He didn't stop smiling the whole time he was talking to her. Even after they hung up, he was still smiling.

Edward looked at him in the rear-view mirror, and he sighed. Wow, Miss Reinhart sure is awesome. I've never seen someone dousing Mr. Sawyer's anger before.

After Hayley went home, she sat on the couch and processed her shock, but it was proving to be hard.

The Stone couple was surprised to see their daughter looking so petrified when they came downstairs. "Hayley, I thought you're going to have dinner with Remus tonight. Why are you back so soon?" Sonia sat across from her.

Nero followed and sat beside his wife. He shrewdly noticed the troubled look on his daughter's face, and he asked, "What happened? You don't look too good."

Hayley bit her lip and told them what she heard at the Sawyer Residence. "Dad, Mom, I just found out that Gregory is Nicholas and Tessa's son."

"What?" The Stone couple was shocked.

Hayley continued, "Nicholas doesn't want to marry me because of Gregory's mother."

The Stone couple's faces fell. Their family lost a lot of money in an overseas project lately, and they needed a lot of funds to cover that. They had used a part of the funds of a branch company in the nation, but it was just a stopgap measure. They still had a huge hole to patch, so they desperately needed this marriage of convenience to help them. However, Nicholas' adamant refusal was not helping them, and now they knew they couldn't wait anymore.

Sonia gritted her teeth. "This engagement cannot be canceled. If he doesn't want to get engaged, then we'll force him to."

"But how?" He could even go against his own grandfather. I don't think we can force him to do this.

Sonia squinted, her eyes glinting with cunning. "Remus himself asks you to be Nicholas' wife. If I tell everyone about the engagement, Nicholas must attend it even if he doesn't want to, or their family would be embarrassed."

"Not bad. Sure, your reputation might be hurt, but we're the victims here. That won't harm us." Nero nodded.

Hayley was tempted to agree, but she hesitated. She didn't think Nicholas would give in so easily, and she shook her head. "That's one plan, but Nicholas has told his grandfather that he won't attend the engagement even if he goes on with it."

“Ah, that’s just his anger talking. You don’t have to take it seriously.”

The Stone couple didn’t think he was serious, and they sneered. “Besides, Remus isn’t really young anymore. Nicholas has to consider his health. If Remus gets sick because of his actions, the whole family will go against him.”

Hayley still thought it wouldn’t be that easy.

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Chapter 371 Persuasion

Before she could say anything, Sonia saw through her. She knew Hayley was feeling uneasy, so she calmed her down. “It’s alright. Leave this to us. You stay out of it.”

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As they cared about the engagement a lot, the Stones went to see Remus early the next morning to talk about the arrangements. They pretended they knew nothing, of course. “Mr. Sawyer, we’ve drafted the list of the guests. When will the invitations arrive? We need to send them out.”

Remus looked at the list of guests on the table, but he didn’t tell the butler to take it.

The Stone couple felt their hearts skipping a beat.

Remus sipped some tea and answered imperiously, “Take the list back. The engagement needs to be delayed.”

The Stone couple was stunned, and their faces fell. Remus noticed that, but he didn’t care. Countless rich ladies would be more than happy to marry Nicholas. If the Stones would give up just like that, he could find another family to work with.

Fortunately, the Stones were smart. They noticed Remus’ displeasure, and they held their emotions down. “Why are we delaying it, Mr. Sawyer? I’ve never heard you mention anything about delaying before.” Sonia didn’t want to give up just like that. She wanted to persuade Remus to go on with it, since nobody knew if anything else would happen during the delay.

Remus frowned in displeasure. He thought Sonia was questioning him, so he said coldly, “If you want the engagement, then get your daughter to get along with Nicholas. It’s been so long, and I’ve helped you so much, but you still can’t make him fall for you. And now you ask me why the engagement is delayed?”

Hayley felt humiliated, and the Stone couple didn’t look too happy either, but they couldn’t voice it out.

Remus didn't care. He snorted at them. "Send the guests away, butler."

The butler obliged and invited the Stone family out. Left with no choice, they could only leave.

Remus was left alone on the couch, fuming. He didn't want to delay the engagement either, but he knew what kind of person Nicholas was. If Nicholas didn't want to go to the engagement, Remus couldn't force him to, even if Nicholas' life was at stake. Looks like I have to find some other way to force him.

