

## Always Been Yours Chapter 581

Although he looked calm and collected on the outside, Gregory was actually terrified on the inside.

Still, he suppressed his fear.

He was afraid that Tessa would feel worse if he let himself cry.

From the clingy hug, Tessa could feel how uneasy Gregory had been, which made sense since he must've been scared stiff.

Under artificial lighting, both of their faces looked ghastly pale. Even so, there was a loving air in the room.

This scene was what Nicholas was greeted with when he returned from escorting the doctor out. Instantly, his heart calmed down.

Just then, Andrew walked by with a glass of warm milk.

“Master Nicholas.”

“I’ll take it to her,” he said, dismissing Andrew after accepting the glass of milk.

He then walked into the room with the glass of warm milk.

Gratitude filled Tessa’s heart as she watched him move closer.

She didn’t dare imagine what would’ve happened if he hadn’t arrived on time.

“Drink this. It’ll help with the shock,” said Nicholas as he handed over the glass.

With a nod, she accepted it.

Once she was done with the glass of milk, she looked at the other two in the room and asked, “Why were you there?”

“Daddy and I were going to celebrate with you, Miss Tessa,” Gregory sweetly replied as he clung to her arm. “Who knew that we’d find those bad guys trying to hurt you. Thank goodness you’re alright.”

The response made her feel so much warmer, especially when combined with the sight of Nicholas, who radiated a sense of security to her.

It was also no wonder her calls to Nicholas never went through that afternoon. They must’ve been on the plane.

At that thought, she smiled. “Yes, thank goodness for your timely arrival. You’re the reason why I’m okay now.”

“Yeah! Daddy is the best. He sent all the bad guys running.” Gregory looked at Nicholas with eyes full of excitement and worship before turning to say to Tessa in a comforting tone, “Don’t worry,

Miss Tessa. I’ll be as strong as Daddy one day, and I’ll protect you then.”

Gregory’s innocent words made her feel like her entire being was filled with cotton cand sensation that felt both sweet and warm to her.

“Okay. I’ll be waiting for you to protect me, Sweetheart.”

Her fingers swept across the tip of his nose.

And so, the three muttered sweet nothings to each other, just like a family.

There was a type of unspeakable warm harmony that echoed through the room as their shadows were thrown against the white walls by the dim yellow lights in the room.

After a while, Gregory grew tired as he began to rub his eyes.

In one day, he had gone on a plane ride that spanned over ten hours and received the fright of his life. It was a miracle he had held on this long.

She moved to bathe Gregory and settle him in his bed, but Nicholas refused to let her do so since she had just danced with danger today.

He only returned to her room later that evening after Gregory fell asleep.

After quickly cleaning himself up, he got in bed and wrapped his arms around her once more.

As for Tessa, she was feeling at peace with her cheek pressed against his chest and the sound of his strong heartbeat in her ears.

“Are you still scared?” he asked, looking down at the woman in his embrace.

She nodded. “But I have you now, so I’m not scared.”

There was a pause before she continued, “When it happened, I was so scared. I even wondered how I’d ever be able to be by your side with a crippled hand.”

He froze. Then, he forced her to look into his eyes.

“I forbid you to think that. No matter what happens, even if you are crippled, I will never allow you to leave me.”

Her heart skipped when she saw the serious glint in his eyes.

She hugged him back and said, “Okay. No matter what happens from now on, I will never leave you.”

With a satisfied smile on his face, he wrapped his arms tighter around her.

He stayed by her side the entire evening.

Soon, she fell asleep. Perhaps it was because she felt safe with him there.

As he watched her fall into a deep sleep, he gently placed her back on the bed before leaving the room.

As soon as he left, his entire bearing changed, causing a terrifying aura to hang around him.

He immediately went downstairs, where Edward was waiting for him in the living room,

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“Have you interrogated those men?” Nicholas asked as he sat down on the couch with his hawk like gaze boring into Edward.

A chill ran down Edward’s spine when he felt the terrifying and oppressive presence in the air.

Because of his fear of what might happen if he dallied, he hurriedly reported on the interrogation results.

“The men said the person who gave them the orders was an Asian-looking woman.”

“Asian-looking? Who is it?”

Nicholas’ tone promised death for the culprit.

