

Always Been Yours Chapter 451

Chapter 451 Examination Result (3)

Nicholas waved his hand as indication for the maids to leave with only Ian being allowed in the living room. He did not hide Ashton's examination report from Ian as he trusted the latter.

"Ian, Grandpa's examination result indicates that his heart failure was drug-induced. I want you to give me the specifics on what Grandpa has eaten lately."

Though Ian was shocked by the results, he immediately brought out Remus' diet menu and reported what his master had recently eaten. Among them were the supplements given by the Stone Family.

When Ashton heard two specific herbal ingredients in Ian's report, he frowned before interrupting, "Stop, using these two ingredients together brings up all sorts of medical issues when taken together for extended periods of time. Why did you still include these two into Old Master Sawyer's diet?"

"These two ingredients?" Shocked, Ian replied in anger, "These supplements were all taken to the nutritionist and physician for scrutiny, and yet they said that there were no problems with them."

Nicholas' expression grew dark as he listened to Ian. At this moment, his mind was filled with countless schemes and conspiracies.

Ashton, on the other hand, calmly asked, "I assume the nutritionist was hired from abroad, correct?"

Ian nodded. "Yes, they are well known to be an expert nutritionist."

"That makes sense. Since traditional medicines in our country are vast and sophisticated, it would be impossible for a foreign nutritionist to understand its ways and nature. As for the physician, I'm assuming that it's because the herbal ingredients—which by the way are indeed valuable and good for health—were packed separately that he did not expect for you to serve them together for Old Master Sawyer."

It was only after Ashton offered his explanation that Ian relaxed his expression slightly, though clearly still in anger.

Nicholas' expression wasn't any better either.

With his eyes narrowed, Nicholas uttered with hints of suspicion, "So these two herbal ingredients were deliberately bought by the Stone Family?"

"I'm assuming that they didn't know about this. Excluding these two ingredients, the other herbal ingredients reported by Ian are all extremely good for one's health." Ashton voiced his opinion. "Naturally, this does not clear the suspicion on them, which is why I suggest for us to not act rashly and see how things play out."

Nicholas nodded after pondering for a moment. "Thank you for your help. I'll treat you to dinner one day."

"Come on, what are friends for?"

With his fist, Ashton lightly bumped Nicholas' chest before he stood up and took his leave. "I still have something to do with my team back in the hospital, so I'll have to take my leave here. Feel free to contact me if you still need my help whenever there's an update in this matter."

Nicholas nodded as he watched his friend leave.

Now, there was only silence in the living room.

Looking at Nicholas' chilling expression, Ian said uneasily, "Master Nicholas, I'll instruct the maids to dispose of those supplements sent by the Stone Family right now."

Nicholas showed no opposition and only said, "Leave some of them as evidence and throw out the rest."

Ian nodded and immediately called for the maid to bring some samples to Nicholas.

Nicholas took the samples and continued, "Have Grandpa's nutritionist changed to someone local that understands traditional medicine. As for the physician, warn him that he's fired if he fails his duty one more time."

Ian nodded.

In truth, there was no need for Nicholas to say anything to Ian as Ian had planned to do the same.

After some time passed, Nicholas left the Sawyer Residence. He entered the car with a sullen look on his face. "Edward, I need you to investigate where Hayley bought these." Saying that, he handed a gift bag to Edward.

Though Edward was puzzled by it, he nodded and took the gift bag.

Nicholas continued, "After finding out where she bought it from, I want you to meet the person who sold them to Hayley. Ask that person if Hayley knew that there were some herbs that were not meant to be taken together when she bought these supplements."

Edward was shocked by Nicholas' orders. Did Hayley have something to do with Old Master Sawyer's incident?

After dropping Nicholas off back at the company, Edward went and investigated the origins of the herbs.

Since the herbs were from a well-known brand, it took him no time at all to find which herbal store Hayley had bought them from.

Edward immediately went inside the store and was greeted by one of the staff. "Welcome, may I know what are you looking for today?"

"I'm here to see your manager."

With a serious expression, Edward stared at the staff.

Chapter 452 Investigation on the Herbs (1)

Perhaps the time he spent with Nicholas might have rubbed off on Edward, as he imitated Nicholas by giving off an imposing aura in a serious expression that caused others to instinctively submit to said person.

Soon after his "Nicholas" performance, the manager—a chubby middle-aged man—came

over.

Looking at the imposing Edward, the manager took the initiative and made an invitation to Edward, as he did not want to interrupt the store's business. "Sir, I heard you're looking for me? How about we discuss this in my office?"

Edward did not reject the invitation and followed the manager into his office.

After entering the office, the manager served Edward a cup of tea before asking, "May I know your name and the purpose of your visit?"

"The name's Jackson. I am an assistant to President Sawyer, the president of the Sawyer Group." Edward revealed his identity since it would be easier to get things done this way. Which was proven true just moments later.

The manager stood up in fear and trepidation the moment he heard that the man before him was from the Sawyer Group. "May I know what President Sawyer wishes to request from us?"

