

Always Been Yours Chapter 571

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Seeing the confidence in the girl's eyes, Hathaway nodded with satisfaction.

“Good luck.”

She patted Tessa on the shoulder as a sign of encouragement.

In the eyes of others, this scene looked as if Hathaway was biased toward Tessa.

Cindy, in particular, was looking at Tessa with eyes full of jealousy and anger.

She snorted coldly, then told herself that she must trample on Tessa today.

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Among the audience outside, Kathleen sat in the second row, which was right behind the second judge's seat.

Her admiring gaze fell on Scott, who was in the judge's seat.

Today, Scott was wearing a formal black suit with a white shirt and a black bow tie. Paired with his exquisite facial features, he looked particularly handsome

However, Scott didn't notice Kathleen's stare.

He was talking about the assessment with the other judges, and Tessa became the topic somehow,

“I heard that Hathaway's star student will also participate in this assessment.”

“Speaking of which, I haven't seen this student of Hathaway's yet, but I often heard some friends mentioning her. Have any of you met her?”

“Scott, don’t you go to the Hathaway Philharmonic often? You must have seen Hathaway’s student. Tell us about her.”

Three of the judges peered curiously at Scott.

Scott didn’t refuse, but introduced her with a smile. “She’s a very soulful and talented person. As for how good she is, you’ll know when the assessment starts later.”

Hearing this, the judges glanced at each other and smiled. “It seems that you think highly of Hathaway’s student.”

“She’s a very outstanding girl.”

Scott didn’t hide his appreciation for Tessa.

However, when Kathleen heard those words, they sounded extremely harsh.

Kathleen gritted her teeth. Unable to bear hearing Scott praise Tessa so much, she said enigmatically, “I’m afraid Tessa won’t have such good luck. I remember that Cindy’s participating in this assessment too. She’s the best in our orchestra.”

As soon as she said that, Scott and the other four judges looked over.

Frowning slightly, Scott said firmly, “I believe Miss Reinhart can do it.”

Seeing the look of trust on the man’s face, Kathleen nearly lost her sanity.

Grinding her teeth together, she continued, “That’s not necessarily true. Cindy’s skills aren’t bad, so she may not lose to Tessa.”

At this moment, a heavy voice sounded. It was Guntram, who was sitting in the middle.

“If Hathaway’s student is the girl named Tessa, I don’t think she would have a problem.”

Several other judges, including Scott, looked at Guntram in surprise.

That was because they could sense from Guntram’s remark that he thought highly of Tessa.

“Why would you say that?”

Edgar, who was sitting on the left, looked curiously at Guntram.

Smiling, Guntram said, “Because I heard the name of this student before I came. Apparently, there’ll be a surprise today.”

Hearing this, the other judges were shocked.

Scott was also stunned as he asked, “Mr. Guntram, you know Miss Reinhart?”

“No, I don’t know her, but an old friend of mine mentioned this name to me last night.”

Guntram smiled as he spoke, but he didn’t say who the old friend was.

Listening to their conversation, Kathleen was so angry that she was about to explode.

Initially, she wanted to belittle Tessa in front of the judges, but it didn’t work. Instead, the b*tch had caught the attention of the judges.

At 9.30PM, the assessment officially began.

As the initiator, Hathaway took to the stage and made a few remarks, then let the emcee host.

As the emcee made the announcement, the participants appeared on stage one by one.

They were all carefully trained violinists in Hathaway Philharmonic, and almost everyone was a talented musician.

Naturally, the performances of these people were special.

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Every assessment was exciting, and their violin skills were superb.

There were more than a dozen participants, and every performance was received with enjoyment.

Finally, it was Cindy's turn to play.

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After she performed, Tessa was going to be the last to appear.

“Let’s invite contestant no.17 on stage to perform.”

As soon as the emcee made the announcement, Cindy walked onto the stage, her dress flowing elegantly.

“Hello, judges. Today, I’m going to perform ‘Devil’s Trill Sonata’.”

With that, she curtsied and set up her violin.

The judges and the audience were surprised.

Irprised.

The reason was none other than that ‘Devil’s Trill Sonata’ was one of the most difficult violin pieces in the world, with trills being the hardest bit. Few people would use this piece to participate in competitions or assessments because the slightest lack of attention would lead to mistakes.

Despite that, everyone waited with bated breath.

Everyone listened intently as the light sound of the violin rang out.

This piece was played in the G minor key, and it was divided into 3 movements.

The first movement was in adagio, so the speed was slow, filling the melody with sadness and a hint of resentment, and several of the stronger tones sounded a bit

like crying. The second movement was in allegro, with a few strong, imposing notes at the beginning, then the melody continued endlessly until the piece changed from allegro back to adagio, thus entering the third movement, which had a lyrical melody that seemed touching after the all the liveliness, and it was a little decadent too.

