

Chapter 301

The moment that woman walked in, Gerald and everyone else immediately knew who Felicity's patron was.

Cassandra McGregor!

"Counselor!" As shocked as everyone was, they greeted her warmly nevertheless.

This was a big deal! They'd only known Cassandra as a beauty queen with impossibly high standards, and never any boyfriends.

Who would've thought that she'd have something going on with a big-shot like Flynn Lexington?

Even more astounding was the reverence Flynn seemed to have for her.

It was truly befuddling!

Regarding the relationship between Felicity and Cassandra—it all started from that night, when Gerald rescued Cassandra from that newly opened bar.

That time, he'd sent her back with Flynn.

Whilst in the car Cassandra had discovered Gerald's power bank which was left behind. With that giving her a heads up, she slowly started to realize that it might have been him behind her rescue.

Just as she headed back to get to the bottom of the matter, she ran into Felicity, who freshly came out after her latest recording.

It had startled Felicity too, seeing Cassandra step out from a Rolls Royce. She'd hurried over to ask if anything was the matter, and Cassandra had given her a brief rundown of the recent events. She also subtly mentioned about being the one to see about Mayberry affairs.

Since it was about Gerald, she'd then hurried back to ask about things.

All she got was what Flynn and Gerald had already arranged ahead of time, and it was enough for Cassandra to drop the matter.

However, that wasn't the end of it.

Some time during last week, Cassandra and Felicity had gone shopping for cosmetics.

They ran into a spot of trouble when some drunken old tycoons sought to have a bit of sport with them. A frightened Cassandra called Flynn immediately, and Flynn had rushed to the scene with a bunch of men to beat up the troublemakers.

What a thrill that had been for Cassandra. What more, it had garnered a new-found admiration from Felicity.

It felt really good to have someone powerful on your side!

And so, when this latest fiasco had happened today, Felicity had obviously called for Cassandra as soon as she could.

That was how things had ended up this way.

Sensing that Jake might yet have realized whom he was dealing with, Flynn leaned in and whispered a few things into his ear.

Color drained out of his face. He finally understood—this lady was not to be harassed by the likes of him!

Cassandra examined Felicity, and her eyes narrowed. “Did someone hit you? And you too, Blondie?”

Unbeknownst to Felicity, Cassandra had secretly been in contact with Ordinary Man. She owed a lot to Felicity for that.

“That’s right, Cassie!” Felicity huffed.

“Blast! Whoever did this... you go get him back!” Cassandra folded her arms.

Slap! Bam!

Felicity stepped up and smacked Jake right across his face. Rage flared in his eyes, but remembering what Flynn had just told him, he didn't dare make so much as a peep.

As for Blondie, he smashed a beer bottle against the head of his assailant.

It felt good. Ahh, it felt good!

Those university students all thought so too.

There was nothing Jake could do about it either. Even if they broke his jaw and shoved him all his teeth, he'd still be owing them an apology. Even if they smeared a turd all over his shirt, he'd still have to lick it and call it delicious. That was how pathetic the position he was in at the moment.

Satisfied with how the situation had been resolved, Flynn took his leave.

Everything he'd done was for the sake of returning a favor with Gerald Crawford.

Yet he'd completely failed to notice that Gerald was sitting right there in the corner.

“Counselor, you’re so awesome!” everyone cheered enthusiastically. Toasts were raised in her name.

Chapter 302

Even Harper Sullivan joined in the merry-making.

Gerald could hardly stay out of it. “A toast to Cassandra!” he announced, raising a glass.

“Oho, so you were here, Gerald? It’s like you’re always there whenever something’s going on. I didn’t spot you earlier—where were you at?” Although Cassandra still held little regard for Gerald, through sheer force of habit—nevertheless, she was no longer as cold to him as she used to be, considering he’d helped her out before, in his own way.

“Ahaha, are you asking about him, counselor?” Yvonne cut in. “He’s been hiding in that corner the whole time! When Jake burst in here with all his guys, Blondie and the others stood up to them, but Gerald just sat there! Gosh, he’s more helpless than us ladies!”

Earlier, when she’d slipped away, she also happened to pass by where Gerald was seated, and had noticed him there.

“That’s right! Anyway, were you really expecting this guy to be any help in a fight?”

“Now, I’m sure Gerald would have stood along with everyone... it’s just that his knees were too weak from fear, ahahaha!”

Several girls sniggered, their voices filled with mockery.

Cassandra watched as Gerald only shook his head and sighed helplessly. She sipped to his toast.

“I’m going to the washroom!” Deluged with insults, there was no way for Gerald to respond. Certainly, he’d been of no help at all today. His only option was to flee.

“Hahaha, he literally pissed himself!”

“Goodness me... I’d rather die than have a boyfriend like Gerald!”

“Pfft, and what girl would be interested in a guy like him?”

Annoyed, Felicity changed the subject. “Gosh, enough already about that guy! Oh, right—counselor, when I called you earlier this afternoon, you said you wouldn’t be free to hang out. Did you have something else going on?”

“Oh, I had an errand to run, things to buy and stuff. If it wasn’t because Flynn was busy himself as well, I’d have sent him along to watch over you girls. Sadly, that matter really took him a while to settle—in fact, half of Mayberry is in an uproar over it!”

“Oh? What happened?” Everyone's interest was piqued.

“How come I haven’t seen anything on the news?” someone exclaimed.

“Don’t be stupid. It’s too big to talk about in public. Flynn wouldn’t tell me any details either, but something seems to have happened at Scothow Elementary, and it’s got major players like Zack Lyle and Michael Zeke involved, as well as a bunch of other notable businessmen. They’ve sealed off the road outside the school, cordoned off by nearly a hundred cars!”

“My god!”

“No way!”

Everyone was in disbelief.

Meanwhile, Gerald was just leaving through the door. Overhearing this bit, he shook his head again. He had no clue what that was all about, either.

Some people you don’t care about, but they get something good out of you anyway.

Some people you want to help, but end up harming instead.

It wasn’t yet time to reveal his true status, and Gerald really, really didn’t want that to become public knowledge in any event. Sometimes, this made things rather complicated and difficult.

It seemed that from now on, he ought to keep a low profile, and stay out of matters which didn't concern him!

He'd just mind his own business, and finish his studies quickly and quietly.

Just then, his handphone rang. It was Queta Smith calling.

He ducked into the washroom and took the call.

"Gerald, are you busy right now?"

"Not at all. What's up?"

"It's Yasmin," Queta whispered. "She said she's not feeling well again. I just checked her temperature—she's got a high fever. She needs to go to the hospital!"

Gerald knew that for her to call him directly meant that she really needed his help. She was probably tight on cash at the moment, otherwise she wouldn't be bringing this matter to him.

He'd have to help Queta find a better job soon. Rather than to give a man a fish... better to teach the man how to fish, right?

Worried for Yasmin, Gerald didn't dare delay any longer. Leaving with a quick goodbye, he drove over to fetch both girls to the hospital.

It was the middle of the night, but surprisingly there were quite a few people here to see the doctor. Holding Yasmin in his arms, Gerald lined up behind them.

Just as their turn was about to arrive, a woman suddenly stepped in front of him.

Chapter 303

A young woman suddenly cut right in front of them, without a word, displaying not the slightest bit of regard for others.

Gerald was not in the mood for this. "Miss, don't you find this a little rude?"

The woman ignored him.

"That's right! My teacher says you can't cut in a queue!" Yasmin exclaimed with a frown.

"Bah!" The woman turned around and snapped, "So I cut in front of you, so what? What can you do about it? All bark and no bite!"

One could see she was around twenty-one, with a fair complexion and a pretty face—and dressed in such a way as to leave little to the imagination.

However, her stuck-up attitude only pissed Gerald off to look at her.

“You’re the one barking!” At the limits of his patience, he snapped off a harsh reply.

“What did you say to me? Just wait right here—I’ll have somebody cut you down to size!” Shrieking and swearing as though she’d suddenly gone mad, the woman was pulled away by several bystanders.

Finally, she left in a huff.

Well, that came out of nowhere. Brushing it off mind, Gerald got back in line.

“Sir, maybe you shouldn’t have done that. That woman seemed like trouble!” A pretty young nurse whispered this as she was ushering some patients in. “She was here earlier this afternoon to visit one of our patients—someone of note—and she came with a whole train of fancy cars! I wouldn’t underestimate her clout, you know? Hurry on in—and no more trouble!”

Clearly, she’d started it! Well, the nurse meant well... Gerald made no further remark.

“Let’s not fuss over it, Gerald,” Queta agreed. “We’ll just wrap it here and leave immediately!”

So Gerald brought Yasmin in to see the doctor. It turned out to be nothing alarming—just a common cold—and some medicine was prescribed.

Queta was visibly relieved, and they left the hospital together.

As they arrived at the entrance, glossy black cars suddenly rolled up, one after another... at least a dozen in total. A massive group of well-dressed people got out and headed inside.

When she saw the woman who emerged from the car in the middle, Queta quaked with fear. It was that woman who'd cut in line earlier, starting off a spat with Gerald.

Had she really returned to cause trouble for them?

Thank goodness they'd made it out of there in time.

"I only just heard about it. How's Mr Rye? Is he still in the Intensive Care Unit?" A dashing young man asked.

The woman nodded. "Yeah. He's suffered terrible bone fractures in all four limbs, and he's still in the ICU ward—but thankfully his life is not in danger!"

"Blast! Who could be behind such savagery? I know... it must have been Mayberry."

"Hey! Don't talk about that here!" the guy snapped at her, causing her to shut her own mouth.

Gerald lingered nearby, easily within sight of them. Why did he do this?

Because he recognized that dashing young man.

Face still beaten up from that fiasco at the Emperor Karaoke Bar, it was none other than Jake!

Having overheard their discussion concerning a 'Mr Rye', he finally saw the picture now.

It was most likely the great Damien Rye himself. So that scoundrel had been admitted to this hospital.

It appeared that all these people—including that horrendous harpy—were from Rye Group.

Vroom, vroom! Then, in a rumbling storm of engines, another fleet of a dozen cars appeared.

One would naturally assume they were with Jake and company.

That wasn't all of them. More cars continued to follow from behind.

It stood to reason. Rye Group, under the Rye family, had long encroached upon Mayberry territory. Their roots ran deep.

They were a fierce gang of thugs.

Damien Rye was guaranteed to have powerful backers. No matter how hard anyone tried to cover things up, the events of that afternoon were simply too great to hide.

Chapter 304

Word about this whole incident, with the maiming of Damien Rye, was guaranteed to get out.

The question was how Damien himself would spin it.

“Do you know them, Gerald?” Seeing all these powerful people gathering outside the hospital, Queta stood beside, feeling anxious.

“I know them; but they don’t know me.” Gerald smiled wryly. “They’re just here to visit somebody. Never mind about it!”

“That gave me a fright! I thought that woman had summoned a bunch of thugs!” Queta gave a long sigh of relief.

After one last look at them, Gerald turned to go. He drove Queta back to her place.

Zack Lyle had some dirt on Damien Rye, so the latter would probably hesitate to stir up further trouble.

Along the way, Gerald didn't forget to bring up that other matter, concerning a change in employment for Queta.

"By the way, Queta... interested in changing jobs?" he asked with a smile.

If she wanted to, she could have her pick of any position in Mayberry International. It wasn't out of the cards to just build a kindergarten for her, either.

"I have also been meaning to ask you about this..." Queta replied. "Today, Manager Thornton told me that they might be interested in investing in the kindergarten, and even providing me with training at Sunnydale University! I'll be attending some Psychology lectures there as soon as tomorrow!"

"Oh? That's great!" Gerald nodded.

Ah... at times the thoughtfulness of men is no match for the consideration of women.

Many universities held community classes for people who were already working a job, or who had never received a higher education themselves.

He'd actually had the same idea before—about getting Queta signed up for such classes—but he'd just never found the time.

Well, this was an agreeable turn of events. Sunnydale was on par with his own Mayberry University. Everyone said so.

Gerald wanted to show her his own sincerity, so he promised that whenever he was free, he'd come see her at Sunnydale.

After dropping her off, he finally returned to his room at almost ten-thirty.

It had been an exhausting day. He fell asleep right away.

Two days passed without any incidents. Gerald spent this time studying quietly in the library. Summer break would be coming soon—but before that, the term exams.

That same day, at around 10 a.m., Gerald was attempting model questions in the library.

Suddenly, a sweet fragrance wafted over from his side.

It was the smell of a woman.

Turning to look, Gerald found a tall girl taking the seat beside him.

Everyone knows what it's like inside a university library—particularly star students such as Gerald—research and revision were going on non-stop, and the place was packed to the brim.

Gerald had been occupying this spot since 5.30 in the morning.

It started to get a little crowded in there.

The girl was tall, slender, and statuesque, with skin as fair as porcelain. Long hair cascaded down to her waist. She was a serene, captivating beauty.

One could tell that it wouldn't have been her first choice to sit down next to some guy—but it was the only empty seat left.

This was compounded by how all the guys had been eyeing on her since she came in, causing her to feel terribly self-conscious. Gerald meanwhile was fully engrossed in his studies, which afforded her some small measure of reprieve.

Blushing faintly, she gave him a little nod and a smile, then sat down and opened her book.

Resting her head upon one hand, turning the pages with the other... she was a mesmerizing portrait to behold.

“Damn it, that babe went and sat over there!”

“Come on! I'm a hundred times better looking than that turd! Ah, I can't take this!”

Jealous cries arose from the local menfolk.

“Ah-choo!” Meanwhile, inhaling the scent of a woman elicited a great sneeze from Gerald.

Immediately realizing that it was her own perfume at fault here, the girl flushed bright red, and began edging her chair away from him.

But for Gerald, this unfortunate event was only the beginning.

He lowered his head to focus on his work.

Drip. Splat.

All of a sudden, his nose was on fire—and then blood began to trickle out from it, dripping onto the papers before him.

He needed a tissue, right now!

Fidgeting about anxiously, he saw that the girl had turned away from him, her head laid upon one hand with discretion. Her other hand, however, surreptitiously extended a pack of tissues his way.

Her face was similar to a sight of a wildfire, blazing red.

As for Gerald, right then he'd wish for nothing better than to find a hole to crawl into...

... and then maybe he'd just die there.

Chapter 305

Gerald couldn't remain in the library a moment longer. Wiping the blood from his nose, he promptly fled the scene.

His life was over.

He couldn't even help himself! First off: That girl was simply fine as hell! What a body!

She was the sort of goddess that average guys weren't even allowed to dream about.

And that fragrance she'd been wearing... so intoxicating, his very nose had been aroused.

Sigh. A beauty of that caliber most likely came from a wealthy background.

What sort of ordinary man could win her attention?

Hold on! Wasn't he, himself, a wealthy fellow? Gah! How did he keep forgetting about this?

Gerald shook his head wryly.

He tried to peek into the library through a window—but by some strange coincidence, that girl had her head turned, and was presently looking out the very same window. She watched him curiously.

Their eyes met—and then she hurriedly dropped her gaze.

Gerald decided not to keep staring at her, either.

With a guilty little start, he remembered that he had Mila, now. He shouldn't be ogling at other chicks like this. Anyways, there would always be a pretty girl around the next corner—he couldn't very well go falling for each and every one of them!

That wasn't the way of Gerald Crawford, no.

Fighting to suppress the surging tides of his heart, he realized that he wouldn't be able to concentrate on his revision like this.

It was almost noon. He'd made a date with Queta to meet her for lunch at Sunnydale University, where she'd been taking professional courses the past couple of days. He hadn't gone to see her there yet.

He drove over to Sunnydale which, like Mayberry University, was located in the Mayberry University District—further proof of its equivalent prestige.

Fortunately, this meant that the two campuses weren't located too far apart. It took him roughly twenty minutes to get over there.

"Gerald!" Having received his call, Queta was already waiting at the gates.

They exchanged a few pleasantries upon meeting each other again.

"Hop in, let's go eat!" Gerald gave her a smile.

"No need for that, Gerald. Let it be my treat today!" Queta suddenly replied, with an air of mystery.

"Why this, all of a sudden?"

"Well... today's my birthday, you see." Queta's voice fell to a whisper. "I used to have no friends or family—no one to celebrate my birthday with. Now I have you. You've helped me with so much... this is the least I could do for you!"

"It's just that... Gerald, is the cafeteria okay with you?"

At the end of the day, Gerald Crawford was a rich young heir. Although Queta already knew he wouldn't cause a fuss over this, she felt compelled to ask nonetheless.

Gerald scratched his head. “Now I see why you called to ask me out yesterday... So today was your birthday! You should have said something—I don’t even have a gift ready!”

“I don’t need one. Just share a meal with me!”

Since Queta put it that way, there was nothing more Gerald could add. Still, it was her birthday—he couldn’t actually allow her to pay today... and if this was really her first time ever celebrating it, they should be doing more than this.

As such, Gerald chose instead to go to Surati, a Western-styled restaurant in Sunnydale campus. Back when he used to run with Aiden Baker and his lot, he’d often hear about those big spenders going on about this joint.

It was a nice enough place. Pretty expensive, obviously, but since Gerald had asked to come here, Queta voiced no objections, and followed him inside.

Classic symphonies greeted them. At this hour of the day, there were already quite a few patrons within—all finely dressed kids from families rolling in dough.

Chapter 306

Queta and Gerald walked in, dressed plainly.

The sight of them elicited disdainful scowls from many of the women in the restaurant.

“Isn’t that Queta Smith? She came here, to Surati?”

Next, a group of four or five girls and guys entered as well. As they walked past the table where Gerald and Queta were seated, some of them stopped in their tracks to stare at Queta in surprise. A playful spark flitted through those eyes.

“Linda...oh, hey, everybody...” Queta blushed as she greeted them, setting her food down and clutching her dress nervously.

Linda was fetchingly made-up and wore a form-fitting little black dress that only barely covered her butt.

Her female friends were clad in similarly risqué fashions, while the guys had piercings which announced their considerable social statuses.

It should be fair to assume that these were Queta’s classmates.

They had such teacher training courses at Gerald’s university too. You get all sorts in there.

Some were rich brats who’d failed to qualify for other courses. Some were small-business entrepreneurs. Some were regular working stiffs.

The rich brats attended classes mainly to pick up chicks.

The pretty young things there were hoping to find a sugar daddy.

The rest were like Queta—genuinely here to learn something.

“Hahaha... surely you can’t afford this place, Queta?” Linda hugged her shoulders, grinning at Queta with delight. Clearly, putting Queta down like this made Linda feel like she really was somebody.

Particularly because when classes first began two days ago, one of the rich boys had raised the topic in class as to who the prettiest girl among their classmates was.

At first, Linda had been all for it...but then, after the votes had been cast, the winner turned out to be Queta!

There had been joking invitations for her to come up front and present an acceptance speech for this honor, but Queta had so far paid no attention to their jibes and their attempts to chat her up.

However, this only further antagonized the competitive Linda, who’d never once lost to anyone in terms of looks. After all, wasn’t it said that the greatest cruelty to inflict upon a woman was to name another woman as being more beautiful than her? Even if they admitted it out loud, it’s still such a heart-wrenching thing.

So it was for Linda, and to make matters worse, she’d lost to some penniless tramp!

“It’s my birthday today and I’m treating a friend to lunch!” Queta wasn’t oblivious to Linda’s enmity towards her, so she only offered her a simple reply and no more.

“Good heavens, is this your treat? I’m guessing this guy’s your boyfriend, then?”

Another one of the girls joined in. “Ahahaha! Someone has to say it: the two of you are a perfect match! Look at what you’re both wearing!”

“Quit sulking, you two. They’re only some steaks and fruit juice,” one of the guys with them pointed out, shaking his head. “It’s our class beauty Queta’s birthday today, let her enjoy herself. Stop causing a scene!”

‘Class beauty’, he’d said. Linda couldn’t let that pass.

“But look, you guys! They’re only having the bare minimum here! Someone’s celebrating her birthday, but I bet they can’t even afford a cake! Looking at the two of them, I’m guessing she had to spend all of her life savings just to be in here! Gahahahaha!

“Well, I shan’t interrupt you any further. No wonder Queta’s neighbors were talking about how she never eats any dinner—and that even for lunch, all she has is one bowl of plain rice. Here I thought she was just watching her figure, but I guess she just doesn’t have much money for food!”

Having spoken her piece for the moment, Linda harrumphed, folded her arms, and stalked off.

“We’re going now. You’ll have no more trouble from us. After all, we’ll still have to accompany Finn to Miss Liara’s birthday party afterwards. Isn’t that right, Finn?” Linda made a show of clinging to a young man’s arm and finally left.

Having been humiliated like that, Queta bowed her head and kept silent. She didn’t eat another bite. A moment later, Gerald saw hot tears winding their way down her cheeks.

Chapter 307

“I’m sorry, Gerald. I’ve disgraced you too,” Queta wept. “I shouldn’t have come here, to a place like this!”

It was her birthday today and she was spending it with her only friend in the world. Even Queta’s feelings would be hurt by such ridicule.

No one understood her feelings better than Gerald. He too had once been poor. Whenever his pride had been trampled on like that, it felt like he was being stabbed through the heart.

When Queta was being attacked by those girls, Gerald had wanted to retaliate.

But if he’d done that, how much more would Queta suffer in class with them from that point onwards? Anyway, he hadn’t really understood what was going on until the end, just as they were walking away, and it’s not as though Gerald could chase after them and give them five across the face, right?

“Don’t mind it. The day will be over before you know it,” Gerald consoled her. “What you’ve got to do right now is work hard at your studies!”

He wondered if he ought to ask Aiden to help look after her here.

Queta nodded vigorously.

“Wait right here for me. I’ve got to go get something. I’ll be right back!” Gerald told her with a smile, and then slipped outside.

He was going to get her a cake.

Earlier, he’d placed an order online with a dessert shop on campus.

Outside, he had encountered two dozen young men and women crowding around a girl with sunglasses. They had all gone inside together and everyone was wearing the latest fashions.

Gerald didn’t have any interest in them. Perhaps he’d heard that Linda girl mention something about someone’s birthday? That was probably her, then.

Whatever.

Gerald found the dessert shop, which was just close to Surati. It took him another fifteen minutes to secure the cake and then he headed back.

Now there was a massive crowd of students outside the restaurant. They were peering in through the entrance, with some even taking pictures on their cell phones.

Something must have happened.

“Hot d*mn! I guess that girl must have pissed off Miss Liara! Really, now... of all the people to pick a fight with!”

“Lucky that it’s Miss Liara’s birthday today and she doesn’t want to make too big a fuss over it—otherwise, that girl would be done for!”

“But what exactly did she do wrong?”

“Seems like there was an old grudge from before. Sad...she’s quite the beauty. This is gonna be tragic!”

The onlookers were all in heated discussion over the matter.

Ignoring everything else, Gerald pushed his way through the crowd, and got a great shock!

Several girls were pulling Queta’s hair and holding her down on the floor.

One woman sat imperiously before her, one leg crossed over the other.

Queta's face was red and raw, as though she'd been hit.

"Let her go!" Gerald roared. Charging in, he shoved away the girls around Queta.

"Hmph! So it really was the two of you..." The woman in charge here rose to her feet. "I've searched high and low to no avail, but in the end you came to me on your own!"

Now that she'd opened her mouth to speak, Gerald finally remembered who she was.

It was the woman he'd quarrelled with, that night at the hospital.

She had connections to Damien Rye.

He hadn't recognized her right away because she was made up in a different style today.

"Well? Why did this have to come to violence?" Gerald hollered in fury.

Chapter 308

"Violence, you say? Heh! You were lucky you escaped the hospital when you did, let me tell you...otherwise, you would've been admitted there that night!" the young woman cackled. "I've been searching for the two of you so I can get my revenge—how nice of you to allow me to find you here instead!"

“Miss Liara, is this the punk who was bothering you last time?”

“Pfft. Just a couple of losers. And here I thought it might be someone special and that’s why we couldn’t track them down. You must be tired of being alive, huh? Trying to start something with our Miss Liara!”

Several men were posturing hopefully for Liara’s approval.

“Miss Liara, I know these two! The girl is one of my classmates. Her name is Queta Smith. That guy seems to be her boyfriend!”

Linda finally understood what was going on here. One moment they’d been welcoming Miss Liara, and the next, she was pointing at Queta and shrieking for someone to grab her.

