

Esper 351

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Chapter 351: After Winning the Gambling Tournament

Rudy was sitting on the couch of the casino lounge, seemingly waiting for someone.

The casino was crowded with hundreds of gamblers, but they had slowly started to leave as the tournament had ended.

Some stayed to gamble with their friends, but those who only came with the intention of winning the tournament left in disbelief. They couldn't believe that a newbie gambler like Rudy won the tournament without losing a single match.

He was even accused of cheating as Maria was his partner. They said that the casino's owner was none other than Rusher— Maria's brother and her biological father.

However, everyone present there knew that the losers were whining.

"Here." Maria approached Rudy with Rusher alongside her and handed him the casino pass.

Rusher moved his hand towards Rudy and said, "I have heard about you from Mari. She said you have super luck. I, of course, don't believe in such things, but after looking at your feat today, I think I may have to believe her now."

"Come on, brother! you promised me you won't tell him!" Maria hissed at Rusher.

"Why not? I am glad to see you have finally made a friend of the same age and gender as you."

"Uhh..." Maria glanced at Rudy from the corner of her eyes and said, "Yes. I am lucky to have her as my friend."

"..."

Rudy shook his head in disbelief and thought, 'I should have gotten rid of the hair. But I guess I now have to keep them for a week. I can't risk losing Maria right now. Since my grand plan to become rich will come into action once I become a part of the underworld!'

Even though Rudy had won two million dollars over the night with just \$100 as the first bet, he now had higher standards. He wanted to take everything slow and steady, but now that he had learned about the other universe and the fantastical creatures, he had to move into action.

Rudy shook his hands with Rusher and said in a girly voice: "It's all thanks to Maria."

"You are now an exclusive member of this casino. Maria will tell you the perks. I have some things to do as the owner of this place," he said calmly.

"Can I ask why you didn't join the tournament? Are you not interested in that?"

"Ah, no. Since I am the owner, I am already eligible for the underworld VIP tournament. I don't need to win the lesser tournaments like you or any others."

After saying that, Rusher left for his office.

"..."

"..."

Rudy squinted his eyes and asked, "So you made me a girl, huh?"

"I didn't!" Maria shook her head violently and said, "When I talked about you with him, I never revealed your gender. And he automatically assumed your gender after looking at your current get-up. So..."

She averted her gaze and said, "It's technically your fault."

"Wow." Rudy clapped his hands and said, "You are not entirely wrong, but you went along with him and let him think I was a girl. You could have just said, 'He is a boy!' or something too, you know?"

"Well... my brother is kind of overprotective. And yes, he is the reason why I don't have many friends," she said with a sigh.

"I will play along with your gig until I get bored."

"By the way, do you want the money in cash or your bank account?" Maria asked.

"I don't have a bank account. Do you have one?"

"I don't. I use my father's card for everything, so..." she shrugged.

Rudy raised his brow and said, "Didn't you say you wanted everyone to acknowledge you? So isn't it the best time to stand on your feet and prove your worth to the entire underworld?"

"I can't do that alone, and I don't know how. That's why I chose you to be my friend."

"Open an account in a bank. I will add all my winnings to your account. But not that two million I won. I need them in cash," he stated.

"Preparing the cash will be hard. So they can't give it right now," she said with an awkward smile on her face. "You will have to drop by at night to claim them. Until then, your money will be stored in the casino pass."

"That's fine. I can wait for a day."

"That's nice. Maybe I will also come here tonight to meet you..." she said with a slightly flushed face.

"What's the time now? Since we are indoors, I can't guess the time."

Maria took out her phone and said, "Let's 8:03!"

"Oh... I have to leave."

"I will drop you off!"

"There is no need to. You should go home and rest. And how about you meet me at the central bank later this noon? We will open a bank account for you, and I will also buy a new phone for myself."

"Okay~!" she said cheerfully with a wide smile on her face.

'It's a date, right?!' she thought to herself.

Meanwhile, Rudy left in a hurry and teleported to his house.

Angelica came out of his body and asked, "Why don't you get one account for yourself instead of relying on her?"

"She is a mafia, and she has got connections. If I make a new account and credit it with two million dollars, it's going to be a hassle explaining it to the bank. There is also tax and shit.

And besides, I don't really need an account. It's for future purposes when I start my business. For now, my first goal is to pay off Reina's debt and start the construction of the amusement park. I will win the gambling tournaments with ease unless someone cheats.

My only goal is to make my name in the underworld. Once I gain fame there, starting a business will be an effortless task. Not to mention, I also need to find a supplier of advanced technology in the underworld."

Rudy cracked his fingers and muttered, "Since I am the Lord, I must act like one."

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Chapter 352: Returning to the School

"I wonder if mom has returned yet."

Rudy went downstairs to check, but Rebecca wasn't there.

"I guessed so..." he sighed. "She will probably come late on purpose. Well, let's give her some time. I myself have no idea what I am going to talk to her about."

Rudy went to the bathroom and took a bath with Angelica. He came out fifteen minutes later while wiping his wet hair with a towel.

"It's so hard to take care of long hair. Even washing them was a pain in the ass."

Angelica followed Rudy upstairs to his room with a cheerful smile on her face.

"Quickies in the morning are the best~"

After changing his school uniform, he looked in the mirror and wondered, "What will I do with my hair? I can't go to school with them like this."

Rudy grabbed his hair tightly by his head and used a sharp wind attack to cut them.

"There. Now they are short." He threw the long hair on the bed and said, "Let's go now."

He teleported near Alice's house and walked the rest of the way. But much to his surprise, her house was locked, and Alice wasn't there.

'She may have already left since she doesn't know you are back,' Angelica uttered from Rudy's body.

"Yeah. So now I have to find her on the way..."

Rudy hurried his way to school, but he couldn't find her.

"Great..."

He lazily entered the school and made his way to his classroom to see Alice sitting at her desk.

She was focused on the book and didn't notice Rudy had arrived.

