

## **Dauntless 271**

### **Dauntless God Of War**

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The more she read about it online, the more she realized her symptoms were similar to those experienced by pregnant women.

Not wanting to take any chances, she rushed to the pharmacy and bought a few pregnancy test kits.

Her eyes went wide with shock when she saw the two red lines on the test kit.

My goodness! This can't be happening, right?

Still in disbelief, Autumn repeated the test with a couple more test kits, but the results all came back positive.

Why can't I be as lucky when I'm buying the lottery?

As a young woman who had just started pursuing her career, Autumn found her sudden pregnancy to be incredibly terrifying.

This is unbelievable! No, I can't keep this baby! I need to get an abortion!

With that in mind, Autumn ran out of her house and rushed over to the hospital.

Given how open-minded society had become, pre-marital pregnancies and abortions were getting increasingly common.

Upon arrival at the hospital's obstetrics and gynecology clinic, Autumn saw a really long queue outside the door. Some of the women were there to get abortions as well.

However, unlike her, they all had their husbands or boyfriends accompanying them. Autumn was the only one there all by herself.

There was a young married couple queuing up in front of her.

The woman looked like she was from the countryside, and her husband seemed like an honest man.

"Hubby, how about we keep the baby instead? I feel like I'm killing my own child by getting an abortion! It's really scary..." she asked.

Autumn froze when she heard that.

She's right! This baby is a part of me now. Getting an abortion is no different from killing my child. However, I don't want my child to grow up fatherless either... Harold is a married man, so there's no way he'd be able to take responsibility for this.

Suddenly, Autumn recalled what the fortune teller had told her when she was at Grandeur Hotel.

That old fortune teller asked me to think wisely before taking any action. Did he already know this was going to happen? Is that why he wanted me to be careful? Now that I think about it, it is indeed quite possible that he knew...

Autumn was snapped out of her train of thought when a young couple standing behind her shoved her aside and yelled impatiently, "Hey! Are you going to get an abortion or not? Why don't you step aside if you haven't made up your mind?"

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For a moment there, Autumn truly was tempted to confront Harold and have him take responsibility for getting her pregnant.

"What? Did we hit the nail on the head?" the couple asked when they saw her response.

Autumn felt even more humiliated after hearing that. While she was racking her brain for a comeback, a nurse called out to her from behind, "Hey! Are you going to get an abortion or not? You should go home if you haven't made up your mind! Stop holding up the line!"

Autumn turned around in response and saw a middle-aged nurse glaring impatiently at them.

"I-I won't be getting an abortion..." Autumn mumbled and quickly ran out of the hospital.

She couldn't help but feel conflicted about her predicament and decision to keep the baby.

Life is definitely going to be tough for an unmarried mother. What I experienced at the hospital earlier was only the beginning. Not only will I receive lots of discrimination from society, but I'll also have financial issues because I won't be able to work when my tummy gets bigger! I only started working not too long ago, and I haven't even paid off my student loan. How will I afford to raise a baby without any savings? I can't bring myself to get an abortion, nor am I able to go live with my parents back home. There's no way I could let my parents find out about this! Right now, I need to focus on making as much money as possible before my tummy gets bigger! I'll only be able to start working again when my child is about three years old. That could easily cost anywhere between one to two hundred thousand! How will I make that much money in such a short amount of time?

Money was the only thing on Autumn's mind after she returned to her condominium unit.

That was when she recalled the contents of Kornel's text message from a few days ago.

He had sent her a text offering to pay a hundred thousand for the pictures and videos she took of Harold and Marilyn having sex.

However, she had deleted all of them a few days ago, so she no longer had them with her.

No, this won't do. I need to get those pictures and videos back so I can sell them to that man! I'll think of it as Harold paying me child support! That's not too much to ask, is it?

Autumn clenched her fists at the thought of that.

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Fortunately for her, two of her former classmates were knowledgeable in data restoration.