And then, Miss Liara slapped Queta right across the face.

So... Queta had been stupid enough to draw Miss Liara’s ire.

Beside herself with excitement, Linda scrambled to tell on the offending duo.

Liara was a big-time celebrity in Sunnydale University, with Rye Group behind her and all.

She was one of the empresses of the campus, haughty and forbidding. No one dared to cross her.

In fact, matters of reputation played a major part in why Liara was holding such a grudge against them. That night, she'd planned to put on a big show in front of her uncle's men. That was why she'd showed up all of a sudden, aiming to be the first one on the scene to take charge of everything.

Instead, she'd crossed paths with an ignorant fool who wouldn't allow her to cut in line.

Damn him! He deserved the worst fate imaginable.

She was the renowned Miss Liara! If not for the sake of appearances, would she even have bothered with getting in line?

What a joke!

The point was that she was very upset over the whole affair. She'd managed to keep it bottled up at the time, until they were finished with visiting Uncle Damien. Then, she'd summoned a small army of men to hunt down Gerald, but he'd slipped through the net.

And yet, what a beautiful coincidence this was!

“Hey, seize that guy too!” Liara shrieked jubilantly. “Ahaha! This is the best birthday present I could possibly receive! I’m going to enjoy this to the fullest!”

Immediately, Gerald was pinned down by a whole horde of guys.

He hadn’t expected that girl to be a student here at Sunnydale.

“Liara, your beef is with me! She’s got nothing to do with this—let her go!”

Held down and unable to escape, Gerald knew that his time had finally come.

But what about Queta? She was completely innocent.

“Hahaha! So this is true love! But the more you beg me to let her go, the more I want to punish her too! I’m going to make an example of you two! You over there, give them each a sharp slap across the face! And you, start streaming this live! Make sure everyone knows what happens to those who cross Miss Liara!” This last command was directed toward Linda and was accompanied by a huge grin.

This appointment caused Linda to puff up with pride.

Her main goals in university were to catch a big fish and to make powerful friends. That was how she would get ahead in life.

All of a sudden, she was this close to Miss Liara already?

Sneering wickedly, she moved to stand in front of Gerald and Queta.

“You heard it yourself—I’m carrying this out by Miss Liara’s command. Blame yourself for not knowing your place, like ants railing against the heavens, hahaha!”

Smack! Smack! She meted out the punishment upon Gerald and Queta as ordered.

Quite a number of students were streaming this scene on their phones. Naturally, many of them had been doing so right from the start.

“Holy cow! Elena, check this out! Miss Liara is staging a public execution in Surati Restaurant! Who’s the unlucky fellow who ticked her off? LMAO!”

In a girls’ dorm somewhere, someone was announcing this news flash.

“Gosh, she’s even appointed a professional headswoman...what a drama queen!” another girl exclaimed. “Elena, let’s get down there now and see it for ourselves!”

“I’m not going!” Or so she said, but Elena glanced over at the video anyway before turning away again in disinterest, and flopping down in bed to continue using her phone.

A long moment passed, and then...

“What the hell?”

Chapter 309

Elena was just about to take an afternoon nap, but now she was wide awake.

She snatched up her handphone for a closer look, and her heart flip-flopped between joy and alarm. Still wearing her pajamas, she raced to the cafeteria.

Joy, because the man who had been in her thoughts had somehow appeared in her campus.

Alarm, because...good lord, was Gerald Crawford being abused on live-stream?

Meanwhile, at the Sunnydale University Fight Club...

It was a large organization, created at the whim of some rich kid or other, which went on in a particular corner of the campus.

This club boasted many members—over three hundred in total.

Presently, in the fighting ring...

“Yeah! Awesome!”

One of the fighters had just knocked down his opponent with a masterful technique. The spectators burst into uproarious applause.

“Water!” The fighter shrugged his shoulders as he walked out, and was immediately greeted by a disciple, who uncapped a water bottle and presented it to him. After several mouthfuls of water had been gulped down, the rest of the bottle was flung aside.

“Wow, you’re amazing! So cool!” Several pretty young things, phones in hand, dove into his arms with ingratiating smiles.

“Cool, you say?” The man harrumphed. “You think I didn’t notice how you girls were staring at your phones the whole time? Something interesting there? More interesting than my fights?”

“Tee-hee...we were watching that Liara mess somebody up. Have a look—she’s teaching some unlucky bum a lesson!” The girls showed him the ongoing live-stream.

“God d*mn, Crawford—” The fighter stiffened, and pushed aside the fawning girls.

“What’s wrong, Aiden?” They sulked.

“Hurry, get my guys! Tell them to run to Surati!”

The fighter was none other than Aiden Baker!

Hearing his command, the assembled disciples raced for Surati Restaurant without delay.

Even Aiden's close friend, Yancy Zimmerman, was summoned.

Over at Surati Restaurant, Linda had just delivered her third slap to Gerald's face.

"Hooohoo...you dare mess with Miss Liara? I'm gonna kick your ass!" With each passing moment, she was enjoying this more and more. As she raised her hand for a fourth strike, someone shouted, "Holy crap! Aiden Baker and his guys are here! A whole lot of guys!"

The crowd at the restaurant's entrance instantly scattered wide.

A couple hundred people were charging this way.

"Yo! Aiden came, too? Heh, that's sweet of him...so he heard about what I'm doing here and has come to help out?" Liara stood to greet him.

It was a bit of courtesy on her part. Although Liara was not one of Aiden's subordinates herself, she nevertheless recognized his tremendous influence within Sunnydale. They usually got along well with each other.

However, when Aiden reached them and Liara made to welcome his arrival, she heard him holler instead.

“D*mn it! Beat them up! Beat everyone here into the ground!”

With a shout, his fighters surged in. The men holding Gerald captive were instantly knocked senseless.

Even the furniture was being smashed to pieces, and as for Liara’s personal entourage... not a single person was spared from this violence!

Liara was on the verge of going mad, staring wide-eyed at the scene before her.

“What in heaven’s name... Aiden, have you lost your mind? It’s me, Liara! How dare you attack my people!”

Aiden marched up and slapped Liara hard. Whap!

“You dumb broad. I’ll make you pay for this!”

Then he hurried to Gerald’s side. “Gerald...Gerald, are you okay?” Now, Aiden was drenched in a cold sweat.

Gerald rubbed his sore cheeks. His wrath would be legendary.

If Aiden hadn't come to his rescue, what might this crowd have done to him?

Thank goodness he'd been saved in time.

"Gerald, this woman who's been hitting you... what would you have us do with her?" Holding a handful of Linda's hair, Yancy dragged the would-be executioner before him.

She was on the clawing edge of hysteria.

Chapter 310

Yancy Zimmerman was an august personage in this campus and Aiden Baker even more so.

And they'd come in here with a veritable army to rescue this Gerald person.

What was the connection, here?

What's more...they were actually taking orders from him?

"What are you waiting for? I want the stuffing beaten out of her!" Aiden roared.

Yancy dragged Linda away and barked for the guys to start smacking her about.

“You’re totally barking mad! Aiden Baker, are you really going to make an enemy of me...for the sake of these two nobodies?” This turn of events had happened too abruptly for Liara to make any sense of it.

Aiden...how dare he treat her like this?

“Hah!” Aiden sneered coldly. “That’s right—and what can you do about it? You’re just another whore under Rye Group!”

“No way! You dare insult me?”

Smack!

Humiliation turning to rage, Liara lunged forward to attack Aiden, only to be knocked back to ground with another ringing slap.

Blood was trickling from a corner of her mouth, now.

Liara couldn’t understand it at all. Was Aiden on drugs or something?

But worst of all was the way everyone was watching her right now, as though they couldn’t believe their own eyes.

And Aiden wasn’t even done with her yet.

At that moment, Liara's phone rang. The caller was identified as 'Captain'.

Her eyes lit up and she took the call straight away. "Captain, I need your help! Hurry, or else your boss will never see me again!" She wept into the phone.

The captain spoke emotionlessly, "Yes, Miss Liara. Someone's already called me. Could you pass the phone to Mr Baker?"

The hell she would! Liara switched the call to speakerphone, for everyone to hear.

"Hello, Mr Baker. There must be some misunderstanding going on here..." the captain called out. "I'm sure you're well aware whose woman Miss Liara is!"

"I couldn't care less how close she is to William Rye. Even if she were Henry Rye's personal plaything, that still wouldn't stop me now!"

What a joke! Aiden knew very well who Gerald's sister was—Jessica Crawford and all her family held power beyond measure. There wasn't even any question as to whose side to take!

Put it this way—if it had been Madam Jessica in his place here, there would be much more than a mere beatdown going on!

“Alright, I can see you Mayberry people have no regard for Rye Group whatsoever. Mr Baker, no one would deny Mayberry’s clout, but you’ve only been around the block for a dozen years or so. Why don’t you go home and ask your daddy how long Rye Group has been doing things?”

The captain was spitting out every word now. “To attack Mr Rye’s woman like this is no different from attacking Mr Rye himself!”

Liara could feel her courage returning. “Heh...let me tell you, Aiden Baker... my boyfriend is none other than William Rye himself! He’s back in the country these days, and when he finds out what happened to me...Your Mayberry people have some influence, sure, but you’d still try to get along with the Rye family, don’t you? Your dad’s under Zack Lyle, and even if Mr Lyle were to cover for you, it would still have to be for a good reason, right? Hah!”

Aiden Baker wasn’t invincible. There were matters that went over his own head.

In this regard, he turned to Gerald. If Gerald ordered the assault to continue, there would be no hesitation and nothing to fear!

But Gerald kept silent. Apparently, one of Aiden’s subordinates had supplied him with a taser.

He walked up and stuck Liara with it. Zap!

Liara’s whole body tensed up and then she collapsed to the floor, convulsing.

With some things, one had to endure, take a step back, and see the bigger picture. But when she'd started talking about how Rye Group would have her back, Gerald had lost his temper.

Truly, there was no escaping some feuds.

Last time, he'd nearly been made a cripple by Damien Rye. To tell the truth, he still hadn't gotten over that incident.

And then today, this Liara girl had disgraced him. If Gerald held in his anger any longer, it might kill him!

It had all started with Damien Rye—and now he had to settle a score with Rye Group...

This was enough for now, and there was no hope in continuing with lunch, so Gerald took Queta and left with the others.

A solemn hush fell over the onlooking crowd.

“My gosh, that guy's name was Gerald, wasn't it? He looked like a total loser, but it turns out he's a total bad-ass! Even Aiden Baker was at his beck and call!”

“Yeah! It's so depressing, man! I've heard that Yancy Zimmerman is filthy rich, too, but he looked like he was ready to lay down his life for that Gerald tramp!”

“Are you guys retards? Still calling him names...don't you get it? What was his name again?”

“Crawford, I think. Oh, crap! Could he be...?”

Chapter 311

Gerald was able to let off a lot of steam there. He'd never felt so good before.

However, he realized that things could get very complicated from here on out. Although he'd lived a modest life thus far, he at least understood this much.

Therefore, he decided he'd take this matter a little further. At the next opportunity, he'd have to sit down with Zack Lyle and Michael Zeke to discuss what had happened here.

He thanked Aiden and Elena for rushing over to his side before dismissing them.

The events of the day had left Queta frightened and humiliated. She was down in the dumps. Even her clothes had been ripped and torn by Liara's gang. It broke Gerald's heart to see her like this.

Ultimately, it was his fault that this tragedy had to occur and that Queta had been dragged into it.

“Come on, I'm buying you new clothes!” Gerald declared cheerfully.

“No...I’m fine like this, Gerald!” Queta bowed her head.

“I insist. No matter what, I had gotten you into this mess. Anyway, it’s your birthday!” Dragging her along by the hand, he pulled her onto his car and brought her to a fancy clothing emporium filled with high-quality high-fashion items.

Gerald bought two outfits for Queta all the while coaxing and consoling her. He promised something like today would never happen again.

He paid for the clothes, but just as they were about to leave...

“Gerald, is that you?” A clear, feminine voice called out to him. The tone was laced with unexpected delight.

He turned to look. It was Naomi Milton. “Naomi!”

Naomi also had three other girls with her: Felicity Nelson, Yvonne Dunn, and Cassandra McGregor!

Well, it didn’t surprise Gerald to see Naomi running with these girls. After all, there’d been that thing at Emperor Karaoke Bar a couple days back. That time, everyone had lost their minds, except for Naomi, who’d remained calm and advised Felicity to moderation and she’d been right: Jake had proven to be no trifle.

In that way, Naomi had also proven herself to be a voice of patience—something which Felicity felt she had a need for.

As for Yvonne, well...it wasn't as though Felicity wasn't aware that the girl mainly sought to benefit from her recent popularity. This was made especially obvious by how uncomfortable she was about Naomi joining their clique.

Naomi informed Gerald that the afternoon following that incident, Felicity had invited her to help out around her workplace.

As for right now...naturally, both Felicity and Cassandra spotted Gerald too, but neither one offered him greetings.

They only glanced at him, then began examining Queta, who was beside him.

“Gerald, who's this? What a beauty! Won't you introduce her to us?” Naomi cajoled teasingly.

Gerald handled the introductions. “This is my good friend, Queta Smith. Queta, this is Naomi Milton, that bro I'm always telling you about. She's a real man among men!”

“Pleased to meet you!” Although in low spirits at the moment, having met the Naomi that Gerald had told her so much about, she was delighted to shake hands.

Chapter 312

It had barely been an hour since that catastrophe.

Gerald didn't want to talk about it in front of Felicity and the rest, so after greeting Naomi, he hurried Queta away.

"Hot d*mn, holy cow!" Yvonne exclaimed in frustration. "That Gerald has some guts, huh? Felicity and the counselor are both here, but he didn't even say a quick hello to them? You ladies saw it, too! He completely ignored us!"

To herself, Yvonne thought about how someone like Gerald ought to show someone like her only the utmost courtesy and always mind his manners.

Instead, he'd snubbed them! Yvonne wouldn't stand for it.

Neither Felicity nor Cassandra could believe how Gerald had treated them, either.

They hadn't greeted him, but he hadn't greeted them, either. He'd grown some balls.

"Hmph! Loser! I couldn't care less!" Felicity huffed.

"Alright, alright...leave Gerald alone, now." Naomi tried to salvage the situation. "I noticed he was in a bad mood just now. Something's probably happened and he was too preoccupied to say hi, that's all."

“You don’t have to defend that person, Naomi. He’s free to do as he pleases. Hmph! Anyway, we’re going to Wayfair Mountain Entertainment later—we’d best hurry home and try on our new clothes! Isn’t that right, Felicity?”

Remembering that they’d be making a trip to that wonderful Wayfair Mountain Entertainment as soon as today, nothing could bring Yvonne down right now.

Felicity’s company superiors were having a friendly gathering at the villa. Since their top personality Felicity was one of Mayberry’s own, she was naturally entitled to bring a few guests along.

Now that Exceptional Live had risen to become a national-level media platform, they were worth a lot more these days. That meant better company vacations in nicer spots!

Suddenly, Naomi’s phone rang. She took the call, grunted in acknowledgement a couple of times, and then hung up.

Anxiously, she reported, “Felicity, that was the car rental service. Their driver has just left on urgent business and all their other drivers are at some wedding function, so there isn’t anyone to drive the Mercedes-Benz G-500 we reserved! They’ve asked if we’d be able to find our own driver!”

“What! The driver dumped us? D*mn it! It’s just one thing after another...” Felicity was fuming. “How am I supposed to find a driver last-minute to take us there? Anyway, I always hand-pick my drivers—they have to be good-looking! Every detail counts when going for an event like this!”

Really! Why did everything have to be so complicated?

“That’s right! Among us, only the counselor can drive, but as she’s going as a guest of honor, that’s out of the question!” Yvonne squealed. “Anyway, we can’t ask the counselor to serve as our driver!”

“Oh, I’ve just remembered that Gerald has a driving licence! He could do it!” Naomi exclaimed. “Shall we ask him to be our driver, then? He’s even been to that villa before!”

The truth was that Naomi was serving a personal agenda of her own here.

Previously, Gerald had really borne the appearance of someone who’d suddenly struck it rich, indulging in luxuries left and right. After a while, however, he’d gone right back to ground.

His classmates believed that he’d splurged it all away, and that was the end of it.

However, that brief period in the limelight had also left Gerald with a nasty preoccupation with appearances.

Naomi hadn’t failed to notice this.

She was asking him to be their driver now because she knew that Felicity had commissioned their previous driver for nearly a thousand dollars.

A thousand bucks for an afternoon's work. It was a lovely arrangement.

Yvonne was the first to protest. "No, no way! Naomi, didn't you hear what Felicity said? We need a good-looking driver, not some crass dork like Gerald! Forget about it!"

Felicity, however, arched one eyebrow and murmured, "Hmm...I actually think Naomi's suggestion has some merit. Crass and dorky though he may be, Gerald has a certain innocence about him which is rather refreshing. Mm-hmm...our old dorm-mate Xavia wasn't entirely without taste. I'll just need to give him a bit of a makeover and he might even do very well as our driver!"

"Okay. Let's give him a shot, then! He can drive, after all!" Cassandra raised no disagreement.

"Alright. Naomi, give Gerald a call. Tell him I'd like him to be our driver!"

Chapter 313

"Gerald, are you busy later?" Naomi asked, when Gerald took her call.

"Who, me? No, I'm not busy!" He was sending Queta back to campus. Once she was in class, he'd obviously be free.

“Oh. I’ve found you some side income. A thousand bucks for a day’s work. It’s a simple job: Felicity needs a driver. I know you’re not hurting for money these days, but a little extra scratch never hurts, right? What do you say?” Naomi presented the proposal delicately.

She knew he’d just about used up his windfall already, but she spoke with tact nevertheless as she was also aware that Gerald had become an image-conscious person. He’d even developed a taste for fine clothes!

But for all that, he was still a bro and nothing had changed that between them.

Honestly, when Felicity’s name came up, Gerald had wanted to decline—not least because he knew Yvonne and Cassandra would probably also be involved. It would be a madhouse, being caught between those chattering hens.

Yet, he couldn’t bring himself to turn down Naomi’s goodwill.

After a slight pause, Gerald nodded his head and agreed after all. It was all for Naomi’s sake.

“Alright! First, I’ll need you to get back here. We’re going to buy you some things and dress you up!” Naomi laughed happily over the phone.

Gerald sighed in exasperation and turned the car around.

As the girls' captive, he was given an expensive suit and a pair of leather shoes, all of which he had to put on right away.

It had to be said that Felicity, despite her aloofness towards him all this while, had to admit to being a little smitten when she saw Gerald in those handsome clothes. She almost complimented him, even...

But then she saw him carefully folding up his old clothes, as though intending to take them with him.

Oh, dear...still just a loser, after all.

"These are fine clothes. Don't wear them out in a hurry, Gerald! Between the cost of this outfit and some spending money for you as our driver, you're getting well over a thousand bucks out of this!" Cassandra remarked with arms folded.

"Yes, I see." Gerald could only smile and nod.

"Oh? Gerald, is that your new phone?" Naomi had just now spotted what he held in his hand.

He nodded. "Yup! Just got it a few days ago!"

"Whoa, that looks pretty sweet! Pass it here!" Yvonne peered at the device, her interest piqued. Without waiting for permission, she reached over and snatched it away.

One look at it, and she squealed. “My gosh...Felicity, Cassandra, look at this! This is the latest model, new on the market...it goes for over four thousand bucks! Gerald, is this yours?”

As a matter of fact, the most expensive smartphone she'd ever owned, she'd paid for it by installments, to a total of one thousand dollars.

Gerald, the poor man of their class, used a phone worth four times as much?

“No kidding!” Felicity gasped when she saw it, in spite of herself.

“Gerald, I don't know when you've become such a show-off—but for a guy like you to buy a phone like this, what were you thinking? Felicity is at the top of her game right now and her phone only costs half as much! You're just a student with no steady income, so how can you splurge like this? How many times must I tell you?” This came from Cassandra, the counselor.

It was as though someone had stepped on her tail.

Only a moment ago, she'd been lecturing Gerald about a set of clothes worth a few hundred bucks...and then he'd whipped out this four-thousand-dollar phone! Where did that leave her?

“Exactly! Why did you get something so expensive? Were you trying to impress some rich kids? Ahh...some people simply don't have class. Don't you know, Gerald? Only

poor people go for things like this, people with money just buy the cheaper models!” Having suffered some affront from this, Yvonne eagerly joined in the harassment.

Chapter 314

“Yes. You’re right. Of course.” Gerald just nodded away compliantly.

There was no point in arguing. He’d let them talk.

Next, they brought him to the car rental company, where they collected the Mercedes-Benz, and set out for Wayfair Mountain Entertainment.

Now they were back on track.

Gerald had to open the door politely for Felicity to step out from the car. The other girls followed after and they were all greeted warmly by the staff at the villa.

Why was the villa showing such consideration for Exceptional Live?

It was simple: though neither Exceptional Live nor that upcoming Yorknorth Mountain event was that big a deal, the sponsors behind them were. Ultimately, Michael Zeke was trying to put on a show to impress Gerald Crawford.

As she posed for the photographers, Felicity turned and muttered under her breath to Gerald, who had been about to follow them inside, “Very good, Gerald. Now take the car to the parking lot and wait for us there. You’d best stay clear of the event proper, lest you blow your own cover and embarrass us all! Regarding dinner, you can buy

yourself some bread if you get hungry—it's not like they're serving the kind of food you're used to eating.”

Clearly, she thought he was likely to say something that might embarrass her.

Unbelievable! One day, she'd get her just desserts!

Gerald had had it up to here with Felicity. He had his pride too, for crying out loud! Couldn't she show him at least a little respect?

Cursing in silence, Gerald could do nothing but comply and bring the car to the parking lot.

He couldn't reveal his true identity, one way or the other.

Of course, Gerald wasn't going to just hang around here like a fool.

He'd already decided that while he was here, he'd seek out Zack Lyle and Michael Zeke to discuss about Rye Group.

When he arrived at Michael's office, the man was reading a newspaper. When he saw Gerald, he shot to his feet, caught by surprise.

Moments later, Zack hurried over to join them.

Gerald recounted recent events to them and they in turn shared what they knew about Rye Group.

In summary, Rye Group pre-dated all their other organizations and was a stone-cold criminal family.

In this Mayberry region, they were big shots. As business continued to grow, Henry Rye established a formal group, going legitimate.

However, for all the legitimate businesses they conducted, some of the things they did...well, Gerald had some first-hand experience. One example would be when Chad and Danny Xanders attacked William Rye, and then the Xander family vanished overnight. Then there was Damien Rye, who commanded his own private army of thugs.

The reason Zack Lyle maintained cordial relations with them was because of their might. The vast network of people who served them, as well as their extensive underworld connections, made them a force to be reckoned with.

Peace begets prosperity, after all.

By now, Gerald had a much clearer understanding of the state of the game. Then his phone rang. It was his elder sister Jessica, whom he hadn't spoken to for over a fortnight now.

“What are you up to, Gerald?” she began.

“Nothing much. Just having dinner with Zack Lyle and Michael Zeke!” Gerald answered brightly, deciding that Jessica didn’t need to know about all this. At the end of the day, she was grooming him to eventually take over the whole Mayberry Commercial Street. If he went running to his sister for help with every little thing, what sort of worth would he be demonstrating?

“That’s great. I’m calling to let you know that I’ll be paying a visit to Mayberry in three days’ time and I want to see my precious baby brother. Hahaha!”

“Oh? You’re coming here?”

“Yup—and I’ll have some earth-shattering news to deliver to you, too!”

Chapter 315

“What’s the big news?”

Gerald froze. However, hearing that his sister would be coming, he thought back to one year ago, when she and both his parents had gone abroad to work off some debts, and how he’d never seen them since. This was a truly exciting prospect.

Of course, that was just a story they’d made up to tell him.

“Ahahaha...you’ll find out when I tell you! Alright, eat your dinner!”

Doot... doot...With that, Jessica had hung up.

Zack Lyle and Michael Zeke were turning pale. “Mr Crawford? Will Director Jessica be coming here?”

“Yup, that’s right!” Gerald replied. “Three days from now! No idea why!”

The two men looked as though they were going to be ill. They must be terrified of his sister.