Edward’s legs began to shiver. “I’ve done some digging... The only person in Vienna who has any grudge against Miss Tessa is... Hayley Stone.”

The name uttered made Nicholas’ face cloud over.

He didn’t expect Hayley to have the guts to target Tessa after his warning.

This time, he would not be merciful.

“Go, bring her to me. If you can’t find her, then the Stone Family shall be eradicated from the world!”

One look at the gloomy face, and Edward knew his president was fuming.

“I’ve sent some men for a follow-up investigation,” he cautiously reported. “I believe we’ll have some news soon.”

Hearing that, Nicholas nodded. “And the group of men?”

“We’ve sent them to a police station. I’ve made sure they won’t have a good time there,” Edward answered.

The report made Nicholas give a satisfied nod, but he was still seething with anger.

Even now, the mere thought of what had happened terrified him to the core.

He didn’t dare to imagine what would’ve happened if he hadn’t given Tessa a bodyguard, or if he had arrived slightly later.

Who knew what horrifying events might’ve occurred then?

The memory of her breaking down in his arms made his heart ache even now.

“Use everything we have at our disposal to capture Hayley!”

This woman was a ticking time bomb. He had to get rid of her before his departure, or he

wouldn’t be able to stop worrying.

“Yes, sir. I’ll assign more men to the investigation.” Edward acknowledged his order with a nod.

However, Nicholas didn’t think that was enough. “Put more pressure on the Stone Family. Inform them they won’t have peace for every day that I don’t see Hayley.”

Staring at the seething, murderous man, Edward couldn’t help but send out a prayer for the Stones.

He had seen idiots, but no one as idiotic as these people.

It seemed like the Stone Family was doomed for real.

While his mind rambled on, he solemnly took his leave from Nicholas.

Now, the only one left in the living room was Nicholas.

He spent a few moments sitting there. He only went back up to his room after he had gotten rid of his anger.

Inside their bedroom, Tessa was having a nightmare. Her eyes were screwed shut as her head and arms thrashed about in a panic.

“Don’t cut off my hand. Please don’t do it,” she mumbled and begged, tears gathering in the corners of her eyes.

The sight made him feel like someone had just stabbed him in the chest, causing so much pain that it hurt to even breathe.

With a few quick steps, he walked over to hold her restless hands before lying down on the bed to pull her into an embrace.

“Don’t be scared. I’m here. No one can hurt you,” he repeated over and over again as he stroked her back.

Perhaps due to his soothing pats, she eventually calmed down.

She blearily woke up with a familiar scent in her nose—a scent that made her feel extremely safe.

Slowly, she opened her eyes to find Nicholas’ handsome face before her eyes.

“Nicholas,” she mumbled.

“Sleep,” he said as he continued to stroke her back. “I’ll be here with you.”

In response, she nodded before closing her eyes in exhaustion.

Soon, her breathing evened out.

As the white rays of moonlight drifted in through the window, Nicholas looked down at the sleeping face of the woman in his arms.

First, he kissed her bright forehead, then her soft lips. Finally, he fell asleep with her safe in his arms.



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Under the moonlight, the couple curled up together, looking just like they were a painting

The next morning, Tessa slowly opened her eyes to the low, dulcet tones of Nicholas' voice.

"You're up," he said. "How do you feel?"

"I'm fine. Don't worry."

Realizing he was still worried that she would be affected by what happened last night, she shot him a sweet smile.

One look into her bright eyes, and he knew everything was truly okay now.

His lips curled up in a smile. "Get up and get dressed."

With an assenting nod, she headed toward the bathroom.

After cleaning herself up, she joined Nicholas and Gregory in the dining room for breakfast.

Just then, she was suddenly reminded of the man who had saved her yesterday.

While she had been scared out of her mind, she still remembered hearing him call her 'Miss Tessa. "Who was that man?" she asked, unable to resist the urge. "Why did it seem like he arrived way before you guys did?"

“He’s the bodyguard I assigned to secretly protect you a while ago,” Nicholas replied. Then, he uneasily asked, “You’re not angry, are you?”

“Why would I be? I haven’t even thanked you for that yet,” she said with a surprised chuckle. Then, fear rose in her once more at her memories of last night. “If you hadn’t assigned a bodyguard to me to stall those men until your arrival... Well, I’m too scared to even wonder what might’ve happened.”