"Our president wishes to know who bought these herbal medicines. If possible, I would like to check on the situation during the time of purchase with my own eyes." Edward took the herbal medicines out from the gift bag and gave a description of Hayley.

Naturally, the manager dared not go against the request. He immediately asked for someone to check on the herbal medicines and personally brought Edward into the surveillance room.

In no time at all, the technician had found and displayed the moment when Hayley made the purchase.

Edward stared closely at the screen and realized that Sonia had also accompanied Hayley that day. Furthermore, the two of them specifically asked for the two herbal medicines that Edward was investigating.

Wearing a serious expression, Edward narrowed his eyes after viewing the footage.

He pointed at the staff within the footage before uttering in a cold tone, "Is this staff working today? I would like to meet him."

The manager rubbed his hands together nervously in response. "Mr. Jackson, the staff in question had suddenly quit a few days ago. He's no longer part of our staff."

Edward's suspicion turned into certainty that there was something foul at play here. He asked, "If that's the case, could you contact him?"

"It should be possible. There are a few of our staff that have his phone number." Saying that, the manager asked for someone to get the staff's contact information.

Unfortunately, the manager was met with a pre-recorded message stating that the number was no longer in use when he called the staff's number.

The manager's smile immediately stiffened, and he realized in hindsight that something was wrong regarding the matter.

He hung up the phone before explaining anxiously, "Mr. Jackson, although I don't know what exactly happened, I assure you that whatever this staff did had nothing to do with our store."

With a chilling gaze on the manager, Edward warned, "I hope that word doesn't spread that I was here to investigate this matter today."

The manager was relieved as Edward showed no indication of wanting to pursue the matter any further. He nodded repeatedly while answering, "Don't worry. I will definitely not let anyone breathe a word of this."

Edward nodded in return and left the store. Back in the car, he took his phone out and reported his findings to Nicholas.

"President Sawyer, I've found the place. According to the surveillance footage, Hayley and Sonia had specifically asked for those two herbal ingredients. Moreover, the staff that made the sale has already quit with his phone number changed. I suspect that the purchase of the herbal medicines by the Stones was deliberate."

In a mildly luxurious office, a shroud of cold air was emanating from Nicholas' body. His expression darkened as he listened to the report on the phone.

"Hayley Stone, and the Stone Family." He spoke in anger while gritting his teeth.

On the other end of the phone call, Edward said in a cautious tone, "President Sawyer, should we do something about this?"

Nicholas narrowed his eyes that were laced with ruthlessness. "Although there is no clear evidence that points to the involvement of the Stone Family, they should still be kept in check."

Edward grunted in agreement.

After pondering for a few seconds, Nicholas ordered, "Go to the hospital now and transfer Old Master Sawyer into a VIP ward. At the same time, inform the hospital that no one from the Stone Family has visitation rights."

"Wouldn't they be aware that we're onto them after this arrangement?" Edward was slightly doubtful of his president's decision.

Nicholas sneered, "That's all the better! I want to see just what the Stone Family will do next!"

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Chapter 453 Investigation on the Herbs (2)

Edward understood his president's wishes. He then ended the call and went to the hospital. Per Nicholas' instructions, he transferred Remus into a VIP ward and informed the hospital of his president's instructions.

The arrangement soon reached the ears of Tobias and Stefania.

Later that night, Nicholas went back to the main house for dinner.

During dinner, Tobias questioned the matter. "This evening, you asked Edward to transfer the old man into a VIP ward and banned the Stone Family from visiting. Is there something going on here?"

As Tobias posed his question, Stefania had also turned her attention to Nicholas.

Nicholas replied in an indifferent tone, "Nothing is going on. I just think that Grandpa needs to be in a quiet environment to recuperate."

He did not intend to divulge what the Stone Family had done before having clear evidence on hand.

Since both Tobias and Stefania were unaware of Stone Family's actions, they had no reason to doubt Nicholas' explanation.

Stefania then continued feeding Gregory. "Greg, you'll have to eat more," she said while placing food in Gregory's bowl.

Gregory thanked her in a cute and soft manner. He then followed Stefania's example in placing food in her bowl as well and said softly, "Grandma should eat more as well." Stefania was over the moon and immediately ate the food Gregory gave her while showing off to Tobias.

Tobias was slightly provoked by his wife's bragging, which prompted him to stare intently at Gregory.

Naturally, Gregory understood what his grandpa wanted, to which he complied by placing some food in his grandpa's bowl. "You too, Grandpa."

As a result, a faint smile crept onto Tobias' serious face.

Laughter continued to spread from the grandparents and grandchild.

Kieran was watching them enjoying themselves before turning his attention to his quiet brother. He felt that Nicholas was hiding something in regard to Remus' incident.

After finishing dinner, Tobias and Stefania brought Gregory to the garden for a walk.

Nicholas, on the other hand, went to the study room on the second floor to handle company documents.

However, Kieran came in soon after Nicholas took his seat.