Next, Gerald had dinner with them and talked about simpler things.

Three or four hours crawled slowly by.

“I say, where are you, Gerald?” Felicity just called him directly. She sounded most displeased.

Gerald checked the time. Whoops, it was already well past eight!

There was a rule at these hot springs: After sunset, no one was to make too much noise. Remembering that time when some celebrity starlet was trying to sneak a dip in the baths, and nearly started a fight with him...

...what more a grand function like tonight.

“Oh! I’ll bring the car around right away!” Hanging up, he fetched the car and picked up Felicity and friends, who were ready to leave for the night.

“Blast! Did you do this on purpose, Gerald? What did I instruct you? When the party’s about to finish, have the car ready nearby! Instead, you were nowhere to be found!” The moment she got into the car, Felicity started chewing his ear off.

“On purpose? Perish the thought! It’s just that you forbade me from stepping inside there, so how was I to know when the party would be ending?” Gerald whined.

“Y-y-you...just for that, you’re only getting half pay tonight!” Yvonne snapped.

“Gosh, what an utter failure you are!”

When the guests came out, some of the other drivers had already been standing by at the entrance, but where had hers been? Even when she’d walked all the way out to the car, the man himself had been nowhere in sight. The shame of it!

“I’ll drop you ladies off at our campus and then I’ll return this car!” Gerald muttered.

“Back to campus? Forget that!” Yvonne snapped. “We haven’t had enough fun yet tonight—we want to head to Emperor so we can sing all night long. Am I right, Felicity?”

It had actually been a marvellous evening already, and they'd gotten to see Wayfair Mountain Entertainment. However, the girls were reluctant to call it a night, including Cassandra.

Especially Cassandra. Several of Felicity's superiors had gotten her drinks and even asked for her number. Back then, she would have only been too delighted.

Now, though, her heart belonged to Ordinary Man.

Nevertheless, she'd felt very flattered.

"Yeah, send us to Emperor Karaoke, then return the car!" Cassandra said pleasantly.

There was nothing for it but to do as he'd been told before finally driving himself back to campus.

"Gosh...what do you think? A guy like Gerald—what kind of woman would be willing to be with him?"

In their own private room, the girls were drinking and chatting together as music played.

For want of a better topic of conversation, their thoughts strayed back to Gerald.

“Heh! Speaking honestly, a guy like him has no hope of getting himself a girlfriend. Even if he gets married one day, it won’t be to any great beauty, and even if she is, she’ll most likely be used goods. The reasons are simple—one, he’s dead broke; and two, he’s a total loser!” Felicity was drunk now and spoke with little restraint.

“You’re wrong... Gerald has a girlfriend! You may not be aware of this, but...she’s a radio DJ and she’s really pretty!” Naomi didn’t feel comfortable listening to them insult Gerald like this.

“Pah. Wasn’t Xavia pretty too? And what happened there?” Yvonne sneered, then perked up as she broached another topic. “Oh, yeah! Speaking of which...Felicity, what kind of guy are you looking for?”

“Oh, me? Well...he’s gotta be hot, of course—that’s one. Two, he has to be able to afford me. Three, um...someone from an influential family. Four, someone nice. Five, willing to spend lots of money on me. Six...”

“Good heavens, couldn’t you just say that you’re looking for someone like Ordinary Man?”

Chapter 316

Yvonne burst into laughter.

Cassandra, who had been standing beside Yvonne, started acting slightly awkwardly. The truth was, that inside, she was filled with jealousy.

“And you counselor, what kind of future husband are you looking for?”

Yvonne repeated her question.

“I’m just looking for someone humble. A solemn and mature man who is sensible as well as knowledgeable. Not to sound overly materialistic, but he should also be a well-to-do man since we, as women, will be relying on them for support for the rest of our lives.”

Cassandra ended her explanation with a faint smile.

Another burst of laughter escaped Yvonne’s mouth. “So what you’re saying is that you’re looking for someone like Ordinary Man. After all, he’s just a regular person who’s a bit more sensible and solemn. Speaking of which, what do you think he looks like? Handsome? Or could he just be some ugly person?”

“Definitely not ugly!”

“Far from ugly!”

Both Cassandra and Felicity yelled in unison after Cassandra’s question.

Felicity threw an odd gaze toward Cassandra.

Cassandra seemed a bit too nervous. Felicity could tell that something was definitely off.

Felicity recalled the moment when she had given Cassandra Ordinary Man's contact information. It was to allow Cassandra to help investigate which class Ordinary Man came from.

Back then she didn't think much about it.

But after what happened after... The more Felicity thought about it, the more she felt that something was amiss.

She was so nervous earlier... Could Cassandra have fallen in love with Ordinary Man as well?

Women certainly were the most selfish creatures on Earth.

Ordinary Man was nothing short of outstanding and rich. After all, he was able to allow people from Exceptional Live to host a social gathering at Wayfair Mountain Entertainment.

It was quite possible that Ordinary Man's true identity was the mysterious Mr. Crawford.

No woman could ever say no to a man like that.

'I may have been a little too careless...' thought Felicity to herself.

No one said anything after their answer, and the situation itself became rather awkward.

At that moment, the private room's door creaked open.

"Excuse me... Is Miss McGregor here?"

At the door, stood a bodyguard who had a black suit and earphones on.

"That would be me. Is there something I can help with?" asked Cassandra.

"Allow me to introduce myself, Miss McGregor. I'm Mr. Lexington's driver and he's invited four of you to a meal at Homeland Kitchen. A feast has been prepared as a form of apology. I've been ordered to pick you up," explained the bodyguard.

"Ah, I see."

Cassandra nodded after saying that. Though she was still slightly confused, she found no problem with it. Flynn respected her and he was definitely feeling guilty about what had happened the other day.

What more, Flynn was Gerald's subordinate and he definitely knew that she had a good relationship with Gerald.

While she thought about it, Cassandra realized she had yet to tell Felicity that Ordinary Man was indeed, Gerald.

But how did Flynn know how to find her? She considered the fact that it could be because they were all currently in Flynn's territory.

After pondering about it for a while, Cassandra eventually decided to call Flynn up to express her thanks.

However, her call led straight to his voicemail.

"Let's just go. Homeland Kitchen isn't too far off from here. It wouldn't be wise to make Mr. Lexington wait for too long," said Yvonne.

Cassandra simply nodded in response. "That's true. Alright, start up the engine, and let's be on our way." The driver nodded and led the way to his car.

A black Rolls-Royce was parked right outside the door.

Entering the vehicle, it wasn't long before they were on their way to Homeland Kitchen.

Homeland Kitchen was located in Mayberry Commercial Street but from where they currently were, it would only take them about seven minutes to get there.

However, the driver didn't stop the car even after they had passed the street. In fact, he drove on and on till Mayberry Commercial Street could barely be seen anymore. They were headed west now.

"Um, we've passed by Homeland Kitchen!"

Said Yvonne who had been sitting next to the driver all this time.

"Don't worry, I noticed. We're not going to this Homeland Kitchen. Our enterprise has just established a new branch, west of the city. We're going there instead."

While he said that, a faint smile formed briefly on his face.

Chapter 317

"A new branch? When was it established? I've heard nothing about it..."

The gears in Cassandra's head began to grind. Something about all of this seemed suspicious.

Earlier when they were still in Flynn's territory, the bodyguard had told them that Flynn wanted to treat them to a meal at Homeland Kitchen as an apology.

Cassandra didn't think much of it. After all, she saw the familiar Rolls-Royce before her eyes.

Because of that, they just went along with the bodyguard.

However, seeing that they were now going west of the city, more and more alarms in Cassandra's head were going off.

The west of the city was a factory zone. Very few entertainment centers would be there. Why would anyone consider establishing a Homeland Kitchen branch there?

"It opened just a few days ago. The chef there's quite the prodigy at cooking. Mr. Lexington's told me that he's hosting this feast with you in mind since he wasn't able to serve you well at the Emperor," said the driver.

"That's nice of him, but why didn't Mr. Lexington notify us about this beforehand?"

The driver cleared his throat slightly. "I wouldn't know about that. You can ask Flynn yourself once you reach the restaurant," said the driver as another faint smile appeared on his face.

"Did you just address Mr. Lexington by his name?"

The more she observed the driver, the less Cassandra trusted his odd behavior.

Hearing her question, the driver began smiling awkwardly.

The car's pace began accelerating at that moment. Not too long after, he took a turn and entered the highway, west of the city.

Due to the abundance of factories, there weren't many cars on the road. Only the faint glow of a few street lamps lit their way.

The more they went down the road, the more Cassandra felt that there was something wrong.

"Um, mister? I'm not feeling too well... Can we postpone this? I think I'm going to be sick. Please send us back."

"I'm afraid I can't do that."

Cassandra's heart sank. They wouldn't have entered the car in the first place if he had only specified that the Homeland Kitchen that they were going to wasn't in Mayberry Commercial Street.

Thinking back, he had accelerated while driving down Mayberry Commercial Street too. They weren't able to react quickly enough to ask him anything.

The car driver looked from left to right, averting his gaze.

All this only served to further worry Cassandra.

"We've driven so far anyway, why not go down and have a look once we're there?" persuaded the driver as he smiled.

“We refuse! Stop the car immediately!” shouted Felicity in a cold voice.

The driver pointed at the rearview mirror. “I can’t do that or we’ll crash with the car behind us. Besides, Mr. Lexington’s already waiting for you.”

“Oh really? Well, I’m calling him now!” sneered Cassandra as she rummaged for her phone.

However, the only voice she heard through the phone was his voicemail.

‘Why on earth does it keep going to voicemail?’

All of a sudden, a loud bang could be heard.

The driver had turned the steering wheel abruptly to make a sharp turn. The car was now going down a slope.

Cassandra and the others were almost knocked out after being violently thrown about inside the car.

“Where are you taking us! Who are you?!” roared Cassandra who was both in anger and fear at the same time.

However, the driver simply ignored her.

He pressed a button on his earphone before saying, “Copy that. They’re in the car now along with two other young beauties. We’re about to arrive, over.”

“Who the hell are you? Is this a kidnapping attempt?” Yvonne had been sitting next to the driver the entire time and she bore a look of terror on her face.

The car slowed down soon enough. It would appear that their destination was some kind of incomplete factory building.

She used to think that scenes like this were only present in action movies.

“Stop the car. Stop the f*ucking car I said!” Yvonne screamed, almost like a mad person as she grabbed the driver’s arm.

It took her a second to feel it, but she felt a slap on her cheek.

It was loud and clear. Yvonne almost fainted on the spot, as the slap she took was direct and precise.

At that moment, the driver hit the brakes.

Behind them, five people got out of the car which had been tailing them for a while now. From the building, emerged three other people.

Cassandra and the rest were dragged out of the car, one by one.

It was all clear now.

This was a premeditated kidnapping attempt!

All of a sudden, Naomi started shouting into her phone which she had secretly taken out while they were still in the car. “Hello?! We’ve been kidnapped! Please come save us, we’re at the-”

Before she could finish, a bodyguard ran toward her and snatched her phone. It took less than a second for him to smash it on the ground, disabling it for good.

A tight slap from him awaited Naomi.

“How dare you make that call! Third Brother, do you usually work this sloppily? Retrieve their phones immediately!”

“Give me your phones now!”

Felicity attempted to hide her phone as a few bodyguards rushed toward them. However, her attempt was futile and in the end, her phone was snatched away as well.

Chapter 318

“Humph! Tie them all up while we wait for the boss’s next order!” shouted one of the men.

Cassandra and the others were then dragged into the building before being tied to some chairs.

“They’re all so beautiful! If the boss enjoys himself today, maybe we’ll get to have some fun with them too!” A guard laughed with a cruel smirk on his face.

“That can wait. Let’s make sure the boss receives a warm welcome first! You three remain upstairs to stand guard over them. Until the boss arrives, suppress your sexual urges. If he finds out about it, you’ll definitely be castrated!”

The three chosen subordinates nodded respectfully as the rest of the men descended the stairs.

The women were extremely beautiful and, fearing that they might kiss them if they looked at them for too long, the three men decided it was best not to look at them at all. They squatted down by the door and began playing games on their phones.

“Psst... Hey, Naomi. Did you manage to get the call across earlier? How about you Felicity?” whispered Cassandra, her face as white as a sheet.

Felicity wept in silence as she shook her head. “Didn’t manage to... My phone was snatched away before I even had the chance to press the call button... What should we do, Counselor? I’m an internet celebrity! This is no way to treat such a person!” cried Felicity as she burst into tears.

The corner of Yvonne's mouth was still bleeding from the slap earlier. She was terrified and she started weeping as well.

Regardless of how calm and cold a girl she was, anyone would be frightened half to death if they were to face a similar situation.

"Counselor... I'm not sure whether I managed to get the call across... But it seemed like it did. However, I only managed to shout for a brief moment..." Compared to the others, Naomi was still relatively calm though her breaths were heavy.

"Who? Who did you call?" In this life or death situation, the recipient of that call could be the miracle they needed to escape unscathed.

Though they were still university students, their minds were fickle and bore ample wits.

Earlier in the car, most of them had caught on that something was going very wrong. During the moment the guard had slapped Yvonne and while he was giving death glares toward Cassandra, Naomi and Felicity were hard at work, carefully trying to make calls without being caught.

Among the girls, Naomi had been the first to act. Long before the car had driven off the slope, Naomi was already aware enough about their situation to try making emergency calls.

The biggest help now, of course, would be from Flynn in this situation, even though Cassandra had tried several times to no avail.

“I... called Gerald...” Back then, the first number she saw was Gerald’s and it was such a critical moment that her thumb moved faster than her mind.

“You called... Gerald?” Cassandra said in a disappointed voice.

“You called that good-for-nothing? What could he even come up with to save us, being the stupid person he is...”

Felicity’s fears peaked and she felt cold sweat drip down her forehead.

“It’s all over now... I... I don’t want to die!” cried Yvonne.

“Shut up, b*itch! God, you’re so noisy! Leo, go tape her mouth up! You can scream all you want later!” chuckled one of the men.

The guard that went by Leo smiled lustfully as he approached them.

While all this was happening, Gerald was still looking at his phone, dazed and confused.

He was in the boys’ dormitory when it happened.

About three minutes ago, Naomi had given him a call. He was taking a bath then, and his phone had been ringing for a while.

As soon as he picked up the call, he heard Naomi shouting.

Her words were mostly vague, but he heard something about them being kidnapped before the call ended from her end.

What on earth was happening?

He tried calling her back to no avail. He even tried to call Cassandra and the others but even their phones went straight to voicemail.

'...I hope it's just them having too much fun together...' Thought Gerald to himself.

However, the cryptic call was still worrying. Knowing that they were all at Emperor Karaoke Bar, he decided to give Flynn a call.

His call went straight to voicemail.

Scratching the back of his head, Gerald then tried calling Flynn's personal number. Thankfully, he was able to reach him soon after.

“Still haven’t retired for the day, Mr. Crawford?”

“Not yet, no. Why does your business number keep going to voicemail? Are you still at the Emperor Karaoke Bar?” asked Gerald.

“Don’t even start, Mr. Crawford. I’m looking into it as well. Just forty minutes ago, my phone was being targeted. I received calls every two seconds and yes, I’m at the Emperor now. I’m still trying to find the brains behind all this!”

“I see. Well, Cassandra, Felicity, and a few others were having fun in the Emperor too. Could go over and see if they’re still there?”

“Sure thing.”

Without hanging up, Gerald continued to wait for three more minutes. “Mr. Crawford, they were apparently picked up by someone around twenty minutes ago. They’ve left,” said Flynn when he finally spoke again.

“...Huh? Could you please have a look at the surveillance footage? Who on earth could have picked them up?”

Gerald could feel that something was going terribly wrong.

Flynn felt the same.

While he started with the Emperor's own surveillance footage, Flynn soon found himself going through the footage from the surveillance cameras littered all over Mayberry Commercial Street.

Flynn's voice began to quiver nervously. "...Mr. Crawford... It seems that they were picked up by a Rolls-Royce. The car moved at an accelerated pace and the last footage we have of it shows that it drove west of the city."

"...Oh no. Could this be a kidnapping attempt?" Gerald felt his anxiety grow by the second.

"Quick, call Zack and Michael. Tell them to meet up at the Emperor Karaoke Bar immediately. I'll meet you there too!"

Chapter 319

Inside the Emperor Karaoke Bar's office, the mood was heavy.

"We've pinpointed the exact location, Mr. Crawford. After tracing Miss Milton's last call, we found that it was made outside an incomplete factory, west of the city," explained Michael.

"Mr. Crawford!" shouted Zack as he burst through the office's door.

"We've run some investigations on the gangsters in Mayberry City and the Rye group. According to our spies, Jack had been acting strangely tonight. Earlier at eight, he had held a dinner party with a few others, including a few business-focused bosses from Mayberry City. In between meals, he would leave the table a lot to make calls. It was also found that his subordinates had drugged the wine beforehand. About ten

minutes ago, his driver picked him up and his final destination was the same factory Miss Milton last called from!” Zack reported.

Gerald had a confused look on his face. “Mr. Lyle... How do you know so much about them?”

Zack smiled. “The truth is, Mr. Crawford, I’ve planted some spies in their group much earlier on to prevent them from pulling any unexpected tricks. I’m proud to say that one of Jake’s most trusted subordinates is our spy!”

“Excellent work! Mr. Crawford, everyone’s here now. It’s best that we leave now,” said Michael.

“Let’s go!”

With that, those gathered there began driving swiftly to the west of the city.

Meanwhile back at the unfinished factory.

“Boss! It’s good to see you!” The subordinates from earlier took turns shouting the phrase.

A roar of laughter followed. “Where’s my little beauty? Where is she?”

Obscene laughter could be heard before Jake began ascending the stairs.

The moment Felicity and Cassandra saw him, their eyes almost popped out.

He was here because they had offended him immensely the other day...

They were here because Jake wanted to personally take revenge on them.

Jake simply laughed at how surprised they looked. “So you’re all here! Come! Remove the tape from their mouths!”

As soon as her mouth was free, Cassandra shouted at him. “Do you have a death wish Jake? Do you know whose woman I am?! Let me go now, I belong to Mr. Crawford!”

Cassandra knew very well what kind of relationship she had with Mr. Crawford ever since Flynn told her about it the other day.

However, she didn’t have much of a choice at the moment. She could only hope that she could use her relationship with Mr. Crawford as a way to scare Jake off.

However, her statement scared Felicity and the others too.

‘No wonder Flynn respected the counselor so much... So she was in such a relationship with Mr. Crawford.’ Felicity thought to herself, rather upset.

Jake simply laughed. “I’m aware of your relationship, yes. Not only are you protected by Mr. Crawford, but Flynn as well! However, not even God can save you today!”

“You utterly humiliated me in the Emperor the other day, and you’ll pay for it today! I’ll break you inside out!”

“And you Felicity! I supported you at first but what good did it even do? I bet you never expected to find yourself in my grasp again, did you? You slapped me once, remember? There’s no need to rush. I’ll let each one of you experience first-hand how brutal I can be!”

Once his sentence ended, Jake stretched a hand out toward Felicity with lustful intentions.

Felicity, who was both terrified and nervous, instinctively retaliated by biting hard on Jake’s finger.

“You b*itch!”

The sound of a hard slap echoed through the building.

“How dare you! Even if you kill us, Flynn and the others will eventually find out about this. No matter how powerful you are, you’ll end up in ruin soon enough. Wipe that smug smirk off your face!” shouted Cassandra toward Jake.

Jake burst into laughter at her statement. “Oh, you don’t have to worry about that. Flynn and the others will have no idea that I was involved in this at all! I have an alibi that I’m currently drinking wine with a few bosses from the business field. The wine is strong and we’re all drunk and after a little while, we’ll be taking a rest in a hotel.”

“Those bosses would definitely vouch for my innocence!”

“Come! Set the video camera up for me! I’m going to make sure they watch every second of their slutty moments over and over after we’re done with them! I need to make a video call too! Damien should definitely enjoy this, live!”

As he said that, he started the video call.

On the other end of the line, Damien was lying on his hospital bed, his hands and legs bandaged. He picked the call up.

Jake chuckled. “Mr. Rye, you gave me such a brilliant idea the other day. Look! I have four beauties by my side today. And I’m having a go with each and every one of them!”

“By god! They’re so beautiful! What kind of a monster are you? Zoom in on that slightly older girl for me!” shouted Damien happily.

“We have all the time in the world. Let us begin!” laughed Jake, almost maniacally.

With a subordinate holding on to Jake’s phone, Jake rushed toward Cassandra first.

The girls were all in tears, including Cassandra.

Chapter 320

With Ordinary Man on their side, the girls had thought that they could do anything they wanted in Mayberry.

None of them had ever anticipated that they would end up being in such a hopeless situation.

They were all frightened half to death at the thought of getting r*aped.

“Boss! There’s a call for you!” called out a subordinate.

“I’m not answering that, can’t you see I’m busy?” Jake scowled as he shed his clothes off.

“But...” The bodyguard then whispered the rest of what he wanted to say into Jake’s ear.

“...What?” A sense of nervousness quickly filled Jake. “Why is he calling me now?”

Jake wasn’t in any position to refuse the call. Gulping down, he braced himself as he answered the call.

“...Did you misunderstand me? How is this possible? I-”

“Cease your nonsense. Your subordinates downstairs are under me now. Release them immediately Jake, or you’re meeting death early today!” The person’s voice on the other end of the line was frigid.

Jake gulped.

At that moment, footsteps could be heard ascending the stairs.

People began rushing in soon after, swiftly surrounding Jake and his men.

They were bodyguards dressed black from head to toe.

The leader of the group was a person with snow-white hair. He bore a cold and fierce expression, accompanied by a long scar on his face that made him look extra intimidating.

“You... Who are you?” Jake shouted, shocked.

With his white hair and ferocious gaze, this was certainly no ordinary man.

Cassandra and the others, however, gave opposite reactions. Relief washed over them the moment they saw the white-haired youth.

He was their savior.

“Get them!”

From that single order, the guards under the man moved forward in unison. Their swift and precise movements painted a picture that all of them were seasoned professionals.

Jake and his men were pinned down on the ground in no time flat.

“What are you doing? I work for the Rye Group! Think of the consequences you’ll be facing!”

A loud thud could be heard.

The white-haired man had kicked Jake straight in the face.

Despite being pinned down by two men, Jake was still sent flying by that kick. He flipped in the air and fell on his back.

Jake’s chin had been broken and his teeth were covered in blood. The blood stained the ground as his body twitched uncontrollably.

The rest of Jake's subordinates were knocked out immediately after.

"Mister! Have you come to rescue us?" shouted Yvonne excitedly.

However, his cold demeanor remained. He glanced at all four of them before asking, "Which one of you is Miss Milton?"

"I am!" replied Naomi.

"We've received an order from our superior to rescue you. Please, come with us."

The leader then personally untied Naomi's hands before heading toward the exit.

"Um, hello? We're still here." Both Felicity and Cassandra were dumbfounded.

"Apologies, but my order was to save only Miss Milton, and nobody else."

"D*amn it! Naomi, tell him to release us too!" shouted Felicity in a quivering voice. She didn't want to stay in this horrible place a second longer.

Sitting in his Maybach downstairs, Gerald observed their actions through his laptop.

He had intentionally set up the rescue this way. He wanted neither Felicity nor Cassandra to freely use his name again to act as recklessly as they had before.

'Look at how anxious they've become...' Gerald thought to himself before picking his phone up.

Chapter 321

Leopold White's next order from Gerald was to untie the other three girls and bring them along.

They had used his name freely, thinking they could do whatever they pleased without having to face the consequences. Making them anxious was his way of teaching them a lesson. He had never planned to leave the girls stranded there in the first place.

Leopold White—the man with white hair—was an outstanding bodyguard who worked under Michael. To put simply, Leopold's job was similar to Flynn's who worked under Zach.

Michael had brought him here from Hong Kong.

"They'll be arriving soon, Mr. Zeke. It'll be inconvenient for me to meet them here so I'll be taking my leave first. Is my ride ready?" asked Gerald to Michael who was sitting beside the driver.

"The ride will be here at any moment now, Mr. Crawford. We'll depart as soon as it arrives. Leopold can handle the rest. He'll be safely escorting Miss Milton and the others back to their college."