The butler came back in and saw him looking pensive. He had been working for Remus for far too long to not get what his employer was thinking. He went over to Remus and hesitated for a while, then he said, "Sir, are you going to use Tessa to force Master Nicholas again? She's already in another country. If we do the same thing again, it'd be unbecoming of our family."

Remus looked at him quietly for a moment and went back to his train of thoughts.

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After the argument with Remus, Nicholas put everything aside and worked for the whole day. Not long after he had dinner with Gregory at home, his parents came to him.

"Gregory, my sweet boy. Here, let me hold you." Stefania smiled lovingly the moment she saw Gregory.

"Grandpa, Grandma!" Gregory happily trotted over to them.

They played with him for a while, then asked Andrew to take the boy upstairs.

Nicholas could tell that his parents had something to say to him. "Say what you have to say, but if it's still about the engagement, then my answer is still no."

A frown furrowed Tobias' forehead. He said sternly, "Nicholas, you should know your grandfather does everything for your own good. You might not know this, but his health is declining. All he wants is to see you raising a family and to have someone take care of Greg."

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Chapter 372 Persuasion Failed

Stefania added, "You said you don't want to marry Roselle because she treated Greg badly. I've observed Hayley for a while, and she really treats Greg well. Not to mention she's wise, and she comes from a good family too."

No matter what they said, Nicholas still wouldn't budge. He answered coolly, "You can't really know someone just by observing them for such a short time. She could be another Roselle. You say she's nice to Greg? What if she's just putting on a show? Do you know how she really treats him when you're not looking? And who'd actually accept a child who's not theirs so easily?"

Tessa was the only one who would treat Gregory nicely, for she was his real mother. She would love Gregory unconditionally no matter what, but Nicholas didn't say that out loud.

Stefania had nothing to say to that, and in the end, they sighed and left.

Kieran was waiting for them on the couch back at their house. When he saw them coming back looking crestfallen, he knew what happened. I expected this. Still, he asked, "Mom, how did the talk go?"

"I don't know what he's thinking. He just won't go with it no matter what." Stefania sat across from him, looking down and confused. "Hayley suits him perfectly, and she's nice to Greg. I just don't understand why he won't marry her."

Kieran rolled his eyes silently. Duh. Nicholas has someone he likes already. Of course he won't fall for anyone else. He wouldn't say that out loud, however. Kieran leaned back into the couch and couldn't help but defend Nicholas. "Honestly, don't try and match him up with any girl. Even if he is the heir, does he really need to marry a woman from the same social status? Will the family fall just because he marries someone in a lower hierarchy? Besides, he has done everything you told him to for the past twenty years. It's the time to make his most important decision in life, so can't you at least let him do it? If you're arranging everything for him, then he'll be no different from a puppet."

Kieran said all that on purpose. He wanted to brainwash his parents so they could accept the fact that Nicholas and Tessa were already together easily when it was exposed. After all, they would have been prepared for it. However, he had overestimated his skills.

A pillow flew his way, and Tobias answered unhappily, "Do you even know what a puppet is, you brat?"

Kieran held the pillow, muttering, "Nicholas is the perfect example of what a puppet is. You'll do anything to get him to do what you want him to do. You never care about what he thinks."

"We're doing it for his own good," Stefania said.

Tobias snorted. "That's how it is like to be born in this kind of family. You can choose because you don't have to shoulder the family's responsibility, but your brother can't."

“Family responsibility? That’s just outdated thinking. Family responsibility and marriage can coexist, okay?” Kieran defended Nicholas again, but that angered Tobias.

“Outdated thinking? I’ll show you outdated thinking!” Tobias told the butler to take the bat.

Kieran leaped out of the couch and hid behind it. “Hey, be reasonable, will you? You’re using violence just because you can’t talk reasonably?”

He saw the butler coming in with the bat, and Kieran escaped the house. Tobias used to use the bat to punish him when he was little, and it hurt a lot. Kieran went straight to Dynasty Gardens after he escaped.

Nicholas didn’t expect his brother to come at this hour, and he frowned. “Why are you here?”

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Chapter 373 Bad Situation

“Nicholas, you have to help me. Dad chased me out because I helped you and Miss Reinhart.” Kieran told him what happened back at the house and kept begging Nicholas to take him in.

