

## Read Chapter 683 of Coolest Girl in Town

Coolest Girl in Town Chapter 683 Losing to You Isn't So Bad

The slight sense of guilt that Sofia had felt earlier instantly dissipated when she heard this. She reached to grab fistfuls of Maya's hair and knocked the girl's head against the ground as she screeched, "Who are you calling a skank? I ought to wash your mouth out with soap!"

One would be wise not to underestimate the strength packed into a female professor's punches because it didn't take long for Maya to be knocked into a daze.

"Better yield now if you know what's good for you!" Sofia yelled aggressively. "Yield!"

"I will not yield to a lowly servant like you! Go screw yourself!" Maya's mind cleared up with each word that she bit out. Instead, she seized the opportunity to fight back when Sofia was briefly distracted. She reached up with both arms, put Sofia in a headlock, and pulled her down. Then, without warning, she clamped her teeth down on the girl's ear.

"Ow! That hurts! Are you some kind of a rabid mutant dog? Let go!" Sofia shrieked, but the more she cried out in pain, the more it encouraged Maya. She was biting so hard that if she bit down any harder, she might just draw blood.

At a disadvantage, Sofia had no choice but to brace through the pain and tighten her grip on Maya's hair.

Cries of agony and screams echoed throughout the living room. Even the maid couldn't help shuddering when she gave the two fighting women a wide berth as she brought Elise her oatmeal.

"Here you go, Mrs. Griffith," she announced as she set the bowl of oatmeal down on the coffee table. "Your oatmeal."

Elise picked up the bowl and stirred the oatmeal insouciantly, adding fuel to the fire as she called out, "Oh, Maya, why can't you just get over yourself? Miss Hawkins here is practically hand-picked by my mother-in-law, and if anything happens to her, I can't guarantee you would be safe from Madeline's wrath. So, just back down for your own sake, Maya. Don't go looking for trouble."

Had she not mentioned Madeline, then perhaps Maya would have listened to reason, but now, she was angrier than ever.

Once upon a time, Madeline had picked on Elise on more than one occasion just to protect Maya, and now, all the preferential treatment had gone to Sofia instead! There was no way Maya could swallow this bitter pill. But, suddenly, it was as if she unlocked some power in her as she managed to flip Sofia over and pin her to the ground with shocking strength, then rained punches down on her mercilessly.

“I’ll beat you to death! I hate you, and I want to kill you! What are you going to do about it? So what if you have a prestigious degree? Do you think you’re so eligible even at this age? You said your dad’s some high-ranking official, right? Give me a name! Come on, see if you dare! I’ll post it on social media tomorrow and tell everyone how his skank of a daughter beat up another innocent person! Let’s see if he gets to keep his job after that!”

Maya could feel her adrenaline spiking with each angry word that tumbled out of her mouth. She was incensed when she saw that Sofia had managed to dodge and block all her punches and slaps, so she started spitting on the girl’s face instead.

She continued spitting as she cursed, “You’re nothing but a piece of trash! To hell with your fancy double-degree Ph.D.!”

“You b\*tch!” Sofia screamed when she felt spit on her face. She had lost all sense of decorum at this point as she scrambled off the floor and pinned Maya down on it once more, then began to choke her. “I hate it when people spit on my face when they speak! And you call yourself a woman?! You disgusting wench! I ought to strangle you!”

When one descended into a maniacal rage as Sofia did, adrenaline would surge and make the person more forceful than usual. More importantly, Maya was petite and never Sofia’s match, to begin with. Now that she was being throttled, she could only wield her weak punches against Sofia’s arm.

It was only when Maya looked like she was about to pass out that Elise beckoned for the maid to pull the girls apart.

The fight ended with both women hauled into the ambulance and ferried over to the hospital.

Elise had no choice but to go along with them as she was the household’s mistress.

Presently, Maya and Sofia were in the doctor’s suite getting their injuries treated while Elise waited for them in the hallway.

Just then, Alexander called her. “Why aren’t you home?”

“I’m at the hospital right now,” she explained.

“What are you doing there? Did something happen? Which hospital is that?”

“Natural Hospital, the one closest to our place. I’m—” She was cut off by the beeping sound on the other line when Alexander hung up in a hurry. She stared at the home screen on her phone in amusement.

At that moment, Sofia walked out of the doctor’s office first. She had a couple of scratch marks on her forehead, which the doctor had fixed up with some antiseptic and band-aids, and coupled with her tousled hair and torn dress; she looked like a right mess.

