

Dauntless 251

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Chapter 251

When night came, Isabella sent Harold a text through WhatsApp.

It read: Are you free tomorrow night? Marilyn is attending the Fields family's party tomorrow night and a press conference after that. She's missing a date. Do you think you can go with her?

Seeing Isabella had taken the initiative to send him a text, Harold replied without hesitation: Of course, I'm free when it's an order from my wife.

He curled his lips into a wry smile despite agreeing to it in a heartbeat.

That was because the Fields family had invited him through Craig and James, but he had rejected them.

It would be awkward if he appeared at the party.

Well, my wife has given the orders. I've got to go no matter how awkward it is.

"You're such a sweet talker. Well, that's settled, then. Make sure you dress properly. Don't embarrass her," Isabella reminded.

Meanwhile, in the study of the Fields residence, which was in the upper-class district of Dellmoor, Laszlo Fields, the patriarch of the Fields family, was discussing the party with his son.

"Dad, Moneybags Smith's people have agreed to attend our party tomorrow, but his powerful backer didn't accept the invitation," Jose Fields said to his father, looking troubled.

If Harold was in the room, he would have recognized who Jose was—the son of the Fields family he had met at Larson Corporation.

The Fields family was a prestigious family in the medical field.

Recently, the pharmaceutical company under their family had developed a new medication that could rapidly reduce the user's blood pressure.

Unfortunately, someone had released the news in advance, causing all the large-scale pharmaceutical companies in the state to set their sights on the Fields family.

To let the companies see their family's power and network, the Fields family decided to hold a party and invite Dellmoor's Big Three.

It was a way of telling the companies to reconsider if they wanted to oppress the Fields family.

Recently, there had been rumors of another mysterious big shot backing Craig and James.

If a big shot like that could attend the Fields family's party, they could definitely sit back and relax this time.

Laszlo and Jose had split up to invite Craig and James to the party.

They had even cast aside their ego to invite their backer.

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Lacie was supposed to be the celebrity representing the company at the Fields family's party.

To her dismay, Craig had switched her out that afternoon and given the opportunity to Marilyn.

Although she had no urgent need for the appearance fee, the fact that her resources had been taken away by someone upset her terribly.

"Don't be mad, Lacie. It's just a cocktail party, and the appearance fee isn't much. We have no need for it."

Kornel did not just look like a sissy, he even spoke like one.

If he were to put on women's clothes, coupled with his feminine actions and way of speaking, most people would not realize he was a man.

"This is not a problem about the amount of the appearance fee. It's the fact that the b*tch is becoming more powerful than me. If this continues, I'll surely be crushed by her. This is unacceptable. I must find a way to bring her down. I must show her how powerful I am." Lacie gritted her teeth; her face twisted in anger.

"Do you have a plan already?" Kornel asked curiously when he noticed her expression.

"It's not exactly a good plan. Isn't that woman having an affair with Mr. McGowan? Since she's so skilled at seducing men, I'll let her be riddled with scandals and get banned from the entertainment industry for the rest of her life. Here's the plan. I need you to find me a reporter to take pictures of her when she fools around with her date at the party." A ruthless look gleamed in Lacie's eyes as she revealed her plan.

Kornel's jaw dropped as soon as he heard her words. "Uh... I don't think that's a good idea."

What's wrong with her? Is she going through menopause already?

Noting the shock on his face, Lacie uttered unhappily, "What's wrong? Are you afraid? Listen here. Everything you have now is all thanks to me. Things won't end well for you if I get blacklisted."

"Who says I'm afraid of such things? I'm ready to risk everything too. I'll go look for a suitable reporter this instant," Kornel hissed, then walked out to make the necessary arrangements.

Lacie's lips curled into a smirk when she saw that. She then poured herself a glass of wine as an early celebration for tomorrow's victory.

The night passed peacefully.

Harold had kept Isabella's instructions in mind.

Early that morning, he had searched through his wardrobe and sent the suit he had not worn for the past five years to the dry cleaners.

At six o'clock in the evening, Marilyn was still putting on her makeup at home while Harold had arrived early at the entrance of Grandeur Hotel.

