

Go After 1041

Chapter 1041

Jepherson walked towards the entrance of the Cole family's home. Then, he stopped by the gate and said, "How's Old Master Brooklyn doing?"

"Well, he's good," the old Lennox replied immediately.

"We're here to pay him a visit," Jepherson said. "I wonder if it's convenient to meet him?" Jepherson's attitude was one of deference. He sounded like a parent who had brought his misbehaving child over to issue an apology.

However, the old steward doubted their motive. "How kind of the Harvey family, huh?" he thought.

"It's blatantly obvious that he's courting trouble. Look at the sheer number of people and cars."

The old Lennox thought for a moment and said, "Wait a minute. Let me pass the word over."

The old Lennox then turned around and hurried to go into the house. Jepherson waited by the gate. Santiago stood behind him, with his hands in his pockets. Jepherson had a similar posture. However, Jepherson was decently dressed, while Santiago wasn't properly groomed.

The old Lennox arrived at Brooklyn's room. He went in and told Brooklyn what happened.

Brooklyn took a sip of tea and spat out some phlegm. Then, he leaned against the bed and said, "Let them in."

"Dad, that's so gracious of you to let them in," Yousif said. He happened to be at home and overheard the conversation. Irritated, he said, "Why are they here? They can't just come to the Cole family's home uninvited."

Brooklyn put the teacup on the table and glowered at Yousif. "Well, if I don't let them in, then they may refuse to leave. And that's going to be even more embarrassing, isn't it?"

Yousif lowered his head and remained silent. He did not dare to say anything as Brooklyn was rather intimidating.

Elina happened to be here too. She glanced at her husband before directing her gaze towards Brooklyn. Then, she walked towards Brooklyn and said, "Shall we get Flynt to come over?"

"Nah," Brooklyn said. "It's not that we're at each other's throats and picking a fight with them. So, it doesn't bother us if they were to make a scene out there. Anyway, we'd better not be frank and speak our minds since they are mad now. We know very well that they are here today over what Deanna has gone through."

"Flynt's been rather reckless," Brooklyn added. "But regardless, it's a job well done. At the very least, this can serve as a severe warning to them."

Elina was elated as Brooklyn publicly praised Flynt. Flynt was her son after all.

Elina flashed a smile and said, "Well he needs plenty guidance from you. After all, he's young, hot-headed and reckless. He would even act outrageously at times, bringing trouble to you."

"Hmph..." Brooklyn snorted. "He hadn't brought trouble to me. It was all the Harvey family's fault. They have been such bullies."

Brooklyn had never wanted to retaliate. However, he resorted to giving the Harvey family a taste of their own medicine since they had consistently taken advantage of the Cole family.

Elina lowered her head and asked, "Now that they are coming into the house, shall I make a move to hide elsewhere?"

Brooklyn was pleased with Elina's remark. Not only had she given birth to a few intelligent children, she was a rather vigilant lady herself. Yousif could not hold a candle to Elina.

Brooklyn knew that he could not count on Yousif.

"I thought so too. You're a woman after all. So, you'd better not show up."

"Alright then," Elina said. She then turned around and left. She did not bother looking at Yousif, not even once. Since they no longer had romantic feelings for each other, she reckoned that she did not need to be affectionate towards him.

Yousif was resentful of Elina's reaction. He took umbrage at Elina for gloating at his humiliation when he was reproached by Brooklyn.

Yousif swore that he would teach her a lesson one of these days.

Brooklyn squinted and looked at the old Lennox. "Go, let them in," he said.

"Okay," the old Lennox replied. Then, he hurried to inform Jepherson and led them into the house.

While they were walking into the house, Jepherson told Santiago, "Tuck your shirt into your trousers. Button up, please."

Jepherson's words apparently fell on deaf ears. As they arrived at Brooklyn's room, the old Lennox let them in without saying anything.

As they went in, Jepherson addressed Brooklyn with deference. "It's great to see you again, Old Master," he said. "How are you doing?"

Brooklyn waved him off, as if suggesting that he was not well. After a long pause, he said, "Well, I guess I'm kicking the bucket soon. I may be fine now but we can't be certain. I'm in my twilight years after all. The clock is ticking my life away, day by day."

Then, Brooklyn coughed twice. "You're still sprightly," Jepherson said with a smile. "You look much better than before when I last saw you. I guess you've been confined indoors most of the time. Take a stroll outdoors. You'd feel much better."

"That's so thoughtful of you," Brooklyn said. "I'm happy to hear that. Even then, I'm too weak to move around."

Santiago could tell that Brooklyn was merely trying to exchange pleasantries. Then, he said, "Well, then there's nothing much you can do. You can't even get up from bed, much less taking a stroll outdoors. Who knows, you might die in your own bed."

There was complete silence at that moment. Brooklyn quirked his brow as he looked at Santiago. Santiago then directed his gaze elsewhere in the room. Jepherson gave Santiago a sideways glance and said with a frown, "Nonsense."

"Alright then, I'm talking nonsense," Santiago said disdainfully. He then grabbed a chair and took a seat. The old Lennox smirked. "The Harvey family has such good-looking offsprings," he thought. "Unfortunately, their attitude stinks."

Jepherson glanced at Santiago. One could not tell whether he was annoyed or secretly delighted as Santiago provoked Brooklyn. He then looked at Brooklyn and said, "He's been spoiled by my Dad. I didn't bother to discipline him when my Dad wasn't around. Hopefully, you won't take his words to heart for he's just a mouthy idiot."

"Hmph!" Brooklyn snorted. He was visibly offended. Jepherson had been calm. Out of boredom, Santiago turned impatient. He sat cross-legged and said, "Hey, old man..."

"Santiago," Jepherson interjected. Santiago immediately replied, "Alright, I get it."

He sounded impatient. Fortunately, at the very least, he watched his manners.

Jepherson was still waiting to be seated. Annoyed, Santiago said, "We've been here for a while. Why hasn't someone offered Jepherson a seat?"

Brooklyn shrugged him off. "Well, you came uninvited in the first place," he said.

Jepherson said with a smile, "You're right. We shouldn't have come here uninvited."

Brooklyn did not respond to Jepherson's remark. In spite of that, Jepherson was not offended.

"I have no choice but to pay you a sudden visit," he added. "It was all Santiago's fault."

Brooklyn remained silent. Yousif snorted and said, "Well why cause mischief at our home if you know that it isn't proper?"

Brooklyn glowered at Yousif. He then stopped talking, lest Brooklyn told him off again.

Jepherson flashed a smile. Then, he said matter-of-factly, "I agree with you. However, he's a grown-up. So, I can't meddle in his love affairs. I can't stop him since he's adamant that he wants to come over. Now that he refuses to leave, I've got to bring him in. He's my brother after all."

Something crossed the old Lennox's mind the moment Jepherson explained himself. "Perhaps..." he thought.

"Perhaps, it has something to do with that incident?"

Chapter 1042

Brooklyn was perceptive enough to know what Jepherson was trying to convey. Nonetheless, he did not bother responding to his remarks.

Otherwise, he would have fallen right into his trap.

Nonetheless, he knew that Jepherson would not leave unless the Cole family came clean about what they had done.

Jepherson then glanced at Santiago and said, "Well, since our visit isn't welcomed, let me be frank and tell things straight from me then. We'll leave afterwards."

The old Lennox glanced at Brooklyn before directing his gaze at the two siblings. He had a feeling that there was more to what Jepherson said. He had only just scratched the surface.

"Old Master hasn't been well," the old Lennox said. "The doctor has told us that his memory is deteriorating. He would need to rack his brains to recall what has happened."

The old Lennox glanced at Brooklyn as he spoke. However, he remained silent.

Jepherson smirked. "Well, so Lennox is apparently the one calling the shots in the Cole family's household."

Immediately, the old Lennox said, "It was the doctor. He told us about it. I did not make that up."

Irritated, Santiago said contemptuously, "What the h*ll are you saying?"

Jepherson did not bother telling Santiago off for being rude. The old Lennox was silent at that moment. "It's clear that they're up to no good," he thought.

"Yesterday, Santiago told me that he has fallen in love with a girl," Jepherson said. "I didn't take his words seriously then. However, he went so far as to assert that he would marry this girl, and only this girl. Well, I was still a little doubtful and decided to shrug him off. This morning, to my surprise, he told me that he wanted to propose to the girl. It was then that I found out that the girl is Cynthia."

Brooklyn was not provoked. "What's with a brat audacious enough to want to marry Cynthia?" Brooklyn thought.

"Did he now?" Brooklyn said. Being blunt, he did not bother if he sounded insensitive. He then snorted and gave Jepherson a piercing stare.

