

Chapter 451

“Gerald, is this the new car you bought?” Sharon asked in surprise.

“Yeah. I got it a few days ago. Just a means to get from point A to B,” replied Gerald as he casually tossed the keys on the table.

This excited but distressed Lilian, as she was afraid that the expensive key to the car would be damaged.

What excited her more, though, was that Hayward’s face had already turned green.

“By the way, I heard Lilian saying that you've recently bought a car? I haven't seen it yet. What did you get yourself? A BMW 7 Series, a Mercedes-Benz, or an Audi? Worth more than a hundred fifty grand?” Gerald asked with a smile on his face as he looked at Hayward.

“Hehe! Hayward procured the Passat for more than thirty grand, but how could that compare to your three hundred thousand dollar car?” scoffed Lilian as she rolled her eyes at Hayward.

Hayward inhaled sharply, as his hands started going into an uncontrollable tremor.

“Oh? You bought a Passat? Why did you buy that?” replied Gerald with a chuckle.

“I can buy whatever I please, and the two of you have nothing to worry about. Didn’t you just win the lottery anyway? So, why the gloating?” Hayward replied anxiously.

“I’m the luckiest woman in the world, Gerald, being together with you. I’ll stick by your side for the rest of my life, and we shall enjoy a wonderful life together! You’ll have to treat me well, though, and that includes buying me all the clothes I want today!”

“Yes! Of course, I will buy them for you. But don’t forget that you’ve also promised me that you’ll give me your first time tonight, hehe!” Gerald whispered as he held Lilian’s soft hands.

When Lilian heard Gerald’s words, she really felt like giving him a tight, bloody slap..

Damn it! Who gave him the right to say that? When was this ever part of the script?

After all, dating was dating, and if Gerald were to bring the topic into the conversation, Hayward would undoubtedly be very easy to break.

Fortunately, Gerald’s sentence left a massive impact.

Lilian originally planned to warn Gerald from talking too much nonsense, but it was then that she realized Hayward’s face had already turned green.

His lips quivered with rage.

She saw that those few words from Gerald had provoked Hayward's anger in more ways than one.

"Ah! Naughty, naughty! I hate you..."

Lilian replied shyly.

Sure enough, Hayward got up to his feet, filled with rage and anger.

"No way, Lilian, why are you doing this? What did you want to get again? How about letting me buy it for you instead? Why give your first time to this pathetic jerk? Don't degrade and abuse yourself just because he won the lottery!"

Lilian ignored everything else, instantly refuting Hayward with an aggressive comeback.

"Pfft! Hayward, who gave you the right to call my boyfriend a pathetic jerk? Besides, he's already mine. So, what's wrong with me giving my first time to my boyfriend anyway? What has it got to do with you?"

"You know, I've always thought you were the reliable and dependable kind, Lillian. I thought you'd always paid great attention to your conduct, and frankly, although I chose to get together with Sharon, I felt really entangled, and I was in a hell lot of pain

throughout the whole thing. I'm filled with regret as well, but now that I see you behaving like this, I am with no resentment, nor do I blame myself anymore for letting you go. Let's go, Sharon!" snapped a furious Hayward as he was about to pull Sharon away.

Lilian looked at Hayward with a sea of worry in her eyes.

Compared to Sharon, Lilian's most significant advantage was that she understood every part of Hayward. She was the one who knew best about his psychological and mental state.

She also knew all too well that Hayward must be saying this to test if she still liked him or not, waiting to see if she would be remorseful and apologize to him for her actions.

That said, if Lilian were to do that, it would all be truly over.

She hugged Gerald as tightly as she could, as though Hayward's words meant nothing to her at all.

"My dear... I don't care what anyone else thinks of me. I promise I'll treat you well from now on. Will you treat me well too?"

Gerald took the opportunity to hold Lilian's waist, giving it a gentle and passionate squeeze.

“Of course, I will treat you well.”

He wasn't stupid either. Why not seize this opportunity and take advantage of her when he could?

He continued caressing Lilian's body.

Those words were loud and clear to Hayward too, and now, his face had lost all color, looking a ghostly white.

Without saying another word, Sharon dragged Hayward out of the coffee shop.

“F*cking hell... that's enough! Why are you still touching me?”

Lilian pushed Gerald away as soon as she saw Hayward leaving.

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Lilian looked at Gerald reproachfully, “You did a pretty good job but I don't want you to be touching me. Do you really think that I am your girlfriend?”

“Oh? So, now that Hayward's gone, what should we do?” asked a perplexed Gerald.

“Hmph! Don’t worry. He will definitely come back for me... One, Two, Three...”

Lilian counted with her fingers when suddenly, Sharon’s voice suddenly came over her shoulder.

“Hayward, what are you doing?”

“Lilian, there are some things that I need to clear up with you. I don’t know what you think of me now, but I admit I was wrong for not standing up for you when Sharon hit you yesterday. I’ve been regretting it a lot. I sincerely hope that you’ll give me a chance. I wish to prove that I am way stronger and capable compared to a nouveau riche like Gerald!” replied Hayward, his tone contrite, much humbler than he always sounded.

Obviously, his self-esteem seemed completely diminished, which was once held so highly by him.

Gerald couldn’t help feeling a deep sense of admiration toward Lilian as he watched the scene unfold from the sidelines.

“But I already have Gerald, a guy who has a luxury car, and he’s about to buy me lots of branded cosmetics and bags too! What about you? What can you offer me?” Lilian asked in response.

“Wow! So, you and Gerald are together simply because he’s wealthier than me, right?”
Hayward asked in disappointment and disbelief.

Gerald remembered how the conversation sounded eerily familiar. Wasn’t that what Xavia said at the small grove the other day?

He completely understood what was going on; it wasn’t because Hayward really loved Lilian but rather, a question of the very fabric of the dignity of a man.

It had always been the case, whether he liked it or not. Men like Hayward, with a wall of ego surrounding him, would never be able to swallow the fact that the person who was once head-over-heels for him was now in love with someone else.

He desired to conquer Lilian in her entirety to reclaim his dignity.

“Say whatever you like! Let’s go for a ride, Gerald.”

Lilian then grabbed Gerald’s arm before the two headed off to his car.

“Get out of my way! You’re standing in my way,” said Gerald as he patted Hayward gently on his chest before walking towards the parking lot.

Unwilling to yield, Hayward chased after the two.

“Gerald, can I drive your car? I have never driven something this good before,” begged Lilian with a sparkle in her eye.

“Yeah sure! Here, take the keys,” Gerald grinned as he tossed the car keys to Lilian.

“Lilian... don’t go! Please. Can you just listen to me? I was wrong. I was really wrong! Can you please just give me another chance? I will cherish and treasure you more than Gerald ever would! From now, I will buy you whatever you want as long as I can afford it! Allow me the chance to prove that I am definitely a hundred times more capable than Gerald!” Hayward implored Lilian as he held her arm tightly.

“Is that so? But don’t you already have Sharon?” Lilian asked as she looked at Hayward with accusing eyes.

Hayward looked into Sharon’s eyes, lowering his tone by a notch. “I’m sorry, Sharon. I just discovered that Lilian is the person I really love. Let’s end this.”

“Hayward? How could you?!”

In a dejecting mix of rage, anger, and confusion, Sharon instantly broke into a fit of tears, weeping and sobbing uncontrollably.

A smile finally appeared on Lilian's face. She felt that her pride had been rightfully restored and a sense of satisfaction and contentment filled her heart.

As for Hayward, Lilian had taken advantage of his ego and pride, knowing how he would undoubtedly be stimulated once he found out that she had gotten a far more capable boyfriend than him.

After all, no matter how beautiful a person turned out to be, her value would certainly depreciate if nobody pursued her. Not to mention how countless gorgeous women were walking the earth.

That would all change the moment a capable man of robust standing was head over heels for you. It was then that your value would skyrocket beyond the bounds of social strata.

Otherwise, even if a man finally managed to capture your heart, they wouldn't cherish you anyway.

Through this, Lilian's importance to Hayward had far surpassed that of Sharon.

After all, Murphy, Sharon's ex-boyfriend's capabilities were simply no threat to Hayward at all.

Hayward grabbed Lilian's hand as he continued to speak to her.

Gerald felt strangely embarrassed, and since he just had a massive mug of coffee, he had to use the toilet urgently.

“This time, since I can tell you’re sincere, Hayward, I promise to be with you then.”

Lilian replied with a smile on her face when she saw that her goal had been achieved.

At that moment...

“Eh? What a coincidence, Miss Cole! You are here? I happened to be looking for you...”
said a woman.

When Lilian caught a glimpse of the person walking towards her, her pupils instantly contracted...

Chapter 453

“Miss Cole?”

A woman looking to be about twenty-five years of age strutted over, calling Lilian as she gazed upon her respectfully.

Lilian, on the other hand, pretended not to know the woman the moment she saw her.

Who was she?

She was none other than Quartney, the business manager who rented this car to her.

“Oh? Is it urgent? Should there be anything urgent, perhaps you can talk to me on WeChat when I am home. It’s not a really convenient time at the moment.”

Lilian’s face was drained of its color.

Oh god! How could there be such a coincidence?

She actually ran into the manager of the rental car here.

Why couldn’t it happen later? She just got back together with Hayward.

“It’s okay, Miss Cole. I just wanted to let you know that I did not pay attention to the time when I rented this car to you. I wrote that you should return the car tomorrow, but I made a mistake. You have to return the car before 4 p.m today as we will have to deliver the car back to the customer before five! I am sorry. It is really our negligence at work! I was initially planning to give you a call later!”

Quartney smiled apologetically.

She then waved her hand at Lilian before leaving.

What?

Hayward and Sharon were both stunned for a moment when they heard Quartney's words.

"Lilian, a rental car? What's going on here?"

Hayward did not understand what was going on.

"Huh? I...I don't understand what is going on too!"

Lilian did not know what else to say.

She was completely at a loss for words.

"Wow okay, I get the whole picture now. Lilian, you were the one who rented this car, right? You rented it so that you could use it to deceive Hayward on purpose. Tell me I'm right."

Sharon poked.

Lilian did not know what to do.

She suddenly saw Gerald walking back towards her from the washroom.

Lilian suddenly had a plan in mind.

She turned around and quickly ran towards Gerald.

“Gerald, come here. There is something that I need to tell you!”

Lilian grabbed Gerald’s arm before she whispered, “It’s over! Hayward found out that the Mercedes Benz G500 is a rental car! Can you just pretend that you were the one who lied to me about the car? Okay? Please, you have to help me!”

Gerald was stunned for a second. What was going on here?

As he was lost in the moment, Hayward and Sharon were making their way towards Gerald.

“Gerald, you b*stard! How dare you lie to me?! You rented this car just so that you could deceive me. This car doesn’t belong to you at all!”

Lilian suddenly roared.

“What is going on? This is my car!”

Gerald replied in shock.

“Pfft! Gerald, stop being such a tough nut! I’m shocked to see what a sly person you actually are! Using such despicable methods to cheat and deceive Lilian and she almost fell for your tricks! And not forgetting, I almost broke up with Sharon for real because of you too!”

Hayward sniggered.

“So now, can you see who are the ones who are truly good to you? Some girls simply like to stick to a guy just because they think they’re loaded, but they end up getting fooled instead! Do you see the clearer picture now?” Sharon exclaimed as she glared at Hayward.

“Hayward, you said that you were going to treat me well moving forward!”

Lilian cried out.

“C’mon Lilian, you know I think it’s time for a wakeup call. This pathetic jerk almost cost my relationship with Sharon today. Seriously! The both of us are supposed to

attend Miss Larson's birthday banquet at noon later today. We almost made a fuss and broke up for no reason at all because of this matter!"

Hayward clutched Sharon's hand tightly, threw Gerald and Lilian a cold glare before leaving for Mayberry Hotel.

It was Miss Larson's birthday today so Hayward definitely did not want to be late. He then decided to pop by a cafe for a quick coffee fix first.

Alas! What a dramatic outcome.

Lilian's value just completely plummeted with the devaluation of Gerald's identity.

"By the way, Gerald, didn't you win the lottery? Hahaha! Why don't you come over to Mayberry Hotel too? We have tickets!"

Chapter 454

Hayward mocked Gerald before ushering Sharon away with him happily.

Lilian squatted and started sobbing.

"Oh! Mr. Crawford! How come you're here?"

A voice suddenly spoke.

A middle-aged man clad in a suit and leather shoes trotted towards Gerald.

“You are?”

Gerald thought he looked really familiar, but couldn't put a name to it.

“Well, Mr. Crawford, it's normal for you not to know who I am. But I know who you are. I was also there at your last reception meeting in Serene County. I witnessed how you took the day with grace. My name is Blake Wadford. Mr. Lyle has just recruited me into the group as the events planning manager. Are you also here to attend Miss Larson's birthday banquet?”

The man smiled and rubbed his hands nervously.

Lilian's sobbing stopped, as she stared at the men blankly.

Even Hayward and Sharon who were about to enter the hotel were confused with the statement they heard.

“Oh! Hello, Mr. Wadford. So you planned Miss Larson's birthday banquet too?”

Gerald couldn't seem to figure it out. Which Miss Larson was he talking about? Why was someone from his own group planning her birthday banquet?

"Ahem. Of course! It's Miss Elena Larson's birthday today. Since we're all members of the same group, it goes without saying that I should be helping out in her banquet arrangements. Many owners of Mayberry Commercial Street will be here too today. Anyways, the whole lot of them will be moving into Yorknorth Mountain Commercial Street in the second half of the year together, so this kinda feels like a gathering too."

Blake explained.

"Oh, I see!"

Gerald felt a twang of uneasiness creeping up.

Elena was also friends with him. So, why wasn't he invited?

"Mr. Wadford, you know Gerald?"

Lilian asked, her eyes wide with curiosity.

She was observing the look on Hayward's face right now.

Lilian felt as though this was a good chance to make a comeback.

Could this be the man that her friend, Quilla had arranged to come and rescue?

After all, Quilla had been keeping an eye on the situation nearby, but she had not shown up yet.

The more she thought about it, the more Lilian was convinced that this was all staged by Quilla.

“Of course, I know Mr. Crawford. Even if I didn’t know him, his car is definitely recognizable.”

Mr. Wadford responded, pointing at the Mercedes Benz G500.

Perfect!

Lilian was certain that her best friend had made the move.

She had zero clue how Quilla managed to find someone like him, but it felt really good.

Since Hayward and Sharon insulted Gerald earlier, it would be tough for Lilian to explain herself if he were to just walk away.

Plus, Gerald wouldn't be happy about it either.

Since he was already here, just in time for Elena's birthday, he figured he'd pop by inside to take a look then. This would also be a slap in the face for Hayward and perhaps stop him from being so pretentious.

Gerald turned to Blake and said, "Mr. Wadford, why don't you give me two tickets then? I didn't bring it with me today."

"Oh? Okay! Of course, Mr. Crawford."

Blake nodded.

Lilian peered at Gerald, as though she was trying to remind him not to overdo it. This was Miss Larson's birthday banquet. How would this man be able to give them admission tickets if he was just here to put on an act?

But much to Lilian's surprise, Blake whipped out the tickets for Gerald.

Hayward and Sharon were stunned too.

Gerald was oblivious to his surroundings. He simply pulled Lilian into his arms as he said, "Come, let's go. Let me bring you to a banquet today!"

Lilian was taken aback and confused when Gerald suddenly pulled her into his embrace, but regained her senses and gently held his waist back.

The both of them breezed into the hotel, under Hayward's envious glare.

'Damn it! Why thick could Gerald get?'

Hayward thought in envy.

He then followed closely behind the pair and went in as well...

Chapter 455

"F*ck! Gerald, we really got in!"

Lilian breathed, stupefied.

She barely showed any resistance, although Gerald was still hugging her waist.

It was all only too exciting, now that the tables have turned.

They were in the venue.

Elena's birthday banquet was exceptionally grand this time. This was mainly because Mr. Larson wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to host a large gathering for all the business owners too.

As Hayward was from the Yorknorth Mountain, that automatically qualified him on the banquet attendees' list.

There were more than a hundred guests on the scene. Most were rich and young heirs, and there were many bosses too.

The layout of the event was a bit similar to that of a wedding ceremony. There was a long aisle in the middle, and the banquet tables lined both sides of the aisle.

Gerald managed to find a seat for both of them.

After all, there were many people here, and most would just be casually looking for a place to sit with their friends.

Hayward made his entrance in the ballroom, threw a fierce gaze at Gerald and Lilian before pulling Sharon over to sit at another table with some of his friends.

"Gerald? Why are you here too?"

A random voice questioned out loud.

As he turned around to have a look, Gerald was startled.

It was a girl, and it turned out to be Leila, Mr. Jung's daughter.

A group of dashing young men and beautiful women were standing next to her. Leila also stared at Gerald in surprise.

Why was Leila here?

As Gerald gave it some thought, he could slowly put things into perspective.

Mr. Jung was not the leader of Weston Merchants Holdings. Since he was investing in Serene County, he must be acquainted with and had many deals with large managers and bosses.

Since Elena's father organized such a large gathering and Hayward could get an admission ticket, it went without saying that Leila would get one too.

What a coincidence that they had to bump into one another.

“Leila, is this a friend of yours?”

A young, handsome man next to Leila suddenly asked.

“Well, I don’t think he’s considered a friend? We’re both from the same hometown, that’s all, and his dad had some connections with mine in the past. But we’ve not been in contact with their family since a while back. His family owes a lot of money now, and his parents and sister are working abroad to pay off his family debts. That being said, it’s really unexpected that he’s able to attend such a huge function!”

Leila explained as she squinted at Gerald.

After all, she could still remember how Gerald previously placed her in a very tough and awkward situation at the western restaurant.

She finally succeeded in getting her father to bag an admission ticket for her this time around, not to mention how he got it with inside help. By coming here, she hoped to gain some insight too.

Ever since she became even more exposed, she had met Liam Zachman, a young and rich heir from Mayberry City.

Liam’s family used to run a large enterprise in Mayberry City. When they heard about the developments of Yorknorth Mountain, they managed to secure the contract to run

one of the largest restaurants there. It only meant that they wouldn't have any shortage of funds in the future.

He was one of the most influential and loaded heirs among the rest.

In retrospect, Douglas had been totally eclipsed by Liam.

Leila also found that slapping Douglas in the face just because of Gerald was somewhat ridiculous.

“Liam, he's a nobody. He used to be an infamous pauper in our Serene High School.”

Douglas was there to attend the gathering too.

“Oh! Hehe, so that's the case, eh. Well, let's look for a place to sit down first. We can all then have a good chat together!” He told Liam politely as he emerged from the crowd.

Liam said to the group of young men and women behind him,

“Liam! You just arrived? I've already reserved a good seat for you!”

Hayward brought Sharon over to greet Liam.

His table was very close to Gerald, after all.

“Hayward, you’re early! Leila, let me introduce you to my friend, Hayward!”

Liam introduced as he smiled.

Impressions of Hayward skyrocketed.

Since he owned a shop at Yorknorth Mountain, his reputation had peaked.

He, too, was to be considered a part of the rich heir circle.

Chapter 456

Leila too introduced herself after everyone. She had learned a lot from these people.

Leila always thought that the rich only talked about luxurious cars, but these people did not. Their discussions had a depth to them—money management and a healthy lifestyle, and Leila was very much impressed.

Douglas, who loved to flaunt his wealth, or Gerald, of whom she thought was loaded by sheer luck, were nowhere to be compared to this sophisticated bunch of technocrats.

Lilian was upset after listening to the manner in which Hayward spoke. She knew Gerald would not keep up to his self-proclaimed status since everyone there was well off.

Hayward had been doing pretty well and knew many people. Thanks to that, Lilian couldn't bear to raise her head, feeling as though today had been an utter failure.

"When is Elena Larson coming?" quizzed a few young chaps. For most of them, it was their first time meeting Elena Larson, and they were very excited.

Meanwhile, backstage.

"Mr. Wadford, are you sure? He came? How's that possible?"

Elena sprung away from the makeup artist and asked.

"Ms. Larson, did you know that Mr. Crawford is here today?"

"Why would he be here...it must've been an optical illusion. Was there a girl by his side?" Elena questioned.

Ever since Gerald and Mila had gotten together, Elena didn't bother reaching out to him because she knew Gerald never liked her in the first place, and whenever she saw him, she would feel this great sense of grief flood her chest.

She was going to invite Gerald to her birthday party, but her father told her that Gerald had been busy with his project, and one of his older family members was in the hospital. Elena ought to not be disturbing him.

In fact, no one of extreme importance from the company was attending. Not even Aiden and the others, so, there was no point in inviting Gerald.

Elena promised her father, disappointed, as she wanted him to attend really badly. Especially after she heard that Gerald was there.

“It’s true, Ms. Larson! How could I have recognized Mr. Crawford wrongly? I gave him the tickets personally, but he brought along a girl with him,” replied Blake.

“This is really hard to swallow!” She turned to the workers. “I’ll be going out soon, so get ready.”

Elena graced the ballroom as the spotlight fell on her. She donned a pristine, white gown.

“Oh, wow! She is breathtaking!”

“Oh, my goodness! Ms. Larson is so gorgeous!”

When he heard the excited murmurs, Gerald looked up to the stage.

Chapter 457

Gerald had not seen Elena in a while, and she seemed much prettier now.

“Elena Larson is gorgeous!” a stunned Hayward exclaimed. Sharon, nonetheless, wasn’t jealous at all.

She had to admit that Elena was a real beauty.

“Of course, she is! Elena is Mr. Crawford’s godsister. She has to be!” Liam smiled.

“Then why isn’t Mr. Crawford here, Liam?” Leila asked.

She was really hoping to see who Mr. Crawford was.

“Let me tell you why. My dad mentioned he’s someone who keeps a low profile and doesn’t like banquets and functions as such.” Liam explained as if he knew about Gerald very well.

“Aw!” Leila was disappointed.

“Hey Leila, would you like a drink? This fruit juice is imported, it’s excellent! Let me get you some!”

Douglas was unhappy seeing Liam and Leila hitting off well.

“I’m good. Just leave me be.” Leila frowned at Douglas and turned towards Liam again.

“I need one, please!” A waiter passed by Lilian, and she reached out for a drink.

Lilian was parched after what happened earlier on, and she was even more anxious now.

Elena delivered her speech on the stage as her eyes skimmed around the room.

Suddenly, someone shouted, and everyone went silent.

It was Lilian.

She had discovered how lovely the drink was, and she wanted to get one for Gerald too, but the glass slipped, spilling the drink all over him and herself.

“Oh, no! Let me help you!” Gerald quickly offered to help.

He grabbed some napkins, helped Lilian clean her dress, then wiped the remainder of the liquid off his pants.

“How embarrassing! She can’t even hold a glass properly!”

“I know, right! Elena’s still speaking, and she’s only bothered by the food. Ridiculous!”

A few people seated at the same table insulted her.

“There is an obvious difference between finding a rich boyfriend and dating a fraud. Even the standards are worlds apart!” added Sharon, sniggering away silently.

“Thank heavens I didn’t end up with her!” Hayward exclaimed.

Leila just looked at Gerald and shook her head judgmentally.

“I’m so sorry! I really didn’t mean it!” A scared and quivering Lilian immediately apologized.

Her face blushed a bright beetroot, and she tugged hard on Gerald’s sleeves.

“Gerald, I think we should leave!”

Lilian knew how tall of an order it was to get Gerald acting like someone of wealth, but she chose to follow him anyway. Never did she think she would embarrass herself like that.