However, she appeared to be completely at ease as she sauntered down the hallway like a thug who had won a street fight, though, in all fairness, Maya was more roughed-up than she was.

Elise glanced at Sofia in mild disinterest and made no effort to speak to her.

Despite this, Sofia called out loudly, “Hey!”

Elise held her phone as she stood to the side and asked forthrightly, “What is it? You still got some of that adrenaline, huh? Do you want to fight me or something?”

Sofia laughed when she heard this and waved her hand to deny this. “Nah, not today. I’m wiped. I’ll beat you up some other time.”

Elise flashed her a good-natured smile and asked, “So why did you call me then?”

Sofia let out a long sigh, and when she gazed at Elise, it was with admiration and sincerity. “Nothing. I just wanted to let you know that you should start looking for a new housekeeper. I quit.”

“Really? So soon? Surely Maya couldn’t have scared you that much,” Elise pointed out in amusement.

“You have no idea how little I think of that wench,” Sofia said, chortling as she shook her head. “Personally, letting you beat me doesn’t sound half as bad as letting that stupid Maya win,” she mused thoughtfully.

Elise couldn’t help laughing at this. “Is that a compliment?”

“Kind of,” Sofia admitted. Then, she reached out and patted Elise on the arm in a show of sportsmanship, then said, “I’m backing out of this competition for good. Maya won’t be the only woman you’ll have to watch out for. Heaven knows how many more of them are there. Good luck with dealing with them, and take care.”

With that, she shrugged off her jacket and slung it over her shoulder, then walked away with an astounding air of confidence.

Elise took in the girl's cavalier attitude as she watched her leave and smiled for some reason.

Not long after Sofia left, Alexander arrived.

He rushed over to Elise and examined her from head to toe, then front to back. He even circled her once just to make sure she was completely unharmed. After he concluded that she was fine, he breathed a breath of relief and said, "I'm glad you're okay." But then, he recalled what the maid had told him when he called home earlier and instantly turned grim. "Where are Sofia and Maya?"

It was bad enough that these two women had been stirring up trouble for a while now, but to fight in his home was crossing the line.

"Sofia just left," Elise answered. "And as for Maya..." The name had only just slipped past her lips when she glanced at the doctor's office and saw that the person in question was walking out. She jerked her chin in Maya's direction and said, "She's right there."

Alexander glowered in Maya's direction mutinously, and there was no hiding the contempt and disgust in his eyes.

Maya looked pathetic with her hair mussed and tangled, and the fight had smudged her make-up. Startled, she kept her head down as she quietly padded over to where Alexander and Elise were, not daring to meet the former's icy gaze at all.

She had wanted to sneak past them unnoticed, but when she drew closer to them and tried to give them a wide berth, Alexander snapped, "Stop." There was not a trace of warmth in his voice.

She winced and halted in her steps. "What is it?" she asked so softly that it was almost like she was speaking to herself.

"Who said you could go by my place?" Alexander was intimidating, and the air around him crackled with angry energy. But, he didn't wait for her response before threatening darkly, "Your father is still receiving treatment in rehab, right? So, let this be my final warning to you—don't ever show up in front of me again, or I can't promise that your father will keep living."

At the mention of her father, Maya stiffened and looked up in shock. She wanted to confront and question him, but in the end, she said nothing. Instead, she swallowed her words along with her bitterness, then turned to leave the hospital in defeated silence.

## **Read Chapter 684 of Coolest Girl in Town**

Meanwhile, over at Mayweather Polytechnic University, Mica was in a classroom in one of the campus buildings. She was seated in the last row as she worked on her calligraphy while waiting for Sebastian's class to end.

Just then, Tiana walked past the back door and spotted Mica from the corner of her eyes. She sauntered into the classroom and approached Mica, hoping that she would tell her what Elise had been up to these days.

However, she had only just walked up to Mica when she caught a glimpse of the calligraphy work on the desk, and she suddenly grew very interested in it.

The Sonnet 18 calligraphy transcription bore the unique font that QH herself had developed. The font was precise, elegant, and demanded the beholder's attention. The transcription was as good as a printed copy, but it was obviously hand-written, seeing as it was on an ordinary piece of paper instead of proper stationery.

Mica couldn't even make the cut for the Calligraphy Association. Who would've thought that she personally knew a legendary figure who possessed such refined calligraphy skills? The transcription is superbly done!