"Nicholas, tell me the truth. Did you ban the Stone Family from visiting Grandpa because they did something?" With both his palms on the table, Kieran stared at his brother with curiosity in his eyes.

Nicholas looked up from the file he was reading and, with no intention of hiding the truth, answered in an indifferent tone, "Grandpa's sudden heart failure was not from a natural cause, but was triggered by something he shouldn't have eaten."

"And this 'something' was a gift from the Stone Family." As though a lightbulb went off in his head, Kieran instantly connected the dots as he recalled his brother's arrangement at the hospital. Subsequently, he looked at Nicholas in shock.

Nicholas did not deny his brother's deduction. "I've asked Edward to investigate it this afternoon. It seems that some time ago, Hayley and her mother had gone to a herbal store and had specifically asked for two herbs that are not meant to be taken together. Furthermore, the staff that made the sale that day had quit a few days later and vanished without a trace."

The next morning, Hayley came to the hospital again to visit Remus.

"I'm sorry, Miss Stone. But President Sawyer has instructed us that you are not allowed to visit the patient." The bodyguards outside the VIP ward stopped Hayley from entering.

Hayley was bewildered and asked in a panic, "Why am I not allowed to visit? Does Old Master Sawyer know about this?"

One of the bodyguards answered in an indifferent tone, "This is an order from President Sawyer. If you have any problems with it, you'll have to take it up to the president."

After that, he said nothing further as he continued to stand guard in front of the door.

Hayley had no other choice but to leave. Naturally, she couldn't ask Nicholas about the arrangement made. After all, she felt guilt lurking in her heart.

After she returned to Stone Enterprise, she immediately went to the chairman's office

and apprehensively told her father about what had happened at the hospital. “Dad, do you think that Nicholas banned us from visiting Old Master Sawyer because he had figured out what we did?”

Nero fell into deep thoughts. Seconds later, he shook his head and explained, “I’m afraid you’re overthinking this. If Nicholas really did figure us out, he would have definitely come at us considering his temper. However, since nothing is happening right now, I assume that he’s just doing this to protect Old Master Sawyer.”

Though Hayley felt that her father’s words made sense, she still felt a little uneasy about it.

Needless to say, Nero noticed Hayley’s unease, which was why he continued, “Don’t think too hard about it. There will always be appropriate measures for the actual situation. Nevertheless, we have already achieved our objective. Right now, you should be seizing the opportunity to get closer to Nicholas.”

Chapter 454 Tessa’s Surprise (1)

Nero easily calmed Hayley down just when she was at a loss.

It was indeed true that her ultimate goal was to get closer to Nicholas.

However, she also knew that approaching Nicholas head-on would only cause him to view her in a negative light, which was why she decided to use a different tactic—visiting Stefania in the Sawyer Residence.

Coincidentally, Gregory had been spending his time in the residence as well. Hayley could show off the maternity side of her as a method to become close with Stefania. Moreover, it would serve as a demonstration that she could perfectly take care of Gregory. This was truly what one would call a ‘two birds with one stone’ maneuver.

However, the reality was often a cruel mistress.

“This is the latest AI robot that has its own voice. I know that Greg here likes these kinds of things, which was why I’ve asked a friend to get one for me. Greg, do you like it?”

After a brief greeting, Hayley gave the gift she prepared to Gregory.

Stefania’s impression of Hayley grew several levels higher as she watched how attentive Hayley was toward Gregory. With a slight turn of her head toward Gregory, she said softly, “What should you say to Miss Hayley when receiving your gift?”

“Thank you, Miss Hayley,” Gregory obediently thanked Hayley. However, if one looked closely, they would find that the boy had no interest in the gift he received.

After all, the boy already had the world’s most advanced AI robot by his side. In comparison to Shadow, a robot of this kind that only had a voice function was just too low of a standard for him.

Regrettably, neither Stefania nor Hayley was aware of his inner thoughts.

With the intention for the two people to spend time together, Stefania conjured an excuse.

“Hayley, I have an appointment for my beauty treatment soon. Can I trouble you to take care of Greg for me?”

“Of course.” Naturally, Hayley would not reject an opportunity falling into her lap.

With that, Stefania left the two alone in the living room.

Watching how obedient Gregory was sitting by the sofa, she took the initiative to walk over to him and said in a gentle tone, "Greg, what do you want to do next? Can Miss Hayley play with you too?"

Gregory pursed his lips in response and showed no interest in Hayley. He didn't like the woman in the least, and was already missing the kind Tessa.

Thinking that, he huffed while jumping off the couch, then politely said a few words to Hayley before running toward the music room on the second floor. "Miss Hayley, I'm going to go practice."

Whenever he missed Tessa, he would play the violin as a method to relieve himself of such thoughts.

Hayley's eyes turned dull as she looked at Gregory—who was playing the violin so seriously—in the music room.

It was only at this moment did she realize the reason why this little bend sinister loved playing the violin. It was definitely by the influence of that woman—Tessa Reinhart.

At that moment, her loathing for Tessa grew sharply with her feelings of loathing spilling over to Gregory as well.

