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Coolest Girl in Town Chapter 525 - 528

Chapter 525 Backing Out?

I... I actually lost? In that instant, Sophie was thoroughly shocked as her face blanched. Things got so complicated she could only feel embarrassment and frustration.

Quickly, everyone sensed the shift in favor. Elise turned the table by just making a move backward, forcing Sophie into detriment. At once, the crowd felt a chill when they peered at Elise, realizing how lethal the woman was. She remained silent the whole time, and before they realized it, her opponent was already on the brink of defeat. And that could only be pulled off by someone who had absolute confidence in her own chess skills!

Meanwhile, Sophie, having lost all her optimism, could only maintain her sitting posture when she fell onto the support of her chair. She couldn't bring herself to accept that she had fallen by Elise's hands, especially after she had nailed such a high-level tactic.

Elise shot her a subtle grin. "So are you going to forfeit, or are we going to finish the game and you still lose anyway?"

Finish the game? How am I supposed to do that? No matter what Sophie's next move was, it would only show the audience that she was bound to lose regardless of how hard she struggled.

At that moment, Elise revealed a smirk as she gave Sophie a taste of her own medicine. "What's with the silence, Miss Sophie? It's my first time seeing a player so bad and so disrespectful." Her smirk grew charmingly wider, while Sophie guiltily gulped. Eventually, the latter loosened her gripping fists and took a deep breath. She raised her hand and put down her king piece, admitting her defeat to Elise.

At the same time, Kenneth, who had just finished his match, came to see the ladies' match. Seeing Elise retain her cool look as she won, he let out a deep sigh, feeling the pressure within him getting heavier.

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He could not let his guard down for a second or he might just fail to keep up with such an outstanding woman. After collecting his feelings, he moved up and asked a question everyone had been thinking. "How did you spot the weakness in her strategy?"

Hearing that, everyone held their breath as they stared at Elise with expecting eyes, getting ready to engrave what she had to say in their minds.

However, Elise looked rather innocent. "None of you noticed?"

The crowd wordlessly nodded. One could easily rise to fame if they were known to have seen through such a prominent tactic, and none would even try to hide it once they discovered its flaw.

"Uhh..." Elise awkwardly pursed her lips as she naively turned to the chessboard. "Honestly, the gist of it is to forget all the lines and squares you see on the board and observe the situation of your 'troops.' Then, things will start revealing themselves."

With that, the chess enthusiasts attempted to erase the lines in their minds as she said, raising their heads to read the entire situation on the chessboard. Those with less advantage in height even stood on tiptoes, not minding the embarrassment. Slowly, they realized something odd. For some reason, the chess pieces seemed to be arranged in the shape of a word.

"Fool?" One of them blurted.

"Bingo!" Elise excitedly pointed at the person. "It is 'Fool' indeed! Once you're done with the 'F' and 'l', all you need are two chess pieces in between as the 'o's.' As such, 'Fool' becomes the point to victory!"

"Oh!"

"So that's it!"

The crowd appeared as if they'd discovered a new dimension. Nevertheless, the only reason the audience dwelled so long on the Malta Tactic was solely because they wanted a shortcut to winning games. Shortly after, they realized that she was only insulting them, mocking them for their ignorance. They then scowled, feeling somewhat embarrassed for

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having been set up. All these adults who spent all their time scheming against each other ended up being made fools of, so how could they not feel ashamed?

On the other hand, Sophie, who'd honed her chessing craft religiously, was gravely infuriated as she glared at Elise, who treated it as mere toy. Right then, all she wanted was to disappear from the public's eye.

Flatly, Elise uttered, "Moral of the story is that not everything in life has twists and turns, and the only thing that matters as we live is sincerity. So, Miss Sophie, have you prepared to sincerely fulfill our agreement?"

As per their agreement, the loser would have to kneel and kowtow thrice before the winner. Since the rule was made, they would have to adhere to it. And now that Elise had won, naturally, Sophie would have to kowtow to her before the crowd.

Sophie glowered as she gritted her teeth. "Who said I lost? This isn't right at all! You simply pulled off a silly trick and arranged the chess into a word. If you were actually playing this properly, even God knows I wouldn't lose!"

Elise lifted her commissure. "So you're backing out?"

Sophie then raised her voice and spoke as if she was the most reasonable being in the world. "Who's backing out? I'd admit it if I was defeated by actual chess skills, but what you did was fool around. As if I'd recognize that nonsense!"

Upon her words, a white-haired senile man, under his assistant's support, walked out from within the crowd.