Then, he heard sounds of violin coming from upstairs, and he blinked. “Is Greg playing the violin? I’ll take a look.” He quickly went upstairs in case Nicholas chased him away.

Gregory was in the violin room, and Tessa was teaching him how to play through the phone.

When Nicholas came in, he heard Tessa say gently and patiently, “Greg, it’d be perfect if you can play those two notes higher. Let’s do it again, alright?”

“Alright.” Gregory nodded. He held his violin up and played the tune again seriously.

They were immersed in the lesson and didn’t notice that someone else was in the room. When Gregory played the final note, Tessa clapped for him. “That’s great, Greg. That was perfect.”

Gregory pursed his lips shyly, his eyes filled with starlight. “It’s all thanks to you, Miss Tessa. All thanks to you.” He was still holding the video, and he praised Tessa back. It was a warm scene.

Nicholas crossed his arms and leaned against the door, looking at them gently, a smile curling his lips.

Kieran stood at a corner, looking at him. When he looked at the room, he felt jealous for some reason. Whoa. I have never seen Nicholas looking so gentle all my life. What is this, a dream?

The night passed by peacefully.

Contrary to Nicholas, the Stones weren't looking too good. Ever since their engagement with the Sawyers' was put on hold, Hayley's friends kept asking her out so that they could find out more about the engagement's delay. It got to her nerves eventually, and she snapped, "What does the engagement's delay have to do with you? Stay out of my business." She took her bag and went home.

Nero faced the same situation as well. When the news of the engagement was first released, tons of people in the business world paid attention to it. A lot of companies even wanted to work with the Stones because of their connection with the Sawyers. However, now that it was delayed, they called to ask what happened.

They might look like they were concerned, but in reality, they were just trying to seek the truth. If the engagement was canceled, then the Stones would be worth less to them, and there would be no need to work together. Nero knew all about that, of course.

That night, the Stones sat on the couch, looking dark. "We can't let this go on. Today, some companies suddenly said they're going to stop working with me." The other companies' cancellations made him gnash his teeth.

Sonia frowned. "The Sawyers won't go on with the engagement as usual. What can we do?"

A dead silence fell between them. Nero frowned. He had to find a way to stabilize things. Even if they couldn't reboot the engagement, at least they had to make sure everyone thought the Stones still had a chance. At this rate, the Stones would have no projects to work on, and the price of their shares would be at risk.

He suddenly thought of a plan. "Hayley, go to Sawyer Group every day starting tomorrow. Get Nicholas his lunch or dessert or anything. Just make sure people think that you and Nicholas are still going strong. Of course, if you can get someone to photograph you two together and post it online, all the better."

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Chapter 374 Refusal

Hayley knew what her father was trying to do. She thought it wouldn't be so easy to pull off, but she wanted to try. Nicholas was the man she wanted to have, and she would do anything to reach that goal. The next morning, Hayley did as her father told her to and

went to Sawyer Group with the snacks made by her family cook. Their families were partners, so it was normal for her to show up at the company.

But Nicholas was annoyed, for she came with a motive in mind. Hayley did the same thing for days, appearing at the company and sending food for Nicholas despite him giving her the cold shoulder and not touching her food.

One day, Nicholas' patience finally ran out. A frown dotted his forehead, and he said coldly, "Miss Stone, next time you come to the company, don't give me anything. I have no interest in anything aside from work."

Hayley's smile froze. She felt sad, but she held that down, and she smiled again. "It's alright. It's nothing, really. And eating out too much isn't good for your health."

"I said no!" Nicholas emphasized coldly. "My health is none of your business, Miss Stone."

Hayley felt heartbroken seeing the man refusing her so adamantly. I come here every day no matter the weather, and he still isn't touched? "Why? Why won't you choose me? Am I not good enough?" She bit her lip and stared at Nicholas, waiting for his answer.

The frown on Nicholas' forehead got deeper. "That has nothing to do with it," he said.

"Why not?" Hayley couldn't accept that answer. Tears welled up in her eyes, and she looked at him with a melancholic gaze. "I have made my feelings for you obvious from the start. I thought you should have seen my good side n—"

Before she could finish, he interrupted, "I will only notice the good side of those I love. Everyone else is the same to me."

Hayley felt hurt.

Nicholas ignored the look in her eyes and said coldly, "Miss Stone, stop wasting your time, or I will request a change for the person in charge."

