

Always Been Yours Chapter 590

Chapter 590

As Nicholas had noticed that her lips were very dry, he called out softly, "Tessa. wake up and have some water."

"Okay..." she answered, half-conscious, but her entire body was limp, and she had no strength at all,

In the end, with his help, she leaned on his chest weakly. This was then that he noticed her scalding temperature, whereupon he furrowed his brows tightly. As he watched her take small sips of water with her abnormally flushed face, his heart was filled with worry.

When she was done, Nicholas got up and went into the bathroom. A few minutes later, he came out with a basin of warm water to physically cool down Tessa's body.

Under the light, the man gently removed the girl's pajamas, and her fair skin appeared before him, but he didn't have any indecent thoughts as he cooled down her body with the warm towel.

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After Nicholas' attentive care for half of the evening, Tessa's fever finally subsided at midnight.

The peaceful look on her face as she slept made him breathe a sigh of relief, and he cleared up the things before getting into the bed and hugging her to sleep.

The next morning when Tessa woke up, she felt much better, but her body still felt weak.

Beside her, she heard Nicholas' husky voice asking, "How are you feeling?"

"Not too bad. Thanks for taking care of me last night."

Turning around, she hugged him as happiness washed over her. Even though she was in a daze from the fever last night, she was still a little conscious and knew that this man had taken care of her for most of the night, and that was why she could recover so quickly.

Patting her back gently, he asked with a smile, "Isn't this my responsibility?"

His words added more sweetness to the smile on her face. A short while later when they were done washing up, they went downstairs hand-in-hand for breakfast. Seated in the living room, Gregory trotted over upon seeing Tessa.

"Are you feeling better, Miss Tessa?" Hugging her thigh, he lifted his small head and looked at her with eyes filled with concern.

Meeting his concerned eyes, she felt a warm whirlpool in her chest. "I'm feeling much better. Thanks for your concern, Sweetheart."

Just then, the butler came and said politely, "Sir, Ma'am, breakfast is ready."

Nicholas acknowledged it with a nod and led Tessa to the table to eat. While eating, he glanced at Tessa, who still seemed a little pale, and asked. "Are you planning to go to the orchestra alter breakfast?"

Nodding, she answered, "There's practice today, so I have to be there for sure."

The words had just left her lips when it was met with his disapproval. "You've just recovered. Just skip the day and ask for leave from your teacher."

"That's not a good idea. I just joined Group Two and shouldn't ask for leave." She turned

down his idea indirectly, sounding reluctant.

Peeved, Nicholas thought that she didn't care about her own health. "I know that you want to work hard, but not by disregarding your health!" Pulling a long face, he cast her a disgruntled look.

Despite sensing his anger, she still wanted to go to the orchestra.

"Don't worry. I'm just feeling a little dizzy. It's not a big deal, so don't be mad," she said with a pleasing smile.

Nicholas' face was tense, and his eyes were shrouded with disapproval. Out of wits, she went over to coax him, telling him about her current situation. "I've just become the concertmaster in Group Two, and many people are watching me. If I don't do well, that will easily invite criticism against me, and it will even implicate my teacher's authority at that time. That's why I can't do that," she said while she placed her arms around his neck and kissed him on the cheek. "Don't be mad, okay?"

Seeing this, Gregory chirped in, "Daddy, you should believe in Miss Tessa and not be unreasonable."

Meeting his son's reproachful eyes, Nicholas couldn't be sure if he should laugh or complain about it.

Chapter 591

This mother and son really know how to control me, he thought as he pulled Tessa into his arms and said in a feigned strict voice, "You can go to the band, but come back immediately once you start to feel unwell. Otherwise, you'll suffer tonight."

Hugging him, she nodded obediently. "Don't worry. I'll come home right away and won't stay a second longer. if I feel sick."

After breakfast, Nicholas dropped Tessa off at the orchestra, and when Mona saw her, she quickly asked in concern, "Tessa, why are you still looking so sickly? Are you still unwell?"

"I'm fine. Thanks for asking."

"Are you sure?" she asked again, still looking worried.

Right then, Hathaway came over as well and saw her ashened face. "Are you sick? Should I give you a day's leave to rest at home?"

"It's okay. I'm not that sick, really."

Sensing the genuine concern from them, she flashed them a friendly smile. Hathaway didn't say anything else after that.

Later, when Hathaway went to check on Group Two while they were practicing, she saw that everyone was performing very well, especially Tessa, who performed the best.

Seeing how much effort Tessa had poured in, she was filled with satisfaction in her eyes.

During break time, she paced to her and complimented, "You played very well with others earlier, and you've done well to lead. Keep it up."

