

# The Understated Dragon Lord

## Chapter 31

### Chapter 31 I Accept the Wager

Brittany's final remark was intentionally loud, intended for Jessica to hear. Her aim was to ensure Jessica wouldn't be naïve enough to be led astray by Daniel.

Jessica's faced darkened as she asked, "Brittany, are you instructing me on what to do now?"

"No, that's not it at all, Jessica! You misunderstand! I was just telling Smiley Nick he can bet against that idiot if he wants, but he can't involve TMO in the wager! Regarding the Windows Street property, if we were to sell, we would only do so at the current market rate,

certainly not the original price from three years ago!"

"I know what I need to do! You don't have to remind me twice!"

Jessica's response gave Nicholas, the wily fox, a whiff of opportunity. He quickly flashed his trademark Smiley Nick grin at Daniel.

"Daniel, even if Jessica herself disagrees, you can't use the Windows Street property as a bargaining chip to bet against me. In that case, let's forget about your intention to sell these three pieces of trash to me for two billion. After all, Ma'am Jessica doesn't think highly of your chances – she's already convinced you're bound to lose!"

It was a crass attempt at goading

Nicholas wasn't sure if it would

work, but since there was no loss to him, why not try?

Daniel glanced at Jessica and even cheekily winked at her.

“What are you winking about? Speak up if you have something to say!”

“I was just flirting wi....

Was this guy up to his antics again? Jessica quickly shot him a fierce glint to stop him.

“What?”

“Fly you an application!”

Jessica couldn’t help but snicker at his made-up phrase, saying, “You certainly have a gift for making words up!”

“So does that mean you agree?”

Agree to what?”

“Agree to have the bet with Smiley Nick! If we win, these three items can be exchanged for two billion, plus we can choose another item for free. And Smiley Nick will have to kneel and apologize to me!”

“And what if we lose?”

“How could I possibly lose? Trust me, I can make Smiley Nick willingly spend two billion to buy these items!\*

“You talk as if you were some god. What if you lose?”

“If I lose, I’ll get lost right away, disappearing from your world, Jessica!

“Fine!”

Jessica actually agreed?

This left Brittany wearing an incredulous expression.

“Jessica, why would you let this fool mess around?”

“Do my decisions require your approval?”

“Uh... Of course not!”

Brittany dared not say more.

Jessica, of course, didn't believe Daniel could sell the forgeries to Nicholas for two billion. Her agreement was a gambit – if Daniel were to lose the bet later, she intended to give him a harsh lesson.

Regarding the Windows Street property, the land price might indeed have tripled. But that property was problematic, and it was a hassle. she couldn't resolve, rendering it essentially a junk asset.

Selling it at Nicholas's proposed price might seem like a loss, forfeiting some interest, but at least Jessica would be recovering the cost. Not every transaction had to be profitable; if you lose, you just

have to accept it.

Right now, TMO needed to focus all its resources on the Healthy Land collaboration project.

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## Chapter 32

*Chapter 32* You have some nerve

*Nicholas* was stunned! Jessica, the undisputed businesswoman of Delvin *Hub*, was undoubtedly shrewd and capable. She was agreeing to let her little assistant gamble with Nicholas over the Windows Street property?

What was Jessica thinking?

After a moment of contemplation, Nicholas figured it out. TMO had long wanted to develop the Windows Street land but couldn't overcome certain problems, hence why it had remained idle. Now that TMO secured the cooperation with Healthy Land, they needed significant capital investment.

By accepting the assistant's gamble, Jessica was smoothly handling a troublesome asset she couldn't do anything about – the fortitude befitting a queen of the business world! Even he couldn't help

admiring her for that.

If Nicholas could acquire the Windows Street property at its price from three years ago, it would be like winning the Powerball jackpot for him. He was eager to clinch the deal, so he began to press Daniel.

“Jessica has agreed to our wager. So, do what you want to do. Make me spend two billion to buy these worthless items!”

Daniel picked up a rock from outside and began to smash it against the statue. The statue’s edge broke off, pitting and marring its

surface. Brittany grew anxious.

“What are you doing? Even though it’s a fake, that statue is still worth

a million. If you damage it, it’ll be worthless! Stop it now!”

“Before I smash it, it’s worth only a million, but when I’m finished, it’ll

be worth fifty million.”