Rudy sat on his desk and looked at Alice with a smile on his face. After a few seconds, Alice realized someone was sitting at Rudy's desk, so she turned her head to the side to see him smiling and grinning at her.

She stared at him for a few seconds with a dazed expression on her face.

"Before you ask anything, yes, this is not a dream," Rudy said with a soft scoff.

Alice moved her hand to Rudy's face and touched it. Then, she moved her other hand and slapped him lightly on the other cheek.

"I was expecting a hug or a kiss, not a slap."

"Where have you been?" she asked with teary eyes.

"Well... let me show you."

Rudy placed his hand on Alice's hands and showed everything to Alice.

"No way...something like that happened?" she asked with a baffled look on her face.

"Yeah."

"And when your relationship with Rias got better and better, I kept ignoring you?"

"Yeah. You were obviously jealous."

"So not only one, but you have four vampires in your harem..."

"Are you angry?" Rudy asked curiously.

"Not really." Alice shrugged her shoulders and said, "One or ten, it won't matter if you have a harem already."

"Wow. That's so optimistic of you."

Rudy glanced around the classroom from the corner of his eyes and sighed after seeing half of the class was already full.

"When did you return?"

"Last night. I came to visit you, but you were sleeping," Rudy responded calmly.

A few seconds later, Alice squinted her eyes and said, "Did you do anything to me in my sleep."

"Whoa~ Calm down. Don't you even dare think of such things. You need to stay innocent, alright?"

"It's hard to stay innocent after you corrupted me with the pleasure of being a girl."

"Why do I get blamed for everything? I am pure, innocent, and in every way holy," Rudy said with a proud face.

"Oh? Is that why you made moves on your lover's twin sister, her maid, and her great grandmother?" she asked with a judging look on her face.

"Ahem!" Rudy and Alice were interrupted by someone's presence.

Rudy moved his gaze and saw Janet standing there with tears in her eyes.

"Hey... what's up?" Rudy asked with an awkward smile on his face.

Janet's eyes got more teary, but she didn't say anything. She turned around, wiped her tears, and went to sit at her desk.

"...?" Rudy turned to Alice with a confused look on his face and asked, "What was that?"

Alice shrugged her shoulders in response.

'In my past life, Janet confessed her love to me when I was in the university. And she told me that she fell in love with me after we spent time together at the university. So she shouldn't be in love with me right now. Unless... I messed up the events and... yeah.'

Rudy recalled his talk and walk with Janet on the night he went to the vampire world.

'But that's a good thing. If I had let everything happen as it was supposed to, Janet would end up going out with some delinquent in the senior class and... I don't even want to recall that fiasco.'

Alice and Rudy talked until the bell rang and morning call started.

After a few lectures, it was finally Rize's lecture, and her mood was brightened after seeing Rudy had returned. However, the rest of the students in the class didn't like that.

When Rudy wasn't in school, Rize was also in a gloomy mood and didn't care about the class. Of course, she taught the students as she was supposed to but didn't give them any homework. She wasn't strict in class either.

In short, she wasn't acting like herself. But after Rudy returned, she gave them a lot of homework that she didn't give in Rudy's absence and scolded those who even moved their gaze to the side.

Once the school hours had ended, Rudy walked Alice to her house and bid her goodbye. Rudy then teleported to his house and went downstairs to check on Rebecca, but she had closed the door of her room.

When Rudy used his see-through ability, he saw her fast asleep on the bed with a happy smile on her face.

Rudy changed his clothes and wore a hoodie to cover his head with the hood.

"Now, time to go to the bank. The very first step of my journey to become the richest person on this planet."

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Chapter 353: Visiting the Bank

"..."

'It's all your fault,' Angelica said from inside his body.

SIGH!

As Rudy had promised Maria, he was on his way to the central bank, which was two cities away from his town— and he had never been there. He teleported to the next city but had to fly all the way to the next one.

"To be honest, I am glad that it's not that far. We are fortunate to have a branch of the central bank near us," Rudy said while flying above the clouds to remain hidden from everyone's sight.

He lived more of a village than a town— although it was slowly developing into one. And the city next to his village where Joe and Lucy lived, where Reina's waterpark and the casino were located.

Because of such attractions and newly founded facilities, the city was rapidly developing.

"If I remember correctly, there was a park near the central bank that was later demolished and turned into a mall even after many protests from the citizens. That turned out to be one of the worst decisions in history since everyone in the city boycotted that mall, and it eventually went bankrupt."

Rudy landed on the backside of the park, where no one was around.

"Since it's late noon of summer, no one would come to the park. But there are still some people here for some reason..."

Angelica came out of Rudy's body and said, "Imagine if you had called her in the evening. Everything would be crowded, and finding her would have been a hassle."

"True."

"What are you doing here?" Someone asked from a distance.

Rudy glanced at the voice and saw Maria standing there, wearing a similar hoodie as him.

"What are 'you' doing here?" Rudy questioned back without showing any change of expression on his face.

"I was waiting for you in the park since there was nothing to do. You don't even have a phone, so I had no way to contact you. But I hoped that you would drop by the park or call me using the phone booth to find my location."

She smiled and added, "But I am glad I was able to find you."

"Same..."

"Now!" Maria folded her hands below her bosom and said, "Let's get you a phone first!"

"Actually..." Rudy looked at the sun and said, "It's almost 4PM. We should go to the bank first and make your account before the bank closes."

"Hmm..." She hummed with a judging look on her face.

"By the way." Rudy glanced around using his see-through ability and asked, "Where are your bodyguards?"

Maria walked to Rudy and whispered in his ears, "I sneaked out."

"What?!" he exclaimed in shock. "How did they even allow you to leave alone to an entirely different city? I mean, yeah, you said you sneaked out, but how did they not notice?"

"As you know, the underground VIP gambling tournament will be later this week, so the entire underworld is preparing for that. It's the grand event of the year, and gamblers from all over the world come to participate," she said with a proud face. "That's why, the security at my place is liberal, which gave me a chance to sneak out without being noticed by anyone."

