

Always Been Yours Chapter 610

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At the end of her sentence, Stefania furrowed her brows in dissatisfaction, but Nicholas didn't think that anything his mother mentioned was a problem at all.

"There will always be someone to take care of Greg. There's Andrew and the others."

However, Stefania was still unsatisfied. "This and that aren't the same thing!"

Meanwhile, Gregory looked around for ideas to appease his grandmother's ruffled feathers.

"Grandma, I'm fine. When Miss Tessa isn't around, I can be with Daddy. Moreover, we also have the servants at home and Andrew. So, I won't be left alone."

The child was very understanding as he stood entirely on his father's side and Nicholas gave him a look of approval. On the other hand, Stefania couldn't win against the two in a verbal spar, so she could only set aside the topic for now.

A while later, Nicholas went to work and had meetings the whole morning. However, when it was almost noon, Edward knocked and came in.

"President Sawyer, someone is here to look for you, and she's a woman..."

Toward the end, he trailed off and peered at his boss hesitantly.

Nicholas knitted his brows when he noticed Edward's tentativeness. "Who is it?"

"It's Janet Brenner. Miss Brenner..." he answered honestly.

Nicholas was startled by the answer and inquired, "What brought her here?"

"She didn't mention the reason." Then, an equally confused Edward glanced at Nicholas, who had tightly knitted his brows, and asked, "Are you going to meet her?"

Nicholas thought for a second and instructed, "Let her in."

"Okay." Edward nodded and left.

A couple of minutes later, he brought a tall, slender woman having a stoic expression and wearing stilettos into the room.

The woman looked about twenty-five years of age, and she kept her hair in a neat bob. Her well sculptured features were sharp, but they retained the softness of a woman, and she looked charming.

She was dressed in a black fitted suit that looked tidy and suave beyond words and carried a strong, determined air about her.

This woman was Janet Brenner.

"President Sawyer, Miss Brenner is here," Edward announced politely.

Janet lifted her eyes at the introduction and saw Nicholas seated at the desk in the spacious office, sitting on a genuine leather office chair in his tailored black suit.

Even though he was seated, his perfectly proportioned body was as evident as his height.

As though borne from the hands of a master, his face was so intricate, and he was exuding an alluring air with the dignity of an emperor.

Janet realized that he was even more mature and attractive than she remembered him as she observed the man before her. "It's been a while, Nicholas." She curled her red lips into a smile as she paced a few steps forward gracefully.

Unfortunately, Nicholas merely nodded in composure. "Take a seat. Get Miss Brenner a cup of coffee, Edward."

Edward nodded in acknowledgment and returned a short while later with two cups of coffee in his hands. After he placed them down gently, he stood at the side, awaiting his next task.

Finally, Nicholas gave a cursory glance at the woman seated across from himself as he asked indifferently, "Aren't you supposed to be abroad? Why did you show up here all of a sudden?"

At that, Janet placed the coffee cup down and returned his gaze with concerned eyes. "I suddenly appeared because I heard that you immobilized the guards from the Night Alliance. Because I'm a little worried about you, I specially asked for leave to visit you to find out if something happened to you."

In her opinion, it must have been a grave matter if he had immobilized the guards from the Night Alliance.

Nicholas figured out why she was here and said nonchalantly, "I'm alright."

Janet was used to his aloof behavior, but at the same time, she couldn't help but feel disappointed because she thought that he would be happy to see her after not meeting her for such a long time. After all, they were partners who had been through life and death together.

Even though she felt uneasy, she didn't show a trace of it on her face.

Curious, she asked, "Since you're alright, then you're using the guards for="

"I'm only using the guards to protect someone."

Nicholas wasn't keen to hide the truth, but Janet was a little shocked by his answer.

"Someone from your family?"

One had to be aware that just any of the guards in the Night Alliance was comparable to the top assassins of the world.

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If somebody else were using such good personnel to do something that any regular bodyguard could do, she would have definitely berated that person. However, if that person were Nicholas, she would only approve of his decision.

"You've made quite a few enemies over the years, so you indeed need to make proper arrangements to protect them. Should I get two more guards for you?"

"No, thanks. Just two guards by my fiancée's side are enough."

As soon as the words left his lips, Janet froze, and she gawked at him in shock. "You... already have a fiancée? When did this happen?"

He furrowed his brows slightly upon hearing her prodding inquiry and said calmly, "Not long ago."

Clearly, he didn't want to speak about Tessa with her, and she could hear it in his voice, which made her very uncomfortable.

Nevertheless, she composed herself very quickly as she smirked and chuckled lightly. "I don't mean anything else. I'm just a little curious."

Nicholas nodded, and Janet decided to catch up with him after seeing that.

"How have you been recently?"

"Not bad."