Beaming, Tessa nodded, and the others came to compliment her as well.

"Miss Hathaway, Tessa is really amazing and gifted. Just two days, and she could catch up to

us already.”

“I think if she keeps it up like this, she might become the second Kathleen, and maybe even surpass her.”

“I think Tessa is not that far off from Kathleen.”

Showered by their compliments, Tessa was very embarrassed and waved her hand, saying humbly, “Please don’t say that, guys. Compared to Kathleen, I’m still far off.”

“Hey, don’t be so humble. With the speed of your progress now, you’ll surpass Kathleen given the time.”

Giving her fair opinion, Hathaway wasn’t biased toward Kathleen just because she was her daughter.

Unexpectedly, Kathleen, who happened to pass by, heard her, and it sparked her anger.

She fixed her gaze angrily on Tessa, and they were filled with resentment, making her look like a poisonous snake. She wants to replace me? Not without my permission!

Meanwhile in the hotel, Hayley was curled up on the couch restlessly.

Worried that Nicholas’ men would find her before Jacob’s arrival, she could only pray repeatedly in her heart.

Then, her cell phone next to her started to vibrate and ring, and she hurriedly grabbed it.

At first, she thought it was a call from Jacob, but it turned out to be a call from home, and she couldn’t help but feel disappointed.

Picking up the call, she grumbled, “Dad, didn’t I already tell you not to disturb me during this period? Why are you calling me?”

After changing her phone number, she had only called her family to tell them that she was safe and ask them not to disturb her, but she didn’t mention that she was in Vienna.

However, Nero’s voice, which was interspersed with fury, boomed through the call. “I didn’t want to disturb you either, but yesterday, Nicholas suddenly terminated a few partnership projects with our family and even asked me where you were. What the hell is going on?”

Her face fell as she bit her lower lip. She didn’t expect Nicholas to react so greatly by implicating the Stone Family.

She took a deep breath and said in a low voice, “Dad, don’t worry about that. If Nicholas asks you guys again, just tell him you don’t know where I am.”

Hearing that, Nero had a hunch that something was wrong, and he questioned her angrily, “Did you do something stupid again?”

Hayley was silent for a moment. Gripping the phone tightly, she knew that she couldn’t hide it from her father. In the end, she decided to come clean.

Chapter 592

“That’s about it.”

“Hayley Stone, are you out of your mind?!” On the other side of the phone, a furious Nero jumped up from the couch after hearing what Hayley had said.

Sonia, who was watching from the side, was shocked when she saw her husband becoming so irate. Even though she also felt that her daughter was too impulsive, she still couldn't help but take Hayley's side. "Calm down. What are you so angry about? Since Hayley has already done it, being angry now doesn't help matters at all!"

After he heard Sonia's words, he became more enraged. "Are you hearing yourself right now? Do you know that what Hayley has done can bring so much harm to the Stone Enterprise?!"

He glared at Sonia furiously and hissed, "A kind mother makes a wastrel. This is the consequence of you spoiling her!"

Even though his criticism mortified her, she did not concede her argument. "As if you didn't spoil her yourself," she refuted him resentfully.

When he heard that, Nero became so incensed that he couldn't even speak a word, and his face

flushed an angry red.

When Sonia noticed his agitated state, she didn't bother arguing with him any further. So, she snatched the phone over and prompted Hayley on the phone. "Since Nicholas is looking for you everywhere, you should hide abroad and don't return for a while."

"I know. I'm just calling you to warn you, so none of you spill the beans about this," Hayley told her anxiously through the call.

Sonia nodded and answered, "Don't worry about it. Your dad and I will just say that we have no idea about your whereabouts. You should only come back sometime later when Nicholas isn't as furious."

"What about the company?" Even though Hayley felt that it was a good idea, she knew what kind of person Nicholas was. He would take his anger out on the Stone Family if he couldn't find her.

Naturally, Sonia understood what Hayley was worrying about and comforted her. "Don't worry about us. If Nicholas takes his anger out on us when he can't find you, then I'll ask your dad to ask for help from Tobias Sawyer."

"Will it be of any use to find Mr. Sawyer? Didn't he say that all matters of the Sawyer Group are out of his hands?" Hayley was still worried. After all, she had spent enough time with Nicholas and knew that nothing could change his mind once he had made a decision.

However, Sonia was confident. "You don't have to worry about this. These days, your dad has been maintaining a good relationship with Tobias. We just need to say that we know nothing about it, and he'll definitely stop Nicholas. For the sake of our relationship, he won't make things too difficult for us. But if that still doesn't work, we have your grandfather to help us out.