With their guidance, Autumn was able to restore all the indecent pictures and videos that she deleted.

After going through the video once again, Autumn cut out the part showing Marilyn entering Harold's room naked, leaving only the part where she seduced him.

Autumn then compiled the pictures of them with the blanket on before contacting Kornel.

At three in the afternoon, Lacie and Kornel were waiting for Autumn in a corner of Island Café.

In order to avoid being recognized, Lacie had on a pair of shades and a green baseball cap.

"You were right about everything, Lacie! You're so amazing!" Kornel exclaimed flatteringly with an impressed look on his face.

Autumn had contacted him earlier asking for a meetup to discuss their deal.

"Pfft... This is nothing!" Lacie replied with a gleeful smile.

She really enjoyed receiving Kornel's compliments.

Moments later, Autumn showed up at Island Café with a white handbag hanging from her shoulder.

Kornel had originally asked to meet her at a secluded spot in a park.

However, Autumn had become a little paranoid after her horrible experience the other day.

She insisted on dealing with them in a bustling café instead.

Upon entering the café, Autumn glanced about and saw the two sitting in a corner.

“Sorry to have kept you two waiting!” Autumn said nervously as she walked up to them.

“It's fine. We only just got here a while ago. Did you bring what we asked for, Ms. Linnell?” Kornel asked impatiently.

Lacie simply kept her head low and quietly sipped on her coffee.

“We're making a deal, so it's only natural that I would bring it with me. However, I'm not satisfied with the price you're offering,” Autumn replied while waving her phone at Kornel.

The look on Kornel's face turned grim the moment he heard that.

Even the tone of his voice changed as he asked, “How much would you like, then?”

Autumn took a deep breath and replied, “I want five hundred thousand!”

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Due to the ridiculously huge sum of money involved, Kornel had to seek Lacie's permission before making the decision.

Lacie tried to deepen her voice as much as possible when she said, “Show us the pictures and videos. We'll see if they truly are worth five hundred thousand.”

“All right...”

After giving it some thought, Autumn pulled up the files on her phone and showed it to them.

“There's no actual nudity in these, though,” Lacie said with a frown after seeing the pictures and videos.

“You two are planning to either upload these online or publish them in a magazine to ruin Marilyn's reputation, right? If that's the case, there's no point in having those with actual nudity because you wouldn't make it past censorship. This is the only way to ensure they make it into the news!”

Autumn knew they would bring that up, so she came fully prepared with a sound explanation.

Hmm... What she said does make sense. Besides, the footage of Marilyn seducing her date and sleeping with him is more than enough to suggest they had sex.

With that in mind, Lacie agreed to the amount Autumn requested. "Fair enough. All right, you have a deal. We'll pay you five hundred thousand for these pictures and videos."

Autumn was both shocked and overjoyed when she heard that.

I can't believe it! They're actually going to pay me five hundred thousand! This is great! I can give birth to my baby without worrying about the hospital bills and living expenses!

Having reached an agreement on the price, Lacie made the payment on the spot without any hesitation.

Five hundred thousand is quite a huge sum, but it's worth the outcome. With these pictures and videos, I'll be able to ruin Marilyn's reputation and reclaim my spot in the limelight! When that happens, I'll easily make more than five hundred thousand!

After receiving the money, Autumn sent them the pictures and videos before deleting them from her phone.

I know that my actions will cause problems for Harold and Marilyn, but I have no choice. I have to do this for the sake of my baby. Since Harold is the father, I don't feel any guilt toward him at all. The only person I feel bad for is Marilyn.

"Kornel, go upload these onto the internet and hire a bunch of ghostwriters to share them on Twitter and all the other social media platforms. I want everyone to find out about Marilyn sleeping around!" Lacie ordered with a vicious look on her face after Autumn left.

Just like that, the conspiracy to sully Marilyn's reputation began to unfold.

