

Chapter 302 What a Coincidence

Despite being quite familiar with the man in front of me, I was still taken aback by his narcissism.

And it annoyed me that he was sort of right.

And just as I was thinking of what words to taunt him with, Aaron emotionally raised his voice. "No way. It's really me?"

There were a lot of eyes around us at once.

"Keep your voice down, asshole." I lowered my head and tried to cover my face.

Aaron leaned close to me and bent over to whisper in my ear, "Does it mean yes? You're going to Antarctica to see your parents for my sake."

"You could be a little more narcissistic." I snorted, gritting my teeth.

"Wow!" The corners of Aaron's mouth curled up, and he seemed to be in such a good mood that even his blue eyes shone with light.

He took my shopping cart, took out the pair of gloves, put them back, and replaced them with some other pairs. "You can't just use that level of waterproof gloves in Antarctica. Come with me. I'll help you get the best gear for free."

I didn't know why, but when he strutted around pushing the cart, he looked like a golden retriever wagging his tail at me.

I resisted the urge to laugh and followed behind Aaron.

Although I didn't want to accept his kind offer, I had to admit that he was more experienced in this field.

"Did you decide on the spur of the moment? How do you get there? Through a travel agency?" he asked.

"Yes. I'll leave the group when we get to Ross Island. As for the return trip, I'll take a flight back from a nearby airport," I replied.

"You're always so brave."

I was a little baffled by Aaron's comment, but he began to introduce me to different goggles when we arrived at a store.

"These polar goggles are very important. Antarctic ice and water reflect a lot of sun-light, so if you don't want to suffer from snow blindness, it's best to have an extra pair just in case."

"Won't you tell me to think twice about my decision?" I voiced my doubts.

I was going to Antarctica alone and would separate from the group halfway through the tour, after all. Although, in cases like that, I would be accompanied by an explorer, the trip was still full of unknown risks.

I remembered that when Adenauer heard my idea, his first reaction was to ask me not to go. To my surprise, Aaron took me to prepare for my departure instead of commenting much on that.

"Do you expect me to stop you?" Aaron asked, gazing at me.

"Not really."

"If someone stops you, it means he still doesn't know you well enough." Aaron continued to walk toward the outdoor wind-proof mask section. "You may do things impulsively sometimes, but when you make up your mind, you never look back.

Instead of wasting energy and time on advising you, I'd rather tell you what kind of risks you'll face with this decision."

Aaron sounded casual, as if we were just talking about the weather and traffic.

But the more he acted that way, the more a subtle warmth flowed into my heart.

I had to admit that it delighted me.

"Which island will you land on? Which science station are you headed to?" Aaron looked back at me and asked, "Did you contact your parents? Are they coming to pick you up?"

"I did, but I haven't received a reply," I told Aaron about the landing site and the science station where my parents were. "I consulted with the cruise ship, and they would help me land at Ross Island through a rubber boat. From there, I only had to climb one snowy mountain to get to the McMurdo expedition station."

"There is no direct landing at McMurdo Station? Where exactly is the landing site, and what is the elevation of the snowy mountain that needs to be climbed?"

"Why do you ask that?" I was a little afraid of looking at his serious face.

I hadn't asked these questions. The head of the travel agency only told me to rest assured.

Aaron gazed at me with his blue eyes and suddenly looked away.

"Forget it" he said casually as he tossed a climbing rope and several bundles of red nylon rope into the cart.

"What's that?" My eyes were fixed on the bundle of nylon rope.

"It's an avalanche rope, and it's very light. If you're unfortunate enough to encounter an avalanche and get buried by snow, it will stay on the surface, and rescuers will be able to find you through it."

I was stunned. "An avalanche? Are you serious?"

Then I watched as Aaron tossed a back-pack, a shovel, a probe, an airbag, and a whole lot of other stuff into the cart.

"Wait, is it necessary to go this far?" I looked at the pile in shock.

"Just pray that these things won't be needed." Aaron glanced at me and suddenly curled his lips into a grin. "Remember the self-rescue points I told you?"

I thought for a moment and worked out what he had said from the depths of my memory.

It happened during our only double date with Cinder and her boyfriend. It was on the same date four years ago.

We were skiing when someone mentioned an avalanche situation at the snow park.

Since I was the only one with the least skiing experience among the four, Aaron explained some key points of self-help in case of an avalanche.

For example, if one is buried in snow, he only has 15 minutes to save himself.

Given the avalanches in snowfields, I couldn't bring myself to think nothing would go wrong when I was in Antarctica.

"Judging by your reaction, I think you re-member," Aaron said with a broader grin.

"That was a long time ago. Who remembers exactly what was said four years ago?"

I would admit that I said so because his smug look annoyed me.

I hated letting him take control.

"Well, since you've forgotten, let's review," Aaron said patiently, not frustrated by my denial.

He then elaborated on the self-rescue techniques when one was hiking in the wilderness and met an avalanche.

His descriptions were so detailed that I couldn't help but wonder.

"How do you know so much about this?"

Even the sensation of being caught in an avalanche is so specific. Have you experienced it yourself?"

"No," Aaron said.

"Then why are you so clear?" I asked.

Aaron paused and looked at me calmly. "I have a friend who was an extreme sports enthusiast. He survived several close calls, but the last time, he missed the golden 15 minutes."

"I'm sorry," I said, taken aback by the sudden heaviness of the conversation. "Uh, why did you put my thermal clothing back?"

"There will be professional gear on the cruise ship," Aaron explained. "There's no need to bring extra weight."

In the end, we returned home with a car full of gear for my snowy mountain adventure.

Aaron helped me carry everything inside, and I thanked him sincerely.

"Thank you for everything today."

The only thing that made me upset was that he had paid for all the gear. I offered to transfer him the money, but he refused.

My trip to Antarctica was impulsive, and the departure date was fast approaching. The next day, I boarded a plane to Argentina with my avalanche bag packed to the brim.

When I arrived at the dock in Ushuaia and stepped onto the cruise ship, my face flushed with embarrassment.

So many people were staring at me.

A few polar explorers even approached me, thinking I was one of them.

"Sorry, she's already taken."

A familiar voice came from the deck, but somehow, it didn't surprise me.

I looked up to see Aaron standing there with a wide smile on his face.

"What a coincidence to meet again at the end of the world," he said cheerfully.

No wonder he hadn't tried to stop me from going to Antarctica.

I should have known better than this.