"Granted that he's a little too young for her," Jepherson said. "But he makes up for it by being honest."

"Well, all your geese are swans anyway," Yousif said while he was sniggering. "My daughter's too good for that son of a b*tch," he thought. "He's bloody underage yet he fell for my daughter."

"Santiago's a nice guy," Jepherson said. "It's just that he has an unconventional approach to life. I'll bring this up to my Dad. Hopefully, he'll be able to return home to help out. Anyway, it is my wish that the Cole family would give Santiago and Cynthia their blessings for this marriage. After all, it is customary for two lovebirds to tie the knot. It is a happy occasion for both families."

As soon as Jepherson was done talking, the old Lennox said, "Mr. Jepherson, Miss Cynthia is 23 years old. May I ask, how old is Mr. Santiago?"

Jepherson forced a smile as he looked at the old Lennox. "I suppose it is none of your business," Jepherson said. "You aren't a member of the Cole family, are you?"

The old Lennox blushed. Then, he said, "I didn't mean to be meddlesome."

"Enough said," Jepherson said. "We don't want to make a fuss about it. That isn't the reason we're here in the first place anyway."

"Old Master, I don't think age is a problem," Jepherson said. "In the meantime, Santiago would mend his ways. If the proposal materializes, then I'm sure that it'll be great news for Capital City."

Feeling pleased, Santiago could be seen shaking his legs while Jepherson was talking.

Brooklyn directed his gaze towards Santiago, who was looking smug. Yousif was tempted to give Santiago a hard slap.

Those Harvey siblings were such bullies. What was with them coming over and shaming the Cole family? Yousif thought angrily.

"Well, I've shared my thoughts on this," Brooklyn said. "I remember telling you that you aren't quite a compatible match for Cynthia. However, it surprises me that you remain resolute to this day and even want to propose to her. You have put me in an awkward position."

"Cynthia's one haughty girl who would not easily fall for any men. Even if she does, it would be in vain if it does not eventually lead to marriage."

"Flynt has always enjoyed friendly relations with Cynthia. However, it has come to my knowledge that Flynt isn't on good terms with you. It will be rather challenging for you to improve your relationship with Flynt. I think you'd better not propose to Cynthia lest you find yourself in dire straits."

"I take it that you are agreeable to the proposal as long as Cynthia accepts it?" Santiago asked. Brooklyn forced a laugh. It was one cunning chortle.

"The young are generally gung-ho. However, the Cole family aren't afraid of the young. We appreciate your kindness to have proposed. Anyway, let's give this a pass and forget about it." Then, he lay down, pulled the quilt, and said, "I'm an old man. I've got to hit the sack now. See the guests off, please."

"This way please, Mr. Jepherson and Mr. Santiago," the old Lennox said. He could not wait to drive them away.

"Let's go," Jepherson said. "I've told you that he won't be agreeable to the proposal."

"Well, he's not agreeable to the proposal now," Santiago said. "But he could change his mind in the days to come. Let's see if he is agreeable when I father a child."

Santiago then led the way and walked out of the room. Jepherson trailed along. The old Lennox was exasperated. "Isn't he disparaging the Cole family?" he thought.

Nevertheless, he did not dare to rebuke them. After all, Brooklyn did not respond to Santiago's remarks either.

The old Lennox then led them out of the house. Worried that they could be lingering around in the vicinity of the house, he waited to make sure that they left. After that, he hurried to go into the house. The moment he walked into Brooklyn's room, he saw him having an outburst of anger. He had practically smashed all the items in the room.

"Look at this mess," Brooklyn said. "Take a long hard look at it. You've been such a candy-*ss. That's why the two siblings dare to push me around. Who the h*ll is Calvin? Those two sons of his are nothing but dirt under my feet. How dare they provoke me!"

Brooklyn was so angry that he could barely breathe. Yousif remained motionless. Even though he was injured, he did not dare to say anything, much less walk out of the room.

The old Lennox went ahead to pacify Brooklyn. It was then that Brooklyn started to quieten down.

"Mr. Yousif, I guess you'd better be making a move," said the old Lennox. Yousif then turned around and left. It was at that moment that the old Lennox looked at the door and whispered to Brooklyn, "Old Master, I think the two siblings have some hidden agendas."

"Come to think of it, Santiago paid you a visit as soon as he left the hospital. Don't you think he's here to denounce us?"

Brooklyn snorted and said, "Well, they have foolishly assumed that I'd accede to their whims and fancies if they were to bait me by using Cynthia. Everyone in Capital City has to bow to me. Just because they have Calvin and Rhys as support, they thought that they could do anything and everything as they pleased. They're clearly biting off more than they could chew."

"Old Master, what do you mean?"

"Tell Flynt about this matter and get him to deal with it. He has always been on good terms with Cynthia. It's about time to test his calibre. Otherwise, outsiders may think that the Cole family are a bunch of weaklings."

Brooklyn was annoyed. If Jaqueline was around, then there would not be so much drama. It was all Steffan's fault. "Hmph..."

Brooklyn could not help but to snort the moment he thought of Steffan, who had taken Jaqueline away. "That's ridiculous," Brooklyn thought.

"You've got to take care of your health," the old Lennox said as soon as Brooklyn snapped. "Otherwise, they will gloat at you." As Brooklyn gradually calmed down, the old Lennox put his thinking cap on to analyze the matter.

Chapter 1043

As Jepherson and Santiago walked out of the Cole family's home, they each got into their own cars. Jepherson then sped off. Santiago hurried after him. From expressways to local streets, the two siblings went about racing each other. Jepherson led the high-speed car chase as he drove to the top of a hill. Refusing to concede defeat, Santiago tried to play catch-up. He stopped when he was a dozen or so meters away from Jepherson. Then, he got out of the car.

As they reached the top of the hill, Jepherson looked for somewhere to sit. Santiago followed suit.

The two siblings did not talk. They sat there for a while. As it was getting late, Santiago yawned and said he was feeling drowsy. They then made a move.

When they arrived at the foot of the hill, Jepherson told Santiago, "Head to the school and pick Raeleigh up. Let's go for a meal."

"Why don't you go?" Santiago said as he leaned back in his seat. "Well, can you cook us a meal then?" Jepherson asked.

"I'll pick her up then," Santiago replied. Cooking was particularly bothersome to him.

He recalled an incident in his childhood. He was about three years old then. Calvin told him to get something to eat. Calvin meant to say that he could help himself with some light snacks such as cookies or apples.

However, Santiago took it out of context. He went ahead to cook up a storm. Roast chicken was his favorite.

Then, he got off the couch and dashed into the kitchen. His mother was not at home then. His nannies were not around to look after him either. He then went about searching for a chicken in the freezer. Before long, he managed to find a frozen chicken in the lower compartment of the freezer. It had been a herculean task for him.

He was ooh-ing and aah-ing the moment he laid eyes on the chicken.

He put the chicken on the gas stove. He then turned on the gas stove and began roasting the chicken.

Ever since then, Santiago would feel a giddy sensation whenever he entered the kitchen. Therefore, he avoided kitchens like the plague these days. Truth be told, he had been wreaking havoc in the kitchen practically every year during his childhood.

In view of this, Belle jokingly used to exhort that under no circumstances should Santiago get a house that was equipped with a kitchen lest his life was in jeopardy. She claimed that it was better to eat out or order food via food delivery platforms than to risk his life.

Santiago stepped on the accelerator pedal and whizzed away. Jepherson made a detour to Raeleigh's school.

Stuart was at Santiago's villa. He was busy preparing a meal. Jepherson had instructed him to prepare some nutritious meals as Raeleigh would be dropping by.

While he was preparing a meal, Jepherson drove into the villa.

Raeleigh's lecture had just ended. She then headed straight to the dormitory. The moment she lay down, Santiago called. It was as if he had timed the call.

As the phone conversation ended, Raeleigh told Scarlett to get ready to leave the dormitory. Then, they headed straight to the school gate. Soon after that, they saw Santiago's car. Raeleigh hurriedly walked towards his car. She bent down and looked into the car to ascertain that it was Santiago sitting in the car. Then, she heaved a sigh of relief, knowing that he had managed to cheat death once again.

Raeleigh pulled up the door handle and got into the back passenger seat. Scarlett went in after her. She then locked the door. As they set off to the villa, Raeleigh asked Santiago where he had been for the better part of the day.

“What’s with you concerning yourself with me though?” Santiago asked as he glanced at the rearview mirror. He was visibly amused. Raeleigh rolled her eyes at him. “Well, why are you feeling elated?”

Santiago guffawed at her remark before speeding off. Soon after that, they arrived at the villa. Santiago headed straight to his room to take a nap as he was feeling sleepy. As Raeleigh walked into the villa alongside Scarlett, she could hear someone calling her in the kitchen.