As he said that, a limousine stopped beside them. Gerald wiped the sweat off his forehead as he stepped into the limousine. He then left the area together with Michael.

Earlier when they had pinpointed the girls' location, Gerald had told Zack to keep a close eye on the Rye Group as well as the police. Following that, he and Michael drove immediately to the place.

Gerald breathed a sigh of relief as soon as he confirmed that Naomi was safe.

As the four girls left the unfinished factory, they looked at Naomi. Yvonne, particularly, looked toward her with eyes filled with admiration.

“What was all that? Was it only you that they had initially come for, Naomi? Were you the one who called them over?”

From what they had seen and experienced, it seemed only fair to assume that the rescue team had only arrived to save Naomi.

As they descended the stairs, they were momentarily stunned when they realized how many people were involved in the operation.

In the room downstairs, at least twenty professional-looking bodyguards waited with their hands behind them.

Outside, there were at least six Maybach cars. There was even a high-end SUV.

Though Cassandra was rather powerful, only a few Rolls-Royce had come to pick her up at that moment.

Thinking back, Naomi's team of bodyguards seemed even more outstanding than the current one, especially the white-haired youth who acted both coldly and cruelly without hesitation.

Both Felicity and Cassandra looked at Naomi curiously.

"Um... I don't know either. I have no idea who any of these are! I'm as clueless as the rest of you..." said Naomi, looking extremely confused.

"If that's the case... Who ordered you to save us, mister?" Cassandra couldn't help but ask curiously.

Leopold however, retained his emotionless facade. He continued leading them without saying a word.

Realizing he wouldn't answer, Cassandra signaled Naomi to try asking him instead.

"We'd like to thank the person who had told you to save us, mister. Please tell us who it is," pleaded Naomi.

“I’m afraid I cannot comply, Miss Milton. My superior has specifically told me not to reveal his true identity. Not even to you,” answered Leopold respectfully.

“Actually... Couldn’t it be Gerald?” Yvonne said out loud.

“Gerald?” Both Felicity and Cassandra were stunned. The thought had never crossed their mind.

“Thinking back... We had all tried to call for help earlier but only Naomi was able to get her call across. Didn’t she call Gerald? That would mean that only he would be aware that we were in trouble in the first place!”

Analyzing the situation, Yvonne seemed unwilling to accept her own suggestion.

The same went for Felicity and Cassandra.

“Actually... Assuming it was Gerald who saved us, how would you say he got that many people to come save us? It’s kind of illogical to conclude that he saved us, don’t you think?” said Felicity.

Cassandra looked at Naomi nervously after Felicity had ended her sentence. She then asked, “Naomi, are you really sure that you called Gerald earlier? Maybe you actually called someone else? Are there any other influential and powerful people in your family? Maybe outside connections?”

They took turns looking at each other anxiously.

This was because both Cassandra and Felicity looked down on Gerald the most.

Chapter 322

However, if it was indeed true that Gerald was a powerful and influential man, they would prefer to die rather than accept that fact.

Cassandra recalled the time she had suffered terribly and had a restless night when she found her power bank in Flynn's car before.

"I was nervous back then and now that I think about it, I'm not too sure if I had called Gerald anymore... However, it is undeniable that the first contact number in my contact list is his. The second is my cousin's, whom I called just this morning. If we're talking about connections, it could be her. She works as a vice president for an international trade enterprise so she would definitely know a lot of people," said Naomi, careful with her words.

"That sounds much more logical. Your finger could have accidentally tapped her number. Following that, your cousin must have arranged for the rescue! Some of the guards here look like they could be SWAT cops while the others look like gangsters!" Cassandra said in a soft voice to them as she analyzed the members of their rescue team.

"Did we guess correctly, mister?" Felicity asked Leopold. They were quite sure that they had made the right conclusion.

However, Leopold's face didn't move a muscle. He simply opened the door of the Maybach which was parked in front of the other cars. It was the same car which Gerald and Michael had arrived at the factory with.

"It's time to return to your college. Get in the car," said Leopold.

"You're avoiding our question... That must mean we guessed correctly!" Yvonne said happily.

"Mister, may I borrow your phone? I wish to call my cousin." Yvonne's confidence had assured Naomi that it was indeed her cousin who had saved them.

"Very well, Miss Milton," said Leopold as he handed his phone to Naomi with utmost respect. All of them then entered the car.

"Hello? Cousin, is that you? This is Naomi. Were you the one who had orchestrated the rescue mission?"

"I wouldn't say orchestrated but yes, I was the one who called the criminal investigation team. Have they already saved you? They work really fast. I'm glad to hear that you're fine. I had tried to call you back earlier but the line kept going to voicemail. So I called your counselor but that failed too. I began to worry that something bad may have happened so I sent a message to your classmate, Gerald, to look into the situation. He told me that you had been kidnapped!" Naomi's cousin said nervously.

Wait... How did her cousin know about Gerald? Was it because she had that many connections? Actually, where had Gerald gotten the money to buy that phone and those clothes for Xavia before? Was it even possible to earn that much money through a part-time job alone?

Thinking back, it was Naomi who had asked her cousin to find a place for Gerald, Harper and the others for their part-time jobs.

Sometime then, her cousin had occasionally made Gerald run errands for her. That was probably the reason why she had Gerald's, Harper's, and a few of her other friends' contact numbers in the first place.

"I see... Well don't worry, we're fine now. They're taking us back to the college at the moment."

"That's good to hear. Rest well, I'll meet up with you tomorrow. You're going for an internship soon so I'll have to discuss the work details with you anyway."

"Got it. Make sure you hit the hay soon too!"

Sitting so close to each other, the other girls were able to listen in to the entire conversation.

Putting two and two together, they eventually pieced the puzzle together.

It was indeed Gerald who had notified her about the kidnapping.

“That stupid Gerald! He knew we were being kidnapped but he didn’t do anything about it!”

“If Naomi’s cousin hadn’t called him, who knows what would have happened to us!”

“I’m going to strangle him to death once we return to college!” scowled Cassandra under her breath.

All of a sudden, Felicity yelped in pain. It seemed as though she had hurt herself somehow.

Biting her lower lip in pain, Felicity moved her hand beneath her to find whatever had hurt her butt.

She pulled out a small coat that had a phone inside it.

“I’m terribly sorry mister, I accidentally sat on your clothes!” said Felicity apologetically.

“...Hmm? This coat looks familiar...”

It took her a moment, but when she realized who it belonged to, Felicity was dumbfounded.

“...Eh? Isn't this the coat I bought for Gerald?” Felicity asked aloud, a clear confusion in her voice.

There was no doubt about it. It was definitely the coat she had bought for him in the mall that afternoon.

“Are you sure Felicity?” asked Cassandra, stunned at her claim.

She took the coat from her to have a look at it herself, and it was true. It was indeed the exact same coat.

‘How could this be? Why would his coat be in this particular Maybach?’ The girls were all thinking the same thing, their confusion reflected in their eyes as they took turns staring at Leopold who was still driving.

Leopold, for the first time since meeting the girls, began fidgeting slightly.

Mr. Crawford had specifically ordered him to keep his identity a secret.

However, with the progression of the girls' conversation, things were becoming awkward for him very quickly.

“That's my coat. I usually just leave it on the passenger's seat,” lied Leopold.

Felicity and Cassandra looked at each other. They doubted Leopold's claim because the coat definitely looked like it cost less than a hundred bucks. While Gerald usually wore coats that ranged around three hundred dollars, Leopold was even less likely to be the owner of the coat.

This was because the coat Leopold currently wore probably cost at least five thousand dollars.

'Oh god, was Gerald in this car before them?' the girls thought to themselves, shocked.

"It really is mine, no need to speculate. I wear casual clothes too you know!" said Leopold with a slight quiver in his voice. He knew they weren't buying his story.

A guilty person usually starts talking more. Cassandra knew this as a fact.

Felicity didn't believe him either. She slid her hand into the coat and took the phone out. It was what had hurt her butt earlier.

"Isn't... This Gerald's phone?" she asked, stunned as she observed the familiar phone.

"Let me have a look!" Felicity said aloud, her hands shaking slightly.

Before she could grab it for herself, Yvonne snatched it out of Felicity's hand. '...It's true!' Yvonne thought to herself.

'Mr. Crawford must have forgotten about his coat and phone earlier while he was hurrying back,' Leopold concluded in his mind.

But Leopold wasn't one to give in easily to pressure. No matter how much the girls asked after that point, he remained quiet and refused to say anything.

His mission was completed the moment they returned to college. After dropping them off, he drove away immediately.

"So... Counselor, is it really true? Was it really Gerald who saved us? Why else would his coat and phone be in the car! Thinking back, he was the first to learn that we were kidnapped too!" Yvonne cried out, almost in tears.

Her nervousness was warranted as Yvonne had always condemned Gerald. If there were to ever come a day where he grew more powerful than her, she would definitely feel extremely upset.

Felicity's face went pale as well as she considered the thought. 'If that were the case, what was Gerald's true identity? Could he actually be Mr. Crawford? Or even Ordinary Man?' Felicity thought to herself, slightly shaking.

"That's enough! Stop playing the guessing game and calm yourselves for a moment. The coat and phone may be similar to Gerald's, but how certain are we that they're actually his? Another possibility would be that Gerald could have been in the car for a while after he told the police about us. Since the police needed to keep the informant's identity a secret, they sent Gerald to a safe place before coming over to

save us. Aren't those explanations logical as well?" Cassandra explained her theories in a quivering, but mature voice.

She had experienced a similar nervousness before. In fact, Cassandra was probably the most nervous among the girls at that moment.

It was because she knew that Gerald had borrowed her power bank before this. It was left behind in a Rolls-Royce. Now both the coat and his phone were left in the Maybach. It was just too much of a behavioral coincidence.

What more, Gerald was the first to suspect that something was wrong in both incidents.

At the moment, Cassandra's mind actively refused to link the coincidences together.

"That's enough. How about this? We'll go to Gerald's dorm and ask him about it in person. We're going to ask him what happened today."

Cassandra said again.

"Alright. If we've our phones with us, we could give Gerald a call!" Yvonne reacted soon.

"Tried it. It won't work since the phone's switched off and the battery's dead anyway." Felicity sighed as she lifted her hands in the air to show her resignation to

the idea. “However, we can still take the coat and phone along with us to pass them back to him when we meet him later. Hopefully all our questions will be answered.”

Back in the men’s dormitory, Gerald shed his clothes off, leaving only a pair of shorts on before he lay on his bed.

All of a sudden, the dorm’s door was flung open with a loud bang.

A scream followed shortly after.

It was Harper as he ran off to find something to hide his underwear from plain view.

“Counselor Felicity! What on earth are you doing here?”

Chapter 324

Harper repeated his question, his voice full of anxiety.

However, Yvonne simply ignored him and walked toward Gerald’s bed.

“Get up immediately, Gerald!” she sneered.

She then pulled Gerald’s blanket off him without bothering to consider what he had on at the moment. Once he was in plain view, she yanked him off the bed recklessly.

“What are you doing?!” Gerald yelled as his hands moved to cover his crotch.

These women were terrifying.

But instead of answering his question, Yvonne simply began rummaging through his things. Not too far away, both Cassandra and Felicity had their arms crossed as they watched the scene play out. Naomi simply hid in a corner.

“Counselor, Felicity! I found his coat and phone here!” Yvonne shouted as she held the two items up for them to see.

All the girls were stunned. All of them were thinking the same thing. ‘So it wasn’t Gerald after all!’

They felt relief wash over them as if they were prisoners who had just been freed after many years.

This was especially the case for Cassandra who felt almost overjoyed. ‘I’m glad it wasn’t him.’

After calming themselves down, they soon came to the realization that all the men in the dormitory were staring at them in shock.

Cassandra coughed before clearing her throat. She then asked, “Gerald, after you received a call from Naomi asking for help, where exactly did you go? And what were you doing at the time?”

“Well I was nervous of course, and I wanted to call the police. Before I could, Xyleena sent me a message asking me where Naomi was and I told her what I knew. She immediately arranged for some people to rescue you. I’m glad to see that all of you are safe and sound,” said Gerald with a smile on his face.

“...It seems you hit the nail on the head, Counselor. So much for overthinking earlier! We really were saved by Naomi’s cousin!” shouted Yvonne excitedly.

“And why don’t you wear pajamas when you sleep? Disgusting!”

After condemning Gerald one last time, the women were finally willing to leave.

Naomi however, stayed back for a while to explain to Gerald about the incidents that had happened.

Gerald couldn’t help but smile bitterly. ‘Thank god I reacted quickly enough...’ thought Gerald to himself.

The truth was that he had been extremely nervous throughout the entire rescue mission. He was sweating profusely so he had to take off his coat in the car.

Before the limousine arrived, he spent every second nervously observing the girls as they left the building. He did so through his laptop which had access to a surveillance camera.

Once he actually entered the limousine, his eyes were still glued onto the laptop's monitor. It took him a while, but he eventually realized that his coat and phone were still in the previous car.

In his mind, Gerald knew that his identity would definitely be exposed if he didn't act swiftly.

In the nick of time, an idea came to him. He immediately went off to get a similar phone and jacket. However, he could only hope that the battery in his old phone died quickly so that the phone would turn off on its own. If someone made a call before the phone died, it would all be over.

Thankfully, the phone seemed to have died before they managed to call him.

To be safe, Gerald even canceled his number at the last minute so that the phone would no longer be able to receive any calling signals.

From that point on, Gerald would have little need to contact the women aside from Naomi.

'There's no reason for me to expose my identity to them.'

The night had been an anxiously eventful one, but they somehow managed to subdue all the danger in time. It was finally time to get a well deserved rest.

A few hours later, Saturday morning came.

It was ten in the morning and Gerald was doing some revision in his dorm.

Out of the blue, Naomi gave him a call.

Though he canceled his number the night before, Gerald had told Zack to help register his number again with his ID before he slept. It wasn't exactly a difficult task.

Earlier that morning, Gerald had gone to the service hall to retrieve his new contact number card.

"Good morning, Gerald. My cousin came to visit today and after the chaos yesterday, she's planning to hold a feast for a table at a restaurant near our college. I'm indebted to you for your help yesterday. Please come! My cousin could even arrange a job for you. Harper and the others are free to attend as well."

"I think I'll pass. Besides, I hardly helped at all," Gerald said, a bitter smile on his face.

"You had better come immediately, Gerald. Otherwise, I'll come to your dorm to invite you over personally! On a serious note, my cousin really wishes to express her gratitude toward you."

"Well... Alright, we'll be there soon."

Gerald couldn't bring himself to decline Naomi's invitation. In truth, he had indeed helped them. It was fine to indulge himself with a simple meal like this every once in a while.

The problem wasn't meeting up with Naomi. Gerald was simply reluctant to meet up with her cousin.

Chapter 325

When Gerald, Harper, and a few others arrived at the restaurant, Naomi was already there with her cousin, Xyleena.

Cassandra, Felicity, and Yvonne were there too. Sitting beside Xyleena, was a young man in his mid-twenties. He wore a suit and his shoes were made of leather.

Xyleena looked as feminine as ever. She was one of the more outstanding people in society, and she had social connections all over the place.

Gerald, Harper, and many others knew Xyleena mostly due to her social connections with them. This, however, granted them the knowledge that Xyleena was actually a rather arrogant person. She only helped Gerald and a few others find part-time jobs because they were friends with Naomi. Otherwise, she wouldn't even have batted an eyelid at them.

"Come, take a seat. All of you," Xyleena said in a soft voice.

Gerald complied.

“What a frightening chain of events, last night was. We’ll have a toast in a bit, but before that, I’d like to introduce someone to all of you. This man is Brian Merrall, and he’s been my friend all the way back from high school. He’s the team leader of the criminal investigation team in Mayberry and he’s also the one I called for help yesterday!”

“Nice to meet you Brian. Thank you very much for saving us!” said Yvonne. After realizing who Brian was, Yvonne couldn’t help but admire him.

“You’re very welcome. I’m just doing my job. Honestly, it should be me thanking all of you. After catching the suspects yesterday, we were able to uncover an even bigger criminal case that they were involved in. If it wasn’t for you, we may never have gotten the chance to take down such a powerful person as Jake.” Brian smiled after finishing his sentence.

“Look at how well-spoken he is, Naomi! Let’s have a toast with the one who saved you!”

Seeing that her cousin wasn’t reacting appropriately, Xyleena took it into her own hands to remind her cousin immediately.

“Oh yes, aside from thanking Brian, I would also like to thank Gerald as well. If it wasn’t for him, we may never have been saved in time!” said Naomi.

After all, if he hadn’t told anyone about the call, who knows what would have become of them.

“What are you doing Naomi? I told you to thank Inspector Merrall, not Gerald,” said Xyleena, slightly unhappy.

“Xyleena’s right, what did that poor man do? He said he was going to launch a police report but he must have been too stunned to do anything. Had Xyleena not messaged him or called Inspector Merrall, all of us could be dead by now!” said Yvonne.

Brian simply shook his head and laughed.

“Well said! If anyone is to receive our gratitude, it should be Xyleena and Inspector Merrall! I’ll be having tea instead of wine, but allow me to toast to you. Since I failed to protect Naomi and the others, I’ll drink first!” said Cassandra as she smiled.

Clearly, she didn’t care about Gerald at all.

While all this was happening, Naomi felt that something was off.

She realized that Brian had not appeared at all throughout their rescue mission the day before. On another note, Leopold was also clearly much stronger than Brian in terms of both aura and strength.

Something was definitely wrong.

In addition to that, Naomi felt slightly sick hearing how the rest continued to ridicule Gerald.

“Naomi, I know that you have quite a good relationship with Gerald. How about this, I’ll use my connections to try landing him a job with benefits. One that includes endowment insurance, medical insurance, unemployment insurance, work-related injury insurance, and even childbirth insurance!” said Xyleena. She didn’t want to embarrass her cousin too much.

“Is that true, cousin? How about a job with all the previous insurances as well as housing funds?” asked Naomi.

“That would be quite difficult! Only outstanding companies provide their employees with housing funds these days. With Gerald, it may be a little difficult to arrange such a company to take him in. However, I’ll try my best!” said Xyleena before coughing slightly.

It was quite obvious that she was indirectly saying that Gerald was clearly not that capable.

“Xyleena’s right. If Gerald gets into an outstanding company, he’ll most probably only be a hindrance to the other employees!” Yvonne said without filtering her words at all.

“That’s true! The best he can do is paperwork or be an office worker given his character. He really can’t do much else and even the counselor would agree,” said Felicity as she shook her head, a bitter smile on her face.

Gerald felt his blood boil as he heard all the insults.

'D*amn it, this happens every time! It's almost as if they run out of topics to say if they're not mocking me!'

'Sure, I was an honest man before this, but that doesn't mean I'm stupid.'

'I was only honest because I didn't have much money or power.'

Gerald fumed angrily in silence.

At that moment, his phone rang.

Glancing at it to see who was calling, he saw that it was his sister.

He then got up and walked away from them before picking up.

Chapter 326

"Sister, what's up?"

"Bro, are you busy? A butler and a few of my subordinates are landing at Mayberry's airport soon. Could you please find someone to pick them up? I've arranged some other tasks for both Zack and Michael to deal with. They'll be needing a living space as well, so please find one for them!"

"Alright, no problem," said Gerald as he nodded to himself.

This was actually the first time Gerald had been in contact with his family for a long time. He heard his sister chuckle.

“I’ll be there the day after tomorrow. We can meet up then, just brother and sister!” Jessica smiled after saying that.

Gerald had missed her too.

After talking for a bit, Gerald finally hung up.

Since both Zach and Michael were busy, it was best that Gerald didn’t disturb them.

‘Who could I assign the task to?’ He scratched the back of his head as he thought.

After a while, he decided to just leave the restaurant since Felicity and the others were there anyway.

He concluded that it would be best to just pick them up himself since they were his sister’s butlers.

Nodding to himself, he re-entered the restaurant and told Naomi that he was busy, so he left directly.

“Gerald seems to be quite busy!” said Xyleena sarcastically.

‘I graciously invited you to a meal today and you claim that you’re busy? How dare you!’ thought Xyleena to herself.

“I’m sure he’s just feeling pressured to be here, being as poor as he is. Speaking of which, Brian. We saw a handsome white-haired guy yesterday. What position does he hold?” asked Yvonne at that moment.

“Honestly, I’ve been curious as well. You keep talking about a handsome white-haired person in a Maybach, but judging from your description, it’s quite impossible that such a person is from our police team,” replied Brian somewhat awkwardly.

The more he heard from the girls, the more Brian felt that something was off. The police team certainly did run a big mission the night before.

The mission was big enough to the point where there were even rumors that superiors from the province came to investigate as well.

During the commotion, Brian had received a call from Xyleena, claiming that her cousin had been kidnapped along with three other girls.

The report was far too similar to the case which they had been handling the night before.

Brian told her not to worry and said that the police would take immediate action.

However, by the time he arrived at the spot with his large team, the criminals had already been caught. The hostages had even been rescued, and had long left the scene.

Given his rank, he was not allowed to look too far into the matter.

It felt strange to him to be sharing that meal since he knew he hadn't done anything much to save them.

All he knew at the moment, was that there were two groups of people who had participated in the girls' rescue mission.

He was only there in time to clean up the mess.

"Eh? He isn't from the police team? I suppose so... It does seem quite impossible for a policeman to be driving a Maybach," Yvonne responded, puzzled.

"So what you're saying is that you weren't the one who saved us, Inspector Merrall?" asked Cassandra in shock. 'Why was it so difficult to get to the bottom of this trivial matter?'

"Technically speaking, no, we weren't. By the time we got to the scene, you had already been saved. You girls had even left at that point!" explained Brian as he smiled.

He only shared some rough details with them. All they needed to know was that he hadn't really done much to save them.

"So after all that talk, we're back to square one. Who was it exactly that came to our rescue?" All four girls were stunned again.

At that moment, Felicity's phone rang.

"Yes? Who is this?"

"Good day, miss. I'm part of the customer service from the Rex Suit Flagship Store. You bought a suit from us yesterday. However, your boyfriend came last night to buy another of the exact same suit. We only had a smaller one in stock, but he insisted on buying it. A few suits his size have arrived today and we were wondering if he would like to exchange the suit he bought last night for this one. We're calling you because he was in such a hurry last night, we weren't able to get his contact information."

"Boyfriend? Ah, you mean Gerald. He's not my boyfriend. Why did he even buy two suits?" Yvonne asked aloud, utterly confused.

Cassandra had heard the conversation as well and was equally shocked.

"That means... The suit we found in Gerald's room yesterday wasn't the one that Felicity had bought for him. He fooled us! But why did he? So... The coat we found in the car last night... It really was his?"

Without warning, Cassandra began screaming.

Chapter 327

“Was it Gerald all along?”

Cassandra found no other explanation, especially when she linked this event with the previous one concerning the power bank.

Gerald was indeed a strange person. He lived a very secretive life.

‘Thinking back, Gerald was the first to learn about the incident back when I was first brought into the hotel. Because of him, I was saved just in time.’

‘I also found Gerald’s power bank in Flynn’s car. The same happened this time. Gerald was the first to realize that misfortune had befallen us, which led to the four of us being saved in the nick of time. Even Gerald’s coat and phone were there!’

‘At first, it seemed that Mr. Crawford was the one orchestrating all this, but this time, his attention went to Naomi instead.’

‘And Gerald currently has a good relationship with Naomi!’

‘He even beat up the vice president of the student union the other day! What happened in the end? Come to think of it, the department director was respectful toward Gerald!’

'He's filthy rich now and we don't even know how or when it happened!'

'But most importantly... Gerald shares the same surname with Mr. Crawford!'

'Oh god. If Gerald was indeed Mr. Crawford, everything would make sense now!'

Cassandra's face turned pale as her onslaught of thoughts ended.

Even Felicity and the others were catching up to the same conclusion.

They were left completely astonished.

"Is... Gerald really Mr. Crawford? Then is he Ordinary Man too?" Felicity asked in a nervous and low voice.

"I don't know, but that's very likely to be the case!" said Cassandra, her voice weak. "But we shouldn't be nervous. We can observe Gerald secretly until we're sure of his identity. We can then decide what to do about it!" Cassandra said, trying to calm herself.