Just then, Tiana suddenly remembered that Sonnet 18 happened to be the theme for the Calligraphy Contest finals held by the Tissote Calligraphy Association. So, if she could get her hands on this copybook and use it as a guide while practicing at home, she was bound to win first place!

Tiana brightened up at the thought, but she recomposed herself just as quickly as she reached out to tap Mica on the shoulder.

Mica turned around with a smile as she thought that it was Sebastian who had tapped her shoulder but frowned when she saw that it was Tiana. While Tiana was always courteous to her, Mica still found the girl inexplicably and unnervingly hard to read.

"Good day, Miss Hill," Mica greeted with an awkward nod. "Is there something I can help you with?"

"It's no big deal, but Sebastian was bringing his friend to the infirmary after the poor lad suffered a heat stroke, and he was asking if you could go over and lend him some cash," Tiana lied smoothly.

"A heat stroke?" Mica's eyes widened in concern as she pressed, "Is Sebastian okay?"

"He's fine, but he left his wallet back home this morning, so he really needs your help now," Tiana answered solemnly.

“Okay, thanks for telling me. I’ll get going then!” Mica said as she slung her purse over her shoulder and hurried out of the classroom.

The classrooms on this floor mainly were used as study halls on campus, and nearly all the desks were occupied with books and other stationery, indicating that the desks were taken, not to mention saving students the trouble of moving their stuff around. This wasn’t the first time Mica had been here, and in a force of habit, she had left the more cumbersome items behind on her desk, such as her calligraphy work.

When Mica’s footfalls faded, Tiana went to the doorway and peered out the corridor. It was only after she was sure that Mica had gone out of sight that she returned to the desk, took the Sonnet 18 transcription out from the pile of papers, and then shoved it into her bag. After that, she fled the scene.

Fifteen minutes later, Mica left the infirmary with a confused look, only to run into Sebastian at the stairwell.

“Sebastian?” Bewildered, she asked, “Weren’t you supposed to be in the infirmary? What were you doing upstairs?”

“Infirmary?” Sebastian blinked at her. “Class ended earlier than usual, and I came to look for you. Is something wrong?”

“But Tiana told me that you—ah, forget it. Now that your class has ended, shall we grab lunch? I don’t want us to have to wade through the cafeteria crowd when the rush hour hits.” She couldn’t care less about anything else now that she had Sebastian with her.

However, when she returned to the classroom to retrieve her things, she immediately noticed that the Sonnet 18 Elise had personally calligraphed for her was missing. She flipped through all the papers and books on the table and even the desk drawer, but the script was nowhere to be found. Frustration and anxiousness filled her as she realized that this was the second time she had lost something Elise had given her.

Suddenly, an overwhelming surge of guilt seized her, and tears started welling up in her eyes as she panicked.

“Hey, why are you tearing up out of the blue?” Sebastian asked gently when he sensed that she had become gloomy next to him.

“I lost the calligraphy script Elise gave me. I was supposed to use it as a guide, and now it’s gone!” Mica said mournfully.

“Are you talking about the Sonnet 18 you’ve been poring over for the whole morning?” He thought she was being a little melodramatic about this and snapped impatiently, “How is losing a piece of paper a big deal? It’s not as if you’d be making a career out of calligraphy anyway. Can’t you just buy another script or something?”

“No, you don’t understand. Elise has been nothing but kind to me, and I... I’ve just been losing everything she gave me...” Mica couldn’t help the self-blame that washed over her.

Sebastian grew furious when he heard this. “What is that supposed to mean? Do you still blame me for losing your precious badge? I thought we agreed that we’d move on from that. Mica, if you have no intention of getting back together with me, just tell me right off the bat instead of holding my mistakes over my head!”

Mica was already despondent, but to hear him lash out at her made her gut wrench, and she lowered her head as tears started spilling down her cheeks.

At the sight of this, Sebastian softened. He still had some feelings for her, and he didn’t like seeing her cry. As such, he pulled her into his arms, then apologized softly, “Okay, I’m sorry. Stop crying. I only meant to say that the past is the past, and we shouldn’t let it affect us anymore. Mica, you know that I want to be with you for the long run, don’t you?”

She sniffed and stopped crying at once. “I know. I just wish you’d trust me a little more. I don’t blame you; I’m just worried I would let you guys down.”

“That’s enough now. Come on, let’s get something good for lunch.”

