

Always Been Yours Chapter 361

Chapter 361 Secret

Nicholas frowned. “Cover me for a bit. I’ll be coming back in two days.” And he hung up.

Tessa noticed the dark look on his face, and she was worried. “Did something happen back home?”

“No. Just talking about work with Kieran.” Nicholas omitted the most important part, but he did tell her when he would be going back.

Tessa heaved a sigh of relief, but she also felt sad. The last two days had been a really happy time for her. She didn’t want time to go by so quickly, nor did she want Nicholas and the others to leave so soon.

Gregory felt really sad hearing that they would be going home in two days. “Daddy, can I stay with Miss Tessa?”

“No,” Nicholas refused without any hesitation. If Gregory stayed back, the Sawyers would know about Tessa’s existence, and that would disturb her peaceful life. She only got that after working hard for it. I don’t want to ruin it.

Gregory knew nothing about that, and he was disappointed and angry that his request was denied. But he couldn’t do anything about it, for he knew his father would never change his decision. “You meanie!”

Gregory was upset, but he recovered quickly with Tessa’s help.

As he would be going home the next day, he spent all his time with Tessa. After a lot of playtime and dinner later, Gregory looked exhausted.

Tessa wanted to get him to sleep, but Gregory wouldn't leave her. "I'm not tired. I want to spend more time with you, Miss Tessa."

Tessa couldn't get him to give up, so she let him come along. They didn't go anywhere though. Nicholas took them to the café for some coffee. Tessa and Gregory took one side of the table, and the lady played with the boy. The men took the other side and talked about the software.

"If everything goes well, it should be usable in a few months."

"Just a suggestion. Before this goes live, your team should come up with the next software's design."

The dim light illuminated them, their vague silhouette projected onto the glass window. Time flew by, and the sky outside darkened.

When dusk came, Gregory was already leaning against Tessa, dozing off. Tessa was amused, but she felt sad as well. She knew the boy was holding on because he wanted more time with her. "I'll take you back to the room, Gregory." She picked him up and gave him no chance to say no. Then he told the men, "I'll take him back."

They nodded and sent her off.

Once they reached the room, Tessa helped the boy bathe.

Gregory seemed to have recovered some strength. He held her hand and requested adamantly, "You have to sleep with me tonight. I wanna sleep in your room," he said, emphasizing the last sentence.

Tessa wouldn't say no, so she nodded. After she was done bathing him, she wiped him dry and took him to the bed. "Sleep now." She tucked him in lovingly.

Gregory held her hand. He asked cutely, "Miss Tessa, I want to hear you sing."

Tessa could not refuse him when he was looking so cute. “Alright, then.” She started humming and patted the boy’s chest rhythmically. When she stopped singing, the boy had fallen asleep. She tucked him in again and tiptoed out of the room.

When she came out, she saw Nicholas working on his laptop in the living room. “Oh, you’re back. Where’s Timothy?” She went over to him, a sweet smile curling her lips.

Nicholas looked at her. “He’s back in his room, resting.”

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Chapter 362 Cheer Up

“You should get washed up then. It’s getting late. You should get some sleep.”

“Sure.” Nicholas then pulled her into his embrace and made her sit on his lap.

Tessa felt a little embarrassed sitting so close to him, but then she remembered that they had done even more intimate stuff before, so she hugged his neck. “Are you leaving tomorrow?”

Nicholas nodded. “Why? Don’t want to say goodbye?” He smiled.

“Yes.” Tessa nodded honestly. She thought time was flying by too fast. “I wonder when we’ll meet again.” She sighed sadly.

Nicholas’ eyes shone. He suggested, “If you’re feeling sad, then reward me well tonight.” He picked her up and took her to the room next door.

Tessa snapped out of it when he placed her onto the bed. As he took his clothes off, it reminded her of how insatiable he was the night before, and it scared her. “Um, let’s not do it tonight. I promised Gregory I’d stay with him for the night.”

She got up and tried to run, but she didn’t get far before Nicholas pulled her back. “Gregory’s a big boy now. He should learn to sleep by himself,” he whispered, his voice raspy and sexy.

A while later, moans and groans were heard from the room. A long, long while later, Tessa lay on the bed, exhausted, while Nicholas seemed refreshed, as if he

was indefatigable. Tessa had mixed feelings about that, but then he would be leaving the next day, so she let him do what he wanted.