Seeing that, Sophie immediately sprung up from her seat and walked to the old man. "Why did you come here, Master Reynolds?"

All of a sudden, everyone's attention was drawn by her words. Realizing that the old man was Warren Reynolds, the president of the Cittadel Chess Club, the crowd hastily stood still and pulled a straight face, paying utmost respect to the old man.

Warren slightly nodded. "I'm already an old man, and I can barely walk now. I didn't intend to interrupt, but I heard that someone was able to beat the Malta Tactic?"

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A random man from the crowd replied, "Indeed. The person who beat the Malta Tactic and won is—"

As he was speaking, he turned to Elise, and as he was about to introduce her to Warren, Sophie interjected out of nowhere, "Look, Master Reynolds, she turned the game into Scrabble!"

"Scrabble?" Warren craned his neck to take a good look and was obviously stunned. "'Fool,' it says? Ah, so that's it! She did that while playing the game? All that's left now are the two 'o's,' and the formation tears itself apart! Splendid, splendid indeed!"

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Chapter 526 You Kneel Too

At Warren's gleefulness, Sophie was visibly disaffected. "Master Reynolds, don't you think this completely disobeys the true essence of chess? She's obviously insulting her opponent! How distasteful!"

Nevertheless, Warren disregarded her words and grabbed Richard, excitedly questioning, "Where's the person, the person who broke through the tactic? I must see them for myself!"

"I'm here." A clear, treble timbre traveled from within the crowd behind him.

Warren turned around and saw Elise steadily standing beside Kenneth. "So Sophie's your student, huh, Old Reynolds?"

When Warren turned around and saw Elise, he almost forgot to breathe.

Seeing her so complacent, Sophie rushed forward and rebuked, "Show some respect, Elise Sinclair! 'Old Reynolds'? Who do you think you are to call my master that? You better kneel down and apologize, and we might look past this! Or else..."

Thump!

Before she could finish, Warren was already kneeling on the ground.

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“Master, wha—” Sophie was dazed and turned to the direction he was kneeling toward, only to see Elise in the way. He’s kneeling to Elise?

“You kneel too!” Warren even raised his head to scold her.

However, Sophie simply wouldn’t kneel. She stared at Warren in stupefaction, thinking her master must have gone insane.

“No way. I’d naturally kneel before my parents and master, but for a dumb game of Scrabble? Not a chance!”

Richard attempted to pull Warren up. “Master Reynolds, even I think kneeling is a bit much. Even though they have their personal bet, kneeling is still fatal to her pride. Miss Sinclair is just being difficult and overly competitive, and Sophie doesn’t deserve this.”

Sophie was immensely grateful to Richard’s words. Since Richard’s words carried more weight in Warren’s ears than those of hers, she assumed that Warren would spare her her pride.

Little did she expect, Warren was much more persistent. With vexation written all over his face, he infuriatingly grasped his walking stick and struck the floor. “If you still take me as your teacher, kneel down this instance!”

Sophie instantly froze, as if she was being strangled. “What gives, Master Reynolds?!” She felt absolutely betrayed, especially when she expected that Warren wouldn’t turn his back against her.

Surprisingly, her old master quickly revealed an irrefutable reason. “What gives? I’ll tell you what gives! The fact that she’s my master is what gives! You said you’d naturally kneel before your master. Does your master’s master not count?”

Master’s master—two words that ferociously blew Sophie’s mind. Shocked stiff, she responded in dismay. “Th-That’s impossible!”

“Nothing is impossible. I’ve grown so old. Sure, my body has grown weak, but my mind never deteriorated. Do you think I’ll mistake someone else for my master, who invented the Malta Tactic?”

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The crowd was left speechless. They knew that Warren had lost to an anonymous player when he was overseas, and he willingly became the player's student. Nonetheless, one thing they did not anticipate was that the anonymous player was the young woman before them!

In the meantime, Kenneth also peered at Elise in astonishment. He had encountered so many surprises from her back when he was Alexander, but each surprise never ceased to astound him even more. And she was his fiancée, who stood taller than everyone and never showed a speck of flaw.

Feeling the strain on his knees, Warren sternly reprimanded, "What are you waiting for, Sophie? What's wrong with paying respect to your master's master? You're the one being difficult right now!"

Perturbed, Sophie grasped the hem of her dress. As she was exerting too much force on her hand, the reddening on her palm was visible. All these years she had lived, she had never undergone such a melodramatic twist. Scorn and resentment stormed in her heart. Now that she had discovered that Elise was her master's master, how was she supposed to live the rest of her life?