His eyes darkened with pain at the sight of the terrified look in her eyes.

Not wanting to continue with this topic, his voice took on a teasing tone as he smiled at her and asked, “So, when do you plan on thanking me?”

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Startled, her eyes flickered before she understood what he meant. “It’s so nice to have you here,” she coyly said as she darted over to kiss him on the cheek.

In response, he wrapped his arms around her waist as warmth filled his gaze.

The couple stared deep into each other’s eyes.

Just as they were about to kiss, a killjoy spoke up.

“Miss Tessa, I want a kiss too. I want one!”

It was Gregory, who was jealous because Tessa had kissed his father while forgetting all about

him.

His words made her snap back to her senses, and her cheeks instantly flushed red.

They had nearly kissed right before Gregory’s eyes.

Embarrassed, she squirmed out of Nicholas' embrace.

Seeing that, Gregory rushed over to hug her by the leg and sweetly said, "Miss Tessa, I want a kiss too."

There was no way she could say no to that. And so, she leaned down and pecked him on the cheek.

Meanwhile, Nicholas was feeling exasperated while looking at the scene before him.

He had also decided against taking Gregory with him ever again for his visits to Tessa. It wouldn't do for Gregory to keep spoiling his fun.

After breakfast, Nicholas had his driver send Tessa to the orchestra.

Today was her first formal day at Group Two; it was a very important day for her.

The instant she arrived at the orchestra, Mona spotted her.

"Tessa, you're so amazing!" Mona cried out as she excitedly dashed over. "From now on, you're the concertmaster of Group Two!"

"You'll have to work hard too," Tessa replied with a smile and a gentle pat on Mona's back.

"I can't do it. Nothing I can do will let me catch you," Mona replied in what little she knew of Tessa's native language.

"It's actually 'catch up to you,'" Tessa corrected her while the urge to laugh or cry warred within her.

Just as she said that, the other members of the orchestra approached them.

“Congratulations, Tessa. We’re so sorry for how narrow-minded we were before. I hope you’ll forgive us.

“Yeah. Sorry”

“We know now why Miss Hathaway thinks so highly of you. You’re very talented.”

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The last person to speak gave her a thumbs up.

She smiled, and just as she was about to speak, Kathleen appeared.

With obviously faked happiness, she congratulated Tessa as well. “Congratulations, Tessa. Your dream came true. Finally, you’re the concertmaster.”

Even though Tessa wondered if Kathleen actually meant what she said, she still smiled and thanked her.

After a brief bout of chatter and laughter, Hathaway arrived.

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“Come, I’ll be showing you where Group Two practices so that you can meet the others,” Hathaway said to Tessa as she beckoned the latter over.

“Okay.” Tessa replied before turning to let everyone around her know that she had to leave.

Hatred flashed in Kathleen’s eyes as she watched Tessa walking off.

When Hathaway led Tessa to the practice room, everyone in the orchestra was already there. Group Two was strong in numbers with their several dozen members.

Everyone was seated on their chairs, which had been arranged in a semi-circle around the conductor’s podium at the center of the room.

When the two women entered the room, everyone turned to look inquisitively at the newcomers.

While some of them knew Tessa, others didn’t.

Sensing the eyes on her, Tessa smiled back in greeting.

“I trust I don’t need to introduce you to Tessa. All of you know her after all,” Hathaway said with a clap of her hands. “Now, a formal announcement—Tessa will be the concertmaster of Group Two from now on. Please work well together, guys.”

As soon as she was done speaking, there was a loud round of applause.

“Hello, everyone. I’m pleased to be working with you,” Tessa said, stepping forward as she did so.

Her greeting was met with kind smiles from everyone.

Looking at the peaceful sight before her, Hathaway nodded in satisfaction.

Then, she called for the conductor, who had been standing at one side of the room. “Frank, please advise Tessa on where the orchestra is at right now,” she said.

“I will,” said Frank before turning to smile at Tessa.

Frank was an Australian man in his thirties with brown hair and deep-set eyes. There was an aura around him that made her think he would be easy to get along with,

“This is the conductor of Group Two, Frank,” Hathaway said, introducing him to Tessa. “You’ll be working with him from now on. If you have any questions, feel free to ask him. He’ll help.”