To his surprise, he met Jose, who was greeting the guests at the entrance.

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"You're attending the party? Where's your invitation?"

Jose stretched out his hand in an unfriendly manner, gesturing for Harold to hand over the invitation.

Hearing that, Harold replied honestly, "The invitation? It's with my partner. She's not here yet."

Harold's words only caused Jose's expression to darken.

Suddenly, Jose recalled Autumn asking him for an invitation early that morning, which he had dismissed, saying he wanted to personally bring her in.

Yet, Autumn became upset and insisted on getting one.

Did she ask for an invitation to bring him in?

The more Jose thought about it, the more he found it plausible.

“You two. Hold on to him. I'm going to make a call.” After giving the security guards his orders, he scooted to the side and dialed Autumn's number to get some clarification.

Not long after he left, Marilyn arrived.

“Harold, didn't you say you'd wait for me in the hotel? Why are you standing in front of the entrance like an idiot?” she asked curiously.

“They won't let me in without an invitation,” Harold answered helplessly.

Marilyn snickered. “Well, well. Aren't you the resourceful Mr. Campbell, who can borrow Paradise Hotel's plane anytime? Yet, you can't get yourself in without an invitation from the Fields family.”

At that moment, she was more certain that Isabella's father was the person who had backed Harold's performance previously.

Otherwise, there was no way he could not get himself an invitation, let alone be denied entry and forced to wait for her outside the hotel.

“Uh...” Surprisingly, Harold had nothing to say to that. If not for Isabella's request, he wouldn't have attended that boring party.

“Hello, Sirs. This is our invitation, and he's my date. Can we go in now?”

Noting the embarrassment on Harold's face, Marilyn stopped teasing him and handed the security guards the invitation. Then she held his arm, and they walked into Grandeur Hotel.

Now that an invitation had been presented, the security guards dared not block their way anymore; they could only watch the duo enter the building.

Not long after, Jose returned to the entrance. When he realized Harold was nowhere to be seen, he asked in confusion, “Where's that rascal? Is he gone?”

“Mr. Fields, someone presented an invitation and brought him in,” admitted the security guard.

“Didn't I tell you guys to stop him? Why did you let him in? Ugh! Useless!” The security guards' words infuriated Jose.

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Harold found a quiet corner and sat down, enjoying his fruits.

Truth was, he had not taken his dinner yet because he had arrived early.

When he finished his plate of fruits, he still felt hungry, so he immediately called out to a waiter passing by, "Excuse me. I'd like to get a pizza!"

However, the party had not started, and the music was relatively soft. His words instantly caught the attention of those around him.

"Pfft! Sir, this is a high-end hotel. There's no such food as pizza here. What about a plate of pasta instead?"

Before the waiter could even answer, a mocking laugh traveled into Harold's ears.

He turned around, only to see the woman he had met in Larson Corporation walking over with a smirk on her face. It was Autumn, the person who had spoken earlier.

It was an unspoken rule for anyone who attended a party to wear gowns or formal outfits.

Autumn, however, looked no different from usual. She was dressed in simple autumn clothes.

Harold turned around to ask the waiter, "Is that so?"

Hearing that, the waiter nodded, eyeing Harold with disdain.

At that realization, Harold had no choice but to give in and say, "A plate of pasta, then. Then again, I still think Chanaean pizza is more delicious. I've got to suggest this to your boss later."

"Make that two, please."

Right after he finished speaking, Autumn, too, ordered a plate of pasta as she arrived by his side.

She had not taken her dinner, either, and her stomach had growled as soon as she heard Harold make his order.

Most importantly, she had a mission to complete that night. Only with a full stomach would she have the energy to gain a piece of juicy news.

Autumn waited until the waiter left before turning around and smiling sweetly at Harold. "Do you mind if I sit here, Mr. Campbell?"

She scanned him curiously. This dude has an impressive background and a gorgeous, wealthy wife. Yet,

he behaves like a country bumpkin at a high-end hotel. Could he actually be a country bumpkin who hooked up with a gorgeous and wealthy wife?

Autumn recalled the incident she had seen at Fortune Real Estate.