“Fifty million? Yeah, sure it is!”

As Daniel didn’t stop his actions, Brittany turned to Jessica to caution

her.

“Jessica, look, he’s damaging the statue.”

“Didn’t Daniel say? It’s worth one million now, and when he’s done, it’ll be worth fifty. Let him do what he wants. If the statue isn’t worth that much after he’s done, I’ll punish him then!”

Jessica stood with her arms crossed, seemingly unworried. She didn’t really believe that Daniel, smashing away with a stone, could turn a one–million–dollar fake into a fifty–million–dollar masterpiece.

Thump!

Daniel gave one final, decisive smash.

Crack...

Crack, crack...

Sounds of the statue splitting emerged. The pitted and pockmarked surface completely cracked open.

Brittany, seeing this, exclaimed, “You... you’ve shattered the statue?”

“Where’s the damage?”

“Look, it’s all cracked on the surface. Isn’t that shattered?”

“Cracks don’t mean it’s broken. They mean the real statue is about to reveal itself. However, to bring it out, Brittany, you’ll have to do some leg work.”

Daniel’s words were unacceptable to Brittany.

“You want me to run errands for you? Who do you think you are? You’re just a new assistant, not a CEO!”

Daniel didn’t respond to Brittany. Instead, he turned to Jessica.

“Jessica, since Brittany isn’t willing to help, it looks like I’ll have to ask you to assist me instead.”

Brittany was shocked! This idiot was playing such tricks on her?

“Daniel, how dare you! You have the nerve to ask Jessica to run errands for you? You... you’re utterly brainless!

Don’t you realize who she is?

Jessica, this person who disrespects you must be fired! Otherwise, he will definitely commit more outrageous and excessive actions in the future!”

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## Chapter 33

### Chapter 33

#### Chapter 33 Fire Him

Jessica was getting irritated and glared at Brittany. “Did *you* clearly understand what I said? If Daniel says the sculpture is worth fifty

million, and he needs *you* to do something for him, you should do it! If the sculpture isn’t worth fifty million in the end, I’ll punish him! But *until* then, do as he *told you*.”

Jessica’s *command* left Brittany with no choice but to comply. *Despite* feeling infuriated, she asked Daniel with a glare, “What do you want me to do for you?”

“Go buy me a bottle of vodka – the most expensive one.”

“Vodka? What *for*? You’re smashing up the statue and now you want to drink? What’s wrong with *you*?”

“It’s not for me – it’s for the statue. If I don’t ‘feed’ it, it won’t reveal its true form. If it doesn’t show its true worth, it’s worthless. If it does, then it can be worth fifty million.”

“You idiot, do you think I’m going to believe that bullshit?”

Despite her disbelief, Brittany still refused to go. She was completely certain that Daniel was spouting nonsense. A statue he had cracked had nothing to do with vodka. She had never heard of any connection between antiques and alcohol, and Brittany wasn’t about to start believing Daniel’s absurd story.

Brittany didn’t want to go, and Daniel had no authority to command her. With *no* recourse, he had to turn to Jessica instead.

“Jessica, since Brittany isn’t willing to help, I guess you’ll have to

make the run

Jessica was taken aback – did this guy really have the nerve to order her around? She was so angry that she felt like kicking him to teach him who was the boss here.

However, she held back the urge. Instead, she decided she wanted to see exactly what Daniel was up to.

“Brittany, go buy him the vodka! If it turns out to be useless, deduct the cost of the liquor plus your running around fee from his salary

“Deduct from his salary? That’s it?”

“What else do you want?”

“Fire him!”

“Daniel’s trial period lasts a year. During this time, I will not fire him! So, stop thinking about firing him.

“Why does every other employee have a trial period of only three months, and he gets one year? Besides, if he turns out to be unfit

during his trial period, can’t you fire him immediately? What’s so good about this loser?”

“Are you questioning my decision?”

“No... I’m not!”

Brittany quickly shook her head. “Fine, you don’t have to fire him. But if this statue doesn’t end up being worth fifty million, from that point on, Daniel reports to me! He has to do whatever I tell him to. Is that okay?”

“That’s fine!”

Jessica agreed, which satisfied Brittany. Since she couldn’t fire Daniel, she decided she would torment him until he couldn’t take it anymore and resigned on his own.