“Why should we leave? It’s just a glass. We’ll be fine!” Gerald found it really intriguing that a girl like Lilian would have such low self-esteem.

Gerald remembered his first time attending such functions. He was not unlike her.

Chapter 458

Gerald tried to calm her down.

“Who were these two? How did they even come in here? Did they know the rules?” exclaimed a middle-aged man from the other table. The entire room fell into a hushed whisper.

It was nothing but plain rudeness stealing Elena’s limelight while she was still talking on stage.

All the more, standing up while everyone else was seated must have caught the attention of the Larsons.

Everyone’s attention then shifted back to the stage to see how Elena would react.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she dropped the microphone in her hand.

“You came!” Elena cried.

Gerald cleaned his pants, and when he heard Elena’s voice, he realized she was looking right at him.

“Yes. Happy birthday!” Gerald replied awkwardly.

He looked around, realizing he didn’t actually bring any gifts for her except his car keys.

“I’m sorry I didn’t manage to prepare anything for your birthday. I can only wish,” Gerald said apologetically.

“I thought you’d forgotten me!” Elena wiped off her tears, bolting toward Gerald and embracing him as tightly as she could.

The scene shocked everyone.

“It’s been so long since you last called! Ever since you’ve gotten yourself a girlfriend, you completely forgot about me!” Elena wailed helplessly.

“Hey, hey. I’m here now. Don’t cry!” Gerald patted Elena gently on her shoulders.

“What?”

“What the f*ck?”

Everyone was dumbfounded.

Elena was like a goddess to everyone else, and only the elites could be acquainted with her, but this ordinary looking guy just got a hug from her?

Even their conversations were so cheesy! Who on earth was this guy?

The lot of young men had their eyes green with envy and hearts bursting with jealousy.

Even Hayward and Sharon were stupefied.

Gerald must have gotten lucky—how on earth did he ever get that likeness of a goddess?

Hayward failed to comprehend, and even Leila and the others could not believe their eyes.

“I’ll celebrate with you again tonight!” Gerald smiled.

Gerald had made an effort to be present, only to shut Hayward up and the rest. But this wasn’t what he had in mind, and all turned out to be a mighty embarrassing affair.

“Alright. Now’s your chance to make it up to me.”

Elena’s tears stopped falling.

Once she had calmed down, Gerald left the scene with Lilian.

The two walked in front while Hayward, Leila, and the rest tagged behind.

They felt really embarrassed by what happened earlier, but they were very curious about who Gerald truly was. How could he do that to Elena?

After walking for some distance, they finally reached the car.

“Ms. Cole, I’ve been waiting for you but couldn’t get hold of you through your phone.”

Quartney was waiting next to the car, in her hands, laid the contract...

Chapter 459

“I turned off my phone, Ms. Weaver,” Lilian shouted as she ran toward Quartney.

Since Hayward and the others were following them, she was afraid they might get exposed.

The last time Gerald claimed the Ferrari was his, Sharon did not believe him. This time, she had to make it clear.

She stomped over to Gerald and stood in front of Quartney. She glared at Lilian and asked, “What are you afraid of, Lilian?”

“Ms. Weaver, right? Is this car rented by Lilian?”

“Absolutely not!”

Lilian tried to make eye contact with Ms. Weaver—it was apparent she was trying to hide something.

Sharon snatched the contract from Ms. Weaver and laughed, “This is a rental! Look, Hayward! Oh, Ms. Jung and Douglas, let me humor you guys. I was having some coffee with Hayward today, and this girl called Lilian...”

Sharon showed them the contract smugly while spilling the details from this morning’s incident.

Hayward was envious of Gerald, but after what Sharon said, he felt terrible for Lilian again. Seeing how everyone had witnessed Elena hugging Gerald, this was the only way to get back at him.

It wasn't that surprising that Gerald knew about Elena, seeing how he was Aiden and Yoel's subordinates.

Everyone eagerly anticipated Lilian's explanation about the car.

The moment Sharon found out the car was not Gerald's, a wave of relief instantly washed over her.

"Lilian, did you really rent this car?"

Hayward threw Lilian a disgusting look.

Lilian started sobbing. "I'm really sorry, Hayward... I'm sorry... I shouldn't have lied to you!"

"Hah, so it's rented by Lilian. Even the IC numbers don't match! Let's see who the owner is. Wait... huh? Gerald?!" Sharon froze, stunned to the point her mouth was wide open.

"This...this has to be a mistake, right?" Sharon's eyes widened in disbelief.

“Mr, Crawford you’re here! I was talking to Ms. Cole just now, and I didn’t notice you. My apologies!” a surprised Quartney quickly apologized.

“It’s fine, Ms. Weaver. Anyway, I can leave after signing, right?” Gerald smiled.

“Yes, Mr. Crawford, but don’t you need to go over the details first?”

“No worries. I’ve been staring at it for the entire day anyway,” Gerald replied and chuckled.

He walked toward Sharon and took the contract from her.

“The car, it’s really yours?” Sharon quizzed Gerald with questioning eyes.

That was the closest she had stood next to Gerald since high school, and all she had was this confused feeling in her heart.

“Who did it you think it belonged to? I’ve already said it’s mine, but none of you believed me!”

Gerald replied calmly, his eyes piercing right into Sharon’s soul.

He then tapped Lilian on her shoulder.

“Let’s go. I’ll send you home first.”

“Okay. Just drop me off at the station; I’m headed back to my hometown tonight,” responded Lilian.

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Gerald felt good about it, but Lilian didn’t resent Hayward at all.

“Gerald, this car must’ve cost a bomb, right? It’s quite a sight!”

Liam walked toward them and smiled at Gerald.

No matter how much the rest mocked him, Liam knew that being friends with him would be advantageous since he personally knew Elena and drove such a luxurious car.

“About 22,000 dollars!” Gerald replied, smiling politely.

They both shook hands.

Meanwhile, Liam’s phone rang.

“Dad? Okay, I’ll go back now!”

Liam hung up his phone. “Hey, Gerald. I’ll have to leave now; it’s really nice meeting you! I’m so sorry, Douglas and Leila, something came up, and I can’t take you guys home.”

“Huh?” Leila was stunned.

They were supposed to hitch a ride from Liam back home since Douglas did not dare drive his car.

Meanwhile, Gerald had already started his car engine, and Lilian was sitting next to him.

Douglas then turned to Leila and asked. “Leila, why not we take an Uber?”

“Uber? Look at you, is taking an Uber all you know? You bought a car, and you don’t even drive it, and now I’ve got to take the Uber!” Leila snapped, pissed.

“I’ll give you guys a ride to the station!” Gerald smiled and beckoned them over.

Gerald just felt that it was not right to leave them there like that.

Leila glanced at Gerald hesitantly and then hopped into the car. She stole a peek towards Lilian and felt a pang of jealousy. She wanted the co-pilot seat to be hers.

“Damn it!” Douglas cursed under his breath.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Gerald eyed Douglas.

“What do you mean? I’m getting into the car!”

“When I said them, I meant both the ladies. Not you, Douglas. And the money you owed me, don’t forget to pay up!” Gerald locked the door.

The last time Gerald tried to help him, he got insulted in return, and this time around, he was definitely not going to offer help again.

As she watched them drive off, Sharon was left in a confused state.

Gerald cared about her a lot back in high school. Even when she forgot to take her meals while busy studying, he would brave the rain just to buy her food. Gerald always saw her differently.

Even after three years, despite what she did to him, he still looked at her the same way. But this time, Gerald just grew so cold. He completely ignored her, and she was not too used to it. He did not even look at her when he took the contract from her.

After dropping them off at the station, Gerald booked a hotel room to rest for the evening.

That night, Gerald received a call from his family. It was a classified call that only his family members knew of. Gerald immediately picked up when he realized who the caller was.

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“Hey, dad!”

Gerald called out respectfully, answering the video call.

Although it wasn't the first time he video called his father after discovering his true identity, Gerald had somewhat grown to be more respectful towards his father.

He increasingly felt how honorable of a man his father was.

“What are you up to now, son?”

Gerald's father broke into a smile the moment his son came on the screen.

“Am just about to rest, Dad. What's up with the late call? Anything you need to tell me?”

“Yes, I do. I was initially planning to ask your sister to look into this matter. As I’m aware, you spend most of your time and energy, focusing on your homework. This thing will be delayed since your sister has gone to handle factory issues in North Africa. I wonder if she’d already told you about it?”

“You need my help finding a woman?”

Gerald recalled his sister’s instructions and what she confided in him previously. She had asked for his assistance in looking for a particular woman.

“Yes, I’ll send over her picture to you in a bit. I need your help finding out about her whereabouts as soon as you can. Otherwise, this guilt in my conscience will eat me up for the rest of my life!”

“There is also one more thing that you have to remember. You cannot let your mother know about this!”

Gerald’s father warned as he sighed.

This made Gerald feel a little awkward.

He scowled as he tried to grasp the meaning of the situation.

Could this have been a woman his father had let down in the past?

Damn it! His father was actually asking both the siblings to look for this woman in secret! The first person that crossed Gerald's mind was his mother. He could not help but feel a little sorry for his mother because he thought they were letting her down.

“What is your relationship with this woman? You have much greater power and influence compared to us. If you wanted to find her, you would've definitely been able to find her. Isn't that the case?” asked Gerald.

“Hey, kiddo. If it was that easy for your father to find her, would I even be asking you or your sister's help? What's my relationship with her? It's a question you both have asked me. Anyway, let me assure you that it's not whatever you are thinking of. But that being said, she was highly involved in our major family event that year. I can't help but feel that the Crawford family had let her down even after so many years. Don't ask me about the details as to what really happened. I'll explain everything to you at a later time.”

“Okay, that's it. Please put in some effort to help me to deal with this.”

Gerald's father hung up as soon as he finished speaking.

It didn't take long before Gerald received a message.

It was a black and white photo—one which looked like it was a few decades old.

It was a picture of a woman.

The moment he saw the woman, Gerald's hand trembled uncontrollably, and he nearly dropped his cell phone to the ground.

After looking at the photo again, Gerald inhaled sharply.

“This...isn't this Queta Smith?”

Yes. The woman in the photo was indeed beautiful. In fact, she was incredibly charming and enchanting.

She looked almost exactly like Queta.

But if this photo was in black and white, then Gerald knew for sure that it could not possibly be Queta.

Who was she?

Gerald presumed that this woman was most probably a peer of his father, which meant that she was around his age.

If that were the case, it was most likely she was Queta's mother.

After all, Gerald knew that Queta grew up in an orphanage.

It seemed as though her parents abandoned her for no apparent reason.

Putting the pieces together, it led to a clear conclusion that it was Queta's mother, the woman his father asked him to look for.

Thoughts started shrouding Gerald's mind.

He could remember vividly how his heart was throbbing and beating uncontrollably the first time he saw Queta.

He also felt a strange sense of comforting closeness to her ever since the first time he saw Queta and even had the urge to protect her for no reason at all.

Now, as he gave it a much deeper thought, he couldn't help but wonder if Queta was actually his sister?

Despite his father's explanation, Gerald wasn't convinced that his father had nothing to do with that woman at all!

That night, Gerald was washed with anxiety. He tossed and turned around his bed, felt extraordinarily restless, and could not sleep at all.

Gerald called Queta early the next morning. He had to meet up with her and clarify this once and for all.

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Throughout this whole time, both of them have occasionally been chatting with one another on WeChat whenever they were free.

At present, Queta was already teaching at a new kindergarten and was doing pretty well.

Gerald had helped Queta out and gave her a house to live in, where Drake and Tyson shared the same place with her.

"Miss Smith, can you do me a favor? I can't review these children's homework in my class on time. My boyfriend is already on his way, picking me up to go shopping. Could you review their homework on my behalf?"

A female teacher with waist-length hair asked Queta, who was also reviewing her students' homework.

“But Miss Lawrie, I’m still reviewing my own students’ homework too!”

Queta replied shyly.

“Pfft! If you’re not keen to help me, then just say it. Why come up with so many excuses? Don’t think for a second that you’re so great just because Mr. Teves introduced you to work here. Hah, just think about it! I mean, who are you, Queta Smith? You got crowned as Mayberry City’s Early Childhood Education Academy’s most beautiful teacher after only joining the kindergarten for a month. Isn’t that great or what? If so, can’t you even help me review my students’ homework?”

The teacher named Kaitlyn Lawrie retorted icily.

She became a teacher at the best kindergarten in Mayberry City two months before Queta’s arrival. When Queta first joined, Kaitlyn would often bully her, making her review her students’ homework on her behalf.

Kaitlyn had a wealthy and influential boyfriend who was really handsome too.

She was confident that she would be selected as the most beautiful female teacher in the entire district, optimistic that she would definitely bag the top spot.

But alas, the students’ parents voted for Queta, a woman that was beautiful inside out.

Of course, that threw Kaitlyn into a nervous breakdown.

She even dug into Queta's background, but there were zero bad records about Queta at all.

Hence, the bullying situation at hand.

Other female teachers who were present just kept their mouths shut.

"Well, I will just review it for you then, Miss Lawrie."

Queta bit her lips. She then moved the massive pile of homework from Kaitlyn's table onto her own.

"Hmph! Now that's much better. Miss Smith, don't be too high headed thinking you're so great just cause you won the most beautiful teacher award. Let me tell you something. I, Kaitlyn Lawrie, will not lose to you in anything!"

Kaitlyn mocked before turning around triumphantly as she prepared to leave.

"Queta, everyone should review their own students' homework. You don't owe her anything at all, so why are you helping her to do it?"

Suddenly, a soft voice spoke out.

A boy walked up to Queta's table before moving the pile of homework back to Kaitlyn's table.

"F*ck! Who do you think you are?"

Kaitlyn was appalled.

Gerald did not even bother looking at her. He simply grabbed Queta's arm as he said, "Didn't I ask you to apply for leave? Let's go out and grab something to eat. I have to talk to you about something!"

"Mm! I have already asked for the day off!"

Queta replied as she nodded.

Upon seeing Gerald, Queta was immediately filled with a sense of security.

Kaitlyn seemed really intimidating to her, and she was a teeny bit afraid.

When the other female teachers saw Kaitlyn being outrightly ignored, they simply lowered their heads and giggled.

Kaitlyn's face flushed red.

“Oh! Miss Lawrie, your boyfriend is here to pick you up again! God, I envy you so much!”

Several young female teachers who had gone out to shop were chatting with Kaitlyn's boyfriend at the door.

When they spotted Kaitlyn, they instantly felt jealous.

They then saw Queta and Gerald walking out from the side doors.

The girls continued the gossip among themselves, “Oh, look at that! Is that Queta's boyfriend?”

“Oh my god! Seriously? He looks pretty low...”

“Haha! I guess they're meant for each other.”

“ ... ”

The moment Gerald stepped out, these ridicules came flooding...

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“Pfft! No wonder Queta dared to disobey me today. It turns out she’s gotten herself a boyfriend! Wow, this is pissing me off right now!”

Kaitlyn rolled her eyes as she glared at Gerald, who was talking to Queta at that time.

“Kaitlyn, what’s wrong?”

The man leaning against his car door had his hands in his pockets asked as he threw a quick look at Gerald.

“It’s all because of Queta! All the kids are on vacation today, so we’re supposed to stay back in school to review their homework. But I’ve made plans to go shopping and ask her to help me review my students’ homework! But look, she refused to help just because her boyfriend’s here!”

“I thought that she actually found a great boyfriend for herself, but he turned out to be nothing more than a pathetic jerk!”

Kaitlyn cried out in exasperation, explaining the details to him.

She saw that Gerald had on a simple white T-shirt, a pair of sports pants and some sneakers.

She couldn't be bothered to filter any of her words.

“That's right. He thinks that he's so great just because he got together with the most beautiful teacher? Hahaha! Kaitlyn, your boyfriend, is still the best! Look, he's driving a BMW 5 Series — simply too awesome!”

“Of course! It so happens that I'm going out shopping with my boyfriend too. Why don't all of you get in my boyfriend's car and we can go together then? After all, we should have a good relationship since we are all colleagues!”

Kaitlyn replied as she laughed.

She wanted to isolate Queta and make sure that she was an outcast in the future.

“Yeah, sure!!”

The girls smiled happily as they got into the car and left together.

Gerald wanted to reprimand Kaitlyn.

He could not help feeling enraged, seeing the way she bullied Queta.

But Queta tugged Gerald's hand back — she didn't want him to act rashly.

“Damn it! Do they really think they're so great just because they're loaded?”

Gerald cursed as he watched them leave.

They then got into the Mercedes-Benz G500 that he had parked by the side of the road.

It was almost eleven in the morning now.

Gerald drove Queta to a restaurant.

“Gerald, you said you've something important to talk about? What is it?” asked Queta curiously once they had taken their seats.

“Queta, do you know a woman named Xara Machamer?”

Gerald asked forwardly. After all, this matter did not only involve Queta, but it also involved his own life to a certain extent.

This mattered even more if Xara was involved with his father in the past.

Wouldn't this mean that he would suddenly have another sister out of the blue?

Gerald felt that the entire situation was just weird—it was best asking Queta himself.

Queta looked stunned when she heard those two words. She looked at Gerald in surprise.

“You...you...how did you know about her?”

Upon seeing how she reacted, he was convinced that this was leading somewhere.

He asked again, “How is she related to you?”

Queta shook her head in response as she said, “I don't know who she is. I only know that she was the one who abandoned me. She's probably my mother. The orphanage dean only told me about it when I asked him about it later on.”

“They found me at the entrance of the orphanage, and I was wearing a jade pendant with the name ‘Xara Machamer’ engraved on it.”

Queta carefully examined Gerald before saying, "I have not mentioned this matter to anyone else before. How did you find out about it? Did Drake and Tyson tell you about it?"

Gerald was silent as he thought to himself for a moment.

He decided not to tell Queta the truth for the time being, as he did not know how he was going to explain things to her.

He simply took advantage of the situation and said, "Well, yes. One of them mentioned it to me just randomly. Queta, don't you want to find your mother or this person named Xara Machamer?"

Gerald quickly changed the subject.

"Of course, I want to find her. But how am I going to look for her?"

Queta replied, "This is one of the reasons why I didn't want to tell you about this. You've already helped me a lot and I don't want to cause more trouble and inconvenience. Otherwise, I really don't know how I am going to repay you!"

"What's the matter? Since you do want to find her, then you don't have to worry about anything else. I will help you find her!"

Gerald replied and smiled as he patted Queta gently on her shoulder.

“Okay.”

Queta replied, nodding slowly.

She then took out a jade pendant that was wrapped in a piece of red cloth.

“Here, Gerald. This is the jade pendant that I was talking about.”

Queta handed the jade pendant over to Gerald.

Gerald looked at it. Wasn't this the jade pendant in one of the photos that his father had sent to him?

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“Queta, do you mind if I hold on to this jade pendant for now? I want to look for a master to help me to look into the origins of this jade pendant!”

Gerald asked, smiling lightly.

Queta paused for a moment before she nodded and said, “Yeah, sure, go ahead!”

Gerald continued to question Queta about her past.

“It’s really too hot outside! My sunscreen isn’t working at all!”

Suddenly, a group dashed into the shop.

One of the girls could not help but exclaim out loud as she carried a few bags in her hand.

“Kaitlyn, there is a branded shop next to this restaurant. Shall we go in and take a look later?”

One of the girls asked.

“Okay, let’s eat first!”

This girl was not just anyone else, but it was none other than Queta’s colleague, Kaitlyn.

“Oh my god! Kaitlyn, look! Isn’t that Queta? Can’t believe she’s eating here too!”

The girl next to her pointed at Queta and Gerald.

This was totally unexpected.

Kaitlyn's boyfriend was filthy rich — they knew that he definitely would not bring them to just any casual place to eat.

This restaurant had quite a reputation.

But seeing Queta was completely unexpected, as she was someone who could usually only afford to eat a meal with a dish every day. How was it that she could actually afford to eat in such a high-end restaurant?

“Oh! Queta, did you come here for lunch?”

Kaitlyn sneered as she walked over to both of them.

Gerald had just taken the jade pendant from Queta. He could not help but frown when he saw those girls heading in their direction.

“Did you order anything to eat? Why are you only having two drinks?”

Kaitlyn questioned.

“Hahaha. Perhaps this young couple simply wanted to come in here just to look around. There are just too many of these kinds. They won’t order anything to eat but just get drinks so that they could take some photos and show off to their friends!”

One of the female colleagues whispered in Kaitlyn’s ear.

Her statement made Kaitlyn and the others burst out in laughter.

“Waiter! Is there a four pax set meal here? Can you give me a set meal that is of a higher standard?”

“Of course, ma’am. Our shop has also recently added a new dish to our menu. It is a special foie gras dish, specially made by our chef from Silton. Would you like to try it too?”

The waiter asked as he looked at Kaitlyn and the rest.

This time around, Kaitlyn glanced at her boyfriend.

“Okay, then. Let me have a look at it...”

Kaitlyn’s boyfriend took the menu in his hand, and he was shocked when he saw the price.

“F*ck! Are you crazy? A plate of the foie gras actually costs two hundred and sixty dollars? Just one plate?”

Kaitlyn’s boyfriend was speechless.

Kaitlyn was also taken aback. “Ahh? It is so expensive! Oh my god! That is a big portion of my salary!”

“Yes, sir. This is just the price for a small portion. There are about six pieces in it. But once you taste it, you will definitely feel that it is worth the money and experience!”

“Look! All of those customers also ordered it!”

The waiter gestured at the other guests who were dining next to them.

There were indeed plates of foie gras on each of their tables.

When they looked at the large portion’s price, they were even more dumbfounded to see that it cost four hundred dollars!

This was simply too exorbitant.

Before coming to the restaurant, they were thinking of spending about two to three hundred dollars tops.

“Why don’t we order a small portion to try then?” Kaitlyn suggested when she saw that everyone seated around them had also ordered the dish.

“Alright, you want to order a small portion of foie gras then? Hah, sure! No problem.”

Kaitlyn’s boyfriend raised his voice and ordered, “We’d like a portion of the foie gras, please!”

He wanted to prove that he was superior.

At this same time, Gerald’s food was also being served.

The waiter brought two bread bowls over to his table.

“Hahaha! They only ordered two bread bowls? Isn’t that a little too pathetic?”

“Oh my god! It’s okay. You can ask them for some rice and a plate of potatoes too!”

The girls commented as they laughed.

“Sir, can you please make way. This is the large portion of foie gras that you have ordered. I will serve it to you now.”

Just then, a waiter respectfully placed the large portion of foie gras on Gerald’s table.

Kaitlyn and the others were all covering their mouths in laughter as they continued to make fun of Gerald and Queta. But the moment they saw the waiter and the foie gras, they were so shocked that they froze in place...

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”F*ck! How is it that they’re eating so well?”

Kaitlyn was shocked.

The vanity from her face was thoroughly washed away.

“Pfft! Why are you showing off when you have no money? Why bother ordering something that expensive?” mocked Kaitlyn.

The other two female colleagues who felt the burn also chimed in as they mocked the pair.

Gerald and Queta were really eating very well. Both of them ordered the expensive and large portion of foie gras, while the other four only ordered a small serving to share among themselves.

As the waiter served the dish to them, he could not help but give them a look.

Gerald chose to keep quiet because Queta kept persuading him, and she didn't want him to confront them directly.

They simply continued chatting as they ate.

Once they were done eating, he then realized that Kaitlyn and the others had already left.

They obviously couldn't take the humiliation, so they left in a hurry once they were done with their meals.