“Up to you,” Harold answered indifferently without sparing her a glance.

His indifference made Autumn angry.

She was quite confident with her charm. In fact, she was capable of being the center of attraction wherever she went.

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The intimate way the two were looking at each other made Jose purse his lips.

Just as Harold and Autumn were in the middle of eating their pasta, an old man in traditional garb with a goatee and a handheld fan walked over to them and began staring at them. As a matter of fact, he even started gulping.

Both Harold and Autumn paused in the middle of their meal when they realized that the lighting had dimmed. Then, they lifted their heads.

“Sir, do you want to eat this too? Why don't I order a set for you?” Autumn suggested in confusion at the sight of the elderly man swallowing and staring at the pasta as if he was starving.

“It's fine. I'll just eat what's left on your plates,” the old man with a goatee said as he pointed at the half-empty plates.

“You want our leftovers?” Harold asked, baffled.

He thought he was already one of the sloppier people, but it seemed like the old man was even less meticulous than he was.

The old man then nodded in affirmation. Without wasting another second, he snatched the plate from Harold's hand.

Then, as if finding Harold's food too little for his appetite, he snatched Autumn's portion when she was not even done eating yet and poured the two plates of pasta together before wolfing it down.

Harold and Autumn were dumbfounded by that.

The two glanced at the old man before looking around in the fancy hotel ballroom.

Both were sure that they were in an upscale hotel, not a beggar's hideout.

Still confounded, the two shared a look with each other.

Nonetheless, the old man seemed completely unperturbed as he focused on the food.

But there is plenty of food in the area. How can this old man be this starved?

All of a sudden, Harold narrowed his eyes.

There's only one reason for the old man to do this—he deliberately approached us!

With that thought in mind, a look of amusement crossed Harold's face.

“Young man, what are you smiling at? The pasta tastes quite good. To repay your kindness, why don't I tell you about your fortune for free?” the old man said in slight embarrassment when he sensed Harold's stare.

“Sir, you know how to read fortunes? Why don't you read mine?” Autumn exclaimed when she heard the old man's words.

“No problem. Give me your hand.”

It seemed like the old man was delighted with the naive look on Autumn's face.

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“Of course.”

Without any hesitation, Harold stuck his hand out.

After a brief glance at Harold's hand, a look of shock and suspicion crossed the old man's face.

After a moment of contemplation, the old man asked Harold, “Mister, could you tell me your birth sign?”

“Sure, why not?”

As Harold spoke, he told the old man his birth sign.

Hearing that, the old man placed his handheld fan down and started reading Harold's fortune.

The way he crooked his fingers as he read his fortune made him seem like one of the fortune-tellers in tents that one could find anywhere.

However, half a minute later, seemingly coming to some kind of conclusion, the old man peeked at Harold's hand and gasped.

It was at that moment the sharp-eyed Harold noticed the cold sweat beading on the old man's forehead.

"What's the matter? Is it terrible?" Harold curiously asked.

Harold's words snapped the old man back to reality, and he cried out in panic, "I... I'm sorry! I can't read your fortune! Farewell!"

With that, he turned to leave.

Both Harold and Autumn were stupefied by the old man's series of actions.

Autumn felt that the old man had come to make a fool of himself, for his words barely made sense.

On the other hand, Harold was reeling from the shock of how the old man had read his fortune.

From the old man's look of surprise, it seemed like the old man had discovered something and was frightened by it.

Harold came to that conclusion because he noticed the old man wiping the sweat off his forehead while hastily leaving.

Meanwhile, not long after the older man left the area, he reached a corner and came to a stop in front of a middle-aged man. That man looked like he was someone important.

"Hey, you've returned from your rounds. Did you discover anything?" the middle-aged man asked the old man in a respectful manner.

"Sir, the Fields family has invited a powerful man. You'll be playing with fire if you try to lay a finger on the Fields family. It'd be best if you avoid crossing the Fieldses," the old man whispered to the middle-aged man.

With his brows raised at the old man's fearful look, the middle-aged man queried, "That can't be right. What kind of powerful man is he to have you as scared as this?"