“Okay.”

She gathered her things and followed him out of the classroom obediently. For some reason, she couldn’t shake the feeling that Tiana had stolen the script from her, but in the absence of proof, she could only try to ignore this nagging thought.

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Ever since his meeting with Jack, Craig had been struggling to make it as a gigolo. But, unfortunately, it had been half a month since any of the usual affluent ladies called him up, and he wasn’t sure where they managed to get ahold of the younger trainees, either.

These days, he waited at the restaurants where the wealthy ladies usually patronized to badger them, only to have them cast him aside after they showed up with their younger new beaux.

Craig was used to living the high life after all this time of getting his hefty allowances from these ladies, and he couldn’t be bothered to entertain those who could only offer him mere thousands. So, with his source of income shrinking fast, he decided to crawl back to Winona.

He went over to a high-end restaurant and ordered a feast for take-out, then made it look as if he was the one who had prepared it. Then, after asking Winona for her address, he showed up at her front door.

The bell had only just been rung when Winona came up to the door excitedly.

“Here you go, Miss Jennings! Kindly sign to accept this lovingly-prepared lunch from a certain admirer,” Craig said pleasantly with a sweet smile.

Winona took the food containers and played along with his act, “Why, thank you, Mr. Delivery Man. My boyfriend isn’t home right now. Care to come in?”

“Oh? Is that an invitation, ma’am? I can’t promise that I won’t do anything naughty,” he teased as he wiggled his fingers like he was about to tickle her, then followed her through the door while she squealed and made to run away from him.

He had only just passed the threshold when he saw Elise standing by the kitchen counter with a drink in hand, and she was appraising them with mild amusement.

“Miss Sinclair,” he greeted politely with a flamboyant bow.

Winona wasted no time in making introductions. “Elise, this is my boyfriend, Craig.”

Elise pursed her lips and smiled as she eyed Craig meaningfully, then drawled with heavy implication, “How nice of you to personally bring Winona lunch. Thoughtfulness is a wonderful quality to have in a boyfriend, indeed.”

He chuckled and pretended like he was embarrassed by the compliment, then scratched his head as he said demurely, “I just haven’t seen her for a while, and I thought it’d be nice to drop by for a visit.”

Winona flushed but seemed happy as she pursed her lips and said nothing.

Elise, on the other hand, looked highly entertained as she asked knowingly, “You’re a drama student, right?”

As it turned out, one could even pretend to love someone and make it look believable if one tried hard enough.

## **Read Chapter 685 of Coolest Girl in Town**

Coolest Girl in Town Chapter 685 Jack Started a Fight

“Not specifically. Craig’s a very well-rounded performing arts student,” Winona interjected to speak up for Craig. “By the way, Elise, do you think Rushmore



Entertainment might consider signing Craig up as one of their artists? I saw that they were recruiting.”

Winona knew that Mr. Howard took Elise’s words seriously, and if Craig could get her recommendation, his career could blossom in Rushmore Entertainment. Moreover, Mr. Howard had very casually paid off Garreth’s contractual damages, which racked up to well over hundreds of millions, after all. So, surely he would extend the same sentiment to Craig if he got into the agency.

While Craig had the same idea, he still looked flustered when he heard Winona reveal his innermost thoughts. He reached out to tug on the corner of her shirt as he muttered in embarrassment, “Winona, what are you doing? You can’t ask Miss Sinclair to go through the trouble...”

Obviously, he was only feigning courtesy because he immediately glanced up at Elise expectantly after he said this, trying to whittle her down with his pleading gaze.

Alas, Elise was not one who fell for tricks like these. So she raised her glass at them and smiled as she changed the subject. “I’m sure the both of you would want to catch up after all this time. I won’t be a third wheel, then.” With that, she headed out of the kitchen and up the stairs, indirectly rejecting their request for her favor.

Craig faltered when he sensed that Elise had no intention of helping him with his career. He waited until she had disappeared around the stairwell before saying in low, angry tones, “What the hell, Winona?”

“What?” Winona shot him a blank look.

“This is the first time I’m meeting Miss Sinclair, and you’re already trying to build connections? What will she think of me?!” he demanded as frustration welled up in him.

Winona felt tears prick her eyes as she argued, “Be reasonable, Craig. I was only doing you a favor and hoping that you could start your career on the right foot. Do you plan on going around filming commercials for the rest of your life?”