Then, they spoke awkwardly for a little bit, but Nicholas didn't want to waste more time.

"Since everything is fine, you should just go back. The higher-ups won't allow you to leave your mission by yourself," he said pragmatically.

Toward Janet, he had always maintained the courtesy required of a friendship and the distance between a man and a woman.

Janet was his partner when he was in the military, and he didn't contact her anymore after he retired from the army and returned to his family. Despite his surprise at her sudden appearance, he was rather patient with her because of their friendship as former partners.

Toward the end, he added, "Regarding the Night Alliance, there's nothing for you to worry about."

Janet found the matter somewhat difficult to swallow while she looked at the man's emotionless face. The whole while, she felt that she had a special place next to Nicholas because she always thought that no one in this world was more intimate with him than herself.

Their past experiences were something nobody else could imagine, especially their rapport. With just one look, she could read what was on his mind.

Not to mention that whether it was background or even appearance-wise, they were a natural match for each other.

In other words, there couldn't be another couple more fitting for each other than them.

Back then, when Nicholas left the military, she kept thinking that she would marry him one day in the future. However, she never thought that he would have a fiancée now!

At this thought, Janet clenched her fists at her sides for a second and released them again.

She decided to make another attempt as she smiled coyly and said, "The mission is not in a rush, but I rarely make a visit. Aren't you going to play the part of a good host?"

"I'm still busy with work." Nicholas turned her down straight away. "Furthermore, I don't want my fiancée to get the wrong idea."

When she caught a glimpse of the gentleness that flashed across his face when he mentioned his fiancée, she felt a stab through her heart.

Finally, she looked at him once more while she kept her pride and dignity, then nodded with a faint smile. "I got it."

See

In response, Nicholas asked Edmund to see her out, and she seemed lost in her thoughts after she was out of his office.

When she walked out of the Sawyer Group, her subordinate was already waiting for her with the car.

"Please, Jan," he said, opening the car door for her politely.

She ignored him, turned back to look at the spot where Nicholas' office was, and her mind kept replaying everything he said and did earlier. All of a sudden, her face turned stone cold.

Even though his gentleness was only visible for a split second, it brought her a tremendous sense of crisis because she had never seen Nicholas acting that way.

That man had always been above others with an expressionless face, and he would never care about other people's feelings.

But just earlier, that man told her that he was worried that his fiancée might get the wrong idea.

At that moment, she was incredibly jealous of that woman who could become his fiancée, but at the same time, she was very curious to find out how outstanding this woman was that she could make a man as aloof as Nicholas care that much.

With this thought in mind, she kept her gaze away and looked at her subordinate sharply, ordering, "You don't have to come with me to complete the mission. Stay here and find out who Nicholas Sawyer's fiancée is!"

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After hearing Janet's command, her subordinate frowned with disapproval.

"Jan, the mission this time is perilous. You—".

Before he could finish, he was interrupted by her angrily, "Kaiden, this is my command. Are you going to disobey my command?"

"No," he quickly denied. In the end, he could only accept the order reluctantly.

When she saw that he had accepted her orders, she said coldly, "After you find out who Nicholas Sawyer's fiancée is, report it to me immediately."

I would like to know who this woman is that has the guts to fight over a man with me! she thought...

After she spat out those words, she strode to the driver's seat and drove away.

Meanwhile, Nicholas was in the dark about everything that was happening on Janet's side. However, he had set her to the back of his mind very quickly because not long after she left, Tessa made a video call to him.

In the call, Nicholas gazed at the girl who was still flushed from just washing up, and affection crept over his eyes, shimmering with gentleness.

"How's rehearsal today?"

"It was good today. Nobody made a mistake, and Miss Hathaway even praised us."

On the other end, Tessa was plopped in bed on her stomach in a comfortable position as she shared with him about what happened at the band today.

Nicholas felt that his heart filled with warmth and love as he listened to her soft voice.

In the end, Tessa looked at the handsome man in the call and pouted her lips, sulking, "What should I do? It's only been a day since you and Greg left, but I already miss you guys."

"It's difficult for me, too. Without you by my side at night, I have the feeling that something

is missing," he said, telling her how much he missed her in his husky voice. When she listened to his sweet nothings in his deep voice, she felt the melancholy in her heart gradually disappear and was replaced by happiness.

They chatted for a while until Tessa suddenly remembered something. "It's Miss Hathaway's birthday soon. What do you think I should get her as a present?"

"Do you have a general idea?"

"At first, I thought about giving her a violin, but I thought I could do better. A person of Miss Hathaway's current status wouldn't be lacking in violins from the mid to high-end range. But I can't afford it if it's something a little more expensive," she said with a helpless shrug.

An expensive, precious violin could easily cost millions, and it wasn't something she could afford at all.

Although she could ask her brother or Nicholas to help pay for it, she didn't want to do something like this, and her pride wouldn't allow it, either.