Scarlett went into the kitchen as Raeleigh took off her shoes.

Jepherson was cooking bean curds. He made the bean curds himself.

Raeleigh took a closer look at the bean curds. It surprised her that Jepherson knew how to prepare this dish.

“How was it?” Jepherson asked. No one was in the kitchen. Raeleigh flashed a gentle smile. “It looks delish,” she said.

Jepherson kissed her and said, “Well, what are you going to do to repay my kindness?”

“What do you want?” Raeleigh said. “It’s just a meal. What’s more, it’s not that I instructed you to prepare the meal. It’s you...” Raeleigh stopped talking as soon as Jepherson pressed his lips against hers.

After kissing for a while, both of them were breathing heavily. Worried that somebody may be sneaking a peek, Raeleigh pushed Jepherson away and said, “Hey, stop it. Someone could be looking.”

“Hand me a bowl,” Jepherson said. “Enjoy it while it’s warm,” Jepherson said while holding a ladle. Raeleigh immediately handed him a small bowl. He then lowered his head to kiss her once again before he carried on cooking. Raeleigh looked at his back and asked, “Have you found it?”

While Jepherson was cooking the bean curds, he replied, “It takes time. We can’t be hasty.”

“What about the list?” Raeleigh added. “Have you gone through the list?” Raeleigh went through the notebook the other day as she wanted to check if she had missed out anyone who could potentially shed some light on his sister’s whereabouts.

Jepherson shook his head and said, “Nah, I haven’t. I’ve been busy. I’ll look into it in the next few days.”

Raeleigh did not probe afterwards as she was fixated on the pot of bean curds. After waiting for a while, Jepherson was done cooking. Raeleigh was very much looking forward to tasting it. Jepherson sprinkled some scallions on the bean curds. It looked like a perfect bowl of dish. The bean curds looked tender and silky-smooth, the kinds that would melt instantly in the mouth as one ate it.

Although she had not sampled it, she was already impressed with the aroma of the dish.

Jepherson turned around and handed Raeleigh a bowl. Raeleigh took a spoon and scooped a spoonful of bean curds. She then blew on it to cool it before eating.

Raeleigh frowned. “Something must have fallen into this pot of dish,” she thought.

Raeleigh laid the spoon in the bowl. Then, she removed the object from her mouth. She was blown away the moment she saw the object.

Jepherson took the diamond ring. Although it did not look particularly outstanding, it was nonetheless a rather expensive ring.

“Marry me,” Jepherson said softly as he put the diamond ring on Raeleigh’s ring finger. He looked at her intently. Raeleigh was transfixed by his piercing gaze. Dumbfounded, she was at a loss for words. She did not jump for joy. Neither was she moved to tears. She found it too surreal to believe that Jepherson had just proposed to her.

“Please don’t tell me that you aren’t marrying me,” Jepherson said as he pinched Raeleigh’s chin. “I remember you telling me that you aren’t after fame or fortune. And all that you’ve wanted is my love.” Raeleigh shook her head. Just as she wanted to push him away, Jepherson lowered his head to kiss her passionately.

Raeleigh was out of breath. As much as she felt like hauling him away, she did not as she was not strong enough. She was reluctant to haul him away anyway.

Chapter 1044

Now that Raeleigh had received the ring and the bracelet, a sense of unease crept up on her. Even though she had expressly informed Jepherson that she was not after fame and fortune, his proposal somehow caught her off guard. She felt that he was rather self-serving in that he did as he pleased and did not consider her feelings.

In other words, as long as it made him happy, he would go public with their relationship.

A few people could be seen sitting in the living room on the first floor. Raeleigh was sitting beside Jepherson while he was chatting with Santiago. Raeleigh stood up and went upstairs. Since she would not be returning to her home, she went upstairs to have a rest.

She wanted to collect herself too.

A few moments later, Jepherson went upstairs. As soon as he went into the room, he saw Raeleigh looking pensive as she fell into a daze.

Jepherson closed the door and walked towards Raeleigh. He wrapped his arms around her waist. Then, he lowered his head and whispered in her ear, “Are you mad at me?”

Raeleigh shook her head. “I was just thinking that you’d probably regret your decision a few years down the road,” she said. “You aren’t exactly sure how things will pan out too.”

“Granted, there’re lots of things in life which are beyond our control,” Jepherson said. “But that doesn’t mean we should give in and not fight for our lives. I mean, you wouldn’t have fallen in love with a scaredy-cat, would you?”

Raeleigh laughed. “You jokester. I realize you are getting funnier by the day.”

“Well, men are naturally wacky,” Jepherson said. “It’s just a matter of who they want to show that side of wackiness to.” At that moment, Mr. Calvin crossed his mind. He reckoned that his father best

embodied the spirit of wackiness. Hence, he could not help but to quirk his brow as he thought about this.

He then lowered his head and kissed Raeleigh. Raeleigh did not avoid his kiss. She put her hands around Jepherson's shoulder. Jepherson held her by the waist with his left hand and pressed her back with his right hand.

Raeleigh blushed and pushed Jepherson away. Jepherson looked at her with a pair of eyes that were full of affection. He then bent over to carry her.

"Silent, lest somebody overheard us," Jepherson said. He seemed to have said that on purpose. Raeleigh blushed. She bit her lips and glared at Jepherson.

"He must have said that on purpose," she thought.

Jepherson clearly knew that Raeleigh had been worrying that somebody would overhear their conversation. Yet, he reminded Raeleigh to stay silent. Hence, Raeleigh was convinced that he had said that deliberately.

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Raeleigh got up Tristany in the morning and went back to the university campus alongside Santiago and Scarlett. As soon as she arrived at the school, she found out that a new female student had just enrolled in the school and that she was related to the Cole family. However, she had no idea which member of the Cole family had enrolled their daughter in this school.

That girl was a certain Xandra Cole. She had a lovely name.

Word got around that she was one beautiful girl who had stellar academic results and that she had gone through a few rounds of examinations before enrolling in the school.

"Not another member of the Cole family," Scarlett said. "Raeleigh, why are the Coles practically everywhere?" Amused, Raeleigh said, "I don't understand why you are making such a fuss though. Aren't you tired of whining?"

Scarlett snorted and said, "No, I'm not."

Santiago was strolling with his hands in his pockets. Raeleigh gazed at his back. She seemed to be very fond of green shirts, particularly grass green. She reckoned that she would be able to pinpoint Santiago's location effortlessly at Elkton University as long as he was clad in this shade of green.

Clad in a grass-green shirt with hair that could be easily styled, Santiago looked like an average Joe as he strolled in a carefree manner. Hence, Raeleigh could not understand why the onlooking ladies were spellbound when they laid their eyes on him.

"If Santiago says anything now, then the girls would go to great lengths to please him," she thought.

Raeleigh reckoned that love was not as powerful as charm. Some people had such a charm in them that they could enthrall and enchant everyone.

“The Cole family is one big family,” Santiago said. “The men would marry seven wives. Each wife would give birth to two children. It’s not surprising then that the Coles are everywhere.”

Raeleigh burst into peals of laughter. Then, she cupped her mouth in an attempt to keep a straight face. “That’s so mean of him,” she thought.

Scalette looked at Raeleigh and said, “What’s so funny though? Mr. Santiago’s telling the truth.”

Santiago stopped walking. He turned around and looked at Raeleigh. “There’s a basketball match in the afternoon,” Santiago said. “Let’s go and watch, shall we?”

Raeleigh shook her head. “Nah. I’m checking out my design blueprint later.”

“Well, let’s forget about it then,” Santiago said. He then turned around. Raeleigh walked towards him and said, “You don’t have to keep me company all the time. I’m fine on my own.”

Raeleigh did not wish to see Santiago idling his time away to keep her company. She thought that it was not fair that he stuck around her all the time.

As Santiago did not respond to her remarks, he left her speechless. “Let’s watch the match then. I’ll check out my design blueprint in the evening.”

Santiago paused for a moment before turning around to look at Raeleigh. “You don’t appreciate basketball matches, do you?”

Irritated, Raeleigh said, “How self-absorbed can you get? Just because something is great to you doesn’t mean it is great to others. By the same token, you can’t just assume that people don’t measure up to you just because you’re good at a certain thing.”

Santiago smirked. “Well, then I take it that you know how to appreciate basketball matches,” he said.

Raeleigh did not want to give in. She said, “At the very least, I’ve watched a basketball match even if I don’t quite appreciate it.”