"One cannot reveal the secrets of life. Sir, please heed my words if you don't want karma to come after you. Please leave immediately, or else no one in this world will be able to save you. This is all I can reveal

to you.”

With that said, the old man turned and left Grandeur Hotel.

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Initially, she did not plan to attend the Fields family's celebratory cocktail party, for she did not wish to get closer to her wealthy classmate, Jose Fields. She was afraid that others would say she was trying to hook up with a rich man.

Yet, the night before, she received a call from an anonymous person telling her that breaking news in the entertainment industry was going to happen at Grandeur Hotel the next night. If she were to do as they said, she would be able to retrieve first-hand news of that moment.

Autumn, who had just graduated, was determined to be the first to get a big scoop, so she went straight to Jose to get an invitation to attend the cocktail party.

Meanwhile, Marilyn returned to the ballroom, for the event was about to begin.

The moment she appeared, everyone turned to look at her.

Although her presence caught everyone's attention, none had the guts nor the foolishness to approach her.

That was because rumors of her being involved with Craig had been rampant recently.

Craig was not only the Underground King of Dellmoor; he was also the one in charge of Paradise Hotel's Dellmoor branch.

No ordinary person would dare to flirt with Craig's woman, no matter how courageous they were.

On the other hand, upon reaching the ballroom, Marilyn scanned the room. In seconds, she spotted Harold sitting in a corner, all alone.

All the prominent figures of Dellmoor were drinking and chatting away, but Harold's lone figure seemed like it did not fit into the vibrant atmosphere.

Even Marilyn started to feel bad for him.

Thus, she strode over to him and pulled him up onto his feet.

“Why are you sitting here alone? I'll take you around and introduce some business owners of the upper-class society to you. They'll be of much help to you in the future,” Marilyn said as she dragged Harold

out from the corner.

Almost immediately, everyone's attention shifted to Harold.

They were all in disbelief, for none expected someone to be acting that intimate with Marilyn in a public place like this.

"Who's that man beside Marilyn? I've never seen him before. Isn't he afraid that Craig will make his life a living hell?"

"I know, right? Why would someone like Marilyn come to a major ball with a nobody?"

"Could it be that he's her boyfriend?"

The people began discussing softly.

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A ruthless look flashed past his eyes with that thought in mind, and he quietly left.

In contrast, Philip and James instantly stepped forward to greet Harold the moment they saw the latter.

Yet, just as the two made a move, Craig stopped them.

Immediately, they turned to look at Craig in confusion.

Both Philip and James were puzzled by how Craig was stopping them from greeting Harold.

Unlike them, the head of the Fields family, Laszlo Fields, did not know who Harold was. Still, he had heard about how Craig was romantically involved with his company's artiste, Marilyn.

Therefore, he was even more certain about the genuineness of Craig's relationship with Marilyn when he noticed the stunned expressions the other three wore when they saw Marilyn with an unfamiliar man.

However, what he was bewildered about was how Craig could bear watching Marilyn bring another man to the Fieldses' party.

Nevertheless, Craig did not bother explaining anything to them. Instead, he turned to Laszlo and said, "Mr. Fields, do what you need to do first. The three of us will just find a seat to watch the programs."

"All right. Please make yourselves at home. Once I'm done settling my matters, I'll make amends with

three shots.”

Laszlo then left, not ignorant enough to linger.

After all, he was not as important in society as the three of them. It would be nothing unusual for them not to want him around for a private conversation.

“Craig, why did you stop us from greeting Mr. Campbell?”

James only voiced his question when Laszlo was gone.

“Has old age gotten to you? Laszlo tried to invite Mr. Campbell through us, but his invitations were declined. Yet, he has now appeared with Marilyn. Do you know what that means?” Craig questioned.

James answered in uncertainty, “Are you saying that Mr. Campbell doesn't want others to know that he has come to the Fields family's party as well?”

“To my knowledge, Mr. Campbell prefers to keep a low profile, so that's highly likely. Therefore, we mustn't reveal his identity to anyone. Let's wait and watch for now,” Craig replied with a nod.

At that, Philip and James thought about how they had only found out that Harold had been living in Dellmoor recently. Thus, they saw sense in Craig's words.