Nicholas could piece together what was going on in her mind as she was an open book to him, so he didn't offer to help her financially.

After he pondered over the matter, he gave her a pertinent suggestion. "Since you have no idea yet and there's still time left, why don't you ask around your bandmates to find out Miss Hathaway's preferences? Based on those preferences, you can then give her a meaningful gift."

Even though she thought he had a point, she still felt vexed.

"Something that's meaningful and has a high collection value... That's an extensive range, then."

Nicholas chuckled. "Once you've found her preferences and tried looking based on them, wouldn't that help narrow it down greatly?"

She paused at his advice and thought that he made sense, so she agreed. "You're right. I'll first find out her preferences and try to look around after that. That will make things much easier," she said, looking at him happily and beaming brightly. "Thank god for you.

Otherwise, I'll be stuck figuring this out."

Nicholas had a small smile playing on his lips and appeared to be in a good mood at her praise. After that, they spoke a little longer before she hung up to rest.

The following day, Tessa went to the band carrying her violin. She was unsurprised to hear everyone discussing what to get Hathaway as a gift because her birthday was considered a big deal to them. Especially with Hathaway's current status, her birthday would be a big celebration when the time came.

Alas, everyone was at a loss for presents to give her.

Just then, Mona caught sight of Tessa and trotted to her. Mona intimately took her by her arm and asked, "Do you have any idea what to get Miss Hathaway?"

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"Not really. What about you? Do you have any ideas?" Tessa asked, looking at Mona curiously.

Mona sighed as her face scrunched up in frustration. "I don't have a single clue. I was thinking about getting some ideas from you."

"What a coincidence. Great minds think alike. I was wondering if you know any of Miss Hathaway's preferences."

Tessa let out a huff of amusement as Mona giggled along.

A few seconds later, she answered, "If there's anything that Miss Hathaway loves, it would most probably be string instruments."

Despite her disappointment at the answer, Tessa still thanked Mona for the insight.

As for the gift, she decided to ask Louis for opinions. With the number of friends he had in the music industry, he must have had some experience in gift-giving talented musicians that dominated their fields.

Therefore, that evening after practice, she asked the driver to drop her off at the bar.

Perhaps it was still early when she arrived, but there weren't many guests at the bar yet, and she found Louis in a corner booth drinking by himself when she scanned around the place.

"Hey, Mr. Louis," she walked over and greeted him with a smile.

The sight of her caught him a little off guard. "Why are you free to come over today? Here, take a seat."

Tessa nodded and slid into a seat opposite him. "The practice today ended early, so I decided to come here to take a look. By the way, I have something to ask you as well."

"I knew it! You're only here whenever you have a problem for me to solve," he said, exposing her intention straightforwardly.

However, it didn't bother her, and she soldiered on with a grin, "I would like to ask what will be good as a present for elders. Mainly a gift concerning string instruments."

He instantly guessed who the gift was meant for. "Hathaway has seen all types of string instruments in her life. So, if you want to get her something related to that, you should get her something meaningful instead."

Tessa nodded in agreement while asking expectantly, "So, which instrument should I get her that will be meaningful?"

"Shouldn't you think about that yourself? I've already given you the big picture, and you'll have to come up with a concrete idea yourself. Who is the one giving the gift here?" he complained, casting her an annoyed look.

Embarrassed, she scratched her nose lightly and explained, "Well, I'm more than a little stumped here."

So, she easily ignored the annoyance he purposefully played up as she got up, refilled his glass. and started buttering him up.

"Please help me, Sir. I really can't think of anything good, but I know that you're a man of experience and wisdom. I know without a doubt that you hold the solution to my troubles." Louis was out of wits as he watched the overly attentive girl, and he knew that she would pester .. him all night if he didn't come up with an idea for her.

"I remember that your country has a lot of musical instruments with unique sounds. Isn't it a good idea to get those as gifts?"

For a second, she was stunned, and then it hit her. He's right. I can get Miss Hathaway a string instrument that's only produced in my country.

Delighted, she filled up Louis' glass again. "I just know that you're full of ideas. Thank you so much for the help."

He accepted her grateful gesture graciously as he lifted his glass and drank from it. Then, he placed it down and chuckled. "Since your problem is solved, why don't you perform today? My guests have repeatedly talked my ear off about you."

Of course, Tessa wouldn't turn him down, and after she agreed to a performance, she went to the stage with her violin.

At this time, there were already a lot of guests in the bar, and perhaps it was due to her oriental appearance that she attracted quite a few inquisitive looks.

"Who is this foreign woman? Why does she have the right to perform on stage?"

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The regulars who knew Tessa started to explain to the newcomer.

Afterward, when they saw that Tessa was about to begin her performance, they said one last thing and kept quiet, ready to listen.