“Hello, Frank. It’s a pleasure to meet you,” Tessa politely greeted.

They soon began to chat. When Hathaway was certain they were cordially getting to know each other, she left the room.

“Come. I’ll show you where your seat is,” he said to Tessa.

With a nod, she followed him by his side.

As they walked, Frank explained, “Because you’re new here, you might need to practice more with the other members. It’s the only fast way to integrate you into the orchestra, and the only way to build up a good foundation for future performances.”

“As you say, sir.” Tessa had no objections at all as she remained humble.

Her response improved Frank's impression of her.

He then briefly elaborated on the group's current situation. "Some of the members here have been training for a long while whereas some joined about a month before you did. I know you've performed in Kathleen's place before, but a group can only build up a good foundation if the members practice together. I trust it won't be too hard for you to do so."

"I will do my best to catch up to everyone."

By now, they had arrived at the concertmaster's seat.

"Your seat is here. Get along with everyone. If you have any questions, come find me," he said.

Tessa responded with a nod before greeting the members around her with another nod.

When everyone saw that Tessa had no airs and was being friendly despite being so respected by the conductor, they couldn't help but like her.

For the whole day, Tessa practiced hard.

However, she thoroughly enjoyed herself and was soon part of the orchestra. She was honestly doing quite well.

After work was over and Tessa bade farewell to her fellow orchestra members, she hurried down the stairs with her violin.

Nicholas had just messaged her, saying they would be having dinner together,

Once she entered the car, he took the violin from her and instructed Edward to drive to their destination.

“Miss Tessa, are you tired?” Gregory asked in concern as he clung to her side. “I can give you a hand massage.”

With that, his chubby hands reached out to rub her hands.

Staring down at him, her heart melted as she asked, “Sweetheart, why are you so cute?”



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Unable to hold back any longer, Tessa pulled Gregory into her arms for kisses and caresses

With his arms around her neck, Gregory giggled happily.

Affection and love shimmered in Nicholas' deep eyes as he watched the two cuddle with each other.

Dinner was to be had in a members-only establishment.

To celebrate Tessa's achievement, Nicholas had ensured they were sufficiently prepared.

Their room was decorated in a manner that was very warm and cozy while a bouquet of lilies-a congratulations bouquet-was used as the centerpiece of their table.

"Thank you," Tessa said, hugging Nicholas. She was touched by the effort put in.

"Congratulations, Miss Tessa," Gregory happily said, holding his glass of juice up in an imitation of a toast. "You're one step closer to achieving your dream."

"Oh, you're such a flatterer."

She giggled as she clinked her glass of wine against the glass of juice.

"I'm only ever like this when it's with you," he said as he guzzled down his juice.

Those words filled her with joy and warmth.

She had been so overjoyed that evening that she had a little more to drink than usual. Although she was tipsy by the end of dinner, she wasn't drunk.

When they arrived home, she tucked Gregory in bed before returning to the bedroom.

When Nicholas saw her come in, he beckoned her and said, "Come here."

"What is it?" she asked as she walked over to him.

To her surprise, as soon as she was within reach, he pulled her into an embrace.

Then, a shiny silver chain bracelet dangled before her eyes.

Stunned, she exclaimed, "What a beautiful bracelet!"

"Do you like it?" he dipped his head down and whispered into her ear. There was a silent but obvious seductive quality to his deep voice.

Instantly, she felt as though she had been zapped.

"I do," she replied, nodding as her face blushed.

Seeing that, he chuckled and put the bracelet on her wrist.

The mood was just right, and he was about to kiss her when her phone killed the mood by ringing

"It's a call from 'Timothy. Give me a moment.'"

Her cheeks were pink as she pushed him away to answer her phone.

His face clouded over when he heard that.

Timothy sure has great timing for his calls. He must have too much time on his hands.

By tomorrow, he would tell Kieran to give Timothy more work.

Meanwhile, Tessa answered her ringing phone.

“Congratulations, Tess. You’re one step closer to your dream,” said Timothy.

“Thanks, Tim,” she sweetly said to her little brother over the voice call.

“Have you received my gift?” he asked.

“What gift?”

The question confused her.