Throughout the three movements, many difficult trills were interspersed, making the whole piece more beautiful.

It could be said that Cindy's performance was remarkable.

At the end of the piece, everyone applauded.

Guntram and the others praised her as well.

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“Excellent! Surprisingly, not a single trill was wrong.”

“The rhythm was very well controlled too. Well done.”

“I'll give you nine points for this piece.”

“I give nine points as well. Although it's an excellent rendition, there are still some flaws.”

The full score was ten points. At present, Cindy had the highest score of nine points, as most of the other contestants only got seven or eight points.

In this regard, although Cindy regretted not getting a full score, she was still satisfied.

Since she was given nine points by all five judges, she believed that Tessa wouldn't surpass her. and that she was bound to get the position of concertmaster.

At this thought, she smirked proudly, a look of victory on her face.

Then she turned around and returned backstage, just in time to meet Tessa, who was up next.

“You’re sure to lose!”

When they passed by, Cindy whispered in a voice so low that only the two of them could hear.

Tessa paused slightly, but didn’t stop and just strode off.

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She didn’t take Cindy’s words to heart at all. Standing under the stage, she waited for the emcee to announce her turn.

Originally, she thought that she should be nervous, but she found that she was surprisingly calm and composed.

Before she could think any further, the voice of the emcee sounded from the stage.

“Let’s welcome our last performer, contestant no. 18.”

Hearing this, Tessa took a deep breath and gracefully went up on stage.

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She started with a polite greeting. “Hello, judges. The piece I’m going to perform is Paganini’s Caprice No. 24”

As soon as she said that, the audience was in an uproar.

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That was because this piece contained the most complex violin techniques.

It was famous for including a variety of difficult techniques, intervals greater than an octave, and fast playing during the higher octaves.

It could be said that this piece was a difficult challenge for any professional musician.

Scott and Mona were both concerned for Tessa.

They didn't expect Tessa to make such a major move, and they were worried that she wouldn't perform well.

After all, this piece was difficult beyond belief.

Backstage, when Cindy heard Tessa's announcement, her lips curled into a slight sneer. "Is she crazy? She actually wants to challenge the high degree of difficulty during the assessment? Isn't she afraid that she'd cause her own demise? Even my rendition of this piece was flawed. How could she possibly succeed?"

Not only Cindy was doubtful of Tessa; the other orchestra members were doubtful as well.

"What's Tessa thinking, using this piece to participate in the assessment?"

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“I guess she’s reaching for the stars.”

“To me, she’s better off not performing. There’s no suspense about the results anymore. In the end, Cindy will definitely be the one who wins the position of concertmaster.”

Tessa heard their discouraging remarks, but her expression was calm, and she was completely unperturbed.

She picked up her violin and started to perform.

As the lively and light-hearted tune sounded, the members who had been talking about her gradually quieted down.

They stared at Tessa in disbelief, shocked.

Caprice No. 24' was in the A minor key, and it had a 2/4 time signature. The piece consisted of one theme, eight variations, and one ending. There were a variety of forms, such as springing arpeggios, powerful chords, complex intervals, diatonic and chromatic scales, and so on. It combined a variety of difficult violin techniques, creating a rejuvenating, brooding, and fiery atmosphere.

Tessa ignored the stunned audience and moved the bow with her right hand while rapidly plucking the strings with her left hand, sinking her entire person into the turbulent music.

It seemed like a long time had passed, but it also seemed like it had only been a few minutes before Tessa’s performance came to an end.

The crowd was silent, and everyone stared wordlessly at Tessa for a long time, as they were still in shock from her performance

Tessa set down her violin and breathed slowly, but she couldn't hide the smile that tugged on her lips.

Looking at everyone's expressions, she knew she had succeeded.

I really did it...

After a long silence, there was thunderous applause.

Mona, in particular, was clapping so hard that her hands were red.

"Bravo, Tessa! I knew you could do it!"

She cheered and shouted for Tessa.

Tessa sensed it and looked in her direction.

Mona became even more excited and waved at Tessa, who laughed.

At this moment, the other people made admiring remarks as well.

"She's really amazing. Initially, I thought that it was impossible for her to successfully play it, but she actually did it."

"I thought so too. With such talent, no wonder Miss Hathaway favors her. If it were me, I would favor her too!"

"I'm not kidding when I say that Tessa is the real deal."

When Kathleen looked around and saw everyone admiring Tessa, she gritted her teeth so hard that she nearly crushed her gums.

She felt that her efforts to ruin Tessa's relationship with the members were in vain.

“B*tch! B*tch!”

She gritted her teeth, glaring at Tessa with resentment in her eyes.

Fortunately, her voice was covered by the applause and cheers from all around the place.

At this moment, the judges began to comment on Tessa's performance.