Three minutes later, Brittany returned with a three-thousand-dollar bottle of vodka after visiting several stores to **find** it. Upon receiving

the bottle, Daniel unscrewed the cap, sniffed it to ensure it was

indeed real liquor, and then began to drink it down.

“Jessica, look at this loser! He just wanted to drink! You need to

punish him severely! That bottle cost me five thousand dollars, and I want him to compensate me ten thousand dollars out of his salary!”

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## Chapter 34

Chapter **34** A Reward for My Husband

Spurt...

Daniel spit the mouthful of vodka onto the statue. Brittany immediately yelled in exasperation.

"You good-for-nothing, you obviously can't hold your liquor, taking such a big swig and then spraying it everywhere! That's a five-thousand-dollar bottle of vodka you're wasting! The company policy states that penalties are doubled for wastage! You owe me ten thousand dollars from your salary!"

When reimbursing expenses, claiming a three-thousand-dollar item as being worth five thousand was a common practice for Brittany. Daniel ignored her complaint and started rubbing **his** hands on the statue's surface.

Crack... Crack, crack...

The surface of the statue cracked.

"Be careful not to hurt your hands," Jessica quickly warned him.

"Are you worried about me?"

"Yeah, sure I am! It's work hours, and I don't want to end up having to pay you compensation for an injury!"

Jessica wouldn't admit she was actually concerned about him.

"I come from the countryside; this thing won't hurt me."

As the outer layer continued to fall off, something inside the statue



began to reveal itself, stunning Nicholas. He couldn't believe the statue harbored such a secret.

Once the surface had completely fallen away, Daniel used the remaining vodka to wash down the statue. Then, a stunning new sculpture was laid bare before everyone.

Daniel handed the statue to Nicholas with a smile, "Smiley Nick, check out this statue. Is it from the Renaissance period?"

Nicholas took the statue, and upon examination, he could tell from its shape and material it indeed dated back to the Renaissance. However, upon further inspection of the sculpture's patterns, he chuckled again.

"This sculpture is indeed from the Renaissance period, but it doesn't count as something valuable. Look at the craftsmanship and the stone's texture; it's just work from an ordinary sculptor and not from an official kiln. You can't solely measure a statue's worth by its age. From the same era, sculptures made by art masters and those by ordinary people differ vastly in materials and craftsmanship. Consequently, the price difference is also immense.

If this statue were the work of a top artist, its value could **truly** be fifty million. But it's clear this is merely an apprentice's work, and not particularly good quality at that. However, one notable point is that a faux layer wrapped the outside, preserving it nicely. Thus, it might fetch a higher price due to its condition.

Altogether, this sculpture at most is worth five million."

Nicholas's assessment was fair and objective, considering the

sculpture's value was just increased from one million to five million

under Daniel's manipulation. He had to demonstrate his professional expertise in his field, especially since the bet with Daniel was for two even a value of five million for the statue would not affect

billion

the bet.

Jessica was delighted with how things turned out and nodded in satisfaction, "Daniel, well done. Your bonus for the month is doubled!"

Clear rewards and punishments were her consistent principles, and Daniel was, after all, her husband. She felt he deserved a reward in

such circumstances.

Upon hearing this, Brittany felt a twinge of jealousy.

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## Chapter 35

### Chapter 35 Last Chance

“Jessica, he just claimed the statue was worth fifty million, but now *it* has *turned* out to be worth only five million. That doesn’t exactly qualify as a good performance! How does an employee who cannot meet objectives deserve a reward? According to the company’s rules, you should deduct his bonus! Not only should you deduct his bonus, but you should also have him write a self–critique to ensure he doesn’t set such unreasonable goals in the future!”

“Are you sure *you* spent five thousand on that bottle? Which store did you buy it from? We will ask the owner directly later, okay?”

“Jessica, I... I only spent three thousand.”

“The price of the bottle is three thousand, but you claimed it was five thousand, so the deduction should come from *your* bonus!”

“Jessica, I’m sorry.”

