

Chapter 305 Reply

After the passengers' evacuation and self-rescue training before departure, the Explorer let out a resounding horn, officially commencing its voyage. The air on the ship was filled with lively cheers. On the deck, everyone seemed full of excitement and curiosity about the journey ahead, except for me. I felt like a lonely outsider. Everywhere I looked, couples and companions strolled hand in hand, be they lovers, friends, or family members. Everyone had someone by their side, but I was alone. The only person who had wanted to accompany me was driven away by me. Never before had I anticipated feeling such a profound sense of desolation. Perhaps I had underestimated the impact of my surroundings.

Having been a lone wolf since childhood, I was accustomed to solitary ventures and adept at handling things on my own. But it became increasingly difficult to endure the darkness once I had glimpsed the sunlight.

The cheers and merriment around me felt like noise.

Thankfully, I had developed coping mechanisms to deal with loneliness over time.

Navigating through the crowd, I sought out Captain Mike P. Rothwell, the person in charge of this expedition, as directed by the ship's staff.

Cruise travel differed significantly from other modes of transportation. Once aboard the ship, the captain held the highest authority. Despite having previously discussed my departure plans with the travel agency's representative, it was ultimately up to the captain to permit me to disembark when the time came.

"Hey, Captain Rothwell, I am Olive Woods.

I'm wondering if Mr. Dan, the representative from the travel agency, has informed you about my situation."

Captain Rothwell was an imposing figure, tall and robust, with a perfectly tailored uniform that accentuated his muscular physique. His extensive experience at sea had bestowed upon him a weathered complexion, adorned with countless creases and lines. As the

captain, he exuded a commanding presence. Fortunately, having spent considerable time with Aaron in the past, I had become accustomed to dealing with this level of intensity.

"Dr. Woods?" Captain Rothwell scrutinized me with an impassive expression. "I

remember you. Dan mentioned your situation. Your parents are biologists who have been working in the South Pole for a long term. You want to visit them, so you want to disembark and depart from the rest of the journey upon reaching Ross Island."

"Yes." I breathed a sigh of relief. "I'm sorry I can't continue the entire journey with your team, but I haven't seen my parents in many years."

"No need to apologize to me, Dr. Woods, I completely understand your situation." Captain Rothwell reassured, lowering his

hand from the air. "Our planned route already includes passing through the Ross Sea. If the weather permits, we will arrange a visit to Scott Cottage on Ross Island. It's close to the McMurdo Station, and there are driveways for easy transportation."

"That's great!" I immediately felt a weight lifted off my shoulders. "I can wait there for my parents to pick me up."

"However, it is the South Pole after all, and the weather there can be unpredictable. If the weather conditions in the Ross Sea are unfavorable, I won't risk forcing a landing with the entire ship on board. I hope you understand."

"I understand. Thank you very much, Captain Rothwell."

After bidding farewell to Captain Rothwell, my steps became light and brisk.

I knew it! Aaron was excessively concerned, bringing all those mountaineering and wilderness survival gear. Turned out the Explorer would dock directly at Scott

Cottage, and I wouldn't even need to climb any mountains

Back in my cabin, I opened my laptop and checked my email.

Several days had passed since I sent the email informing my parents about my journey to the South Pole, but they still hadn't replied.

"Wait..." I didn't have much confidence at first, but to my surprise, there was an unread email in my inbox.

It was a reply from my mother, Kirsty!

I clicked on the email immediately, but the smile that had just formed on my lips froze the moment I read its contents.

"I'm so sorry, dear, but I think you should come at a different time, like in March. It's currently the peak season for penguin

hatching and nurturing, and your father and I will be very busy. We might not have enough time to spend with you."

Penguins again!

In their eyes, their daughter couldn't even compare to a group of penguins!

A strong sense of absurdity washed over me, anger and sadness intertwining and igniting a blazing fire within my heart. I glanced at the timestamp on the email - just one minute ago!

I immediately clicked on the reply button, my fingers swiftly tapping on the keyboard.

"But I've already boarded the Explorer cruise ship, and we've set sail! I'm sorry for reading your email so late, but the captain has agreed to let me disembark at Scott Cottage. The itinerary is already set. Don't worry, it won't disrupt your penguin-watching plans!"

After sending the reply, I slumped in my chair, curling my legs up and hunching over.

This was a disaster!

A complete disaster!

My heartless and irresponsible parents, my messed-up life, and this whole damn world! It would be better if everything was destroyed!

The Explorer gently swayed on the sea as I numbly refreshed my email.

Five minutes passed, and there was still no response from Kirsty.

Ten minutes passed, then half an hour..

I sat in the room for an hour, motionless, until darkness completely enveloped the sky. The growling hunger in my stomach urged me to leave the computer and head to the ship's restaurant.

Although the Explorer was only a four-star ship, the interior decorations were quite luxurious, and the service was impeccable. I didn't have much of an appetite and ordered some food to appease my hunger. Surprisingly, the food on the ship tasted good.

"At least there's one thing that can make me happy," I said, finishing a glass of juice and self-deprecatingly muttering to myself.

"It's you again, the kissing lady," a somewhat familiar voice approached from a distance.

It was the photographer lady who took pictures of Aaron and me.

"You look a bit down." The photographer lady came up to me and held out her hand, "Ross Sweeney, an amateur photographer."

"Olive Woods." I shook her hand politely.

"Are you missing that man?" Ross came and sat down beside me.

"No, I'm just..." I hesitated for a second, then decided to be honest. "I'm not here for a vacation. My parents are biologists, and they've been studying penguins at the South Pole for a long time. I wanted to go and see them, but they just replied to my email, saying it's the peak season for penguin hatching, and they're busy."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Ross's smile faded from her face. "So, are you still planning to go and find them?"

"If they had told me an hour earlier, maybe I would have given up. But now, I'm already on my way!" Perhaps it was because I was

talking to a stranger that many frustrations I couldn't express in person came pouring out so easily.

"I paid tens of thousands of dollars to board this ship. Am I just going to waste my money in vain?"