“Throughout the whole piece, you've successfully integrated your own style, bringing a different energy to this piece.”

“Your violin skills are excellent, and you've perfectly mastered the continuous diatonic scales.”

“It can be said that you controlled the detail of the entire piece very well. It's worth examining.”

Scott gave an extremely high evaluation as well. “It's perfect. I don't think I'm qualified to comment on it now.”

His gaze was profound as he looked at Tessa, who was dazzling on the stage, and there was deep appreciation in his eyes.

After she received such high recognition, the smile on Tessa's face was extremely bright.

“Thank you.”

She bowed to show her gratitude.

The emcee recovered and stepped forward to ask, “Judges, how many points will you be giving to contestant no. 18?”

As soon as he said that, the audience and Tessa looked nervously at the judges.

Scott, Guntram, and the others glanced at each other, and they saw through each other's thoughts at once.

“Do we even need to score this?”

: . “Yeah, the scoring is no longer necessary, right? The result is obvious.”

“She's the only winner there is.”

“If we need to give a score, I'll give her a score of ten.”

They voiced their opinions in unison, and everyone in the audience agreed as well.

“Indeed. There's no need to score this at all. Although Cindy performed very well, she still wasn't as good as Tessa.”

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“I agree with the other judges. The champion is Tessa.”

Listening to everyone’s praises, Guntram and the others had smiles on their faces.

Of course, they were envious of Hathaway.

She was truly lucky for being able to snatch such a good talent.

“You really have a discerning eye. The talent of your student will surpass you with time.”

“Oh, she’s still young now. Her future is limitless.”

Hathaway gradually returned to her senses when she heard all of their statements. She was staring at Tessa in shock, feeling that Tessa had made a qualitative leap with her progress.

Obviously, a few days ago, Tessa wasn’t at this level yet, so Hathaway didn’t expect to witness such a huge surprise today.

After a few seconds, a smile appeared on her face as she responded, “She’s very talented, but she still needs to polish her skills before she can progress further in the future.’

Guntram and the others agreed to this as well.

“That’s true. You must cultivate her well and let her shine on the stage in the future.”

Meanwhile, the emcee had called all the participants up on stage in accordance with the agenda. “Now, we’ll invite Miss Hathaway up on stage to announce who our champion is.”

Hearing this, Hathaway walked from the judges’ seat to the stage.

She accepted the microphone handed by the emcee, then walked directly to Tessa and smiled lovingly. “Now, I officially announce that Tessa Reinhart has won first place in this competition, and she’s now the concertmaster of Hathaway Philharmonic!”

As soon as she said that, there was a burst of applause in the audience.

Hathaway turned to give Tessa a hug as she congratulated her. “Congratulations.”

“Thank you, Miss Hathaway!”

Tessa returned Hathaway’s hug, tears of joy filling her eyes.

She had finally done it, and her hard work in the past wasn’t in vain.

At this moment, she wanted to share the good news with Nicholas right away.

However, she suppressed the impulse because the timing was wrong. Standing at the side, Cindy gritted her teeth with hatred when she saw Tessa’s bright smile. Why didn’t I get this opportunity?

She was dissatisfied, as she couldn’t figure out in what way she was lesser than Tessa. “I don’t accept this result!”

In the end, she couldn’t hold back anymore, so she stood up and asked Guntram and the other judges, “Obviously, you praised me for playing perfectly and for my excellent violin skills. Why did she end up winning first place? How am I lesser than her?”

For a moment, the atmosphere stilled; it was probably because no one expected anyone to question the outcome.

Hathaway reacted and immediately frowned as she scolded, “Cindy Rose, stand down! Don’t be so undisciplined!”

Cindy didn’t budge.

She looked stubbornly at Hathaway. “Miss Hathaway, I just want to know where I went wrong! Why am I not as good as her?!”

Upon saying that, she stretched out her hand and pointed at Tessa.

Hathaway’s face suddenly darkened as discussions erupted among the audience.

“Isn’t it obvious?”

“Although Cindy’s performance was excellent, there were still some flaws, but Tessa’s performance was exactly what a performance should be. It was perfect!”

“I think so too.”

Although their voices were low, with the number of people talking, they sounded collectively loud.

Cindy heard some of their remarks and stared viciously at the people who said them.

At this moment, Guntram spoke on behalf of several spectators. “Your performance was excellent, but your playing doesn’t seem natural. You ended up losing some of the artistic conception that the piece should have, such as the sense of magic.”

Cindy gritted her teeth as she wanted to say something, but before she could speak, he added, “Do you understand? When I listened to you play, I didn’t feel anything,

nor did I feel that the devil was approaching. There's no denying that you have excellent violin skills, but you lack in your artistic conception and emotions.”

As soon as he said this, she was rendered speechless and her fair cheeks flushed.

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After the assessment was over, Hathaway invited Guntram and the others out for dinner.