It had never occurred to her that she would end up falling in love with Gerald.

The meal became a strange one, with many of the girls filled with anxiety.

Meanwhile, Gerald was already at the villa. He started up the engine of his high-end limousine before driving off to pick his sister's butler and her other subordinates up.

He had heard that his family had sent them over, and that each of them held quite a privileged status in his family.

Gerald had never taken a plane before, so he didn't know what an airport arrival gate looked like.

Did he need to hold a sign up and wait at the arrival gate?

He parked the limousine just outside the arrival gate. He couldn't really park his limousine anywhere else.

He then sent a message to the butler through the contact number his sister had given him. It contained the car's license plate number.

Not too long after, Gerald began regretting parking there.

Several young people, especially girls, were gawking at his limousine.

Some even took group photographs with it.

Sitting in his car, Gerald felt extremely uneasy and awkward.

While this was happening, a group of four walked past the arrival gates.

“Didn’t you say that Mr. Crawford would be sending someone to pick us up? Where is he?” asked a female voice.

A kind-looking old man with white hair took the lead. Following behind, was a young and lively girl who seemed to be either eighteen or nineteen of age.

Even further behind, was a pair of twins. Both brothers seemed to be in their thirties and they both wore suits. However, even that did not fully erase the fact that they both of them looked equally strong and fierce.

The two seemed to act as bodyguards for the grandfather and his granddaughter.

“Yes, Mr. Crawford will be sending someone here to pick us up. I’ve just received the car’s license plate number. Drake, Tyson, go check if our ride is here.”

“Right away, Mr. Kendall!”

The two guards then began looking around.

“Grandpa, I’ve done some research, and apparently the food here is rather special. Is it alright if I try some for myself later?” the girl asked. She appeared to be more on the naughty side as she pleaded to her grandfather.

“We’ll be staying in Mayberry for a while anyway. You can eat whatever you want.”

As he ended his sentence, the brothers returned.

They had located the limousine.

Once they got there, Gerald was there waiting for them.

As Gerald was about to exit the car to introduce himself, he heard the girl speak.

“Say grandpa? Is Mr. Crawford extremely handsome? Miss Crawford is such a charming lady, he must definitely be as handsome as she is beautiful!”

Hearing that, Gerald became slightly embarrassed to introduce himself.

Chapter 328

“Mr. Crawford is indeed, extremely handsome. However, you shouldn’t say such nonsense when you meet Mr. Crawford later, Dorothy. Control your rashness as well. Miss Crawford may adore and spoil you, but what if you accidentally anger him? I may not be able to help you then! You know how much of a temper you have.”

“Alright. You know, I’ve asked around and learned that though Mr. Crawford is a rather reserved person, he’s a wicked man inside! He appears to have several wives!”
The girl stuck her tongue out before grinning.

“You naughty girl! I’m slapping you if you say that again! Where did you hear that from?”

“It’s true! Almost all the youths living in Northbay talk about it. I’ve also heard that he’s a promiscuous man who has gotten several women pregnant here. It’s said that whoever offends him will end up becoming pregnant so I’m quite afraid of him!” said Dorothy as she patted her belly.

“I can see that those ignorant kids are indeed done for! How could they spread such baseless rumors about Mr. Crawford? Truly preposterous! Dorothy, Miss Crawford has told me that Mr. Crawford is an extremely kind man. Those kids are just gullible rumor spreaders. Nonsense, all of it. You had better stop talking to them!”

“Miss Crawford is his elder sister. She’ll praise him no matter what he does!”

“That’s quite enough you naughty girl! Keep your mouth shut!” Mr. Kendall said extremely angrily.

It was then when they noticed that Gerald was standing behind them, his face flushed. He had silently exited the limousine and circled around it while they were talking.

He was certainly unable to introduce himself now after hearing all that she had said.

‘How and where the hell did these rumors sprout from?’

“Ah, good day little brother. My apologies, my granddaughter here doesn’t know much about Mr. Crawford. Don’t worry, she has no real intentions of condemning Mr. Crawford. Might you be Mr. Crawford’s chauffeur?” asked Mr. Kendall as he smiled.

The butler knew that he was Mr. Crawford’s subordinate and as Mr. Crawford was the heir to the Crawfords, his status was definitely higher than Jessica’s.

Even if he was just a mere driver of Mr. Crawford, his status was definitely not a low one.

With how loud Dorothy was speaking, the chauffeur had no doubt heard every word of it.

Sadly, there were just too many people in the family who gossiped about him.

Some claimed that he was a humble and reserved man. Others shared tales that he was instead, a promiscuous man. While plenty were there to praise him, plenty more were bold enough to mock him.

It was inevitable that he would be gossiped endlessly about, especially since he was the future heir of the powerful Crawfords.

“...Huh? Oh, no... No, I’m-” Gerald ended his sentence early, a sheepish smile on his face.

Gerald had indeed heard everything Dorothy had said, and he couldn't bring himself to reveal his true identity.

'People are claiming that I make women who offended me pregnant? As if I could ever do that! If that were the case, then all the women in Mayberry University would already be pregnant since all of them constantly mock me!'

Things would certainly become awkward if he told them who he really was at this point.

While he was thinking to himself, the girl yelled, "That's great! Since you're his driver, you must be familiar with this place. Bring me to a place that serves special food in Mayberry. Since you've been here for a while, you should definitely know where the best food is, right?" asked Dorothy excitedly.

"Of course!"

In truth, Gerald had never actually enjoyed any of the special food in Mayberry. He definitely couldn't afford any of the meals here in the past.

Dorothy laughed in glee. "Then it's settled! Take me to one now!" she shouted.

"That's quite enough, Dorothy. Stop acting so rashly. If the driver takes you food hunting, who's going to drive the car?" Mr. Kendall said, a defeated smile on his face.

“Humph! Drake and Tyson are already with you, grandpa! I’ve been looking forward to this day for so long. Please let the driver accompany me. It’ll be my treat today!”

“Please agree to that. If you don’t, I’ll tell Mr. Crawford every single rumor I’ve heard about him once we meet. Then I’ll tell him to get me pregnant too! Humph!” shouted Dorothy.

Mr. Kendall sighed. This granddaughter of his was uncontrollable. Shaking his head, he smiled as he said, “I give up. Little brother, how about this. We should be able to find Wayfair Mountain Entertainment from where we are now. We’ll go by ourselves. Meanwhile, could you please accompany my granddaughter and take her to someplace fun? I’ll explain the situation to Mr. Crawford in person later.”

“I can do that,” said Gerald as he scratched the back of his head.

He sighed internally. At first, he had wanted to meet up with people from his family properly.

Unfortunately, that wasn’t going to happen, seeing how poor his reputation and image already were to them.

‘You say you’re going to meet me, but I’m taking Dorothy out food hunting. Who exactly are you going to meet?’

‘This is getting too convoluted, I might as well just reveal my identity now.’

“Actually Mr. Kendall, I’m-”

“It’s him!”

At that moment, they heard a female voice outside the airport. It sounded like the voice of a person who had finally found someone they had been looking for after a long ordeal.

“Liara, who is that?”

“Humph! Mr. Rye, he’s the one who beat me and Aiden up! He’s the reason why I had to be admitted into the hospital! You said you were going to take revenge for me after you returned to our homeland. Here he is now!” shouted Liara excitedly, her eyes almost bulging and bloodshot.

Behind her, was a group of suited bodyguards. There were several luxurious black Mercedes-Benz cars parked at the exit’s opening as well.

Standing right beside her was a man wearing a pair of sunglasses. A man who had attracted the attention of endless numbers of girls. It was none other than William.

“D*mn it! Are you sure that’s the guy Liara?”

William then threw his sunglasses to the side, glaring at Gerald coldly.

“Surround them at once!”

As William barked his order and waved his hand, ten bodyguards immediately rushed toward them. Gerald and the four others had been encircled.

Behind William, stood a sturdy-looking man. He looked to be almost thirty and wore a pair of sunglasses as well. Up till this point, he hadn't said a word.

His arms were crossed and almost half of his face seemed to have suffered severe burn scars. He looked rather hideous to be honest, and he appeared to be William's personal bodyguard.

“Humph! Enemies are always bound to meet again! It's just been a few days so I'm sure you never saw this coming!” Liara shouted as she clung on to William's arm and slowly began walking toward them. Her eyes were filled with fury and if one could kill a person with cold glares alone, Gerald would definitely be dead by now.

Liara, for one, wanted that to be true. She wanted to torture and kill Gerald with her own hands.

From a young age, she had been spoilt rotten by everyone around her.

She had never even been hit before.

It had been a crushing blow to her pride when she was beaten up in front of the others the other day.

She had been too embarrassed to tell the others about it, but she had lost control of her bladder at the restaurant the other day and wet herself.

It was beyond humiliating for her, and it was all because of this b*stard!

“So you beat my woman up, huh? You b*stard! I’ll make sure you face the consequences today! Break his limbs first! We’ll ruin the rest of his family later!” ordered William.

After what had happened the other day, William had returned to M Country to relax for a few days. However, he soon found himself rushing back to Mayberry after hearing that his girlfriend had been beaten up.

For those who dared to offend William, only punishing the offender alone was a blessing. Usually, William would ensure that the offender’s entire family line suffered as well.

In William’s eyes, Gerald’s family was not going to be treated any differently.

Immediately after his command, two bodyguards rushed forward and attempted to grab Gerald’s shoulders.

Before they could do so, Gerald felt a gust of wind behind him.

In a split second, the two bodyguards were thrown onto the ground as easily as two sacks of potatoes.

Drake and Tyson had been standing behind Gerald this entire time and now they both took a step forward.

Their actions were so rapid that Gerald had barely noticed them moving to shove the guards away at all.

Mr. Kendall simply smiled bitterly as he watched the scene play out before him. He looked at Gerald and sighed with a smile. "Little brother, are these your enemies?"

Gerald nodded, a smile forming on his face. "Yes, we've had some conflicts before," he said before beginning to laugh.

He was no longer afraid of William and Liara.

"Your enemies are Mr. Crawford's enemies and his enemies are ours. Drake, Tyson, we'll leave them to you," said Mr. Kendall as he smiled while nodding.

Dorothy had been standing beside Mr. Kendall and she smiled as well.

"Oh, a treat! It's been such a long time since I've seen Drake and Tyson engaged in a fight!" shouted Dorothy excitedly.

“Both of them seem quite powerful,” said Gerald as he observed their martial arts stances. He couldn’t help but feel pleased that he had such powerful bodyguards under him.

“Of course they are! They were both sergeant majors who had great reputations during their time in the army. You know, if you say Drake’s name to gangsters living abroad, they’ll start trembling in fear!” said Dorothy smugly.

“They are both indebted to the Crawfords. After they left the army, they came to work for them. As the master had ordered them to leave Miss Crawford, they’ll only listen to Mr. Crawford from now on!” explained Mr. Kendall.

Gerald’s eyes widened.

So apparently his family had sent two sergeant majors to be his bodyguards. He had initially thought that both Flynn and Leopold were already exceptionally capable.

It surprised him to see that both Drake and Tyson were much more powerful than them.

Their expressions barely changed no matter who and how many opponents they were up against. Each punch and kick was calculated and they could strike the opponents’ vulnerable spots with ease.

In the blink of an eye, all of William’s bodyguards were sprawled on the ground.

“What?”

While William and Liara were smug in the beginning, they were at a loss of words now.

‘These two were originally dad’s bodyguards. They’re seasoned professionals, that’s for sure’ Gerald thought to himself in awe.

Chapter 330

It took less than ten seconds for the twins to completely bring down the ten guards. How was that even possible?

“So you’ve decided to mess with the Crawfords. You lack common sense, kid. Let’s beat some sense into you!” said the twins in unison as they walked toward William slowly, cold smiles on their faces.

“D*mn it! Carl! Get them! Make sure they can’t even stand after you’re done with them!”

William was in shock.

Initially, he had thought that getting revenge for his woman was going to be an easy task. All he needed to do was to have his guards cripple Gerald. He had never anticipated that Gerald would have two expert bodyguards with him.

He was now forced to order his trump card to make a move.

Carl was the bodyguard who had been standing behind William all this time. Though he looked intimidating with all the severe burn scars on his face, he began to tremble when he saw Drake and Tyson approaching.

It wasn't out of fear, but an odd emotion in his heart which he just couldn't suppress.

He stood in front of William.

"You can kill me, but please let Mr. Rye leave unharmed," said Carl calmly.

Drake and Tyson stopped moving forward for a brief moment and looked at each other before fixing their gaze on Carl again.

"D*mn it! I didn't ask you to give yourself up to die! Beat them up already you hideous man! How dare you disobey me!"

At that moment, a loud thud was heard.

William had punched Carl directly in the cheek.

Carl hadn't dared to dodge and the corner of his lip began bleeding.

“What a waste of space! Useless!” yelled Liara before she slapped Carl on the other cheek.

‘You idiot! We ordered you to avenge us, not cover for us so we could run away!’ Liara continued to rage in her mind.

“Mr. Rye, Miss Liara, please leave immediately. I am no match for them,” said Carl calmly again.

“F*ck that! Aren’t you powerful yourself? It’s such a waste that dad kept you with us! Once we return, you’re going to start carrying a dustbin around with you every day and everywhere you go!”

It had never occurred to William that Carl would surrender himself so easily.

He was becoming slightly nervous now. He then pointed toward Gerald and the others.

“Hey b*stard! I wasn’t ready today! If you’re bold enough, let’s make an appointment! We’ll compete with each other then!”

William had noticed that more and more people were surrounding them. He knew that he would either be beaten up or humiliated if he continued to stay here for any longer.

Gerald noticed that Mr. Kendall was looking at him. Gerald knew that this meant that he was going to be making the final decision.

Thinking about it, he understood Mr. Kendall's thought process. Since he was supposedly Mr. Crawford's driver, if he was in trouble, so was Mr. Crawford. He currently held the highest position to make the final say.

"Sure. We can discuss the details of our match later. You may leave, but the woman stays with us for now," said Gerald with a faint smile.

It was true that Gerald usually kept a low profile, but it did not mean that he was a fool.

After all, he had offended the Ryes, and he could not shake that off now.

Gerald had reached the conclusion that it was better to take them down early on so that they wouldn't be able to cause further trouble in the future.

William was a person who relied on his family's power. Without the Ryes, he was only an ordinary person with no merits. Ruining him would mean nothing to Gerald.

Hearing Gerald's rule, Liara started becoming nervous.

"Mr. Rye! Please don't leave me with them! Bring me along with you!"

“Don’t worry, Liara. Just stay with them for now. I’ll rescue you soon enough so wait for me patiently!” said William hurriedly. He then rushed toward his car, started the engines, and left immediately. He didn’t even care about his pile of unconscious bodyguards lying on the ground.

Carl nodded toward Drake and Tyson respectfully before turning around to walk toward his car.

“Frank Dunkin!”

Both Drake and Tyson shouted at Carl who was just about to get into his car.

Carl’s body trembled slightly. However, he pretended not to hear.

“D*mn! They’re so alike! He looks exactly like the guy!” Tyson said aloud, his gaze still fixed on Carl.

“Yes, he does resemble Frank. Those eyes of his never change. But why would he ever become a bodyguard for such a person?”

“I don’t know, and he clearly doesn’t want to identify himself with us!” Both of them continued to taunt him in low voices.

Mr. Kendall stepped in at that moment. “That’s quite enough. We’ll talk more about this once we arrive at the villa. It’s high time we met Mr. Crawford. Drake, Tyson, bring that woman along!”

Chapter 331

With Liara now being held captive, Gerald began driving to Wayfair Mountain Entertainment.

Upon arriving at the villa, Gerald called out to the bodyguards who had opened the gates for the limousine to enter. They were told to bring Liara to a vacant room and keep a constant eye on her.

“Wow, little driver! I didn’t expect you to have so much power over the guards here! They’re listening to all your commands!” said Dorothy as she laughed.

“Mr. Crawford, you’re here!”

Zack and Michael saw Gerald entering the building and they hurried over to greet him. They greeted Mr. Kendall respectfully as well.

While Zack and Michael usually appeared assertive in Mayberry City, in front of Jessica and Mr. Kendall, they instead gave the impression of just being regular minions.

However, that wasn’t what caught the four new people’s attention. Mr. Kendall, Drake, Tyson, and Dorothy were all stunned when they heard how the two addressed Gerald.

“Mr. Crawford?”

“You’re Mr. Crawford?” Mr. Kendall asked, shocked.

“That would be me, yes. I had wanted to introduce myself earlier but the situation hadn’t allowed for it,” replied Gerald, a bitter smile on his face.

Mr. Kendall coughed. The revelation was both surprising to him as well as shameful.

After all, they had earlier been discussing all manner of rumors about him for quite a while when he was, quite literally, sitting right next to them in the limousine.

To think that this casually dressed and introverted person was actually Mr. Crawford. It seemed that what the eldest young lady had told him was really true.

“...I see. So... You’re Mr. Crawford?” said Dorothy. Though she had initially been comfortable talking to Gerald due to how honest a person the driver seemed, she couldn’t help but feel shocked at the revelation.

Gerald simply nodded slowly, a wry smile on his face.

Gerald hadn’t expected any less a reaction. What’s done was done and the four were led to a dinner banquet which had been arranged by Michael. The five then slowly got to know one another better as they ate and drank.

“Mr. Crawford, the eldest young lady and the master have sent us here to pass on an important announcement. I believe that the matter has been brought up several times between you and the eldest young lady,” explained Mr. Kendall respectfully.

“While the eldest young lady completed her assessment six years ago, yours is to officially begin now. The family has decided to auction off Mayberry Commercial Street which had initially belonged to both you and the eldest young lady. Once the auction is complete, you will be given an exclusive asset. With said asset, you will need to create a completely new group to run in Mayberry City. You’ll have to control and develop it on your own as well!”

This was nothing new to Gerald. On the contrary, Jessica had previously told Gerald about this many, many times.

Because of that, he had prepared himself for the assessment for quite a long time now.

His previous discussion to set up two projects under his name, them being Exceptional Live and Yorknorth Mountain, had already been approved.

However, he had not anticipated that his family would auction off Mayberry Commercial Street.

“While I understand that the goal is to develop something on my own, Mayberry Commercial Street is already very profitable. Is there really a need to auction it off?” asked Gerald as he smiled bitterly.

Gerald had experienced many things there and it bore some sentimental value to him now.

“Well, the profit gained was simply used to assess both you and the eldest young lady. The family could never allow such a small group to survive forever. However, Mr. Crawford, if you really like the place, you can buy it again in the future for your own entertainment and leisure!” Mr. Kendall couldn’t really grasp the meaning behind Gerald’s question.

However, Gerald still found his answer from Mr. Kendall’s statement. While it was true that Mayberry Commercial Street was impressive, compared to the other industries owned by the Crawford family worldwide, the street was nothing special.

There was nothing he could do but allow his family to auction it off.

Besides, he was also not short of money anymore. Owning Mayberry Commercial Street would only be for bragging rights now and he didn’t want any part of that!

“Speaking of which, Mr. Crawford, a portion of the Crawford family’s defense force in Mayberry City will also be under you in the future. Drake and Tyson themselves will be working as your personal bodyguards,” said Mr. Kendall.

After saying that, he looked toward Zack.

Zack immediately caught on to what Mr. Kendall was hinting at, and carefully retrieved a small machine with a red button on it. He handed it gently to Gerald.

Gerald was no stranger to the contraption.

Back when Nigel was very close to killing him, Zack had pressed the button to summon forty to fifty helicopters to save him.

“This device functions as a communication tool for Military Emergencies. It now belongs to you!”

The next step was for them to sign some transfer documents and to be done with all the formalities. By the time everything was completed, it was already almost eight o'clock at night.

To tell the truth, it was only today that Gerald realized just how much influence and reach his family had over Mayberry City.

It was surprising, to say the least.

Chapter 332

Not only did the so-called Military Emergency Base host a section for its armed forces, but it also boasted one of the most efficient medical teams as well as intelligence gathering departments.

It was just like how it was in action movies.

Gerald had personally never been in contact with any of those departments before.

Being granted access to the Military Emergency Base meant that he would be in charge of all of this in the future. It only further affirmed Gerald that he was going to be the future leader.

It was already late when he was thinking about this, and Gerald himself was ready to retire for the night.

Before that, however, he suddenly remembered that he still had some unfinished business!

Gerald sneered as he walked toward the room.

“Oh, behave yourself won’t you? Otherwise, I may really end up killing you! Did you really just try to bite me? Are you some kind of dog?”

Even from quite a distance away, Gerald could already hear his bodyguard cursing from behind the door.

“Release me you b*stard! If you don’t, I’ll personally make sure Mr. Rye hacks you to death when he arrives!” growled Liara.

“Oh no... Mr. Rye... I’m terrified... Hahaha! Lady, look around you. I’ll drop you a hint, you may as well just await your death since you dared to offend Mr. Crawford of Mayberry City!”

“What? Mr. Crawford? Since when have I ever offended Mr. Crawford?” asked Liara in genuine surprise.

“Still trying to feign ignorance? Mr. Crawford’s the man who brought you here today!”

“...Wait, he’s that Mr. Crawford?”

At that moment, Gerald entered the room.

“Mr. Crawford!” shouted the two bodyguards inside respectfully before leaving the room under his command.

“You... What are you planning to do with me?” asked Liara. The terror had finally sunk in.

She finally realized how he could’ve gotten so many people to rush over back when they were at Surati.

This man was actually Mr. Crawford in the flesh!

“You’re already a captive in this room. What do you think I’m going to do?” replied Gerald as he smiled.

“But... Mr. Crawford, I’m Mr. Rye’s woman!” whimpered Liara. Her arms were still tied and her head was lowered.

Understanding the power difference between them made her feel scared and embarrassed at the same time.

The bodyguards were right. Mr. Rye was nothing compared to Mr. Crawford.

She, for one, would never be able to reach the top by becoming Mr. Rye's woman.

Perhaps it would be better if she became Mr. Crawford's woman instead.

Though both of them definitely still bore grudges against each other, she believed that Mr. Crawford would eventually fall for her beauty.

"I don't really care whose woman you are. I won't personally be touching you either way. However, since you're already here anyway, then this makes it the perfect opportunity for me to settle this score with you. You don't really have a way to pay me back, so you can just settle this score with your body!"

"What... What do you mean by that?"

As soon as her question ended, Gerald turned around and slowly began walking toward the door while making a phone call. "Hey, get me a random homeless person off the street..."

"Wait, what are you planning? Get back here! Wait!"

A terrified Liara continued yelling at him as he left the room.

The intention of his phone call was obvious.

Of course Gerald wouldn't touch a woman like her.

Outside the room, Gerald began strolling down the hallways, enjoying the peace of the moonlit night.

It was a little under half an hour later when Zack gave Gerald a call.

"Heh, Mr. Crawford, that girl was so terrified that she revealed everything she knew about the Rye Group. I honestly wasn't expecting her to know that many of their secrets. She's also agreed to help us get what we want!" said Zack, a grin on his face.

"Your idea was truly brilliant Mr. Lyle. If you hadn't suggested it, I would have just ordered some guards to beat her up," replied Gerald as he smiled awkwardly.

Zack had naturally given Gerald some advice about the matter.

"Don't worry Mr. Crawford. The Rye Group offended you because they don't know their own place. Give me one day and night. You'll definitely hear satisfactory results from me!"

Chapter 333

Gerald really couldn't be bothered about Zack's methods of dealing with the matter.

He rested early that night.

Though it was raining heavily when he awoke, Gerald rushed to school anyway. After all, his homework review was important as well.

As per usual, his driver dropped him off at the school gates and Gerald walked into the school with an umbrella in hand.

All of a sudden, Gerald heard a loud scream.

When he turned to look at the source of the sound, he saw a girl in a white dress who seemed to have sprained her ankle. She held an umbrella in one hand while her other held onto her ankle. Gerald deduced that she must have sprained her ankle while she was opening her umbrella.

Since she could hardly walk properly at that moment, it seemed that the sprain was a severe one.

Gerald found himself walking toward her under his umbrella. "Are you alright?"

"It hurts!" cried the girl as she raised her head to look at him. Her eyes were all teary.

Gerald was slightly taken aback when he saw her face. "It's you?"

The girl showed obvious surprise on her face as well.