Isabella had been staying at Marilyn's house throughout the past few days. She was busy handling her business while waiting for Harold to finish his work in Dellmoor.

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At first, Isabella chalked it up to Marilyn's busy schedule as the latter had more projects on hand lately. Hence, she did not think much about it and focused on making plans for her brand.

On Sunday, Isabella turned on her laptop as usual to do some research.

As soon as she did so, she saw that Marilyn's name was trending online.

"No wonder this girl has been so busy these days. It turns out she's a hot topic again," Isabella murmured with a smile. Then, curious to know why her friend was on the list of trending headlines once

again, she clicked on the article to read more.

When she saw what popped up on her screen, however, her head buzzed with questions, and a look of disbelief crossed her face.

That was because after clicking on the link, an eye-catching headline grabbed her attention: Video of rising female star Marilyn Schmidt and unknown man spending the night at a hotel leaked!

Underneath the headline was a video.

The woman in the video was Marilyn wearing a sexy spaghetti-strap dress. Meanwhile, the man was Harold, Isabella's contract husband and the man she was starting to fall for.

Seeing that caused Isabella to suddenly feel anxious. With trembling fingers, she clicked to play the video.

Shortly after, Isabella saw a scene that made her face turn as white as a sheet.

The scene showed Harold sitting cross-legged on the bed as though he were meditating.

Meanwhile, the scantily-clad Marilyn practically wrapped herself around him like a snake, clinging to him and moving provocatively as he kept his eyes shut.

To Isabella's relief, although Harold looked as though he was struggling to restrain himself and his face was flushed, he kept his eyes closed and did not move an inch.

The only thing that infuriated her was Marilyn's actions.

If I had to use one word to describe her in the video, the word "minx" would be the most suitable. We've known each other for so long, but I've never seen her wear such skimpy clothing.

She continued scrolling downward, and when she saw the last three photos, her mind went blank again.

Everything around her seemed to spin as though she had vertigo.

She simply could not accept what she saw.

The last three photos were of Harold and Marilyn lying in the same bed, under the same blanket.

The blanket did not hide their bare shoulders, and it seemed clear that they had fallen asleep after a romp in the sack.

Too upset to read what had been written, Isabella quickly turned off her laptop.

Even so, the image of the pair sleeping in the same bed kept floating in her mind.

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Even Marilyn's assistant hesitated to speak.

“What's wrong with you all? Can't you talk?” Marilyn asked again.

“You're on the trending headlines again, but this time, it's not for a good reason. You'd better steel yourself,” her assistant said somewhat worriedly before passing the phone to Marilyn.

Marilyn had a sinking feeling as she gazed at the others' expressions.

When she checked the list of trending headlines and saw the video and photos, she was utterly stunned, and the color drained from her face.

“How did this happen? Who did this?” she muttered in a panic.

A video like this circulating online will wreck the reputation I've spent years building! Not only will it destroy my future, but what'll it make Isabella think of me?

At that thought, she immediately dropped all work and rushed home.

Upon her return, Marilyn saw Isabella sitting alone in the bedroom. The latter was hugging her laptop in a daze as tears slid down slowly from the corners of her eyes.

Seeing Isabella in that state was confirmation to Marilyn that the former had come across the trending article. Hence, the latter said hurriedly, “Let me explain, Bella. Things are not what they seem.”

Isabella's face contorted with pain when she saw Marilyn. “Oh, really? Explain yourself, then!”

I truly hope that things aren't what they seem!

“I was drugged by Harold that day and fell unconscious. By the time I woke up, everything had already happened!” Marilyn explained anxiously.

However, her explanation merely drew an icy stare from Isabella.

“Hah! You claim he drugged you and that you fell unconscious, yet you were all over him like a cat in heat and seducing him. You told me you were saving yourself for your future husband, but that was all a lie. I was wrong about you.”

As Isabella spoke, tears streamed down her face. Then, she spun on her heel and left Marilyn's mansion.