“Tessa, come with us.”

She stopped Tessa, who was about to leave.

Tessa was stunned, but she dared not refuse.

After all, they were all maestros.

The others watched as Tessa and Hathaway left, feeling envious.

They wanted to have dinner with the big shots too.

Only Cindy was staring at Tessa’s distant back with a vicious look in her eyes.

She would never let this matter rest.

In the luxurious room, Tessa sat on the left side of Hathaway.

Sitting on the other side was Kathleen.

At the table, Guntram smiled at Tessa. “Previously, Louis praised you for being an excellent violinist, and he reckoned you had a promising future. I didn’t believe it at first, but when I saw you today, I believe him now.”

“Mr. Guntram, you know Mr. Louis?” Tessa was surprised.

Smiling, Guntram answered, “I know not only him, but also the music director of Crystalline Philharmonic, the music director of the Rosen Ritter Philharmonic... and so on. All of these people collectively recommended you to me last night.”

Hearing the familiar names, Tessa was stunned for a moment, then burst into laughter.

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Aren't those the big shots I met at the bar last night?

She didn't expect that they would remember her.

When Hathaway, Kathleen, and Scott heard this, they were all puzzled.

When did Tessa meet so many maestros?

Kathleen didn't hold back and asked outright, “Tessa, when did you meet so many maestros?”

She was extremely jealous, as she didn't know many of these maestros personally.

Hearing this, Hathaway and Scott looked at Tessa as well.

Tessa didn't hide anything. “I met them in a bar yesterday, and that bar belongs to Master Louis.”

She briefly described the nature of the bar.

Kathleen was jealous as she listened, so she said enigmatically, “Tessa, why didn't you tell us of such a great spot?”

Naturally, Tessa heard the sour note in her tone, then she answered lightly, “I was busy with the assessment at the time, so I forgot.”

“Then, next time you find such a gem, don’t forget it again.”

Kathleen deliberately showed disgust toward Tessa, who frowned.

The others noticed something too, as the smile on their faces faded a little.

Upon seeing this, Hathaway shot Kathleen a warning look. “Let’s have a proper meal.”

Kathleen was furious, but she behaved and stopped talking.

She even pretended as if nothing had happened and placed some food on Tessa’s plate, continuing to act like they were good friends.

However, Tessa didn’t touch the food Kathleen gave her.

At this moment, Hathaway looked at Tessa with admiration and said with a smile, “I didn’t expect you to have such an opportunity and to find such a good place. You’ll have to work harder in the future, and don’t forget everyone’s expectations of you.”

“Indeed. All those old guys could do was compliment you. If it weren’t because they knew you were already part of an orchestra, everyone would be snatching for you.”

“Hathaway, you have to keep an eye on your student. There are a lot of people who would want such good talent.”

Guntram and the others joked around as well.

Embarrassed from being praised, Tessa said modestly, “You’re all too kind. In fact, I’m still lacking in many areas.”

The others looked at her with appreciation upon seeing how humble and hardworking she was.

With a gentle gaze, Scott said, “Don’t look down on yourself. You’re younger than me. Over time, you’ll definitely achieve more than me.”

“Mr. Brooks, you’re the humble one. I still have to work hard to catch up to your level.”

Tessa returned his compliment.

Looking at the two of them, Hathaway smiled. “All right. Let’s not trade compliments anymore.”

Guntram and the others let out good-natured laughs,

Watching them talk and share laughter, Kathleen couldn’t be a part of the conversation at all. Her hands, which were holding cutleries, had turned pale from the force she was exerting, and her heart was burning with rage.

Tessa, this b*tch! How can she be favored by so many people?!

At the same time, someone was seated in the cafe opposite the restaurant.

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Hayley sat by the window, fixing her gaze on the restaurant Tessa was in.

“Be glad, Tessa! Be as glad as you’d like. After tonight, all your dreams will be shattered! Your hand that plays the violin will no longer exist!”

The corners of her lips lifted mysteriously, and the more she spoke, the more freely she talked. It was as if she was watching Tessa’s tragedy unfold before her.

“Tessa, tonight will be the end for you. Hahaha...”

She couldn’t help but let out a sharp and shrill laugh.

When the customers around her heard her eerie laughter, they cast surprised glances at each other.

Originally, some of the waiters wanted to stop Hayley from making noise in public, but when they saw the ferocious expression on her face, they were too scared to step forward.

Naturally, Hayley was aware of the looks being thrown her way, but she didn’t care much.

She looked at Tessa’s bright smile again, her eyes filling with resentment.

Fortunately, she didn’t plan to stay for long. After sitting for a while, she got up and left.

Tessa was completely oblivious to what was happening there.

After the meal, Hathaway asked her to go back.