“I asked Nicholas to hand over a house deed to you,” he explained. “I’ve also bought an apartment in Vienna. It’s not big, but once I have more money, I’ll buy you a mansion. This house is just a safe haven for you. It’s so that if you’re ever angry at Nicholas, you can go back to your own home.”

While she burst out chuckling at that, she was touched by the gesture.

“Tim, you’re so sweet and considerate,” she said in a proud voice as she grinned at him.

The two siblings didn’t chat for long, and the call soon ended.

As soon as Tessa got off the call, Nicholas pulled her back into his arms,

When he recalled what Timothy had said over the call, he couldn’t help but chuckle. “That brat... He really deserves to be taught a lesson.”

“You cannot lay a hand on him, or I’ll do the same to you,” she said, defending her brother even as her arms were wrapped around Nicholas’ neck.

“Are you actually defending another man from me?” he jealously asked with a raised eyebrow.

“That’s not another man. That’s my little brother,” she rebuked with a smile. There was no fear in her. “Also, he’s only doing that because he cares for me.”

In response, he let out a soft scoff and said with fake anger, “I think he has ulterior motives for that.”

Tessa didn’t know how to reply to that.

“Alright. Stop being upset,” she said as she held his face in her hands.

With his handsome face in her hands, she then dipped her pink lips down for a kiss.

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The soft touch of her lips was fleeting against his. It was here one moment and gone the next.

“Is that okay?”

Tessa smiled at Nicholas.

Staring at the happy woman before him, Nicholas gulped.

“Only this will do.”

Just as he said that, he raised his hands to press her head toward his as he violently captured her

lips.

She was stunned for a moment before her arms were wrapped tightly around his neck in a passionate response to his kiss.

The couple was reluctant to end the kiss, as if they wanted to release all of their repressed desires through it.

The temperature in the room slowly rose.

Soon, she was drowning in his warmth.

It was a long while before their sweet battle was finally over.

With glazed eyes and pink-stained cheeks, Tessa lay in Nicholas' arms.

Suddenly reminded of something, she looked up at him and asked, "How long can you and Greg stay this time?"

"We'll be here for about a week," he replied as he played with her hair.

One week wasn't long, but it wasn't short. Still, she was satisfied with what time she had.

She wrapped her arms around his muscular waist as she rubbed her cheek against his chest like a kitten. There was a happy little tilt on the corners of her lips as she savored their rare time alone.

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Looking down at the languid form in his embrace, Nicholas' heart melted.

"How did you find your first day with Group Two?" he asked.

"How did I find it?" she repeated as she thought about her answer. Then, she smiled and replied, "I think it's not bad. Everything has basically been set up. I just need to work hard, and I'll have plenty of chances to perform."

Hearing that, he nodded in response.

However, as if a switch had been flipped in her, she continued to ramble on. "Did I tell you: I now have a reputation in the industry. Miss Hathaway said I could actually be famous if things continue as they are."

The happy look on her face made him proudly nod and praise her. "You, my fiancée, are so talented!"

"Tee-hee! I think I'm great too!"

For once, she didn't act humble and wave the praise away. Instead, she proudly tilted her chin up.

The sight made him chuckle. She was so cute like this.

The two chatted for a while longer before she conveyed the wish to clean herself up.

With an assenting nod, Nicholas let her out of his arms.

As he leaned against the headboard, the smile on his face vanished, and his eyes clouded over.

He had only planned to stay for three days.

However, with what Hayley did, he couldn't just ignore her. Evidently, three days weren't enough to resolve this situation.

Hayley was currently a bane in his life. He had to get rid of her-it was the only way he could stop worrying

When Tessa eventually stepped out of the bathroom, he swiftly suppressed his bad mood.

Then, with her in his arms, he drifted off to sleep.

The next morning, Tessa joined Gregory and Nicholas for breakfast.

"Miss Tessa, can you not go to work today and stay home with me?" Gregory abruptly asked with hope shimmering in his eyes.

"I... I'm sorry. I can't," she apologetically replied.

While it was rare for Gregory and Nicholas to visit her, she couldn't actually slack off.

After all, she had just started her job as the concertmaster of Group Two. Everyone was watching her.

Although Gregory was disappointed, he was mature enough to not throw a tantrum.