“I’m a man, Winona. I don’t want them to think that I’m only with you to get connections!” he snapped, his voice growing louder in the kitchen.

“Well, I know you’re not like that, so isn’t that enough? Why do you care about how others might see you anyway?” She could feel the pricking sensation in her nose as she added in a teary voice, “We’re a couple, and I don’t see the need for you to mind if I try to network for you. It’s not even that big of a deal!”

This rendered Craig speechless as he stood there with his hands planted on his hips. He was still boiling with rage, but he was worried that he might push Winona over the edge, so he stopped arguing with her.

All of a sudden, the tension in the living room was so thick and suffocating that one could slice through it with a knife.

Just then, a steady set of footfalls drew near from the threshold, sounding particularly loud in this pregnant silence.

Craig turned to see who it was, but he had only just registered Jack's presence when the latter's fist came hurtling in his direction, then slammed right into his face.

Caught off guard by the assault, he staggered and toppled to the ground like a felled tree.

Winona gasped and quickly crouched down to prop Craig up, asking anxiously, "Are you okay?"

Craig knew that Jack had only punched him because of Winona. He swiped her hand away and spat out a mouthful of blood, then sat up on his own as he glowered at Jack mutinously.

On the other hand, Winona didn't seem to mind that he had so brusquely turned down her help and only went on to assess the damage to his face. Thankfully, there didn't seem to be any bruises or signs of a broken nose, though that didn't stop her from turning to glare at Jack incredulously. "Mr. Jack, why did you do that?"

"I've been wanting to hit him for a while now," Jack ground out through gritted teeth as his fists clenched at his sides. He looked intimidating and angry, like a high-strung predator ready to strike.

He didn't think Craig would continue his shameless ways even after being warned. He was clearly using Winona to achieve his own ends, and it was disgusting to see him put on a holier-than-thou and goody-two-shoes demeanor.

"Is there something going on between the two of you?" Winona pressed. She knew that Jack was not an unreasonable person, and she decided to try and mediate. "Craig's my boyfriend, and he's a really nice person, to boot. Did you maybe confuse him for somebody else?"

A grim look passed over Jack's face as he ignored her, and the awkward tension in the living room made an even stronger comeback this time.

As things were, she could only help Craig onto his feet. But he had only just straightened up when he shoved her aside, clearly lashing out at her.

She wasn't offended by this. Jack was something like a friend to her, and now that he had hit Craig, she couldn't help feeling guilty. She frowned and said nothing, though she eyed him worriedly nonetheless.

"You ambushed me like a coward! Why don't you prove you're a real tough guy and fight me without sneaking around, huh?!" Craig challenged furiously.

Jack's expression was not even the slightest shift as he drawled icily, "You think you're a match for me?"

"What the hell are you both doing?!" Winona was baffled by the hostility toward one another as she stood between them to hold them apart.

"You saw what he did, Winona! He started it! Whose side are you on?!" Craig thundered, trapping her in a dilemma.

She was so torn that she wasn't even sure what to do with her hands right now. Craig was her boyfriend, but Jack had been nothing but kind to her all this while. It would weigh down on her conscience if she were to side with either one of them.

As though reading her mind, Jack pointed out coolly, "This thing is between you and me, and we'll settle it like men without having to drag the poor girl into it, you coward."

"If it's a fight you want, then so be it!" Craig hollered, raising his fist and gearing to brawl.

Jack was incensed as well, and he took an imposing step forward.

Stuck between them like a weak barricade, Winona reached out her hands to try and stop them from coming into contact.

"What's with all the noise?!"

At that moment, Elise appeared at the foot of the staircase and shouted at the two aggravated men, "If you're going to fight, then take it outside! I won't have that sort of nonsense happening in my house!"

She was on Jack's side, of course, but seeing as he refused to confess his feelings for Winona and then chose to butt into the couple's personal affairs, she was irritated and decided that he deserved to be snapped at just as much as Craig did.

Presently, Craig dared not disobey Elise, and Jack was always obliging when it came to her. The two men exchanged a glance, then did as they were told and marched to take the fight outside, with Craig being the last to go out the door.

Worried that something might happen to him, Winona wanted to hurry after him, but Elise stopped her firmly. “Stay here, Winona.”

“Elise, I have to go and stop Craig from getting into a brawl. What if they hurl fists and end up roughing each other up so badly that they leave injuries? They can’t afford to have their faces bruised up, not if they still want their careers in this industry!” Winona explained anxiously, though she did not try to take another step toward the door.

