FORCED MARRIAGE

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MARA

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I've been running back and forth, taking orders, serving food, and cleaning the table since my shift started. We were five servers during this shift from twelve noon to eight in the

evening, the busiest hours of the day in the diner, but I think our boss needs to hire another server during these hours. We couldn't even sit even a minute except when it was our break, and my legs were killing me. "Mara, table seven. Move faster. Can't you see there's a lot of customers waiting for their order?" Our manager said, glaring at me. Sometimes, our manager is so mean, but I endure

I was fired here, I would need a few weeks again before I could find another job, and I don't have any savings left. "Coming." I moved here to the city three months ago after I finished my studies to find a better job. I don't have any relatives, and I don't know anyone here, only Jared, my boyfriend, but I don't want him to know I was here until I found a better job. The last time

it. It was hard to find a job here in the city, and It took me a few weeks to get this job; if ever

we talked about four months ago, he said he was working in a huge company as a head of finance, and I didn't want to humiliate him to his co-workers, knowing her girlfriend was working as a waitress. We've been dating for almost four years, and I'm sure he is the one for me. Jared is my pillar of strength, and his mother is kind. "Mara, stop moving like a turtle." I sigh. Our manager loves to humiliate us, and I am her

and took the tray full of food, and brought it to table seven. Two men and two women occupied the table, both in business attire.

favorite to put in shame always because I'm new here, but I bear it. I rushed to the counter

"Thank you." One of the women said. I bowed at her and moved to the next table and took their order, and brought it to the cook with my manager's eyes following my every movement. "Mara, table nine, faster."

"I'm on it, Ma'am." My co-workers pitied me, but they couldn't do anything to help me.

"Here's your food, Maam, Sir. Enjoy your lunch." I bowed, smiling.

building, the Fernández Corporation. All of them looked extravagant, dressed in their office attire. I envied them. I should be looking like them if only those companies I applied to didn't reject me as soon as they saw what school I came from.

Why did they judge my capability from what school I came from? My school isn't that bad.

Actually, my school taught us accurately despite it being just a small school. The province

official provided everything the school needed, and the teacher was excellent, in my opinion.

The diner is full during lunchtime, and the patrons are usually the employees of the nearby

They didn't even try my skill beforehand before they rejected me. Sigh. If one day I can save some money, I will take up a Masteral course so that I can find the right job for me. I'm a business administration graduate, but I work as a waitress. I sigh. But I can't be choosy at the moment. I need money to survive.

"Mara, stop daydreaming." My manager said in annoyance, snapping me out of the thought.

I hurriedly cleaned the table before me and brought the used dishes to the dishwashing area.

I took a deep breath, wiping my sweat, before I returned to the dining area, smiling as I made

my way to the next table where four men were sitting, both wearing expensive clothes. I'm

poor and haven't tried to wear those expensive clothes, but I know when I see one.

"Good afternoon, sir. May I take your order?." I almost swooned to see how gorgeous these men were, especially the one wearing a poker face. The others are all smiling while he is wearing a blank look. "Just give us the specialty of your restaurant today. The guy with smiling eyes answered.

"Grandpa Phil still loves that cake?" The guy with panda eyes asked. "Yes, he'll get mad if I don't bring him that after I'm away for a month." He replied.

"Chiffon cheesecake for takeout." The guy with a poker face said.

" That's all, sir?"

on me. Why are they staring?

"Hello! Grandpa." I greeted him, smiling.

"I'm hungry." He murmured.

"I'm hungry." He cried.

I hurried to the counter and took a tray of food, and brought it to the four gorgeous men. "Here's your order, sir." I carefully place their food in front of them, conscious of their eyes

"Sir, the cake you can take it at the counter when you leave. Enjoy your lunch." I said,

me. Then why are they looking at me? I shook my head and returned to the dining area when my phone sounded. I pulled it out of my pocket, and I felt nervous instantly when I saw the

smiling, then hurried to go to the toilet. I check my face and uniform, but I find no dirt on

bleeding. I wanted to bring him to the clinic, but I couldn't leave my children." "I'm coming home," I said, hanging up. I went to our manager's office, hoping she would allow me to leave. I'm worried for Grandpa. I knocked on the door nervously, praying my manager would be kind to me just this time and let me go home. Grandpa is not my real grandfather, I met him three weeks ago, but I saw him as my grandfather.

resume there three times, but I haven't received any response from them. Sigh. I snapped out of my thoughts when I felt someone sitting beside me and found the Grandpa earlier now sitting beside me.