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When Gregory woke up in his room the next morning, he didn't see Tessa around, and it made him furious. When he saw his father and Tessa coming out from the same room later, he directed his anger at his father. "Daddy, you meanie! You took Miss Tessa from me again!" He puckered his lips, crossed his arms, and sat on the couch angrily. "You're a meanie too, Miss Tessa. You promised you'd stay with me."

Tessa felt heartbroken hearing how disappointed the boy was, and she reflexively wanted to cheer him up, but she stopped herself before she could. Hey, this is not my fault. I can't be the one to cheer Gregory up every time Nicholas makes him mad. What if he ends up thinking I'm a liar? She turned around and glared at Nicholas. "You made him mad, so you cheer him up," she whispered. "And tell him I didn't stand him up on purpose. I don't want him to think I'm a liar."

Nicholas looked at Tessa, his eyes filled with love. "Of course," he said, and he went over to the boy.

The boy noticed someone coming. He thought it was Tessa, and he smiled. He was about to complain to her, but then he saw a pair of black leather shoes beside him. When he looked up, he saw his father's face, and he snorted. Then he turned away and ignored his father.

Nicholas didn't mind. He calmly huddled closer to his son.

For some reason, the boy looked hesitant after a while, then he seemed less angry, but he still snorted at his father anyway. Then he got off the couch and trotted to Tessa. "Miss Tessa, I want a hug." Contrary to how he treated his father, he beamed at Tessa.

Tessa picked the boy up, and she looked at Nicholas, feeling surprised. What did he say to cheer him up so fast? She wanted to know, but she didn't get the chance to ask.

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Chapter 363 Holiday Ends

After they had breakfast, they disembarked the ship. While they were on their way back, Tessa looked at Gregory, who was playing with Timothy. She was reminded of what happened back on the ship, and she huddled closer to Nicholas. “How did you cheer him up earlier?”

Nicholas glanced at her, and he smiled. “I told him it might be possible for you to stay forever if you get pregnant with my baby.”

Tessa looked horrified. He actually lied to his son? And who said I’m going to have his baby?

The car drove along the road and eventually came to Vienna’s airport. The tearful goodbye came at the gates, and Tessa didn’t want to say goodbye.

Gregory was crying and hiccuping. “I don’t want to go, Miss Tessa. I don’t want to leave you.”

“Neither do I.” She teared up as well. “But listen to me. This separation is only for a better reunion. Once we have time, I’ll ask your father to bring you over, alright?”

“That’s not a good idea.” He puckered his lips, sulking.

Tessa smiled and continued to coax him. “You’re a good boy, right? I know you are.”

Gregory had no choice but to nod, and he rubbed against Tessa’s chest. He sniffled, saying, “I’ll be going then. Do always think about me. I’ll always think about you too.”

“I’ll miss you.” Tessa kissed his forehead and put him down. She was worried she might take him home if she kept holding him.

Timothy gave her a tissue. He had a lot to say to her, but in the end, he only said, “Take care of yourself. I’ll come to see you when I have time.”

Tessa nodded, and she wiped her tears away. “You too. Remember to have your meals. Don’t skip them just because you’re busy. And remember to work on your studies too.”

Timothy nodded. Worried, he said, “Don’t make me sound like the only kid here. You should be careful too. Don’t get into any trouble. If anyone gives you trouble, tell me. I can protect you, and don’t scrimp anymore. I can make money now.” Eventually, he started nagging and telling her about everything she should look out for.

Tessa was feeling sad a moment ago, but her brother managed to make her laugh. “Okay, okay, I got it. Keep nagging and people will think you’re my father,” she interrupted. Then she looked at Nicholas, who was quiet. “You take care of yourself too. Don’t skip your meals. Gregory will keep an eye on you. And I’ll miss you.” She pounced at him shyly and gave him a hug.

“I’ll miss you too.” He said nothing more, though he bent down and kissed her forehead.

It was time for them to leave, and she watched them walk through the gates. Even after they were gone, Tessa still stood around for a long time. She felt empty after they left.

When she left the airport, Tessa took a deep breath and decided to do something for the day, or her mood would turn really sour. She called her teacher and canceled her leave, then she went home and took the violin—named ‘Nirvana’—that her brother gave her before going to the orchestra.

Tessa knocked on the door of the practice room and walked in. Hathaway looked at her, smiling lovingly. “You’re finally back.”

“Sorry for taking a few days’ leave, Miss Hathaway.” She smiled apologetically.