Marilyn was taken aback by Isabella's response. The combination of the video and photos implies that I was the one who seduced Harold, and then we had sex. By the looks of it, I'll never be able to clear my name.

"Bella, it's really not what you think..." Marilyn shouted, her voice cracking as she called out after Isabella.

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When those in the project management department heard Wrenna's voice, a chill ran down their spines, and they quickly scattered off to their respective desks.

Wrenna glanced curiously at the article the others had been discussing, and the sight of the unseemly photos wrenched at her heart.

"Where did Harold go?" she asked the others, her expression grim.

The person who sat next to Harold at work piped up softly, "He probably went to the restroom, Ms. Turner."

"Tell him to come to my office when he gets back."

Wrenna looked livid as she returned to her office.

Seeing the evident jealousy on Wrenna's face, the others were thoroughly in awe of Harold.

When Harold returned to his desk after taking a smoke in the restroom, he could not help noticing that his colleagues were looking at him strangely.

There was also a difference in how the men looked at him compared to the women.

He detected a look of admiration in the men's gazes while the women stared at him with what seemed to be contempt!

"You're wanted in Ms. Turner's office. Good luck, buddy. If you make it out alive, I'll have to take lessons from you on how to pick up the ladies. I still can't understand how on earth you bag all these beautiful women!" his colleague said in a pitying tone mingled with admiration.

Puzzled, Harold went into Wrenna's office.



He wondered whether it was because Charlotte missed him.

"You wanted to see me, Ms. Turner?"

Harold's confusion deepened when he walked into Wrenna's office and saw her solemn expression.

"What's your relationship with that female celebrity, Marilyn Schmidt?" she asked somewhat jealously.

His heart lurched at her question, and he felt a twinge of guilt as he responded, "She's my wife's best friend. Why do you ask?"

"You... You're utterly despicable!"

Wrenna's expression was already grim, but she looked even more upset after hearing his reply.

He told me before that he has a wife, but I thought that was a lie. I can't believe it's actually true! What's even more maddening is that this b\*stard went and slept with his wife's best friend! Oh, I really have the urge to give him a good thrashing. Some would say not to shit where you eat, but even his wife's best friend is not safe from him!

"I'm despicable?" Harold echoed, feeling even more baffled.

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He's the famous God of War, so it's hardly surprising for him to sleep with a female celebrity. I'm only an ordinary person who has a daughter. It's good enough that he treats me the way he does.

When Wrenna thought of it that way, she felt much better.

Over at Paradise Hotel's large conference room, Craig was in a meeting with the upper management when the telephone operator hurriedly opened the conference room's door after receiving Harold's call.

Everyone in the room turned to look at the telephone operator, but she ignored their gazes.

"Mr. McGowan, someone just called and asked for you, Mr. Larson, and Mr. Smith to meet him at Galaxy Media."

The people in the conference room were Paradise Hotel's higher-ups, and their expressions darkened when they heard the telephone operator's words.

None of them could wrap their heads around the possibility that there was someone who dared to order

Craig around and wondered whether that person had a death wish.

“That's clearly a prank call. How could you fail to recognize that and come to interrupt Mr. McGowan while he's in a meeting? I don't think this job suits you. You'd do better to find some other job,” the beautiful secretary sitting next to Craig remarked as she shot the telephone operator a displeased look.

The others nodded in agreement.

Craig was seated at the head of the table, and he, too, approved of what the secretary said.

Nonetheless, he could not shake the feeling that something seemed amiss about the telephone operator's message.

He turned to the woman with a doubtful expression and enquired, “Where was it that he wanted us to meet him?”

“H-He said to meet him at the office of Galaxy Media's project management department,” the woman replied nervously.

Initially, I did suspect that it was a prank call. However, the number is Mr. McGowan's personal number, and the caller mentioned Dellmoor's Mr. Larson and Moneybags Smith. That's why I thought the caller could be some bigshot and rushed over here to report it at once.