“The orchestra will be resting during the afternoon, so you don’t have to go over. Have a good rest at home. When you come to the orchestra tomorrow, I’ll officially initiate you into the orchestra. From now on, you’ll really be the main player in the orchestra, so you have to work hard.”

“I will.”

Tessa nodded vigorously.

At this moment, Scott walked over and told Tessa, “It just so happens that I’m heading back too. Let me send you back.”

Hearing this, Kathleen, who had been holding back her anger, gritted her teeth and ran to Tessa’s side.

She pretended to be close to Tessa and said, “Scott, my mother and I are going back too. You can’t just send Tessa alone.”

When Tessa felt how close Kathleen was, her whole body stiffened.

Even after so many days had passed, she still couldn’t adapt to Kathleen’s enthusiasm.

Scott’s gentle voice sounded.

“I’m sorry I didn’t think it through. How about this? I’ll send you and Miss Hathaway back first. then I’ll send Miss Reinhart. Miss Reinhart, do you think that’s okay?”

“Thank you for your kindness, Mr. Brooks, but I can just take a cab home.”

Tessa declined, then uncomfortably pulled her hand out of Kathleen’s grasp and couldn’t help but say, “Kathleen, the next time you want to talk, just talk. You

don't have to touch me. I already said that besides my family, I'm not used to other people being in close contact with me."

Kathleen gritted her teeth.

This b*tch. Do you really think I wanted to get close to you?

Although she was furious, she didn't show it, but said playfully instead, "Okay. I'll remember that next time."

After that, she turned and went to tug on Scott. "Scott, since Tessa doesn't need you to send her, let's go."

Scott felt a little down, but he didn't show it. He gave Tessa a nod before leaving with Hathaway and her daughter.

Tessa watched them go far before retracting her gaze, then she eagerly took out her phone to contact Nicholas.

She wanted to share the good news that she had won the assessment with him.

However, Nicholas didn't answer the phone.

Helpless, Tessa could only call her brother.

"Tess, is the assessment over?"

"It's over."

Looking at her increasingly handsome brother on her phone screen, Tessa smiled with relief. "I won first place, so I'll be the concertmaster of Group Two in the future."

She shared the results of the assessment with Timothy.

When Timothy heard this, he was extremely happy for his sister.

“Congratulations, Tess! You’re one step closer to your dream!”

After talking to him for a while, Tessa hung up.

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She didn’t keep her phone, but called Nicholas again instead.

“Sorry. The number you have dialed is unavailable.”

Listening to the robotic voice on the phone, Tessa frowned and ended the call.

“That’s strange. Did his phone run out of battery, or is he busy?” she murmured to herself as she kept her phone, planning to call him later.

After putting her phone away, she didn’t take a cab back, but instead went to Louis’ manor.

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Tessa intended to personally inform Louis the good news of her passing the assessment.

Regardless, it was all thanks to Louis' bar that she was able to progress well during this period.

After arriving at the manor, Tessa was taken to Louis' workshop by the servants of the manor.

The workshop was spacious and well-lit. There were a lot of violin repairing materials being placed in an orderly manner in the workshop.

Louis sat by the window, wearing a pair of glasses. He was repairing a violin while facing the sunlight.

When he heard the sound of footsteps, he asked without raising his head, "Isn't today the day of your assessment? Why did you come here and find me?"

"The assessment is over, and I wanted to inform you of the results."

As Tessa spoke, she retracted her wandering gaze. Then, she walked up to Louis with her lips curling up into a smile. "I got first place in the assessment, and I have been appointed by Miss Hathaway to be the principal violinist of the second orchestra group."

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"First place? That's very good. Well deserved, I must say." Louis was not surprised at all. It seemed that he had already expected such an outcome.

After that, he continued with the violin-repairing task on hand.

Upon seeing that, Tessa did not mind either. Smiling like a Cheshire, she expressed her gratitude toward Louis. “Thank you.”

Once she finished thanking him, she could not but ask again, “Can I still drop by the bar in the future?”

“The bar always welcomes your visit.” Louis did not reject her.

Upon hearing that, Tessa smiled even wider.

It was just that before she could speak again, Louis’ urging voice sounded in her ears.

“Okay. You have delivered the good news. Leave if you have no other business here. You’re blocking my light by staying here.”

“I’ll give way to the light, then.” Tessa obediently stepped aside. She did not feel like leaving yet as she wanted to watch how Louis usually repaired the violin. I want to observe and learn.

Although Louis had a quirky temperament, Tessa still felt that he was a good person after getting along with him for a while.

Out of the corner of his eyes, Louis saw Tessa standing beside him obediently and sensibly. Therefore, he raised head and asked while raising his eyebrows, “Do you have anything else that you wish to discuss with me?”

“No, I just wanted to watch how you repair the violin.” Tessa did not hide her intention from Louis, and she looked back at him with a gentle smile.