“Don’t be. Your family came to see you, so of course you would need to spend some time with them.”

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Chapter 364 Birthday Party

Hathaway looked at her disapprovingly, and she smiled. “We do have a little gathering tonight to celebrate your birthday.”

Tessa was Hathaway’s student, and they knew she would rise up the ranks fast in the future. Almost everyone in the orchestra was happy to befriend her, so when they heard about her return from her break, they planned on throwing a little birthday party for her. She knew it was the members’ token of kindness, so she didn’t refuse it.

The orchestra held a little birthday banquet that night, and they even played the Birthday Song for her. They also bought her a cake, and it made Tessa a happy lady. The sadness of saying goodbye to her family was swept away a lot too. “Thank you, everyone,” she thanked the members genuinely.

After they divided the cake, some people started coming to Tessa to chat with her. They were all being nice.

“Tessa, everyone knows about your performance on the anniversary. Lots of them praised Miss Hathaway for having a great student like you.”

“Some even asked her about your solo performance, but she said there are no plans for that for now.”

“She said you still have a lot of flaws in terms of skill, so she has no plans to let you go solo yet.”

“I thought Miss Hathaway’s strict with us, but compared to you, we’re lucky.”

They kept chatting, and Tessa caught up on the events that happened while she was gone. She realized that she was loving the orchestra more and more.

The orchestra overseas had the habit of worshipping the strong. If someone wanted to get to a higher position, they would defeat their rivals with their own skill instead of schemes like the ones back home.

After the gathering was finished, Tessa was feeling tipsy from drinking too much. Hathaway felt worried about her. "Can you go home like that, Tessa?"

"Yes. Don't worry, Miss Hathaway." Tessa was just tipsy. She could still move around no problem.

Hathaway didn't believe her. "I'll get you a driver." She went to make the arrangements without giving Tessa any chance to say no.

Tessa saw her off, and her smile broadened. She felt touched that Hathaway cared about her.

A few minutes later, Hathaway came back with a driver. She was a violinist of the orchestra, and the girl was a gentle soul. When she took Tessa and came out of the orchestra, Tessa saw someone she never expected to.

"Mr. Brooks?" She looked at the man in surprise.

The dim light was shining on Scott. He was wearing a casual shirt, and his body was lean. He smiled and said, "Hi, Miss Reinhart."

Tessa apologized to the girl and told her to go home first, then she went over and looked at Scott curiously. "What brings you here, Mr. Brooks?"

"The performance is over, so I came back," Scott said. He looked at her, and something glinted in his eyes when he saw her reddened face. "I heard it's your birthday today, so I came over."

Tessa was surprised. Oh, that's nice of you. "Thanks." She scratched her head, but she felt weird, and she didn't know what to say.

Scott noticed the awkward air as well, and he suggested, “Let’s have a stroll.”

Tessa hesitated for a while, and she nodded. They walked slowly down the street, and the city’s lamps drew out their long shadows. A little while later, Tessa sobered up because of the night breeze. She asked, “So, what’s next for your orchestra?”

“Nothing at the moment. We’ll have a two-week break this time.” Scott smiled, then he brought up Tessa’s performance during the anniversary. He sighed. “Right after I came back, I heard about your great performance during the uni’s anniversary. A pity I missed that.”

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Chapter 365 Private Celebration

“It’s fine. They were just exaggerating,” Tessa answered humbly.

“No. You’re being modest. You have no idea how much our music director regrets booting you out of the orchestra after he heard the live recording.”

Tessa smiled. “Honestly, I’m grateful that I got the boot, or I might have never met Miss Hathaway.”

“Miss Hathaway is a great teacher. I can see that she pours her heart and soul into developing you.”

“Yes. She helped me a lot on this path.”

“Your skill and transition has also improved greatly. I believe you’ll be making an official appearance soon.”

“I’m not in a hurry. I want to train more,” Tessa told him her plan. “Miss Hathaway thinks I need more training too.”

“I can see that she has made plans for you.” Scott smiled.

Tessa nodded. “She said I can take my time for the performance. She wants me to gain experience and build my foundation. Miss Hathaway says I can be in too much of a hurry, so it’s hard for me to get into the zone.”

“Miss Hathaway is correct. Sometimes you’re in too much of a hurry to give a good performance,” Scott analyzed. “You can get into the mood no problem, but you’ll have to get into the zone to express the mood. Your skills are not a problem, but getting into the zone is.”