"Let's leave too," said Gerald while rubbing his belly.

He then ushered Queta out.

"By the way, Queta, where are the clothes that I bought you before? Why aren't you wearing them?"

Gerald asked and smiled as he looked at Queta.

Back then, he bought a lot of clothes for her.

Queta blushed slightly, and she lowered her head as she said, “I feel a little embarrassed to wear such beautiful and nice clothes!”

Gerald couldn't help but smile.

She was so similar to him. Back then, when he was poor, he felt that he only needed to wear clean clothes.

Gerald still chose to wear plain and ordinary clothes now because he wanted to maintain a low profile.

Whereas on the other hand, there was no reason for Queta to maintain a low profile.

“What are you afraid of? By the way, there is a branded shop here. Come! Let me bring you in to pick out some nicer clothes!”

“Huh? No, I don't want to! It's too expensive!”

Queta rejected, shaking her head.

“It’s okay. Let’s go in. I have a black card anyway!”

Gerald replied as he smiled.

He then gently pulled Queta into the shop.

“Grayson, I want this dress. It’s gorgeous. Do you think I’ll look good in it?”

Kaitlyn asked as she held a dress in front of her, gesturing for her boyfriend to comment.

The dress was really beautiful.

The rich, young chap named Grayson flipped the price tag, and he almost threw the dress away.

“F*ck! This dress costs more than 3,000 dollars! Why not rob a bank instead? Darling, can’t you choose another dress?”

Grayson persuaded Kaitlyn as he clutched his wallet.

“Alright, then. What about this one?”

Kaitlyn asked again.

From a single glance, it was still too pricey, costing 1,500 dollars.

As for the other two girls who were with Kaitlyn, they merely held on to their shopping bags as they sulked in envy from the side. Anyways, they did not have a rich boyfriend like Grayson who could afford to buy them such luxurious goods.

It was sufficient for them to take advantage of being acquainted with Kaitlyn, but it would most certainly be unrealistic for them to expect Grayson to buy them something too!

Even after Kaitlyn chose a couple of dozen dresses to try, Grayson realized that it was way over his budget, and they ended up not buying any of them.

Kaitlyn was extremely depressed.

“Gerald, aren’t you buying too many clothes? I can’t wear that many clothes anyway! Plus, it’s way too expensive!”

Queta exclaimed in shock when she saw the number of clothes piled in Gerald's hands.

She felt a little distressed.

"Why is it expensive? The tailor makes the man, anyway!"

Gerald strongly felt that Queta did not need to live such a life like him.

"Hey, this dress looks not bad, and it's quite cheap too. We are buying it!"

Gerald saw the dress next to Grayson, rummaged through to pick the size before asking the dumbfounded salesgirl to wrap it up for him.

"F*ck! Queta? You...are you both crazy?!"

The moment Kaitlyn saw both of them, she could not help but simultaneously feel both stunned and confused, especially when she saw the number of luxury items they were holding.

Judging by the number of pieces in Gerald's hands, it was probably more than a dozen.

"Oh my god! Can you even afford to buy anything here? How are you actually buying that many? Why are you so pretentious? Are you just going to take pictures again?"

Both of Queta's female colleagues sneered along.

They felt as though Queta had just trampled all over their self-esteem.

Gerald couldn't care less about them. He simply walked straight to the counter once he was satisfied with his selection.

Kaitlyn and the others exchanged glances with one another before tailing behind Gerald and Queta.

"Hello, sir. The total amount for all the clothes and bags that you have selected is 48,000 dollars. How would you like to make the payment?"

The cashier was also utterly dumbfounded at the amount.

Kaitlyn and the rest who stood behind gaped, utterly stupefied.

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Without saying another word, Gerald simply swiped the black card in his hand.

Though utterly dumbfounded, the cashier was a professional and he immediately bowed.

“Sir! You’ve spent so much on our shop today that it would be rude if we didn’t give you any free gifts! Please select any three articles of clothing and they’ll be on us!” said the cashier respectfully.

“No, wait! He’s not buying any of that! Gerald, all of this is way too expensive! I don’t need that many fancy clothes!” replied Queta frantically as she shook her head.

“I don’t think I’d ever have a reason to wear half of what you’ve selected anyway! Please just put them back...”

Her voice was still quivering slightly from the shock of the final bill.

“You don’t need to wear all of them, you know. Now come on, go choose another three articles of clothing. If you want, you could even give them to the teachers or colleagues that you’re close to in the kindergarten. I’m sure that that’ll definitely help boost your relationship with them!” said Gerald with a faint smile on his face.

Gerald knew that many people bullied Queta for her honesty. Which was why Gerald thought that it was worth spending some money on her.

Gerald had to use his black gold card anyway. He needed to spend at least forty-five thousand dollars monthly, so Queta was making his life much easier this month.

Gerald was also aware that he could be willingly spending so much for her because of the feelings that he had for Queta, deep down in his heart.

While this was happening, Kaitlyn and the other two female colleagues were standing not too far behind them.

All three of them were surprised, and this was especially so for the two female colleagues who had heard Gerald's last statement.

"Wow! Queta, your boyfriend's so rich! His name is Gerald, right? What a nice name, and he's so handsome too!" said the two girls who had begun walking toward them and praising Gerald.

Who the more powerful one now was, was clear as day.

"...Huh? Gerald- He's not..." said Queta, still in a state of shock as she tried to tell them that he wasn't her boyfriend.

Gerald however, hurriedly replied, "I'm just her god brother! And please, handsome? Have you even looked at how casual the clothes I'm wearing are?"

"Haha! You're hilarious Gerald!"

The two girls couldn't help but to feel slightly embarrassed.

God brother? D*mn it! And here they were thinking Queta had a boyfriend!

However, this didn't move Queta's position in their hearts. After all, she had a rich and powerful person backing her up.

"Say Queta, Gerald's bought you so many clothes. And he's even said that you could give some of them to your closer colleagues! So... Do you remember that time I smiled at you on your first day of work at the kindergarten?" asked one of the girls with a smile.

"Also Queta, I remember clearly that I was the one who had pointed out where the cafeteria was to you when you first arrived," said the other.

"I remember both those moments, yes!" replied Queta as she nodded.

"Pfft. Oh, Queta! I really hadn't expected you to have such a rich god brother! If he's that willing to buy so much for you, you should just appreciate it! But anyway, I was the one who was interested in that dress first. If you're giving out clothes to your colleagues you'd better give that one to me!" said Kaitlyn, her voice filled with jealousy.

"Oh? Kaitlyn how shameless! You're the one who bullies Queta the most and you're still expecting her to give you something? Who do you think you are?" scolded both girls at the same time.

“F*ck! Whose side are you two on anyway?” cursed Kaitlyn, her eyes widened in anger.

“Alright, settle down,” said Gerald as he glanced at Kaitlyn. He smiled before looking away and continuing what he wanted to say.

“Queta, since these two colleagues treated you well before, feel free to give them some of the clothes. I trust that if anything happens in the future, all three of you will continue looking out for one another. Now let’s go, I’ll send you back to the school!”

“Ahh! Thank you, Gerald! We’ll definitely continue to help each other in the future, right Queta?” said the two colleagues gleefully.

When they finally left the shop and arrived at the parking lot, the two girls were surprised once again when they saw Gerald and Queta getting into his car.

“Queta... that’s... That’s a Mercedes Benz G500! Oh my god, your brother drives a Mercedes Benz G500?!”

Kaitlyn was already fuming at that point and Gerald knew that he had taught that arrogant girl a lesson.

Later that afternoon, once Gerald and Queta had parted ways, Gerald bid farewell to Giya who was still in the hospital.

His next stop was Serene County. Gerald made sure he had Queta's jade pendant with him before he started driving. He decided that once he reached Serene County, he would ask Zack to help him look into the matter.

However, upon entering the county, Gerald found that the main road had been blocked and the border had been pulled up.

Several police, workers, and leaders were there.

Taking off his sunglasses, Gerald rolled down his car window to have a look at what the commotion was about. Noticing some workers nearby, he handed them some cigarettes before asking them what was going on.

Seeing how polite Gerald was, they willingly explained the situation to him.

"Young man, I'm afraid you can't go any further. Something big has happened ahead!"

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"Well, what exactly happened?" asked Gerald, confused.

"See, this place was originally a construction project. The Weston Merchants Holdings were hired to oversee the job about a year ago. Apparently, the developers used less than appropriate quality materials and because of that, there's been a collapse around

the project area. More than a hundred people were injured because of this, sixty of whom were workers! Thankfully, no lives were lost this time around!”

“Yep. I heard that the developers ran for the hills last night! Those from Weston Merchants Holdings are definitely in hot water now. About a dozen people, including Mr. Jung, have been dismissed from their positions, or so I’ve heard! They’re waiting to be dealt with at this very moment!” replied the workers.

As Gerald recalled, Mr. Jung was the director of Weston Merchants Holdings. He had been dismissed as well?

After thinking about it for a while, Gerald asked, “Why would the developers need to run away? Since no lives were lost, compensation would’ve been enough, no? What more, the main responsibility doesn’t fall on the investors, right?”

“The thing is, I’ve heard that the developers ran out of money quite a while ago. According to rumors, six months ago to be exact. But that’s beside the point. Right now, we’re just wondering who to look for! We just want our salary!”

“As for Weston Merchants Holdings, well, someone has to take responsibility for the matter. All this is happening during such a critical moment too. If you haven’t heard, a large group has been planning to develop and reconstruct Serene County. Due to such an unfortunate event happening now, the leaders must be furious. The impact of this accident is truly terrible!”

After hearing the whole story, Gerald finally understood the general situation.

However, he couldn't do anything to help with the matter, though he still sympathized with all those involved in it.

Gerald then turned his car around and drove off after thanking the workers.

Along his journey, Gerald received a text message from Zack. It was the same story about the building's collapse which the workers had told Gerald about earlier. What a disaster!

Seeing that Zack had messaged him, Gerald took the opportunity to ask him to look for a master specializing in jade.

Gerald knew that Zack knew way more people than he did.

Once Gerald got back to the hotel, he took a shower. As he was about to leave for a quick dinner, he received a phone call. It was from his father.

"Dad?"

"Son, you've made an investment in our hometown right? I heard that a building collapsed there. Such a catastrophe..."

“That’s right, though my group isn’t involved in that matter.”

Gerald thought to himself that his father was very well-informed.

“Oh, I know it isn’t. However, I just wanted to say that your Uncle Jung has been dismissed from his position. Could you go over and help their family out?”

“Dad, I’ve already told you. Uncle Jung has already forgotten all about his friendship with you a long time ago. Why are you still asking me to help him?” replied Gerald in a puzzled voice.

Gerald’s father was really something else. The same topic always popped up whenever his father called him.

Gerald was constantly reminded to offer the Jung family help if they faced any difficulties.

Why else would Gerald continue to help Leila even though she despised and looked down on him?

However, Gerald had been disappointed with the Jung family since the last time he had gone to their house. He had also explained to his father about the situation back then.

That left a sour taste in Gerald's mouth and even though he knew that the Jung family was in hot water this time, he didn't really care.

After all, just as Uncle Jung had said, Gerald was not to go to his house to look for him unless there was something truly important.

Gerald really couldn't be bothered with their family.

"Well, some things can't be explained easily. Anyway, have you met up with your Aunt Leia yet?" asked his father, suddenly changing the topic.

Gerald frowned slightly before saying, "Yes, I've met her. Why?"

"To tell you the truth, I've let your Uncle Jung down before this. I can't help but blame myself for what happened. Just... no matter how they may treat us, please help them whenever you can..." replied Gerald's father as he sighed.

"...What? What did you do?"

Gerald was shocked.

Could his father and Aunt Leia be having an affair?

Was that the reason why Uncle Jung was always so cold toward Gerald's family?

"Dad? Explain yourself. Also, what exactly is going on with that woman you asked me to look for? That Xara Machamer. Is she and Aunt Leia both your women?"

Gerald couldn't help but ask out of frustration.

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Upon hearing that claim, Gerald's father immediately coughed aloud.

"You... you rascal! What nonsense are you spouting? Just know that my relationship with both of them isn't how you're imagining it! Ignoring that, your Aunt Leia is part of the Jung family as well, and they really need your help now. Just help them if you can. Think of it as though you're helping me repay a debt to them! Don't forget to look for Xara too! Your mother is here! That's it for now!"

After saying all that, his father hung up immediately.

Gerald held on to his cell phone, frozen for quite some time before finally coming back to his senses.

...What?

Gerald was tempted to call his mother at that moment to tell her about all this. After all, he had been helping his father lie to her and he couldn't help but feel guilty about it.

After giving it some thought, he sighed. He would trust his father for the time being.

Rubbing his forehead, he looked at his phone and saw that it was only 5.30 p.m.

Scratching the back of his head, he sighed again. So be it. Having lost his appetite, he left his room and began driving to the Jung family's house.

Upon arriving, Gerald saw that many people were already there.

Inside the house, Uncle Jung was lying on his sofa. He was on a drip and feeling faint from all the things happening to him. Since he had to take responsibility for the event and was even dismissed from his position in Weston Merchants Holdings, the sudden wave of anxiety had hit like a truck, causing him to feel ill.

Accompanying him, were some guests who chatted occasionally with the man.

"It's going to be fine, Willie. No use crying over spilled milk. Since the impact of the accident was so sudden and huge, the county leaders may have just dismissed you out of pure anger! Who knows, they may even reinstate you once things have calmed down!"

“He’s right you know. Besides, Leia’s working in a bank now, right? There should be no problems for you, financially!”

“Thank you, Lucas, Zayne... Why don’t you stay over for dinner tonight?” replied Willie weakly.

“Oh, there’s no need for that. We only came to pay you a visit. We’ll be taking our leave soon!” said both of them as they stood up.

“Lucas, Zayne, is there really nothing more that you can do to help Willie? Both of you have several good connections if I recall correctly. There must be some way you can further help him!”

Hearing that, both of them simply shook their heads. They had done what they could and the people who saw their reactions understood.

“Don’t worry, Aunt Leia. I’ve had a talk with my dad about Uncle Jung’s situation before coming here today...” said Douglas.

Naturally, he was there too.

Hearing this, both Willie and Leia turned to look at him.

Douglas couldn't help but think highly of himself. They were all looking at him so expectantly, knowing that he would be able to help them when they were at their lowest.

"So... how did your father respond?" asked Willie as he continued looking at Douglas.

"He said that the situation wasn't that serious. The only reason it sounds so terrible is because you're making a mountain out of a molehill. After all, you shouldn't be the one shouldering all this responsibility in the first place!"

"My dad added that as long as you can recruit new developers to fill in the vacancies and achieve a settlement with the injured workers, everything else should be easily resolved," replied Douglas with a smile.

To simplify, he just needed to find new funds to take over and support the development of the project.

"But this is already such a messy project! Worst come to worst, we may even have to demolish the real estates that have already been built! I can't see why anyone would take up this kind of real estate or project after hearing about this disaster. What more, the county would be responsible for some of the compensation funds. How could our county possibly have that much money? We simply can't afford it!" said Willie as he shook his head slowly.

He had already considered that approach before.

Ding dong!

At that moment, the doorbell suddenly rang.

Thinking it was just going to be another one of his colleagues or maybe even a leader who had come to pay him a visit, he told Leila to help him get up. “Thank you. Please welcome our guest, Leila!”

His wife simply nodded before heading toward the door. The moment she opened it, Leila was taken aback.

“Gerald?”

‘Why... Why is he here?’ Leila couldn’t help but think to herself, disappointed.

Hearing his name, Willie shook his head as well, frustrated.

When Leila returned to his side, he told her to help him lie down again.

To think that he had thought that it could have been a leader or colleague who would be able to help with the situation. The gap between his expectations and finding out that it was just Gerald was simply too wide.

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“Uncle Jung, Aunt Leia, I’ve come to visit!” said Gerald with a smile on his face as he carried a bag of gifts into their house.

Leia simply looked at him without saying anything else as he placed the bag down.

Willie himself was already on the sofa again, looking toward the ceiling without even caring to reply to Gerald’s greeting.

Leila felt embarrassed seeing Gerald get ignored like this since she knew that Gerald was probably doing very well in Mayberry City.

After all, he had been the one who had sent her to the station the other day in a big Mercedes Benz G500!

In all honesty, Leila was slightly grateful toward Gerald.

However, she hadn’t had the time to tell her father about this yet. By the time Leila got home yesterday, this series of unfortunate events had already kicked off.

Even then, her father was already on the verge of collapsing from all the pressure. How could she ever tell him about how much fun she had had?

Sensing the awkwardness, Leila walked over to Gerald before setting the bag he had brought on the table.

“Thank you for coming over to visit, Gerald!” said Leila with a smile.

Douglas simply narrowed his eyes at Gerald when he heard his daughter greeting him.

Gerald didn't really have anything to say so he simply nodded and took a seat on one of the couches. He had anticipated Willie's poor attitude. Thus, before arriving, he had made sure to fortify his mind psychologically.

“Oh, funding! Where on earth am I supposed to get such a huge sum of money to take over this real estate project!” said Willie out of the blue in a saddened tone.

“Uncle Jung, what about the Dream Investment Group in Mayberry City? They're going to invest and spend one and a half billion dollars to develop Serene County. Have you asked for their help in this project?”

“Of course I have. To be honest, I know a few of the managers working for the Dream Investment Group. Though we used to share a good relationship, I don't think it would be appropriate for me to look for them now. After all, what company would want to take on this project anymore!” replied Willie as he shook his head miserably.

“They're the only hope you have left now, Uncle Jung. Besides, we're talking about the Dream Investment Group. This is just a small sum of money for them! As long as you

can get them to take on this project, the matter can be easily resolved! My dad told me this as well!”

Knowing that Willie was obviously relying on him to deal with the issue, Douglas spoke every word confidently.

“Douglas, you’ve helped us ask your father to put in some effort to deal with our situation... Your Aunt Leia, Leila, and I will remember this favor for as long as we live!”

“Worry not, Uncle Jung! My father will definitely try to get the Dream Investment Group to help in this matter!”

Though he said all that, Douglas was thinking otherwise in his mind.

Pfft. As if my father would ever worry about this.

If I weren’t after Leila, I wouldn’t even have bothered wasting my time coming here.

Despite thinking so, Douglas still knew that he had to say all that to save his face.

“Alright then... I feel much more relieved after hearing you say all that... Douglas, why not stay for dinner tonight? You know what, all of Leila’s friends and classmates are invited to join as well! Aunt Leia will be preparing dinner for all of you right now!” said Willie, some color finally returning to his face.

“Alright, I’ll go clean up first! But wait! I don’t think we have enough vegetables for all of us here! And I can’t leave to get any since I still have to prepare the meat!” said Leia anxiously.

At that moment, she noticed Gerald drinking a glass of water. He had been sitting quietly on the same couch ever since he entered.

Suddenly feeling irritated, she said, “Since you’re clearly free, why don’t you get the ingredients, Gerald? I’ll write you a list of things to get and you can run over to the supermarket just outside the community to get them for me!”

“Me?” asked Gerald, startled. Wasn’t he just being treated like a servant then?

Thinking about it, however, it would still be more awkward for him to stay here since he would have to continue looking at Willie’s disgusted face.

What more, if he left now, he could give Zack a call to tell him to take over the real estate project.

In a way, that would mean that he had fulfilled the task that his father had entrusted to him.

Nodding to himself as he got up, he agreed to Leia’s request.

He was rather glad to be able to leave, honestly. He was only here because his father kept insisting that he helped them after all!

He didn't need to be in their good books and he knew it.

"I'll go with you, Gerald!" said Leila as she saw him leave with the ingredient list and a basket that he had been given.

"Leila! Can't you differentiate between who's more important? Hurry up and pour a glass of water for Douglas!"

When he had heard Leila's words, Willie started getting anxious again.

Even Leila could feel that something was wrong.

What was going on with their daughter? From the moment Gerald had entered, Leila's tone toward him seemed to be completely different compared to how she used to talk to him.

The Crawford family weren't good people after all!

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Leila told Leila to remain home as well to accompany Douglas.

As for Gerald, he immediately called Zack as soon as he got out of the house.

Once Zack had been updated on the matter, Gerald knew that the situation would be dealt with swiftly. This was Zack after all.

As Zack immediately set out to start making the appropriate arrangements, Gerald headed to the supermarket to get all the items on Leia's list.

Once he had everything, he returned to the Jung family's house.

When he set foot into the house again, however, a massive change had apparently taken place.

“Congratulations, Uncle Jung!”

“Thank you! I really hadn't expected the Dream Investment Group to actually take over the real estate project! To decide to take over the entire project... I'm honestly stunned!”

Willie didn't need his drip anymore. His initial paleness was all gone and in his raised hand, was his cell phone.

“Gather round, everyone! All of you need to enjoy a good drink with me today! Especially you, Douglas!” shouted Willie joyfully.

To him, he felt that Douglas’s father’s help was crucial in the Dream Investment Group’s final decision. His own connections may have also played a part in that.

To simplify, the leader had called Willie just a while ago to tell him that his position in Weston Merchants Holding had been reinstated. He was also to take charge of this project in the future.

They would then collect a donation and the matter would be completely resolved.

How could he stay depressed after hearing all that?

Willie then looked at both Douglas and Leila. He had an idea in his mind.

“Leila, let me tell you...”

“Gerald, have some food!”

Just as he was about to say something, Willie saw Leila serving some dishes to Gerald.

He was utterly shocked. “Leila! What are you doing? Gerald still has both his hands, doesn’t he? Let him get his own food!”

Leila turned to look at him before replying, “Dad, actually, Gerald...”

“Uncle Jung, Gerald’s no longer who he used to be!” shouted Douglas as he glared fiercely at Gerald before Leila could finish her sentence.

If Leila was just going to relay the same information, he would be the one to say it!

“What’s so different about him now?” asked Aunt Leia as she served another dish on the table.

“See, Gerald here won the lottery! With the money, he bought himself a Mercedes Benz G500! That’s the reason why Leila’s treating him so well now!” replied Douglas enviously.

“Oh my god...”

Everyone seated around the dinner table was shocked.

“How much money did you win?” asked Aunt Leia as she subconsciously gulped.

Gerald didn't know what to say.

He had lied to Leila and told her that he had won the lottery just so he could conceal his identity back then. Apparently, now he had to lie to an entire group of people.

"I just used most of the money to buy a Mercedes Benz G500!" replied Gerald.

"You used the money to buy that? You won more than three hundred thousand dollars through the lottery?"

Everyone was shocked silent. Gerald remained quiet as well.

All of a sudden, Willie slammed his chopsticks against the table, staring at Gerald with a cold gaze.

"What a fool!"

"Gerald, other people are free to show off, but don't you even realize how poor your own living conditions are? Why are you even trying to show off? Wasting your money to buy a Mercedes Benz... Do you even know how much you could have done with that three hundred thousand dollars?" yelled Willie as he shook his head.

Douglas was satisfied. He smiled as he said, "That's true, Uncle Jung. If he had only used one hundred and fifty thousand dollars as a donation for your fundraiser, you

could have arranged a position for Gerald in the labor dispatching department! Ha! But all Gerald knows how to do is try to compete with other rich heirs!”

“See? Douglas is clearly more knowledgeable! Gerald, let me ask you. Have you bought a house for yourself in Serene County?”

Gerald simply shook his head, knowing where this was going.

“Have you found a job?”

Gerald sighed as he shook his head again.