"Can't you just give me a chance?" Hayley gritted her teeth, her eyes red. She was feeling like a mess inside, but she continued to stare at him.

Her reply was him chasing her away coldly. He pressed down the landline on his desk. "Edward, send Miss Stone away."

Edward came in a few moments later, a professional smile on his face. He extended his hand to Hayley. "Come with me please, Miss Stone."

Hayley glanced at Nicholas, but he was still looking indifferent. Left with no choice, she could only leave in the end. She got in the car and turned back to look at the majestic building, her eyes filled with frustration and defeat. She had always been proud of her charms and brilliance, but none of those could make him fall for her. What kind of woman does he love? And then, a face popped up in her mind, and the frustration in her eyes thickened.

He can't still have feelings for her, can he? She's already gone!

Hayley would not accept the fact that she was inferior to someone whom she thought was worthless, and her eyes blazed with ferocity. I will have him no matter what.

Tessa had no idea what happened back in the nation. Her life was getting back on track, and she spent most of her time going between her home and the orchestra.

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Chapter 375 Matchmaker

She would go to the orchestra early in the morning and only come home in the evening. Her skills improved a lot too. Hathaway was incredibly strict to her. Sometimes, she would ask Tessa to keep playing a note until she felt that it was right before they moved on. On some days, Tessa would spend half the day playing just one note, but Tessa was patient. She didn't think Hathaway was intentionally making things difficult for her.

Hathaway liked that part of her. Patience was a requirement for every musician, but few had the patience to play only one note for hours on end. However, Hathaway didn't have much time to teach her every day. The orchestra had an important performance in the following month, and she spent most of her time on that.

"You should play that note slightly lower. And you went into this note here one and a half beat too fast," Scott said gently. They were in the training room. He was in a grey casual suit, standing beside Tessa. The light shone on him through the window, making him look like an elegant prince who came straight out of a fairy tale.

Tessa wasn't affected by his looks in the slightest, and she was seriously playing the bar of music again.

Scott looked at her, his eyes shining with a special tenderness for her.

Ever since he knew Hathaway had to work on the orchestra most of her time, he volunteered to teach Tessa. His orchestra was on break anyway, and he had nothing to do.

Tessa was grateful for Scott's teachings. His classes were lively, and he could always accurately point out her flaws in music theory and sense. Now, she wasn't facing too

much difficulty when she tried to enter the zone. It would happen in just moments most of the time.

When Hathaway came to check on her progress after she was done with the orchestra, she bumped into a beautiful performance. She quietly went to the training room and saw Tessa playing the violin passionately. Her timber and transition had shown great improvements, and after she was done playing, Hathaway went inside, clapping her hands. “It’s only been two days, Scott, but she has improved a lot. You’re so good, I want you in my orchestra. How does that sound?”

“You’ll have to talk to our music director about that,” Scott answered with a smile.

“Forget it. Your music director is super stingy, and he really, really likes you. He’d probably fight me if I bring this up.”

Tessa and Scott both laughed.

A while of chatting later, Hathaway suddenly changed the topic. “Scott, you’re at that perfect age to find a girlfriend, aren’t you?”

Scott paused for a moment. Why is she talking about my love life?

Tessa smiled at him as well. She asked curiously, “Mr. Brooks, what kind of woman do you like?”

“I…” Scott looked at her. He wanted to say something, but he stopped himself. A light glinted in his eyes, but it was a mysterious light.

The ladies didn’t notice that. Hathaway even started to play matchmaker. “Since you don’t have anyone you like, why don’t I introduce my daughter to you?”

Hathaway’s daughter was the orchestra’s main violinist—Kathleen. She was famous in the industry, and she used to be classmates with Scott.

Scott paused for a moment, then he shook his head. “You jest, Miss Hathaway. She’s really out of my league, and she probably won’t think I’m boyfriend material.”

The moment he said that, everyone heard a clear, silvery voice. “You are a talented violinist. Why won’t I think you’re boyfriend material? And how could you think I’m out of your league? Don’t put yourself down like that.”

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They turned around, and a sexy, beautiful woman with blonde hair and green eyes came up to them. She looked just like a doll, and her green eyes were like a pair of emeralds that shone in the dark.

“Hello, Kathleen.” Scott smiled at her, but if someone were to look closely, his smile looked distant.