"She's a very talented violinist. Pay attention to her performance. Then, you'll understand and fall in love with her performance."

Even though some people thought that those words were mere exaggerations, they still kept quiet. Nonetheless, she was unbothered by their comments as she propped up her violin and started playing.

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Soon, the melodious sound of a violin that was rich with emotions filled the room.

At times, it was light, but sometimes, it sounded depressing, as though the music conveyed the tale of a couple's ups and downs.

Everyone was smitten with the music, and when it ended, thunderous applause came from the crowd below the stage.

Tessa curled her lips into a confident smile as she bowed to the crowd and left the stage with her violin.

Then, she returned to Louis' table and noticed that a few musicians had gathered around him. Seeing that she was coming over, they started complimenting her.

"You made a tremendous improvement, Miss Reinhart. Your performance this time is very different from before."

"He's right. The rhythm this time is more lively and has its unique soul, which is much more moving than your previous performances."

"It's even slowly becoming a style of its own. Keep up the good work!"

Tessa was overjoyed that her efforts were noticed and nodded earnestly at their helpful advice, "I'll continue to work hard."

At this point, someone brought up the question of why she hadn't been here for such a long time.

"I've been busy with practice recently because I've joined Group Two of Miss Hathaway's orchestra, and we're performing in Yvetlava next month. So, that's why I'm not free."

At her candid answer, everyone started to encourage her again.

"You'll have to do your best, then. This will be your first performance after joining the orchestra."

"I will." She nodded vigorously.

After she hung around for a little longer, she decided to take her leave from the bar, and Louis didn't try to make her stay. When she was home, she gave Nicholas a video call after she had washed up, and they spoke briefly about their day.

Suddenly, she changed her tone and asked, "Nicholas, do you know if there's going to be an auction in Vienna recently? Of course, it would be best if someone from our country were the organizer. Please let me know if there's any."

Curious at her request, he asked, "Why do you want to go to an auction?"

She didn't hide her intentions as she elaborated on the idea Louis gave her in the evening.

"So, I would like to see if there's any gift suitable for Miss Hathaway."

"You don't necessarily need to go to an auction for that. I know an antique store; they probably have what you are looking for. I'll ask the butler to take you there tomorrow."

She figured that he had a point, so she agreed without a fuss. Plus, she might be unable to outbid the wealthy men at an auction if she saw something she liked.

At the thought of this, she smiled brightly at the screen. "You have amazing ideas. Thanks, honey."

"That's all?" Nicholas raised his brows and seemed unsatisfied with the thanks.

Tessa looked at him slyly when she noticed that and placed her hand on her lips, sending flying kisses his way.

"Will this do?"

Embarrassed, she gazed at him with a bright and happy smile on her face.

He gave her a grin; his eyes were so gentle that anyone could drown in them.

The next evening after Tessa finished her practice, the butler, who received the order from

Nicholas to bring Tessa to the antique shop to pick out a gift, was already waiting at the orchestra's entrance.

A few minutes later, Tessa came out with Mona because she kept bugging Tessa to bring her along after discovering that she was shopping for Miss Hathaway.

When they were about to get in the car, Scott strode over to them unexpectedly, dressed in a leisure suit.

"Mr. Brooks, what brought you here?"

"Hi, Mr. Brooks."

They spoke up simultaneously, and both had a hint of surprise in their voices because it had been a while since they saw Scott as he had been performing overseas recently.

"Where are you girls going?"

He greeted them with a light smile, but his gentle gaze never left Tessa.

"My fiancé recommended an antique shop to me, and we're planning to check out that place to see if we can get a present for Miss Hathaway," Tessa answered honestly without hiding the truth.

When he heard her say the word 'fiance', the light in his eyes dimmed a little, but he quickly hid his emotions away and smiled. "What a coincidence. I'm having trouble getting her a gift as well. I hope you won't mind me tagging along."

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After a short moment of hesitation, Tessa agreed because Mona was coming along as well, and Scott had been a great help to her before this.

Hence, the three left for their destination by car. However, they didn't know that this scene was witnessed by Kathleen, who was not far off, and her eyes dimmed as she watched the car disappear from her sight.

Then, Cindy's annoying voice echoed in her ears.

"What is the problem with Tessa Reinhart? She knows that you like Mr. Brooks, but she's still being so friendly with him. I think she just doesn't give a hoot about you."

She tried her best to drive a wedge between Kathleen and Tessa, as she wanted to use Kathleen to deal with that b*tch.

Since she lost to Tessa in the last assessment, she has been holding a grudge. She felt that Tessa had snatched the leading position which belonged to her simply because she didn't think that she was lesser than Tessa, and it was all because Hathaway was biased.