This wasn't just any random person. She was the good-natured girl who had previously sat next to Gerald when he was studying in the library a while back.

The memory of the event embarrassed Gerald.

Not only did he have a nosebleed back then, but he had also sneezed. What an embarrassing thing to remember!

It was unexpected, to say the least, for him to encounter her today while returning to school this early in the morning!

“Yes, it's been a while... I had initially planned to call a cab to go out and get some materials. Thinking back, perhaps I was walking a bit too hastily!” said the girl as her cheeks flushed slightly red. It was an obvious sign that she remembered what had previously happened in the library.

“With this heavy rain, it would be best if you postponed that plan for now. I'll help you get to the infirmary,” replied Gerald.

He hadn't forgotten the fact that she had handed him a tissue during his embarrassing plight back then.

Even though they were still pretty much strangers at this point, he still felt obligated to help her.

After all, the girl was someone good-natured and was beautiful to boot.

If he were to ignore and just leave her there, his guilt would surely come back to bite later.

Though she hesitated at first, she eventually nodded. The pain was too overbearing for her.

Even with Gerald's help, she still found difficulty walking.

In the end, Gerald resorted to carrying her on his back. Fortunately, the girl had sensed that Gerald bore no ill intentions, even from when they had first encountered in the library. Therefore, she didn't try to resist at all and simply allowed Gerald to carry her.

She held on to her umbrella as they walked toward the infirmary.

Gerald couldn't help but blush slightly as his nose caught the scent of her body.

However, he already had Mila so why on earth was he still overthinking the situation?

Gerald shook his head slightly to clear his mind before starting to walk faster.

Beep, beep!

A Mercedes Benz G500 honked as it passed by Gerald and the girl.

“Hey there beauty! It’s raining heavily so why don’t you get in my car? I’ll drop you off wherever you’re headed to!”

The shout came from a well-dressed teen who had rolled down the car’s window.

Gerald couldn’t help but stop in his tracks when he heard the teen’s words.

In his mind, Gerald knew that all beautiful girls loved luxury cars.

However, she hardly even looked at the driver.

Instead, she pinched Gerald’s shoulder lightly. “Don’t just stop here! I’m dying from the pain!”

“Oh! Right!”

Gerald nodded before starting to walk hurriedly again. It seemed that this girl was different from the others he had encountered before.

“D*mn it! If I had known she’d be here I would have come a bit earlier! It’s such a shame! That girl’s so beautiful!”

The boy sighed loudly before slamming his hand against the steering wheel as he watched Gerald slowly walk away with the beauty still clinging on to his back.

Fortunately, the infirmary wasn't too far away. Once they arrived, a doctor came over immediately to check on her injury.

Knowing that she would be taken care of by the doctor, Gerald turned to leave.

“Wait! What's your name? Mine is Giya,” shouted the girl toward his back.

“Mine's Gerald!”

“I see! Thank you so much for today. You've saved me from a world of pain. I don't know how I would have managed to return with that sprained ankle! Also, I noticed that you're holding on to a book. Are you possibly headed to the library to study?”

“As a matter of fact, I am,” replied Gerald as he nodded.

Chapter 334

“Giya! Are you alright? How could you be so careless?”

At that moment, the infirmary's door was pushed open. Four girls who all looked well-mannered walked into the infirmary.

Somehow, each of them bore beauty comparable to car showgirls on the internet!

They seemed to be Giya's roommates.

They were here because Giya had sent them a text message earlier, telling them that she was going to the infirmary.

"I sprained my ankle but I was lucky to bump into Gerald! He carried me all the way here on his back!" explained Giya with a smile as she looked at Gerald.

"Oh my god! You're telling us that a hero saved our beauty? Hahaha! Then we'll really have to thank the handsome guy who saved our Giya then!"

The girls continued chatting among themselves before turning to look at Gerald.

It was reflected clearly in their eyes that they felt a slight disappointment after looking at him for a while.

The clothes he wore were a little tasteless and to be frank, at first glance, Gerald looked like a pathetic jerk.

However, he did look like a decent person with a nice, chiseled face.

He looked like an honest and silly person as well.

However, they didn't know him personally so they didn't want to end up judging a book by its cover.

"Hey there handsome! So you're the one who saved Giya?"

"I wouldn't say I saved her, I was simply helping her out!"

Gerald didn't know what to do. His nervousness had increased the moment he saw all those beautiful girls.

He was obviously not like this in the past.

"I see, speaking of which, Giya has never owed anyone any favors. What do you say, handsome? How would you like Giya to repay the favor to you?"

The girls continued to tease Gerald.

"That's true! Well how about this, why don't we ask Giya to marry you?"

The girls giggled at this in unison.

"Marriage is rather extreme, why not just ask Giya to spend the night with you instead?"

“Ahh! This is so embarrassing!”

The girls continued to chatter loudly among themselves.

“There’s really no need for any of that!”

Gerald had honestly not expected these girls to be so bold and direct when all of them looked like goddesses.

He felt extremely embarrassed.

“Oh, why’s that? Do you think Giya’s not pretty or worthy enough for you? Is that the case?” asked several of the girls as they gathered around Gerald.

“N-no! That’s not what I meant!”

“Then what did you mean hmm? Why don’t you elaborate, handsome?”

While her roommates continued to tease Gerald, Giya watched silently from her sickbed. This wasn’t out of the ordinary for her roommates. They weren’t exactly known to allow boys to play around with them. Instead, every single one of them had the capability of both fooling and duping dozens of guys easily.

When she looked at Gerald, she could see that he was already blushing severely after being bombarded by teases.

Giya couldn't help but laugh at the sight. "Alright girls, stop teasing him already! Tammy, I'd like to eat an apple. Could you peel one for me?"

"Alright!"

Tammy was a tall girl and she was about to peel an apple before she paused. She then turned to look at Gerald again before smiling. "Hey handsome, you said you didn't mean it right? Could you peel an apple for Giya then?"

"Huh? Me?" Gerald was surprised at the request.

"Of course, I wouldn't ask you to do it without a reward. After peeling it, I'll allow you to kiss me anywhere you want! How's that for a deal?" said Tammy as she slowly approached Gerald.

This was the first time Gerald had ever encountered such a bold girl. Was she really as bold as Jacelyn was?

Comparing the two in his mind, Jacelyn was definitely a rookie compared to these girls!

Out of every ten sentences the girls said, eight of them were dirty talk.

They were also equally bold and straightforward when they spoke.

After toying with him for a little longer, Gerald could barely hold himself together.

Once the apple had been peeled, they told him to peel a banana.

After that, they even told Gerald to drench the bracelet on Giya's hand with boiling water.

Gerald felt queasy and really didn't want to stay a second longer.

That was it, once he completed this favor, he was leaving.

Right as he held onto the bracelet which Giya had just removed from her wrist, Gerald felt himself being pulled backward. A strong hand had pushed him away from Giya so suddenly, that he lost his grip on the bracelet and it shattered the moment it hit the floor.

"Giya! I heard that you got injured! You had me worried to death!"

The anxious voice came from the boy who had just rushed in.

Chapter 335

"Don't worry Yacob, I'm fine," replied Giya in an indifferent tone.

The boy was dressed presentably in a suit and looked rather handsome.

Though Giya gave a slightly cold impression toward him, Yacob wasn't angry at all.

"Oh, Giya! Your bracelet's broken!" exclaimed Tammy. She had looked at the floor to see what had caused the shattering sound earlier and found that it was the bracelet.

"Gerald, how could you be so careless? Is it because you're unhappy that Yacob's here to be concerned about Giya?" asked another girl.

Her words caught Yacob's attention.

Though the boy liked Giya to the point of infatuation, Giya wasn't interested in Yacob at all.

Despite him having a very good family background, she still didn't have any feelings for him. She knew what she liked, and she didn't like him that way at all.

Naturally, it was impossible for her to have feelings for Gerald just because he saved her once.

Giya's roommates knew this and they were simply just playing around with Gerald.

Everyone had clearly seen that it was indeed, Yacob who had yanked Gerald away earlier which caused him to accidentally drop the bracelet.

“It’s fine, it’s just a bracelet. I’ll just buy another one!”

Giya felt slightly embarrassed. After all, her friends were still making fun of Gerald now even though he was the one who had helped her.

“Yacob! You and Gerald are the reason the bracelet’s broken! Both of you will have to pay for it!” said Tammy.

The girls obviously had to speak a bit more respectfully toward Yacob.

“Heh, I’ll just buy a new one without his help. How could he possibly even afford to pay for half?”

Yacob scoffed as he looked at Gerald, displeasure clearly reflected in his eyes.

“Well, if there’s nothing else, I’ll be taking my leave first. Please, take care Giya!” said Gerald.

Gerald knew that he would continue to be teased as long as he stayed here. What more, Yacob was glaring daggers at him.

Gerald didn’t really want to hold it against the girls either.

If he really wanted their respect, all he needed to do was to drive his own car and park it in front of them.

After all, people just found him fun to bully because they all thought he was poor!

It was just a coincidence that Gerald had stumbled into Giya today, and he really didn't want to get entangled within the situation.

As for the broken bracelet, Gerald had already been thinking about it. Since it was also partly his fault, he would simply buy a similar one to compensate her. Then the entire matter would be resolved peacefully.

As she watched Gerald leave, Giya wanted to call out to him to stay but she also knew that he wasn't going to adapt easily to her circle of friends.

She would just have to wait for another opportunity in the future.

After finally leaving the infirmary, Gerald headed straight for the library to study.

In a blink of an eye, noon had come.

It was then when Zack gave Gerald a call.

"Everything's been settled, Mr. Crawford. Rye Group will cease to exist in Mayberry City!" said Zack, a smile on his face.

“I knew I could count on you, Mr. Lyle!” replied Gerald.

Zack’s process was easy, really. All that was needed was a little coercion.

In the past, both families had minded their own businesses. In order to make money peacefully, there was mutual comity between the two parties.

However, if the Rye Group were to ever attempt to go against the Crawford family, they would definitely be no match against them.

“Speaking of which Mr. Crawford, I’ve checked and found out that we’ll need to use one of your identity cards for some of the master’s other industries in Mayberry City. Are you currently busy? If you aren’t, there are some documents that need to be signed. If you can’t come over, I can go to where you are!” said Zack respectfully.

“There’s no need for that! I’ll come over.”

Gerald was almost done reading his book anyway. He was also thinking of heading to a jewelry shop in Mayberry Commercial Street to get a jade bracelet similar to Giya’s previous one. Just to make sure that she was properly compensated.

By now, the rain had already stopped.

Gerald first drove to Wayfair Mountain Entertainment. Once he was done signing the documents, he headed for the jewelry shop in Mayberry Commercial Street.

“Boss! I’d like to buy a jade bracelet!”

It had taken him a while, but he finally found a jade bracelet similar to Giya’s.

“Good sir, that jade bracelet is made from excellent hetian jade. It is very expensive, are you sure you want this?” asked the salesgirl, a professional smile on her face.

Though she smiled, an expression of contempt on her face was still slightly visible.

The young man before her wasn’t well-dressed at all.

Despite that, he had come to buy jewelry. What more, he had chosen to buy a jade bracelet made from hetian jade!

Was he pulling her leg?

However, due to professionalism, she just kept her thoughts to herself.

Chapter 336

Gerald didn’t care. Picking the bracelet up, he carefully observed it before saying, “Wrap this up for me. I’m buying it.”

“Are you sure sir? This excellent hetian jade bracelet costs seven thousand and five hundred dollars... Perhaps you would like to look at something else instead?”

The smile on her face was beginning to fade at that point.

“Just do it already, why are you asking so much?” replied Gerald, rather coldly.

The salesgirl packed the jade bracelet up before swiping it on the payment machine. However, the transaction was a failure.

Gerald suddenly remembered that the minimum amount for each of his bank transactions had to be at least thirty thousand dollars!

“Hehe... Since when has Trinity Jewelers become such a low-class shop? Can any random person just waltz in now? What’ll become of our noble customer experience then?”

The scornful voice came from a couple who had just entered the shop and witnessed Gerald’s payment failure. The couple consisted of a woman who was in her thirties and an even older looking man.

All humans were like this, weren’t they? Trampling all over others was their only way of showing how rich and powerful they were.

The salesgirl smiled apologetically at the couple.

Her expression turned into an impatient one when she looked back at Gerald again.

It was no secret that Trinity Jewelers was a very well-known shop in Mayberry City.

In the past, it was not uncommon for pretentious people to enter the shop just to take pictures of themselves holding jewelry in their hands.

It was getting far too common, honestly.

In her eyes, Gerald was no different from them.

“Sir, if you aren’t going to buy it, then please leave. Can’t you see that other customers are waiting to buy something?” the salesgirl said with a tiny hint of scorn in her voice.

“Who said I’m not buying it? It’s just far too cheap! I’ll just pick a more expensive item!”

Gerald said this, trying to save his own face.

The woman locked arms with her partner and sneered at Gerald. “Children nowadays! They can be so vain!”

“Truly! If I had such a son, I would just break his legs off!”

“I’ll buy this one! Wrap it up for me!”

Gerald pretended to not hear the couple’s comments and simply pointed at another jade bracelet in the middle of the glass display case.

“Hehe... This is a famous jade bracelet made by the top master himself. The market price for this bracelet is thirty-two thousand dollars. Are you sure you want to get this?”

The salesgirl’s tone was cold and her voice was close to a sneer at this point.

“Not only this one. I’m buying both!” replied Gerald.

“Pft! That would be almost forty thousand dollars! This silly boy really thinks he can afford that! Hah!” said the man as he laughed.

As he did so, the salesgirl proceeded to swipe Gerald’s bank card on the payment machine.

Since this pathetic jerk was so stubborn, the salesgirl was also starting to lose her temper. Her plan was to embarrass Gerald even more by showing the couple that the transaction had failed.

“Hmph. This person really doesn’t know what’s good for himself,” said the woman coldly as she glared at Gerald.

It was at that moment when the couple and the salesgirl's eyes widened in shock.

After he had keyed in his password, the payment machine displayed that the transaction was a success.

"...What?"

All three of them were stunned speechless.

Not too long after, their faces began burning with embarrassment. This pauper was actually someone rich!

"Pack the two jade bracelets for me, and make sure there's not a single wrinkle on the bag or I'm coming for your head!" Gerald huffed.

"Right away sir!" said the salesgirl as she quickly bowed respectfully.

Gerald was already used to such a scene. More often than not, it would end up like this. Being polite to others would only fuel their pride. You would only be given respect if you had this kind of attitude.

"Please wait in the rest area for the moment, sir!" said the salesgirl as she began carefully packing the purchases.

Gerald complied and thought to himself once he sat down.

The bracelet he had originally wanted to buy would be given to Giya as compensation, while the much more expensive one would go to Mila when he met her again.

It seemed like a good plan to him.

“Please give me another chance, Sharon! I really love you!”

“Haha! You love me, do you? Then come in here and buy me a piece of jewelry!”

“Hehe... Don’t worry, I won’t compare you to Hayward! You can just buy me something cheap. If you manage to buy me a single piece of jewelry from this shop, then I’ll stay with you, how’s that sound?”

At that moment, a young man and woman noisily entered the shop.

Gerald then raised his head to see who was making such a commotion. The people he saw made him lift an eyebrow.

Wasn’t that Sharon and her ex-boyfriend, Murphy?

Chapter 337

Gerald remained in the VIP waiting area as he watched the two continue to bicker, a quarrel seemingly imminent.

From what he was able to hear, Gerald was able to piece the reason for their argument together.

Essentially, Sharon had broken up with Murphy without giving him a proper explanation. Her only excuse was that she wanted some time to herself.

This was very reminiscent of the time Xavia had broken up with him. F*ck. She had said the exact same thing to him too. That she wanted some time alone.

He really shouldn't be thinking about her anymore.

Shaking his head, he turned his focus on the duo's argument again.

The rest of the story was rather straightforward. Murphy had not been convinced with her excuse from the very beginning. He later found out that Sharon was getting very close to a rich heir.

What more, Sharon's friend had also told him that Sharon had been actively pursuing said heir.

Because of that, Murphy now had conflicted feelings for Sharon.

On one hand, he was still in love with her. On the other, he felt betrayed.

Thus, Murphy had been trying to get Sharon to reconcile with him for some time now. He simply wanted to do so because even he had his own dignity as a man.

All that eventually led to the current scene in the jewelry shop.

Now, Sharon was telling Murphy to buy her a piece of jewelry from Trinity Jewelers. She said that she would return to his side as long as he could afford to buy her even a single piece of jewelry.

That was going to be a difficult task for Murphy.

The items there were all atrociously expensive. Even the cheapest piece of jewelry there would have a price tag of up to four thousand and five hundred dollars. Murphy had just started working so he definitely wouldn't have that kind of money.

“Sharon, the jewelry here is much too expensive. Could we please go to another shop instead? As long as it doesn't exceed a thousand and five hundred dollars I'll definitely get it for you.”

Murphy had a determined voice and expression on his face as he said this.

“Hehe... You want me to be your girlfriend when all you can afford is one thousand and five hundred dollars? Are you daft, Murphy? This cell phone alone that Hayward bought for me costs at least a thousand dollars!” replied Sharon as she sneered.

Since she was already going to break ties with him anyway, she might as well go all out!

“It’s all crystal clear now. You like Hayward just because he has more money. Even if I did manage to buy you a piece of jewelry in this shop, you’d still refuse to go out with me. That’s the plain truth, isn’t it Sharon?” said Murphy, his face red with anger.

“Oh, Murphy. To be honest, I don’t really want to hurt you that much since you’ve treated me so well in the past. So be a good boy and run along. Stop bothering me alright? And to set things straight, I really do love Hayward. You’ve never been able to make me feel the way he has. From that alone, I believe that it really is impossible for us to be together anymore. So why not just drop the relationship talk for good? Maybe we could even still be friends in the future. You’re an outstanding person and I’m sure you’ll find a better girl than I am,” replied Sharon in a sudden, serious tone.

“You really are too much, Sharon. I’ve always treated you well and I’ve been willing to do anything for you. But now you’re just breaking up with me without even considering my feelings! It’s all too clear now. You’ve already slept with him, haven’t you?”

Murphy’s self-esteem had been trampled on enough. His eyes were bloodshot and he was done playing nice.

The sound of a slap echoed through the shop.

Sharon’s instant reply to him was a tight slap to the face!

“You lunatic! You absolute f*cking lunatic!” yelled Sharon.

Another slap could be heard. But this time, it wasn't Sharon who did the slapping.

Murphy had retaliated and slapped her back in rage. Sharon now lay on the ground, stunned by the force of his slap.

By this point, several pedestrians had already gathered around the scene to watch.

“I'll just end myself along with you! I... I'll beat you to death this instant! Return all the money that I've spent on you!” yelled Murphy as he continued punching and kicking her.

The man seemed to have gone insane.

Initially, Gerald had not wanted to get involved in the matter. He had once been in an ambiguous relationship with Sharon and they nearly became a couple.

It had been three years since then, and Gerald knew that Sharon definitely looked down on him now.

Back to the present, Gerald had thought that they would only end up quarreling for a while. This had become way too physical for him to just ignore.

If he didn't step in now, his guilt would definitely come back to bite him later. Plus, there was a time when he had strong feelings for her in the past after all.

Thinking back, the cause of their breakup was also indirectly related to him.

Gerald shook his head before walking over to help separate the two of them. By that time, several big bosses who had come to buy jewelry were already trying to stop the fight.

Chapter 338

"Alright, that's quite enough, young man! You can't prove anything by hitting a woman! If you really want to prove your worth, work hard so that she'll regret leaving you in the future!" rebuked a well-dressed, middle-aged man who looked noble and dignified.

At this point, Murphy had already calmed down a little. He could only sigh as he clenched his fists tightly.

"That's right! If you want to show your worth then go make something of yourself! I think that's impossible though since you're a lunatic! How dare you hit me today? You're done for!" shouted Sharon who was still sprawled on the ground, panting heavily.

"You should speak less yourself. Young girl, you should stop dating only wealthy men. Rich people are fickle. If you want to break up, clarify things with your partner first. There's no point of saying anything else just to trigger emotional responses from them," reprimanded the same man toward Sharon this time.

Sharon went silent and simply covered her face with her hands as she wept.

She couldn't really talk back since the middle-aged man was most definitely a big boss.

"Are you alright, Sharon?"

Gerald wasn't sure what to do so he simply tried to initiate a conversation with her as soon as he walked over.

Sharon looked at Gerald in surprise. She hadn't expected him to be here as well.

"What the gentleman there had said is right. Misunderstandings can always be cleared peacefully as long as both parties remain calm. From what was heard, both of you seemed to have a good relationship in the past. Fate changes things so there's really no need to treat each other like enemies now..."

"F*ck you! This is none of your business! Do you actually think that you're worthy enough to educate me? You were dumped too! You're as pathetic as Murphy, yet you actually have the audacity to attempt to educate me?"

Gerald had only good intentions with his words. However, despite saying almost the same things as the middle-aged man, Sharon's reaction was completely different.

Sharon was extremely anxious at this point, akin to a barrel of gunpowder which had just been lit.

In her mind, she was thinking about how she would be fine with anyone from any place in the world educating her, but a person like Gerald? He would never be worthy enough.

Hadn't he just bought two high-end cell phones? Why was he showing off here?

Her rage was further fuelled when she thought about how she had not only been humiliated in public, but also witnessed by Gerald while she was being beaten up.

He even had the audacity to point at and reprimand her!

She didn't dare provoke Murphy for fear that he may start acting like a lunatic again. The middle-aged man who reprimanded her was out of the question as well.

Thus, the only person she could direct her anger toward was Gerald in an attempt to restore her own self-esteem.

She began pushing and shoving Gerald while spewing all matter of foul language toward him.

It was all too clear that she was just trying to save her own face.

"Someone like you should just stay out of this and get lost! I must have been blind in high school to even have considered falling in love with such a pathetic jerk as you!"

Gerald only stepped backward with every shove she made without saying anything else.

At that moment, the salesgirl from before returned with the jade bracelets held carefully in her hands.

“Stop!” yelled the salesgirl the moment she saw her most distinguished customer being shoved around by some random girl.

A rage had fuelled the salesgirl as if her own husband had just been slapped by another woman. She ran over to stop Sharon immediately.

“Get lost!” growled Sharon as she pushed the salesgirl away.

The sound of shattering could be heard.

The two exquisite boxes which the salesgirl had carried out were now both on the ground.

The sound that had come from inside the boxes when they fell wasn't very reassuring.

Everyone who saw the event play out went silent.

After all, everyone knew that the jewelry in this specific shop was extremely expensive. Judging from how extravagant the two boxes on the floor were, the contents were most definitely not just any regular jewelry.

The shattering sound definitely brought Sharon back to her senses.

“A-ahh! The jade bracelets!”

The salesgirl had not expected Sharon to be so violent. As she stared at the two boxes on the floor, cold sweat began forming on her forehead.

Gulping, she squatted down immediately and began unpacking the first box.

When she opened it, everyone could see that the jade bracelet had already broken into three pieces.

Chapter 339

“Oh my... That doesn't look like any ordinary jade bracelet... It's a shame that it's already in three pieces...”

“Hmm... It seems to be a hetian jade bracelet. I'd say it costs about seven thousand and five hundred dollars. What a pity that it's broken now. That girl really is too violent. She should have to pay the full amount since she was the one who pushed the salesgirl!”

“There's still another box. I wonder what happened to its contents...”

Several of the people there were contemplating the matter as they looked at Sharon.

Meanwhile, the salesgirl had fallen into a panic and forgot to even apologize to Gerald. She immediately began opening the second box.

Once she opened it, everyone there instantly exclaimed out loud.

“That... That’s the jade dragon! The one and only jade dragon! I’ve heard that if you look very carefully, you’ll be able to see the shape of a dragon inside the jade itself!”

“I’ve heard about it as well! It’s one of the top-selling items in this shop. It was made by a very skillful master jeweler. It costs around thirty-two thousand dollars!”

“Fortunately for the violent lady, the dragon jade bracelet isn’t broken. Imagine how much money she would have to compensate!”

“What do you mean thankfully it is not broken? It’s absolutely vital that the jade color of a dragon jade piece is maintained. If the color combination of the jade dragon piece is disturbed, then it won’t be in the shape of a dragon anymore! Should that happen, it would be better off just breaking the bracelet!”