Tessa had been missing the two ever since Nicholas and Gregory left Vienna. She wouldn't have felt this way if she hadn't tasted what it was like to live together. However, she did, and because she did, she couldn't resist missing the wonderful times she had with them.

The good thing was that the orchestra was all ready and would leave for Xerthania soon. However, on the day of her flight, Tessa had not informed anyone of her return yet and followed the orchestra to board the plane back to Xerthania.

Thus, Nicholas was unaware that Tessa was on the way back to the country.

In the evening, the feelings of longing for Tessa grew too much for Nicholas to bear, as it had been a few days since he last contacted her. He gently touched the picture on his phone before finally deciding to give Tessa a call.

"Sorry, the number you've dialed is unavailable."

Frowning, he thought that Tessa had fallen asleep without charging her phone, and decided to contact her a little later.

Later that night, Nicholas had tried contacting Tessa again when he reached home, but he was still greeted by the same mechanical voice message he got during the evening. He immediately felt uneasy about the current situation.

Logically speaking, Tessa should be awake by now at this time. Then why isn't the call going through?

Nicholas waited for a little longer—namely sweating in anxiety—to call but still could not contact Tessa.

Panic came over him in an instant.

Especially since a night had passed and he still could not contact Tessa. He was beside

himself with anxiety at this point.

It was during the first light of the day when he called Timothy in a haste.

Chapter 455 Tessa's Surprise (2)

"Nicholas, what's wrong?" Timothy's puzzled voice came through the phone; his raspy voice indicated that he had just woken up.

With urgency in his tone, Nicholas asked, "Tim, can you contact your sister? I've called her all night but the calls wouldn't get through."

"My sister's missing?" Timothy was startled.

Nicholas murmured, "I'm not sure. Try contacting your sister first. If you can't, then we'll cross the bridge when we get there."

Saying that, Nicholas hung up the phone.

Timothy immediately jumped out of his bed and dialed his sister's number.

"Sorry, the number you've dialed is unavailable."

It was when he dialed the number several times consecutively only to find the same mechanical voice answering him that he started panicking.

Perhaps it was due to him being beside himself with worry, for his hand that was holding the phone started to tremble lightly.

Soon after, he called Nicholas and said in a panic, "Nicholas, I can't reach my sister either. Do you think something has happened to her?"

Nicholas' heart sank as a result of Timothy's call.

Too anxious to know what to do, Timothy started to blame himself. "Damn it. If I had known this would happen, I would've never agreed for her to stay abroad alone in the first place."

Hearing Timothy's rant, Nicholas also regretted his decision not to bring Tessa along with him when he was coming back to the country earlier.

"It's pointless for all these now. The important thing we should focus on is to find a way to reach your sister."

Nicholas forced himself to stay calm. However, anyone would have caught the slight shaking of his voice should they have listened to him carefully. "Tim, I have nothing on me right now. Instead, you take a trip to Vienna and see if you can find your sister there. Contact me again when you have information on the situation there."

"Alright, I'll book the flight immediately."

Timothy agreed. He then hung up and proceeded to book the flight online.

He understood why Nicholas couldn't personally make the trip to search for his sister, for Remus was in a bad condition and had to be hospitalized recently.

Later that day, he had managed to book his flight to Vienna and was packing his bag for the trip while calling his sister's phone number at the same time.

Naturally, he still couldn't reach Tessa.

Soon after, Timothy was done packing his things and was ready to leave for the airport. However, the calls that had not been able to reach his sister finally got through the moment he left the house.

"Tim, what's wrong?"

Tessa's puzzled voice came through the phone, yet one could hear the suppressed joy in her voice should one listen to her closely.

Unfortunately, Timothy did not, for he was surprised that his call to his sister finally got through.

"Tess! What have you been doing? Your phone has been unreachable for a while now. Do you know how worried Nicholas and I were? I've even booked a flight to Vienna to look for you!" He burst out and rambled on like a machine gun.

When Tessa processed what her brother told her, she asked in a panic, "You're in Vienna now?"

"No, but I was just leaving for the airport."

Timothy responded in irritation.

However, Tessa was not bothered by it and sighed in relief instead. "Thank god. Good thing you didn't leave for Vienna. You don't have to go to Vienna, so hurry up and refund the ticket."

"Why?"

"Hehe. That's because I've followed the orchestra back to Xerthania," Tessa announced cheerfully over the phone.

Timothy was taken aback and asked in surprise, "You've returned to the country? Where are you now? I'll come over and pick you up."

"I've only just left the airport. You can pick me up at the Hanson Hotel. I'll be following the orchestra until they check in there."

"Alright, I'll leave for the hotel now."

Timothy hung up and returned his suitcase back to his room before immediately leaving for the hotel.

When he arrived at the hotel, he called Tessa again. "Tess, I'm downstairs right now."

"Wait for me. I'll come down immediately." Tessa hung up the phone after saying that.

After a little while, Tessa, dressed in a long-sleeved dress, walked out of the hotel.

"Tim."