On the other side of the phone, Hayley felt more at ease after thoroughly digesting her mother's

words as she thought that her mother indeed had a point.

After she hung up the phone, she sat on the couch with a cold face, and her hatred toward Nicholas suddenly grew to a new level. As expected, he wouldn't give up until he found her. I must leave this place before he finds me!

At the same time, she started to blame everything on Tessa Reinhart. "Damn you, b*tch! Just you wait. Once I have dealt with all this, I'll definitely make your life miserable!"

Nicholas was seated at the desk in a black suit inside the president's office of the Sawyer Group's branch, but his charming face was devoid of facial expression.

Just then, Edward entered after knocking. He stood in the middle of the office and reported respectfully, "We've searched the hotels and motels in this area, but we still can't find Hayley Stone."

As soon as Nicholas heard that, his face turned even more baleful, and one could even feel the chills emanating from him.

"It's been two days, and you can't even find a woman? Are you all garbage? What am I even paying any of you for?" He gave Edward such a vicious glare that it felt like it was sharp as a blade.

Now that Edward was feeling the ominous aura full-frontal, he bit the bullet and suppressed the chattering of his teeth due to fear. Then, he continued, "I've asked people to hack into the CCTV footage on the road, but there wasn't anyone suspicious. So, I figured she should be in another area. Therefore, I've sent people to that area to start their search, and I believe we can have the result by tonight."

That night, in the hotel room...

Chapter 593

As soon as Hayley finished her dinner, she heard someone knocking on her door.

She was startled and walked to the door cautiously. "Who's there?" she asked while modulating her voice as she was worried that Nicholas' men had found her.

At this moment, a cold voice resonated from outside. "It's me."

When Hayley heard that voice, she felt relieved and was no longer on tenterhooks. She opened the door immediately, and a tall man was standing outside.

The man looked about 25 or 26 in his tailored black suit and had a mohawk hairstyle that refined his charming features. All in all, he looked exquisite yet wild.

This man was Jacob Chambers. As he looked at Hayley's haggard face by the door, he couldn't help but frown.

However, before he could say anything about it, she quickly moved aside and invited him into the room. "Let's talk inside."

When he was inside, he sat on the couch elegantly with his legs crossed.

"It's been a while. However, I never imagined our next meetup would be in a situation like this." He observed her from head to toe with his obsidian eyes before the corners of his

mouth curled upward into a mysterious smirk.

At this moment, she felt uncomfortable under his stare, but she endured it as she remembered that she was the one asking for his help.

"It has been a long time." She nodded in agreement with Jacob's words. After that, she instantly went straight to the heart of the matter. "Sorry for bothering you this time, to the point where you would need to come here personally."

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"It's fine. I will go to the ends of the world if it's for you." He smiled as he looked at her with his pitch-black eyes.

However, even with his lover's prattle, Hayley still felt indifferent. After all, he was not her type, and she had given all her affection to Nicholas. She didn't need any other men in her life apart from Nicholas.

So, with a flickering gaze, she tried to gloss it over and said, "Now is not the time for this. We should leave."

When Jacob heard that, he just raised his eyebrows and didn't question her. "Okay then, you should pack your things."

As soon as he said that, Hayley answered, "I'm done packing. I was just waiting for you to arrive."

Jacob furrowed his brows slightly when he heard the eagerness in her tone, so he couldn't help but ask, "Who did you offend that you're in such a rush?"

"I'll tell you about it later." But, of course, she was just being perfunctory. In all honesty, she didn't want to tell him the truth.

On the other hand, as soon as Edward received the news from his subordinate, he knocked and went into President Sawyer's office at once. "President Sawyer, we've found the hotel Hayley Stone is staying at."

"Good. Get the woman here, by any means necessary," Nicholas instructed him coldly.

As soon as Edward heard that, he nodded before he turned to leave.

However, when he arrived at the hotel with his subordinates, he was informed by the hotel's employee that Hayley had already checked out.

"Damn it!" Edward was so enraged that he couldn't help cursing. Then, he asked the employee furiously, "When did that happen?"

"J-Just a few moments ago." Startled by Edward's furious expression, the employee didn't dare to hide the truth.

As soon as he heard that, Edward immediately left the hotel with his subordinates to chase after Hayley.

At this moment, a black car drove off in front of them. He saw her sitting inside the vehicle

at a glance and instructed his subordinates to chase after the car at once.

At the thought of how much he had been through to find this woman, he couldn't let her escape so easily.

Hayley noticed Edward inside the car as well. In an instant, her face paled in fright. It was especially so when she saw him and his subordinates driving right behind her and giving chase. She became anxious and rushed Jacob. "Jacob, speed up! Hurry! Those guys that I offended are after me!"