Tessa listened closely, and she agreed. “That’s what Miss Hathaway told me too. She said I can only improve through training and expanding my horizons.”

They chatted for a while longer, and Scott stopped in his tracks. Tessa looked at him curiously, and he handed her an old sheet music book.

Tessa could tell that the book was old and priceless.

Scott said gently, “It’s your birthday present. I hope you like it. And happy birthday.”

Tessa paused, then she waved her arms. “Thank you. I’m happy that you remember, but I can’t take this. It’s much too expensive.”

Scott insisted, “You’re worth it. I hope this book will remind you of why you set out on this path. Keep working to be a great violinist.”

Tessa couldn’t refuse after he said that. “Thank you, then.” She took the book. “I’ll give you a nicer one next time.” She smiled.

“That’s great.” Scott looked forward to it.

Tessa smiled.

Scott changed the topic and invited, “But before that, I think you can have dinner with me first. I came here right after I got off the plane, so I have had nothing to eat yet.”

He sounded really sad in the end, and since he came all the way to celebrate her birthday, Tessa agreed. They came to a classy Western restaurant and sat face to

face. Tessa didn't order any food, as she had eaten back at the banquet. She had also had cake, so all she did was drink as Scott ate.

They talked about music along the way, and Tessa managed to learn a lot.

When they went past a cake shop after dinner, Scott stopped. "Give me a minute, Miss Reinhart."

Tessa was about to stop him, but he had already gone into the cake shop. She quickly went after him and managed to stop him just before he forked his money out. "Sorry, but we're not getting any cake." She looked at the retail assistant apologetically. "Mr. Brooks, you've given me a gift. You don't have to buy me a cake."

"What's a birthday without cake?" Scott insisted on buying it, and he told the retail assistant, "Get me that cake I wanted."

The assistant nodded and went to pack the cake up.

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Chapter 366 Backstory

Tessa sighed. He's just... Forget it. He's just being nice, and he did help me.

After they bought the cake, Scott sent her home.

"You should go home now, Mr. Brooks." Tessa waved him goodbye at the neighborhood's entrance.

Scott nodded. "You go in first. I'll leave after I see you off."

Tessa went into her neighborhood with her cake in hand. After she disappeared from his sight, Scott left.

Tessa turned on her house's light, and the darkness slunk away. She put the cake in the fridge and went to the couch in the living room. The silence in the house made her feel sad all of a sudden. I wonder if they have landed.

The house was merry while they were around, but now that she was alone, it seemed empty. She sighed. Well, guess this is what happens if you're too happy. Once the people are gone, you'll start to feel lonely. It hadn't even been half a day, and she was already missing them.

...

Ever since they got onto the plane, Gregory had been feeling down. He lay in his father's arms and didn't say a word. Nicholas wasn't too bothered about it. He knew the boy would be fine once he got over it.

Timothy looked heartbroken, however. He extended his hand and smiled. “Wanna play with me, Greg?”

“Play by yourself, Mr. Timothy. I am not in the mood for it.” The boy shook his head, and he sounded down.

Timothy cocked his eyebrow. He knew the answer, but he still asked, “And why aren’t you in the mood?”

“I miss Miss Tessa. I don’t want to leave her.” He puckered his lips, and tears welled up in his eyes.

Timothy looked at him, surprised. He’s not Tessa’s son, but why does he want to be with her so much? I thought kids hate their stepmothers, so why is it different when it comes to him? Timothy couldn’t figure it out, but he didn’t think deeper on it. Maybe it’s fate. Since Gregory was looking sad, he got an idea to cheer him up. “Gregory, do you want to know what Tessa was like when she was little?”

Gregory blinked and stared at him dumbly.

Timothy continued, “She was awesome when she was little. She’s smart, caring, and she’s great at fighting.”

Gregory got interested immediately. “Tell me more about her childhood, Mr. Timothy.”

Even Nicholas looked at him curiously.

“She has been strong ever since she was a kid. When I was bullied, she would go straight to the bullies and fight them. She wasn’t scared even though the bullies were bigger than she was, and her courage always scared everyone away. In the end, nobody bullied me anymore, since they were scared of her.”

Timothy had a look of reminiscence on his face, and a smile curled his lips. They were all great memories, after all. “Tessa used to work part-time, but she was

always in the top three of her year. The teachers loved her, and she could do anything for her friends. Her teacher always said she only got held back because of our background.”