“He’s a full-grown man, and it’s his job to settle his own personal affairs. As his girlfriend, all you can do is wait for him to come back after he blows off steam so that you can try and talk some sense into him. You don’t have to mediate a fight or join in the brawl. We ladies need to protect ourselves at all times instead of going all out to clean up the men’s mess,” Elise pointed out patiently.

“But...” It was clear to see that Winona could not stop fretting over the two grown men fighting outside.

“Look, go and stop them if you want to, but you ought to really think about why Craig never told you that he and Jack were on such horrible terms. Does he even see you as a girlfriend or a confidante?” Elise turned around and made her way to her room after she said this.

It was only then that something clicked in Winona’s mind, and her thoughts were suddenly clearer than ever. In recent times, she had become more oblivious to what was going on in Craig’s life.

Before today, she had been under the impression that they were both working regular, monotonous jobs, which did not make for interesting conversation. However, judging from the scene earlier, Craig clearly had a far more exciting life than she thought.

Meanwhile, outside the house, Jack and Craig had come to a stop just in front of the door. They were glaring at each other balefully, and the air around them crackled like there was a brewing storm.

## **Read Chapter 686 of Coolest Girl in Town**

### **Coolest Girl in Town Chapter 686 Light at the End of the Tunnel**

After what felt like a long moment, Jack was the first one to break the tense silence by saying, “It seems like you thought I was joking the last time we met, Craig. But, unfortunately, your happy days are numbered.”

“Whatever, man. Go right ahead, try and take me down. We’ll see if you’re just all talk,” Craig challenged with matching defiance.

He had already discerned from the exchange earlier that Jack had feelings for Winona. He can't do anything to me as long as I stay with her, Craig thought.

On the other hand, Jack was unaware of what the other man was thinking. He only wanted to ruin Craig's reputation and life as soon as possible. He shot Craig a glacial look, then took out his phone and made a call as he walked away.

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Meanwhile, a week had gone by, and Andy still had not received the calligraphy Elise wrote at the mall the other day. He even called the Calligraphy Association Museum to ask if they had sent the work to the Archive, but the employee on the other line fumbled over his words and excuses. Eventually, Andy grew restless and decided to drop by the Archive himself.

When he got to the S-Class Archive, he saw that the employee had dozed off at the work desk.

Andy rapped his knuckles against the desk, and with two thuds, he managed to wake the employee up.

"Mr. Nixon!" The employee snapped out of his sleep and stood up as he apologized profusely, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to slack off during work hours. I was just really worn out. I promise this won't happen again!"

"Don't worry about it. I'd be sleeping like a log by now if I were you. It's not the most interesting of jobs, to be fair," Andy said with a dismissive wave, not wanting to pick on the employee. Then, without beating around the bush, he asked, "I had an item sent over last week that still has not been archived. Why is that?"

"Mr. Nixon, are you talking about Elise Sinclair's calligraphy?" the employee asked.

"We're in the S-Class Archive here, so who else would dare send something here unless they're asking for humiliation?" Andy countered dryly.

"That's true," the employee agreed with a flustered smile. "I've been here for half a year now, but I've never received an S-Class item before."

"So why haven't you archived it?" Andy pressed. He had only one thing on his mind right now, and it was Elise's calligraphy.

"Oh, well, it's actually because Cody—that is, Mr. Carlson—and his student, Miss Hill, said that while Miss Sinclair is qualified for the Calligraphy Contest finals this year, she has yet to become an official member of the Calligraphy Association. So, as protocol goes, we're going to need to see where she places in the competition this year and wait

for her to be assigned a rating before we can archive her work,” the employee explained truthfully.

Andy’s eyes lit up. “Are you saying Elise is on the list of contenders for this year’s finals?”

The employee nodded with a blank look on his face. “Yes, that’s right.”

When he heard the confirmation, Andy felt as if he had seen the light at the end of the long, dark tunnel. For the last few days, he had been using his grandson’s WhatsApp to text Elise, but she never replied to any of his messages. He was starting to think that he would never meet the genius behind such intricate calligraphy, but alas, fate decided to humor him with a miracle, for he was finally going to see her.

There had been a considerable lack of talent in the recent Calligraphy Contests, and Andy only ever showed up when he was invited as a guest of honor to hand out the awards.

However, now that he knew Elise would be there, he was determined to stay for the entire run of the competition and watch her at work.