"Wait, the entire world?"

"Indeed. There are underworlds all around the globe. And the winner of the underworld VIP tournament gets qualified to the VVIP tournament."

Rudy squinted his eyes with a judging look on his face and said, "You never told me about that."

"Honestly, getting there would be a dream come true situation. It's so hard that even my father, who is a professional gambler, was never able to get there. Imagine, only twelve people from the seven billion people in the world!" she said with a resolute expression on her face.

"Calm down. You exaggerated it. First of all, not all the seven billion people do gambling. Maybe a million of them. But yeah, that does sound appealing."

Rudy's goal had changed.

"I know, right! And no one knows what they give as a reward for winning the VVIP underground tournament~!"

"Heh." Rudy chuckled softly and uttered, "You are so reactive when it comes to gambling stuff, huh?"

"Well, I started gambling ever since I was three years old, so you may consider me a gambling addict," she said with a proud and confident look.

"Then you don't need me to win the tournaments, right?" he teased with a grin on his face.

"No! I need you! I don't have super luck like you have. And my brother and father don't allow me to gamble in the other casinos," she groaned with a sigh.

"You said no one knows the reward of the VVIP underground tournament, but you also said it happens yearly. So shouldn't everyone already know what the rewards are? What did the previous winners get?" Rudy asked patiently with a curious face.

"Most of them didn't win."

"Huh?" Rudy raised his brow with a visibly confused look on his face and asked, "What do you mean?"

"They forfeit before reaching the final round. And most of the contestants always say that it wasn't worth it to reach there. And none of them gambled after that."

"Earlier, it had my curiosity, but now it has my attention! Now, let's go to the fucking bank and get you an account!"

Maria and Rudy went to the bank and passed through the security. However, they were being monitored by the guards as they both were wearing hoodies.

They walked to the counter, and it was then Rudy realized something. He checked Maria's hands and asked:

"Where are the documents required to open an account?"

"..." She averted her gaze and said, "You never told me to bring them."

"..."

"I was kidding! I already submitted them here and even filled the form!" she hissed.

"That wasn't the right time for a joke. But anyway, let's—"

BANG~ BANG!

"...!"

PEW! PEW!

That day, robbers broke into the bank armored with advanced weapons that clearly didn't belong in the 2008 timeline.

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Chapter 354: Money Heist

The bank was filled with chaos as soon as the robbers broke in. The guards at the entrance were knocked out by their advanced weapons, while the guards inside the bank prioritized everyone's safety before taking action.

"Everyone! Get on the floor and lock your hands behind your back!" one of the robbers yelled.

There were a total of 17 armed robbers inside the bank, and three were outside. They wore an advanced type of suit covering their entire body, including their face.

"If I see anyone move, I will shoot everyone!"

One of the lady staff working in the bank rushed under the counter to press the alarm button, but it didn't go off even after pressing it a couple of times.

"Huh?"

One of the guards was with the robbers, and he had disabled all the security systems of the bank and activated the emergency lockdown.

The robbers had their van equipped with even more advanced equipment parked outside the bank. Using that equipment, they hacked into the bank's firmware and disabled the cameras. They also

jabbed all the incoming and outgoing connections of the bank and used yet another advanced tool to communicate with each other.

Obviously, it was a well-planned money heist, but they happened to rob the bank when Rudy was there.

'What the fuck?!' Rudy yelled inwardly.

Rudy, Maria, and everyone present in the bank did as the robbers ordered them to do.

"We have planted bombs everywhere in this bank. So if some smartass tried to pull any trick, every one of you would die!"

"You will die with us too, then!" Maria yelled.

'Oi! Shut up, you little mafia! Let them announce their plan so I can plan my next moves! Don't interrupt them!' Rudy sighed inwardly.

"Hah?!" The robber turned to Maria and said, "Why would we die with the bomb explosion? We will, of course, leave the building first before setting them off."

"Hey, you!" One of the robbers pointed his gun at the cashier and said, "Bring out all the money you have here."

Then, he snapped and pointed his finger in the direction of the vaults.

"Two of you, go there and start collecting the money. The other two, go where the gold is stored so we will at least have the gold, even if they devalue the stolen notes like the last time."

"After a brief pause, he said, "Rest of you spread out and keep your eyes on everyone. If they move even a finger, shoot them down!"

'This guy seems like a leader. But why did this have to happen today? Even if they wanted to rob today, they could have come in the morning or at noon. Why when I was here?'

If I indeed have super luck as Maria claims, then I must also have a super bad luck that attracts all the calamities.'

Rudy scanned the bank using his see-through ability and raised his brow as though he was impressed.

'They aren't lying about the bombs. Crazy motherfuckers! And there are 17 of them here. One of the guards also seemed to be with them, but he was still playing a victim. Too bad I heard his thoughts.'

Now, what is their escape route? The best way to find that out is to ask them.'

Rudy changed the expression of his face from nonchalant to scared and asked, "Do you think you can get away with this? The cops will definitely hunt you down when you escape from here."

"Hah?!" The leader of the robbers scoffed out loud and said, "No, they won't. Do you know why? Because they are weak. They don't have tools like us. Their cars are slow, and their technology is far too behind to even track us."

We have our van parked outside, and my men have already done what they had to do. The cops won't ever know there was a robbery here, and when they do, it would be too late to do anything!"

'I see. There is a van, and it must also be equipped with advanced technology.'

Rudy used electrokinesis and noticed that they had jammed every incoming and outgoing signal from the bank.

'Hmm. Does that mean the cameras are also disabled and not recording anything? I don't sense any signals coming from the cameras, but what if the robbers are watching everything from the van?

If I use my powers, even without being noticed, everything would be captured in the camera. I want to avoid that for any possible and unnecessary trouble in the future.'

"Pst! Pst!" Maria called out to Rudy.

"What?" Rudy asked in a whisper.

"Can you fight?"

"What do you plan to do?"