Several knowledgeable people were actively sharing their views.

“Wow, I wonder where the owner of the bracelets is...”

Even the middle-aged boss from earlier was surprised by this turn of events.

“What’s happening here?”

At that moment, the young manager of the shop rushed out.

When he saw the two jade bracelets in their boxes which were still on the floor, his face instantly went pale.

“What are you still doing here? Bring the dragon jade bracelet over to the master jeweler immediately! Have him inspect it to see if the shape of the dragon in the dragon jade has been damaged!”

“O-Okay! Right away! Then, this-”

“Why are you still here?!” the manager shouted, his voice extremely anxious.

The salesgirl once again forgot to apologize to Gerald and simply rushed to meet up with the master jeweler to have the dragon jade bracelet appraised.

“Miss, remain in the shop. We’ll be having a talk about the compensation once the appraisal results are out,” said the manager coldly toward Sharon.

“Yes... Um... I hadn't meant to break the bracelet... I simply wanted to push her away...” Sharon said meekly.

Once she heard how expensive the two jade bracelets were, she became so frightened that her legs began quivering like jelly.

“Of course you didn't mean it, but that's beside the point. While you wait, feel free to contact your family. If the dragon jade bracelet has not been damaged, then you'll only need to compensate for the hetian jade bracelet,” replied the manager.

Though Gerald was the one who had bought the two jade bracelets, he remained silent.

He was very angry and upset at the moment.

Gerald had simply wanted to advise Sharon earlier but she treated him as if she didn't even see him as a human being at all.

He decided not to say anything this time. He chose to simply stare at Sharon in silence.

“Damn it! This is all your fault! How unfortunate am I to run into both of you on the same day!” scowled Sharon as she took her cell phone out to make a call.

Naturally, she wasn't going to call her family. If her parents found out about this they would definitely kill her.

The only people she could think of were Hayward and Lilian.

Once she had contacted them, the only thing she could do was to wait for the appraisal results.

Sharon clenched her fists tightly as she glared at both Gerald and Murphy.

She had a threatening look on her face, as though she was telling them that they would face their punishment sooner or later.

Hayward and Lilian arrived shortly after.

Once the whole story was explained to Hayward, he fumed with anger.

He appeared to be most angry about the fact that Sharon had been beaten up.

“Who did this to you?” asked Hayward.

“Murphy!” shouted Sharon.

Though Hayward didn't really get together well with Sharon, he still maintained an ambiguous relationship with both Sharon and Lilian.

As the so-called love rivals were meeting face to face, they were also equally filled with hatred.

Hayward immediately picked up a vase that was close to him and smashed it on Murphy's head.

The shattering of glass was heard and in no time at all, blood was already spewing from Murphy's head.

Murphy had initially been shocked silent by the broken jade bracelet. He had not anticipated Hayward smashing the vase directly on his head like that. Due to his lack of preparation, all he could do was remain sprawled on the ground, his blood forming a small puddle on the floor.

“How dare you mess with me? I'll kill you!”

Chapter 340

Fortunately, the manager managed to stop Hayward before he could continue attacking Murphy. A few good-natured people helped Murphy to get on his feet before calling for an ambulance.

“F*ck! Why are you here too, Gerald?”

Lilian finally saw Gerald who had been standing at the side.

“Don't even mention his name anymore! If it wasn't for that pathetic jerk I wouldn't have broken the seven thousand and five hundred dollar hetian jade bracelet and the

thirty-two thousand dollar dragon jade bracelet!” replied Sharon with a look of disgust on her face.

“...Come again? More than thirty thousand dollars...”

Harvey was dumbfounded. Through the phone, Sharon had only said that she had met with an accident at the Trinity Jewelers shop. She hadn't mentioned anything about the compensation or the outrageous cost.

Naturally, he was speechless for a moment when he heard this. The same went for Lilian.

Due to her nervousness, Lilian began scolding Gerald.

“So what if Sharon got beaten up? What's that got to do with you? Did you think you needed to step in to stop the fight? Who do you even think you are? D*mn it! So what're you going to do about this? Aren't you going to pay for the compensation?!”

Lilian pointed toward Gerald as she continued to curse at him.

“I can't believe that you think you're that remarkable just because you bought two cell phones! Disgusting!”

“Oh Lilian, just leave him be. Hayward, can both of you please help me figure out what I should do to gather that much money?”

Gerald wasn't even prepared for the verbal attack from Lilian.

He was stunned to a point where he didn't even know how to refute them.

He was upset beyond compare. It had only been three years since they had lost contact with each other but during that time, any of Sharon's lingering feelings seemed to have evaporated completely!

"It's out! The appraisal results are out!" shouted the salesgirl.

She ran over excitedly this time.

Hayward, Sharon, and the others stared at her, anticipating her announcement with eyes wide open.

"Fortunately, the dragon jade bracelet isn't damaged. Therefore, you only need to pay the compensation for the hetian jade bracelet, which is only seven thousand and five hundred dollars!" explained the salesgirl.

"Oh, thank god!"

When Sharon heard this, she nearly fainted. The enormous weight on her shoulders had been lifted and so had most of her anxiety.

However, another problem remained.

Seven thousand and five hundred dollars was by no means a small amount. What could she do to gather all that money?

“Hayward, Lilian, how much money do you have? You’ve got to help me out!”

Sharon felt like crying again.

“I have about four thousand and five hundred dollars with me at the moment. How about you, Lilian?”

“Only seven hundred and fifty,” she replied.

“I have about seven hundred and fifty too, but adding everything together we’ll have about six thousand dollars. I’m still short of a thousand and five hundred dollars!” said Sharon as she jumped anxiously.

“Don’t worry just yet, I’ll call my dad first. I’ll just ask him to transfer that amount over!”

Hayward could feel his wallet lighten as he considered how much money he would be spending. However, he would definitely lose face if he said that he didn’t have any money in front of so many people.

The three of them waited anxiously at the side of the shop as Hayward made his phone call.

“Dad? I need a thousand and five hundred dollars. It’s important. You’ll be receiving a second batch of compensation money in a few days, right? I really need the money now, okay? Okay!”

Hayward hung up the phone and a few seconds later, he heard his WeChat notification sound.

The money had successfully been transferred over.

“Alright! We have enough money now!” said Hayward with a smile on his face.

At that moment, Sharon was filled with admiration toward Hayward. She felt that as long as he was there, she would always be safe and secure.

She affirmed to herself that she would definitely marry him one day.

Lilian on the other hand, felt slightly uneasy watching Hayward spend six thousand dollars on Sharon.

Her jealousy was warranted as who wouldn’t feel that way around such an outstanding man.

“Speaking of which boss, could you give me the broken jade bracelet? After some repairs, it could possibly still be worn!” said Hayward to the manager.

“Ah... Sure, why not?” The manager then shook his head with a wry smile on his face.

Hayward and the others then took the broken jade bracelet out of its box and inspected it to see if it could still be repaired.

While this was happening, the salesgirl reappeared again, this time with two, new, beautifully wrapped boxes.

“I apologize for making you wait so long, Mr. Crawford. Both of the jade bracelets have been packed nicely now!” said the salesgirl respectfully while she passed the boxes to Gerald.

“Thank you,” replied Gerald as he nodded and took the boxes from her hands.

Chapter 341

“...What the f*ck?”

“...Huh?”

Both Sharon and Lilian were dumbfounded as they watched Gerald leave with the two boxes.

The boxes which contained the two jade bracelets that had almost scared Sharon to death earlier.

The moment her issue had been resolved, Sharon felt that she could finally breathe again.

However, she now felt as if someone had just kicked her in the head. Her mind went blank.

Gerald was the one who had bought the two jade bracelets?

Lilian and Hayward's eyes were open wide in shock.

This was especially the case for Lilian. She was so shocked that she didn't hold on to one of the jade pieces firmly enough and accidentally dropped it onto the ground where it shattered.

"Wait! Gerald! You... You were the one who bought the two jade bracelets?" asked Lilian in surprise.

Gerald simply ignored her and continued to walk away with the jade bracelets in hand.

He was beyond angry this time. There was no need to bother explaining anything to them.

“Humph! He could just be buying them with someone else’s money! Forget about him! Sharon, Lilian, why don’t we head to a restaurant and enjoy a nice meal together instead?”

Hayward didn’t want to get outdone.

D*mn it! It felt as if Gerald had just sent an abrupt slap to his face!

The only reason he was willing to spend that much money today was because he wanted to win Sharon over.

No matter how he tried to dice it, deep inside he knew that Gerald had clearly outdone him this time.

“What the hell is even going on here...? Was he really the one who bought the jade bracelets? Where did he get all that money from?” they questioned aloud as they left the jewelry shop.

Both Sharon and Lilian felt very uncomfortable.

They were both afraid that it was indeed the truth.

If Gerald was now somehow richer than they were, that would be even scarier than the events that had taken place in the shop earlier.

Out of the blue, Lilian suddenly came up with an idea.

“Why don’t we invite Gerald to have a meal with us? After eating, we could ask him more about it. After all, you guys saw him buying the cell phones last time. He must really be rich! We must ask him about it to get to the bottom of this!”

“While I do think that that’s a good idea, I’m not sure if he’ll be willing to even sit with us after the way I treated him earlier,” said Sharon a little worriedly.

“Relax, just leave it to me. What do you think, Hayward? Should we investigate and get to the bottom of this together?” asked Lilian.

Hayward had an extremely displeased expression on his face up till the point Lilian had asked him for his opinion.

“Hmm? Ah yes, sure! It’s just a regular meal anyway! Go ahead and call him!”

Hayward was having mixed feelings about the entire situation but he had to admit, even he was curious about what on earth was going on.

In the past, Murphy was Hayward’s strongest competitor.

While Sharon had indeed mentioned that she had nearly fallen in love with Gerald during her high school days, he hadn’t regarded Gerald as a competitor at all.

Now, however, he was struck by a realization that this seeming poor boy was actually the biggest threat!

The way Sharon and Lilian were talking about him now was proof of that.

Once the girls were done discussing the matter, Lilian made a phone call to Gerald.

On the other end of the line, Gerald was walking with the bracelets in hand when his phone began to vibrate. He checked to see who was calling and saw that it was Lilian.

She had received Gerald's contact number when they had met in town for dinner last time.

"Ah! Hello Gerald! Where are you now? I'll be frank, I'm feeling a little embarrassed about everything I had said to you earlier. Now that I'm calm, I realize that I shouldn't have treated you that way."

"I'm sorry as well! I was overly impulsive earlier!" shouted Sharon hurriedly into the phone.

"Essentially, both of us regret treating you the way that we had. We want to invite you over to have a meal with us right now so that we can formally apologize to you. Maybe even reminisce a little!" Lilian continued.

A wry smile was on Gerald's face as he heard all this. If he hadn't walked out of the shop with the two jade bracelets in hand, they would never even have thought about apologizing in the first place, let alone decide to reminisce about their past.

To put simply, it was all about the money again.

If you had money, people would want to befriend you.

However, if you were penniless, just remembering your name would be giving face to you!

Gerald knew that well. As long as he had money, both he and Sharon could even pick up from where they left off and pretend as if the three-year gap had never happened.

Chapter 342

"Haha! It's fine, forget about it. It wasn't a big deal!"

Gerald did not want to go.

"No, no Gerald, I insist! You don't look down on us, do you? You would never look down on your own high school classmates, right? Or do you secretly look down on us because you were admitted to Mayberry University while we only took the normal entrance exams for normal universities and colleges? I see how it is now!" said Liana shamelessly.

"You know I don't mean that! Fine, let's have a meal together!" Gerald said before sighing. How could anyone be this shameless?

Gerald was at a loss for words.

However, since it was only a meal, he was willing to just eat together and be done with it. After all, he had nothing to lose. Besides, it was an opportune time for him to prevent them from having anything more to say about him in the future.

He would just join them for their meal and see what they had to say then!

Gerald nodded to himself before turning around again.

They didn't eat in any of the stores in Mayberry Commercial Street. Instead, they went to an ordinary restaurant right next to that street.

Sharon had ordered a lot of delicious dishes for Gerald.

"So tell us, Gerald, how did you become so rich?"

The topic was finally brought up by Lilian. Sharon listened in closely as well. It was the highlight of their concerns.

"Rich? When did I ever become rich? I'm penniless!"

Gerald held back his laughter as he enjoyed the expressions on their faces. They were both hilarious and ridiculous at the same time. He was no longer angry. Rather, he was feeling playful at the moment, so he simply replied in a plain and casual manner.

He then took some roasted pork knuckles and rice before savoring them.

“Pft! You’re really mischievous aren’t you, Gerald? You’re getting quite good at acting I see!” said Lilian as she laughed.

She had studied art before this and that included a bit of theatre. She was less rigid than the other two for sure.

As she spoke, she also slightly pinched Gerald’s thigh.

“I... I really don’t have any money!” said Gerald again.

“Hmm... If you don’t have any money, how did you manage to fish out seven to nine thousand dollars just to buy cell phones? What more, how could you have bought the two jade bracelets today without having any money? The dragon jade bracelet alone cost around thirty-two thousand dollars! You’re not deceiving anyone, Gerald.”

Gerald groaned slightly as Lilian continued questioning him.

Sharon simply continued to stare at Gerald, her eyes wide open.

“Ah, those? That money doesn’t belong to me! I’m just running some errands for some people! I’m going to be sending the bracelets over to the buyer immediately after this!”

Gerald really didn’t want to tell them the truth.

By deceiving them, the best outcome he could foresee was that they would just continue treating each other as strangers in the future.

“Ahh... I see. So the money really wasn’t yours?”

Lilian and Sharon exchanged glances. They both felt as though a huge weight had been lifted off their shoulders.

“Say, Sharon, could you pass the pork trotters over to me? I can’t reach it from here!” said Gerald to see their reaction.

“D*mn it! Why are you still eating pork trotters now? Are you some pig? You’ve already eaten so much! Just look at how unpromising you already look!” said Sharon coldly as she glared at Gerald.

D*mn it... I really thought you were rich for a second there... That was the only reason why you were invited in the first place... I guess in the end you were just being an errand boy for someone else!

While those were the thoughts in Sharon's head, Lilian had begun inching slowly away from Gerald.

Once she was sitting quite far away, she said coldly, "Oh, Gerald Crawford. I used to think that though you were poor, you would at least be useful in the future since you're good at studying anyway. However, now that I look at you, I feel that you're only going to become more useless in the future!"

Apparently he was going to be called by his full name now.

"Didn't you guys say that we should support each other and provide helping hands since we're all in Mayberry City anyway? Since you guys are obviously doing better than me, could you lend me a helping hand as well? After all, we've been classmates for three years in high school!" asked Gerald.

"Oh my god! As if we could help you! What can you even do? You shouldn't talk about our high school days anymore. I haven't even spoken to you for so long! Why don't just keep chatting with Sharon? Weren't you two almost a couple back then? Sharon definitely still likes you!"

Lilian said this deliberately for Hayward to hear.

Sharon caught on to what she was trying to do immediately. "What do you mean by that Lilian? How could I ever like Gerald! I've never liked him!"

As Sharon ended her sentence, she slammed her chopsticks on the table angrily.

The two then started to argue.

Hayward could only try to persuade them to stop fighting each other.

Ah, to be as rich and handsome as he was, was a sin.

Gerald paid no attention to them and simply continued eating while also enjoying the lively atmosphere.

All of a sudden, the door was pushed open rather loudly.

Several police officers suddenly walked in.

“Is that them?” asked a policeman coldly as he pointed toward Gerald and the others.

Chapter 343

At that moment, several police officers walked into the room along with the one who had initially pointed at them.

“That’s them!”

An angry voice came from someone who had white gauze wrapped all-around their head. As he walked closer, the group could finally make out who the person—who was pointing at Hayward—was.

'His name was Murphy right?' Gerald thought to himself.

The situation was quite clear. After Hayward had attacked Murphy, Murphy must have called the police after getting his injuries treated. It seemed that the police had managed to track them here through the help of the surveillance cameras on Mayberry Commercial Street.

If that wasn't enough, Hayward had also booked a table at a restaurant near Mayberry Commercial Street under his name.

"Alright then, we'll be needing all of you to come with us!" a single police officer said coldly.

Both Hayward and Sharon began panicking.

Even though Hayward was feeling rather superior a few seconds ago, his actions had come back to bite him. After all, he had crashed a vase over Murphy's head earlier.

Though he was clearly anxious, his next response was to brazenly say, "Sure, let's go! I'll be released after two hours anyway!"

"Oh, two hours you say! After you've dared to hit my brother? I'd like to see you try!" said a cold and arrogant voice.

A woman soon began walking forward. She stood next to Murphy.

“Sister! That’s the kid who attacked me!” said Murphy as he pointed toward Hayward.

“Don’t worry, I’ve already explained the matter to the inspector! He’ll definitely be upholding justice on your behalf!” replied the woman.

Being able to utter that sentence alone proved that Murphy’s family had sufficient connections to turn the situation from a simple into a rather difficult one.

Hayward began feeling even more nervous now.

Sharon had also not expected Murphy to have such a powerful sister.

As the woman shifted her cold glare from Hayward to look at the others who sat at the same table, she couldn’t help but raise an eyebrow in astonishment.

“Gerald? What are you doing here?”

Gerald was busy eating but when he heard his name and the familiar voice, he looked up. Even he was surprised.

The woman standing before them was none other than Naomi’s cousin, Xyleena. He really hadn’t expected Murphy to be connected with her as well.

Gerald knew very well that Xyleena didn't have a brother.

D*mn it! With her in the picture, there would be no outsiders in this dispute at all. On one side was his high school classmates while on the other was Naomi's relatives and friends.

Gerald couldn't help but laugh wryly at the ridiculousness of the situation.

"Don't mind me, we're just having a meal together!"

"Humph! So you're actually enjoying a meal with the people who beat my brother up? And of course a pathetic jerk like you is involved in the matter as well! To think that I took such good care of you in the past!" replied Xyleena coldly.

To be honest, ever since Xyleena and Naomi had invited Gerald and the others to a meal back then, she had already been extremely dissatisfied with him for running off before the meal was even over.

The embarrassing thing was that she had initially planned for her classmates to act impressively and display their power to Naomi's classmates. She still couldn't understand what went wrong that day. All Naomi's female classmates did was whisper among themselves and she had no idea what they were even discussing about.

In the end, they barely even looked at her classmates at all.

In short, the entire meal was embarrassing.

Of course, she blamed the entire thing on Gerald for not being appreciative of her efforts which led to the others doing the same.

It was, however, unexpected that both of them would actually meet like this today.

“Humph! That person was also there while I was beaten up!” said Murphy as he pointed toward Gerald.

“That’s enough. You don’t have to say anything else. If you wish to add anything you can say it back at the police station! For now, all of you are coming with us!”

The police then brought all of them back into their police cars.

Gerald felt depressed. What terrible luck!

What could he even say at this point?

Upon arriving at the police station, the police officers began taking their statements. Since surveillance cameras were present, Hayward couldn’t deny anything.

After that, the four people were placed in a small room while they awaited their results.

“What should I do Hayward? Do you think I’ll get charged as well? I’ve just been offered a job as a teacher and I haven’t even started my first day at work yet! If I get charged by the police then the school will definitely expel me!” said Lilian as she started panicking in the detention room.

“I really don’t know... We actually hurt someone this time and they have solid evidence too! That Murphy... And his sister! She’s pretty incredible herself!”

Sharon was silent but she was clearly nervous as well.

Chapter 344

This was because all of them could tell that Xyleena was not the kind of woman that they could afford to mess with.

Thinking about the current situation, Hayward’s face had already been pale for some time now. He was pacing back and forth anxiously.

On the other hand, Sharon was feeling a little disappointed.

She had come to learn that Murphy’s sister was very powerful in Mayberry City. She was also very capable in society in general.

This would mean that Murphy was also someone quite capable himself.

As she thought about it, Sharon began feeling slightly regretful. Had she been too cruel to Murphy?

What if Murphy's future achievements somehow surpassed Hayward's?

Thinking back, Hayward mostly only knew how to show off. Murphy, on the other hand, was actually a very capable man.

The more she thought about it, the more conflicted Sharon felt.

Ahh! Why!

She had only ever fallen for three people in her lifetime.

The first was Gerald but she had already moved on from him for a very long time. She wasn't even interested in him anymore.

The second and third were Murphy and Hayward!

Now, Sharon was feeling very entangled in the mess she had brought upon herself.

"Okay, okay! Stop talking about it already. I've already told my dad about the situation. He'll definitely come up with a suitable solution to free us. You won't have a

criminal record either, don't worry!" said Hayward as he scratched the back of his head.

"Murphy will obviously refuse to accept settling this in private. Therefore, there'll definitely be a criminal record no matter what!" said Gerald who had been quiet for a while.

"F*ck! Shut up already! You really like to say inauspicious things! People acquainted with you must be really unlucky!" scowled Lilian toward Gerald unceremoniously.

"That's enough Lilian. There's no point in scolding him now. Let him say whatever he wants. After all, only Hayward and I participated in the fight! I think Gerald's just making fun of us at this point!" said Sharon as she rolled her eyes at Gerald.

Hayward's father arrived shortly after. Both parties were then taken to the interrogation room to meet with one another. Two policemen were present to mediate the situation.

Hayward's father had some connections too. After all, he couldn't just rely on the Mayberry Commercial Group when his son had gotten into a fight and beaten someone up.

Asking for help from the Mayberry Commercial Group now would simply be giving others a reason to look down on them.

Therefore, Hayward's father could only depend on his personal relationships and connections. Due to the absence of help from the Mayberry Commercial Group, both sides now had equally strong backgrounds that resulted in a stalemate.

It didn't help that his son was unscathed while Murphy was badly hurt. After all, no matter who started the fight first, the one with more serious injuries would always be the victim.

"Dad, why have you gone silent! You have a solution in mind, don't you? I don't want to have a criminal record! What am I going to do if I have one? My whole life will be ruined!" said Hayward, his voice terrified. The realization had finally caught up to him that he was at the mercy of both Xyleena and Murphy now.

"Me too! Officer, you can look at the surveillance camera recordings! I was simply tagging along! I didn't do anything at all! I'm a teacher please don't place a criminal record on me!" begged Lilian and she quivered.

She then looked at Murphy who was sitting opposite her, "We were friends before this, right Murphy? Have you already forgotten our time together?"

"Humph! No, of course I haven't! But you're also part of the reason why Sharon cheated on me! No matter what the case is, my sister's definitely getting to the bottom of the matter for me today!" said Murphy determinedly.

Hayward's father sighed before frowning and looking at Xyleena. "Miss Xyleena, I am aware that you have a very broad network of connections. However, you shouldn't push people into a dead-end either. I know people from the Mayberry Commercial Group. Do you really want people from that group to intervene in this matter?"

“Hehe... Don’t try to use the people there to scare me off. Do you think you’re the only one who knows people from the Mayberry Commercial Group?” replied Xyleena as she glared at him.

Hayward’s father gritted his teeth as he began contacting people from the group.

Xyleena began doing the same, though she also contacted Naomi this time.

This was because during the last incident, Naomi had explained everything that had happened to her. Naomi had even told Xyleena about the white-haired youth along with his men that had driven several Maybach cars over to rescue them.

“Naomi, I’m going to have to trouble you a little. Do you still have the contact number of the young man who had saved you last time? Could you contact him on my behalf? Our brother has been beaten up. Hadn’t he told you that you could contact him if you ran into any trouble in the future? Could you ask for his help now?”

“Hello, Chairman Lloyd! I’m the docking accountant for Yorknorth Mountain. Remember that time when we were having a meal together? I remember you saying that I could contact you if I ran into any trouble? Well... Right, yes that’s right... There’s just a small issue right now!”

Both parties had begun showing their impressive connections.

Lilian and Sharon could only stare at them, dazed.

D*mn it! Both Hayward and Murphy had quite complex backgrounds!

Sharon used to think that Murphy was just a young man who could only work hard and struggle at the bottom. However, his sister seemed to have very strong connections all over the place. She even had a team of people driving Maybach cars.

She was flabbergasted and if there was one thing she had come to learn from all of this, it was that life really was full of ups and downs.

She also learned to not look down on young or poor people ever again!