Brittany quickly bowed her head in silence. Jessica had always been aware of her little schemes but had never called her out on them. Was Jessica exposing her because of this useless assistant, causing her even more hatred toward Daniel? How could such a worthless assistant always receive preferential treatment from Ma’am Jessica? She had to remove him from Jessica’s side immediately! The longer he stayed near Jessica, the more her own position was at risk – her throne as Jessica’s top–secretary was in jeopardy!

After thoroughly inspecting the statue with a magnifying glass, Nicholas considered its value the statue’s material and

workmanship were, indeed, average. However, its preservation was

impeccable, seemingly flawless. Such a sculpture, if sold to the right buyer, could easily fetch ten million. Everybody loves money, after all.

So, with a trademark smile of the Smiley Nick character, he told

Daniel, “Daniel, you’re certainly not a greenhorn; you managed to see that there was another sculpture inside the original one. I hadn’t even noticed that! As I’ve already analyzed, this sculpture’s market value is five million, and I’m willing to pay that amount to acquire it.”

“Five million isn’t enough, you need to add a zero,” Daniel proposed, holding out his hand, “Fifty million!”

“Fifty million? Daniel, are you joking with me? No matter where you take this sculpture for appraisal, it can’t be worth more than five million! Your price of fifty million makes me think you have no intention to sell it. If that’s the case, then forget it. These kinds of sculptures are fairly common antiques. Auctiq has plenty of them, and I don’t particularly want this one!”

Nicholas pretended as if he had no desire to buy the sculpture. This it worked every was a tactic he often used when acquiring antiques

time!

“Smiley Nick, if you’re not willing to pay fifty million now, then in ten minutes, if you want to buy this sculpture, you’ll have to pay eighty million!” Daniel plainly stated.

Nicholas couldn’t help but laugh uproariously. “What did you say, Daniel? I didn’t catch that? You want to sell me this sculpture for eighty million? Do you take me for a fool from your village?”

“No, you’ll be begging me to sell it to you for *eighty* million, but I might not even sell it to *you*. For now, I’ll give you one last opportunity. If

you pay fifty million now, you can have it. If you miss this opportunity, in ten minutes, the price will be eighty million.”

With that statement, Nicholas instantly grasped Daniel’s strategy.

“Ha, ha, ha, ha...” Nicholas’s laugh was filled with ridicule.

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## Chapter 36

### Chapter 36 **Naive**

*“Daniel, you’re being too naive. Do you really think I’ve never seen this kind of tactic before? You don’t need to make empty threats; I won’t fall for them.”*

Daniel didn’t bother to argue and simply asked Nicholas, “So you are giving up the chance to buy this sculpture for fifty million?”

*“Yes, I’m giving up! Since you’re so confident, why would I want to prevent you from doing what you think you can? I want to see how you manage to sell a sculpture worth five million for eighty *million* to me. If you fail later on, my offer for this sculpture will be *only* three million.”*

Nicholas turned to Jessica as a reminder, “Jessica, the sculpture is yours, and even though you’ve authorized Daniel to handle it, you’re still the boss and can take back the authority over the sculpture at any time. Even though *you* don’t lack money, by having Daniel’s words devalue the sculpture from five million *to* three, that doesn’t seem optimal, does it?”

He didn’t want any unexpected turn of events! He had had enough of Daniel’s shenanigans!

Brittany saw this as her opportunity and quickly chimed in, “Jessica, I think Smiley Nick is right; the sculpture is indeed worth only five million, and now that Smiley Nick is willing to buy it for five million, we have no reason to refuse! If Daniel turns that five million into three million for no reason, it’s an unnecessary loss!”

“Since I’ve entrusted Daniel with handling this sculpture, until he

declares it finished, I will not intervene. TMO’s principle is to trust its employees and let them demonstrate their competencies! Even if the sculpture is worth only five million and Daniel wants to sell it for fifty million, then he’s trying to obtain more benefits for the group.

Whether Smiley Nick wants to buy it for five million or not, we could just choose not to sell the sculpture. But I will definitely not complete a sale below the market value for an item worth five million dollars!”

after all, he was her husband in

Jessica clearly sided with Daniel name. Even if they were only a pretend married couple, she had no

reason to distrust Daniel!

“Since you’ve said so, Jessica, I can’t argue. However, I still need to remind you that the sculpture is indeed worth five million, but that’s my offer here at Auctiq. Anywhere else, nobody will be willing to pay five million for this sculpture. Because out of all auction houses in New York, only I can sell it. If anyone buys this sculpture, they will still bring it here to sell to me. And the offer I provide them will be up to five million at most!