As soon as Craig heard the words “Galaxy Media,” he sprang out of his chair.

“Inform Mr. Larson from Larson Corporation and Moneybags Smith to head over to Galaxy Media at once! That's your final task at this company,” Craig instructed the secretary before dashing out of the conference room without even taking his coat.

Everyone was flabbergasted.

They did not know what Galaxy Media was nor why the mere mention of it would cause Craig, the Underground King of Dellmoor, to become so shaken.

The secretary was especially nonplussed. She was utterly shocked by Craig saying that would be her last task at the company.

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The trio came to the project management department and inquired, “Excuse me, where is your supervisor's office?”

When the employees raised their heads and saw the three men, they were all stunned.

"It's t-that way..." an employee sitting nearby stuttered.

"Thanks!"

The three men nodded before walking over to knock on Wrenna's door.

After they entered Wrenna's office, the employee turned around with widened eyes. "Was that Dellmoor's Big Three?"

"I'm sure it's them. We all know Mr. Larson since he comes here often. We see Craig on the internet and television a lot, too. Could the other guy be Moneybags Smith?"

"You're right. I've watched his interview on a finance channel before."

In an instant, the entire project management department was abuzz with discussion. They were all extremely curious as to why Dellmoor's Big Three would come to the company together.

The news soon reached Matthew, who was equally shocked.

He immediately rushed to the project management department and headed straight for Wrenna's office.

Right after he opened the door, he was greeted by the sight of Harold scolding Dellmoor's Big Three with an ugly scowl.

Seeing that, he hurriedly stepped back out and quietly closed the door.

Harold had waited for twenty minutes in Wrenna's office for Craig, Philip, and James to arrive.

When the trio entered and saw Harold sitting on the couch with a dark look, they all swallowed a lump in their throats.

Craig and James started nudging Philip, the oldest among them. Left with no choice, Philip stepped forward and looked at Harold like a child who had done something wrong. "Mr. Campbell, how may we help you today?" he asked carefully.

Wrenna stood up instinctively when she saw Dellmoor's Big Three in her office.

Although she knew that Harold was the God of War, it still felt unreal to see the three iconic figures of Dellmoor acting so cautiously in front of Harold. After all, they were people she could only see on the internet and television before this.

“Wrenna, show it to them!”

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Wrenna felt relieved when she heard James.

So Harold slept with that celebrity because he was drugged by someone.

At that instant, her resentment toward Harold dissipated.

“Let me take a look.”

Upon hearing James' statement, Harold took the laptop and went through the contents again.

It was then that he realized the clip was taken not long after he was drugged. That was also when Marilyn was trying to seduce him.

Similarly, the photos were snapped before he lost consciousness, and he clearly remembered that those reporters only entered after he woke up.

“Remove these from the internet right now and find out who's behind this. I want an answer in half an hour!” Harold ordered with a frosty face.

“Yes, Mr. Campbell!”

The trio promptly got to work and called their subordinates to relay the order.

While Philip asked his men to get rid of the contents online, Craig looked for the person who could possibly be behind this.

Because of her guilt toward the actress, Autumn had been paying attention to Marilyn's news.

As such, when the news disappeared from the trending topics, she noticed it right away.

She widened her eyes at the computer in astonishment and mumbled, “They're insanely quick and efficient!”

The next second, her expression changed as she remembered something.

Without hesitation, she packed her things, ended her lease with the landlord, and left Dellmoor.

As a journalist, Autumn was a perceptive woman. Upon seeing how soon the news had been removed

from the internet, she realized that there was someone powerful behind Marilyn.

It might be her boss, Craig. If that's the case, they'll soon find out that I'm involved in this. Craig is known to be ruthless. There's no guarantee that I can still live until tomorrow, much less give birth to my baby!

Meanwhile, in Galaxy Media, Craig had traced the issue to Lacie and Kornel.