Despite her anger, Kathleen didn't lose her cool. Of course, she noticed Cindy's effort at provocation and knew what she was planning in her mind.

However, Cindy was a fool if she thought that Kathleen was a brainless tool who would rise at such tasteless provocation.

A cold light flashed past her eyes, but she appeared protective of Tessa. "I believe Tessa and

Scott only left together because they had something to do. But, don't forget she's already taken."

Cindy was stumped for words as she didn't think that Kathleen would react in such a way. Meanwhile, Tessa had no idea what had happened, and they had already reached the antique shop's entrance.

The store was located on the busiest street in Vienna, and the storefront was decorated traditionally. Two well-carved stone lions stood on both sides of the entrance giving the establishment a majestic air.

While showing the road, the butler briefed them about the place, "Someone from Xerthania owns this antique shop, and Master Nicholas has said that the goods inside are genuine. So, you don't have to worry about buying counterfeits."

Tessa nodded and brought Mona and Scott into the store.

She realized that it was akin to another world on the inside upon entering the store, and it was as large as four boutiques. In addition, many exquisite antiquities and treasures were proudly on display.

Even Mona and Scott were amazed by the things available in this establishment.

"Tessa, take a look at this vase. It's so pretty."

Attracted by a porcelain vase, Mona called out to Tessa in excitement to take a look, and she went over with a smile.

Right then, a lady dressed in a traditional long dress approached them politely and broached the subject, "Ma'am, this is not a regular vase but a type of porcelain art unique to Xerthania."

As the shop assistant patiently launched into a detailed lecture of the items' origins to them, looks of amazement appeared on Mona and Scott's faces. After all, these were historical antiques that were both intriguing and mysterious to them.

As for Tessa, she listened intently as well, but she didn't forget the purpose of her visit this time.

"Hello, I would like to ask if you have any traditional string instruments or the likes of it?" she asked when the shop assistant was finished expounding on an item.

Was

Her words reminded Mona and Scott of the purpose of their visit, and they turned to the shop assistant, who nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes, please come this way," she answered and led the way courteously, bringing them into another studio.

Once they entered, Tessa realized that this was a room specifically for musical instruments. There were zither, lute, flutes, and many other instruments.

Nevertheless, a zither made out of wood casing hanging on the wall had caught her eyes.

"Can I please have a look at that zither?"

The shop assistant nodded in acquiescence and carefully took it off the wall. Mona and

Scott came over when they heard her request.

"What kind of instrument is this? It looks weird."

With curiosity alight in her eyes, Mona stared at the zither, then cast a puzzled look at Tessa. She smiled gently as she explained while examining the zither carefully, "It's a string instrument unique to Xerthania."

The zither was made of Paulownia wood, and cherry blossoms were engraved on the lacquer of the instrument. It was an aged instrument, but it was clearly well cared for. She plucked the strings for a quick soundcheck, which resulted in a distinct and pleasing sound echoing in the studio.

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A look of surprise appeared on Mona and Scott's faces at the musical sound cutting through the air.

"This zither sounds remarkable!"

Tessa nodded in agreement and thought that the sound was indeed sui generis. It was smooth, but it had a sharp quality to it, and her teacher would definitely like it.

"This is it. The present for Miss Hathaway will be this zither. Please wrap it up for me." Her last sentence was meant for the shop assistant.

Mona was inspired by Tessa's choice and started browsing the room when she saw that Tessa had already made a purchase.

"Tessa, what type of instrument is this?"

Suddenly, she pointed to an intricate lute and looked at Tessa.

She immediately looked over and explained, "This is also a string instrument native to my country."

Mona's eyes lit up in excitement when she heard Tessa's explanation. "What about the sound?"

How is it?"

"Why don't I try it out for you, and you can listen to it before deciding on your gift?"

That was more than Mona could ask for, so she eagerly accepted the suggestion. "That would be amazing! Thanks!"

Half an hour later, all three of them had selected their gifts-Mona chose the lute, and even though Scott didn't pick a string instrument, he settled with a drawing instead.

Since almost all his previous presents were string instruments in the past few years, he decided to switch things up a little this year.

When it was time to pay, the butler had already paid the bill for Tessa.

However, Mona and Scott had received a discount from the shop because of Nicholas.

When they left after paying, Mona couldn't help but exclaim in wonderment, "I always have

good fortune when I'm around you, Tessa."

Tessa was amused, and Scott brought up the idea of having dinner together, to which the girls agreed.

Hence, the three of them went to a Western restaurant with a pleasant ambiance. During their meal, Scott received a call from Kathleen.

"Scott, I heard that you're back after a successful performance. Are you free tonight? Let's have dinner together."

"Next time, maybe. I already have an appointment tonight."

"Really? Who beat me to it?"

He said truthfully with a slight chuckle, "It's Miss Reinhart and Mona."