“Alright then,” Santiago said. He then turned around and headed straight to Raeleigh’s dormitory to take a nap. Raeleigh was then a high-achieving student. It was not compulsory that she attend all lectures in school. Hence, she decided not to attend her lecture that day.

In the meantime, Raeleigh spent time reading. As the match drew closer, Santiago got up from the bed and freshened up. Then, he took his clothes and headed straight to the basketball club. While he was walking, Scarlette said excitedly, “It’s a pity that you missed the previous match. It was a great match. Today’s D-day, the final. If our team wins, then we will be awarded a scholarship.”

The moment Raeleigh overheard Scarlette mentioning the scholarship, she looked at her. “How much is it worth?” she asked.

“Tens of thousands of dollars,” Scarlette said. “I didn’t check the details. I’m not entitled to it anyway.” Raeleigh gave Santiago a bizarre look and asked, “Are you short of cash?”

Santiago glanced at her and said, “No, I’m not.”

“Why are you vying for the scholarship then?” Raeleigh said. “It should be given to other students, shouldn’t it? After all, your family owns Elkton University.” Raeleigh made a legitimate point. However, Santiago was amused. “Come on, don’t make a fuss about it,” he said. “We’re just having fun. No one cares about the scholarship anyway. I mean, the students who enrol in this school come from reasonably wealthy families. Thirty grand may be a lot of money for the man on the streets. However, it’s nothing but an insignificant sum for students in this school.”

Santiago then made his way to the basketball club. Raeleigh was surprised to find everyone making way for him the moment he walked into the club.

Santiago went to the changing room to change his clothes. Raeleigh trailed along and waited outside. She was taken aback the moment she saw Santiago walking out of the changing room.

Scarlette was not surprised, since she was used to seeing his bad boy look. So did his family members and everyone in Capital City.

However, Raeleigh seemed to be mesmerized. He was spotted wearing a shirt in black as he walked out of the changing room. “Those sneakers are tight,” he said as he lowered his head while walking.

“I’ve got another pair for you, Mr. Santiago,” Scarlette said. “Wait a moment.” As soon as Scarlette left, Santiago raised his head and looked at Raeleigh. “Haven’t you seen someone as good-looking as I am?” he said.

Raeleigh rolled her eyes at him and said, “What’s the point of being good-looking if you’re good-for-nothing?”

“I’m not good-for-nothing,” Santiago retorted. He wanted to flick her but eventually held back. “Well, forget about it,” he said.

He then turned around and walked out of the club. Puzzled, Raeleigh said, “What do you mean?”

Chapter 1045

Soon afterwards, Scarlette was back. She put the pair of black sneakers on the floor. Santiago waved at Raeleigh.

“Come here.”

Raeleigh had no idea what he was up to. When she came closer, Santiago held onto her shoulder as he put on his sneakers. He treated Raeleigh as if she were mere railings in order to keep his balance.

Raeleigh gave him a grumpy look. She looked unusually annoyed.

After putting on his shoes, Santiago did some warm up exercises. Then, he made his way to the basketball court. Raeleigh and Scarlette tagged along. There was quite a commotion when they reached the court. Everyone was cheering for Santiago. A sea of onlooking crowds could be seen encircling the court at that moment.

“Take a seat,” Santiago said as he motioned Raeleigh and Scarlette to head to the seating area. The girls glanced around the court. Then, they made their way to the seating area.

Quite a number of players could be seen standing at the court by then. Raeleigh noticed that the members of the two opposing teams were already there to get ready for the match. One team was clad in black, while the other was clad in red. As both teams exuded the same level of commanding presence, she had no idea how the match would play out.

Raeleigh looked at the design blueprint on her cell phone. She reckoned no further improvement was required. However, Jepherson insisted that she had it reviewed once again, especially the interior section of the car and the color palette. He told her that reviews were necessary, unless she was absolutely certain that her designs were impeccable.

Raeleigh heeded his advice. She had been scrutinizing the blueprint.

Raeleigh had an unusual fault in her character. She possessed a tendency to think that her designs are flawless. However, she could be rather critical when it came to reviewing other designers' works.

This had been bothering her for quite some time. However, she did not make a fuss about it.

She believed that nothing was perfect. She realized that her inability to spot flaws in her own designs could be indicative of her own incompetence. She believed that great designers should instantaneously be able to tell which parts of their work needed improvement.

In contrast, average designers tended to nitpick other designers' works instead of identifying the flaws in their own designs.

While Raeleigh was looking at her cell phone, Scarlett rubbed her hands excitedly in anticipation of the match. She was so exuberant that she felt like dashing into the court and being part of the match.

Raeleigh lowered her head and said, "This is a basketball match, not a wrestling match. Why are you so charged up?"

"I don't think you'd ever get it," Scarlett said as she waved her off. She did not bother to explain as she reckoned that Raeleigh was not on the same wavelength anyway.

Raeleigh then continued looking at her phone while Scarlett kept cheering. Soon afterwards, the match started. Raeleigh raised her head and watched intently as one player grabbed the basketball and attempted to dribble the ball and score. As Santiago snuck a glance at them, Raeleigh raised her hand and made a gesture to him. Bewildered, Santiago flashed a smile. Then, he turned around and looked at the court as the opposing team player attempted to shoot.

Raeleigh kept her cell phone and directed her gaze towards Santiago. Whenever Santiago looked at her, she made the same gesture to him.

Puzzled, Scarlett asked, "That gesture, what does it mean?"

"Keep fighting!"

"I thought it meant, 'you can do it'," Scarlett said. She made a similar gesture to Raeleigh, who then rolled her eyes at her and said, "Are you sure about that?"

"Isn't that so?"

“No, it isn’t.”

...

While they were talking, Zorion walked into the seating area alongside Deanna. Two seats were unoccupied in the front row. Raeleigh was not sure if someone had deliberately left them unoccupied. Zorion walked towards Raeleigh and sat beside her while Deanna took another seat.

“Hi, Raeleigh. Glad to see you,” Deanna said as soon as she took a seat. Raeleigh replied with a smile, “Yeah. I didn’t want to come, but Scarlettte insisted that I should come along.”

Deanna blushed and said, “Likewise, I’m just keeping my brother company.”

Raeleigh did not respond to Deanna’s remarks. She looked at Zorion and said, “Well, let’s enjoy the game.”

“Alright,” Zorion said with a smile as he gave Raeleigh a light-hearted look. Then, he turned around and looked at Santiago. It was quite a rare sight to behold, to find Santiago clad in sports attire, and in black to boot. The girls were ooh-ing and aah-ing as they caught sight of him.

On the other hand, Deanna had been staring intently at Santiago.

There were a lot of spectators. Raeleigh had a feeling that most of them were more interested in the players than the match itself, especially those who looked infatuated.

Raeleigh glanced at her cell phone before directing her gaze towards Santiago. She was interested in how the match played out. However, Zorion paid more attention to her than the match itself.

Raeleigh was aware. Nonetheless, she feigned nonchalance. Not that she could tell Zorion off anyway.

The first half of the game ended. Santiago walked out of the court. Raeleigh remained seated. As much as Deanna wanted to greet Santiago, she held herself back. She was worried that Santiago would be displeased.

As soon as the crowd dispersed, Raeleigh got up and walked towards Santiago to hand him a bottle of water and towel.

Santiago took the towel and wiped his face before turning around to drink some water. While he was drinking, he looked at the center of the court. “Look, those two players right in front,” Raeleigh said. “I think they will play a trick on you in the second half of the game. You’d better watch out.”

While Raeleigh was talking, she walked closer to Santiago and adjusted his attire.

Santiago snuck a glance at Raeleigh’s delicate face while he was drinking water. “I saw them talking about the movement of your legs, twice,” Raeleigh said. “Their gaze suggested that they are up to no good. You tend to overlook your opponents. But you’d have to play along. Maintain the same dribbling technique in the second half of the game but don’t shoot. We’re going to be so proud if we win. Come over here, I’ll explain.”

While Raeleigh was talking, Santiago put the water bottle on the ground. Raeleigh whispered in his ear as he lowered his head. Then, he wiped his face and looked at Raeleigh as he made his way to the court. "Well, this girl knows a thing or two about basketball," he said.

Raeleigh was bewildered. Frowning with displeasure, she said, "What's with your flippancy attitude whenever I'm being serious?"

"Well, I can't take you seriously, can I?" Santiago said as he chuckled. Raeleigh grabbed the water bottle and said, "Be sure to heed my advice."

"Alright then," Santiago said. Then, he walked towards the center of the court. Raeleigh turned around and watched as he made his way to the court. As soon as he reached the court, she headed straight to the seating area, carrying the water bottle and towel. She stared at the court intently as she waited for the second half of the match to commence.

At the court, Santiago could be seen getting ready for the match.