"I can easily take care of five guys at once, but not all of them. If you can fight, then I want you to help me fight the others. But if you can't fight, or are afraid of getting shot, then you can distract them while I take them out one by one."

"Yeah, that's not going to work. This is not a movie or a video game. And they have advanced weapons. Did you not see how they knocked out the security guards at the entrance using some sonic wave guns."

"But we can't just wait and watch everything!" she whispered violently in frustration. "They are the robbers. They are the bad guys. Once they have looted this place, they will trigger the bombs and kill us all! So if we are going to die anyway, why not try to fight for our lives?!"

"Calm down, miss Mafia. You don't have to risk your life like this. And if something happens to you and your father learns of your death, the underground will go into mayhem.

What do you think will happen after that? There will be a war, and your entire syndicate will be searching for these robbers all over the country, or maybe even the world. Countless innocents will die in that war, you know?

You are just being reckless in the heat of the moment without thinking of the consequences."

"Then what do we do?!"

"We don't have to do anything."

Rudy had already analyzed the entire situation and had made dozens of plans. Now, it was time for him to act on them.

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Chapter 355: Sneaky Attack

"Hurry up!" the leader yelled at the cashier and pointed his gun at them.

"Boss." Two men returned with ten cartons full of money with a pallet separating each layer of one million dollars.

"How much is that?" the boss asked.

"One pallet has one million, and each carton has 5 pallets. There are ten cartons, so 50 million dollars," a female robber replied.

"Only 50 million? This is one of the major banks of this state, and you are telling me there was only 50 million in cash?!" the leader yelled.

"There is more. We only opened one vault, and there are 9 more vaults," another replied.

"Then why are you here?! Get them loaded!"

"There are no more cartons available."

"Oh!" The leader exclaimed but soon sighed and said, "Then you could have informed me via the walkie-talkie you have been given."

The leader hung his gun on the belt around his waist and took out a small tennis ball-sized device from his pocket.

"..." Rudy carefully watched as the leader placed the ball on one of the cartons and tapped it three times.

The ball opened with a mechanical sound and generated an invisible wave that only Rudy could see. Then, the ball hovered in the air and flashed a bright light that blinded everyone except Rudy.

"...!"

The ball and the money from the cartons had disappeared into thin air, and the empty pallets fell on the cartons.

"Go now!" He turned to one of the robbers and said, "You, go and check what the other two are doing! Taking out gold was supposed to be easier than taking out the cash!"

The two robbers left with empty cartons, and the third one rushed to check up on the other two robbers who had gone to steal the gold from the vault.

'What was that?!' Rudy yelled inwardly. I have many plans, which one should I use?' Rudy once again scanned the bank to see the changes.

'What are their weapons? Forget about advanced technology, they look futuristic as though they belong to a game. I can't sense any electric frequencies coming out of them, so I can't cause them to malfunction.'

After a few minutes, the robber who had gone to check up on them returned and said, "Sir, there is no one inside."

"What?!" the leader exclaimed.

"Their bags and equipment are in front of the vault, but they are nowhere to be seen," he informed.

"Was the vault open?"

"Yes. The vault was wide open, but they weren't there. I even called them, but I didn't receive a response," he calmly responded.

The leader grabbed his talking device but couldn't connect to the missing robbers.

"What should we do now, boss?"

"Nothing! We don't have time to worry about all that!" He turned to the other robbers and said, "Two of you go and start the job."

However, none of them wanted to go, but they had no other option but to follow the leaders' orders.

A few more minutes later, the two robbers came with fifty million cash in the cartons.

The leader did the same thing he did earlier and placed the ball on top of one of the cartons. He tapped, and the ball began to hover in the air. Soon, it flashed a bright light and blinded everyone. But they knew what was going to happen, so they all closed their eyes as soon as he placed the ball on top of the cartons.

Rudy hacked into the equipment in the van and quietly disabled the jamming. Then, he triggered the alarm of the bank, which obviously freaked everyone out.

They opened their eyes in fear and expected to be shot down mercilessly by the robbers. However, all the robbers had fallen unconscious on the floor for unknown reasons.

'Well, that was so easy that I feel like stupid for planning moves ahead,' Rudy sighed inwardly.

Since everyone had closed their eyes, Rudy could freely use his powers without anyone noticing. On top of that, he used the least noticeable power— telekinesis, and raised all the robbers into the air and slammed them on the floor so hard that even their advanced armored suit couldn't protect them from the impact.

The two robbers who weren't present there came rushing after hearing the alarm and saw the rest of their teammates were knocked unconscious.

"What happened here?!" one of them yelled.

They took out their guns and pointed at the people around. But as soon as one of them got near Rudy and Maria, Maria kicked him on the back of his knee and grabbed him from the neck before pinning him down on the floor.

She snatched the gun and shot the remaining robber's on the legs and shoulders, avoiding the vital spots.

"You—!" The robber she had pinned down tried to attack Maria with a dagger but grabbed his hand and crushed it so hard that his bones had become powder. However, he restored it soon after and crushed it again, only to restore it for the last time.

Everyone got up and dashed to the exit door, but it was still locked.

"Why is the door locked?! Open it!" they yelled.

"We can't allow anyone to leave unless the cops arrive and investigate everything. It's part of our regulation," the manager of the bank asserted in a neutral tone.

"Who cares about your regulation! Our lives are in danger here! Let us leave, or I will sue the bank!" one of the rich old shouted.

"That's not possible. You can yell as much as you want. The situation is currently under control, so—"

The lockdown suddenly deactivated, and the cops rushed in armed with guns, shields, and armors.

They spread it in the bank before asking anything. But it was obvious at first glance that the people in armed suits were the robbers.

Rudy casually leaned to the wall and scanned the area to search for the guard who was with the robbers.

"There is still one left. And I have got special plans for him."

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Chapter 356: Detective Rudy

The cops were letting everyone go in the line, but after inspecting them. They tried to review the footage, but it was all corrupted beyond repair. Of course, it was done by Rudy to avoid unnecessary trouble.