On the other end, Kathleen heard the answer she was expecting and clutched the cell phone in her hand tightly in fury.

That b*tch, Tessa Reinhart. She already has a boyfriend but keeps stringing other men along! she cursed silently, completely overlooking Mona.

Despite her boiling anger, her voice sounded normal, and nobody could tell that she was irked by the facade she had on.

"I see, so it's Tessa. I won't bother you, then. I'll ask you out next time."

When the call ended, Scott continued eating with Tessa and Mona. The atmosphere between them was joyful the whole time, and because Mona was very curious about the culture of Xerthania, she kept the conversation flowing with questions directed at Tessa. After dinner, Scott sent Mona home because Tessa had her own driver, and when she was home, she washed up simply and lay in bed as she called Nicholas.

"Did you have fun in the evening?"

"I sure did. Also, thanks for your investment today. Once I have money in the future, I'll return it to you."

"Do you have to draw such firm boundaries with me?" He cast her a dissatisfied look with raised brows.

Tessa giggled as she knew that Nicholas was willing to spend money on her, and even though she thought it was really sweet of him, she also had her principles that she wouldn't set aside.

"I'm not married to you yet, and I can't keep spending your money. Furthermore, my brother sends me a monthly allowance, so I have money to spare."

Nicholas disagreed with her words and said firmly, "You're my future wife, and it's only right that you spend my money. No matter what, you're not allowed to spend another man's money!"

Coincidentally, Timothy came over because of work and overheard him saying that.

Disgruntled, he pushed open the door and burst in.

"Nicholas, how could you be so bossy? What do you mean by another man? I'm her younger brother!"

Then, Timothy marched to his desk, leaned forward slightly, and snatched his phone out of his hands.

As he gazed at his sister in the video call, a gentle smile spread across his handsome face.

"Tess, don't listen to Nicholas. I'm more than happy to let you spend my money."

Unfortunately, Tessa was unable to come up with a quick answer as she was stunned by her brother's sudden appearance.

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After that, she snapped back and nodded with a smile. "Don't worry. I won't listen to Nicholas."

Timothy threw Nicholas a gleeful look at her words, and his eyebrows shot up a little, but he didn't say anything. Despite that, he kept this tab in his heart, planning to exact his 'revenge' on his mischievous brother-in-law in due time. Meanwhile, Timothy and Tessa have already started asking about each other.

"Tess, how are you doing over there?"

"I'm doing rather well. What about you? Are you taking good care of yourself back home?"

As they talked about their everyday life, their conversation gradually switched to Timothy's company without realizing it.

"How's your company doing lately? You're very busy, aren't you?" she asked concernedly.

"Not bad, but I'm not very busy. So, you don't have to worry, Tess."

"I'm not worried, but I see that you've lost weight again. Why is this happening?"

She felt frustrated as she stared at her brother and thought that he didn't take care of himself.

Timothy was embarrassed, but before he could say anything. Tessa said earnestly, "The money isn't going to run away when you take a break. Besides, no matter how busy you are, you must eat your meals regularly. Your body is your capital, and if you are too busy, we'll hire someone to cook your meals or just clean up the place. If you continue like this, how can I further my studies abroad in peace?"

"I know. I'm sorry, Tess. I'll take good care of myself. Don't worry about me. He apologized to her good-naturedly.

Alas, it didn't matter how he apologized,

as she was well aware that he wouldn't change his ways even if he admitted his mistakes, and she sighed. "Both of you are workaholics, So, how can I not worry?"

"I'm here, so you don't have to worry so much. Just watch over yourself!

Nicholas stood up from his desk, snatched back his phone, and looked at the girl in the call with gentle eyes.

If he allowed her to go on, he was afraid that he would also receive a round of lectures. Thus, he decided to divert her attention while he still could.

Hathaway's birthday was held at the orchestra hall, and the interior was grandly decorated.

In the evening, an endless convoy of luxury cars was lined up on both sides of the road, and countless famous musicians were dropped off at the venue.

They were all dressed glamorously in gowns and bespoke suits as they entered the hall in groups and pairs..

The hall was brightly lit as light music played in the background while uniformed waiters walked through the crowd with an ease that spoke of experience as they carried a tray of

cocktails for the people in attendance.

"Happy birthday, Hathaway

The guests who arrived all sent their greetings, and they were all Hathaway's close friends.

Hathaway was overjoyed by the turnout, thanked them, and introduced her friends to Kathleen and Tessa.

Everyone had a blast, and many of them were full of admiration for Tessa.

“She must be your outstanding student, isn’t she? She looks like an uncut gem.”

“I heard the news from our circle some time ago and was really curious. Finally, I got to meet her in person. She’s a wonderful person, indeed.”

“The industry is rife with the news that you have a talented student, and everyone wants to make her their student now.”