Chapter 1046

Santiago had been playing half-heartedly since the second half of the game commenced. He had been losing control of the ball whenever he dribbled. The score had been fifty-six to twenty-one. In a short span of time, the opposing team was able to catch up. The current score was then fifty-six to fifty-five.

Like a cat on a hot tin roof, the PE teacher was agitated at that moment. He directed his pointer at Santiago, as if grumbling about how he had been messing up. However, he did not reprimand him directly. After all, his family owned Elkton University. Having had to suppress his anger, he was therefore not in a good state of mind.

Raeleigh could not help but to be amused to find the PE teacher rubbing his forehead whenever Santiago lost control while dribbling. Had she not been worrying, she would have laughed out loud.

Now that the opposing team was only one point behind, the PE teacher did not say anything, but the coach yelled, "Hey, Santiago. What's wrong with you?"

Santiago glanced at Raeleigh and made a gesture to her. Then, Raeleigh gave him a cursory nod and clenched her fist to cheer him on. Speechless, Scarlett looked at Raeleigh and said, "Are you nuts?"

Raeleigh ignored her. She was transfixed by the two men who had been keeping an eye on Santiago. Despite their initial devious plan to harm Santiago, they were then shrugging him off as one incompetent player.

Everyone was thrilled as there was one more minute before the match ended. Any team that managed to score would emerge victorious.

All of a sudden, Santiago turned aggressive. Everyone watched in awe as he snatched the ball from the opposing team member before dribbling his way to the basket.

The rest of the players were completely befuddled. As the opposing team members attempted to stop him, he jumped and shot the ball before crossing the three-point arc. And so, he scored a three-point ball.

It was a score in the nick of time, effectively robbing the opposing team of an opportunity to make another last-minute shot.

Santiago's team was one point ahead moments ago. Right then, his team was four points ahead.

As the basketball fell to the ground, Santiago turned to look at Raeleigh. Raeleigh was all smiles as she stood up and applauded.

The audience members sitting near Raeleigh directed their gazes at her. Unmoved by the cheering crowd, Santiago waved at her as if she was the only person in the bleachers. However, she did not walk towards him. All of a sudden, the spectators cheered with thunderous applause. Santiago walked towards Raeleigh and hugged her.

Raeleigh did not resist. She reckoned that she was merely giving a friendly hug to Santiago, rejoicing at his victory.

After holding Raeleigh tightly for a while, Santiago let her go. He then laid his left hand on her shoulder and held her waist with his right hand. This pose would eventually become the popular pose among the boys in school who wanted to come across as chivalrous.

Raeleigh pushed him away and said, "It's about time to get changed."

Raeleigh wanted to make a move. However, she knew that Santiago would trail along wherever she went. Hence, she asked him to get changed.

Santiago took a towel and headed to the changing room. Raeleigh tagged along. At that moment, Deanna stood up.

"Raeleigh."

She sounded calm. Raeleigh could tell that she wanted to have a word with her.

Raeleigh turned around and looked at her. "What's the matter?" she said.

"I wanted to ask you something about design," Deanna said as she stood behind Zorion. "Can we go somewhere quieter?" She could be seen holding a handbag. One could tell that she had dressed up. Clad in an elegant white skirt, she looked like an elegant princess.

Raeleigh glanced at the nosy Scarlett and said, "Let Santiago know that I've got a personal matter to attend to and that I'll meet him shortly at the dormitory's entrance."

"But Raeleigh, Mr. Santiago won't be pleased," Scarlett said. She felt that Deanna was being ludicrous. "What does she take Raeleigh for?" she thought.

Raeleigh nudged Scarlett and said, "Got it."

Raeleigh then brushed Scarlett off and followed Deanna to the opposite side of the basketball court. "Well, it's not my fault then if Mr. Santiago blames me," Scarlett said.

Raeleigh did not respond to her remark. She paused for a while as she walked past Zorion. Then, she left alongside Deanna.

Zorion was not exactly sure why Deanna wanted to have a word with Raeleigh. Be that as it may, he could tell that it had something to do with Santiago.

Deanna slowly left Zorion and walked out of the basketball court. As she led Raeleigh to a quiet spot, she said, "Well, it's not really about design."

Deanna lowered her head. Raeleigh said with a smile, "Yeah, I knew it. I know what you want to tell me."

"What do you think I want to tell you then?" Deanna said. She was blushing as she did not expect that Raeleigh could see through her intentions. She was at a loss for words and a little agitated.

Raeleigh thought for a moment and said, "Jepherson and I are a couple. But somehow, I was probably a tad intimate to Santiago. That's kind of indecent. That's what you've been thinking. Am I right?"

Raeleigh spoke straight from the shoulder as she wanted to spare Deanna the embarrassment. She felt obligated to protect her image. She thought that it was a good idea to be forthright and come clean with her.

Deanna pursed her lips and said, "Well, you weren't entirely right though. Santiago's a bit of a ladies' man. Don't be fooled by him."

Amused, Raeleigh said, "Girls tend to take a liking to him and enjoy his company too. It takes two to tango. So, I guess it isn't right to say that he's a guy who is perpetually flirting around. Well, at least that's my impression of him. He's going to be faithful if he meets the right girl."

"Zorion shares the same opinion," Deanna said. She then paused as she was at a loss for words. "The people who badmouth him are basically green-eyed monsters or people who don't truly understand him. People who know him well will vouch for his character."

Deanna was happy to hear that. However, she was still a little concerned. "Well, then. Do you like him?" she asked.

"As I said, the crux of the matter should not revolve around liking him or otherwise. We may seem close to each other, but we aren't romantically involved. He was merely trying to protect me. After all, he is the younger brother of my boyfriend."

"Oh, right," Deanna said. She then asked Raeleigh, "He hasn't dated any girls, has he?"

"I guess so," Raeleigh said. "Not that I've asked him." Raeleigh was a little worried as she thought of Cynthia. She had no idea how to go about persuading Santiago to stay away from her.

The other day, Santiago went to the Cole family home alone and almost got into trouble. Raeleigh was surprised to learn that Santiago had brought Jepherson along subsequently.

Raeleigh had no idea what the two brothers were up to.

Chapter 1047

Deanna was excited to learn that Santiago had never had a girlfriend. Exhilarated, she chimed in, "Well, Santiago isn't exactly a brat. He's saved my life."

“Of course he’s not a brat. The Atkinsons and the Harvey have known each other for the longest time. Both of you were childhood friends who grew up together. Naturally, he won’t turn his back on you when you’re in danger.”

“Really?” Deanna said. She looked skeptical. “Yes, absolutely,” Raeleigh said.

“Raeleigh, could you please do me a favor?” Deanna said blushing. “Find out what kind of girls Santiago likes.” Raeleigh wondered how Deanna would react if she came to know that Santiago was in a romantic relationship with Cynthia. “Oh, you poor thing. What have you got yourself into,” she thought.

Raeleigh paused for a while and said, “Sure. But it will take time though. I’ve got to find an opportunity.”

“No biggie. Be sure to find out...”

Deanna remained silent afterwards. As she bit her lips, she lowered her head. “Raeleigh, do you think I’m someone who’s not loyal when it comes to relationships?”

“Nah, I think you’re pretty loyal,” Raeleigh said. Since she was not sure if Santiago would take a liking to her, she could only say so.

Deanna clasped Raeleigh’s arm and said, “We’re still friends, aren’t we?”

Raeleigh turned around and looked at her. “Of course. I mean, if you don’t mind befriending me.”

“Well, I’d love to keep you as a friend,” Deanna said. “I’ve always wanted to be your friend. But I held myself back. I was just too embarrassed to befriend you then, since I’ve been making mischief.”

Deanna lowered her head, looking rather ashamed of her past self.

“Let bygones be bygones,” Raeleigh said. “You didn’t mean to cause trouble then. In fact, I was the one who wronged you in the first place as I went into a relationship with Jepherson despite knowing that he was supposed to marry you.”

“That’s so nice of you for not blaming me,” Deanna said. “Have you forgotten the incident where I turned my back on you when Flynt wanted to take you away?” Deanna was on the verge of crying as she recollected that incident.

Raeleigh turned around and looked at Deanna. “I haven’t had friends since I was ten. Scarlett and you are my only friends. I was the one who wronged you in the first place. You weren’t at fault for turning your back on me. You didn’t mean to and it had never been your intention. It had to do with your upbringing where you were brought up differently compared to other children. Others may not empathize with you, but I do.”

While Raeleigh was talking, Deanna curled her lips and cried. She clasped Raeleigh in her arms and cried under the tree. It was as if she finally found a kindred spirit who truly understood her.