The cops had already caught the robbers, but the ones in the van had escaped with the van as soon as the police cars parked near the bank after the alarm went off.

Maria was currently being questioned by the cops as she had immobilized the robbers, but the cops were already aware that Maria was a Mafia. Her father had connections everywhere, and that was why Maria didn't need any documents to open a bank account.

Rudy quietly stood beside Maria and listened to her testimony.

"Excuse, Sir. You can't be here. Please stand in the line like the others and leave." the officer said.

"He is with me."

"Oh..."

"I am here to inform you of something." Rudy pointed his gaze at the guard in the corner and said, "I saw that guard talking with the leader of the robbers. And it didn't seem like a conversation a criminal and guard should have. It looked more like they were discussing something."

"We will get it checked."

Two officers went to the guard to interrogate him. But he noticed it and grabbed the nearby female staff. He placed the gun on her head and said, "If you come near me, I will shoot her down!"

The officers took out their guns and surrounded the guards from all sides.

"Put the gun down. You are surrounded everywhere. If you cooperate with us, you will be safe," the chief warned.

"Shut up! Don't come near me!"

"You are simply making things worse. You just need to put the gun down and let go of that girl. We just want to talk to you."

"Now, now, officer." Rudy walked between the officers to the guard and clapped his hands.

"Hey, what are you doing!" The chief yelled loudly. "Get back! It's dangerous!"

"I think you have got the wrong person at gunpoint," Rudy said with a smile on his face.

"What?! but you were the one who—"

"Officer. Please listen to me." Rudy furrowed his brows and said, "I did say the guard had something to do with the robbery. But what if he was acting on someone's order? Why would the guard reveal himself like that? That's honestly stupid."

"What are you trying to say?"

"I am saying that the mastermind behind this robbery is someone else, and that person is currently present here," Rudy asserted nonchalantly.

"What makes you say that? Do you have any credible—"

"Ask the guard." Rudy walked to the guard and placed his hand around his shoulders like a friend would. "Say, how about you reveal the name of that person?"

"I-I don't know what you are talking about!" the guard shrugged his shoulders and backed some steps from Rudy. "Stay away from me, or I will shoot this girl!"

"Oho! What a serious threat. Why don't you go ahead and shoot her?"

"I will really shoot her!" he yelled as he moved his thumb to the trigger.

"Go ahead."

"Hey! Hey!" the chief yelled furiously at Rudy and said, "Are you out of your damn mind! You are risking someone's life to prove your suspicion?!"

"Officer. That gun has no ammo," Rudy stated.

"What?!" The chief explained. "How do you know that?!"

"Because that's not even a real gun. And not only that, but this female staff is also acting. She purposely got herself caught."

"What?! Why are you making things up! You have no proof!" the guard yelled, but nervousness was visible on his face.

Rudy grabbed the gun from the guard's hand and shot pointed it at the chief before pressing the trigger over six times.

"See? It's empty. Now, time for thee miss actor to confirm." Rudy moved to the female staff and asked, "How about 'you' confess everything. You don't seem to be the type of girl who would carelessly risk your life for some stupid gig."

"..." The woman stayed quiet at first, but after noticing the stares from everyone, she sighed and said, "I cannot tell you the name, or my life will be in danger. But you were right, we were ordered to do this, and that person is present here."

"Nice. See?" Rudy turned to the guard and said, "It wasn't that hard. You just had to confess everything. You might not have taken part in the robbery, but you were aware of it."

"What about you?" Rudy asked the woman. "Were you aware of this?"

She shook her head and muttered, "I was told after the robbers entered."

"But how did you know the mastermind is present here?" the chief asked Rudy.

"It's simple, honestly. It was this woman, who had pressed the alarm, am I right?" He said while turning to the girl. You wouldn't have done that if you were into this together."

"Why did you ruin everything! Everything was going so far. If you had just let everything happen as it was, none of your life would have been in danger!" the guard yelled while glancing back and forth at the officers and Rudy. "Now, whatever happens, you are to blame."

He said while pointing his finger at Rudy.

"Oi Oi. Why am I to blame? I just did what a respective citizen would do to save his fellow humans. How could you blame someone who just unraveled everything by simple and obvious clues, which, unfortunately, the cops couldn't notice," Rudy commented.

"What do you mean by everyone's life is in danger?" the chief asked the guard. "You two are defenseless, and the third person can't do anything. We will find that person eventually."

"There are bombs planted all over this building! He will press the switch and blow everything up!"

"What?!" the officers exclaimed while the people around started chattering loudly.

"He? Hmm~" Rudy hummed in amusement and said, "So that person is a male. That narrows down the list of suspects. Actually, there can be only one person who can pull this off, and that is..."

Any guesses on the mastermind?

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Chapter 357: The Mastermind

"That is...?" The chief, the officers, and the rest of the people present there had the same question in their minds.

Who is the mastermind?

"Eh? What will be left for you to do if I tell you everything? Isn't it your job to find that out? I am just a normal citizen, who happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time," Rudy responded with a shrug.

"...."

Two officers handcuffed the guard and the staff member and took them outside the bank to interrogate them. And it turned out they both were husband and wife.

The chief then ordered all the males present to stand to the side and allowed all the females to go without any inspection.

However, even upon inspecting the males, there was no guarantee that they would catch the culprit. After all, he was the mastermind behind the heist and wouldn't be as stupid as the others.

Not only that but there was no real way to catch him unless he could confess everything himself.

The inspection continued for half an hour, and Rudy was getting bored of watching the cops do their job.

SIGH!

'I am getting late too.' Rudy looked at the clock on the wall and let out an even bigger sigh.

It was nearly 6PM.

He glanced at Maria, who was, for some reason, getting her account open from the accountant.

Rudy shook his head and muttered, "Goddamn. She is fearless. Are all mafias so brazen and nonchalant? Probably not. But still, if she wasn't here, things might have gone south. Well, if she wasn't here, then I wouldn't be here either, and the robbery would have happened as it was supposed to.