She looked at her dashing brother, who was standing by his sedan, and immediately went over to him with the biggest smile on her face.

"Tess!"

Chapter 456 Tessa's Surprise (3)

Timothy had also noticed Tessa and the warm, gentle expression on her face. He immediately rushed over to embrace his sister.

Cheerfully, Tessa hugged her brother back as well.

It was only after a few moments did the two break their embrace.

Recalling how panicked he was during the morning, Timothy reprimanded, "Don't ever do this again. Do you know how worried I was when Nicholas called me in the morning and told me that he couldn't get a hold of you?"

"Oh come on, I only wanted to give you guys a surprise." Tessa stuck her tongue out, albeit looking somewhat apologetic.

Timothy shot a look at her, exasperated. "This isn't a surprise; this is clearly what I call a bombshell."

"Alright, I get it. I won't do it this way next time."

"What do you mean next time?"

"Er, anymore. I absolutely won't do this anymore."

Tessa quickly apologized and started appeasing her brother's anger upon realizing that Timothy seemed to be really angry this time.

When Timothy's anger seemed to have slightly subsided by Tessa's repeated assurance, he asked, "Have you told Nicholas that you're back? He didn't get any sleep last night when he couldn't reach you and is still worried about you until now."

Hearing that Nicholas lost sleep over how worried he was about herself, Tessa started to feel a little guilty.

She rubbed her nose in embarrassment before sheepishly saying, "I haven't told him yet."

"Why not?" Timothy frowned before coming to a realization. "Did you plan to surprise him as well?"

Tessa nodded before smiling at him. "I know I might have been slightly out of line. But, now that I've come this far, I have to take this all the way, right?"

Somehow, Timothy was persuaded by his sister, which led to him cooperating with her in surprising Nicholas.

In the president's office of the Sawyer Group.

Nicholas' emotions were all over the place as he was so distracted by his worries for Tessa that he wasn't able to get anything done.

If only there weren't all these complications, I would have immediately taken a flight to Vienna.

Timothy should be on the plane right now, right?

He gazed at the azure sky beyond the window, his thoughts slowly drifting further and further.

Some time passed before the intercom by his desk rang. Nicholas answered the intercom to find the caller was Edward.

"President Sawyer, Timothy is here to see you."

"Shouldn't he be onboard a plane right now? Why did he come over here?" Although he was taken aback, he agreed to the meeting.

Downstairs, Timothy led Tessa—who was dressed as his secretary—into the Sawyer Group.

Because this was Tessa's first visit to the Sawyer Group, she was overwhelmed with curiosity as she looked around while sighing to herself endlessly.

Just as expected of the number one company in the country. With black and white as the theme of the interior design, it gives off a luxurious yet subtle atmosphere.

Even the receptionist looks professional and competent. It definitely makes one feel comfortable with how motivated the receptionist was.

Once the siblings had entered the elevator, Timothy's eyes showed signs of resignation as he took a glance at his sister, who was full of excitement.

However, he couldn't resist laughing when he thought about what was going to happen next. "I think Nicholas will probably get a heart attack when he sees you."

"No he won't. He'll only be happy," Tessa replied heartily before fixing her appearance with the mirror in the elevator. "Tim, help check if my makeup is okay."

She tidied up her clothing and her hair before turning around in place for Timothy to check on her appearance.

Per his sister's request, Timothy examined his slightly nervous sister from top to bottom.

Though he had said that Tessa was his secretary so that she would be allowed entry into the Sawyer Group, she was still dressed in her usual outfit.

She was wearing a sky blue long-sleeved lace waisted dress, which revealed her long legs, and was rocking a pair of seven centimeters high heels. Her outfit exuded young femininity yet still had a touch of elegance to it. To conclude, she was definitely pleasing to the eye.

"No problems here," Timothy replied after turning his attention forward to the elevator door. He then joked, "Even if there's a problem, I'm sure Nicholas would fix the problem."

Listening to what her brother was implying, Tessa blushed with her cheeks turning warm.

"Looks like you're asking for a fight by teasing your sister that way." She feigned annoyance and lightly punched him at his shoulder.

Timothy apologized while laughing heartily.

Just as he noticed that they were about to reach the highest floor, he spoke up. "I'm telling you now: I'm only going to lead you until the area outside of Nicholas' office door."

Chapter 457 Poker Face

"Alright."

Tessa nodded. She knew that her brother had the intention for her to spend time alone with Nicholas.

With the ring of the elevator signaling to the passengers that they had arrived at their destination, the elevator doors opened.

Tessa followed Timothy out of the elevator and noticed Edward waiting for their arrival outside.

"Mr. Jackson, long time no see." Tessa greeted him quietly.

With a blank stare on Tessa, Edward asked in surprise, "Miss Reinhart, when did you come back?"

"Shhh!" Tessa immediately gestured for Edward to quiet down the moment he spoke in a slightly loud voice.

She took a glance at the office behind Edward before continuing in a whisper, "I've just arrived this morning. I'm planning to surprise Nicholas with this."