Louis was speechless. “What’s there for you to see?”

“Well, it may not be a big deal for you. But I’ve never seen it before, so I’m very curious. Please let me stay and watch.”

“Kid, why are you so annoying?”

As he looked at the girl playing cute and looking at him expectantly, Louis rolled his eyes out of annoyance. However, he did not chase her away.

Upon seeing this, Tessa came to Louis’ side with a smile. She helped handing over the materials and said with a smile, “I was thinking that I might be able to lend you a hand in the future if I ever mastered it.”

“You?” Louis snorted coldly. Then, he looked Tessa up and down. With a disdainful look in his eyes, he added, “You not causing any trouble for me is a blessing to me.”

After he spoke, he ignored Tessa. Lowering his head, he continued to repair the violin.

Despite being despised, Tessa did not mind.

Without affecting Louis from carrying out his task, Tessa stood by the side and watched.

That was because she knew that was Louis’ speaking style. This is Mr. Louis. He’s a person whose bark is worse than his bite.

That afternoon, Tessa stayed in the manor.

Meanwhile, Louis directly ordered her around like she was his assistant without scruple.

For a moment, he asked Tessa to look for the materials. Then, in the following moment, he asked Tessa to run errands for him. Anyway, they were all tedious matters.

Even so, Tessa also gladly helped him out.

Looking at the proactive girl, Louis was powerless. In the end, he allowed Tessa to stay and learn from him.

In a short amount of time, Tessa learned a lot of simple violin repairing knowledge.

After dinner, she bade Louis goodbye as she saw that it was getting dark outside.

“It’s getting late. I should go back.”

“Hurry up and go. Finally, my peace and zen is restored.”

Although the words spoken were unpleasant, the smile on Louis’ face was very loving.

Since Tessa had also become accustomed to his speaking style, she simply smiled sweetly and

said, “Alright. I will come and visit you again another day.”

With that, she turned and left.

Due to the location of the manor being a bit remote, Tessa had to walk a long way to get a cab.

However, it did not cross Tessa’s mind that several burly men would suddenly appear in front of her just as she walked to an empty corner. While holding knives in their hands, they seemed to have been waiting for her.

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“What are you guys trying to do?”

With panic and fear accumulated in her eyes, Tessa’s facial expression changed drastically.

Her body shivered, and she stepped back, taking one step at a time. At that moment, she thought she had encountered a robbery.

After all, the peace and order in foreign countries is notoriously bad, particularly at night. There will be robbers who specially target anyone who walks alone.

Thinking of this, she threw the handbag in her hand toward the scar-faced man. “I know you guys want money. Here, take it! I can give you guys money as long as you let me go.”

Looking at the handbag dropped under his feet, the scar-faced man raised his eyebrows. However, he ignored it.

Looking up and staring at Tessa, he said with a bloodthirsty smile, “Miss Reinhart, it seems like you have some misunderstanding about my profession. I’m not one of those lowly robbers.”

Upon hearing this, Tessa felt her heart sink. All of a sudden, she had a bad premonition.

“Who are you?” She looked around from the corner of her eyes while guarding herself against the scar-faced man with hope to find a chance to call for help or escape.

Naturally, the scar-faced man did not look past her little gesture. With that, he sneered, “Miss Reinhart, it’s useless to think that someone would come here. No one would come here at this hour.”

As he said that, he gave the subordinate next to him a look at the same time.

Within minutes, those men formed a circle and enclosed Tessa in the middle.

At the sight of this, Tessa was scared out of her wits. Even so, she gritted her teeth and forced herself to calm down. Appearing to be tough outwardly yet timid inwardly, she asked, “What are you guys trying to do?”

“Someone hired us to break your hand. Since we’ve received the money, it’s natural for us to carry out the task given by the boss,” the scar-faced man said. Step by step, he approached Tessa with bad intentions.

At once, Tessa’s face turned as pale as a white sheet.

Break my hand?! This person wants to destroy me! Who is it? Who can be this cruel?!

Clenching her fists, she endured her fear and looked at the scar-faced man. Then, she gritted her teeth and uttered, “Who is it that wants to break my hand? I can pay you double the amount!”

She thought that this group of men were simply tempted by money. However, it did not cross her mind that her proposal would be rejected.

“Oh, that won’t do. Since we’ve received the order, we can’t break the rules.”

The scar-faced man stopped two steps away from Tessa, and his facial expression was indescribably ruthless. “So, I can only strike at you, Miss Reinhart. You guys, hold her down!” Without a doubt, that last sentence was spoken to his surrounding subordinates.

At the same time, the scar-faced man picked up the knife in his hand and looked at it against the moonlight.

Under the moonlight, the body of the blade shone with a cold light. The light shone on Tessa's face, making her pupils shrink in fright.

Just when the others were preparing to hurt Tessa, the bodyguard who had been hiding in the dark appeared.