“Oh, I haven’t seen anyone as brainless as you are! Why are you spending so extravagantly? Get a decent job first then start working to make an honest living for yourself! Tell you what, sell the car again immediately. If you’re lucky, you’ll be able to get at least two hundred and seventy thousand dollars back. With that money, you can buy yourself a house. Once that’s done, I can arrange a job for you with social insurance and housing funds. ”

“What else, what else... Ah yes, there’s one more thing,” said Willie as he sipped some wine before looking at Gerald again.

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“...Actually scratch that, I guess I can accept you, even if you don’t fulfill all the standard conditions. All you need to do now is sell the car and buy yourself a house. If you can at least do that right, you’ll get a job as a clerk in the public office. You’ll have

social insurance and housing funds then. That way, you'll be able to have a stable life in the future!"

"You know, I used to have a subordinate who had a sister just three years older than you. She's still unmarried. Once you've settled down, I can be your matchmaker and help you get a wife as well!" said Willie.

Gerald was dumbfounded. So, as long as he was willing to donate money to him, Willie was going to give him such good treatment?

Leila, however, was shocked. "Dad... Isn't that secretary's sister... You know... Intellectually slow...?"

"So what if she is? It's not easy for anyone to get a wife these days. Look at Gerald's qualifications! I can't even guarantee that the other party would be willing to marry someone like him!"

"Um... Uncle Jung, you don't have to worry about me!"

Gerald was trying hard not to burst in anger, his face alternating between red and pale.

He could only endure it by thinking about what his father had said.

Unfortunately, Willie wasn't done yet.

Once dinner was over, Willie immediately contacted a second-hand car dealer without even waiting for Gerald to step in. After all, he wanted Gerald to donate part of that money to him before using the remaining money to buy a house for himself. This was an excellent opportunity to arrange a contractual job for Gerald as well.

At the very least, he would belong partially to the organization then!

Gerald, naturally, was unwilling to do any of this.

He was very, very close to revealing his identity at that moment just so that he could slap all their faces.

However, he clenched his fist behind his back while thinking of his father's words to keep himself calm. After all, his father had said that he had done things with Aunt Leia to let Uncle Jung down.

Since he didn't know what his father had done with her yet, he remained silent.

He simply wanted to put an end to this matter quickly. Once that was done, he didn't want any part of them in his life anymore.

The car didn't matter to him anyway, so Gerald simply agreed.

“Alright, let Douglas accompany you when you sell your car off later. At least he knows more than you do. That way, you won’t get tricked without even realizing it!” said Willie without filtering his words in the slightest.

If Douglas hadn’t raised the idea of using Gerald to donate and raise some money for him, Willie would never have dreamed of landing Gerald a job. He wouldn’t even have done so even if it was just a contractual job!

Thinking about it now, once he received the donation money, he could just randomly arrange for Gerald to work as a clerk in any department. That way, Gerald would be able to earn at least two thousand dollars a month! Willie felt that he would already have done Gerald a huge favor!

Naturally, Douglas agreed to go with Gerald.

His intentions were obvious. He wanted Willie to take all of Gerald’s money and even his car away. Let’s see Gerald try to show off in front of him again in the future!

Unexpectedly, Gerald was rather willing to agree to all this just for the sake of getting a job! Haha!

Of course, Gerald already knew what was running through the minds of Douglas and Uncle Jung.

He was simply doing this to draw a clear distinction line between them in the future.

That way, he would have a good reason to refuse and turn down any of his father's future requests if he ever asked him to help this family again.

Leila and a few of her close friends followed Douglas and Gerald to the second-hand car shop.

“Boss! We're here to sell a car!”

A young man came running out of the shop as soon as he heard people calling for him.

“Coming! Oh wow! A Mercedes Benz G500?!”

When Douglas saw the boss of the place, he quickly walked up to him. He was going to be the one to talk to him in this transaction.

His goal was to get the boss to lower the price of the car as much as he possibly could for Gerald.

When Douglas turned to peek at Gerald's reaction to this, he was surprised to see that Gerald was instead, smiling.

“Xeno?”

Hearing his name, the boss looked up and he was stunned when he saw Gerald.

He smiled wide and patted his thigh twice. “Well f*ck me! Gerald? Is that really you?”

Xeno walked toward Gerald with a surprised look on his face.

The boss there was actually Gerald’s childhood neighbor whom Gerald also considered to be his best friend. Xeno was only six months older than Gerald and the two had played together a lot as children. Xeno had always been kind to him.

Back when they were younger, both of them were top of the class academically. However, due to some reasons, Xeno stopped studying before he could finish junior high school.

From that point on, he learned how to fix and repair cars. Unexpectedly, a few years later, Xeno would be doing well. He was even the owner of a second-hand car shop now!

Ever since Gerald had left his hometown to attend university in another city, he hadn’t come home for a long time. As a result, both of them had rarely contacted each other in the past two years.

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Despite that, they were still close childhood friends. Even if they hadn't met each other in a decade, the same childlike feelings of joy that they shared would still remain.

"You f*cker! When did you come back? Why didn't you give me a call, huh?" asked Xeno as he playfully smacked Gerald's back a few times.

"Ow, ow! I just came back some time ago! It's been a long time since I've returned, so I'm staying in Serene County for the time being!" replied Gerald as he smiled happily.

"Xeno, that's a customer! Be professional!" shouted a woman as she came out of the shop.

She was dressed fashionably and she looked to be around the same age as Gerald.

Of course, Gerald knew who she was too. She was from his junior high school and back then, she was in a relationship with Xeno.

Her family owned a supermarket in town and they were pretty well to do.

It seemed that both of them were still maintaining their relationship even after so many years!

"Heh, don't tell me you forgot about Sienna?" said Xeno as he smiled.

“She’s my fiancée now... Both of us got engaged just three months ago!”

“Oh? Oh, it’s Gerald? And here I was wondering who it was. Hurry up and greet the customers!”

When Sienna saw Gerald, she simply looked at him coldly before turning around to leave.

She didn’t really despise or look down on him, but Gerald could still sense a slight resentment through the way she looked at him.

Gerald simply smiled awkwardly after hearing that.

“Boss, are you done? We’ve been standing here for a while! Are both of you done chatting?” asked Douglas as he tapped his foot.

Douglas was feeling slightly irked. To think that the owner of this second-hand car shop was actually Gerald’s close friend! There was no way he was going to be able to make Gerald suffer a loss now!

“Oh? Who’s the seller? Are you the one?” said Xeno as he smiled while looking at Douglas.

“Oh, I’m not the one you’re looking for. I’m just helping Gerald sell his Mercedes Benz G500! He’s been driving it for a while now so... I’d say one hundred and fifty thousand dollars should do the trick!” Douglas replied.

He then immediately looked at Gerald before saying, “Gerald, this is your buddy right? Don’t you feel bad selling your car to him at such a high price? After all, it would already be great if you could make some profit!”

He wasn’t even going to wait for Gerald to reply.

Xeno on the other hand, was taken aback. “Gerald... this is your car?”

“I’ll explain it all to you one day. For now, just know that I’m glad that you’re the one I’m selling the car to,” replied Gerald as he smiled.

Xeno simply nodded before slowly walking around the car as he inspected it. He then opened the hood of the car to have a look at it from the inside. “This car costs three hundred thousand dollars. It doesn’t seem like you’ve driven it for more than a month. Gerald, honestly, why are you even selling this car? What more, you’re planning on selling it for only a hundred and fifty thousand dollars? And who’s this kid anyway?” asked Xeno as he looked at Douglas.

He knew Douglas was up to no good the moment he mentioned selling the car for just one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

“He’s in a hurry to sell the car because he wants to get himself a house, a wife, and also a job. With that amount, Uncle Jung and I can make all the necessary arrangements for him! He’ll have a stable job that he’ll never lose in his lifetime! Haha!” replied Douglas smugly.

“Oh? Is he telling the truth? This Uncle Jung guy can really secure a stable job for you as well as a wife?”

Xeno looked at Gerald with a pleased expression on his face. If Gerald could get all that just from selling the car, then this transaction would be very much worth it.

He couldn’t help but feel happy for Gerald, his dear buddy.

Gerald could only reply with a wry smile on his face.

He couldn’t just tell him that he was just doing all this to help his father repay a favor!

“I’d love to buy it off you right now, but I don’t have that much money on hand. Also, do you smoke? I’ll have to trouble you to take care of my brother’s affairs!” said Xeno as he took out a cigarette and passed it toward Douglas’s direction.

Douglas however, didn’t take the cigarette. He instead took out his own and lighted it.

“Oh? So you don’t have the money to buy the car from us? Why even bother opening a second-hand car shop then? Forget it then, let’s just have a look at the second-hand car shop just opposite the street! You can see it for yourself right, Gerald? Your buddy just doesn’t have the cash to buy this car!” said Douglas with a grimace as he looked at both Xeno and Gerald.

“You don’t need to give me a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. You know what, I’m just giving the car to you. I don’t need to drive this car anymore anyway!” said Gerald calmly with a faint smile on his face.

“F*ck! Gerald, are you crazy?”

It was Leila, of all people, who shouted at Gerald’s proposal. She had an astonished expression on her face as she looked at Gerald.

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The car was his greatest asset and he was just going to give it to his friend for free?

‘Gerald, this isn’t the time to be showing off!’ Leila thought in her mind, frantically.

Though Leila had recently started to change her opinion of Gerald, she couldn’t help but feel angry at his words.

Before this turn of events, Leila had even secretly considered Gerald to be her boyfriend. Now, she didn’t even want to think about it!

From an outsider's point of view, it was almost as though she considered the car to be hers in the first place.

"I can't accept that! This is a relatively new car, brother! I can't just take it off you for free! How about this, I have about a hundred thousand dollars on hand right now. I'll buy the car at the market rate of two hundred and seventy thousand dollars. I'll pay you the rest of the money once I sell this car off! Deal?"

"If that's the case, you can just buy it from me for a hundred thousand dollars then!" replied Gerald with a wry smile on his face. He knew that Xeno wasn't going to accept the car for free no matter what he did.

However, how could Gerald's Mercedes Benz G500 make up for the incident that happened back then? Gerald shook the thought off his mind for the moment.

"Seriously, don't worry about it, Xeno. I'll explain it to you later. Just buy it for a hundred thousand dollars! Now bring us the contract, buddy!" said Gerald as he patted Xeno's shoulder.

Xeno went silent and simply complied. He had made up his mind that he would just return the money to Gerald once the car was sold.

The contract didn't really matter to him.

As Gerald signed the contract, Leila looked baffled while Douglas was secretly overjoyed.

The car was now officially sold and Gerald would give Willie seventy thousand dollars for his fundraiser.

After doing so, Gerald would only have thirty thousand dollars left.

“Douglas, Leila! My cousin sister sells houses! She’s just opened for business recently and she hasn’t gotten off work yet at this hour! Since Gerald’s buying a house, why don’t I give her a call? He can buy it from her! Do know, however, that thirty thousand dollars is barely enough for the down payment!” said one of Leila’s friends who had followed them.

“Go for it!” replied Leila as she nodded slightly.

Once the down payment was made, Gerald would officially become a pauper again. Aside from his house and the mortgage he would have to pay, he would have nothing else.

To Leila, that was the equivalent of Gerald losing all his initial charisma. Any feelings she had for him, were now six feet under.

Moving back to Gerald, the only reason why he had promised to give his car up and donate to Willie in the first place, was simply because he wanted to repay the debt on behalf of his father.

If it wasn't because of his father, Gerald would be crazy to actually be bothered about someone as minuscule as Willie.

It turned out that the houses Leila's friend's cousin sister had to offer were in pretty good locations.

Gerald himself had been planning to buy some houses in Serene County so that he could arrange for housing and accommodation for some of his executives.

Though his original plan was to buy an entire building so that he could use it as a staff hostel, it wouldn't be a problem for him to check out a house and book one of the units first.

After saying goodbye to Xeno, Gerald left with the group of people.

It was relatively easy to buy a house.

All Gerald had to do was choose from a selection of houses, pay the down payment, and sign a contract. Once that was done, he only needed to wait for the bank to approve his loan.

“Oh, cousin and handsome Douglas! Thank you so much for your support! Since it’s already so late, please stay! I’ll treat the four of you to supper! Your cousin sister’s treating all of you today!” said the girl’s cousin, happy to have made a sale.

As for Gerald, he simply stood at the side as he held onto the house purchase deed and contract. He was the one paying for the house yet the salesgirl simply left him out of the count.

Of course she would.

As soon as she saw Gerald, she could immediately tell that he was just some ignorant person who hadn’t seen much of the world yet. She didn’t even bother to flatter him at all. Once the transaction was done, she had even less reason to want to even be near him.

“There’s no way we can do that! No matter what you say, I can’t allow you to treat us to supper tonight! Rather, since Gerald bought a house today, he should be the one treating us!” said Douglas as he laughed happily.

“Yes! We’ve been running around with you from seven in the evening! It’s almost eleven now! What more, we helped you secure a house for yourself. You know, if you weren’t someone familiar, you wouldn’t even be able to buy this house at this price! You should be thankful!”

Chapter 474

The reply had come from one of Leila's friends.

"Alright, alright, girls. Tell you what, I'll pay for whatever we're eating tonight! We can spend up to a thousand and five hundred dollars tonight!" said Douglas with a smile.

"But Douglas, why are you the one paying? Gerald's clearly the one who should be treating us!"

"Well, you may not know this, but I owe Gerald that exact sum of money! If I pay that amount for supper, the IOU will be fully paid off!"

Douglas was thinking to himself then, that Gerald shouldn't even consider reclaiming his one thousand and five hundred dollars from him!

He would rather use the money to entertain everyone rather than return the money to him.

"Alright! Let's go! It's time I got off work today anyway!" said the salesgirl happily.

At that moment, Leila's cell phone began to ring.

It was Willie.

“What’s this? Hadn’t we agreed that he would donate at least a hundred and twenty thousand dollars so that I could find him a job? Why is there only seventy thousand dollars?”

“Dad, he sold the car for only a hundred thousand dollars since the buyer was his friend!”

“That idiot. I’ll just give him an award for the seventy thousand dollars then. As for the job opportunity, I’ll simply arrange it for him in the future! Pfft!” replied Willie coldly before hanging up.

“Gerald, my dad said...”

Leila felt a little embarrassed as she looked at Gerald. She didn’t know how to tell him that he wouldn’t be granted a job immediately.

Gerald simply smiled faintly. He had anticipated this to happen.

“It’s fine, you don’t need to worry about getting a job for me. As for supper, all of you go on ahead. I’m not coming along. Goodbye!”

As he spoke, he took Douglas’s IOU out of his pocket before ripping it in half in front of them and tossing it into a trash can.

As he walked away, he didn't feel any rage for some reason, even though they had constantly been ridiculing him.

It took him a while, but Gerald soon realized then that it was because they weren't from the same world as he was. He didn't need to hold any grudges against ants like them.

As for the Jung family, he had already contributed enough funds to help them make a comeback. What more, he had even donated to Willie to help him raise funds. Regardless of how much his father owed Uncle Jung, this amount of money would definitely settle whatever favors Gerald's father still owed the Jung family.

There was no longer going to be any debts on his father's side. This was something Gerald was sure of.

Because of that, he wouldn't need to worry or even care about them anymore. A supper with them would be meaningless.

That night, Gerald went back to the hotel to sleep.

At seven the next day, his phone started ringing.

It was Xeno.

“Good morning, Gerald! You awake? If you’re free, why not come over to my shop? I have a mighty delicious breakfast waiting for you here! Oh, and by the way, I’ve already sold your car! Come on over and let’s celebrate that!” said Xeno over the phone.

After finding out that Gerald could be in urgent need of money, Xeno had spent most of the night contacting several of his friends and peers to find a buyer for Gerald’s car.

Gerald himself missed Xeno too. Even if he hadn’t called Gerald, Gerald would have gone over to pay him a visit either way.

After all, he had already thought of visiting Xeno long before returning to Serene County.

Once he was done washing up and putting on a fresh set of clothes, Gerald headed straight for Xeno’s second-hand car shop.

Upon arriving at the familiar shop, Xeno immediately dragged Gerald into a room and locked the door behind him.

“Morning Gerald! You’re one lucky b*stard! A buddy of mine helped us contact a buyer last night! Haha! I managed to sell your car for exactly two hundred and eighty thousand dollars! And before you say anything else, you’re taking a hundred and seven thousand dollars back with you, whether you like it or not. I’ll still have made ten thousand dollars’ worth of profit, all thanks to you!”

After finishing his sentence, he handed a cheque over to Gerald.

Naturally, Gerald was unwilling to accept it. After all, Gerald wasn't even sure if Xeno had really earned any money from the transaction.

As the two of them continued pushing the cheque back and forth, frantic knocks suddenly began banging against the locked door.

"Xeno? Xeno! Open the door now! Have you seen my fifteen thousand dollar bank savings book?!"

The voice belonged to Sienna who had just run out from the kitchen.

Chapter 475

"What fifteen thousand dollar bank savings book?" asked Gerald, slightly taken aback.

Before Xeno could stop him, Gerald had opened the door to see a very anxious Sienna.

"Oh, don't worry about it! I need to use the money!" said Xeno as he smiled.

"What are you using it for? And what are you holding in your hand? Oh god, what are you doing with such a big cheque?!"

The anxiety in Sienna's voice only seemed to grow even worse.

“The money's for Gerald! How could we possibly purchase an almost brand new car for just a hundred thousand dollars? What more, it's a Mercedes Benz G500!” replied Xeno.

“And why would it be impossible? What's wrong with earning some of his money? Xeno, you can't cheat anyone else of their cash but you can definitely cheat him! Give me the cheque!” yelled Sienna as she snatched the cheque from his hand.

“Pfft, we've sold the car for a grand total of two hundred and seventy thousand dollars. We already gave Gerald one hundred thousand dollars and we also have to give your friend fifteen thousand dollars for introducing a buyer to us!”

Hearing this, Sienna looked at the cheque and gasped in horror at the amount written on it.

“One hundred and seventy thousand dollars...? Xeno, what's the meaning of this? Are you telling me you used our own fifteen thousand dollars for Gerald? We would be losing fifteen thousand dollars in this huge transaction then! Have you gone mad?!”

Quivering, Sienna immediately picked up a wine bottle before tossing it toward Xeno. Though it didn't hit anyone, it fell right in front of Gerald.

Xeno had grown anxious himself, looking at her actions. Both of them looked like they were getting ready to fight.

The truth was, the car had not been sold for two hundred and eighty thousand dollars. Xeno had spent his own money to look for a buyer. In the end, the transaction landed him zero profit. He did all this because he could sense that Gerald was very upset the night before. Xeno had assumed that it was due to monetary issues.

Because of that, he wanted to help Gerald get some money as soon as possible. Xeno, for one, was more than willing to do so for his best friend.

Unfortunately, Sienna wasn't having any of that.

“Hand over the cheque, Sienna! I'm making sure that Gerald gets his full two hundred and seventy thousand dollars!”

“Over my dead body! Gerald owes us this much! Remember Xeno, you wouldn't have been expelled if you hadn't stabbed someone because of Gerald! I wouldn't have had to live this kind of life with you then if it wasn't because of him! You were at the top of your class back then!” replied Sienna as she started crying.

“What was that Sienna? What the f*ck are you talking about?” cursed Xeno as his face turned red in anger.

Gerald was caught between the fight and he could only try to de-escalate it.

To be honest, Gerald had felt a pang in his heart the moment Sienna brought back the memory of that incident.

Both Gerald and Xeno had come from poor families. They had grown with the same lifestyle and minuscule fortune, leading both of them to become extremely close confidants.

While both of them used to study together, Xeno, unlike Gerald, not only excelled in academic performances, but he also liked to fight.

It wasn't uncommon for Xeno to be caught fighting others, even from a young age.

He even fought for Gerald as well. Gerald had suffered much more bullying in high school compared to his time in junior high, since Xeno was still fighting off bullies for him then. That all changed when that incident occurred.

Back during their junior high school days, Gerald had a close female friend. They weren't exactly in a relationship back then. The most they did was write letters to one another.

However, another student—who was a well-known gangster—took interest in the same girl. Since he knew that Gerald shared a close relationship with her, he brought along some of his gang members to beat up Gerald after school one day.

Xeno was with Gerald that time and when he saw his best friend about to get beaten up, he helped Gerald fight back.

In his state of panic, Xeno had stabbed the gangster kid with a knife.

While it was fortunate that no one was killed that day, Xeno had to be expelled from school because of that incident.

Chapter 476

After Xeno was expelled, Gerald got beaten up several times.

Even that girl that the gangster was after left Gerald, opting instead to be with the bully.

The reason why Gerald became afraid and shy of girls whenever he saw them during his high school and university years, was directly linked to this event.

Once Xeno got expelled from school, he simply continued living his life out on the streets. He was rarely ever at home. What more, when Gerald entered high school, Xeno kept changing his phone number. It was difficult for Gerald just to be able to get in touch with him sometimes!

Since that day, Gerald had always kept Xeno's sacrifice and kindness deep in his heart.

This was because Xeno's possibly great future had been shattered by a single event, and it was directly caused by Gerald!

Sienna knew about all this and this was why she didn't like Gerald.

Sienna was actually a very nice girl. Her family owned a big supermarket in town and they were very rich. However, she never despised or looked down on Xeno. After all, she had been dating Xeno from the first year of junior high school up till this point.

Therefore, Gerald had always had a really good impression of Sienna.

Hence, no matter what Sienna said or how badly she treated him, Gerald just couldn't feel angry at her at all.

After all, Xeno seemed to be doing well with her. This made Gerald feel even happier and he wasn't about to hold anything against his best friend's fiancée.

It took some time and persuasion, but he finally managed to prevent the fight from getting too wild.

Once things calmed down a little, Sienna went to the kitchen to finish preparing the breakfast that had only been half completed before she ran out.

As they ate, Xeno and Gerald chatted about various things that had happened in the past.

Gerald also took this opportunity to tell Xeno that he had actually won the Mercedes Benz G500 at an event.

Gerald was still hesitant about whether he should tell Xeno about his true identity.

This was mainly because Gerald was afraid that if he told Xeno the truth out of the blue, then the sincere brotherhood they had shared would disappear just like that.

Naturally, since Gerald was now back in Serene County, he would definitely go all out to help Xeno as much as he could!

“Alright, what if we do this instead? I really don’t feel comfortable taking so much money from you, Gerald. I already have a stable life and I even have a fiancée now! You, however, haven’t settled down yet. You may find a girlfriend in the city and she may want to get married and live with you in the future. Think of this as an investment from me for your future happiness. I’ll just take back a small amount of money, and you take the rest. How’s that?”

Xeno was still insistent on giving Gerald some money.

However, Gerald continued to refuse. He even said that he would leave immediately if Xeno kept insisting on giving him the money.

Hearing that, Xeno scratched the back of his head before finally giving up.

“Hey Xeno, isn’t this way better? With that money, you’ll be able to expand your business! That way, Gerald can finally repay you for everything that you’ve done for him!”

Sienna was noticeably happier the moment she saw Xeno give up.

However, she could also tell that Xeno was slightly upset.

“By the way, Xeno, an old colleague of mine called the other day. She said that one of her best friends was in a hurry to get married and she’s around the same age as we are. She told me to introduce a good person to her friend but I didn’t have anyone in mind that day. Why don’t we try introducing Gerald to her? They could go on a blind date and if everything goes well, Gerald may meet his future wife, just like that! You would essentially have helped Gerald find his life partner then!”