Hmm~" Rudy hummed in wonder and thought, 'Isn't that fortunate for everyone here? They were lucky, but I was unlucky. This is a live example of the world treating me unfairly. I want justice!'

Said the guy who had a harem full of beautiful girls that were completely head over heels for him.

Rudy walked to the chief and handed him the fake gun he had snatched from the guard earlier.

"Here, officer. This is a piece of evidence of the crime, am I right? It should be in your possession, I believe."

The chief gritted his teeth and put the gun in a plastic bag.

"And I am the chief, so stop calling me officer!" he said with a forceful smile on his face that didn't look so friendly.

"You don't have a badge or anything indicating that, though." Rudy casually stood beside him and said, "So. How is the investigation going? Any leads?"

"..." The chief stayed quiet and didn't answer Rudy's question.

"Well, whatever. I will leave as soon anyway."

"Uh uh. You are not leaving until the mastermind is caught."

"Why not?"

"You can be the mastermind too, you know?"

"Why would I purposely get myself caught if it was me?"

"Maybe you wanted us to think like that? Whatever you may be, you are under the radar now, mister... err. What is your name?"

"It's John Doe."

"That's the meaning of an anonymous party or a hypothetical average man. There is no way that's your name."

"Oh? You know about it?"

The chief exhaled sharply and said, "We have personal lives too, you know?"

"Yeah..."

"What are you going to do about the stolen money?" Rudy uttered to no one. But then he turned to the manager and asked, "Hmm, manager?"

"We will have to report it to the FRS to devalue the money notes stolen," the manager replied.

"That was obvious. I was asking, what will you do with that money?"

"What do you... mean? I don't understand."

"Why would you steal the money?"

"Wha—!" The manager's face turned pale after hearing that.

"Wait... the manager is behind all this?" The chief and the officers pointed their guns at the manager without even confirming Zach's doubt.

"No, no. I am not! He is lying! I am the manager of this bank. What would I gain from doing that?!"

"If that's the case, why are you hiding your hands behind your back?" Rudy asked with a chuckle and a knowing look on his face.

"There is nothing."

"Show your hands then," the chief said.

The manager brought his right hand forward and showed it to them.

"See?"

"What about your left hand?"

He moved his right hand back and showed his left hand to them.

"THat's enough! Show both of your hands without playing any games."

The manager slowly moved his hands forward and showed them to them.

Rudy furrowed his eyes and uttered, "Turn around."

"What?"

"Turn around."

The manager frowned his face and took out the remote he was hiding behind his back.

"Stay back! Or I will press the switch and take you all down with me!"

"Calm down, manager. If you press that switch, you will die too."

"I don't care! I have nothing to lose anyway! If you don't let me go, I will press this switch and blow this place up!"

"We can negotiate. So calm down. What are your demands? Why are you doing all this? How about we first start by asking each other names? What is your name? My name is John."

"..." Rudy shot a suspicious glance at the chief, but his name was truly John.

"My name is Ryan," the manager said.

"That's a good name. Now, Ryan, how about we first start with you giving me that remote to the bombs?" John asked calmly.

Ryan slowly moved his trembling hand to hand the remote to John, but he pulled his hand back and said, "I won't!"

The rest of the officers had their fingers on the triggers, and if Ryan even placed his thumb on the chief, they were going to shoot him from all sides.

That, of course, wasn't a bad situation. But there was no guarantee that Ryan wouldn't press the switch even after getting shot. That's why negotiating with him was the best option John had.

Rudy, however, had enough of that and let out an exhausting sigh.

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Chapter 358: Triggering the Bombs

Rudy glanced at the counter where Maria was to check whether she was done.

'She is done. That's enough time-pass. Now, let's end this charade and go home.'

"Give the remote to me," John calmly asked.

"I won't! Step back!"

"Why don't you go ahead and press the switch," Rudy scoffed arrogantly.

"Hey!" John yelled as his face twitched from all sides. "Would you stop doing this? You can't just play around with hundreds of lives here."

"But no one's life is in danger."

"Huh?"

Even Ryan was surprised to hear that.

"The bombs in this building are not real. They were just for the show to scare everyone." Rudy shrugged his shoulders and said, "Think about it. Why would someone blow themselves up? The robbers said the same thing when they mentioned about the bombs."

"It seems you haven't met or seen the suicidal freaks who would blow themselves up to kill others with them," John commented. "There is no guarantee that the bombs are not real."

'Tch!' Rudy clicked his tongue and said, 'I thought he would buy it since my last two assumptions turned out to be true. Now I have to move to the next plan.'

Rudy had planned all that even before the cops showed up. He had thought of each and every possibility, so no matter what happened, he was ready to move to the next plan.

"If you think that's the case, why don't you call the bomb squad and let them do their job? Even if the bombs turned out to be real, they would be able to defuse it right away," Rudy suggested.

John moved his face close to Rudy's ears and whispered, "I have already done that. I was just trying to stall this guy."

'I know it. I caught the signals going out from one of your officers. But too bad, I can't let them ruin my plan.'

If the bomb squad got there and checked the bombs, it would be confirmed that the bombs were real, and the situation would go back to how it was before. Sure, defusing the bombs was also an option, but it was as risky as Ryan pressing the switch.

However, there was something no one except Rudy knew. Even Ryan wasn't the actual mastermind, and he only knew about the plan and its execution. He didn't know if the bombs were real or not.

"What do you say, Ryan?" Rudy mocked him. "The bombs won't go off whether you press the switch or not. There is still a chance to surrender and confess everything. Remember, no lives have been lost yet."

Rudy turned to John and asked, "Officer, what do you think he will be charged with?"

John's face twitched once again as he responded, "I am not a judge. And stop calling me officer."

"Ryan. Would you rather die with the many others you spent a few years of your life in prison and start a new life? Of course, the bombs are not real, so you are not going to die, anyway."