He raided from behind and directly attacked the scar-faced man's subordinates.

"Who are you?" The scar-faced man glared at the bodyguard angrily when he saw that someone came to break his deeds.

However, the bodyguard ignored him completely and shouted at Tessa, who was still a little stupefied, "Miss Tessa! Run quickly!"

At this moment, Tessa also snapped back to her senses.

Looking at the bodyguard in a black suit, she nodded in panic. She planned to turn around and leave to seek reinforcements.

It was just that it did not take her two steps before she was blocked again. At the same time, the ruthless voice of the scar-faced man sounded in her ears.

"Trying to make a run? Did I agree to that?" he said. Then, he immediately motioned his subordinates to go and grab Tessa.

As she saw the burly men who rushed toward her, Tessa was so frightened that her face turned ghastly pale.

"Ah!" she screamed in panic. Then, she subconsciously changed direction and ran away. However, someone quickly blocked her path again.

“Go away! Go away! Don’t come near me!” She waved her arms in the air out of fear.

Upon seeing this, the bodyguard hastily stepped forward and protected Tessa.

However, the amount of their enemy outnumbered them. There was only one bodyguard on Tessa’s side. No matter how competent he was, he still could not defeat the four burly men.

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Moreover, those burly men were also skillful themselves. They looked just like professionals.

The more he fought the burly men, the more frightened the bodyguard got. Eventually, he became anxious,

If this goes on, I will not be able to protect Miss Tessa!

Standing outside the melee circle, the scar-faced man stared at the bodyguard with sharp gazes

Clearly, he could also tell that the bodyguard had extraordinary skills. And thus, he quickly gave another of his confidants a look.

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What the scar-faced man's subordinate saw from the look shot at him had him silently lead two underlings to stand behind the bodyguard.

Then, when the moment was right, they seized Tessa.

"Let me go! Let go!" Tessa struggled as hard as she could upon being captured but failed to escape.

The bodyguard's eyes went wide with fury. "Miss Tessa!"

Despite his wish to go save Tessa, he couldn't afford to, for he was surrounded by other men.

Meanwhile, Tessa was being pinned to the ground with her right hand forcefully held away from her.

Her face went pale with terror as she watched the scar-faced man's subordinate pull out a knife to stab toward her right hand.

"No! Don't!"

This was the hand her entire career depended on, and it was vital to the realization of her dreams.

If she was crippled, what right would she have to be with Nicholas?

Not only that, but she had only just become the concertmaster...

"Please! Stop! I'll give you anything you want, however much money you want! Please don't ruin my hand!" A sob could be heard in her voice as she pleaded.

Her life had only just begun!

With tears welling up in her eyes, she struggled as if her life depended on it. However, the grip pinning her down was as strong as steel. She couldn't even move an inch.

“Stop it!” When the bodyguard noticed what was happening to her, he was beyond himself with rage.

He was also too scared to even think about how angry his boss would be if Tessa's hand was crippled

With a few hard kicks, he sent the people stopping him flying into the air, but he was soon surrounded once more.

“Darn it! F*ck off!”

With an angry roar, he fought harder and crueler.

Seeing that, the scar-faced man immediately barked, “Stop that man now!”

That order made more of his men fight harder against the bodyguard.

While this was happening, inside a black car parked nearby was Hayley.

She watched the entire scene play out through a pair of binoculars.

Her entire being was radiating with joy as she watched Tessa beg and plead while being pinned to the ground.

“Tessa, oh, Tessa. Finally, karma has found you...”

As she put down the binoculars, she let out an ear-piercing laugh that made her sound like a lunatic.

Meanwhile, Tessa trembled in fear as she looked up at the glinting knife.

“Don’t! Please, I’m begging you!” she cried in desperation,

Even so, the scar-faced man’s subordinate was not moved.

Just as disaster was about to break out, Nicholas arrived with Gregory in their car.

What he saw shocked him to the core.

“Edward, go!”

“Yes, sir!”

Too afraid of the consequences if he moved slowly, Edward charged straight out of the car and into the battlefield.

He had planned on going straight for Tessa.

However, the scar-faced man saw him and decided to personally stop him.

The two men clashed.

Even though Edward tried hard, the scar-faced man was skilled enough to ensure he couldn’t escape.

Inside the car, Gregory was scared stiff by the fighting outside.

His arms were wrapped around Nicholas as he panicked, “Daddy, Miss Tessa will be fine, right?”

“Don’t worry. I won’t let anything happen to her.” Cold determination could be heard in Nicholas’ voice as he comforted Gregory. “Be a good boy and wait here for me. I’m going to rescue her now.”

Hearing that, Gregory immediately let go of him and said, “Hurry, Daddy. Go save Miss Tessa. Til behave.”

Nicholas nodded and stepped out of the car.