Meanwhile, Elise was still gazing at the unresponsive Sophie.

As their eyes met, Sophie angrily gritted her teeth as she felt the piercing glares on her back. She already noticed the people badmouthing her and saying how she knew nothing about manners. If their gossiping were to continue, her reputation in the organization would shatter. After moments of struggle, she clenched her fists and took a deep breath, hopelessly bent her knees, and kneeled before Elise. However, before she fully kneeled, a pair of hands reached over and grabbed her arms, pulling her up. Surprised, she swiftly opened her eyes, only to see Elise herself.

In that instant, Elise's eyes curved into crescents, though there was not a trace of friendliness in them. Feeling a chill up her spine, Sophie stuttered, "W-What are you doing?"

"How could I let you kneel to me?" Elise interjected and emotionlessly said, "Your body alone is dearer than the entire universe. There's no way I can accept your kneel. If you were to hurt your knees while doing so, how am I supposed to pay for it?"

Sophie scowled. If she failed to kneel down, Warren would certainly give her a hard time later. Forcing a smile, she gratifyingly answered, "That won't happen, Master Sinclair! I'm not

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that weak. And showing you and Master Reynolds respect is only my obligation. How can I forget such a simple rule?"

"I see..." Elise scoffed. "It seems you have changed your mind and you're finally willing to kneel. But sadly, I no longer accept it."

At once, Sophie gasped as she hastily turned to Warren, signaling for help.

However, Warren's eyes were fixed on Elise. And those eyes resembled those of a religious follower who finally met their God, unable to shift away.

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Chapter 527 An Embarrassment to Family

Elise then withdrew her hands and pulled out her phone, casually saying, "Besides, I don't really care how strangers perceive me. However, my bad temper won't allow me to take false accusations silently, so I shall let the truth speak for itself."

Hearing that, Sophie started to grow uneasy as her heart uncontrollably palpitated.

With that, Elise raised her phone and played a voice recording.

'Sure. If I lose, I'll kowtow thrice before you right in front of the club members. If I win, however, you shall do the same and pay me what I deserve!'

Having revealed the recording, Elise put her phone away and caused an uproar within the crowd.

"So it was Sophie instead of Miss Sinclair who specifically asked for the kowtow!"

"Wasn't she extra aggressive when she was talking? Look at how she's all p*ssied up now! What a shameless woman! She's an embarrassment to her family!"

"Know what? If she were the winner, she would surely have Miss Sinclair to do what she asked for!"

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The people that were looked down upon earlier quickly voiced their thoughts, forcing Sophie to fulfill her promise.

“Practice what you preach, Sophie! What, do your words mean nothing? You fart with that mouth too?”

“And here I was feeling sympathetic for her! Why was I even doing that? Get down on your knees, liar!”

All their cruel words ultimately forced her to her boundaries. She felt a tingle in her nose, and her eyes were wet with tears. She then turned to Warren as she whimpered.

Nevertheless, Warren was extremely exasperated, strictly uttering, “I only accepted you back then because of your genuinity and talent. Now that you have turned into such an unreasonable person, you have broken the master-student tie between us. From now on, I no longer recognize you as my student!”

“Master...”

Thoroughly dumbfounded, Sophie had her mouth hanging agape. She would never have expected Warren to go this far for Elise’s sake. Having become Warren’s student was the only reason she was respected back at home. Now that she was publicly disowned, she had severely disgraced her family, and her parents definitely wouldn’t let her off so easily.

As Sophie opened her mouth and was about to defend herself, Warren was already right beside Elise, trying to please her. “It’s been a long time, Master Sinclair. How about a cup of tea at my place? Treat it as my apology. I have some exquisite Earl Grey tea leaves with me. They’ll certainly be to your taste.”

Without rejecting him, Elise turned to Kenneth. “Are you gonna play your last game?”

Kenneth faintly smirked. “Since Old Mr. Reynolds is already asking you, there’s no point in that. And thanks to you, I have the chance to taste some fine tea. Let’s go.”

As they were about to leave, another white-haired senile man in a tailcoat came forth from within the crowd. He humbly inquired, “Miss Sinclair, would you mind adding this old one to your tea-tasting chatter?”

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Speedily, information of the old man flashed across Elise's mind—he was the president of Randall International, Steven Randall.

Seeing no response from Elise, Warren cut in, "This is my old friend, Steven. He's pretty skilled at chess as well. Come on, Steven, perhaps we'll get to learn a thing or two from Master Sinclair."