There was even someone who tried to poach Tessa right under Hathaway’s nose.

“Miss Reinhart, if Hathaway doesn’t want to teach you music anymore, my doors are always open to you.

“Fissel, you’re poaching my student in front of me. Are you trying to pick a fight because our friendship has been too peaceful?” She feigned anger as she glared at him, and this roused another round of cheerful laughter.

The entire time, Tessa stood beside Hathaway quietly and gracefully, giving people an even better impression of her.

On the other side stood Kathleen,

listening to the compliments everyone

was showering on Tessa, and the jealousy

and resentment in her heart grew.

She held the wine glass so tightly that her knuckles turned white as she tried to hide the malevolent intent in her eyes.

In the past, she was the only one around, and these musicians only sang praises of her, but now, everyone’s attention was on that b*tch, Tessa Reinhart! Unbeknownst to her, it was just a misunderstanding. Between Tessa and Kathleen, these musicians already

knew Kathleen very well, but they had never been in contact with Tessa before. Hence, they were naturally more curious about her.

Chapter 618

At this moment, someone came over to congratulate Hathaway. She was a noble lady with an elegant aura whose beauty appeared ageless.

"Happy birthday, Hathaway. I hope you don't mind me being late."

When Tessa heard the somewhat familiar voice, she reflexively turned her head to it.

However, when she saw the voice's owner, she looked slightly surprised.

That was because the person who came was Suenobe, a senior she met in the bar and also a world-renowned top violinist maestro.

When Hathaway saw the oncoming person, the smile on her face became even brighter.

"Why would I mind? It's my honor to have you attend my birthday party." While she spoke, she stepped forward and hugged Suenobe courteously.

In the meantime, Kathleen, who was standing on the side, was also excited.

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That was because she had always dreamed of being Suenobe's apprentice but was ignored by the older woman.

Even so, she never gave up on trying her best to earn Suenobe's favor.

That was the reason why when Kathleen saw Suenobe and Hathaway parting from their hugs, she immediately stepped forward and greeted enthusiastically. "Miss Suenobe, do you still remember me?"

As Suenobe looked at the ambitious and self-interested girl before her, the smile on her face faded considerably.

Nevertheless, she didn't expressively show her dislike toward Kathleen and merely nodded politely and turned her head to ignore Kathleen. But then, she happened to see Tessa, who was standing beside her.

"Miss Reinhart, it's so good to see you again." She went up to Tessa in surprise and hugged her. After that, she let out a hearty laugh. "I think what I said just now was wrong. You're Hathaway's student, so it's only natural for you to be in attendance."

Likewise, Tessa laughed in amusement and hugged Suenobe. "The honor is all mine, Miss Suenobe."

Finally, Suenobe let go of Tessa and asked about her situation with concern. "I see that you've rarely come to the bar. Are you busy?"

I've joined Miss Hathaway's second orchestra group, so I've been busy with my practices during this period of time. As a result, I don't have much free time. So, I rarely drop by the bar now, Tessa answered her inquiries honestly.

Kathleen gnashed her teeth in anger when she saw the two chatting away happily. Hatred and fury welled up within her. Although she looked composed outwardly, it was the utter opposite inwardly.

There are no ifs and buts about it. Tessa is really my nemesis! Everyone has been praising her excellence since this b*tch joined the orchestra band. Moreover, the limelight that was supposed to belong to me has been overshadowed by this b*tch!

Nonetheless. Kathleen knew in her heart that she could not deal with Tessa, whom she deemed a b*tch for the time being, no matter how resentful she was.

I need to be patient. I need to wait for the right moment...

Meanwhile, Hathaway had no clue about Kathleen's thoughts, but when she saw that Tessa and Suenobe knew each other prior to this, she couldn't help but feel a little curious.

"Tessa, when were you introduced to Miss Suenobe?"

"I knew Miss Suenobe when I went to practice in a bar. I was lucky enough to receive her recognition."

Tessa had no intention to hide the truth from Hathaway, and she briefly told Hathaway the process of her getting to know Suenobe.

Hathaway couldn't help but feel that Tessa was extraordinarily lucky upon hearing her tale. Therefore, she smilingly suggested. "Since you and Miss Suenobe know each other, you'll be in charge of ushering her on my behalf tonight."

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"No problem." Tessa nodded in response. Then, she took Suenobe for a quick tour around the orchestra.

Later, Scott arrived along with Robert.

Tonight, Scott was wearing a black and white tuxedo suit, which complemented his slender and tall figure. With his outstanding facial features, he was as noble as the chivalrous son of the last century. The moment he appeared, he became the focus of the audience.

When Kathleen saw him, her previously gloomy face immediately switched to a bright smile.

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"Scott." She carried the hemline of her white skirt, stepped on her stilettos, and stood before Scott with a beautiful smile.