In the meantime, the scar-faced man had a bad feeling as he began to lose to Edward.

“Do it now!” In between blows at Edward, the scar-faced man turned and screamed at his subordinate

With a nod, the subordinate raised the knife higher and swung it down.

Edward and the bodyguard were horrified.

Tessa closed her eyes, overwhelmed by dejection.

It was at that moment when the tide of battle shifted.

When Nicholas saw the knife being swung down, a violent glint shimmered in his eyes, and he sent a kick flying at the knife’s wielder.

The kick was so strong that the man was sent flying away as he let out a shriek of pain.

Subconsciously, Tessa’s eyes snapped open when she heard the shriek. What she saw made her freeze in shock

“Am I dreaming?” She stared at Nicholas in disbelief as she spoke in a hoarse voice. “Nicholas, is that really you? Have you come to save me?”

The ragged state of Tessa made his heart throb with pain.

He pulled her up from the ground and wrapped her in a tight embrace. “You’re not dreaming. It’s me. I’ve come to save you. I’m sorry I was late.”

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With the familiar scent filling Tessa's senses, her terrified heart finally calmed down a little.

She returned the hug with a fervor. Unable to resist the urge any longer, she broke down crying.

"I thought I wouldn't be able to escape my fate. Thank goodness you're here."

When Nicholas heard that, he felt as if his heart was being crushed by a large, invisible hand. The pain was so bad that he could barely breathe.

"It's okay. Don't be scared. I'm here," he soothingly said while he gently patted her on the back.

Even so, she couldn't stop crying.

As his arms remained wrapped around her, he shot a murderous glare at the scar-faced man and the others. How he wished he could kill them all right then and there.

"Edward, I want their hands rendered useless!"

"Yes, sir!" Edward said as he began raining attacks down on the scar-faced man and the others.

Some tried to run, but they were soon caught by the bodyguard.

For the next few moments, screams echoed through the air.

Every screech released made Tessa's body quiver with fear.

When Nicholas noticed her shivering, he moved her away from the scene.

Even when they were back in the car, she was still trembling.

She was beyond horrified by what she had just experienced.

Seeing that, he kept his arms wrapped around her.

"You're fine now. Don't be scared. I'm here. No one will ever hurt you again," he said as he kissed the top of her head.

By now, Gregory had shifted to sit by their sides. His hands carefully held hers as he comfortingly said, "Don't be scared, Miss Tessa. Daddy and I are both here to protect you."

Meanwhile, Edward and Tessa's bodyguard had defeated the scar-faced man and his men.

Everyone else was on the ground, and they were all doing the same thing-shrieking in pain while curling up, hugging their arms.

After a brief sweep of the area, Edward turned his attention to contacting his men.

"Have a team come over immediately. We have some people to arrest and interrogate."

No matter what happened, they had to find out who the mastermind was.

After all, the target of this incident was clearly Tessa.

Not far away, Hayley was stunned silent by what she had just witnessed.

She never expected Nicholas to appear at such an opportune moment.

Frustration and hatred overwhelmed her.

She was so very close to destroying Tessa.

“Useless! They’re all useless!” she angrily shouted, directing her insults at the scar-faced man outside her car. “Where’s your efficiency now? After so many hours, not one of my requests has been done. Now, Nicholas has ruined everything!”

The more she thought about it, the angrier she felt.

“Darn it!”

She slammed her hands against the steering wheel.

Beep!

The honk of a car’s horn blared loudly around her, making her jump. She swiftly held up her pair of binoculars to look in Nicholas’ direction.

Edward had turned to look in her direction, likely because he heard her car.

When she noticed him ordering his men to check the area near her, she hurriedly dropped her binoculars and drove away.

She could not let her connection to this incident be known to Nicholas.

Otherwise, from what she knew of him, she and the Stone Family would be doomed.

Later that day, Nicholas returned to his manor with Tessa in tow.

He carried her up to the bedroom and gently placed her on the bed.

Gregory followed close behind.

Inside the room was a doctor, who had been waiting for their arrival.

After thoroughly checking her over, the doctor reported, “Miss Tessa is doing fine. She’s just in shock, and she’ll be better with two days of rest.”

After all, the knife didn’t cut through her hand.

Hearing that, Nicholas and Gregory both let out a sigh of relief.

“You’re fine now, Miss Tessa. There’s no need to be scared.”

Gregory sat down by her side and gently patted her on the arm, just like how she used to soothe him. He looked so cute.

All she could feel as she watched him was the warmth growing in her heart.

She raised a hand up to smooth back the wispy hair drooping before Gregory’s forehead and whispered, “I’m fine.”

Now that she was back in a familiar room, her anxiety vanished.

When he realized she was truly fine, he immediately plastered himself against her body.

“Miss Tessa,” he sweetly called out before hugging her tightly.