"Shut up! I have had enough of this!" Ryan raised his thumb and pressed the switch.

One of the officers had shot Ryan on the hand holding the remote, but it was already too late.

However, nothing happened.

"Huh?"

"...."

Ryan then pressed the switches several times, even with the injured hand, but the only sound that came was the noise of the remote falling to the ground from Ryan's hand.

"See? I told you." Rudy sighed and shook his head in disbelief before saying, "Why do they never listen to the citizens."

One officer walked forward and handcuffed Ryan.

Now, the cops allowed everyone to finally leave the bank. Rudy took advantage of the crowd and grabbed the remote from the ground.

PHEW!

He sighed in relief and crushed the remote with his hand before burning it into crisp.

'I used telekinesis to fuse the circuit inside the remote and jammed the signals for it as a precaution. The bombs are still here, and they are real. Even though I proved to everyone that they were fake, the cops would still take out the bombs as a formal procedure. Should I get rid of them before that happens?

Even if they realize that the bombs were real, they wouldn't be able to understand why they didn't go off after pressing the switch. They will probably call them faulty and close the case.'

Once everyone had gone, only the staff of the bank, John, Rudy, and Maria, were there.

"I didn't know the bombs were fake," Maria said.

"Uhh..." John turned to Rudy and raised his brow before saying, "I hope you are not an undercover detective or something. You solved everything and caught onto every clue as though you knew everything. That requires precise attention, skill, and experience."

'That's because I knew everything.'

"Just who are you?" John asked curiously.

"I am..." Rudy shot a glance at Maria before replying, "My name is Rudy Ross."

"Ross...? Wait, you are from the mafia family?!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. I am Miss Maria's cousin and her bodyguard. And I would appreciate it if you keep this a secret from her father or any of her family members. We weren't supposed to be here. In return, you can take the credit for this case and tell the higher-ups that you solved this case."

Since Maria had sneaked out and no one knew about it, she would be punished if the words reached her father that Maria was there. Rudy did that to save Maria as he was the one who had asked Maria to come to the bank.

He took the responsibility he thought was the right thing to do. But unknown to him, he had seduced the mafia princess with his kindness.

"I will take my leave now. We still have to interrogate Ryan and ask him everything. And I feel like he is hiding something."

"Good luck." Rudy said while waving his hand and added, "And let's never meet again."

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Chapter 359: Date with Maria

Now that everything was taken care of, Rudy and Maria left the bank.

'Since it's summer, the sun hasn't set yet. And it's still 6:09 PM.'

"Did you open the account?" Rudy asked Maria.

She nodded without looking at him.

"That's good. What type of account did you open?"

"Top tier VIP account that has an all-inclusive package including unlimited transactions, credit card rebates, unlimited debits, and much more. As far as I know, it's a perfect type of account for gamblers. Then again, I have zero knowledge about this stuff. I just did what the account told me."

"What a coincidence; I have no idea either."

Money and Rudy had a bad relationship in his past life. They could never be together no matter how hard he tried. And just when he had finally landed a job, his legend as a Lord began.

"Now, it's time to get your new phone!" Maria held Rudy's hand tightly and took her to the nearby apple store.

"You look awfully familiar with this area. Have you been here before?" Rudy asked calmly.

"Uhh... yes..."

Maria had arrived there sooner than the promised time, so to pass some time, she wandered around the area and took note of all the stores and the nearby location.

She made a date plan.

After entering the store, she went straight to the counter with Rudy and said, "I want your latest device."

The staff placed a phone on the platform and said, "This is the latest innovation in this world, and it's filled with revolutionary features like never before. It's called uPhone 3G, and as the name suggests, it has 3G networking that is twice as fast as the first generation uPhone, which you can use to download your files faster. You can watch the youtube videos without buffering. Surfing on the web would be like rubbing a knife on butter.

Not only that, it wasn't only one function of this device, it has many more features such as built-in GPS for expanded location based mobile services. For example, the camera is by far the best any mobile phone has ever had. Our screen is made of high quality--"

"I get it. I will buy it," Rudy interjected with a sigh.

'Brands and their way of marketing. Only if I had such skills... wait, I do have it. I don't consider myself a womanizer, but I have managed to make many girls fall for me with my smooth talks. I don't know if I should call it a skill, nor do I know if that's a good thing or bad.'

"Our last generation uPhone started at \$499 for the 4GB model and \$599 for the 8GB bundle. However, its successor, our next generation uPhone starts at \$199 only for the 8GB model and \$299 for the 16GB.

Even with more storage and much more advanced features and functions, it costs much less. Our first priority is customer satisfaction, which keeps us motivated to bring more revolutionary devices."

He said with a proud face.

'Back in 2013, before I got into an accident, Elise gifted me an uPhone 5s. And it was only \$199 for 16 GB. It had a touch ID and a faster chip. Even the uPhone launched alongside it-- the uPhone 5c started at only \$99 for 16GB.

Well, whatever. No point in thinking about the past. I don't know what happened to this brand, but it must have reached the success it was trying to achieve.'

Rudy had brought money with him as he knew Maria would take him to buy a new phone. But just as Rudy was about to pay in cash, Maria paid for it using her new account card.

"Hey! I am paying for that."

"No, you are not."

"I am. And it's my phone. So let me pay for it."

"I am your sugar mama, so I am paying for it!"

"You are not my--"

Rudy stopped when he saw Maria glaring at him with a frowned face and puffed cheeks.

"Again... that just makes you look cute instead of scary."

Rudy gave up and let Maria pay for the phone.

They left the store and went to the nearby restaurant to eat as Maria was feeling hungry.

"Why don't you open the new phone while our food arrives?" Maria suggested.

"I was just going to do that." Rudy took out the box of the phone from his bag and placed it on the table. He carefully unboxed it and took the phone in his hand.

Even though we saw it in the store and even held it, it still feels different when we unbox ours.

Rudy turned on the phone and checked if everything was alright.