Xeno slapped his thigh before laughing aloud. “You hear that Gerald? It’s time for a blind date, brother! Since she wants to get married quickly, with any luck, you two can get married this year! I’m sure she won’t be like the girls you met in the city. Those have overly high standards and their families? Probably even higher standards than the girls themselves! They’re just being too unrealistic!” said Xeno as he shook his head.

Gerald shook his own head, signifying that there was no need for the blind date.

“Why not? There’s nothing for you to lose if it doesn’t work out anyway. Naturally, I’m not asking you to get married immediately. If both of you get along and are suited for each other, good for you! If you’re not, nothing wrong with that! At the very least, both of you could be regular friends then!”

Xeno was really considering everything for Gerald.

It was precisely because of that that Gerald just didn’t feel good turning down his best friend’s goodwill.

What more, Gerald couldn’t just tell Xeno that he didn’t need to worry about him just because he was actually a rich heir!

Their good relationship could fall into shambles there and then!

Seeing no other option, Gerald simply smiled in resignation as he nodded. “Alright, I’ll give it a go!”

He decided to at least meet the girl once and as Xeno had said, it wasn’t a big deal anyway. At the very least, just as Xeno had said, both of them could just end up being regular friends.

“Hahaha! It’s settled then! I’ll start making the arrangements immediately! That girl lives in Serene County too. Let’s see if we can get both of you ready for lunch together today!” said Sienna happily.

After finishing their breakfast, Sienna told Gerald to go back and change into something nicer first to prepare for his blind date.

Not too long after Gerald left Xeno’s shop, he received a call from Zack.

Chapter 477

It was about the jade pendant.

Zack had managed to contact an old, well-experienced master on a jade antique street in Serene County. He was apparently very famous in the local area.

What more, he had also been told that the old master had inherited his craftsmanship from his ancestors.

This was perfect since Gerald needed an experienced person like this to help identify and appraise such an ancient jade.

Gerald decided that he would let the old master have a go at identifying and appraising the jade pendant first. If he couldn’t, Gerald would simply look for other jade masters from all over the country then.

After all, if even the dean didn't know anything about Xara Machamer's identity, how else would Gerald be able to find out anything about her?

His only clue was this jade pendant, and Gerald understood that.

Originally, Zack had wanted to accompany Gerald to meet the master. However, Gerald's father had told him that the fewer people knew about Xara Machamer, the better.

In addition, Zack was also very busy now so Gerald declined his offer. After all, Gerald just so happened to know that street well too.

The antique street wasn't too big and there were just a few shops selling antique porcelain there.

Zack, being the professional that he was, had arranged Gerald's meeting with the old master. Because of that, the bespectacled old man with a long white beard was already there waiting for Gerald by the time Gerald got to his shop.

"Mr. Crawford, I assume? My name is Matthew Xiques!" said the old man as he smiled at Gerald.

"Hello, Mr. Xiques, a pleasure to meet you. Let's get straight to business, shall we? See, I wanted to meet you today because I need you to help me identify and appraise a jade pendant. I'd like to know how old it really is and if possible, where it originated from as

well. Basically, the more details you can give me, the better,” said Gerald as he presented the jade pendant to the old master carefully.

When Matthew saw the jade pendant, he was slightly surprised. Carefully picking the pendant up, he squinted his eyes as he brought it close to his face. He looked like a seasoned expert, just as Zack had said.

“I must thank you, Mr. Crawford, for allowing me to see such a rare jade with my very own eyes. In fact, it’s one of the rarest kinds of jade! It’s top quality! Mr. Crawford, if you don’t mind me asking, how did you get your hands on this jade?” asked Matthew as he looked at Gerald with great interest.

Matthew couldn’t guess for the life of him why Gerald would have such an expensive piece of jade on him.

Earlier when Gerald was addressed by Matthew by name, he had assumed that Zack had arranged the entire meeting for him. However, Zack seemed to have left out Gerald’s true identity and Gerald was thankful for that.

Gerald replied, “How I got it isn’t important, Mr. Xiques. Have you managed to identify the origins of this jade pendant...?”

“Ah, I see. Forgive me for being nosy. Also, it’s a little difficult for me to identify the origins of the jade pendant immediately. However, I do recall reading about a jade with such fine texture in one of the notebooks left behind by my ancestors. Would it be convenient for you to leave this jade pendant behind so that I can properly analyze

it? Once I get the information you require, I'll let you know immediately," said Matthew.

Hearing that, Gerald thought about it for a moment. Since Zack had arranged for Gerald to meet the master, the master should be capable enough in Zack's eyes.

"That's fine, Mr. Xiques. I hope to hear from you soon!" said Gerald as he nodded.

The two of them chatted for a little while more before Gerald stepped out of the shop.

What was he going to do now? It was still a little too early for him to head out for his blind date.

After some thought, he decided to withdraw some money from the bank since the new house he had bought was also nearby. Gerald so happened to be carrying the house purchase agreement contract in his bag so he might as well clear the payment immediately.

After all, it wouldn't be possible for Gerald to take up a loan!

"Gerald?"

At that moment, Gerald heard a girl's voice calling out to him. It sounded surprised.

When Gerald turned around to look, he too was pleasantly surprised.

It was Leila's good friend, Cindy.

She had just come out from the inner courtyard. Apparently she lived here.

When Gerald had gone to Leila's house the first time that day, the very beautiful Cindy had left a deep impression on Gerald. He could tell that the girl was a very kind one.

"Do you live here, Cindy?" asked Gerald with a smile.

"Yes! The one inside is my grandfather! Speaking of which, Gerald, why did you come to our shop in the first place?" asked Cindy with a smile as she walked toward Gerald.

"Cindy! That's no way to address him! Refer to him as Mr. Crawford!" shouted Matthew who had poked his head out from his shop.

Matthew didn't know much about Gerald's background. However, he knew that the person who had arranged for Gerald and him to meet was someone who could contact both the county magistrate as well as the chairman of the National Antiquities Research Association. For someone with such an extraordinary status to work under Gerald, he knew that Gerald wasn't someone to mess with.

Why else would Matthew have acted so courteously toward Gerald earlier?

That was the reason why he was so startled at Cindy's lack of manners just a while ago.

"Oh, grandpa! This is a new friend I met recently. His name is Gerald and he's also Leila's childhood friend!" replied Cindy her smile unwavering.

"That's quite alright, Mr. Xiques. Just focus on the job I gave you first!" said Gerald as he smiled.

Chapter 478

"Job...? Also, you still haven't told me why you came to look for my grandpa today!" said Cindy, her curiosity growing.

"It's nothing serious, I just came to ask him for a favor, no big deal," replied Gerald.

"I see... Oh! Since you're already here, why not come in? I'll make some tea for you!"

"Maybe next time, I'll be back soon anyway. I'm just going to head to the bank now to withdraw some money," replied Gerald as he smiled.

"What a coincidence! I'm also going to the bank to pass my mother's cell phone over to her. Let's go together!" said Cindy as she walked out of the shop and stood beside Gerald.

Gerald could only nod awkwardly.

All he wanted to do was to leave quietly after leaving the pendant for Matthew to analyze and withdrawing his money. He really hadn't anticipated running into Cindy here today.

"So, your mother forgot to bring her cell phone out with her?" asked Gerald to break the silence as they walked to the bank.

"Well, that's sort of correct. See, my mother has several cell phones. The bank that she works with urgently needs to attract funds and capital. Since my mother is a deputy director and she needs to meet her targets, she requires several cell phones to call different customers. She's just really busy all the time!" replied Cindy.

Both of them arrived at the bank not too long later.

"Mom, I've brought your cell phone here for you!" called out Cindy to a middle-aged woman who seemed to be waiting for someone.

Hearing Cindy's voice, she turned to look at Gerald and her daughter.

"Thank you Cindy, and who might this be?" asked Cindy's mother.

“Just a friend. His name is Gerald. I think I’ve mentioned him to you last time! He was the one who had invited me to have French cuisine at the western restaurant. Hehe... It just so happened that we met while we were both on our way over to the bank! He’s here to withdraw some money!” replied Cindy with a smile.

“Oh? So this is the young man. Not bad, quite good looking as well! Are both of you going out together later to play?” asked her mother.

Gerald didn’t need to be a rocket scientist to tell that Cindy’s mother must already have considered him to be Cindy’s boyfriend at that moment.

“Oh, not at all! Once I withdraw some money to pay for my house I’ll be on my way!”

“Oh? You’ve already bought yourself a house!” said Cindy’s mother happily.

As she said that, she recalled when her daughter had told her about everything that had happened that night. The French cuisine was apparently very expensive and this was proof that this young man was at the very least, financially capable.

He had even bought a house for himself.

“Who’s bought a house, Deputy Director Lacy?” said a cynical voice out of the blue.

At that moment, another middle-aged woman walked up to the trio.

Gerald couldn't help but feel surprised when he finally saw who had spoken. It was Leila's mother, Leila.

Leila was also working at the bank, and she was a leader and deputy director as well. She and Cindy's mother were of similar rank.

"What are you doing here, Gerald?"

She certainly hadn't expected to see him there.

"I came over to withdraw money!" said Gerald without even bothering to address her as 'Aunt Leila' anymore.

"Oh, I see how it is. Can't even be bothered to greet me by my name now? Why even bother trying to show off if you're penniless now?"

"Also, you could have started working at a labor dispatch unit by this month if you had just paid according to what was agreed. You know, there were many others who donated much more than you had. Since you only donated seventy thousand dollars to your Uncle Jung, you'll have to wait a little longer before you get your job!"

Leila was taking every chance she could to widen the gap between Gerald's status and hers.

“Deputy Director Tolbert, what are you talking about? Penniless?” asked Cindy’s mother, surprised.

“Oh, you didn’t know? So that’s why you were talking to him! I guess poor Cindy doesn’t know about this either. Well, you see, Gerald here is now...”

And with that, Leia took the opportunity to share how Gerald’s family used to be very poor. She even told them about the car he had sold to buy his new house.

Naturally, she also kept emphasizing how much of a pauper Gerald was now.

‘F*ck! I almost pushed my own daughter into a lion’s den!’ Cindy’s mother thought to herself as she shuddered.

At that moment, the sound of tires screeching could be heard as a car stopped right outside the bank. As the four people turned to look, they could see several men in suits running into the bank.

“Mom! Your cell phone’s here! Come get it!”

Leila, Douglas, and the two girls from the day before entered the bank, with Leila calling out. It seemed like the group was heading out to play again.

By some wild coincidence, they were here to pass Leia's phone to her as well.

"Gerald? What are you doing here?" asked Leila as soon as she saw him.

Chapter 479

"Pfft! Do you even need to ask? He's probably here to get what little pocket money he has left in his bank account! Hahaha! All of you probably didn't notice, but he didn't even have any money in his wallet yesterday!" said Douglas as he laughed.

Leila didn't say anything else. When he was still rich, she couldn't deny that she had some feelings for him.

Now, however, she felt nothing for him after witnessing all that he had done yesterday.

"That's right! He's come to withdraw money and Cindy here came together with him!" said Leia as she too, laughed.

Leila's face scrunched slightly when she heard Cindy's name. She immediately pulled Cindy to the side and began telling her tales of how he was broke and that he may have pulled her along to cheat her of her money.

Once she heard all that, Cindy looked at Gerald with anxious eyes. "Why did you sell the car, Gerald? Also, why did you sell it for such a low price?"

She was sincerely worried about Gerald.

“I’ll tell you about it if an opportunity arises in the future. For now, I’m just going to go withdraw some money. I’ve an appointment at noon!” replied Gerald as he smiled at Cindy.

He didn’t even bother to look at anyone else as he walked to the counter.

Douglas himself brought the girls closer to the counter to observe Gerald. He wanted them to see Gerald make a fool of himself in front of the others.

“How much money would you like to withdraw, sir?” asked the clerk.

“Ninety thousand dollars, please,” replied Gerald without batting an eyelid.

“Ninety- What?” said Douglas, startled.

Leila was taken aback as well.

The same went for Leila and Cindy’s mother who were already heading back into their office. They froze and turned around in shock.

“Just a minute, sir!”

After Gerald entered his password and validated the transaction with his signature, the money counting machine came to life.

Douglas's smug smile disappeared in an instant.

"You... you still have money? Didn't you use all of it to buy that car?" asked Douglas in surprise.

"Did I say I used all of it?" replied Gerald, coldly.

"Then... How much did you actually win?" It was Leila's turn to ask.

Cindy's mother and Leila herself had inched closer to the group by then. All of them waited anxiously.

"I won..."

Gerald made sure to keep the suspense up for as long as he could. He deserved at least that. Once he had enough, he smiled and said, "Actually, forget it. It's not that much. There's really no need to talk about it!"

"You!" Leila could only manage a single word. She was furious.

Gerald couldn't fit all the money into his small bag so he asked one of the cleaning staff there for a black garbage bag. He stuffed the money—all ninety thousand dollars—into it and nodded to Cindy with a smile before leaving the bank with the bag.

“...So... He actually still had money!” shouted Aunt Leia, devastated.

“That Gerald! How much did he actually win from the lottery?” asked Leila anxiously.

“D*mn it all! I think he's just doing all this on purpose! He's just pretending to be poor in front of us!” Douglas was beyond annoyed at that point.

After all, he had just received a huge mental slap from Gerald. All his intentions of having fun were now down the drain.

As for Gerald, he soon arrived at the sales office and the salesgirl from before definitely felt the same mental slap that Douglas received when Gerald fully paid for the house in cold, hard cash.

One hundred and five thousand dollars' worth of cash in one go.

This was a big boss.

Chapter 480

By the time Gerald was done settling the house's payment, it was already close to noon and Xeno made sure Gerald was aware of this by constantly calling him.

After hurrying back to his hotel room to change into some better clothes, Gerald immediately headed for a restaurant called Johnsbury Bistro.

While he was on his way there, Xeno and Sienna were already at the restaurant.

Three other people were in the private room with them.

One of them was Sienna's colleague while the other two were the girl who was going to be Gerald's blind date today as well as her mother.

The girl had long, black hair, and her skin was very fair. She looked both delicate and beautiful. However, her looks dictated her behavior as she seemed cold and her head was lowered most of the time as she constantly looked through her WeChat.

Her mother, on the other hand, was a plump middle-aged woman with tattooed eyebrows that looked similar to caterpillars. Contrasting her daughter, she looked rather sturdy and even formidable.

"Gerald's a very nice person, and we're not praising him for the sake of it either. You'll know what we mean when you meet later. What more, he graduated from a prestigious university and he's quite handsome as well! He's started looking for a job and I heard that he's aiming to work for a public office. Don't let that get your hopes

down, though. He recently just bought a house in Serene County!” explained Sienna as they waited.

Though Sienna had some resentment for Gerald in recent years, she wasn’t always like that. She used to have a good relationship with him during junior high due to him constantly being around Xeno.

The slight hatred only began because of the incident that had caused Xeno to be expelled back then. However, the resentment she had for him had now dissipated after the events of this morning.

She was now sincerely worried for Gerald as well, and she wanted to do all she could to help him.

“Well, how big is the house that he bought? If it has less than three rooms, can it even be considered to be a house? There must be at least three bedrooms, two living rooms, and two bathrooms!” asked the girl as she finally raised her head.

“Well wouldn’t you know it? His new house fits your bare minimum! Haha!” replied Xeno.

“Well, what about his car? What car is he driving now?”

This time, it was her mother who asked.

“Oh, he doesn’t have a car yet. But you know, cars aren’t worth that much money in the first place!” replied Xeno.

Her mother coughed before saying, “Well, you see, having a house or a car isn’t the most important thing to us. We just hope that he’s an honest man! I won’t accept a man who only likes to brag and talk big!”

“Oh, you can be assured that that guy’s the most honest man on the planet! We grew up together so we’re more than certain about his personality,” replied Sienna.

While everyone was chatting, Gerald finally opened the door and entered the room.

“Gerald! There you are! Come over here quickly so that I can introduce you to them!” said Xeno with a smile as he began introducing the two parties to one another.

The girl’s mother scanned Gerald from head to toe and she could sense that he really did look and feel like an honest person.

She could breathe a bit easier knowing that.

The dishes arrived soon after and both parties talked to each other as they ate their lunch.

“You know, they’re really taking their sweet time to serve the last dish! I’m going to go over and ask them about it!” said Sienna’s colleague as she stood up. She secretly winked at Sienna and Xeno.

“Yeah, I think I’ll join you,” said Sienna. Xeno excused himself to go to the bathroom as well.

Before Xeno left the room with the other two, he patted Gerald on the shoulder and gave him a secret thumbs-up. He closed the door of the private room, leaving only Gerald, the girl, and her mother inside.

Seeing that everyone else had left, the middle-aged woman wiped her mouth with a paper towel.

“So, Gerald, right? We’ve heard about all the good things about you from your good friends. I personally think that you’re quite an honest person. Tell me, what do you think about my daughter?” asked the woman.

Of course he was honest. This was his first time partaking in a blind date event. What more, the woman looked extremely fierce! She also hadn’t said much since Gerald arrived.

“She’s not bad!” replied Gerald.

At that moment, the girl raised her head to look at him for a moment. After a few seconds, she pouted before lowering her head again in disdain.

'...F*ck! What kind of expression was that?' Gerald thought to himself. He couldn't help but curse in his mind.

The woman cleared her throat before saying, "Let me tell you this, Gerald. My daughter is working for a company under the Dream Investment Group. She's working for the Dencouls Production and Trading Corporation. I believe you should know about the Dream Investment Group, right? Being such a large group with superb financial strength, do you know how difficult it is for someone to get into that company?"

Dencouls Production and Trading Corporation. If Gerald remembered correctly, that was just one of the companies supported by the Dream Investment Group. After all, the Dream Investment Group was supporting several local projects and companies like this.

Did she actually just claim that her daughter was working under the Dream Investment Group because of that?

Gerald could only smile at that before nodding slightly.

He was honestly thinking to himself at that moment. The woman looked quite normal. She looked decent and her personality wasn't too bad either. Why was she lowering her standards and going on blind dates then?

“My daughter’s interested in you because she can tell that you’re an honest man. She would love to marry an honest man. However! There are three absolute rules that you have to abide by before both of you can marry. Listen closely now!”

“I beg your pardon?”

Gerald was dumbfounded. What in f*ck’s name was going on here?

Chapter 481

Wasn’t he just here to meet this girl and become friends?

When Gerald heard those words, he immediately felt uneasy and saw that he was in a position to be obligated to get married immediately.

Unconsciously, he started breaking out in cold sweat.

“First, you have to transfer the title of your house and your car over to my daughter before she marries you. Oh, wait. You don’t have a car yet. So, you can just transfer the title of your house over to my daughter. It should be under my daughter’s name and not under both of your names. This will help ensure that you are sincere, got it?” said the woman.

“Oh... yeah, alright.”

Gerald nodded, his face sullen and numb.

“The most expensive property that I own is worth 120,000,000 dollars. Even if I am willing to give it to you, would you even dare accept it? Hah!”

“Secondly, there’s definitely a problem with your parents. You have a sister, right? I’d better give you a heads up about this. If your sister gets married in the future, you cannot reject the dowry of her fiancée. Instead, you have to accept it and deposit the proceeds into my daughter’s account. My daughter will also be in charge of the salary that you earn and the money earned by your parents. Will that be okay for you? Of course, your parents are not allowed to live with you either. Since your house is in the city, your parents can visit the county for a couple of days if they want. But that said, they will need to source accommodation for themselves.”

The woman continued in a hostile tone.

“Did you hear me?!”

Gerald nodded repeatedly. “Yes, I heard you. You may continue.”

He also whipped out a small notebook and pen from his bag, jotting down everything she said.

This was his first time going on a blind date, but Gerald felt this experience was more than enough. F*ck! He could only dread the other conditions that this woman was going to bring up.

If it weren't for Sienna's colleague who introduced this mother-daughter pair to him, Gerald would've really doubted if they were going all out to scam him into this marriage.

When the woman saw how obedient and gullible Gerald was, she squealed with delight inside.

She continued rambling on.

“Thirdly, wedding arrangements. I won't repeat to you where my daughter works, right? Heh. When the time comes, there will be many reputable figures who will be attending your wedding. Hence, your wedding car of choice cannot be your regular runabout. Daughter, what do you think of an Audi?”

The woman could not make up her mind, asking for her daughter's opinion.

The daughter brushed her fingers through her hair, sighing, “I think a Mercedes-Benz or a BMW should be fine. But if we're going with a BMW, then it will have to be at least a 7 Series or higher.”

“Sounds good. You can choose between the two then!”

The woman turned to Gerald and commanded.

“As for the fourth...”

“There is a fourth rule? Didn’t you say that there were three rules?”

Gerald asked in surprise, his jaw-dropping slightly.

“You!”

Both the woman and her daughter raised their heads as they stared coldly at Gerald.

“Oh! I’m sorry. The fourth point, the fourth point. Please carry on. I am listening,”
Gerald swallowed and replied thoughtfully.

“The fourth point is regarding the wedding gift. We don’t expect too much, but you should be paying attention to the thousands of red and green.”

“Hang on, auntie. How much money are we looking at for thousands of red and green?” Gerald asked, smiling sheepishly.

“Pfft! You’re so stingy. It’s about twenty-two thousand dollars. We want it in cash. We don’t want anything in the form of a bank card, bank book, or anything like that.

We want it all in cash. This is our house rule! Of course, this is the dowry your family should be granting ours if you want to marry my daughter. And we’ll also need to talk about something else. We’ve already spent a ton of money to get this job for our daughter, and we still need to save up for her brother’s education fees too. As such, our family will not be returning the dowry to you. Our only hope is that you both will lead a happy life as a married couple. That’s all!”

“Oh! How could we possibly enjoy a good and happy life?” Gerald quizzed sarcastically as the whole picture seemed too graphic.

“Huh? What did you say?”

The woman was startled.

“I said, alright. Please carry on!”

Gerald quickly flashed a smile.

It was definite that he would not be marrying her. But all those conditions mentioned had piqued his curiosity.

“Hmph. The fifth point is the most important. After marrying my daughter, you cannot lay a finger on her within the first three years. This is an important rule in our family and hometown. Once three years have passed, you must first get my daughter’s consent before you can touch her!”

The woman said.

F*ck!

Gerald was so stunned at her statement that his pen fell to the ground.

“C’mon, you don’t have to look so shocked. Do you know how difficult it is for someone to get a wife nowadays? Plus, my daughter is so beautiful, has such a good temperament and a good career. Think you’ll be able to find anyone else better than her? Dream on!” scoffed the woman as she concluded.

Suddenly, the girl covered her mouth as she began to gag.

“Mom, can you help me to the washroom? Ugh~!”

She continued retching as her mother propped her up all the way to the washroom.

Sweat trickled down Gerald’s cheeks.

To be honest, if it weren't for Xeno, Gerald would not even have bothered to come here today.

HE simply wanted to run away, especially when put under such ridiculous circumstances.

Chapter 482

Gerald grabbed a paper towel as he wiped the sweat off his forehead. He felt the sudden urge to relieve himself and started pacing toward the washroom.

As he passed by the female's washroom, he unexpectedly heard the woman and her daughter's conversation as she repeatedly patted her back.

"What's wrong? Why the sudden nausea?"

The woman asked worriedly.

"Yeah... This naughty little boy is kicking me again!"

"Oh! I told you to be more careful! I've always told you to pay more attention to what you do! Why did you have to mess around with a foreigner?"

She frowned and scolded.

“Mom, don’t say that about Jamison! Jamison isn’t just any ordinary guy. He’s a foreigner from M Country! He promised me that he would come back to look for me in three years!”