Although he was still reveling in the shock, Edward immediately understood Tessa's underlying intentions.

Smiling, he said, "If that's the case, then hurry on inside. President Sawyer has been beside himself with worry ever since he couldn't reach you last night. He couldn't even get any work done today because of this."

Tessa felt a slight tinge on her conscience as she rubbed her nose in embarrassment.

Without further delay, she walked toward the office and found that the office door was ajar. She gripped the door handle with both hands with slight excitement.

After taking a deep breath, she pushed the door open and entered the office in the next instance.

In the office, Nicholas had been awaiting Timothy's arrival for some time.

Upon hearing the doors opening, he turned around and asked, "Tim, what's going on? Shouldn't you be on a flight to Vienna right now? Did something happen to your sister?"

It was only after he finished posing the countless questions did he realize that the person in front of him was the person he was worried about the whole night before.

Tessa, dressed in a sky blue lace waisted dress that highlighted the details of her beautiful figure, looked slender and graceful as she stood by the entrance of the office.

"Tessa?" Nicholas cried out in shock.

Tessa, on the other hand, was pleased with Nicholas' reaction and opened her arms cheerfully. "Surprise!"

She then rushed over and embraced Nicholas. While hugging him, she raised her head and smiled at Nicholas. "Surprised? Were you surprised?"

For a moment, Nicholas was still processing the scene before him, but managed to compose himself after a while. Pulling Tessa away from himself, he asked with a solemn look, "What's going on here?"

Tessa stuck her tongue out before explaining in an embarrassed manner, "Didn't I mention to you before that the orchestra had a performance planned in the country? Since the date for the performance was set, I followed the orchestra back here to give you a surprise."

"Surprise?" With his dark eyes on Tessa, he feigned anger. "This is more like a bombshell than a surprise!"

In truth, he was already over the moon by the fact that Tessa was here. However, he wanted to teach her a lesson after recalling how worried he was from last night until now.

Naturally, Tessa was unaware of Nicholas' intention. She thought that he was seriously angry about this, which was why she quickly put on a smile and acted coquettishly to appease his anger. "Alright, don't be angry. I know I didn't really think things through with what I did, but you'll have to admit that my intention was good, right?"

Nicholas' expression remained stern, as he intentionally stayed silent.

Tessa persisted by shaking Nicholas' arm. "I'm just learning from you, you know? Didn't you

also go to Vienna without telling me before?"

"How is that the same?" Nicholas cast an unamused glance at Tessa.

He was a man and was accompanied by his assistant.

But, it was different for Tessa. There was no one else for her to rely on besides herself.

Understanding Nicholas' worries, she smiled at him. "I know you're worried about me, but relax. I'll have you know that I care about my life a lot. Plus, since you gave me so many surprises, I wanted to give you some as well."

Nicholas was so touched by her words that his poker face was starting to crumble.

The change in Nicholas' expression did not escape Tessa's notice, which prompted her to pat herself on the back in her mind.

"Alright, alright. Stop nitpicking over the details. I've missed you so much. Did you miss me?"

Saying that, she tiptoed and surprised him with a kiss on his pink lips.

The warm sensation had Nicholas' inky eyes turning even darker.

With his eyes lowered slightly, he gazed at the delicate girl in front of him before he vehemently lowered his head and returned the kiss back to the girl's retreating lips.

"I've missed you too."

Chapter 458 President Sawyer's Girlfriend

Tessa was startled for a moment by the man's affectionate whispers. The next instant, she wrapped her arms around his neck with a smile on her face.

Nicholas put one hand on the back of Tessa's head while wrapping the other hand tightly around Tessa's slim waist as if to become one with her. He kept deepening the kiss in a dominating way but not without tenderness.

The air in the office heated up by the minute. Sunlight shone on the couple through the window as if enveloping them with a halo; the scene was beautiful, as if it came straight out of a fairy tale.

The two could hardly separate from each other. It wasn't until Tessa nearly passed out from lack of oxygen that Nicholas let go of her with great self-restraint.

With a smile full of happiness, Tessa leaned weakly against Nicholas' chest as if she had been drained of all energy. "How wonderful," she whispered while wrapping her arms around his waist.

Nicholas' lips curved up, and he hugged her back tightly. After having his heart in his mouth for a whole night, he was finally relieved.

Even the air in the office seemed to sweeten as the couple embraced each other.

Just when the atmosphere was just right, Nicholas suddenly put up his hand and gave Tessa a noogie.

Tessa put her hand on her forehead in pain while looking at Nicholas with an aggrieved expression. "Ouch! What are you doing?"

Nicholas let out a soft snort. He said sulkily, "Good that it hurts. Don't play such a joke again next time. Had I not been tied down here this time, I'd have flown to Vienna right away last night."

"I got it. I promise you that I won't do that again," Tessa apologized again, knowing that she was in the wrong.