"Oh... Okay. Don't cry. I'll get food for you, okay?" He quickly grinned, wiping his tears. " Wait for me here. I'll buy food for you." He nodded, smiling. I went inside the diner and bought food for him despite the money inside my pocket was only enough to buy my dinner later, but just thinking of him starving pains me even though I don't know him.

"You are welcome. Grandpa, I can't stay here longer because I still have work. You'll be okay here alone?" He nodded, smiling. Okay, take care." He nodded again with a mouth full of

It was already past ten in the evening when I stepped out of the diner. As always, I was

discuss them. Every time I asked her, she diverted the conversation to other things, and I

food. I chuckled and went back inside, and resumed my work.

exhausted, and all I wanted to do was sleep.

let out a sigh of relief when he groaned.

I smiled when I remembered the old man earlier. I haven't experienced having a grandfather and grandmother because since I was young, it was only me and my mother, and when she died five years ago, it was only me. I don't know my relatives because my mother doesn't

tonight.

bad." He pouted.

I looked at the bench where I left the old man earlier, and I frowned when I saw someone still sitting there and it looked like the old man earlier. I quickly went to him, and I confirmed that it was him. Why was he still here? "Grandpa, Grandpa," I called, shaking his shoulder. "Is he sleeping? I shook him again, but I shrieked when he fell to the ground. I panicked. I quickly check his breathing and pulse, and I'm so

didn't force her because every time I mentioned her family, she became sad.

"Grandpa, open your eyes." I urged, and after a few seconds, his eyes opened. " Are you in pain? What happened? I thought someone would pick you up. "He sits up, and I help him lean on the bench. "I'm fine. I fall asleep." He answered, smiling.

He was so sweet and caring, and I experienced how it felt to have a grandfather in him. Every morning, he will kiss me good morning and hug me. We ate together, and he kissed and hugged me before I went to work.

I ask my neighbor to check on him when I'm away for work because I'm worried about

leaving him alone, but I need to work to earn money for our expenses. I'm glad my neighbor

"That's all, miss, and wrapped the cake nicely; it's for our boss, grandfather." The cute guy said. Yes, he's cute because he has a baby face. "Okay, sir. I'll come back when your food is ready" I bowed and gave the cook their order. I continued taking orders, and it felt like someone was watching me. I looked around, and I blushed to see the four men earlier were watching me. Why are they looking at me? I felt conscious of myself instantly. Do I have any dirt on my face? "Mara, don't just stand there. The customers are waiting for food." Our manager annoying voice said.

number of my neighbor, who I ask to check on Grandpa once in a while, and I'm thankful that she was kind enough to give me a favor. "Hello! Rena. What's wrong?" "Mara, your grandpa, he fell to the floor, and his head hit on the edge of the bed, and it

*** It was my lunch break, and I was sitting at a bench outside the diner eating my lunch when I met him.

I saw him sitting on the bench under the tree, smiling at me. I smiled back at him and turned

my eyes to the huge building across the street where employees were coming in and out of

the building. I wanted to work with that building, but I had no luck. I already submitted my

He shook his head, and his lips quivered. I panicked when tears rolled down his eyes. He doesn't look like a beggar because he was clean to be one. He was wearing a white polo shirt and cargo shorts paired with running shoes.

"You're hungry? Who's with you?" I asked, looking around, but I didn't see anyone near us.

bear to ignore the old man. I brought him the food, and he gave me a grateful smile. "Thank you."

I bought food for him, and my co-worker warned me not to trust him easily, but I couldn't

scared when I find out he is unconscious.

What happened? I looked around, hoping to see someone to ask for help, but my co-worker

had already left, and I was the last to leave the restaurant. It is my schedule to close the diner

I rampage my bag and find my inhaler, hoping it can help him gain consciousness. I opened

"Grandpa, Grandpa, wake up," I called, shaking him. My heart is pounding with worries. I

the lid and brought it near his nose, and my fears heightened when nothing happened.

"You are an unconscious grandpa. What happened?" "I just fell asleep." He pouted. "Okay, where do you live then? I'll send you home." "Can I go home with you? I like you. I want you to be my granddaughter. You are so kind to

me. The girl with me is mean. She always screamed and sometimes pinched my side. She's

I'm scared to bring a stranger into my apartment, but what if he told the truth? I can not bear

Comments (4)

was kind enough and agreed to check on him when she wasn't busy.

to leave him in the middle of the night. So I brought him home.