Nicholas said nothing throughout the conversation.

Once breakfast was over, he drove Tessa to the orchestra.

Gregory insisted on going along.

Frankly speaking, he wanted to spend every waking moment stuck to Tessa's side. However, she had work to do, so the only thing he could do was seize every chance he could get to be by her side.

At the gates of the orchestra, 'Tessa bade Gregory and Nicholas farewell before getting out of the car with her violin in hand,

"Daddy, can we stay a few more days with Miss Tessa?" Gregory sadly asked with his head on his palms as he watched Tessa disappear from his sight.

Nicholas responded with a grunt and drove off,

He didn't tell his son anything about staying longer though.



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As long as she left this place, she would have a way to deal with Nicholas.

But how can I leave? The people looking for me are everywhere now.

Unable to come up with an idea, Hayley could only pin her hopes on the contacts in her phone.

Now, she could only leave with the help of others.

But who should I look for? Mom and Dad? No, Nicholas is definitely keeping a tab on them when he can't find me.

In the end, she could only shift the attention to her friends, but there weren't many who were capable of helping her out of a situation with Nicholas.

Screening them one by one, she finally decided on a guy named Jacob Chambers, who was interested in her when they were in university. However, this guy had a sinister fox-like personality and was not her type at all. So, she had always rejected him.

After they graduated from university, they weren't that much in touch with each other, but she knew that he was doing rather well in Europe.

With that thought in her mind, the look in her eyes turned grim as an idea popped up in her head.

Then, using the new sim card she had just bought, she gave him a call.

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Perhaps because it was an unknown number, Hayley called several times but was hung up on.

Despite that, under her relentless calls, someone picked up her call in the end.

A cold voice echoed from the call. “Who’s this?”

His tone was obviously impatient and annoyed, and she was startled by it. Fortunately, she reacted quickly and said through gritted teeth while holding the phone tightly, “Hey, Jacob. It’s me, Hayley Stone.”

“It’s you, Hayley? Why did you call me so suddenly?” On the other end of the line, Jacob sounded pleasantly surprised.

“I’m now in Vienna and ran into some trouble. I really don’t know what to do, so I called you...” She went on to roughly tell him about her situation before diving right into her main point. “Jacob, can you please help me to leave Vienna?”

As Jacob was already interested in her to begin with, he jumped at the chance to answer to her requests when he heard that she needed his help.

“Where are you in Vienna now? I’ll come over to pick you up.”

“I’m in a hotel.” After she told him the location of the hotel, she urged anxiously, “You have to come here as soon as possible because I can’t hide here for long.”

Since Jacob was in a different country in Europe, he said, “I’ll get someone to arrange a flight immediately, but I’ll still need more than ten hours at least.”

Hayley thought about it and felt that there should be enough time for that because the hotel she was staying in was very remote. Moreover, she didn’t check in using her own name, so Nicholas probably wouldn’t find her so quickly.

“Okay, I’ll wait for you. Please come quickly!”

In the evening when Nicholas was finished with work, he drove over to pick Tessa up. In the end, he saw her coming out weakly with the help of Mona.

Opening the car door, he got out and went over in big strides. “What happened?” he asked, taking Tessa over from Mona’s hands. Then, he glanced at her with a domineering aura about him.

Sensing the majesty in the air, Mona gulped in fear and answered timidly, “It’s like this—Tessa fell sick for some reason and started having a fever in the afternoon.”

Furrowing his brows, Nicholas lowered his gaze at Tessa and asked in concern, “Why is she having a fever? She was still fine in the morning.”

“Maybe I was too tired previously and my body couldn’t adjust accordingly now that I’m relaxed. My throat felt a little uncomfortable in the afternoon, and I drank a lot of water. Unexpectedly, I started to have a fever out of the blue,” Tessa explained weakly. When she saw the worried look on his face, she assured, “I’m fine. I’ll be okay once I rest well for a night.”

Staring at her pale face, Nicholas didn’t believe that she was fine at all. Frowning, he picked her up in his arms without saying a thing and paced to the car in big steps.

Mona watched as the both of them walked further and further away before she let out a sigh heavily, patting her chest in fear.