When Jacob heard her anxious urging, he glanced in the rearview mirror at once. As she said, several cars were behind, chasing after his car. At this moment, his face turned cold at once.

"Hang on." As soon as he said this, he floored the accelerator.

His driving skills were so superb that he didn't even slow down a single bit when driving on a congested road.

Chapter 594

However, Edward's driving skills were not bad either. So, he kept following closely behind Hayley and Jacob. With that, a game of cat and mouse began between them.

When they arrived at an empty road, Edward instructed his subordinates to flank Jacob's car from both sides. Only then did Jacob stop the vehicle in the middle of the road.

Hayley noticed through the window that Edward was coming out of the car with a grim expression, and she immediately became terrified. In a panic, she grabbed Jacob's arm and repeatedly asked in a trembling voice, "What do we do? What do we do now? They're here." When Jacob heard her hysterical voice, he frowned in annoyance, but as soon as he saw how terrified she was, he kept mum about it.

Without wasting much time, he took out a dagger from the side of his seat and handed it to her. Then, he advised her, "You take this. Use this to protect yourself no matter who comes near you later."

She tightly held the dagger in her trembling hands, but she saw Jacob opening the door and getting out of the car before she could say anything.

At this moment, Jacob's subordinates, who were following behind Hayley and Jacob all this while, emerged from the car one after another when they noticed that their boss had come forward in person.

However, they did not have as many people as Edward since Jacob had rushed over in a hurry as soon as he got the call from Hayley.

Both parties started their fight right away and bypassed any small talk. It was unexpected of Jacob to have splendid combat skills and most of Edward's subordinates were no match for him.

When Edward saw his subordinate being kicked away by Jacob, he went up to catch his

people and instructed coldly, "Leave him to me. Get Hayley Stone."

After a nod, the subordinate instantly ran to the car Hayley was in.

When Jacob heard Edward's order, his face turned cold at once. He ran forward, trying to stop the subordinate, but was blocked by Edward.

"I'm your opponent." As soon as he said that, he attacked Jacob with his aggressive and well trained fighting skills.

However, Edward was startled after a few rounds as Jacob had the same level of combat experience as him.

On the other hand, Hayley was already forced out of the car, but she gripped Jacob's dagger for dear life with trembling hands and brandished the weapon in the air.

"Get lost! Don't come near me!" She glared at the bodyguards around her in fear and rage, preventing them from coming anywhere near her.

At this moment, she noticed one of the bodyguards was trying to attack her forcefully. With her eyes full of determination, she thought, I can never let them get me!

When she thought about it, Hayley held the dagger and ran straight to the bodyguard to stab him.

As the bodyguard was professionally trained and experienced in fighting, it was obvious that her attack did not hurt him.

Adding on to that, he leveraged her strength to hit her back.

It also meant that Hayley was out of luck. When the bodyguard diverted the attack back to her, she accidentally stabbed herself in the stomach with the dagger in her hand.

Judging from her action earlier, the wound that she gave herself wasn't something serious, but she still screamed in pain despite her having this knowledge, "Ahhhh!"

As soon as Jacob heard her screaming, he turned his head to find out what had happened.

The sight of Hayley bleeding provoked him, and he used all his strength to block Edward before dashing toward Hayley.

Edward stopped the others immediately when he saw such a scene.

When Hayley saw Jacob running toward her, she felt like she had seen her savior. She grabbed him tightly the moment he arrived by her side and weakly pleaded in panic, "Jacob, it's so... So painful. Hurry, take me to the hospital; I don't want to die."

What she didn't know was that her wound was not as deep as she thought.

She felt herself breaking out in cold sweat from the pain, and now that the blood was continuously flowing out from her wound, she was worried that she would bleed to death.

"Jacob, save me. Save me, please. I don't want to die."

As he listened to her plea, he carried her in his arms to his car with a dark look on his face.

Then, he instructed his subordinate to drive off.

When the bodyguards' leader saw them speeding away, he hurried up to Edward and asked, "Mr. Jackson, should we go after them?"

As Edward looked in the direction where the car fled, he narrowed his eyes and pondered

before he finally ordered the bodyguards, "No, we're going back."
Now that Hayley was hurt, she wouldn't leave Vienna anytime soon.

Chapter 595

The man who helped Hayley out seemed to be someone with an interesting background person So, he needed to report this matter to the president immediately.

The bodyguards' leader nodded when he heard this and instructed the others to leave in their respective cars.

On the way to the hospital, Hayley was in Jacob's embrace with a pale face.

"Jacob, it hurts a lot. Am I going to die?"