No one does business without profit, so I advise you not to be

impulsive and to reconsider it once more. Of course, if you’re not in need of money and are not in a hurry to sell it, then that’s fine. After all, the prices of sculptures like these can fluctuate quite rapidly. Perhaps next year, this sculpture might be worth eight million, or its price might fall to three million!

The current price of five million is only because the market has been favorable lately, making it historically high. Whether it will continue to rise, remain stable, or even fall, I cannot guarantee. As a professional, my advice to you is always grounded in expertise. Whether you take my advice or not is your own decision, and as a smart person, you will

know what to do. I won’t say more than that.”

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## Chapter 37

Chapter **37** A Mark

Nicholas aimed to engage in psychological warfare with Jessica, but she was unbothered.

“Even if TMO is desperate for money, we won’t be worried about five million. A few million in price difference is not an unacceptable loss for me. So, Smiley Nick, no need

to worry; even if the sculpture's price drops to three million or becomes utterly worthless, I don't care!"

"Since you're determined, I have nothing more to say. Now let's see how your Daniel plans to sell me this sculpture for eighty million," Nicholas said with a smile and gestured towards Daniel.

"Daniel, please, begin your performance!"

"Do you have a dagger here, Smiley Nick?"

"A dagger? Yes, we do!"

Nicholas handed a dagger to Daniel, curious to see what he would do next.

Daniel took the dagger and began to scratch the bottom of the sculpture.

Crack!

He removed a piece from the base, revealing a mark, and Nicholas was taken aback upon seeing it. It was Bernini's mark!

How could that be possible?

Gian Lorenzo Bernini was one of the greatest sculptors of the

Renaissance, and while there were mors that he would leave marks

on some of his works, nobody had confirmed such claims. Nicholas was amazed to see this rumored mark on the sculpture.

Nicholas quickly regained his composure. Even though the mark was right in front of him, he couldn't be entirely certain it was authentic.. He meticulously examined the mark with a magnifying glass. Not only could he not find any indication of forgery, but the more he looked, the more he believed the mark was genuine.

This mark was unmistakably Bernini's!

But how could Bernini's mark be on a sculpture that was clearly apprentice work? The craftsmanship was so much cruder compared to Bernini's known pieces!

Nicholas furrowed his brow, puzzled,

"How about it? Smiley Nick, you've been examining that mark for quite a while with your magnifying glass. Have you determined it's a fake?"

“It’s not fake it’s real! This mark on the base is indeed the rumored mark of Bernini! But how could Bernini’s mark be stamped on an apprentice’s sculpture? This doesn’t make sense

—

a sculpture of this.

material and quality couldn’t possibly be a piece by Bernini.”

“The significance of this mark, Smiley Nick, you surely know. The reason Bernini left his mark on such a sculpture is because it was the first piece crafted by Bernini’s son!”

“Crafted by Bernini’s son?”

“Of course! If it wasn’t made by his descendant himself, how could a Bernini mark appear on this kind of sculpture? Take a closer look at

the materials used for this statue. Don’t they seem like something a

novice apprentice would use?”

Taking up the magnifying glass again, Nicholas scrutinized the statue more thoroughly, and after finishing, he was truly shocked.

“This looks like materials an apprentice would use, but upon closer inspection, I realized these are actually the materials specifically used by Bernini himself.”

“I was wondering why the materials of this statue looked so familiar, I never expected this to be the first sculpture made by Bernini’s son.

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## Chapter 38

Sold!

Chapter 38 Eighty Million, Sold!

“This sculpture may not be perfect in craftsmanship, and it looks a bit ugly in its form, but it comes with a mark engraved by Bernini himself! Eighty million, do you want to buy it or not, Smiley Nick?”

“Eighty million, deal! I’ll transfer the funds right away!”

Nicholas transferred eighty million to Jessica, and Daniel handed over the statue with Bernini’s mark. The transaction was successful. The purchase of a statue marked by Bernini filled Nicholas with joy. He knew that with some promotion, this piece could easily fetch at least one hundred million at auction, with a bit of extra effort perhaps 1.5 billion or even 2 billion, a lavish sum,

Pointing to the remaining two forgeries, Nicholas addressed Daniel, “Daniel, **you** seem to know something about these pieces too? If you can reveal their secrets and show they’re worth over 120 million, I won’t just buy them instantly, I’ll also fulfill my previous promise to kneel and apologize to you.”