Gerald, who heard this from outside, was fuming with frustration.

He knew that these two women had really deceived him.

It felt too good to be true, and everything was oddly in place, but the girl seemed so anxious to get married.

So, was she just looking for a temporary replacement to become the father of someone else’s child?

And if he married her, there would be an additional unwanted gift—a mixed-race baby in return!

No way! He could not afford to be fooled around by them anymore, or there would be no end to this matter.

As he gritted his teeth, he wanted to look for Xeno and the rest of them so badly, but he knew that they purposely hid themselves during such a time.

Gerald returned to his seat defeatedly as he was drowned in helplessness.

Not long after that, both the mother and her daughter came back to the room.

“Alright then, Gerald. Do you understand everything that we said just now? If you do, you may go back and decide on a suitable date. It would be best if both of you can get married by this month!”

The woman exclaimed coldly.

“Hang on, auntie. I have something to say.”

Gerald said in a slow and inarticulate manner.

“Ahh? You still have something to say? Alright then, speak up!”

The woman replied impatiently.

Gerald glanced at the girl before saying, “Can you let me take a look at you first?”

“Haven’t you seen me already? What else do you want to see?” the girl rudely retorted as she frowned at Gerald.

“I am asking you to lift up your skirt so that I can have a look. I need to inspect the goods first!”

Gerald replied nonchalantly.

“What?!”

The woman and the girl’s eyes widened in shock.

Good god. This was a blind date, and it wasn’t just any ordinary low-class restaurant either. This young man actually had the audacity to spew such shameless gibberish amid such an occasion?

“Are you insane?!” The girl shrieked as she stood up abruptly and threw the wine glass in one swoop.

“Damn it! If I wasn’t insane, there’s no way I would’ve been able to continue talking to the both of you for so long! I had enough of your rubbish! You are nothing but a piece of trash with your crazy and ridiculous conditions!”

Gerald could not hold it in anymore and started cursing.

They simply took him for a fool. It was still fine at first. But after they visited the washroom, Gerald could no longer put up with their bullsh*t. It made him furious.

He really wanted to get even with them.

“You bast*rd!”

Slap!

The woman was even more aggressive. She was not the kind of person that anyone could mess around with. With a tight expression on her face, she immediately raised her hand to send a massive slap across Gerald’s face.

“F*ck you!!”

Slap!

Enraged, Gerald instantly returned the slap. As he was quite strong, it completely knocked the woman down to the floor.

While this was going on, Sienna, Xeno, and the matchmaker were chatting and laughing on the way back.

Xeno: “You have to help me put in a good word or two for Gerald in this matter!”

The matchmaker: “Don’t worry! C’mon, don’t you know how close I am to Sienna? Besides, I think the woman is pretty satisfied with Gerald!”

“Well, let’s go in and see what they’re up to!”

When Xeno and the others arrived, they stood outside for a bit and did not enter yet.

Just as they were about to head in, they suddenly heard a loud crashing sound of plates smashing onto the table.

All three of them froze, stunned. The doors swung open...

Chapter 483

As Xeno and the rest rushed in; they were welcomed to the scene of Gerald fighting with both women.

The three of them were utterly shocked at the sight, quickly intervening and persuading them to stop fighting, which fortunately turned out a success.

Xeno knew that if Gerald had really lost his temper, he could be really ruthless and impulsive.

No. Actually, half of the woman's face had started swelling badly after getting hit by Gerald.

Xeno and the others hurriedly dragged the two women, still yelling and cursing, away from the scene.

He had been given the responsibility to send them home.

Sienna could not help but feel a little anxious. What was going on here?

Despite feeling uneasy with the whole situation, she still got into the car with Xeno and the rest.

He informed them that he would be having dinner with Gerald tonight to get some clarity on what happened.

Gerald did not suffer other injuries aside from a stinging cheek from the woman's slap.

As for why he had to vent his anger and frustrations...

First, it was because the two of them were really extraordinarily annoying and frustrating, even planning to trick him and make a fool out of him.

Second, Gerald couldn't take the fact that the demure and pretty Weston girl had actually been taken advantage of by a foreigner. It made him very uneasy and unhappy.

With everything adding up, Gerald didn't refrain from speaking harshly. He couldn't help but retaliate immediately once the woman hit him.

After all, they were not related at all. No matter what it was, he wasn't the poor pauper he once was. How could he allow someone to just slap him that way?

Gerald stood in the lobby alone as he settled the bill. He shook his head as he saw how the table full of wine and dishes had really gone to waste.

"Eh? Gerald! Why are you here? What a coincidence!"

Gerald suddenly heard someone calling his name.

When he turned around, he saw Cindy and her mother. He did not notice their presence before this.

"Gerald, you came here for a meal too?" asked Cindy.

"I guess you could say that!" replied Gerald as he smiled awkwardly.

“Well then, have you eaten yet?”

“I guess you could say that.”

“Pfft! You’ve got a funny way of talking!”

Cindy was really tickled by how Gerald spoke.

“Since it is such a coincidence, why don’t you join us for a meal if you haven’t eaten already? My mom was just saying that she would like to buy you a meal if she ran into you. Not forgetting how you even treated me to a delicious French meal the last time!”

“Isn’t that so, mom?” asked Cindy, smiling brightly.

Francesca smiled as she looked at Gerald. Nodding, she said, “That’s right. Anyway, I’m also treating a young man to lunch. If you have no other plans, please do join us for lunch...”

When Francesca heard what Leia said before this, she also thought Gerald was nothing but a pauper.

She initially did not want her daughter to spend any more time with him.

Seeing the bigger picture, Gerald withdrew 90,000 dollars from the bank at one go.

This really shocked them all.

The more Francesca thought about it, the more she felt something wasn't right.

She could tell that Gerald was a very calm and composed person. Even in the face of ridicule, he could still maintain his composure and maturity. No ordinary person would have been able to take it the same way.

With such comprehensive thoughts on this matter, she decided to get to know Gerald better. Hence, the reason she got Cindy to invite Gerald for a meal.

As for lunch today, Francesca finally managed to use one of her connections to get in touch with a potential client. It was the cousin of one of her female kindergarten mates whose family was very influential.

To further attract the client, Francesca decided she would be buying lunch. The other party was not free, but his son, also a rich heir, was. Francesca thought it would be merrier and easier for her to connect with the other party if there was another young person around. So, she decided to ask Cindy to join her for lunch too.

And then, they bumped into Gerald. How perfectly things turned out!

Everything was fated. Hehe. In fact, the director of the bank was about to retire before the end of the year. Therefore, one of the two deputy directors would be appointed as the new director of the bank.

And so, Francesca and Leia became rivals for the position.

“Look! My mom is also asking you to join us. Come join us! Let’s have a meal together.” Cindy persuaded.

Gerald rubbed his stomach. He did start to feel a little hungry after all that squabble and muscle movement earlier on.

Chapter 484

He had barely eaten anything, and his stomach grumbled with low groans.

It would also be ungracious to turn down Francesca’s kind offer; hence Gerald agreed to join them for lunch.

It was then that Gerald received a call from Xeno.

“F*ck! Gerald, I am so, so sorry for you. I totally understand now why the fight happened. Let alone you, I, too, felt like giving them a good beating. If it weren’t for Sienna, I would have already given it to them just now. Isn’t this simply equivalent to committing fraud?!”

Seemed as though Xeno found out the truth. He was enraged and fuming mad.

“Sienna and that colleague of hers have already gotten into a big argument. She wants me to apologize to you. She really trusted that colleague of hers! Who would have expected her to introduce such a piece of trash to you instead? That woman even vomited inside my car! Hmph!”

Xeno couldn't help but feel contrite.

His intentions were good—introduce a girl to his buddy to give him a helping hand. On the contrary, the outcome was terrible, and such a woman was introduced to Gerald instead. Anyone else would have also felt awful and embarrassed.

“It's okay, Xeno. So, where are the both of you now? Have you sent that woman and her mother home yet?”

“Are you kidding me? Who'd be bothered to send them home? Arghh!! Plus, that woman totally said the wrong thing in my car. She should've known her place! The moment she said it, I literally chased the both of them out. Sienna and I are going to walk around the supermarket now. Do come over and have a drink with me tonight!”

“Yeah, sure!”

After a quick chat, Gerald then hung up the phone.

Alas. How could Gerald possibly blame Xeno and Sienna for this?

He decided not to think about the matter anymore, following Cindy and her mother into the room.

“I wonder when Waylon and the others will arrive... hmm. Speaking of which, Waylon’s actually a pretty decent guy. The moment he heard that his aunt was the one who introduced me to them, he was very polite and respectful towards me over the phone. He even said that he would bring a couple of friends here with him today! Regardless of whether this business deal would be successful or not, both his aunt and I would also owe him a favor today. Cindy, it would be great if you can find someone like him to become your boyfriend!”

Francesca blurted excitedly.

“Mom! What are you talking about?”

Cindy burst out as she pouted.

“Aunt Lacy?”

Suddenly, the door of the room swung wide open.

A boy walked in and greeted them with a bright smile.

There were two other young men and a woman standing behind him. They were all young people just like Gerald and Cindy.

“Yes! Are you Waylon Letts?” Francesca asked as she returned the smile.

Waylon nodded before replying, “Yes, Aunt Lacy. Sorry that we are late!”

“Haha! What are you apologizing for? We just arrived too. Your aunt often tells me how handsome you are. I had a tough time believing her as you know, there aren’t many good looking ones around anyway. But my, you are even more handsome than her compliments!”

“Aunt Lacy, you flatter me. Please allow me to introduce you to my friends. First, this is Milo Laurent. He is a high school classmate and a buddy of mine. His family owns a factory. This girl is XellaJaquin, also a classmate from high school. This guy is Jacky Zeni, the department’s deputy manager in Xella’s company. I would especially mention that the company Xella works at is a Dream Investment Group subsidiary! Hehe!”

Waylon proudly introduced all of them, one hand stuck in his pocket.

“Gosh! All of you are so young! How can you be so amazing and capable?”

It all took Francesca by surprise, judging how they had accomplished so much at such a young age.

She was oblivious to the fact that the other three who had come with Waylon were also dumbfounded by his introduction.

“Waylon, this is my daughter, Cindy. She’s the same age as you, but haha... well certainly not quite as promising as you are!”

“And yes, this is an ordinary friend of Cindy’s that she had recently got acquainted with...”

It seemed as though Francesca was afraid that Waylon and the others would misunderstand seeing Gerald as Cindy’s boyfriend.

She wanted to justify by giving them clarity.

However, Waylon interrupted her before she could even finish speaking.

“Aunt Lacy, don’t worry, there is no need for you to introduce him to us. We know who he is. He’s Gerald, and he is our classmate too!” replied Waylon as he looked at Gerald with a sneer.

He had not settled the score after Gerald gave him a slap during their last high-school reunion.

Back then, Waylon was supposed to be the day's protagonist, but Gerald stole the limelight. He even got beaten up until his head was bleeding!

Those few days were basically like living hell because all Waylon could think about whenever he closed his eyes was how Gerald had given him a slap across his face. It was a nightmare.

He could not help but become very uncomfortable once he saw Gerald again.

Waylon had been continually thinking of ways of where he could find the opportunity to trample all over Gerald, then destroy him in front of everyone else when their paths crossed again.

The moment he saw Gerald today, it definitely took him by surprise.

Gerald, oh, Gerald! It seemed as though a clash would be inevitable between both enemies!

As the introduction went on, Gerald smiled and looked at Xella.

“We meet again, Xella!”

Chapter 485

“Know Aunt Lacy and her family, Gerald?”

Gerald previously drove a Mercedes-Benz G500 at the hospital, and he even knew the county’s leader. It really surprised Xella.

Frankly, Gerald was quite charismatic that day.

That said, regardless of circumstance, Gerald was still inferior compared to Waylon and Jacky, who were standing next to her.

Waylon’s family owned a huge empire. He had also started his own company and became a boss at such a young age.

Although Waylon didn’t drive a car as posh as Gerald’s Mercedes Benz G500, he had higher prospects compared to Gerald.

As for Jacky, Xella suspected that he was the one who helped her the last time as the deputy manager of the personnel department.

He was a large organization manager, and he had very high standards in the public institution. He was also rewarded with a very high bonus and dividend at the end of the year.

Plus, Jacky also owned a business.

He was a handsome, eligible white-collar worker.

What about Gerald? What else did he have?

Although Gerald was one of the more capable ones from their class, Xella no longer had the kind of affection that she felt for him during high school.

“Yes, I know them! How unexpected that the guests’ Aunt Lacy invited for lunch today are you guys! Such a coincidence!” replied Gerald as he nodded.

Although some of them weren’t fans of Gerald, they all sat at the same dinner table, eating, drinking, and chatting with each other.

Gerald, who was sitting at the side, could sense that something was different this time.

It seemed as though Waylon and Xella were no longer as close as how they used to be.

To further explain, back then, Xella used to be really attached to Waylon, and Waylon had always been interested in Xella too.

But strangely, at lunch today, most of Xella’s attention was focused on Jacky.

Waylon would sometimes throw a cold stare at Gerald before stealing glances at Jacky, envy dripping all over his face.

It was apparent that he didn't look happy, but not to the point of being too upset.

Cindy's appearance really brightened up his day.

She was as gorgeous as Xella, but with a bonus look of innocence on her—pure and delicate.

Despite his jealousy toward Jacky, Waylon had put in a conscious effort to show his affection and favor to Cindy.

Milo was also captivated by Cindy's beauty and tried to make moves too. But upon seeing the look on Waylon's face, Milo quickly held back all of his advances.

What was even more embarrassing was the fact that Cindy seemed to be interested in Gerald. The whole time, she had been using her own chopsticks, picking up the food and leaving them on Gerald's plate.

Her gesture really upset Waylon and Milo.

Although this lunch seemed to be peaceful on the surface, many little internal battles were going on behind the scenes.

Waylon quickly glanced at Gerald before he winked at Milo. After that, both excused themselves, saying that they had to go to the washroom.

“Waylon, what’s the matter? Are you interested in Cindy? She is my...”

Milo spoke up.

“Shut up. We are not going to talk about that first. I mean, look. The opportunity has finally come for me to settle things with Gerald. I want to take advantage of this opportunity to make sure that this b*tch, Xella, and that girl, Cindy, have some respect for me!”

Waylon could not hide his sullen expression as he cringed at how awkward and embarrassing the atmosphere was at the dining table earlier.

“What? Are you serious, Waylon? You’re going to deal with Gerald, like now? I mean, how?”

Milo got a little excited at the thought.

During the last fight, besides Cameron, Milo got himself involved too. Milo had also always been tagging along with Waylon ever since their high school days.

Milo's family ran a factory and was rich, but he fought very well.

“By the way, when we went out for drinks about two days ago, was that your brother, Warrick, who does like underground dealings? Why don't we do this then? Perhaps you could give Big War a ring later. Tell him to come over and just give these bunch a little scare. And once the matter seems unsolvable, I will ask my godbrother, Jaxon, to give him a call then. Hah! And in Serene County, everyone knows how no one in the world wouldn't dare give face to Jaxon!”

“On second thought, tell him to not just give them a scare. It would be best if they could belittle Gerald; beat him up nicely. I want him to embarrass himself!” Waylon growled.

Milo was amazed when he heard Waylon's suggestion.

“That is a brilliant idea!”

“Yes. Jaxon had been feeling very sorry towards me because he couldn't help me with the matter the last time. All the more, I am his godbrother. He promised me that he would definitely help me take care of things if I ran into any difficulties in the future!”

Waylon exclaimed proudly.

“Okay, then! Let’s do that then. Let me give Big War a call now!”

Milo then hurriedly dialed on his phone.

The both of them then returned to the room casually, but deep down, they could barely contain their excitement.

Gerald, enjoying his pork trotters at the side, could not help but wonder why both of them were laughing gleefully amongst themselves.

Not long after, there was a loud commotion outside.

“What do you think you guys are doing? You cannot go in there!”

Chapter 486

A waitress yelled at the top of her lungs.

“Get lost!!”

A man cursed.

The next thing everyone knew, the room door was kicked wide open.

A group of seven or eight brawny men with buzz cuts and gold necklaces around their necks rushed into the room.

Each of them had dragon-like tattoos carved over their bodies.

They definitely gave off an intimidating vibe.

Clad in short-sleeved shirts, they slowly looked around, staring deadly at the people inside the room at this moment.

The leader of the gang had on a T-shirt and a sling pouch bag.

He took a long puff before he growled in a raspy voice, “Who was the one who booked this room? I want you to move to another room now!”

“Why should we do that? Who do you guys think you are?”

Cindy asked angrily as she stood up. She was not afraid of them at all.

“Who am I? Hah, girl. I am Warrick Yackel. If you don’t know who I am, go out on the streets and ask anyone about me!”

Warrick chuckled as he threw the cigarette butt on the ground and stepped on it.

Francesca raised her brows when she heard this.

This proved that she had heard of Warrick's name before this.

“Mr. Yackel, we're not done with our meals yet. So, how can we possibly move to another room then?”

Francesca asked politely, a tight smile pressed across her face.

“How? It's simple. Each of you just pick up your own damn dish in your hands and move elsewhere!”

Warrick retorted and sniggered.

The atmosphere was tense and awkward. Even Francesca did not know what else to say.

If they were to take their dishes out to eat, Waylon would definitely lose face.

Francesca could only helplessly hold down her irritated daughter as she tried to persuade Cindy to sit down.

Waylon and Milo both just calmly observed the situation unfold with delight.

But something felt amiss, and Waylon whispered worriedly, “What’s going on? Gerald’s one of those who hosted today’s luncheon too. So, why isn’t he doing anything at all? If we’re going accordingly to plan, as soon as Gerald speaks up, they would immediately start beating him up! This is f*cking annoying!”

At the same time, Gerald thought to himself:

‘Waylon and Milo are usually the types who enjoy being in the limelight. During such situations, they would be already showing off and trying to handle the situation to prove their own strengths and capabilities. I don’t want to rob them of their opportunity to take charge. But it seems as though both of them are not going to say anything at all. What is going on?’

Gerald decided to remain seated and continued to observe further.

“Okay! Looks like none of you are going to speak up, right? Then, don’t blame me for being impolite!”

Warrick cracked his knuckles and loosened his neck.

Boom!

Suddenly, Jacky slammed his hands on the table.

“Let’s see how brave you guys are then! Don’t you have any respect for the law? Xella, call the police now!”

Jacky fumed as he stared coldly at the group of men, one hand in his pocket.

Xella felt her cheeks turning pink as she felt Jacky’s charm exuding out of him.

She stared wishfully at Jacky, her eyes filled with admiration.

Milo could not help but feel even more worried about Waylon.

Milo looked at Waylon, as though to say: “Look! Jacky is stealing all the limelight from you!”

Waylon simply smiled wryly as he thought to himself: ‘He wants to steal the limelight from me? Heh. Fine, I’ll let Jacky and Gerald steal the limelight from me first. My plan will not work if no one is trying to steal the limelight from me!’

Jacky, too felt a sense of accomplishment, like a hero. He turned around and looked at Xella, as though telling her not to worry, and that he had everything under control.

Xella simply nodded and quickly whipped out her cell phone to call the police.

“F*ck! So you’re really not giving me any face at all. Brothers... beat him up!”

As soon as Warrick boomed, he picked up a stool from the side and threw it directly at Jacky.

As the fight broke out, one of the gang members snatched Xella’s phone and broke it.

Xella’s face immediately crunched in fear as she crouched defensively behind Waylon.

Jacky was pinned to the ground as the guys severely bludgeoned him up.

“Stop! Stop hitting him! Stop hitting him! What should I do now?!”

Francesca screamed in a frenzy and looked as though she was about to burst into tears.

Waylon saw that Cindy and Xella were completely helpless and almost reached their limits. But yet Gerald still remained calm and did not take any action. Waylon cursed below his breath and vowed to have someone else beat him up next time then.

Suddenly, the sound of someone slamming their hands on the table pierced through the air.

Waylon slipped his hands in his pockets, squinting in frustration. He tilted his head as he slowly muttered in disgust.

“I want you guys to stop right now!!!”

Chapter 487

Waylon stood up and yelled.

Stunned, Warrick and his guys stopped immediately.

“Young man, are you asking for a death wish too?”

Warrick pranced towards Waylon, his face grim and black.

“Don’t mess around with him! Don’t you know who Waylon’s father is?”

Although Xella had tasted the harshest realities of the world in these few years, never had she come across anything like this before. When this incident broke out, the sense of security that she felt in Jacky was gone entirely.

Looking at how things turned out, it seemed as though Waylon was handling things better compared to Jacky.

Despite being clouded in fear, Xella felt the urge to reveal Waylon's family background to scare off Warrick and his men.

“Pfft! Who is he?”

Before Xella could reply, Waylon grabbed her arm and motioned for her to shut up.

“Xella, I told you before that I do not want to involve my father in any of my own affairs in the future. Get behind me. It's okay. I will solve this matter!”

Waylon replied.

“Ahh? But Waylon...”

“Just stand behind me!!”

Waylon roared at Xella.

Xella nodded timidly. Despite being yelled at, she suddenly felt a strong sense of security deep down in her heart.

She obediently stood behind him.

“Big War, my name is Waylon Letts. I started a small company of my own. I know how famous you are in the underground industry. My godbrother from Mayberry City knows who you are too.”

Waylon smiled at Warrick, trying to ease the situation.

“Oh, is that so?” Warrick raised an eyebrow, pretending to be shocked.

Francesca, who stood by the sides, started to feel a growing sense of admiration and appreciation for Waylon when he saw him dealing with things so calmly.

“Your godbrother also knows who I am? And from Mayberry City? What is his name?”

Warrick paused for a moment before asking Waylon.

“Jaxon, Sanders. He is very powerful and influential in both Mayberry City and Serene County. Everyone calls him Jaxon the Great. Have you heard of him before, Big War?”

Waylon replied, smiling politely.

“What? Jaxon the Great is your godbrother?”

Warrick asked, as his face turned pale immediately.

His act was really convincing.

“Bullsh*t! Who is Jaxon the Great? He is from Mayberry Organization. How can you possibly know someone like him?”

Warrick immediately quizzed him.

In fact, Francesca doubted his words too. She found it fishy for someone like Waylon to be so well connected.

Plus, it was such a big claim to say that Jaxon the Great was his godbrother!

“Heh. You don’t believe me, do you? If you don’t believe me, I can always drop my godbrother a call now and get him to speak to you in person then!”

Waylon replied calmly before calling Jaxon.

Of course, he had already told Jaxon about this matter beforehand and asked for his favor to put on an act and pass a message on his behalf.

His primary purpose was just to teach his enemy a lesson.

After all, since Jaxon did not manage to help Waylon the last time, hence he agreed to this favor today.

“Brother, are you busy? I ran into some trouble...oh, yes. I am at Johnsbury Bistro now. There is someone by the name of Warrick Yackel who is holding up my friends and me!”

“What? You’re near Johnsbury Bistro? So you’re coming over now?”

Waylon was in glee, unable to contain his delight.

When they spoke over the phone earlier, they had already planned for Jaxon to say a few words over the phone to Warrick. Unexpectedly, Jaxon was actually going to come here personally.

Waylon then hung up the phone excitedly.

“It really is Jaxon the Great!”

As he said this, Warrick pretended to be extremely shocked. He even acted as though he was too scared to even move.

One of Warrick’s conditions stated before he agreed to put on an act for Waylon was so that he could befriend Jaxon the Great through Waylon. After all, Warrick knew that Waylon came from compelling family background.