All this while, Hayley was clutching tightly onto Jacob's arm, unsure if her hallucinations led her to think that her body was weakening as time passed.

"Nonsense! I'm not going to let anything happen to you!"

Jacob's hand clenched around hers as he anxiously ordered the driver, "Drive faster! I need you to get us to the hospital as quickly as possible!"

"Yes, sir!"

As soon as the driver heard Jacob, he immediately put the pedal to the metal.

The black car sped down the road toward the hospital.

Jacob's face was gloomy as he held her tightly in his arms.

After all, the woman that he liked was hurt. Although it was Hayley who hurt herself, it still angered him.

On the other side, Edward headed to Nicholas' mansion to report back to him.

Edward knocked on the door of the study before walking in.

When Nicholas saw him, he immediately asked coldly, "Did you get her?"

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"No, someone managed to rescue Hayley," Edward answered truthfully.

When Nicholas heard this, his face immediately darkened, and he shot Edward a sharp look.

"What happened?"

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Being under Nicholas' intense stare was terrifying for Edward, but he recounted everything that had happened earlier.

"And that's about it."

After hearing that Hayley was hurt, Nicholas squinted as he questioned coldly, "Is she dead?"

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"No, she's not. I asked the bodyguard who was there. Apparently, the dagger did not stab any vital organs, and it didn't even leave a deep wound," Edward reported what he knew.

This made Nicholas snort. "If that's the case, forget it."

Because of what Nicholas had said, Edward knew that the president did not want to pursue this matter any longer.

But...

"President Sawyer, the man with Hayley today, is not an easy target. We were caught in a scramble, and his combat experience is as good as mine. He's very skilled, so I'm afraid he's not a simple man."

Nicholas lowered his gaze when he heard this.

He understood that Edward was worried that Hayley would take this opportunity to stir up more trouble.

"I'll need you to make some arrangements. Before we return, get a few more undercover men to protect Miss Tessa. At the same time, get someone to find out who that man is and his relationship with Hayley."

"Yes, sir." Edward nodded in affirmative.

After that, Nicholas didn't have anything else to say, so he waved his hand and said, "Go back and rest."

With that, Edward nodded and left with his dismissal.

Now, Nicholas was left alone in the study.

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Once he was done dealing with the company's tasks, he headed back to his room.

Tessa, who had been in the room, had no idea what was happening outside.

She had Gregory in her arms as they slept peacefully on the big, soft bed.

These two were the most important people in his life, and them being on the bed was a loving scene that he couldn't bear to disturb.

So, he gently walked to the side of the bed and lowered his head slightly to look at the two sleeping peacefully with a softened gaze.

The black car sped down the streets before Jacob and Hayley finally arrived at the hospital.

"The patient's wound is not deep and none of her vital organs are hurt. However, she will still have to recuperate for some time."

After the doctor finished bandaging her wound, he advised Jacob accordingly.

Jacob nodded before asking his men to send the doctor out.

Then, only he and Hayley were left in the ward.

He walked over to the side of the hospital bed, looked at her, whose face was drained of color, and asked, "Who were those people back there? Why are they after you?"

When she heard this, her eyes began to fill with resentment as she gritted her teeth.

However, she did not reply to Jacob. Instead, her face contorted with rage as she yelled, "I want them all dead. I want them to die!"

With that, seemingly like she had thought of something, she ignored the pain of her wound and tried to sit up on the hospital bed.

Jacob immediately stepped forward to help when he saw this. As a result, she immediately grabbed his arm; her gaze was somewhat maniacal as she murmured frantically. "Jacob, can you please help me? Help me kill them. As long as you kill them, I'll be with you."

Chapter 596

When Jacob saw the crazed look in Hayley's eyes, he felt conflicted. After a while, he agreed. "I will get the justice you deserve. Now, you'll need to recuperate." As soon as he was done speaking, he helped her lie back on the bed. His promise caused her to show a triumphant smile on her face. The next day, Tessa, who had suddenly caught a cold, felt a lot better.

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Since it was a weekend, she did not have to go to the orchestra to practice. Thus, she planned to spend her day with Nicholas and Gregory at home.

When she told them about her plans during breakfast, Gregory was delighted.

"That's great! You can finally accompany me today!" He clapped his hands in celebration.

When she saw how happy he was, she felt that his happiness had also lifted her mood.

"Greg, where do you want to go today?"

"As long as you're with me, I'm already happy. It doesn't matter if we don't go out today."

"Oh, Greg! Did you eat candy this morning? You are such a sweet talker!" Tessa looked at him lovingly.

Gregory shyly pursed his lips and smiled. "I didn't eat anything. I'm just telling the truth."