Timothy started sounding sad. “She used to be my mother and sister. When I got really sick at one time, she went and begged that man to save me, since I am his son, but that man chased her out and ignored us.”

Timothy only wanted to talk about the happy times and cheer Gregory up, but for some reason, when he met Nicholas’ gaze, he told him everything about Tessa.

Gregory had no idea about the heavy weight behind that past. All he thought was that Tessa was super awesome.

Always Been Yours Chapter 367

Chapter 367 Worried

Nicholas frowned, and his heart ached for Tessa. He knew their lives had been hard, but now that Timothy told him about it, he realized that she had it harder than he had imagined. But no matter if it was then or now, she had always been resilient and strong.

Timothy then brought up Tessa's disappearance. "She suddenly disappeared for a year. I thought the Reinharts did it, so I went and demanded that they give her back, but then I realized it wasn't them. No matter what I did, I just couldn't find her at that time, and I was worried sick and in despair."

Gregory was worried as well, and he urged, "What happened then? How did you find her?"

Timothy looked at him, and he continued, "I didn't find her. She came back herself, but she never talked about her disappearance. As long as she was back, I didn't really care what happened during that year."

Gregory nodded in agreement. Tessa had disappeared on him before, and he had been worried sick, so he knew how Timothy felt. "Yeah, it's not important. What's important is that she's back."

Nicholas connected another piece of the puzzle. The year she disappeared must have been the one when she got pregnant.

The plane landed a while later, and they disembarked.

“Nicholas, here!” Kieran waved, welcoming them loudly beside the car with a smile. The one standing beside him was Henry, who was dressed in a suit.

The people around looked in their direction because of Kieran’s loud voice, and they gasped.

“Oh my god, is that a boy band? They’re so handsome.”

“Especially the one with the boy in his arms. He’s so hot.”

“I want to get his number, but I’m really scared.”

Nicholas noticed someone trying to come over, and he shot them a glare. The ladies snapped out of their fangirling, then he went to Kieran, looking upset.

Gregory laughed. “You’re doomed, Uncle Kieran.”

Kieran looked sheepish, and he opened the car door immediately. “Get in, Nicholas.”

Nicholas ignored him. He looked at Timothy, and Timothy stopped smiling. “You guys leave without me, Mr. Sawyer. I need to go to the company with Henry.”

A Rolls-Royce cruised along the road. Nicholas was holding Gregory, who was fast asleep, and he asked softly, “What’s the situation back home?”

“Not good.” The mention of the situation made Kieran look serious. “Be prepared, Nicholas. I heard news that Grandpa is starting preparations for the engagement.”

Nicholas’ face fell, naturally, and his anger brought the temperature in the car down a few degrees.

Edward and Kieran felt a chill down their spine, and they breathed quietly. Only Gregory wasn’t feeling a thing. He seemed like he was having a nice dream, and he smacked his lips.

A while later, Nicholas said coldly, “To the residence.”

Edward nodded and changed directions.

Kieran could see that Nicholas was upset. I knew this would happen. “Nicholas, you should talk with Grandpa after you go back.”

Nicholas looked at him and said nothing.

Ten minutes later, they came to the Sawyer Residence. Nicholas handed the boy over to Kieran. “Take Gregory home. Edward, come back and pick me up after you send them home.”

“Are you sure you can handle it alone, Nicholas?” Kieran held the boy. He was worried about Nicholas. Their grandfather was bossy and tolerated no disobedience, but Nicholas hated being controlled the most. He was worried that the fight might tear the family apart.

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Chapter 368 Argument

Nicholas ignored him and went into the residence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At once, Remus’ face fell. “So you knew.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Remus laughed mirthlessly, and he looked at Nicholas. “That’s arrogance.”

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

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Chapter 369 White Lie

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nicholas snorted. “Good.”

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

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

“Yes.” He nodded, his voice still tinged with anger.

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

“Nothing.”

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

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

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

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

“It’s because of the company,” he lied to assuage her worries.

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

“It’s fine. I’m already handling it.”

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

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

“Sure.”

“Give me a minute then. I’ll take my violin.”

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

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

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

"Great."

"Are you feeling better yet?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“What?” The Stone couple was shocked.

Hayley continued, “Nicholas doesn’t want to marry me because of Gregory’s mother.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ah, that's just his anger talking. You don't have to take it seriously."

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

Hayley still thought it wouldn't be that easy.