The trio became much more cautious after that, not daring to do or say anything presumptuous. Furthermore, once in a while, they would let their eyes drift toward Harold and Marilyn to see what they were doing.

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After Jose muttered those things under his breath, he left the room.

Autumn was still hiding in the wardrobe, not daring to make a sound or come back out.

While that was happening, Marilyn was still leading Harold around the ballroom, chatting and collecting business cards.

Neither knew that people had sneaked into their rooms to set up traps for them.

Outside Grandeur Hotel, Lacie Jilsen, the celebrity, was resentfully staring at Marilyn's room.

Right then, one of the hotel staff exited the building and entered Lacie's car.

“Kornel, how did things go?” Lacie asked the other person.

As it turned out, the one dressed like the hotel staff was Kornel Mayfair, Lacie's feminine manager.

“Are you doubting my capability? I released the odorless and colorless gas into the vents. No one is going to notice anything unless they use a machine to test the air,” Kornel gleefully replied.

“Is the reporter you approached someone reliable?” Lacie worriedly asked.

“You should be even more at ease about that. The reporter is someone Jose is courting at the moment. Furthermore, she just graduated. A girl like her wants nothing more than to prove herself.”

The two of them were looking forward to seeing the people find out about Marilyn's scandal.

Soon, it was eight, which was also time for the performances at the party.

As a celebrity, Marilyn was bound to sing on stage.

Moreover, there were a few award-giving sessions afterward as well.

While Marilyn was performing on stage, Harold drank alone in the corner.

Just as Marilyn's performance was about to end, a server came to Harold.

“Sir, Ms. Schmidt told me to convey a message to you: If you're not enjoying yourself here, you can head back to the room to rest first. She has also asked you to help her fill up her tub with hot water,” the server informed.

Harold did not dwell much on that. He nodded, finished his wine, and stood up to return to his room.

Per Marilyn's request, after Harold returned to his room, he went into Marilyn's room to fill up a tub of hot water for her.

Right as he was testing the temperature of the water, he sensed something amiss.

His body had begun to heat up after he tested the water temperature.

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That was because Marilyn had been keeping the image of a pure woman in the industry. She was never involved in any scandals.

However, Marilyn had been trending lately.

There were many people who spread rumors about her being with Craig.

Nevertheless, that was all but rumors.

On the other side, Marilyn had trouble finding Harold after leaving the stage. Since she had no other performances, she decided to return to her room.

Nevertheless, she did not go straight to her own room, for she still needed to execute her plan—she was going to find out whether or not Harold could hold his ground against her temptation.

Marilyn was quite confident in her charm.

If Harold could not resist the temptation, then he must only be interested in Isabella's body.

On the other hand, if he could resist the temptation, then he must truly love Isabella.

With that thought in mind, Marilyn took off her jacket and entered Harold's room with only a spaghetti-strapped dress.

The sight that greeted her surprised her. Harold was sitting cross-legged on his bed with his eyes closed, seemingly meditating.

She guessed that he knew she was here because his eyelids were twitching, and she guessed that he had deliberately closed his eyes when he realized she had come.

He doesn't have a lot of determination, does he? All I'm doing is walking around in a spaghetti-strapped dress, and he's already barely holding on!

To continue with the test, Marilyn reached out to gently brush her hand across Harold's cheek.

Soon, Harold's breathing turned rough.

Let's see how long you can keep up with the act, Marilyn mused.

What Marilyn did not know was that she was playing with fire at that moment.

Autumn, who was still in the wardrobe, widened her eyes at the scene.

She never thought that the innocent-looking celebrity was actually involved with Harold.

Doesn't she know he's married? Is she his mistress?

At that very moment, Autumn was struck with the realization that the world was far more complicated than she had thought.

When Marilyn saw that Harold could still hold himself back from doing anything, she began making more daring moves. As she circled her arms around Harold, she whispered in a sweet tone, "Harold, who do you think is prettier? Me, or Bella?"

The corners of Harold's lips and eyes twitched.

He was trying his best to keep his eyes closed and himself in check, for he thought that Marilyn had been poisoned as well.