Seeing that she had apologized, Nicholas said nothing else. Taking a glance at the hand Tessa put on her forehead, he said tenderly, "Let me take a look." Then, he took her hand off her forehead, and his heart ached all at once. There was a light scarlet mark on her fair-skinned forehead. "Sorry," he said, caressing the mark tenderly.

"It's okay. It doesn't hurt, actually." Tessa smiled before turning to look around. "Speaking of it, we've known each other for so long, but this is my first time coming to your office. I've got to have a good look at it."

"Look all you want." Nicholas looked at her fondly.

The spacious office was decorated in black and white in a simple and elegant style, but it oozed luxury and greatness everywhere. Although there weren't many ornaments in the office, Tessa could tell that each of these ornaments was not only chosen with good taste, but also cost a bomb.

After looking around, she turned to look at the tall, handsome man standing nearby, and her bright eyes glittered in a mischievous smile. "Hmm, not bad. You've got a good working environment," she complimented in front of Nicholas with a straight face and her hands behind her back, like a superior returning from an inspection.

Amused by her mischievous demeanor, Nicholas played along with her, saying, "I humbly thank you for your compliment, Your Highness."

Seeing how the man played along with her with a straight face, Tessa laughed out loud right away, unable to contain her amusement. In an instant, her cheerful giggles filled the whole office.

As Nicholas stared at the giggling lady before him with such tenderness in his eyes that one could simply drown in them, he felt that the dark clouds that had been hovering over him these days had all but lifted. When he finished handling some urgent documents later, he stood up and picked up the suit jacket he had draped over the back of his executive chair, saying, "I've finished work. Let me take you to dinner."

"Okay." Tessa nodded. After putting away her cell phone and standing up from the couch, she left the company hand in hand with Nicholas.

When many employees in the company witnessed this, they were all stunned, and they asked each other for information in their internal chat group.

'Oh, my God! Who was the woman walking with President Sawyer just now? President Sawyer was holding her hand!'

'Could she be President Sawyer's girlfriend?'

'How is that possible? If she's President Sawyer's girlfriend, then what about Miss Stone?'

Tessa and Nicholas were unaware of these, though. After walking out of the company

building, they stood by the side of the street, waiting for Edward to drive the car over from the underground parking lot.

Just then, Hayley drove over from the other side of the road.

Chapter 459 A Pleasant Dinner

Hayley smiled when she spotted a strikingly handsome Nicholas standing by the side of the street at a glance, but the smile froze on her face before she could drive over to greet him. As it turned out, she hadn't noticed Tessa standing side by side with Nicholas earlier due to the angle.

At this moment, Nicholas suddenly took a step back. Not only did Hayley see Tessa as a result, but she even saw Tessa holding Nicholas' arm and leaning her head on his shoulder! Hayley looked at Tessa as if she wanted to devour Tessa at this very moment. Never did she expect that Tessa would come back. In an instant, rage welled up in her chest.

Meanwhile, Tessa and Nicholas didn't notice Hayley at all; they didn't wait long before Edward drove the car over. After getting into the car, Tessa nestled in Nicholas' arms and said with a smile, "Let's go pick Greg up. I just texted Tim and told him to wait for us at the restaurant."

Nicholas nodded before telling Edward to drive to Dynasty Gardens.

When Gregory saw Tessa afterward, he was overwhelmed with excitement. "When did you come back, Miss Tessa?" After trotting toward Tessa and flinging his arms around her, he stared at her without blinking, his dark eyes glittering beautifully as though they contained the starry sky.

Tessa bent down and held the little boy in her arms before kissing him affectionately on the cheek. She replied with a smile, "I came back this morning. Did you miss me?"

"Yeah, I did! I missed you so, so much," Gregory replied in a childlike voice that melted Tessa's heart; he nodded vigorously while wrapping his arms around her neck.

Nicholas watched their interaction with a faint smile without disturbing them, knowing that Gregory had been in low spirits these days because he missed Tessa.

As a result, Gregory latched onto her the entire time after that, and she allowed him to do what he wanted.

When they arrived at the restaurant, Timothy was already sitting in the private room. While they were having dinner, he asked, "How long are you gonna stay here this time, Tess?"

The instant he said that, Nicholas and Gregory turned to look at Tessa as well.

She replied with a faint smile, "I can stay here for a week."

"That's great!" Gregory clapped and cheered happily beside them. "Miss Tessa, can I stay with you every day?"

"Sure." Tessa affectionately tickled the little boy's sharp nose.

Nicholas was smiling as well. Then, he said in a tender voice, "Well, I'll find as much time as I

can to keep you guys company.”

“Okay.” Tessa’s smiling eyes fell upon him.

As the couple gazed at each other affectionately, a sweet scent seemed to emanate from them.

As Timothy looked to the left and to the right, he suddenly felt that he was being forced into watching his sister and brother-in-law’s public display of affection again without being prepared for it. He interrupted the couple’s eye contact with a cough before saying, “Tess, Nicholas, I know you two are a lovey-dovey couple, but could you please consider my feelings as a single man? And besides, Greg is here. Don’t be a bad influence on him.”