Tessa was about to call out to her as well, but Kathleen squeezed her aside, and she almost fell. When she got her bearing back, she looked at Kathleen in surprise.

However, Kathleen didn’t notice Tessa’s look. She smiled at Scott. “Since we’re both free, you’re coming with me for dinner.”

Tessa looked at Kathleen, then at Scott, and she realized what was happening. Ah, so Kathleen likes him. She backed away with a smile and brushed Kathleen’s earlier action aside. She stood beside Hathaway, giving them some space.

Hathaway smiled as well, delighted that she could see the birth of a power couple. She thought her suggestion was great. If her daughter did end up with Scott, they would be a great couple, and she could have an excuse to take Scott away from Berlin Philharmonic.

Before Scott could answer, Kathleen had already held his hand like he was her best friend. “Well, silence is agreement, I guess. Now let’s go.” She tried to take him and leave.

“A minute, Kathleen.” Scott held her back and pulled his hand away. “Not tonight,” he refused.

“Why?” Kathleen frowned, feeling upset.

“I have something to do.”

“I thought you’re on break? What do you have to do anyway?” Kathleen didn’t believe Scott at all. She liked him, so she had looked into everything related to him. She knew that he would either spend his free time practising in his orchestra or resting at home.

Scott was displeased about Kathleen’s insistence, and he frowned. For some reason, he glanced at Tessa and fell into his thoughts. He didn’t make it subtle though, and because Kathleen had been eyeing him, she caught that.

Kathleen squinted at Tessa pensively for a moment, then she half-joked, “Scott, don’t tell me you refused me because you have a date with Tessa?”

Tessa was surprised that she was dragged in. Hey, I'm just an audience here. She quickly waved her hands. "No, we don't have a date. I have to stay back and practise." In other words, she had no time.

Kathleen's sinister smile was replaced with a genuine one.

Scott, however, looked crestfallen, and the light in his eyes dimmed.

Kathleen held Scott's arm and smiled. "See? She needs to stay back for practice. She has no time at all. So that means you're coming with me."

Scott looked at her for a while. In the end, he gave up and nodded. "Fine then."

"Yay. Let's go then!" She took him out of the practice room.

Hathaway saw the two off, and she shook her head with a smile. Then, she turned her gaze to Tessa. She noticed Scott's peculiar glance earlier as well, and she fell into her thoughts.

Tessa didn't notice her gaze, as her attention was focused on the next tune she was going to practise.

But then, Hathaway said casually, "Tessa, what do you think of Scott?"

"Mr. Brooks? He's a nice guy. He's polite, soft-spoken, and his personality is great as well. I think he's a great match for Kathleen. She's outspoken, while he's more of an introvert. They complement each other."

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Chapter 377 Rebuttal

Tessa told her what she really thought without any hesitation.

Hathaway had the same sentiment. She wanted Scott to be Kathleen's boyfriend not only because he was brilliant enough for Kathleen, but also because he could accommodate her daughter. But still, she didn't forget why she asked that question, so she joked, "Even you think he's boyfriend material, huh? So, you've been getting along with him for days now. Are you catching any feelings for him?"

The question caught her by surprise. Tessa took some time to process it, and she realized that Hathaway must have misunderstood something. She was amused, but she looked at her seriously. "Miss Hathaway, I have someone I like, but he's back home right now." She brought up what happened before to convince Hathaway about that. "My family wasn't the only one who showed up during my birthday. He came too. He's a brilliant man, and I won't fall for anyone besides him in this life."

The smile on Tessa's face convinced Hathaway that she wasn't lying. She nodded sheepishly. "Please don't take what I said to heart."

"It's okay. I can understand."

"That's great." She heaved a sigh of relief. Then she remembered something, and she said, "Kathleen might be my daughter, but she's been living with her father ever since the divorce, so she's a bit spoiled. If she does anything cheeky, please don't take it to heart."

"I won't." She nodded with a smile.

Later, Tessa went home after practice and cleaned up a little, then she called Nicholas. He was in his office, and a gigantic french window stood behind him. The golden sunlight shone upon him, basking him in a divine glow.

They chatted for a while, then Hayley suddenly came in. Nicholas' face fell, but he still told Tessa warmly, "That's it for now. I'll call you later."

Oh, he must have work now. She nodded and hung up.

Nicholas put his phone down, and his smile was replaced by a dark look. "What do you want?" he asked coldly.