Overjoyed, Steven excitedly walked beside Warren.

Wordlessly, Kenneth turned to Elise with a knowing look, signaling that they could now push forward their celebration as they had gotten close to their target.

Subconsciously, Elise grinned and showed Kenneth an amicable look.

Warren had two major hobbies—chess, and tea tasting. And the tea he would serve his precious guests with were unquestionably invaluable.

At Warren's confident and admiring eyes, Elise slowly took a sip. When she gulped it down, she revealed a contented beam. "Pretty good. Soothing, and comes with a subtle sweetness and fragrance. Exquisite it is."

Warren nodded in satisfaction. "Only if you say so. Right, when did you come back? Why didn't you look for me for a game?"

As if she remembered something, she seemed stunned for a bit before quickly laughing. "I'm a Cittadelian, so staying too long overseas doesn't feel right. Plus, it's not my fault for not finding you, but you're the one who's always locking himself at home. How am I supposed to look for you?"

"Haha! Well, lucky for us, you had your 'fool' tactic. I mean, Malta Tactic. I've sworn to myself that if I can't break through the formation, I'll never come out to meet you. But I guess only the locksmith can pick her own locks. You're still the superior chess player." Warren's words were filled with admiration. It was as if he was treating her like an irreplaceable celebrity.

Listening to their conversation, Steven had no idea how to join in, or how to interact with Elise.

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“Ugh. Master this, master that. Stop calling me that like I’m some sort of old man, or I’ll stop playing with you. As we agreed, I can be your teacher, but age still comes first. I’ll refer to you as Old Reynolds, and you’ll simply call me Elise. Do that or I’ll stop visiting you.” Elise pretended to be angry.

“Fine, fine. Elise it is. Haha, you’re always this humble!” The adoration in Warren’s eyes grew deeper.

In that instant, Richard and Steven had a sudden realization. They thought it was rather impolite for Elise to address Warren as “Old Reynolds.” In fact, she was already holding herself back. If she were to call him by his first name, he would certainly appear far inferior.

After half an hour, Warren grew tired and retreated for a rest, leaving Elise to converse with Steven.

“Care for a chat with your junior, Mr. Randall?”

“Of course!” Since Warren’s teacher was already putting herself down, he had no reason to refute her. Steven was a straightforward man, and after figuring out Elise’s motive, he sat down and candidly stated, “Please ask anything you wish to, Miss Sinclair. A person’s quality is reflected from their chess skills, so I trust you. Anything you ask, I’ll reveal everything I know. Of course, I also wish to befriend you, and perhaps earn myself the opportunity to have some chess matches with you in the future.”

“That’s no problem,” Elise openly agreed.

After exchanging a look with Elise, Kenneth inquired, “We want to know about the Peculiar Jadeite that you keep in your household. Where does it come from?”

At that, skepticism surged in Steven’s eyes as he hastily turned away. “The jadeite is with me, but why are you asking about the source?”

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Chapter 528 A Long Way to Go

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Elise's face grew stern. "Within this month, I've gotten my hands on two Peculiar Jadeite, and I suspect that they were the result of the radiation caused by an extremist organization."

"I'll be honest with you. Recently, we've been looking into the disappearance of missing physicists. In the past three years, more and more physicists in Cittadel had gone missing. There's certainly a connection between the Peculiar Jadeite and these missing physicists."

"The Peculiar Jadeite you now possess is the first one there is in Cittadel, so it's pretty important. I hope that, for the sake of Cittadel's scientific development, you'll be able to shed light on our confusion."

Steven stared at her in surprise. "Are you cops?"

"No, not exactly." With a straight face, Elise continued, "But my family and lover have suffered, some more than the other, because of these Peculiar Jadeites, so I need to find out the truth for their sake."

Understanding her perception, Steven nodded in empathy.

After a moment of wondering, Elise changed her approach. "Perhaps you can tell me if the jadeite came from within the country or abroad?"

After a long while of silence, Steven took off his glasses, wiping the lenses as he said, "I acquired the jadeite from a physics professor named Lancaster. Even now, the Peculiar Jadeite remains a rare substance. He asked for less than a hundred thousand at the time, but fearing he might regret it, I sent him a check of one million, sealing our exchange."

"Lancaster? Timothy Lancaster?" Elise anxiously pursued. If Timothy's our guy, then things are coming together!

"No idea. 'Lancaster' is all I have." Steven then put on his glasses. As he adjusted them, he earnestly questioned, "About that 'Timothy Lancaster,' how old is the guy?"