When she heard his words, her heart couldn't help but soften in endearment.

Then, she looked over at Nicholas with a smile and asked, "Is there anywhere you want to go?"

"Wherever you are is where I want to be," he answered as he looked at her affectionately.

His low, magnetic voice was like music to her ears.

When Tessa heard his voice, the smile on her face became brighter.

"Now I know why Gregory is such a smooth talker. He must have inherited that from you."

But, before Nicholas could even speak, Gregory's voice sounded in protest, "I didn't learn it from Daddy. No one taught me to say that."

Tessa couldn't help but laugh when she heard this, and the three had a fantastic time together during breakfast.

Once they were done with their meal, she spoke her mind, "Since none of you have anywhere you want to go, I'll plan what we're going to do today."

"Okay, we'll do anything you say."

Gregory would always be her most enthusiastic supporter.

Although Nicholas did not speak, she could see from his actions that he had no objections.

"Andrew, prepare the car."

In the next moment, Gregory, who was lying in her embrace in the car, asked curiously, "Miss Tessa, where are we going?"

As she had no intention of keeping it a secret, she pinched Gregory's chubby cheeks before answering warmly, "We'll go to the apartment that your Uncle Timothy bought."

Although she couldn't accept such a gift and didn't see herself using it at the moment, it was still lovely of her brother to buy it for her. Therefore, she felt that she should give it a look.

The apartment was located in the wealthier part of Vienna.

The community there had a safe environment and good security.

As they headed upstairs, Tessa keyed in the password to the door and entered the apartment.

"Miss Tessa, this place is so pretty." Gregory, who followed behind her, was amazed by the decor he saw before him.

She looked around and nodded in agreement as well.

The huge living room was designed to have natural light available during the day and was painted with light blue walls, brightening up the entire space.

The apartment was fully furnished, and all the furniture was brand new. In addition, the Viennese interior design gave the entire place an artistic touch.

The highlight of the place was the piano next to the window.

As the breeze blew, the white gauze curtain fluttered with the wind, gently brushing against the piano. It was a scenic view.

There wasn't just a piano in the room but countless musical instruments hanging on the walls.

The significant part of this was that this place resembled the Hathaway Philharmonic.

When she stood on the balcony, she could see the orchestra's gate from this place.

As she put her hands on the balcony's fence, the smile on her face had not fallen since she entered the apartment.

Although her brother was not there, she could feel his love for her in every corner of the room."

At this time, Nicholas came over and pulled her into his arms.

When he saw how the balcony overlooked the Hathaway Philharmonic, he chuckled and said, "Your brother is quite thoughtful. He's taken everything into account for you."

Chapter 597

"Of course, he's my little brother," Tessa replied to Nicholas with a proud look on her face.

This made him laugh as he thought about how adorable the woman in front of him was.

The three stayed in the apartment for a while before heading to a nearby restaurant for

lunch.

During lunch, Tessa asked, "Do any of you want to go anywhere after lunch?"

"I don't mind going anywhere as long as I'm with you," Gregory said, smiling sweetly at her.

At this point, she felt that her heart was about to melt from pure adorableness.

She couldn't help but reach out to pinch his cheeks. "Greg, did you grow up with sweet talkers? Why are you so good at buttering people up?"

"I don't butter people up! I'm only like this with you."

His eyes sparkled like black gems shining in the dark when he looked at her.

Just like that, the two broke out in laughter.

Nicholas, who was sitting between them, looked at the two tenderly.

After they played around for a while, Tessa turned to look at him and asked, "What about you? Is there anywhere you want to go?"

He looked at her gently and asked in return, "How about you? Do you have anywhere you want to

go?"

"No."

"In that case, I'll decide what we're going to do this afternoon."

She naturally agreed to his suggestion.

In the afternoon, Nicholas brought Tessa and Gregory to an art exhibition.

Both of them enjoyed the artistic environment very much.

These paintings, in particular, had sparked the inspiration for her music.

After dinner, the three of them headed home.

Andrew heard some noises and respectfully walked out of the living room to report, "Master Nicholas, the team of stylists is here."

Nicholas nodded before bringing Tessa and Gregory into the living room.

An hour later, Tessa came down the stairs in an off-white, long-sleeved lace dress, and her already exquisite facial features became even more stunning after makeup.

When Nicholas saw her, he was mesmerized by her beauty.

Then, he quickly stepped forward and took the initiative to help her down the stairs.

Tessa looked at the tall and handsome man who had changed into a black suit before she asked curiously, "Is there anything going on tonight for us to be dressed formally?"