Hayley stared at him dumbly. She saw him talking so gently a moment ago, but his attitude changed when he was talking to her. Was I seeing things? No. That was true. Why does he treat me so differently? And who was that on the phone? But she didn't ask all those questions and hid her emotions. Instead, she smiled. "I need to talk about some problems with the project."

"What is it?" Nicholas didn't refuse, for work was work after all.

He's just going to talk about work, huh? She took a deep breath and held her disappointment down, then she brought up all the problems with the project. They weren't major problems, but Hayley needed to have an excuse to talk with Nicholas. Her father's plan aside, she wanted to show up in front of Nicholas more. She knew he didn't like her, but she thought he would be moved by her efforts in time.

Nicholas saw through her, but since Hayley was only talking about work, he didn't expose her little plan. After spending a little time settling all the problems she brought up, Nicholas sent her away.

Tessa held her phone, blinking curiously. She heard Hayley's voice just now, but she didn't suspect anything, as Nicholas had told her that the Stone Family was one of his company's partners. She put her phone down and went to study her sheet music. This time, it was a lullaby.

The white light shone upon her, showering her in holiness. It was eleven soon enough, and Tessa was going to sleep, but for some reason, she wanted to record the lullaby she played earlier.

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She did it right away. A beautiful violin tune was heard coming from her room, and those who were burning the midnight oil around started drifting to sleep. She sent Nicholas the recording once she was done, and she said, 'You can listen to this if you can't sleep at night.'

Nicholas got the text, and he smiled. He played the recording, and the beautiful melody filled his office with warm comfort. A while later, he paused the recording, and he replied, 'I like it. Get some sleep now. Good night.'

A moment later, she texted, 'Good night.'

He looked at her text, and his smile broadened. Nicholas brushed his finger across her profile picture, his eyes filled with tenderness, and the uncaring air around him seemed to have lifted a little. He kept his phone a while later and went back to work.

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Tessa woke up early the next morning and washed herself up, then she went and made breakfast. Tessa read through the news back at home while she ate. Because of the time difference, she knew it was late night back home, so she didn't disturb Nicholas.

She took her violin and went to the orchestra after breakfast. Lots of people were already there when she came, and they greeted her warmly.

When she walked past the main practice room, Tessa saw Kathleen talking about something with the other members. She wasn't curious about what they were talking about, so she was just going to say hi and go on with her training in the next room. But before she could leave, Kathleen said, "Miss Reinhart, please come here for a moment."

Tessa was surprised by the formality Kathleen was showing her, and she looked at Kathleen in puzzlement. Kathleen was smiling as usual, but Tessa still felt that something was off. She pursed her lips and pushed that thought down. It's just a title. Nothing to worry about. "What is it?" she asked.

"Are you from Southend?"

"Yes. Why?"

Kathleen smiled. "Nothing. The orchestra is going to perform at Southend next month. Since you're a local, it would be great if you can be our guide."

Tessa was surprised. "You're going to have a performance in Southend?"

Hathaway made her appearance just then. She looked at the members and smiled. "What are you guys talking about?"

"Miss Hathaway."

"Miss Hathaway."

Tessa and everyone else greeted her.

Kathleen trotted over and held Hathaway's arm, telling her about her earlier suggestion. "Mommy, we're going to perform in Southend soon, right? I've asked Miss Reinhart, and she said she comes from Southend, so she can be our guide then."

Hathaway noticed the change in how Kathleen addressed Tessa, but she only thought it was her daughter throwing a little tantrum. She looked at Tessa and said, "Not a bad idea. What do you think, Tessa?"

Tessa was pleasantly surprised, of course. Being forced to leave Southend and start again in Vienna upset her a lot. She might be Nicholas' girlfriend now, and she could talk to him every day, but she missed him nonetheless. She missed Timothy, and she missed Gregory. Now that she had a chance to return, of course she wouldn't refuse it. "I'm fine with it, Miss Hathaway."

Hathaway nodded. "It's decided, then. You'll be coming with us to Southend."

"Thank you, Miss Hathaway." Tessa beamed.

Hathaway smiled back at her and told everyone to go back to practice.

Tessa took her violin and went to her practice room. The fact that she would be seeing Nicholas, Timothy, and Gregory soon filled her with motivation, and she couldn't stop smiling that day.