Nicholas had deemed the remaining orient antique porcelain and the Monet painting to be fakes. Otherwise, Jessica would just be too lucky.

Daniel picked up the Tang sancai horse and handed it to Nicholas. “Smiley Nick, how much do you think this porcelain artifact is worth?”

“This is certainly a fake, looking like something from the 19th century, at most worth 500,000,”

“Are you certain **it’s** from the 19th century?”

“Absolutely!”

“How about this? Let’s make a bet. If this porcelain piece is a 19th–century imitation, I’ll give you one

**million**. If not, you give me one million.”

Nicholas examined the piece carefully rather than accepting the bet right away. After scrutinizing it attentively for ten minutes, Nicholas made up his mind. “This is a 19th–century imitation. I accept **your** challenge! I don’t believe this isn’t a fake!”

“All right!”

Daniel took the porcelain **and** smashed it to the ground with force.

Crash!



As soon as it hit the floor, it shattered into countless pieces. Everyone was shocked. No one understood

what Daniel was up to. Brittany was the first to recover **from** the shock and started yelling at him. “You

**idiot**, what are you doing? Even as a forgery, that piece is worth 500,000! Now that you smashed it to smithereens, it’s worth nothing!”

“It was worthless to begin with.”

Daniel’s response left Nicholas puzzled.

“What do you mean, Daniel?”

Chapter 30 Eighty Miton Soldi

Picking up a shard, Daniel read the Inscription: “Made by Beijing State–Owned Ceramic **Factory**, 1985.

Nicholas was flabbergasted.

“This... this was made in 1985?”

“Smiley Nick, you’ve lost the bet.”

“Daniel, you’re impressive! You bested me! This one million is yours!”

Although Nicholas lost a million in the bet, he had initially sold the fake porcelain piece to Jessica for thirty million. Hence, Nicholas hadn’t really lost anything; he simply missed out on one million in profit, insignificant compared to the astronomical thirty million he made.

However, this fake that was originally only worth 500,000 in Smiley Nick’s hands just won Daniel a million with such an ingenious move. Daniel truly was clever.

Thinking this, Jessica couldn’t help but smile.

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# Chapter 39

## Chapter 39 Change of Mind

When Jessica registered to marry Daniel, fulfilling the marriage contract, she felt she had sacrificed too much. Though she had stated she would give Daniel a one-year probation period, in reality, her plan was to appease her grandfather and then promptly have Daniel leave. Now, however, Jessica suddenly found having Daniel as a husband rather entertaining.

Daniel not only excelled in medicine but also had significant knowledge about antiques. Maybe it was just a stroke of luck that he found the mark on the statue, but Jessica sensed that Daniel was not as simple as he appeared. This might truly be a display of his real abilities.

Profit margins in the antiquities business are high. Jessica purposefully let Nicholas deceive her at Auctiq because she wanted to explore the antique industry. Despite spending tens of millions, she had not found any opportunity. Her appearance at Auctiq today was intended to be a decision to give up on the antiques trade. She planned to dispose of the three forgeries and never purchase any antiques again.

Daniel's performance made her reconsider. If Daniel understood the antique market so well, TMO could definitely make significant inroads there!

Nicholas pointed to the last of the three items, the Monet painting, and said with a smile, "Daniel, we have one item left. Although the porcelain turned out to be worthless, you still managed to gain one million from me. Therefore, based on the actual transaction price, the first two items are worth a combined total of 81 million. For you to win, the painting's value must exceed 119 million; otherwise, you lose. Then, Jessica, you must sell the Windows Street property to me at the price from three years ago!"

"The last painting is worth at least two billion," Daniel declared, which made Nicholas gape in shock.

"What did you say? This painting is 100% a fake, a copy done by others, definitely not an original. You really think it's worth two billion? I understand the painting is a good imitation and could be worth three to four hundred million, but two billion? I don't think so.

Nicholas's professional **and** objective evaluation was truthful; he wasn't lying this time.