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“Tessa’s boyfriend has such a strong aura about him. He almost gave me a heart-attack.” Mona muttered

Despite what she said, she was more envious of Tessa because she got herself such an amazing boyfriend.

Speeding the whole way, Nicholas returned to the villa in the shortest time. Regardless of Tessa’s objections, he insisted on carrying her out of the car.

When Gregory saw his own father carrying Tessa back, he immediately rushed forward in concern. “Daddy, what happened to Miss Tessa?”

“She fell sick. Don’t annoy her,” Nicholas said, taking big strides toward the staircase with Tessa in his arms.

In between, he also instructed the butler to ask the kitchen to prepare some light dinner and have it delivered to the room upstairs.

Seeing that, Gregory followed behind in his little steps. In the bedroom, Nicholas placed Tessa on the bed softly, as if she was a porcelain doll.

Although helpless, Tessa felt very sweet in her heart. Then, she heard him speaking in concern in his husky voice.

“Do you want to take a nap? I’ll wake you up when dinner’s ready.”

“No, thanks. I’m not feeling sleepy now,” she answered, shaking her head.

answer

Just then, Gregory joined them as well and said in his baby voice, “Miss Tessa, where are you feeling unwell? I’ll blow on it for you.”

The smile on Tessa’s face turned even sweeter when she heard his innocent words. Even though she was a little sick, there was a warm feeling swimming in her chest when she saw the man and child by her side.

A short while later, the butler brought in dinner.

While eating, Tessa felt a little bad that Nicholas and Gregory were eating the same bland food as her. “Actually, both of you don’t have to eat as light as me.”

“It’s okay.”

“That’s how we like it!”

They said simultaneously.

Gazing at them, Tessa knew that they merely wanted to accompany her, and she felt very touched by their gesture.

After dinner, Nicholas brought her the medication for fever. “Take this medicine. You’ll feel

better afterward,” he said, passing her the medication and water.

Seeing that, Tessa knitted her brows slightly and didn’t reach out to take the things from his hands, as though she was unwilling.

Nicholas couldn’t help but smirk when he saw this because the look on her face now was exactly the same as Gregory’s when he refused to take any medicine.

Taking a seat on the side of the bed, he teased, “What is it? You’re still afraid of taking medicine at this age?”

“Who says I’m afraid of taking medicine?” she refuted despite her true feelings.

The smirk on Nicholas’ widened, then Gregory came over, comforting Tessa in his childish manner, “Miss Tessa be obedient and take your medication. Only then will you get well.”

“The cheek of you to say that to me when you’re afraid to take medicine yourself.” Giggling, she pinched the tip of his nose teasingly. Peering at the pill in Nicholas’ palm, she said in a pitiful voice, “But this pill is really bitter.”

Hearing that, Gregory looked as though he was helpless with Tessa and continued, “How about this? If you take your medicine obediently, I’ll give you a candy. After having the candy, you won’t find it bitter anymore.”

Although Tessa couldn’t decide if she should laugh or cry, she felt very warm at heart. Stroking the hair on Gregory’s forehead, she agreed reluctantly. “Okay, I’ll take the medicine.”

He nodded, and after watching her take the medicine, he really fished out a candy from his pocket. Not only that, he even removed the wrapper for her and fed her the candy, urging, “Miss Tessa, take the candy quickly. It won’t be bitter after this.”

Seeing how impatient he seemed, she took the candy with her mouth but thought that he was sweeter than the candy itself.

Next to them, Nicholas watched their entire interaction with affection in his eyes.

After taking the candy, Tessa went back to bed and fell asleep in a daze a few minutes later.

Then, Nicholas took Gregory outside because he was worried that he would disturb Tessa’s rest.

However, Tessa's fever didn't subside later and turned even worse instead.

On the big, soft bed, her face, which was lacking in color earlier, was now blushing abnormally. Sweat broke out all over her, and her dark hair was plastered on her cheeks as she lay there in a daze.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



The next morning when Tessa woke up, she felt much better, but her body still felt weak. Beside her, she heard Nicholas' husky voice asking, "How are you feeling?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thanks for your concern, Sweetheart."

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

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

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

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

“That’s not a good idea. I just joined Group Two and shouldn’t ask for leave.” She turned down his idea indirectly, sounding reluctant.

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

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

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

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

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

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