"About thirty? Forty?" Elise's memory was hazy as well.

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"Then he's not your guy," Steven said. "The man who traded with me was around my age. There's a possibility that he's Timothy's father, though." Shortly after, he elaborated, "The jadeite is precious to me, so I can definitely recognize the man if I were to meet him again."

His reply reignited Elise's hopes. After all, she didn't have to leave empty-handed. She then gratefully bowed to the old man. "Thank you very much for your help, Mr. Randall. In my family and the missing scientists' stead, I thank you."

Steven hurriedly helped her up. "No, no, no. Don't bow to me. You're Old Reynolds' master. I can't accept this! Besides, this is beneficial to me as well, so the gratitude is only mutual."

Elise did not persist. After saving each other's number, they left and went their own ways.

Kenneth stood beside her as they watched Steven leave, curiously uttering, "We now know the Peculiar Jadeites came from the physicists, and this proves you're looking in the right direction. If we're able to locate this old Lancaster man, things will certainly get clearer. Though, I'm still baffled as to why a man, knowing the jadeite's value, would sell it for merely a hundred thousand."

Elise pondered as she replied, "And that's what I'm about to find out. We've hardly scratched the surface. It's still a long way to go, but..." She erased the worrying look on her face and turned to Kenneth, sincerely saying, "I still have you to thank for today. You helped me verify what was a huge guess." Although the look on his face right now was rather provoking, he still deserved the credits, so she wasn't stingy with her compliments.

"Shush." Kenneth put his index finger at her lips as he deeply gazed at her. "You still have much to thank me for in the future. Why don't we make a promise? Instead of thank yous, say 'I hope to see you again,' and I'll forget about you repaying your debts to me. How's that?"

'I hope to see you again'? That's cheesy as hell! In no damn situation will I ever say that!

"Sure." Elise forced a grin. "I hope... to never see you again. Happy?"

Being let down, Kenneth felt rather frustrated. He tugged his hands into his pockets and heaved a long sigh, self-mocking, "See this right here? This is what you call 'a long way to go.'"

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“Aren’t you underestimating yourself, Smith Co.’s boss? Of course you can achieve whatever you set your eyes upon!” Elise mischievously teased.

“It’s not like Smith Co. is Santa, allowing me to wake up to whatever I want the next day.” Kenneth lifted his eyes—his glistening, burning eyes. “Well, waking up to a certain someone next to me, at least.”

Heeding his message, Elise speedily turned away as she guiltily gulped a mouthful of saliva. Realizing what she had done, she perturbedly frowned. What am I doing? Why am I nervous around him? No, no! Wrong Elise! Bad Elise!

“You must be sick in the head! Go see a doctor first thing in the morning!” Not wanting to risk her thoughts being seen through, she blurted those words and ran away. As she picked up her pace, she shouted, “I’ll see the Saunders myself. You may leave. Bye!”

Before she could run afar, however, a hand reached over and grabbed her wrist. The moment she was stopped, another hand was already around her waist. When she realized it, she was already in Kenneth’s arms, in a bridal carry. She then started to shake herself out of his arms, to which her intention quickly dispersed at his following words.

“Stop struggling, or I’ll stop searching for your doctor friend.”

Of course, she knew that he was referring to Claude. This shameless son of a b*tch is always leveraging other’s weaknesses! Nevertheless, she, indeed, had to look for Claude as soon as possible, so she could only cope with him.

Peeking at her eyes from the corner of his eyes, Kenneth subconsciously revealed a smirk when he caught her trying hard to contain her frustration. Although ‘leveraging’ didn’t sound exactly prestigious, and it was certainly a dissonance to the ear, what other choice did he have? Whenever he was facing her, he would always struggle to maintain his morality and rationality and end up as her loyal, obedient lapdog. Whenever she was around, he’d always find himself wanting to talk more; whenever she wasn’t, all the words he wanted to express would accumulate, so he would have to vent it all out at once. Since she wasn’t giving him the opportunity, he could only attempt to create one for himself.

As it turned out, his attempt led to a good result. Her not using all the force in her body to shake him off was a sign of improvement.

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Some time after they drove out of the center, Elise remembered the gown Celina sent her. Her eyes glowed as she, somewhat thrilled, stated, "It's gonna be fun at the Saunders Residence tonight."

"Oh? Why is that?" Kenneth went along with her excitement.

"The daughter's trying to piss her dad off. Isn't that fun?"

"Hmm?" Kenneth helplessly revealed a faint smile. "Please, Miss Sinclair, cut the suspense."

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