"Smiley Nick, I'll give you a chance to buy it for 1.5 billion. Again, if you don't buy it now, its value will soon increase to two billion, and you will be begging me to sell it to you. Moreover, if you purchase it now, you won't have to kneel and apologize to me later. If

you're unwilling, you'll soon have to pay fifty million more and still have to kneel **and** apologize, which wouldn't be very cost-effective."

Nicholas burst out laughing again.

"Daniel, you just tried the same trick on me, do you really think I'll fall for it again? The most valuable of the three objects was the statue, which you deliberately placed first. The least valuable was the second porcelain artifact, which you smashed as a stunt to showcase your skills once more.

You set up the stage with the first two items, aiming to con me with this third treasure, the Monst painting, and try to trick me out of 1.5 billion in one go!

Monet paintings are popular in the antique market and can fetch hundreds of millions if they're genuine. Therefore, not only did I authenticate the painting several times myself, but I also called upon numerous experts in the industry to examine it.

## Chapter 39 Change of Mind

I even utilized high-tech methods of authentication. All the results confirmed unequivocally that this painting was a copy done by others!"

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## Chapter 40

### Chapter 40 Vodka Again

Nicholas was confident that the Monet painting was a forgery because while human eyes can be deceived, the data from high-tech equipment don't lie. With advancements in technology, the authentication of antiques no longer relies solely on experts. Many have **turned** to using high-tech professional **devices** for more accurate determinations, which can pinpoint the exact historical period of artifacts through various scans and tests.

"Since you're willing to spend an additional fifty million, I have nothing more to say. But I will reveal **the** true painting hidden within this one to show you," said Nicholas.

“Please! If you need anything, just ask. As long as I have it, I will provide,” Nicholas replied generously.

“Great, can you bring me an alcohol burner? I need an empty one with no alcohol in it,” Daniel requested

“Certainly,” Nicholas went to get the alcohol burner.

Daniel turned to Brittany, “Brittany, could you please buy me another bottle of vodka?!

“Are you trying to make a fool out of me? Why didn’t you ask for two bottles in the first place? I won’t go! You can go yourself!”

Unwilling to run this errand, Brittany left Daniel with no choice but to look to Jessica.

‘Jessica, could you help me out? Without this bottle of vodka, I won’t be able to secure those two billion for you.’”

Jessica knew what Daniel was doing.

“Daniel, you bastard! Do you think you can control me like this?”

“No! I don’t think that! It’s just that Brittany isn’t willing to go, and you don’t want to either, so I’ll have to

admit defeat soon.”

“How dare you threaten me?”

“I’m **not**!”

“Yes, you are!”

Jessica glared at Daniel, huffing angrily, “I’ll punish you when we get back!”

She then turned her head towards Brittany.

“Go run the errand!”

Brittany was taken **aback** in disbelief at Jessica’s response.

\*Jessica, this useless guy has the audacity to demand you to do things. **You** can’t indulge him!therwise,

he’ll soon start disrespecting you.”

“Are you also going against **me**?”

Chapter 40 Vodka Again:

“I... no.”

Brittany left with resentment brewing inside her, clenching her fists as she went to buy the vodka.

Soon, Brittany returned with the vodka, and Nicholas brought a brand-new alcohol burner. Daniel **poured**

the vodka into the burner.

“Do you have a lighter, Smiley Nick?” Daniel asked.

“A lighter? Let me check!”

After searching for a while, Nicholas couldn’t find a lighter.

“Daniel, I’m sorry; I don’t have a lighter.”

“Without a lighter, how am I supposed to ignite this alcohol burner?”

Once again, Daniel turned to Brittany, **chuckling** softly, “Brittany, could you help me get a lighter?”

“You... I won’t go!” Brittany refused again.

“You w

ill go!” Jessica commanded, unwilling to be manipulated by Daniel any longer.

Brittany glared at Daniel, her eyes nearly shooting flames.

“Besides the lighter, is there anything else you need to buy? Say it all now; this is the last time I’m running errands for you!”

“This painting is worth two billion, and its vell needs to be lifted layer by layer. I can’t possibly know right now what else I might need. If there is something else I require later, I’ll have to bother you again. If you’re not willing, that’s okay, I guess I’ll just have Jessica help me.”

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