To his dismay, as soon as he said that, Gregory covered his eyes with both hands and contradicted his words. “I didn’t see anything. Miss Tessa, don’t worry about me. Just keep doing what you’re doing with Daddy.”

An astounded Timothy looked at Gregory with a look of distress before noting, “Greg, your mind has been corrupted.”

Gregory laughed at the sight of Timothy’s theatrics.

After this, merry laughter was continuously heard from the private room, and the four had an extremely pleasant dinner.

At last, Timothy asked about the performance. “Tess, will you be performing during your orchestra’s performance this time?”

“Nope, I won’t. I’m only here to chaperone the orchestra this time,” Tessa explained, though her voice carried a note of unconcealable disappointment. “And besides, how could I have the opportunity to perform? I’m not considered a full-fledged violinist yet.”

When he saw Tessa’s feigned cheerfulness, Timothy felt somewhat sorry for her before he encouraged, “Well, you don’t have the opportunity now, but it’s okay. I believe that by honing your skills little by little, you’ll definitely be able to amaze the world with your performance in the future.”

Chapter 460 You Have to Learn to Sleep Alone

Nicholas nodded in agreement beside them. “Success won’t let down every person who works hard for it.”

“Don’t lose heart, Miss Tessa,” Gregory chimed in, comforting Tessa like an adult.

Tessa was deeply moved as she looked at them. She nodded with a smile, saying, “Don’t worry. I won’t be discouraged.”

After dinner, the four of them walked out of the restaurant together. As Timothy still had some unfinished work to deal with at the office, he decided to go back first. Before he left, he looked at Tessa, whose hand was being held by Nicholas. He asked, “Are you gonna stay at our place tonight?”

"Yeah—" Tessa replied, only to be interrupted by Nicholas before she could finish her sentence. "She'll go back to Dynasty Gardens with me," he said.

Speechless, Timothy felt a little sad all of a sudden. At the same time, though, he felt he had been forced to watch another public display of affection. However, in a show of understanding, he didn't stop Nicholas. After all, Nicholas and Tessa had been in a long-distance relationship shortly after they started going steady, so they must've missed each other very much.

On the other hand, Tessa glared at Nicholas bashfully. Naturally, she could figure out his purpose for having her stay with him. She insisted, "I want to go back to take a look. I haven't been back for a long time."

Nicholas looked at her before his gaze finally shifted to Gregory next to them. "Greg, your Miss Tessa isn't going back with us tonight."

Gregory panicked at once. Tugging at Tessa's hand, he asked anxiously, "Miss Tessa, why aren't you going back with us? Could you please go back with us? I want you to keep me company and read me bedtime stories."

Tessa couldn't bring herself to say no at all when Gregory acted cute and adorable in front of her. Speechless, she looked at Nicholas as if to say, "How shameless of you to use your own son."

Naturally, Nicholas understood what the look in her eyes meant. After giving her an affectionate smile, he turned to speak to Timothy. "Just go back on your own. I'll take care of your sister."

Timothy nodded. After saying goodbye to Tessa and Gregory, he turned around and left.

Just then, Nicholas took Tessa's hand in a natural manner, asking, "Should we go back right now, or should we hang out around here?"

Just as Tessa was about to respond, Gregory's cheerful voice rang beside her. "Miss Tessa, can we hang out around here? It's been a long time since we last hung out together."

Naturally, upon hearing this, Tessa wouldn't turn Gregory down. She and Nicholas held each of the little boy's hands in theirs as they strolled along the street like an ordinary family of three.

Gregory had a great time that night, and when they returned to Dynasty Gardens later on, he felt he hadn't had enough fun yet.

On the other hand, when Tessa saw the familiar and yet unfamiliar environment, her feelings were somewhat complicated, though she also felt a bit nostalgic. Just as she was in a daze, Gregory suddenly tugged at her sleeve, seemingly recalling something.

"What's the matter?"

"Miss Tessa, let me show you your room," Gregory said while dragging Tessa upstairs. As they were heading upstairs, he said mysteriously, "Miss Tessa, let me tell you a little secret. After you left, my dad forbade anyone from touching anything in your room, so your room has always stayed the same since you left."

Tessa was surprised.

When the two arrived at the room, Tessa found that it was indeed almost the same as when she had left like Gregory had described. Upon seeing this, she was visibly moved.

Gregory's sweet voice rang again. "Miss Tessa, can I sleep here with you tonight?" Before Tessa could nod her assent, Nicholas' clear, full voice sounded behind them. "Tessa won't be sleeping here anymore."

"Miss Tessa won't be sleeping here?" Gregory turned to look at the man while blinking his eyes in puzzlement. "Where is she gonna sleep, then?"

With a faint smile on his lips, Nicholas walked over to them and pulled Tessa to his side. He said in a gentle voice, "Tessa will be sleeping in the master bedroom from now on." Then, he paused for a moment and continued, "Also, stop pestering her to sleep with you from now on. You're already a little man, so you have to learn to sleep alone."

Upon hearing this, Gregory immediately pouted his lips in displeasure.