Otherwise, he would not have agreed to put on this act for him for no reason at all.

“Pfft! You are finally scared now?!”

Xella scoffed.

She was still feeling furious that the group of men had broken her cell phone just now.

A short while later, the door swung open again.

A young man decked in a neat suit and leather shoes stepped into the room.

Chapter 488

“Who is causing trouble?” questioned the young man.

When Warrick saw the young man, he was shocked. “It’s really you, Jaxon the Great! I am Warrick, and I was just hanging around the area. This is all a misunderstanding!”

Jaxon had been invited to sing at a karaoke bar next to Johnsbury Bistro. He initially thought that it would not be right for him not to help Waylon at all after receiving so many favors from Waylon’s family.

With that thought in mind, he decided to come over in person to take a look.

“So, what should I do now then? Waylon, you’re not injured, are you?”

Jaxon asked.

“I am not injured, brother! No worries.”

Waylon walked over to Jaxon and took out a cigarette before handing it over to Jaxon as he lit it up for him.

Just as Jaxon had a few drags of the cigarette, it fell right to the ground.

“Brother, what’s wrong?”

Waylon asked curiously.

“You... you are here?”

Jaxon asked as he looked at Gerald, who was sitting down at the table in astonishment.

He was very clear about who Gerald was. As one of those directly involved in the organization, he was certain about Gerald’s true identity.

Gerald, on the other hand, had always thought that Jaxon was a sincere and upright man. He failed to fathom how he was acquainted with someone like Waylon, who only liked to loaf around.

“Yes!”

Gerald replied as he nodded.

Milo, who was standing by the side, also wanted to be able to speak to Jaxon. He then scurried towards Jaxon as he said softly, “Jaxon the Great, that is the kid that we were going to beat up today!”

“What? Are you saying that the person that you wanted to beat up...is him?” Jaxon asked in shock.

“Yes. Brother, this kid actually offended your godbrother! And that’s equivalent to offending me too. Watch me. I am going to hit him now!”

Jaxon’s expression was difficult to read at that very moment.

Warrick started to make his way towards Gerald to beat him up.

Seeing that, Jaxon suddenly lifted his foot and tripped Warrick, who weighed more than eighty kilograms.

Warrick instantly fell to the ground with a loud thud.

“Damn it! You are so rude and disrespectful! I will put an end to you today!”

As a chauffeur, Jaxon could naturally fight very well.

This group of people actually wanted to beat Mr. Crawford up? Wouldn’t that mean that he was assigned to beat Mr. Crawford up too?

What a recipe for disaster!

Waylon was taken aback too. Didn't they already agree that Jaxon would just hit Warrick lightly? Why was Jaxon really beating him up?

"Brother, why are you..."

Slap!

Jaxon raised his hand and gave Waylon a huge slap.

"D*mn it! You reckless fool!"

Jaxon roared as he raised his leg and kicked Waylon aside too.

Xella and everyone else in the room gasped, dumbfounded by the scene.

"What's going on? Didn't Waylon call Jaxon over here to help him? Why is he beating up the people from both sides?"

Francesca gripped Cindy's hand tightly. She knew that they could not afford to offend anyone who was here today.

Waylon's face was swelling badly as he quivered and asked, "Brother, why did you hit me?"

Waylon felt so aggrieved and wronged that he started crying immediately.

Everything was supposed to be really straight forward today. He simply wanted Jaxon to cooperate with Warrick so that he could show off a little. They could beat Gerald up together then.

But the tables had turned, and both Warrick and himself got beaten up instead.

Jaxon ignored Waylon completely as he stepped on his fingers, and he walked towards everyone else.

Francesca asked in a shaky voice, "Jaxon the Great, we have not offended you in any way. What are you going to do now?"

Xella was also so frightened that she retreated as far back as she possibly could.

Jaxon suddenly picked up a bottle of red wine.

He walked toward Gerald, smiling.

“So, you’re here too! Please allow me to explain myself. Things are not what you imagine it is.”

As he spoke, Jaxon quickly filled up Gerald’s wine glass for him.

Jaxon looked so nervous that it seemed as though he would kneel down in front of Gerald.

“Huh? What is happening?”

Everyone’s eyes were about to pop out in horror.

Chapter 489

Jaxon’s respectful attitude toward Gerald surprised everyone.

This was especially so for Xella, who was now looking at Gerald with a completely different expression on her face.

She had used to think that Gerald only had personal connections with average statused people. To think that he knew such a powerful and reputable individual as Jaxon!

What more, Jaxon had even taught the people who were planning to beat Gerald up a lesson. He didn’t give them any face at all!

“What a great coincidence! If it weren’t for you, I would already have been beaten up!” said Gerald with a wry smile on his face.

He had seen through Waylon’s act. If his guess was correct, then everything that had happened was orchestrated by Waylon. That was probably also the reason why both Waylon and Milo were laughing between themselves earlier.

Jaxon simply bowed slightly at Gerald’s comment.

What an awkward meal today... Gerald himself already felt full.

As for Francesca, after seeing Waylon getting beaten like that, she didn’t have the mood to continue eating anymore. With that, she decided to settle the bill first.

“Ah, Mr. Sanders, are you acquainted with Gerald? I’m the deputy director of X Bank. You seem like quite the capable man! Please don’t hesitate to contact me if any of your groups wish to use our bank for your funding and capital flow!”

Francesca wasn’t going to let the chance to befriend Jaxon slip away that easily.

After all, she knew that Jaxon had the capability to make smaller subordinate companies use X Bank for their cash flow.

Instead of discussing the matter with Francesca, he simply looked at Gerald to see his response.

Gerald simply nodded.

If Francesca hadn't invited him to join them for lunch today, she may have been able to get through with her business negotiations with ease. Since her initial plan was disrupted because of him, Gerald thought that it would only be fair for him to help her out this time. This was the only reason why he agreed to it.

At that moment, they could hear Waylon and the group of people fighting again inside the room.

It was clear, however, that the people were beating Waylon up this time.

Though Warrick had planned to use Waylon to befriend Jaxon, he ended up unexpectedly offending him instead!

How could Warrick not be angry?

Waylon was now the group's punching bag to release all their anger and frustration.

Gerald only sneered when he heard Waylon's screams. In fact, he felt that they weren't beating him hard enough.

Xella continued looking at Gerald, a complicated expression on her face.

When she saw that Gerald was only talking to Cindy and wasn't paying her any attention, deep in her heart, Xella couldn't help but feel slightly uncomfortable

And just like that, the meal was over.

Gerald went back to his hotel with Jaxon as the driver.

"Cindy, I can finally see why your grandfather told me that this young man's identity wasn't all that simple!" said Francesca after a while as she sighed.

While they were having dinner together last night, Cindy's grandfather had emphasized that Gerald wasn't as simple as he looked. She hadn't thought much about it back then, but she could now see what he meant.

"I hadn't expected him to be so powerful and well connected either! Actually, now that I think about it, mom! I finally understand what happened back when I was at the karaoke bar last time!" replied Cindy as she smacked her forehead with her palm.

Xella herself remained silent. She was waiting for the people inside to finish fighting before fishing Waylon out. She didn't dare to go in at the moment, nor did she dare to

stay alone. She was terrified that Warrick and his men would also take their revenge on her.

Earlier, she had followed Gerald out quietly when she saw him leaving.

However, Gerald paid her no notice and simply left without saying another word.

Chapter 490

After Gerald left, Xella re-entered the building quietly and stood close to Francesca and her daughter.

She had been listening to the mother and daughter's conversation from the moment they started talking again.

"What happened at the karaoke bar?" asked Xella nervously before Francesca could even respond.

"Oh! See, we went to a karaoke bar a little while back to have some fun. A friend of ours provoked some people there and it led to a clash with Louie from the Lourdes Mining Group in Serene County! Back then, even Douglas was frightened to death despite being such a capable person! After all, it was Louie who we had provoked. Louie had even ordered all the girls to remain in the bar and drink with him!"

"What? Cindy! Why wasn't I told about this earlier?"

All Francesca knew was that Gerald had invited her daughter over to enjoy a meal with him. She had just found out about this entire conflict today.

“Well, I was afraid that you would be worried! I’ll explain all of it now, though. At the time, I was crying together with Leila since we were so frightened. Douglas and the other guys had run away as well! But guess what happened next!”

“Go on,” Francesca replied worriedly.

“In the end, it was Gerald who had helped us settle everything! He was the one who had made Louie let all the girls go! If it hadn’t been for him, I don’t even want to start imagining what could have happened to us that night!”

As Cindy continued explaining, she took notice of how affectionate she was whenever she talked about him. She realized at that moment, that she now had budding feelings for Gerald.

“And? What happened after that? All of you just left Gerald alone with Louie? Would someone like Louie just let Gerald leave that easily?”

It was Xella’s turn to ask.

“Yeah, well here’s the thing. That was when things started getting even weirder! I was worried about Gerald so I told everyone to turn back to the karaoke bar. By the time we arrived, the building was surrounded by dozens of Maybach cars! When we

entered, Louie and his friends were all getting beaten up by some men dressed in black!”

“Though it was quite a spectacle, my main objective then was still to help Gerald get out. I was so anxious then. However, it turned out that not only was Gerald doing fine, he was having an expensive French meal for his dinner in a restaurant next to the karaoke bar! When he saw us, he invited us over to have dinner with him too! When I asked Gerald about the specifics of what had happened back in the karaoke bar, he kept his answers ambiguous... It really felt like he was hiding something from us back then. After tonight’s events, I think I finally understand what happened back then a little better...”

Francesca took in a deep breath before exhaling.

“...Then, if that’s the case, it’s very likely that Gerald was the one who had called the group of people to beat Louie and his friends up. He wouldn’t just help you girls resolve the matter without a backup plan. What more, he was even calmly enjoying a nice meal at the time!”

“That’s what I’m thinking too!” replied Cindy as she nodded energetically.

Xella was shocked after hearing her story.

“...You know, a while back I had a class reunion with Gerald and one of my friends, Cameron, said that Gerald seemed to have a good relationship with Louie! He even said that Gerald had kicked Louie’s butt yet Louie’s only response at the time was to

smile without saying a word! This could mean that Gerald had already beaten him up once before this. Why else would he be that polite to Gerald?" explained Xella in detail.

Hearing her side of the story, both Francesca and Cindy couldn't help but feel that Gerald's true identity had only grown more mysterious.

"I think... I think I've got it! Cindy! If we're really, really lucky, Gerald could be the young master himself! Mr. Crawford from Mayberry City!" said Francesca aloud.

"W-what?"

Hearing those words made Xella tremble in fear. She was shaking so much that her handbag even fell to the floor.

She felt as though she had just been stabbed in the heart.

"Mom! That's... not possible, right?"

Cindy could feel her chest tighten as she pondered upon the idea.

"Pfft! I'm just pulling your leg! On a more serious note, this Gerald is definitely quite the extraordinary individual. Even Jaxon's giving him so much face. Cindy, he's always been good and kind to you, right? Try to get as close to him as you possibly can in the

near future. From what we know, both his classmates and even the Jung family despise him. You're one of the few people in Serene County who treats him well, so you better seize this opportunity!" said Francesca happily.

Xella felt miserable hearing her words.

If nothing else had happened, she would've been Gerald's best friend in Serene County!

Not too long ago, Gerald had still been affectionate with her. Contrastingly, he was now very cold and indifferent toward her!

At that moment, Xella realized that she felt as though she had lost something...

It was some time after noon when Francesca returned to the bank to work. She had a radiant smile on her face.

"Hehe... Deputy Director Lacy, why are you so happy? Could you already have met a noble person to complete your order for you?"

Seeing Francesca's happy face, Leia couldn't help but feel slightly bitter.

Chapter 491

"Oh, don't be like that, Deputy Leia. It isn't every day that we get to see Deputy Lacy being this happy! After all, she still has to fulfill a pretty big quota that even the

President may not be able to reach, and she's just a deputy!" mocked one of the ladies closer to Leia.

Leia was pleased to hear that. "That's right! She's still just a deputy! As if she could have that much power!"

Lacy only smiled without saying a word.

While this was happening, a middle-aged woman suddenly burst into the office, covered head to toe in sweat.

Seeing this, the employees in the room immediately shouted in unison, "President!"

"President Khan, what's wrong? You're drenched in sweat!" asked Leia.

Usually, Leia would get more respect from President Khan because of her husband. This time, however, she didn't even look at her. She simply walked over to Lacy as though she hadn't heard a word from Leia.

"Deputy Lacy, you have accomplished a great achievement on behalf of the bank this time! I'm really not sure how to even thank you properly!" said the president excitedly.

"What happened, President Khan?" asked Lacy. She had a fair guess what this was about, but she still asked anyway.

“Haha... Well, remember the Mayberry Commercial Gro- I mean, the Dream Investment Group? The one I’ve always wanted to cooperate with? I’ve always thought that I’d never be able to work with them because of my status. I wasn’t even sure if their smallest company would even work with us!”

“However! You managed to get over thirty companies under their name. You even signed over sixty financing contracts with them and the data is still increasing! I... I’m not even sure what to do now!”

President Khan wasn’t the only one shocked. Lacy was equally shocked as well.

She thought that Gerald might only be able to get a hold of one or two companies under their name but to think that he got her over thirty companies and over sixty financing contracts?

Goodness gracious!

With this turn of events, she might not just remain a director this time, right?

“Anyway, I’m here to tell you that we will be officially signing the contracts with them tomorrow. Naturally, you’ll be coming with me. However, your current position doesn’t suit you anymore. I’ve had a talk with the higher management and you’re now the reserve vice president. Lennon will be retiring next month and when he does,

you'll be taking his position! Since the director position will also be empty, you'll have both positions for the time being!"

"For now, just fill up the forms for both the position of director and vice president. I'll approve the applications later!"

"I- I understand, President Khan! Thank you for placing your trust in me!"

Lacy was so excited that she was almost in tears.

Once President Khan left, Lacy didn't know what to do. She was feeling an onslaught of emotions at that moment.

All of a sudden, the sound of shattering glass was heard.

Leia's cup lay broken on the floor. Her face was pale and her hand remained frozen as though she was still holding on to the cup. She was in shock.

"How... how is this possible? How is any of this possible?" mumbled Leia to herself in utter disbelief.

She couldn't believe that her competitor had finally overtaken her! Leia had been taking the lead for so long and yet, Lacy was suddenly promoted to a much higher position than her! It wasn't something that Leia could just take calmly!

“Congratulations, Director- I mean, Vice President Lacy!” said one of the workers. Everyone in the office began clapping.

Well, everyone except for Leia. Lacy looked at Leia before smiling triumphantly.

Immediately after that, she called Gerald.

“Hello? Gerald? I need to thank you face to face. Because of your friend, I’m now the vice president! I need to treat you when you’re free, Gerald! You definitely have to come, alright?” Lacy said it out loud specifically so that one particular person could hear her.

“Sure, Auntie Lacy!” said Gerald as he nodded on the other end of the line.

After she hung up, she looked at Leia who was staring wide-eyed at her.

“You... who helped you? What did you say his name was?”

Leia’s face was as pale as a sheet as she asked.

Chapter 492

“Oh, you know, Gerald. Actually, now that I think about it, you should know him better than I do. After all, he’s the one who withdrew ninety thousand dollars in cash and is also my daughter’s best friend! He treats her very well, you know?”

Everyone in the office knew each other very well, which was why Lacy spoke without the slightest hesitation.

“Wow! He must be your future son-in-law!”

Everyone had slight envy in their voices.

“...What? What are you even talking about? As if he could ever have that much power! You’re joking, right?” shouted Leia.

“Haha... Oh yes, yes, I’m definitely joking!” replied Lacy sarcastically as she smiled.

Lacy’s words pierced through Leia’s heart like spears. She was so angry that she couldn’t even say anything at that moment.

How couldn’t she be? Her competitor had won everything! She had even lost to the person she looked down on the most! That Gerald!

As the cocktail of anger, hate, and jealousy filled her mind, she couldn’t take the utter defeat and started weeping!

Meanwhile, Gerald had just arrived at his hotel when he received a phone call from Zack.

“I have two things to inform you about, Mr. Crawford!” said Zack.

“Go on.”

“Well, the first thing is regarding the jade pendant. Mr. Xiques has updated me on his findings. Though the final results will only be available within the next two days, his current prediction of where the jade originated from is somewhere from the southwest! I’ve also asked a few other masters just to double confirm with his assumptions,” explained Zack.

“Southwest... Alright, I got it. We’ll just wait for the final appraisal before making a move. What’s the other thing you mentioned about?” asked Gerald. He was pleased that there was progress on the jade pendant.

“About that... Since the investment with Serene County and Mayberry’s development is a pretty big project, those from the upper management are very concerned. They’ll be coming over to inspect later so I’ve organized an evening cocktail party. It would be great if you could attend. It’ll show how concerned we are about the upper management too!”

“Who is coming? I have time to spare later!”

“There’s Mr. Harrison, Mayberry’s vice president and president, and Serene County’s management. All of the big names will be attending!”

“Then I’d better be there early tonight!” said Gerald.

It was already close to four and Gerald knew that he should get ready soon.

Suddenly, he remembered that he was supposed to have dinner with Xeno later.

Since he couldn’t make it now, he tried giving Xeno a call to inform him about the change in plans. However, he wasn’t picking up.

Strange.

Gerald then tried calling Sienna. It took him two tries before she finally picked up.

However, he could immediately tell that something was very wrong the moment she answered his call.

It was very noisy on Xeno’s side. He could hear someone cursing in the background and Xeno was cursing as well.

When Sienna finally spoke, her voice was extremely anxious.

“Gerald!”

“What’s going on, Sienna? What’s all the noise about?”

Sienna stopped speaking for a brief moment before continuing, “It’s Xeno! Some people were destroying our shop! They’re inside now and Xeno wants to fight them! ”

“What?!” Gerald immediately hopped off the couch.

“Wait for me, I’m coming over immediately!”

Chapter 493

By the time Gerald reached Xeno’s second-hand car shop, several cars were already parked outside. Even from afar, he could hear a group of people quarreling from within the shop.

When Gerald got closer, he could see that the glass door had been shattered. The familiar backs of two people could also be seen in front of the shop.

It was the mother and daughter from the blind date event!

Gerald instantly put two and two together.

No wonder she kept telling him not to come over through the phone. The people there were after him!

“F*ck! That’s him! He’s the one who beat us up!” shouted the angry woman when she saw Gerald.

As she pointed toward him, several people who looked like gangsters wielding wooden bats exited the shop. They had dragon tattoos all over their arms and they each bore fierce expressions on their faces.

Xeno himself ran out, holding a kitchen knife in each hand. Even though he was clearly outnumbered, Xeno wasn’t afraid.

All of them were outside now, and since Xeno was holding the knives, none of the gangsters dared to move forward.

Both parties were simply waiting for the other to make the first move.

“Ignore him! The b*stard who beat both of us up is over here! Beat him to death!” shouted the enraged mother.

“Lay a finger on my brother and I’ll have your head!” shouted Xeno as he jabbed his knife in the air. The gangsters were equally unwilling to move any closer to him.

As the tensions continued to rise, a clap was heard from behind the gangsters. All of them made way for a tough-looking guy. He was wearing a pair of sunglasses and as soon as he waved his hand, the men immediately stepped back. He seemed to be their leader.

“Come now, Xeno! We’ve known each other for years, and we’re both in the same industry! I know what you’re like. Honestly, if it were somebody else, I couldn’t care any less! However, my cousin and her mom were involved this time. They were both beaten up and I can’t take that lightly! Someone needs to give me a proper explanation!” shouted the man as he cracked his neck intimidatingly. This man meant business.

“This b*tch is your cousin? Quazzie, I didn’t even know you had an aunt!” scorned Xeno.

Gerald could tell that the woman was a player. He could also guess that she probably had several men ready to help her!

“Oh, you don’t need to worry about that, Xeno! Look, I know we used to have problems business-wise and that you usually received all the support from the others. I’m setting that aside for today. We have another big problem at hand now!” as Quazzie said that, he pointed at Gerald, glaring daggers at him before looking back at Xeno.

“Know that this isn’t over yet! Let’s go, guys!” yelled Quazzie as he waved his hand again. The gangsters followed behind him, occasionally looking back with intimidating glares.

“Quazzie? You’re letting them off so easily?!” said the girl, upset.

“Oh, I have other plans! They’ll play out in a bit but for now, just sit back and enjoy the show!” replied Quazzie with a smirk.

Once the group of people left, Gerald started feeling extremely guilty.

They were here for Gerald, yet Xeno had to pay the price!

“I’m so sorry, Xeno! Sienna!” said Gerald.

“Say sorry only when you’ve done wrong, Gerald! Nobody’s blaming you! That b*stard Quazzie has been quarreling with me for a while now, even before you came back to the county! We’ve always had an excuse to fight!” growled Xeno as he entered his shop again.

Once inside, he put the knives to the side before sitting on a chair and lighting a cigarette.

Sienna, on the other hand, got a broom and dustpan to clear up the shattered glass pieces.

After calming down a bit, Xeno explained to Gerald how the situation earlier came to be.

Xeno and Sienna had gone to the hypermarket to get some ingredients for dinner. When they got back, they found Quazzie, the mother, and her daughter waiting for him outside his shop.

They had obviously wanted to get their revenge on Gerald, but since they couldn't find him, they went to Xeno. However, Xeno had refused to tell them how to contact or find Gerald.

Chapter 494

Being the hot-headed person that he was, Xeno eventually scolded the mother and daughter, saying they were extremely thick-skinned!

Eventually, Quazzie called in some reinforcements—the gangsters—and all hell broke loose when Xeno's door was shattered. It was at that moment when Xeno ran into his kitchen to get his two kitchen knives.

That was also the reason why Xeno wasn't picking his phone up when Gerald called earlier. He didn't want Gerald to get involved with them.

“So, who is this Quazzie guy?” asked Gerald.

Xeno had taken the hit on behalf of Gerald and Gerald was angry about that. No matter what happened, Gerald would definitely teach Quazzie a lesson.

“Well, he’s a gangster who also owns a second-hand car shop. Last month, he accused Xeno of snatching his customers away and not following the rules! He came looking for trouble but luckily, the bosses around here stood by Xeno’s back and after some words, Quazzie left. Quazzie’s been depending on his brother-in-law for a very long time now and I’ve heard that he’s quite a powerful man!” said Sienna as she swept the floor.

“Got it,” said Gerald as he nodded. He would have a talk with Michael tonight and let him handle the rest.

For now, he had more important things to tell Xeno.

“Anyway, Xeno, you should know that the people from the Dream Investment Group are here in Serene County, right? Why don’t you arrange for a huge car carnival? I could help you out!” said Gerald.

Gerald didn’t mind forking out the funds needed for that idea. After all, he wasn’t just doing this for anyone. It was Xeno!

Sienna sighed at his proposal. “Why would anyone even invest in us?”

Xeno agreed. “Bro, you probably don’t know this, but I’m confident that they won’t invest in us, simply because we aren’t even qualified. In fact, any small and honest company in Serene County won’t be able to get into the Dream Investment Group!”

“...Huh? Why not?” Gerald was honestly confused. He really didn’t know much about the selection process.

“Well, you’ll first have to bribe the company’s employees to get them to invest. After bribing the marketing department, you’ll next have to bribe the manager. Every person involved has to be bribed, so how could the smaller companies get in with their low-profit margins? The only people who would have enough money to do so, are the rich and powerful living in Serene County! It’s not as simple as you think it is, Gerald,” said Xeno as he finally finished smoking.