Raeleigh raised her hand and patted Deanna on her back. She had initially thought that she would be able to resolve the problem easily. Alas, it had become more bothersome then.

Zorion watched as Deanna sobbed. Although she was crying her eyes out, Zorion did not bother consoling her. Instead, he turned around and leaned against the trunk.

Zorion felt that there was something amiss about Santiago's gaze.

Feeling low in spirits, he did not feel like talking.

Raeleigh spent some time consoling Deanna. After that, Deanna said, "Raeleigh, I'd like to stay over at the dormitory. Is that okay with you?"

Raeleigh thought for a moment. While she was walking, she looked at Deanna. "Santiago's at my dorm now," Raeleigh said. "I've got to ask him. I guess you should inform Zorion too. Santiago's been staying there for quite some time. Lots of people have been talking behind our backs. I'm used to it anyway and I couldn't care less."

Deanna held Raeleigh's arm and said, "Well, I don't see what the fuss is about. You guys were merely staying together. I used to share a bedroom with my brother. When I was fifteen, my parents insisted that I sleep in my own bedroom. But I wasn't used to it. In fact, I couldn't sleep well for over a month."

"As a result, I have been sleeping on the desk in the classroom during the day."

"As long as my brother is by my side, I'm able to fall asleep. Otherwise, it'll be difficult to fall asleep. Occasionally, I still have this issue. My Mom said that's a bad habit and that I am like a toddler who couldn't do without her milk for a day."

"Well, I couldn't care less. Zorion and I are twins after all."

Deanna had been blabbering on and on. Raeleigh had no idea what messages she wanted to convey. It was getting late. Raeleigh looked at her watch and said, "You'd better be making a move. I'm heading back to the dorm."

"Raeleigh, let's have dinner together," Deanna said. "It's been a while since we last had a meal together. We're finally reconciled with each other. So, we should have a meal together, shouldn't we?" Deanna grabbed hold of Raeleigh's hand, asking her to stay. "Well, I've got to inform Santiago lest he's worried," Raeleigh said.

"I will accompany you then," Deanna said, refusing to make a move. Raeleigh turned around to look at Zorion, who had been trailing along but made no effort to stop Deanna from bothering her. He truly loved Deanna to bits, as he acceded to all her whims and fancies.

Raeleigh had no choice but to give in. She then made a phone call to Santiago.

The call was connected swiftly. Santiago agreed to join them for dinner. He brought Scarlette along after checking where Raeleigh was.

Soon afterwards, Raeleigh saw Santiago walking alongside Scarlette on the pavement. He had changed into a new set of clothes. As soon as he saw Raeleigh, he walked towards her and asked, "How could you leave without informing me?"

"Well, I did get Scarlette to inform you."

"That doesn't mean you could leave?" Santiago said. It did not go down well with Raeleigh. She did not like his constant nitpicking. She had never seen someone as fussy as him.

Raeleigh did not respond to Santiago's remark. He then stopped whining. At that moment, Raeleigh said, "It's getting late. Shall we join Deanna for dinner? Or do you have something else in mind?"

"Join us," Deanna said. "It's on my brother." Deanna blushed the moment she saw Santiago. Scarlett figured that she knew what had been going on.

"Mr. Santiago wouldn't fall for someone like her, that smug little girl," Scarlett thought.

"Come on, let's go," Zorion said as he walked towards Santiago. Then, he turned around and walked outside. Santiago trailed along as he glanced at Raeleigh.

Everyone was chatting as they walked. Deanna annoyed everyone as she kept blabbering on and on.

Raeleigh had been rather withdrawn. She did not talk much. Most of the time, it was Deanna who talked.

As they got into the car and left the school, Raeleigh felt a great sense of peace. While she was leaning against the car seat and rubbing her head, Scarlett said, "You asked for it."

Raeleigh did not respond to her remark. Santiago looked at her via the rearview mirror. "You alright?" he asked.

Raeleigh shook her head. "I'm feeling tired."

"Well, then let's head back to the dormitory to have a rest," Santiago said. He then made a U-turn. "Oh," Scarlett said. "We haven't had dinner yet," Raeleigh said. "Let's head back after the meal."

Santiago beamed. He ignored her suggestion as he drove in the opposite direction. He bought some street food on the way back.

Deanna was at the restaurant. While she was waiting for Raeleigh, she received a call from Raeleigh. Raeleigh apologized for not being able to make it. Soon, she realized that Santiago had made a U-turn and returned to the school.

Chapter 1048

Agitated, Deanna almost burst into tears as she received the call. "They've agreed to join us for dinner, so why didn't they come?" Deanna thought.

"Zorion, does Santiago hate me?" Deanna said. "Is that the reason he refuses to join us for dinner?" She had a bee in her bonnet. After all, she could tell that Santiago did not quite take a liking to her.

Zorion walked towards Deanna and playfully pinched her cheek. "No worries," he said. "It has got nothing to do with you. I guess something came up. Let's head to the dormitory later to find out what happened. In the meantime, let's dig in. We'll get some food for them in a bit."

Deanna felt much better after Zorion consoled her. She then turned around and started digging in. After that, she ordered some food for Raeleigh.

As darkness set in, boys were prohibited from entering the women's dormitories. There were exceptions to every rule though, as Santiago could be seen lingering in Raeleigh's dormitory.

As soon as Deanna arrived at the dormitory, she called up Raeleigh. Raeleigh walked out of the dormitory as she answered the phone. She saw Deanna and Zorion standing outside, holding some food packages.

Raeleigh walked towards them and said, "We have had dinner."

"This is delish," Deanna said as she handed Raeleigh the food packages. "I've specifically instructed the chef to prepare some for you." Raeleigh glanced at Zorion and said, "Oh, dear. You should have stopped her from ordering any. I mean, it's getting late. It's likely that we would have had our dinner."

As frank as ever, Raeleigh is a straight shooter who spoke her mind. "Well, now that she has bought it, please help yourself to some," Zorion said. "She's just being nice anyway and wants to share some good food. She felt really distressed when she got to know that Santiago did not want to join us for dinner."

Even though Zorion's reply was somewhat short, Raeleigh understood what he wanted to convey.

"Right, come in," Raeleigh said. She held the food package and led them to her dormitory. It was nine o'clock in the evening. Yet, a lot of people could still be seen entering and exiting the dormitories. It was quite a strange sight to find Raeleigh leading two people into her dormitory, even more so to find her bringing a guy and a girl into her dormitory.

When they saw Deanna and Zorion, Scarlette and Santiago understood why Raeleigh walked out of the dormitory moments ago.

As they went into the dormitory, they noticed that Santiago had already changed into his pyjamas. He did not bother getting up from the bed when he saw Deanna and Zorion.

The moment Zorion walked into the dormitory, he said, "Hey, man. Deanna's been missing you. She bought some food for you since you didn't join us for dinner. Try it out."

Then, he put the food on the dining table before taking a seat on Raeleigh's bed. Now that Raeleigh was clad in her pajamas, she did not feel comfortable to find someone sitting on her bed.

Had it been Deanna, Raeleigh would not be as agitated. Since it was Zorion, she was feeling particularly awkward. Besides, she was worried that the siblings may want to stay over.

Santiago seemed to know what was in her mind. He then got up and helped himself to the food that Deanna bought.

Scarlette could not wait to try the dishes. Now that she saw Santiago digging in, she followed suit. Immediately, she got out of the bed and grabbed a stool. Then, she sat beside Santiago and started to dig in.

Raeleigh closed the door before taking a seat opposite Zorion and Deanna.

Since Raeleigh didn't know of any common interests to strike up a conversation with the Atkinson siblings, she directed her gaze towards Santiago, who was gorging on food.

Santiago wolfing down the food gave the impression that he was famished. He looked as if he had gone without food for several days.

Scarlette had a voracious appetite too. Soon afterwards, both of them ate up all the food.

Flabbergasted, Raeleigh was rendered speechless.

"I'm full," Santiago said. He got up and downed a glass of water before heading straight to the washroom to brush his teeth.

Scarlette followed suit. Raeleigh leaned against the wall, looking drowsy. However, the Atkinson siblings showed no signs that they would be leaving anytime soon.

"You guys had better be making a move," Santiago said. "We're hitting the sack soon." Santiago lay down on the bed and looked at the siblings, expecting them to leave. However, Zorion did not oblige. "It's late into the night by the time we get home," Zorion said. "We might as well stay over since there are extra beds here."

Although Raeleigh was surprised, she had mentally prepared herself in the event that the Atkinson siblings would not leave.

"Alright then," Santiago said. "There are four beds. Each of us will have a bed. Unfortunately, both of you have to share a bed."

"Zorion," Deanna cried.