One wore black and another white; they looked like a couple wearing matching outfits from a distance.

Naturally, Kathleen noticed it, and she was secretly feeling delighted.

She raised her head and wanted to talk to Scott.

Unfortunately, Scott's attention was not on her at all.

He finally spotted Tessa, who was not far away, as he looked around. Then, at once, his eyes lit up.

Tonight, Tessa was wearing a lavender corset long dress. The close-fitting design brought

out her perfect hourglass figure, and her hair was tucked lazily behind her head, revealing her delicate facial features. She was exuding an elegant yet charming aura.

"I'm sorry, I'll be heading off to greet Miss Suenobe"

Chapter 619

Once he had finished saying this sentence, Scott picked up the wine glass and made his way toward where Tessa was.

As Kathleen looked at the back silhouette of the man walking farther and farther, she ground her teeth so hard that if one were to get closer to her, they would hear a faint cracking sound.

She knew that Scott's real purpose was not to greet Suenobe. Instead, he was going to say hello to Tessa.

Eventually, she could only suppress her anger and follow him in an effort not to let them spend time alone.

At 7.00PM, all the guests arrived, and the emcee officially announced the start of the birthday party.

As the star of tonight's event, Hathaway was invited by the emcee to give a birthday speech on stage.

"First of all, I would like to thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedule and attending my birthday party..."

After she had said a few words, she handed the stage back to the emcee.

The party went well, and soon, it was the gift-giving session.

As Hathaway's daughter, Kathleen was naturally the first to present her gift.

"Mommy, this is my gift to you. I hope you like it." She stood in front of Hathaway while holding an exquisite gift box.

Hathaway thanked her and then opened the gift box. She found a gorgeous and exquisite necklace worth tens of millions in the box. The sapphires shimmered dazzlingly under the light.

When everyone saw Kathleen's gift, they were amazed.

"This gift is worth a fortune. It looks like Kathleen really cared about Hathaway in her heart."

"I'm so envious of Hathaway now. She's certainly a winner in life!"

"You can say that again. It's good enough that she has an outstanding daughter. Her newly accepted student is also very talented. I really don't know what stroke of luck she has."

Despite feeling dissatisfied with them comparing Tessa to herself, Kathleen said nothing when she heard these words.

Next, the rest of the people also sent Hathaway their gifts, all of which were valuable treasures. Hathaway thanked them graciously, one by one.

When it was Tessa and Scott's turn, someone with a sharp eye discovered that their gift

boxes seemed to belong to the same gift shop.

"Did you two buy the presents together? Even the gift boxes are similar in style."

Tessa did not deny that claim when she heard that. Instead, she smiled cordially while holding the gift box "Mr. Brooks and I did choose our gifts together. My good friend, Mona, also tagged along."

As she spoke, Tessa beckoned Mona, who was among the crowd, to come over and present her gifts together with Scott and her.

Mona saw her gesture, smiled, and trotted over with her gift box in her arms.

Then, the three congratulated Hathaway in unison.

"Happy birthday, Miss Hathaway.

"Happy birthday and best wishes to you, Miss Hathaway."

"Happy birthday, Miss Hathaway."

Overjoyed, Hathaway thanked the three of them sincerely.

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Then, she opened the three gifts and was immediately attracted by Tessa and Mona's gifts.

"This is the zither and the lute, the string instruments from Xerthania."

Tessa nodded with a smile and said, "Miss Hathaway, I know you like string instruments, but you're not short of violins. Hence, Mona and I thought about choosing these two string instruments as gifts."

"I really love them. Thank you." Hathaway looked at the three kindly. She could feel their care and effort in choosing a gift for her.

Meanwhile, the crowd also started a discussion about Xerthania's musical instruments.

Furthermore, everyone was interested in the zither in Tessa's hand as they all knew that the music played by this instrument was very melodious. They also knew the timbre produced by this instrument was special.

"When I saw this instrument, I couldn't help but think of the time I listened to the performance of Xerthania Symphony before. Their magnificent performance style was awe-inspiring."

"Honestly, I wish to hear a performance of this instrument. How about you guys?"

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"I want to hear it too, but I don't know if anyone present knows how to perform using this instrument."

"Well, there are so many people here. I think there should be someone who knows how."

"Why don't we ask around?"

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And thus, the people around whispered, hoping to find a musician who knew how to play the zither.

Unfortunately, there were very few who knew how. Moreover, they couldn't perform a song

with the zither even if they had the skill.

At this moment, Tessa stepped out from the crowd. Then, with a faint smile, she said, "I can perform if you all don't mind. I hope my performance will be satisfactory."

Hathaway was a little surprised. "Tessa, you know how to perform with the zither as well?"

"I can play, but I'm not an expert in zither," Tessa responded modestly.