Gerald finally understood why people like Waylon and his father could still get investments.

So this was the reason why.

Gerald had only started doing investments because he wanted to help the smaller and proper businesses get better. However, it would seem that things weren’t going as he had planned.

The company seemed to have some serious issues, the biggest being the quality of its management and its employees.

Even Zack hadn't detected these issues and he could tell from people like Talon!

While Gerald was already formulating plans in his head, he still insisted that Xeno send in a proposal. Gerald would approve it himself as soon as he could.

At that moment, the tires of three cars screeched to a halt outside. Immediately after, several people wearing black suits got out and entered the shop.

"Who are you people?" asked Sienna.

"We received a call about a fight here. Was it you guys? Are you Xeno?" asked the leader as he looked at Xeno.

"I am. But if you're cuffing me, then Quazzie should be in this too! He was the one who started it!" said Xeno.

"Cut the cr*p! Bring them all back for investigation!"

Chapter 495

All three of them were then blindfolded before being driven off to somewhere. They were eventually led into a building and their phones were taken away from them too, before their blindfolds were removed.

Xeno was absolutely positive that the person who had planned for all this was none other than Quazzie's cousin, Grover.

This was definitely part of Quazzie's plan for revenge.

After all, they were here but not Quazzie and his literal gang members. It didn't require a lot of brain cells for Gerald to figure out that they were doing perfectly fine.

The trio had been locked up in a small room for a while now and none of them had been taken in for questioning.

"D*mn it all! I'll make sure I break that b*stard's back if it's the last thing I do! Just you wait!" cursed Xeno.

All Gerald could do was try to calm him down. He couldn't really call for backup without his phone. Zack would probably have solved the matter by now if Gerald still had his cell phone with him.

"What are we going to do now? What's going to happen to our shop? We've been here for more than two hours and it's probably already six in the evening! Ahhh, this is making me so anxious!"

Gerald could tell how much she loved Xeno. After all, she hadn't caused a scene even during such a stressful situation and she was still thinking about their shop!

...Wait, it was six already?

Gerald thought for a moment. Zack would probably be anxiously trying to contact him now since he still wasn't there. If Zack still couldn't contact him after several tries, a search party for Gerald would probably ensue.

"Xeno, Sienna, there's no use wasting your energy by being angry or worried. That's exactly what they want. Let's just wait for a little while longer. I think we should be able to leave in an hour or so!" said Gerald.

"An hour? That's too quick and specific, Gerald! Pretty sure we'll be in here much longer... Those b*stards are definitely up to something nasty..." replied Xeno, still glaring at the door.

Gerald simply remained quiet and calm.

While this was happening, Quazzie was handing a cigarette over to Grover in another building.

"Ahh, Grover! That guy's been getting on my nerves for a while now so this time, I'm teaching him a real nice lesson that he'll remember for life!"

"Don't worry about it. And you! Stop causing so much trouble!" said Grover.

“Mr. Grover! One of the phones keeps ringing!” said one of Grover’s men as he held Gerald’s phone in his hand.

In fact, that someone had been trying to call for over fifty times now.

“Oh my, the owner’s using a pretty good phone! That model should cost at least a few thousand dollars, right?”

The mother and daughter were also at the scene. The angry mother was glaring at Gerald’s phone.

“Yeah, it costs about three thousand dollars. It’s high-quality stuff!” said the girl, feeling slightly weirded out.

The couple being locked up didn’t look like people who would buy such expensive things. Could it be Gerald’s? Could he secretly be a wealthy person?

She held herself back from laughing at the thought. That was simply impossible!

Whoever the phone belonged to, they were probably just trying to fake being rich. Poor people usually used high quality things to try to fake being rich after all.

“If it’s really that expensive, let’s just take it! We have to get something back in return after getting beaten up after all!” said the woman angrily.

“Leave it be. I’ll help you claim your medical fees!” replied Grover.

It was truly a good phone. If anyone were to take it, it was going to be him!

“So... Mr. Grover, do we pick up the call or not? It seems urgent!” said the same man from before.

“Pick it up my ass! Just turn it off and put it aside!” scolded Grover.

“You’re getting better at this, bro! Also, I heard that you’re getting a promotion soon!” said Quazzie respectfully.

“That I am! Let me tell you something, Quazzie. The most important thing to have these days, is resources. Nothing can stop me or the people that I know! A good example would be our leader and the Merchant’s office deputy. Those are all resources you know!”

As Grover and Quazzie continued to chat, Zack looked at his phone anxiously.

“How is it, Zack? Still not picking up?”

The party had already started and all the important guests had arrived. All but one. Gerald still wasn't there yet and he couldn't even be contacted anymore. Everyone was getting anxious.

"Worse. Nobody was picking up earlier but now, I can't even get the call through anymore!" said Zack as he frowned.

Chapter 496

"Could something bad have happened to him?" said Michael Zeke warily.

"Normally, Mr. Crawford immediately hangs up my calls if he's busy. However, he's neither picking nor hanging up on me even though I've called dozens of times! If something was up, Mr. Crawford would definitely let me know beforehand!"

"Exactly, and if his phone isn't with him, who was the one who had hung up on that last call before turning the phone off?"

Both Michael and Zack had a feeling that something wasn't right.

At that moment, Leopold White—Michael's subordinate—walked in with a group of people.

Leopold walked to their side before saying, "Mr. Zeke, I went to Mr. Crawford's hotel and the hotel manager told us that he was last seen leaving the hotel this afternoon!"

“He went out?”

Michael and Zack looked at each other.

Several high-ranking VIPs at the banquet started gathering around the two of them.

The venue was divided into several large lounges, making the place quite huge. Those in the inner venue mostly consisted of VIPs. It was also where Michael and Zack currently were.

“Mr. Zeke, Mr. Lyle, is something wrong? Why isn’t Mr. Crawford here?” asked Mr. Harrison.

The VIPs had overheard them discussing the situation which led to them enquiring the two of them about the matter.

“We can’t seem to get in contact with him at the moment.”

“Mr. Lyle, I found him!” shouted Jaxon as he rushed over. He was panting and gasping for air when he finally got close.

He then went close to Zack’s side and whispered in his ear.

“...What?” Zack’s eyes widened.

Those who were aware of the situation immediately quieted down.

“Mr. Harrison, Mr. Zebriel, and Mr. Le! Mr. Crawford has been kidnapped and he was most likely set-up!” said Zack.

“Impossible!” said Mr. Le, shocked.

“Bring the witness over, Jaxon! Hurry!” ordered Zack.

Jaxon nodded and ordered one of his own men to bring her in.

Once she stood before them, she started telling them everything that she knew. About how the situation began with Xeno’s store being wrecked up to the point where Gerald and the others were ‘arrested’ by some shady looking men. She also explained the relationship between Quazzie and Grover.

Naturally, she wasn’t sharing all this information for free. Jaxon had paid her a lot of money to tell the truth during his interrogation.

Several of the VIPs there felt embarrassed.

After a brief silence, the chief slammed both his hands on a table.

“Investigate the matter immediately! I want answers and results!”

“Yes sir!”

“We’ll be going over as well to see if Mr. Crawford had really committed the crime!”

With that, the chief and his men immediately rushed out of the venue.

The people outside who were chatting among themselves were stunned to see such a big scene.

“What? What’s happening?” asked a middle-aged man to a driver.

“Oh, Mr. Jung! Something bad has apparently happened. From what I’ve heard, it seems that Grover has kidnapped Mr. Crawford! I’m not sure why either, but now the chief is personally going over to investigate the matter. Please don’t tell others about this!”

“Huh? Mr. Crawford was kidnapped? Grover?”

The Jung in person was Willie and he was startled by what he had heard.

After contemplating on the matter for a little while, he sent out a text message.

Grover and Quazzie were still chatting between themselves when Grover received a message on his phone.

After reading it, his face immediately turned pale.

“What’s wrong, cousin?”

“Oh god, I think I may be in big trouble!” shouted Grover as he rushed toward the building where the three were locked up in.

Chapter 497

Before they entered the room, both of them straightened their clothes and put on a calm façade.

“So, what’s it going to be, Xeno? My bros have their eyes on your store. Besides, you’re the one who messed with my brother’s cousin anyway. Why don’t you just sign the d*mn paperwork already?” said Grover as he entered before pointing at the papers on the table.

Quazzie entered next and he immediately slapped Xeno’s face.

He was lucky that Xeno's arms had been tied together, otherwise, he would have received a swift punch to the gut!

"F*ck off you sons of b*tches! Have you no balls? Fight me one-to-one like real men, cowards!"

Xeno's eyes were bloodshot.

This time, it was Grover's turn to slap him. He was going to make sure that all three of them suffered for putting him in such a situation. Though to get caught, the police would still need evidence! There was no way they'd be able to find such an obscure building, right?

Quazzie himself hadn't received any explanation on why Grover thought they were in trouble. Thus, he simply shrugged it off before thinking of calling his brothers over to gang up on Xeno.

The angry woman, on the other hand, walked toward Gerald and stared down at him with icy-cold glares. She was going to enjoy beating Gerald up.

Before she could land her first slap, however, one of Grover's men burst into the room.

"Grover! Quazzie! This is bad, we're in big trouble!"

The man was in such a panic that he fell after taking a few steps forward.

“Oh god... what is it?” asked Grover as he turned to face his fallen subordinate. He hoped what he was thinking of wasn't true.

“Armed... police... and several luxury cars... They've surrounded the entire god d*mn building!”

Grover knew that it was all over for him. He had been arrested before this. This time, however, he was aware that he was clearly in much hotter water.

Not only had he kidnapped three people, he had also posed as a fake cop. He thought these were nobodies!

Quazzie began panicking as well. He just wanted to teach Xeno a lesson and push him out of the second-hand car market! He didn't expect so many big shots to be involved!

Shaking his head, Grover rushed to the nearest window to peek out. Surely enough, there was a sea of people surrounding the building.

The headlights outside shone through the initially dark, night sky.

“F*cking! Not many people know about this rotten building! How the hell did they sniff us out so quickly?!”

By this point, Quazzie’s face was probably the palest it had ever been in his entire life.

“We’re done for... There’s nothing we can do to clear our names off this!”

The mother and daughter were terrified as well.

The man who had fallen earlier gulped as he got up, his legs quivering.

“Grover? Quazzie? What are we to do?”

“Hell if I know!” yelled Grover as his heart thumped rapidly.

At that moment, all of them in the room could hear people barging into the building.

Several armed police were swiftly ascending the stairs.

As soon as the police saw them, they immediately raised their guns.

“Freeze! Don’t move!”

By the time Gerald and the others were free from their restraints, Grover, Quazzie, and their men were already pinned on the ground.

When they got outside, Michael, Zack, and a few other VIPs rushed toward Gerald.

“Mr. Crawford, you must be terrified! Thank god we managed to track you down!”

“I’m fine! Don’t worry!” replied Gerald.

What a huge commotion this had become.

As Grover and Quazzie stared wide-eyed at the scene before them, both of them began sweating profusely, their wrists now in cuffs.

All those present were big shots that could usually only be seen on television... And why were they calling Gerald Mr. Crawford?

He couldn’t really be that Mr. Crawford, right? He couldn’t be Mr. Crawford of Mayberry... Right?

Both of them gulped down hard at the realization of how big a mess they were in. Now that they knew better, they could safely say that their entire operation had been a suicide mission!

However, the mother and daughter were even more shocked.

“Gerald...? What the hell is going on here?” asked Xeno, confused as to why so many big shots were comforting Gerald.

“I’ll... explain it to you once we get back!”

He might as well use this opportunity to tell his good brother who he really was. There was no need to hide his true identity from Xeno anymore.

Chapter 498

Due to the chaotic chain of events, there was no way that they could continue with the banquet tonight.

Gerald and Xeno both had to go make a statement. As Mr. Le had said, the matter would be investigated strictly.

Quazzie and Grover may even have to face a maximum of twenty years’ worth of jail time.

“This incident has caused too big an impact on Serene County! It could affect the future of the county negatively! As a demolisher, how dare you do this to us, Grover? The only way he’ll be able to atone for this is through harsh punishment!” shouted Mr. Le furiously.

He was in his office with a large stack of documents on his table. The other employees present were thoroughly startled.

“Mr. Le, Grover is an outlaw. He’s done similar things before and he’s managed to wiggle himself out every time! Not this time though! We have sufficient evidence to convict him of kidnapping three people!”

“It’s time for him to pay for his crimes. Also, did anyone back him up? Is there anyone particularly close to him?” asked Mr. Le.

“We haven’t found anyone directly aiding Grover in this particular event, but we do know that he’s quite close to Mr. Jung from the Investment Promotion Bureau. Both of them have had dinner together several times!”

“Mr. Jung? Willie Jung?” replied Mr. Le, his eyebrows raised.

“That’s the one. However, from what we can tell, he’s clean. He’s probably dealt with these kinds of people just because of the nature of his job”

“Hmph, that won’t do. Even if Willie wasn’t directly aiding Grover, Grover still knows him and works for the Investment Promotion Bureau. Now that Grover’s stirred up such chaos, Willie Jung has to be held responsible for this disaster. Transfer him out of this department! Which department is still vacant?” huffed Mr. Le.

“The publication department seems to be lacking a deputy section chief to write materials... But, this is Willie Jung...”

“Just let him be a clerk! Didn’t they say that he’s good at writing articles? Might as well put that ability to good use!”

His decision was final and he left the office with his hands behind his back.

Moving back to Gerald’s side, the matter could only be resolved after an entire night had passed.

It was close to dawn when Gerald fumbled tiredly behind Xeno to his second-hand car shop.

Both Xeno and Sienna were left bemused after learning of Gerald’s true identity.

They began an onslaught of questions and Gerald replied each of them honestly.

“So... it’s actually true? Gerald, you’re Mr. Crawford from Mayberry?” asked Xeno, rightfully surprised. Sienna was in shock as well.

“Yep, that’s me!”

“And you’re also the one handling the Dream Investment Group?”

Xeno was pleasantly surprised by this turn of events.

“I meant every word I said earlier, when I told you that I was going to help you expand your business. Once things have calmed down, I’ll have my people come over to help you with the handover procedures!” said Gerald, smiling.

“Really?” replied Sienna, her eyes wide open in shock and joy.

“What, you want me to lie and say I won’t?” said Gerald with a grin.

Gerald had already made the arrangements with Zack the night before. It wasn’t too difficult for him to handle.

This was also the reason why Gerald followed Xeno back to his shop.

After both of them chatted for a while, Gerald finally got up and returned to the hotel.

Since it was so early in the morning, there weren't any taxis around yet. He didn't have a car anymore either, so he simply got on an Ofo bicycle.

Xeno stood by the entrance as he watched Gerald leave. "Hey, buddy! You're really too humble, you know? If I had as much money as you, I'd have a fleet of Maybach cars clearing the road for me, followed by at least a dozen chicks and bodyguards wherever I went!"

"Also, while you're still here, I'm going to vow right here and right now. I'm going to make sure Quazzie's entire family regrets ever being born!" growled Xeno with resentment.

"...Hmm? What was that?" said Sienna as she raised a slight brow.

"I said I'm going to make Quazzie and his family regret ever being born!"

"No, no, a little before that."

"I think I said that I'd have at least a dozen chicks and bodyg- ah. Sienna, wait! I can expl-"

Before he could finish his sentence, Sienna was already pinching Xeno's shoulder!

Gerald simply smiled while shaking his head as he headed back for his hotel.

Upon arriving, he was just about to park his bicycle when he saw a girl limping out of a taxi that had stopped right in front of the hotel.

Gerald sighed before covering his face with his hand in an attempt to avoid looking at her. However, before he could go past the automatic doors, she called out to him.

“Gerald?”

Gerald froze and sighed before lowering his hand. Of course she had spotted him...

Chapter 499

The girl in question was Leila Jung.

Gerald honestly didn't hate her, nor was he as irritated toward her compared to her parents.

However, he really hoped that she hadn't seen him right now.

At that moment, he recalled his time as a seven or eight-year-old kid. His father had brought him out, and it was then that he had met Leila for the first time.

Back then, he thought that she was really beautiful and that he would definitely have her as his wife when he grew up.

Gerald couldn't blame his younger self for thinking that either. After all, young Leila was always clean and pretty. She wore nice clothes all the time as well.

However, the thing that hadn't changed was her arrogance. She didn't like the fact that Gerald wasn't a city dweller.

Young Gerald had tried getting closer to her on multiple occasions, but she would always turn him down.

Gerald remembered how optimistic he was to make her his wife, even though he was still a little afraid of her back then.

Fortunately, his feelings for her faded once Gerald entered middle school.

Now that they had met again, however, Gerald knew that if he ever exposed his true identity to her, Leila would be head over heels for him.

He shook his head before looking back at her.

But things were much different now.

Rather than wanting to chase after her, he was trying his hardest to avoid her. Sadly, as the saying goes, you attract what you fear!

“Were you trying to ignore me? Didn’t you clearly see me earlier? I even got off the taxi because I just so happened to see you cycling down the road!” asked Leila in an angry tone. She seemed to have broken her foot.

“Oh, Leila! Sorry, didn’t manage to see you there!” replied Gerald awkwardly.

“Well, now that you have, I was planning to take a bus to Mayberry today. Unfortunately, I broke my foot so I won’t be able to go alone!”

As she said that, she limped closer toward Gerald.

“Ah, that’s a pity! I hope your foot heals soon! I’ll be taking my leave now!” said Gerald hurriedly before trying to get past the automatic doors again.

“Hey! I’m injured here! Why are you trying so hard to leave? You aren’t showing any concern at all!” grumbled Leila. His indifference toward her situation was somewhat disappointing.

She considered the fact that Gerald could just be afraid of her at that moment. Thinking back, however, she remembered when she had first met Gerald at her home. Back then, he would obey everything that she ordered him to do, just like a dog.

She also recalled how she never used to take his words and actions seriously. That all changed when she found out that Gerald was rich.

Leila herself was now caring about the way Gerald thought of her. She was also finally willing to take his words and actions seriously.

Yet what was Gerald doing? Why was he showing indifference to her now?!

She wouldn't have batted an eye if he treated her this way in the past but not now!

Everything about their relationship was going topsy-turvy and that made Leila really displeased!

“Ah. Oh no, your foot looks hurt. Are you okay?” asked Gerald reluctantly.

“Humph! It's fine!” shouted Leila angrily.

She could remember that event clearly. That day, Gerald had withdrawn ninety thousand dollars before her very eyes. What more, Gerald had helped Auntie Lacy achieve her work target. She was even made the vice president! Leila knew about this

because her mother had cried a lot over the incident. Leia was still deeply upset about the matter.

Leila herself was shocked after hearing that. She felt as though she was losing control of everything!

“Glad to hear! Well, I’ll be returning to my room now. Need to get some beauty sleep after such a busy night!” Gerald replied with a yawn.

He wasn’t kidding either. He really just wanted to get some rest now.

“So, this is where you’ve been staying?” asked Leila, startled again.

“Yep,” he replied before finally making it past the automatic doors.

“Gerald you’re being so cold! I’ve injured my foot and I just want to go home! Can’t you at least give me a ride back?” yelled Leila, her eyes growing slightly red.

This person who had been pampering her all this time was now treating her like she was nothing!

“With what? A car? A car that I sold so that your dad could get some ‘donations’?”

“That... Well, I saw you park that Ofo bike! You can give me a ride on a bicycle! Also! My mom fell sick with anger last night because of what you did! This will be a prime opportunity for you to visit her!” replied Leila, frustrated.

“F*ck you and you mom! Glad that she is! Now leave me alone, both of you are none of my business!” cursed Gerald who had already lost his patience.

Chapter 500

“Fine! Alright, I’m the one wrong here! Just relax already!” shouted Leila who was so aggrieved that she was already on the brink of tears.

No one had ever scolded her like this and when she heard Gerald cursing at her, she felt as though she had done something terribly wrong. She immediately started blaming herself for it.

It didn’t take much longer for her tears to start flowing down her cheeks.

She just wasn’t used to so much self-reproach coupled with the shame of being scolded.

When Gerald saw her crying, he felt a slight pang of guilt in his heart. Maybe he had been a bit too rough on her.

After all, the main reason why he had shouted profanities at her was because Willie and Leia’s names struck a nerve in him.

He softened his tone a little before saying, "I really need some rest, I've been up all night. I can hail a taxi for you if you want!"

"I'm not leaving!" said Leia as she tried to stomp her hurt foot. Now it was her turn to start losing her temper.

She then slowly limped toward the Ofo bike that Gerald had parked before standing there with her arms crossed.

This girl...

Gerald wasn't going to get any sleep at this rate! And it was too awkward for him to scold her a second time! Gerald sighed as he considered her earlier suggestion to send her back on the bicycle.

"...Alright, fine. If you really don't mind, I'll give you a lift home with the bicycle," said Gerald as he nodded in resignation.

"Yes!" shouted Leila victoriously

She sat on the bicycle's back seat and held on to Gerald's clothes with one hand.

“I never knew that you knew how to ride a bicycle, Gerald! I still don’t know how to cycle yet!” said Leila.

“Heh, weren’t you the one who mocked me back then? Saying that only hillbillies rode bicycles?” said Gerald with a laugh.

“I...”

Leila blushed, remembering how Gerald used to ride a bicycle to her house when they were still kids.

Back then. It was Uncle Dylan who had brought Gerald to her house with his bicycle.

Now, it was her turn.

The funniest thing was, it was more comfortable than sitting in Douglas’ Sedan. She felt so perplexed!

Seeing her reactions from the side mirrors, Gerald was reminded of a saying.

It was better to cry in a BMW than to laugh on a bicycle.

To Gerald, the vehicle itself didn't matter much. The important thing was who maneuvered it.

After chatting while cycling for a while, both of them eventually arrived at their destination.

Upon entering, Gerald was surprised that Willie Jung's house was already very crowded even though it was just nine in the morning.

Willie himself was sitting on one of the couches, his palms placed against his forehead. Something was definitely worrying him.

The expression that Leia was making only solidified Gerald's assumption.

Sitting opposite of Willie were a few middle-aged people, whom Gerald assumed were his colleagues. They seemed to be trying to advise him on something.

Even that b*stard Douglas was there. Beside him, sat a middle-aged man that resembled Douglas a lot.

When he turned to look at Leila, she looked arguably more confused than he was.

After sticking around for a little while more, Gerald heard enough to somewhat make sense of what was happening.

Apparently, Willie had gotten himself into trouble again, and he didn't even know what he had done wrong! However, the more pressing issue was that he had been transferred to another department as a clerical section chief! He was devastated.

"Um... Mom, dad, look who's here!" said Leila at that moment.

Gerald was a different person now, so she held him in high regard.

"Heh, hey dad, look over there. That's Gerald, the one I told you about before. Look how close he is to Leila! And don't let his appearance fool you, I saw him withdrawing ninety thousand dollars from the bank in cold hard cash the other day! Guess there's no reason for us to stay any longer! Not that we're able to help Mr. Jung anyway. Let's go!" said Douglas as he glared at Gerald coldly while tugging his father's sleeve.

"Alright, we'll be taking our leave. You should be able to figure all of this out on your own, Mr. Jung," said Douglas's father before getting up with a nod.

"Please don't leave, Mr. Lindt! He's no guest of ours, you are!"

Willie then turned to look at his daughter, his eyes fierce as a tiger's. He glared at her like she was a total disappointment before shouting angrily, "What were you thinking, Leila?! Why did you bring this son of a b*tch home?!"