As soon as Santiago was done talking, Deanna called out Zorion in a distressed tone. Zorion then got up and said, "I'll make a move then. Deanna will stay over. I'll inform your teachers tomorrow that you have gone somewhere."

After that, Zorion left the dormitory. Raeleigh glanced at Santiago. He had closed his eyes, signalling that he had deliberately ignored Zorion's suggestion.

"Deanna, you may sleep here," Raeleigh said. "I'll sleep in the upper part of the bunk bed." Raeleigh then went to the upper bed. There were in fact eight beds in the room. All upper beds were stuffed full of things, except one of the upper beds. Raeleigh wanted to sleep on the upper bed as she felt that there would be more privacy.

As she climbed to the upper bed of the bunk bed, Scarlette handed Raeleigh a quilt. While she was at it, she glowered at Raeleigh before she left. "Serve you right," Scarlette thought. "Why the h*ll did you allow her to stay over?"

Scarlette got off the ladder of the bunk bed. Raeleigh lay down and covered herself with the quilt.

The lights were switched off. Everyone called it a night.

Raeleigh had a good night's sleep as there was absolute silence. She got up at five o'clock the next morning and went downstairs to freshen up. As soon as she was back at the dormitory, Jepherson called. He asked her to meet him as he was waiting by the gate of the school.

"What's the matter?" Raeleigh asked. Before she could manage to seek clarification from Jepherson, he hung up on her.

At the dormitory, Scarlett handed Raeleigh's laptop to her. "As per Mr. Jepherson's instruction," Scarlett said.

"Why though? Did he say anything?"

Raeleigh thought that there must have been some pressing matters. Otherwise, he would not have come over to meet her Tristany in the morning.

"Well, I'm not sure," Scarlett said. "Off you go. I'll inform Mr. Santiago." Scarlett left as soon as she relayed the message to Raeleigh. Raeleigh took her laptop and walked out of the dormitory.

There was quite a distance between the school gate and Raeleigh's dormitory. While she was making her way to the school gate, she bumped into one student.

As they walked past each other, their eyes met. That student gave Raeleigh a bizarre look. Raeleigh had a feeling that she had met her somewhere. She tried racking her brains but she could not remember if she had met her before.

After walking past her, Raeleigh turned around to look at her.

A few students could be seen whispering as they walked by.

"You know what, that new student over there is a member of the Cole family," one student said. "She's a certain Xandra Cole. I wonder how she is related to Quirina Cole. I don't think they're siblings though. I mean, they look like they're of the same age."

"They aren't siblings for sure," said another student. "The Cole family condones polygamous marriages. She's pretty. I think they're probably half-siblings."

"I thought so too."

"Regardless, she's one lucky girl. Not only is she beautiful, she is born into the Cole family. The world is her oyster."

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Raeleigh overheard the conversation. Cole family? Xandra?

Raeleigh turned around and headed straight to the school gate. True enough, Jepherson was there. He was sitting in the car while Stuart was standing outside.

Raeleigh looked into the car and saw Jepherson napping. She bent over and got into the car. "Are you travelling elsewhere?" she asked as she looked at Jepherson.

Jepherson replied, "Nah."

"Well, then. Where are you going?"

"To the office."

"Office?"

Raeleigh kept silent. At that moment, Stuart had gotten into the car. Jepherson drove off and headed straight to his company offices.

Chapter 1049

After the car pulled up, Raeleigh raised her head to marvel at the Harvey Group's skyscraper office building. It was her first time here. She was surprised to find many luxury cars parked by the side of the building.

Raeleigh clasped her laptop in her arms as she got out of the car. Jepherson glanced at Stuart, signalling him to help Raeleigh. Immediately, Stuart walked towards Raeleigh and extended his arms. "Miss Anson, let me carry the laptop," he said.

Raeleigh handed the laptop to Stuart. Then, she lowered her head and looked at her clothes. She was relieved to find that she was decently dressed in a formal business suit. Otherwise, she would not be able to leave a good first impression.

Now that she was here at the company, she knew that she would be taking part in the production of Phantasy Dream. It would be her first day working officially at the Harvey Group. Considering this, it would be unbecoming of her if she were to leave a bad impression on her colleagues on her first day at work.

Raeleigh took a deep breath to loosen up. Then, she looked around the office building.

Jepherson looked at her and said with a smile, "Are you nervous?"

"Well, kind of," Raeleigh said candidly. It was her first time here after all.

It was her candor which attracted Jepherson in the first place. He then held her hand and led her to the office. Stuart trailed along hurriedly.

There were rows of vehicle models on the first floor of the office building. Raeleigh saw many employees. She could easily tell which department they belonged to.

The men clad in sapphire shirts belonged to the automotive assembly department. The man clad in a black suit and a white-collared shirt was unmistakably an employee of the company. A badge was pinned on his suit. The rest were automotive designers. They were two young ladies, one adult male, as well as two middle-aged men. Raeleigh could instantly recognize one of the middle-aged men. He was an internationally acclaimed designer. He could be seen scrutinizing Lanox, Raeleigh's maiden commercial project.

Lanox would be a limited-edition product. Many people sang praises of the designs produced under the Lanox's series. However, one man's meat was another man's poison. Some people did not like the design. One such man was a certain Lamarre Lee.

Raeleigh had seen Lamarre featured on an international design website. A recipient of numerous design awards since he was young, Lamarre had issued a press release, announcing to the world that he would never accept another award, and neither would he participate in another contest.

Subsequently, no one saw this design legend in any international design contests. Raeleigh recalled that she had not seen him for the past two to three years.

She was bursting with excitement as she met this illustrious designer.

“Mr. Harvey,” an employee greeted Jepherson as he saw him. All eyes were on Jepherson then. He then directed his gaze towards the rest of the employees.

At that moment, everyone took notice of Raeleigh.

Jepherson stopped and said, “Everybody, meet Raeleigh Anson, the company’s new automotive designer.”

Then, Jepherson raised his hands to applaud her. The rest of the employees followed suit. A little uneasy, she gave everyone a courtesy nod. She did not proceed to introduce herself until everyone stopped clapping.

“Hello everyone, my name is Raeleigh,” Raeleigh said. “I graduated from Elkton University’s School of Design.” After introducing herself, she looked at Jepherson. “Raeleigh’s the one who designed Lanox,” Jepherson added. “In recent years, she’s the only designer in the company who single-handedly managed to design a product.”

Raeleigh felt a little awkward. “He shouldn’t have said that,” she thought.

Lamarre turned around and looked at Raeleigh. “Are you the one who designed Lanox?” he asked.

Raeleigh looked at him and replied immediately, “That’s right. I’m a greenhorn though. There’s still a lot of room for improvement. I’d be more than happy if you could give me some pointers.”

Raeleigh’s humility caught Lamarre off guard.

The young are generally ambitious. Sometimes, they tend to think highly of themselves. This was especially evident among those who attained significant achievement in their first professional endeavor.

Be that as it may, Raeleigh did not fit the stereotype at all. She was grounded and down-to-earth, giving others the impression that she was one unassuming lady.

That said, Lamarre was one straightforward man. He would not hesitate to give no-holds-barred reviews whenever he came across works which were less than perfect. He did not hold back when he reviewed Belle’s works, what more Raeleigh, the new kid on the block.

He was well-known for being unapologetically frank.

“Come here,” Lamarre said. He walked past Jepherson as he made his way to Lanox. Immediately, Raeleigh followed suit. She clasped her hands over her lower abdomen and listened as Lamarre spoke.

“Lanox’s a great concept,” Lamarre said. “Modern and vogueish, it would be able to cater to the young. The fly in the ointment is the bone line of the car. It’d be great if you can improve on that.”

“Ideally, it should have a really smooth and sleek shoulder line. At first glance, it seems like this model gives a sense that it could withstand the elements at high speeds.”

“Now, I’ve no idea what inspired you to come up with this design. But I thought you did a great job. It’s an eight out of ten from me. Make it a ten in three days’ time. Nail it and we’ll bring you on board. If you can’t, well I’ve got to show you the door then.”

As soon as Lamarre was done talking, he left. He couldn’t care less if he offended anyone.

Raeleigh smiled and heaved a sigh of relief. She was gratified that her design made a good first impression. “Phew, I was expecting that I would flunk it,” she thought.

However, all onlooking employees did not think she would make it eventually.

“Mr. Harvey, would the meeting proceed according to plan?” Jepherson’s personal assistant asked. Santiago looked at her and said, “Yes. Get everyone to meet at the conference room in a few minutes’ time. The sales progress and market research would be on the agenda.”

“Note taken,” said the personal assistant. “Mr. Jepherson, please.” Raeleigh tagged along as Jepherson made his way to the conference room.