Chapter 345

Once the two parties had made their calls, they both waited in a temporary stalemate.

At the time, even the police couldn't really predict how the situation would end. The results later would be the deciding factor of whether today's events were going to be released to the public or remain private.

“Which party's going to come out on top?” muttered Sharon silently to herself, her heart filled with doubt and hesitation.

One moment, she was rooting for Hayward to be the victor, and the next, she was hoping that Murphy—who had still been sneakily looking at her with infatuated eyes—would be the one victorious.

To put it simply, an onslaught of complicated emotions were being flung at her.

While Sharon continued to wonder, footsteps could be heard from behind the interrogation room door.

Several footsteps in fact, and they all seemed to be moving rather hastily.

“Hell yeah, dad! Is Chairman Lloyd here?” asked Hayward excitedly.

“Don’t even dream about it. Chairman Lloyd and the others would never physically attend to deal with such matters!” replied Hayward’s father with a soft sigh.

The creak of an opening door was heard.

A group of middle-aged policemen entered the room immediately after.

“Sergeant Zales! Lieutenant Leeds!” shouted the two police officers immediately as they saluted them.

A group of men was also following behind them, an almost pressuring aura exuding from them.

“Ah, sergeant Zales. I was the one who had called Chairman Lloyd!” greeted Hayward’s father excitedly the moment he saw the attractive policewoman.

“Lieutenant Leeds! The victim’s side has already contacted Miss Naomi as well! The person who was beaten up was none other than Miss Naomi’s younger brother!” said Xyleena as she took a deep breath.

Even ** and ** were called here today!

Previously, she had found it hard to believe her cousin’s story when the white-haired youth and Maybach were added into the equation. However, she now knew that her cousin’s sister was definitely more powerful and capable than she was.

What followed was a short series of explanations, both parties expressing their positions to the two leaders.

“Mm? What Chairman Lloyd and what younger brother are you even talking about. Officer Wiles, have you sufficiently interrogated them on what truly happened?” asked George.

“Yes, I have. Murphy was the one who started the whole thing by hitting Sharon at Trinity Jewelers. What followed was that Sharon then called Hayward to beat Murphy up!”

“Well since neither party is willing to back down, there’s really no point deciding whether this matter should be settled privately or publicly. They’ll just go through normal procedures, administrative detention and also punishment! All the troublemakers are to be detained!” said George coldly.

At that moment, confusion swept through both parties.

“What do you mean by that? Aren’t you here to help?” asked Xyleena. She hadn’t expected that answer at all.

To think that her persistence was actually going to get her younger brother locked up!

What was going on here?

Was this really her sister’s power? If it wasn’t, who else could have gotten ** and ** to come here?

“You are Mr. Gerald Crawford, correct?”

A few people then turned to look around the room till their eyes were fixed on Gerald.

“That would be me,” said Gerald as he nodded.

The truth was, Gerald had already contacted Mr. Harrison much earlier on while he was still in the police car.

He had explained the entire situation to him.

Gerald was clean since there really wasn't anything shady going on and he hadn't actually done anything worth noting at the scene.

However, it was still surprising to see ** and ** in person. Gerald had initially just expected Mr. Harrison to speak to the police officers on his behalf.

“Well, you're just an eyewitness in this case so you don't need to stay here any longer. You may leave!”

“Alright, thanks for all your troubles!”

Gerald said nothing more and he simply walked out of the police station, leaving the others dumbfounded.

It was clear as day now.

The group of people there had come for Gerald.

As if it wasn't clear enough, the men with strong auras completely ignored everyone else in the police station as they turned to leave together with Gerald.

“F*ck!”

Xyleena felt her face turn red with a cocktail of embarrassment, shock, and surprise.

The same went for Sharon and Lilian.

All of them were left speechless.

Gerald seemed to have very good connections and relationships. From their attitude toward him earlier, it was obvious that his connections were much better than Hayward's father's and even Xyleena's!

'Who exactly is Gerald?'

All of them were simultaneously thinking about this at the same time.

The weights that had been lifted off their chests seemed to have appeared again, this time possibly even heavier.

Xyleena wasn't expecting to get such a mental slap to her face like this!

Chapter 346

Aside from feeling ashamed, she was also starting to grow a little nervous. All three of the women were feeling the same emotion.

They were terrified to even think about the possibility of Gerald actually being a big boss!

As Gerald left through the police station's front door, he was surprised to see that Wesley—from the Bureau of Commerce—was already waiting for him in a car right outside.

Gerald got into the car.

Wesley smiled before saying, "Mr. Crawford, you were just a witness so why were you still being held on hold? Hahaha!"

Gerald knew that he was talking about the fact that Xyleena had continued to insist that he was an accomplice in the matter. "Don't even mention it, she just has a small grudge on me."

Gerald didn't need to get into the details so he simply provided a simple answer.

"I see, I see... By the way, Mr. Crawford, there's been something on my mind that I'm still unsure whether I should be sharing with you," said Wesley with a smile as he continued to drive Gerald back to his school.

Gerald had a good impression of Wesley.

He was a real leader who really wanted to further develop and help the business community in Mayberry City grow.

Due to that, Gerald leaned forward slightly to show that he was listening.

“So, here’s the thing. Some time ago, our business management team received a task indicator to strengthen our urban and rural economic construction. Of course, the business management bureau’s cooperation is necessary for us to achieve this. Therefore, I’ve planned to set up some pilot projects in other countries, cities, and townships!”

“I personally feel that I’ve already troubled you a lot, Mr. Crawford. Hence I decided to put some investment sources into some other big groups instead. Everything had been agreed on. Alas, who could have anticipated the Rye Group suddenly collapsing like that just a few days ago! Their collapse triggered a chain reaction, and many other related companies were affected because of that event. After all, all our original investments are now gone, just like that!” said Wesley as he smiled bitterly.

Gerald was unsure whether to laugh or cry. After all, he was the one who had ordered the Rye Group to be destroyed.

However, it would seem that destroying the group had brought trouble to several other people as well.

“So here’s my take on the situation, Mr. Crawford. I’ve found out that your hometown is a township in the Serene Country below Mayberry City. I’ve looked into the information and transportation location there and from what I found, it’s actually pretty good. If you would be willing to invest in the development of the enterprises there, it would only take a few years to improve the economy of the Serene Country. Naturally, we’ll also be providing all the resources as a form of support!”

Wesley was trying to get Gerald to invest in the project.

Knowing how efficient Wesley was, Gerald had no problem with it at all.

He would be completing his examination in seven more days. After he was done, Gerald would have more free time in the coming months to devote himself to the development of the projects.

What more, Gerald had previously thought about investing in his own hometown before. He had already been planning to talk to Wesley about it but Wesley had come to him instead!

Now that he had indirectly destroyed Wesley's original investment plan, Gerald saw no reason to refuse his request at all.

Besides, the sum Wesley was asking for wasn't too much for Gerald.

Thus, Gerald agreed to his request immediately.

Upon returning to his dormitory, Gerald found a safe spot to place the jade bracelets that he had bought.

Harper and Benjamin were busy studying at the time.

At that moment, he felt his cell phone vibrate in his pocket. It was his sister, Jessica.

Since it wouldn't be convenient for him to talk to her in the dormitory, Gerald headed for the bathroom.

According to his calculations, his sister should be arriving today. Gerald had been meaning to contact her as well.

As soon as he left, five people who were originally 'studying' in the dormitory put down their textbooks immediately.

One of the boys even moved to keep watch at the door.

"Harper! Look at that! He's bought some really expensive looking things again! If Hayley and Alice's guess is correct, then Gerald really is Mr. Crawford! We'll be able to have a higher status just being around him!" said Benjamin as he laughed.

This wasn't the first time the roommates, including Gerald himself, had stolen food from one another or rummaged through each other's belongings.

There was zero guilt in what they were currently doing.

What more, they were now very curious and keen to uncover Gerald's true identity now!

"I know right? I really hope Hayley and the others made a right guess!" said Harper as he smiled while scratching the back of his head.

His words were sincere, as Harper really would be happy for Gerald if the rumor turned out to be true.

At that moment, Harper suddenly received a video call request on WeChat.

Looking at the caller's contact name, he saw that it was Hayley.

"Harper! Harper, is Gerald back yet?"

"He just got back not too long ago but he's in the bathroom now. He's brought back two boxes of really expensive looking things!"

"Hey, I want to see it too!"

This time, it was Hayley's roommate who had butted in. In the background, Alice could also be seen with a curious look on her face.

It was clear that until they could uncover Gerald's true identity, these people wouldn't be able to sleep well. This was especially the case for Alice.

A day could feel like an entire year when a person was feeling desperate, and Alice had been feeling tormented for no short amount of time.

Should she apologize to Gerald?

Now that Mila wasn't here, was there a chance that she could get back together with him?

But what if Gerald turned out to not be Mr. Crawford and just some pathetic jerk?

D*mn it! The question was seriously driving her crazy.

“Hey Benjamin! Open it up to see what he bought this time!”

Chapter 347

“Holy! That's such a beautiful jade bracelet!”

Everyone was equally shocked when they saw what lay inside the parcel.

The receipt that came with the parcel made them even more shocked.

The two bracelets had cost more than forty thousand dollars.

“Hey, we want to see too!”

Jacelyn started jumping and shouting on the other side of the screen.

Harper and Benjamin took the jade bracelets out before showing it to them through his phone's camera. Gerald's other roommates continued looking at the boxes

Even the boxes didn't look cheap.

Everyone was now convinced about one thing. Gerald was rich! That was an undeniable fact,

At that moment, the boy standing by the door started whispering hurriedly, "Gerald's back! Put it away quickly!"

Harper immediately ended the video call as the other boys hurriedly placed the bracelets back into their original boxes.

When Gerald opened the door to enter the dormitory, he saw that all his classmates were standing. They all looked flustered as they stared at him.

It was a puzzling scene for Gerald so he simply smiled and asked, "What? Do you see money on my face?"

"Gerald, please tell us the truth. Are you really rich now?" asked Harper curiously.

"As if I've ever had any money in the first place," said Gerald reflexively.

“D*mn it! He’s still trying to hide the truth from us! Brothers! Let’s unite and crush him!”

Harper and the rest of the boys then lifted him up together before pinning his arms and legs on a bed.

They turned him around and took his pants off before spanking and tickling him mercilessly.

“Alright! Alright! I surrender! I’m rich now! Stop it already!”

Gerald knew that the cat was out of the bag and there was no point trying to hide it any longer.

It would appear that all his recent odd behaviors had caught Harper and Benjamin’s attention.

They had a right to be doubtful. After all, how could such a miserably poor student suddenly become so rich? What more, he wasn’t just rich. He was also very powerful.

Gerald had originally not intended to tell Harper and the rest the truth. This was because he was afraid that the brotherly affection he had with them would cease once money came into the equation.

However, he remained silent on the fact that he was indeed Mr. Crawford.

Despite that, his roommates had already speculated that there was a high chance of him definitely being Mr. Crawford.

No matter what they did, Gerald refused to reveal who he really was and wouldn't admit anything else, including how he got so rich all of a sudden.

There was nothing that Harper and the other boys could do.

Though they continued to fool around for a while, they were all genuinely happy for Gerald.

As for Gerald, he had already made up his mind a long time ago that he would definitely be helping all his brothers in their careers in the future.

Once things calmed down a little, the boys playfully blackmailed Gerald while they discussed among themselves how they were going to spend the next few days at school together. Everyone in the dormitory had helped Gerald before in the past. Therefore, he found no issue in treating them well now.

Once they were done revising and studying, Gerald and the boys went out to enjoy themselves. They ate, drank, and had loads of fun before finally returning to the dormitory to rest.

While all of that happened, that content of Jessica's call earlier has still been left undiscussed.

Dialing back in time a little, Gerald had just entered the bathroom when he finally picked up her call. He had wanted to ask his sister whether she would be coming and if she needed him to pick her up.

However, her response wasn't quite an expected one. She wasn't going to be able to make it over anymore.

"Brother, an important guest is visiting our family and dad has asked me to accompany them. I'm afraid that I won't be able to visit for a while. Dad told me to tell you about it!"

"I see. Well, it can't be helped!"

Gerald was honestly slightly disappointed. After all, he really missed his sister.

"Hey, do you remember that our father used to have a brother and comrade-in-arms back when we were in our old house in Mayberry City?"

"I do," said Gerald as he nodded.

It was a long story which he had heard from his father over the phone some time ago. Part of that story involved his father telling him that the Crawford family had always had a way of educating their children to survive in poverty.

His father had been no exception to that.

Chapter 348

Back then, his father lived in poverty and he had failed to pass the entrance examination to get into university. Therefore, Gerald's grandfather had forced him to serve as a soldier in the army instead. There, he met his comrade-in-arms.

After being in the army for two years, he returned to his hometown and took up farming.

He needed the money since he was broke.

Somehow, he managed to gather just enough to open a steamed bun shop and he stopped farming then. However, since his father wasn't one to just let a thief escape when he saw one, he ended up maiming the thief. As a result, he had to give up his steamed bun shop to the other party as compensation.

By then, he had also borrowed a lot of money and had a lot of foreign debt.

It was a point in his life where he was so poor, that he didn't even have the money to celebrate the New Year. Seeing no other hope, he decided to look for his comrade-in-arms.

His comrade-in-arms lived within the country and came from a pretty rich family. Both his parents were civil servants so they naturally had a pretty good life.

However, every time his father arrived at his home according to the address he had been given, his comrade would never be available.

It was nothing short of cold and disappointing back then.

While they were brothers, they were extremely close to each other. They had even made a pact that their future sons would be brothers as well. If one of them bore a girl, then they would become a couple instead.

Well, apparently that pact was just a joke to his comrade.

From then on, he didn't try to contact him anymore.

Finally, when his father was at the ripe age of twenty-two, Gerald's grandfather finally told his father that he was actually a rich heir.

His father was then led to start up a business before he was finally able to inherit the riches of the Crawford family.

It wasn't until both Gerald and his sister had been born that his father and mother finally returned to their hometown. They both controlled their businesses remotely while also planning a proper poverty system to educate their children with.

Gerald could clearly remember that it was his neighbors, Mr. Winters and Mrs. Winters, who had taken care of Gerald and his sister for a large portion of their

childhood. Their parents were always busy making money abroad to pay off their family's debts.

His parents would only come back to visit them twice or thrice a year at most to check up on their progress.

That was a basic summary of everything that had happened.

As for when his father would finally meet up with his comrade-in-arms again, it happened when Gerald was ready to begin his high school life. His father had brought him over to meet up with his old comrade-in-arms. Gerald's father remembered that his comrade had said that he did well in his studies. He now wanted him to help Gerald look for a good school.

When they finally locked eyes at the parking lot of his comrade's home, his comrade-in-arms simply said that he was busy with a meeting the moment his father asked for his help. He then immediately changed the topic and told his father to meet him again sometime in the future to reminisce about the past.

In the end, Gerald managed to enter a prestigious high school through his own good grades.

His father's comrade seemed to have a very high status and it felt normal that he would look down on Gerald and his family.

That was the only impression that Gerald personally had when he met his father's comrade-in-arms.

“What about it, sister?” asked Gerald as he shook his own thoughts aside for the moment.

“Well you see, dad has constantly been saying that he misses his old friends. However, you know that he’s always been indifferent to fame and fortune. Now that our poverty educating system is already over, it wouldn’t be convenient for dad to return to Mayberry City to visit his old comrade in person, with dad’s extremely high status and all. Yes, I know his so-called ‘comrade’ has always looked down on us and our dad, but our father likes to see the good in people. Since I can’t go back to personally do anything now, I’ll have to leave this matter to you now!”

“Since you’ll be staying in Mayberry City to clean up some of your business matters during summer break anyway, try taking a few days off to go home and stay there for a while. While you’re there, you could visit dad’s old friend as well as his special friend. I’ll be mailing something to you soon. It’ll contain the contact information and address of the special friend in it as well. You’ve never met the special friend before I think. If there’s anything you can do to help with the situation, please do so.”

“Also since Mr. Winters and Mrs. Winters had been taking care of us for so long, maybe build them a villa on the mountain. Make sure you give their children some money to help them too! Well, I’ll need to leave now, bye!”

After giving him so many instructions, she then hung up immediately.

Gerald could only feel puzzled at the moment.

Who was his father's special friend?

Realizing that thinking about it wasn't going to help, he simply shook his head before heading back to the dormitory.

Everything that happened after then played out as shown earlier

Back to the present, the night was silent as the boys slept peacefully.

Early in the morning the next day, Gerald had gone to the library with some textbooks in hand to study.

There were already several people there despite being this early.

Gerald simply walked on to his usual studying spot by the window.

As soon as he saw the familiar table, he was reminded of Giya. After all, this was where they had first met.

He had wanted to give her the jade bracelet which he had bought for her. However, he didn't see her on his usual routes and he didn't have her contact information either.

His secondary mission at the library was to see if he could finally meet up with her again.

After sitting down, Gerald found himself looking up from time to time.

All the while he did so, a few well-mannered looking girls who had been sitting at another corner of the library continued to observe Gerald's actions.

"Hey, hey! Who do you think that pathetic looking jerk is looking for?" asked one of the girls as she smiled.

Chapter 349

"Who knows? Didn't Giya say that he had an actual nosebleed the first time he saw her? Apparently he grew too excited from her scent! I don't buy it honestly!"

"Yeah! Why don't boys have nosebleeds when they see me then? Don't you agree Giya? I really think he's looking for you!"

The girls continued to chatter silently among themselves.

Giya could only blush as she sat there.

She had felt embarrassed back then in the library when Gerald had his nosebleed.

Now she was even more embarrassed with her friends constantly teasing her about it.

They were supposed to be studying now.

Much earlier, Tammy had nudged Giya gently before pointing toward the door.

Giya and her group of friends then saw Gerald entering with his books in hand. He seemed to be looking for someone for a while before finally deciding to sit down.

His quirky actions had prompted the girls to start discussing about him.

“Hey, Gerald!” yelled Tammy softly out of the blue. Since it was quiet in the library, Gerald heard her call almost immediately.

When he looked up, he saw Tammy standing a distance away as she signaled him with her hand to come over.

Gerald could see that Giya and the other girls were seated there as well.

Gerald was pleased that he had finally found her.

He then walked over to them.

“Hey Gerald, what exactly have you been looking for since you stepped into the library? Are your classmates here too?” asked Tammy with a smile as soon as he got close enough to their table.

“Huh? Not at all!” replied Gerald nervously.

‘D*mn it! So they had been observing me from the moment I stepped into the library!’

“Hmm? Then what are you looking for?”

“Hahaha! I knew it. You were looking for Giya, weren’t you? Trying to find her at the library?” said Tammy in between giggles. She covered her mouth to make sure she wasn’t too loud.

“I...” Gerald froze momentarily. He didn’t have a good comeback.

It was certainly a little embarrassing for someone to read him like an open book that easily.

Giya raised her face to look at Gerald, a mix of doubt and expectation showing on her face. She was wondering whether Tammy’s assumption was right as well.

“Well... Yes, I admit that I was looking for Giya. I had broken your bracelet last time and I wanted to compensate you,” said Gerald in a defeated tone.

“Oh? There’s really no need for you to do that, Gerald! The bracelet isn't that expensive, only a few thousand dollars. However, in all honesty, I’ve been looking for you as well. I want to properly thank you for your help the other day!” said Giya who had initially looked slightly dazed from his confession, though it quickly turned into a smile when she found out about his true intentions.

Of course, she hadn't meant to be rude by her statement. A few thousand dollars really was nothing to someone like Giya who had an excellent family background.

It was the only reason why she could say it so casually.

"Well, since you want to thank Gerald anyway, how about this. Since it's still pretty early, you've probably not had breakfast yet, have you Gerald? It just so happens that a new breakfast shop has opened right next to our university! Why don't we have a chat while we have our breakfast together there?" said Tammy as she smiled.

"You're being given a chance to treat six beauties to breakfast, Gerald! You'd better take advantage of this opportunity!" she added with a grin.

"Definitely! Let's go!" replied Gerald as he nodded.

"Gerald doesn't need to treat us. Everything all of you order will be on me today!" replied Giya, a hearty smile on her face.

With that said, all of them agreed and they left the library together.

"You girls can go ahead first, I have to get something back in my dormitory. Don't worry I'm not running away!" said Gerald before splitting with the group of girls for now.

He had gone back to retrieve the jade bracelet.

Gerald wanted to give it to her as soon as possible so that he wouldn't feel like he owed her anything anymore.

Giya was truly beautiful and she was definitely the kind of girl who could make any boy feel a strong desire for her with a single glance.

Chapter 350

However, Gerald's heart was reserved solely for Mila.

He had always felt guilty whenever he had too many interactions with girls like this.

That was also the reason why Gerald had constantly hidden and kept his distance from both Alice and Jacelyn.

Upon entering the dormitory, Gerald took the box containing the hetian jade bracelet. He then told Harper and the other boys about his plan before running downstairs to look for the girls again.

While this was happening, the girls had arrived and found a table for themselves at the breakfast place.

As soon as they sat down, Tammy and the other girls covered their mouths as they started laughing.

“Giya, I’m very sure that Gerald kid really likes you!”

“Same here! You girls may not know it, but I’ve already done some research on him. Gerald seems to be from the Department of Language and Literature. He’s also a pauper!”

“So what if he’s poor? Do you think Giya’s someone who lacks money? At most, Giya can just give him a career after both of them get married!”

“That’s true! In fact, he has a chiseled face too!”

“Alright, calm down girls! What on earth are all of you on about? What do you mean what’s the big deal after we get married? Gerald’s a pretty decent and honest person. It’s fine if you want to joke around with me but don’t tease him like this later. No matter how you dice it, Gerald has already helped me once!” said Giya with a sigh.

She couldn’t stand her group of sisters sometimes.

The more they spoke, the more excited they would become and this more often than not, led them to go a bit overboard.

“But Giya, you’ve never been in love before, right? Don’t you want to experience how it feels like to be in a relationship?” asked Tammy.

“So what if I’ve never dated before? I don’t really see anything impressive about you seasoned girls!” replied Giya, a wry smile on her face.

“Giya, what a coincidence. Are you girls having breakfast here too?”

Out of the blue, a boy walked up to them while they were still chatting among themselves.

His eyes had lit up immediately the moment he saw Giya and her group.

In his hands, was a very beautiful looking box.

“Yes, truly a coincidence Yacob. Why are you here?” said Tammy as she smiled while waving a hand.

Her tone had turned into a flattering one.

The boy before them was indeed, Yacob. The one who had pulled Gerald away from Giya the other day in the infirmary.

In truth, his family’s financial background was rather well-to-do.

They owned their own company and were quite powerful.

Due to that, Yacob could drive a BMW 7 Series which cost more than a hundred and twenty-one thousand dollars.

That was why Tammy and the other girls naturally thought highly of him.

After all, any girl who ended up marrying Yacob would definitely be able to enjoy a very nice and stable rest of their lives.

Yacob had been trying to get Giya's affection for a long time now but she just didn't have any feelings for him.

"What are you girls laughing about? I just so happened to be thinking about looking for Giya too! What a coincidence that we managed to meet just from that thought alone!" said Yacob with a smile as he comfortably sat on the seat which had initially been reserved for Gerald.

"We were talking about how we would all be graduating soon and how Giya still didn't have a boyfriend. Any suitable candidates in mind, Yacob?" asked Tammy as she blinked her eyes.

"Is that so? Well, that depends on whether Giya is interested in me..."

There was a quiver of excitement in Yacob's voice as he said that.

"Alright, we're done talking about that. Tell me, Yacob. Why were you looking for me?" asked Giya as she forced on a smile.

“Well, your jade bracelet was broken because I was a bit too reckless. That’s why I bought you a new one! Here, why don’t you try it on to see whether you like it or not?” said Yacob as he placed a jade bracelet on the table.

Tammy and the other girls all gasped in surprise after opening the box.

“F*ck! That looks amazing! How much did you spend on it?” shouted Tammy. Her voice attracted the attention of a few other girls who were also having their breakfast there.

One after another, the girls tried peeking from where they sat to see what the commotion was about.

Yacob smiled faintly before saying, “Why don’t you try making a guess? If you guess it right the first time, then I’ll get one for you too! Hahaha!”