Nicholas smiled and answered casually when he heard her question, "There's an auction tonight, and I want you to be my plus one."

After she heard his answer, she merely nodded lightly and didn't think much of it.

She didn't question him further, thinking she was simply going to an auction.

At this time, Gregory was also done and hopped down the stairs.

"Miss Tessa, how do I look?"

He happily ran up to Tessa and twirled in front of her to show off his look for tonight.

Gregory had also changed into a small suit tonight, which made him look like a miniature

version of Nicholas with the black bow tie on a white collared shirt. Such attire made him look handsome and stylish.

"You look dashing," she praised him to the skies.

Gregory smiled even brighter when he heard her compliment.

After he got a good look at her, he also sincerely praised her, "Miss Tessa, you are so beautiful tonight."

This caused Tessa's smile to deepen even more.

Nicholas, who had been watching the exchange between the two, felt slightly left out.

He left out a light cough, and when she looked over, he pretended to straighten his bowtie.

At first, she was taken aback for a moment before realizing that he wanted to be complimented as

well.

"You're stunning tonight as well!"

She grinned and hugged his arms as she praised him with smiling eyes.

When he heard her compliment, he couldn't help but smile, obviously in a good mood.

The auction was held in a five-star hotel.

In the brightly lit ballroom, everyone was walking around with a glass of wine in their hands.

When Nicholas, Tessa, and Gregory showed up, their stunning looks immediately attracted the guests' attention.

"Oh my, this family looks amazing!"

"That man is so handsome. I'm so envious of that woman next to him."

"Aw, look at that little boy! He looks so cool and cute!"

Many of the affluent members of society whispered among each other.

Tessa, who had an arm around Nicholas' elbow, was observing her surroundings, only to notice that many famous musicians were at the scene.

However, she did not think much about it as she quietly followed him, occasionally tilting her head to the side to talk to Gregory.

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At that moment, a typical Viennese man came over and said with a somewhat flattering smile, "President Sawyer, you're here."

However, Nicholas only gave him a cold nod in response.

The man didn't mind, and he turned to look at Tessa. There was a flash of amazement in his eyes as he asked politely, "Is this your girlfriend?"

"This is my fiancée, Tessa."

As Nicholas said so, he placed his arm around Tessa, and there was a hint of warmth on his cold face.

At once, the man sensed the change in Nicholas; thus, he paid a little more attention to

Tessa.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Miss Reinhart."

"Pleasure is all mine."

Tessa responded elegantly and politely.

Gregory also greeted the man politely while standing beside her.

After a brief talk, the auction was about to start.

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The man personally led Nicholas and the others to the auction site and arranged for their seats to be in the front row.

Not long after they were seated, an emcee came onto the stage to announce the official start of the auction.

After seeing several precious musical instruments of great value on auction, only then did Tessa realize that this auction turned out to be an auction of musical instruments,

"No wonder."

Nicholas couldn't hear Tessa's murmur clearly, so he leaned closer to her and asked, "What's the matter?"

"I thought it was a little strange when I saw quite a few well-known musicians at the site just now, but now that I see the items for auction, I don't think it's strange anymore," she explained with a smile.

Nicholas smiled when he heard her words and said nothing as he continued to watch the auction with her.

One by one, instruments created by famous luthiers were auctioned off.

There were flutes, pianos, cellos...

At the finale of the auction, when it was the turn for the last piece of musical instrument, the emcee said excitedly on stage, "This final item for auction has a hundred years of history. In addition to its significance collection purposes, the more important thing is its sound, which is truly one-of-a-kind!"

The hostess carefully held a violin case on stage for display along with the emcee's words.

"Looks like I guessed it right; it's a Stradivarius violin."

"I'll definitely get my hands on this violin tonight."

I'll fight for it just for its unique sound."

Everyone around them whispered in low voices.

When she heard those chatters, Tessa suddenly had a faint guess in her mind.

Is it possible that Nicholas has brought me along tonight because he wants to bid for this particular violin?

When she thought about that, she couldn't help but tilt her head to glance at the handsome and charming man beside her.

When Nicholas noticed her gaze, he turned to look at her and asked softly, "What's wrong?"

Tessa was startled for a moment before she shook her head and said with a smile,

"Nothing."

Although she had her suspicions, she was afraid that she was overthinking it-and that it would make Nicholas misunderstand and think that she wanted the violin.

She didn't know that he had already seen through her, but he maintained his silence so as not to expose her thoughts.

He looked at Tessa affectionately, held her hand, and continued watching the auction.

At that moment, the emcee on the stage spoke again.

"It seems that everyone has recognized the origin of this violin, so I won't bother all of you with the introductions. Now, I announce that the auction of the Stradivarius violin will officially begin with a starting price of two million."