“Alright, I understand. In that case, keep the calligraphy with the utmost care until you can archive it,” Andy said to the employee. He and Cody didn’t see eye-to-eye, and he didn’t want the innocent employee at the museum to be caught in their spat, so he let the matter drop for now.

After that, he came out of the museum and decidedly posted a picture of Elise’s calligraphy, which he had taken before this, into the group text meant for premium members of the Calligraphy Association. However, he did not provide any context, making it seem like he was trying to keep something exciting a secret.

Little did he know that everyone in the group text would burst into an uproar.

‘Andy, is this your work? Look at that handwriting! No one can do it without an S-Class Rating!’

‘Come on. Flattery won’t work without common sense. All of you should be familiar with Andy’s penmanship by now, and there’s no way that’s his calligraphy. Spill, Andy. We demand to know the artist behind this legendary work.’

‘Paging for Andy. Stop hiding and explain this right now!’

‘Paging for Andy!’

Andy read the series of texts in amusement and waited for a minute or two, then clicked into the conversation to send in a voice note, saying, “I bet none of you saw this coming!”

I have discovered a genius, and she's the one behind this work of art. She's also a contestant for the Calligraphy Contest this year, so all you old fogeys might get to meet her.'

This voice note was met with a frenzied response from those in the group text.

'You discovered such rare talent and only decided to tell us now? What the hell, Andy?'

'Andy, this isn't fair! You have a genius disciple and held out on us until now! That's some clever hiding if you ask me!'

'Disciple? Please! Look at the remarkable talent packed into each cursive and tell me she isn't a true master of calligraphy. Mind telling us more about her, Andy? Give us a name or something so that I can visit her right now to behold talent with my own eyes!'

'You must tell us!'

'It's imperative that we know, Andy.'

At once, Andy panicked when he saw all these demanding messages, and he quickly sent a voice note saying, "I'm going to make it clear that I discovered her first! Don't even think about trying to beat me into getting her as my disciple, or our friendship is over!"

He knew exactly what these old foxes were up to. If he gave them a name, then they would hunt Elise down before the contest ended and have her become their disciple, then try to hitch a ride on her fame.

Now that he had called the other members out so mercilessly, they did not try to push his buttons.

However, they began booking their air tickets to take a flight to Tissote.

Presently, Andy was pleased when he saw that the group text had quieted down, and he nodded in satisfaction. He thanked the heavens that he and Cody had had a fight that led to the latter exiting the group. If he found out about Elise, then he would secretly try to procure her as his own disciple.

In truth, Cody was competent, though he often resorted to underhanded ways to achieve what he wanted. That, however, couldn't be helped, seeing as everyone in the industry had different goals and means to attain them.

Andy was never one to hang around people like that. However, he still tagged all the members in the group text and typed, 'The genius is an introvert with mild social anxiety, so I'd appreciate it if you could all keep her participation in the upcoming finals a secret from the public.'

Those in the group replied instantaneously in agreement.

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On the day of the contestants' rating day, Tiana, along with Cody and Malia, drove to the Calligraphy Association.

As the car rolled to a stop outside the building, Cody glanced at Tiana and encouraged, "Just treat this like how you would any other practice session and take it easy. You have already outdone yourself regarding your skills, and you'll do great. Go on, then."

Tiana eyed the luxury cars that were parked on either side of the street and felt her heart drop to her stomach. She was so distracted by her own thoughts that her face had a dazed look.

"Tiana?" Cody called out, louder this time. "Are you okay? You seem a little pale."

It was only then that Tiana snapped out of her daze. She tucked her hair behind her ear and muttered a little absentmindedly, "Maybe I just didn't get enough sleep last night. I'll be fine."

"You have to be. The Calligraphy Association only does the rating once a year, and you can't afford to miss it. So, just hang on until it's done," Cody cajoled.

"I know, Mr. Carlson, but what's with the number of cars today? Are these all parents of the finals contestants? Some of these cars even have reporters in them, and they're all carrying equipment as well," she pointed out in confusion.

"Don't you know?" Cody explained calmly, "The heads of all the Association's divisions are here today, and I reckon they'll take part in the rating as well. The press is drawn to the likes of these people, so make sure you do well, okay?"

"Oh, okay," Tiana mumbled as she let out a sigh of relief, then nodded with a smile. "Don't worry, Mr. Carlson. I'll do my very best! I'll be going now."