"Yeah. It works wonders."

Maria moved her hand to her purse and took out something that was wrapped in paper and plastic.

"Here."

"What's this?" Rudy opened it while asking, "Some kind of new drug."

"Of course not! It's a sim card."

"Oh."

"It's a private number, so no one will be able to track you. And it's already activated, so you just need to insert the sim in the phone," she stated.

"Wow. You were well prepared for everything, huh?" Rudy inserted the sim and restarted the phone.

"Thank you, really," he said with a gentle smile on his face.

Maria's face flushed a little, but she managed to compose herself.

"Yeah. The networks are on."

"Give me your phone. I will add my private number that only my family members have."

"So I am getting a special treatment, huh?" he teased with a grin on his face.

"Well... we are friends, aren't we...?"

"Of course. Why else would I let you do me such favors?"

"Here. I am the first name on your contact list," she said with a happy smile.

Their food arrived, and they began to eat.

Rudy later added Rebecca, Alice, Reina, Rize, Eric, and Joe's number to his contact list and texted them to let them know he got a new number.

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Chapter 360: Dinner with Maria

Rudy and Maria were eating dinner together. While Maria was eating and shooting glances at Rudy once in a while, Rudy was busy playing with his new phones.

"..."

However, he was simply texting with Alice as she didn't believe it was truly Rudy and not someone else pretending to be him.

Maria furrowed her brows and thought, 'Can't he at least look at me a little while we are on a date? He is just so rude sometimes...'

"Ahem!" She cleared her throat and said, "You should eat while the food is hot. You won't like it if it gets cold."

"Right."

Rudy texted Alice that he would call her later and placed the phone on the table.

A few minutes later, Maria's phone rang.

COUGH~ COUGH!

She choked on her bite and tried to reach her hand to the glass, but it was empty. Rudy grabbed his glass and helped her drink the water.

"Thank you."

Maria picked up the phone and plastered a fake smile on her face.

"Hello. No. Of course not. I am resting in my room. Wha—! How do you know that?! Argh! Fine. Fine~ Fine~!"

With every 'fine' her groan got louder.

"What, no! Really?! Alright then. Yes. Yeah. We will talk later."

She hung up the call and let out a weary sigh.

"Who was that? You underworld boyfriend?" he teased with a grin on his face.

"Of course not! I don't have a lover!" she hissed.

"Relax. It was a joke."

SIGH!

"It was my niece."

"Umm, your brother's daughter?" Rudy asked suspiciously.

"Yeah. She is only a year younger than me, so we are more like sisters or cousins. We basically grew up together and trained together."

'Well, that's your half-sister, not your niece.'

"She found out that I snaked out and asked me to return immediately. The car should be here in 5 minutes, she said."

"I see. Then we better hurry up."

After eating a few bites, Maria took a deep breath and hesitantly asked, "Do you... do you have a... girlfriend?"

"Hmm?" Rudy was taken back as he never expected her to ask that question.

That was something Rudy had no idea how to answer.

"It's... well, it's complicated, so I wouldn't say yes or no."

'Does that mean he loves someone, but the girl he loves doesn't love him back? Or maybe they have some kind of forbidden relationship? Like a teacher and student, a married woman, or a widow. Or perhaps an underaged girl...?'

No, no. Rudy wouldn't have such affairs. But what does he mean by complicated? Wait... don't tell me... he is into guys?'

After eating, they waited for a while, but no one came for the bill, so Rudy got up and said, "I want to use the washroom. Be right back."

"Okay."

However, that was a lie. He went to the counter to pay the bill as he was sure as hell that Maria would pay for it again.

"Uhh... excuse me. Can I have the bill, please?" he said to the man at the counter.

"Hmm? You are from... hmm, the bill has already been paid."

"What?!" he exclaimed. 'Did Maria pay it without me noticing?' he wondered.

"Who paid for it?"

"The person who paid left a while ago."

"..."

Confused, he went back to the table and asked Maria to leave.

They were walking on the pavement alongside the stores to the sides.

"It's 7:11PM..."

"She said the car would be at the park. So let's hurry."

On their way, Rudy asked, "Did you pay for the bill and ask them to keep it a secret?"

"Huh? No. I thought you paid for it..." she muttered with a puzzled look on her face.

"Then who was it?"

"Maybe... just maybe... someone saw me and recognized me. But if that's the case, then I should get ready to get yelled at by my father and brother..." she grunted with a sigh.

"Or maybe it was your niece? She was out for some reason and saw us. And then she called you to check whether you lied or not. That would explain why she said the car would be at the park in five minutes?" Rudy wondered curiously.

"That's not possible."

"How can you be so sure?"

"As you know, I only have one brother, and he has only one child— that is my niece— who will be the next leader of our syndicate. She has many things to do and doesn't get as much free time as me.

My father gave his leadership and the syndicate to my brother, and I got his fortune. But I don't care about that; the money I use is from my allowance for the last 19 years and what I won from gambling. I am content with what I have. I just... wanted friends."

She said with a dejected look on her face.

"I am here for you now." He patted Maria on the head and said, "Or do you want more friends?"

"I don't know. But for now, you are enough for me. And don't pat me! I am not a kid!"

"We are almost at the park. Can you spot your car?" Rudy asked.

"No. And I think she was just saying when she said the car would be there in 5 minutes. There is no way that's possible unless she booked a cab or something, which I could also do," she shrugged.

They sat on the bench outside the park and watched the world.

"Oh, by the way." Maria squinted her eyes and said, "So you are my cousin now, huh?"

"Allegedly."

"Can you guess my niece's name? I will give you a reward if you do."

"Hmm~" Rudy pondered for a while and said, "Sonia... maybe? I don't know if that suits the Mafia or not."

"Her name is Ruby. Ruby Ross."

"Wha...t? That's... lame..."

"That's why I was surprised when I first learned your name. And when you introduced yourself as Rudy Ross."

"Wow... that's a name my twin sister should have if I had one."