As soon as the emcee finished his words, many people began to raise their bids.

At that instant, Nicholas also raised his paddle and said, "Three million."

His actions took her by surprise.

"Nicholas..."

Initially, she wanted to tell him not to spend so much money, but before she could finish her words, she received a reassuring look from him.

There was nothing she could do but swallow her words.

The auction continued.

"Three and a half million."

"Three-point eight million."

"Four million."

The bidding continued until it arrived at the next figure.

"Five million."

The initially competitive bidding seemed to have paused for a second as no one followed the bid for a while.

After all, five million was already a sky-high price for a Stradivarius violin.

When the emcee saw no one else bidding anymore, he spoke again, "Five million once; is there anyone else who wants to increase the bid?"

The place fell silent.

Tessa also heaved a sigh of relief.

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It seemed that Nicholas understood what she meant just now.

Just as the emcee was about to close the bidding, he raised his paddle again. "Six million."

Tessa was dumbfounded when she heard his voice ring in her ears.

This violin was too expensive.

She sighed in her heart and didn't want him to break the bank like this, so she persuaded him, "Nicholas, you have given me an excellent violin. I have enough violins now; I really

don't need this one."

"You having enough violins doesn't conflict with me wanting to give it to you. Also, this is the present I want to give you to congratulate you on becoming the concertmaster."

Nicholas looked at Tessa with gentle eyes and added pleasantly, "I hope you can take it with you to achieve your dreams."

"But this... It's too precious."

"I want the best for you."

He stared at her affectionately.

Right then, it would be a lie if Tessa said his actions and words did not move her; however, she still felt that Nicholas had spent too much.

Just as she was about to persuade him again, the sound of the hammer knocking down came to her ears.

"Congratulations to this gentleman for successfully bidding the Stradivarius violin for six million."

Perhaps the emcee heard Tessa's words of persuasion, so he paused and added, "The price has been set; the rules of the auction do not allow refunds."

After the auction ended, a staff member swiftly came over and invited them to view their prize, so to speak.

"Our guests, please come with me to the VIP room to do the inspection and acceptance of the Stradivarius violin."

With that, Nicholas nodded and took Tessa and Gregory with him.

On the way there, she held Gregory's hand without saying a word as she felt mixed emotions regarding Nicholas' gift.

When he noticed that, Nicholas merely tilted his head and glanced at the beautiful girl beside him but didn't say anything.

Gregory happily followed along her side, not noticing the subtle change in atmosphere between the two adults.

When they entered the VIP room, the emcee was also there.

He greeted them respectfully and politely. "President Sawyer, Miss Reinhart."

As Nicholas saw him, he nodded with his arm around Tessa and said calmly, "Where's the violin?"

The emcee looked at the staff next to him once he said those words.

And with that, the staff carefully placed the case containing the Stradivarius violin on the glass table.

When he opened the case, Tessa was immediately attracted by the exquisite violin in front of her.

She didn't get a good look at the musical instrument previously on the stage because the hostess was walking around.

So, when he saw her look at the violin with a passionate gleam in her eye, he gently pushed

her lower back and said warmly, "Go on, have a better look at it."

Tessa didn't refuse as she stepped forward and carefully took out the violin.

Although the Stradivarius violin had more than two hundred years of history and looked pretty simple, its craftsmanship was exquisite.

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It was especially so when she tried playing it, as she was instantly captured by its gentle, mellow, and smooth sound.

The sound was sometimes as pure and clear as a woodwind instrument, and sometimes it was as warm and soft as velvet.

Tessa held the violin in her hands and loved it so much she couldn't put it down.

When he saw the wholehearted expression of love on her face, the corners of Nicholas' mouth lifted a bit more.

After they checked that there was nothing wrong with the violin, he took Tessa and Gregory with him, and they left the hotel together.

On the way back, her joyous mood gradually faded away as she suddenly didn't know what to say when she looked at Nicholas.

He has also noticed that she hesitated to talk to him several times and that she seemed to feel burdened.

When they arrived home, he asked the housekeeper to take Gregory to rest and embraced her on the sofa in the living room.

"Do you have something that you want to say to me?"

His dark eyes locked on her face, not missing a single expression.

Tessa pursed her lips; she did have something she wanted to say but didn't know how to word it.

When Nicholas saw the torn expression on her face, he had a faint guess in his heart. So, he smiled lightly and assured her, "I didn't give you this violin for you to feel burdened by it.

You can think of it as my investment; if you become world-famous in the future, the violin's value will increase. When the price skyrockets, I can also profit from it."