As soon as Jepherson entered the conference room, he sat down. The rest of the employees followed suit. Raeleigh stood beside Jepherson. Stuart immediately got her a chair and placed it next to Jepherson. He then handed Raeleigh’s laptop to Jepherson. Jepherson connected the laptop to the projector. Soon, the design blueprint was displayed on the screen.

“This is Raeleigh’s latest design blueprint,” Jepherson said. “For the record, the management has decided that if anyone is found plagiarizing or tampering with the blueprint, then they have to be prepared to receive a life sentence.”

Everyone remained silent. Raeleigh stared at Jepherson, who was looking rather stern. No one there knew that he had a gentle side to his personality.

“Raeleigh will elaborate on the blueprint,” Jepherson added. “It is my wish that everybody will work well with one another.”

Jepherson looked at Raeleigh, who then stood up and took a deep breath. She stood beside the screen and started explaining Phantasy Dream’s structural design.

As soon as Raeleigh was done presenting her ideas, she directed her gaze towards Jepherson. Then, she took a seat. Jepherson had not been looking at her throughout the presentation. Instead, he had been staring intently at the graphics on the screen, as well as the automotive designers in the conference room.

All she sat down, Raeleigh realized that everyone was rather impressed with her presentation. In spite of that, she remained calm. She knew she would have a lot on her plate in the days to come.

However, she was not intimidated. As she had decided to take on this challenge, she would have to bite the bullet and blaze a trail.

Chapter 1050

Jepherson said a few words before the meeting ended. Then, he got up to take Raeleigh’s laptop. He glanced at Raeleigh and held her hand before leading her out of the conference room.

The conference room was as quiet as a graveyard. Stuart could be seen twitching his lips when he saw Jepherson holding Raeleigh's hand. "Oh wow, what does Mr. Jepherson think he is doing?" he thought.

As they walked out of the conference room, Raeleigh attempted to pull away from Jepherson. However, he refused to let her go. Feeling helpless, she gave in and said, "Somebody's watching."

"Are you scared though?" Jepherson asked while he was walking. Raeleigh shook her head and said, "You're the boss. No one dares to spill the tea."

"I'm glad you're aware," Jepherson said. "Stuart, can you make some arrangements? A flight in the afternoon. I'm bringing Raeleigh along. You don't have to come though."

Jepherson then led Raeleigh to his office. "Where are we going?" Raeleigh asked.

"We're travelling overseas," Jepherson explained. "I've got a matter to attend to." By the time Jepherson went into his office, Stuart had already booked a ticket. Puzzled, Raeleigh asked, "Where is it though?"

"Somewhere out of the country."

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Raeleigh reckoned that she must have been out of her mind. Otherwise, she would not have agreed to join Jepherson despite not knowing where she was travelling.

At the airport, Raeleigh called Scarlett to inform her that she would be travelling abroad. "Right, I'm aware." Scarlett said.

Raeleigh frowned. "How the h*ll did you know?" she said.

Scarlett could be seen eating a popsicle as she walked into the airport. As soon as she saw Raeleigh, she said, "I'm walking into the airport. Your passport is with me."

Bewildered, Raeleigh turned around. True enough, she saw Scarlett holding her belongings. Scarlett then hung up on her and walked towards her.

"There you go, that's your passport," Scarlett said as she handed Raeleigh her personal belongings. "How did you know that I'm travelling though?" Raeleigh said.

"Mr. Jepherson got Stuart to inform me," Scarlett said. "And then I came here right away. I'm helpful, don't you think so? Call me up as soon as the plane touches down. Don't worry about your grandmother. Hadrian and I will pay her a visit this weekend."

"Thank you so much," Raeleigh said.

"Well, just get Mr. Santiago to help me pass level 100 when you're back," Scarlett said. "I'll buy you lunch then. How about that?" Scarlett took the opportunity to get Raeleigh to do her a favor. Raeleigh rolled her eyes at her and said, "Got to go now."

Raeleigh turned around and left alongside Jepherson. Scarlett heaved a sigh of relief. She thought that Mr. Jepherson was wise enough to bring her along. Otherwise, she would have gone berserk having had to face Deanna all day long.

Scarlette was relieved as she walked out of the airport. She headed straight to Santiago's car and got into his car.

As soon as she got into the car, Scarlette said, "Let's head to the Internet café for some games instead of going back to the dormitory, shall we? We can get Hadrian to treat us. What do you think? Otherwise, we'll have to put up with Deanna all day long. She's perpetually clingy. I bet she's going to ask where Raeleigh is."

Santiago glanced at Scarlette and said, "Well, why don't you treat us then?"

"Mr. Santiago..."

"On you, please."

Feeling irritated, Scarlette remained silent as she sat in the back passenger seat. Why did she have to pay when she barely had enough money?

Scarlette reluctantly joined Santiago as they headed to the Internet café. As soon as they reached there, she got out of the car and loitered around outside the shops. She was undecided if she should walk into the bigger Internet café. The facilities would be better than the smaller ones. However, it would be more costly too.

After a moment of hesitation, Scarlette made up her mind. Just as she was about to enter, Santiago's phone rang. Scarlette snuck a glance at his phone and saw a certain Cynthia's name on the phone screen.

Cynthia?

Cynthia Cole?

The thought of Cynthia Cole made her feel uncomfortable. "What does Mr. Santiago think he is doing?" she thought.

"You promised to help me, didn't you?" Scarlette said. "So, be sure to help me later when I need to level up." Scarlette reluctantly begged Santiago. Santiago then took a wad of cash from his wallet and handed it to Scarlette. "Get someone to play it with you," he said.

Scarlette was rendered speechless. "What the h*ll?" she thought.

Santiago then got into the car and sped off.

Scarlette shook her head. "Oh, dear. What am I supposed to do now?" she wondered.

"What's wrong with Mr. Santiago?"

Scarlette was waiting at the entrance of the Internet café when Hadrian arrived. As soon as she saw Hadrian, she kept the money. Then, she dashed towards him and said, "Mr. Santiago would like you to treat us to some games. He's left. Got some personal matters to attend to. He'd like you to help us go past level 100."

"Let me call him up and verify this," said Hadrian.

“Whatever floats your boat,” Scarlett said. “Why did you doubt his words though?”

Hadrian lowered his head and said, “Well, I don’t quite believe what you’ve just said.”

While Hadrian was making the phone call, Scarlett gnashed her teeth in anger. After he ended the call, Hadrian said that he had a personal matter to attend to and that he had to make a move. Scarlett grabbed him by the arm and said, “I’m pregnant.”

Stunned, Hadrian turned around to look at her. “Who’s the father of the child?” he asked.

Scarlett was on the verge of crying. She kicked Hadrian before she turned around and ran away from him.

Hadrian was dumbfounded as he stood there.

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Raeleigh took a nap as soon as she boarded the plane. A few hours later, she woke up. She occupied herself with reading books afterwards.

“I’ve got a few days’ time to improve Lanox’s design blueprint,” Raeleigh said. “Now that you’ve brought me along, how am I supposed to do it?”

Raeleigh reckoned that Jepherson secretly wanted her to fail the test and subsequently not be able to join the company.

“Why the fuss though?” Jepherson said. “I mean, you could still improve the design blueprint even if you’re not at school. Just do it now and send it to Lamarre once you’re done.”

Jepherson was reading a magazine as he replied. Although his remarks made sense, Raeleigh insisted that he had brought her along on purpose and that he was not considerate enough.

“Have you found any clues that could shed light on your sister’s whereabouts?” Raeleigh asked.

“Haven’t you said that you want to look for her?” Raeleigh had been particularly concerned about Jepherson’s sister ever since she knew about this matter. It might have something to do with the fact that she was an orphan herself.

“I went looking for her elsewhere recently, but to no avail,” Jepherson said. “I guess I’d have to bank on good fortune then. Having said that, I believe I’d be able to meet her one day if she’s still alive. In the unfortunate event that we aren’t destined to meet each other, I won’t be able to look for her no matter how hard I try.”

Jepherson put the magazine elsewhere and playfully pinched Raeleigh’s chin. He then leaned over and kissed her lips. Raeleigh blushed as she glanced around. To her relief, there were no other passengers in the first-class cabin.

Jepherson frowned. “Silly girl, it’s not a coincidence that there are no passengers in the first-class cabin,” he said.

“Say what?” Raeleigh said as she gave Jepherson a wide-eyed stare. Jepherson could not help but to burst into laughter. He was so amused that he was laughing his head off. Raeleigh was annoyed. “It isn’t

funny," she thought. "For heaven's sake, just tell me that you've chartered a plane and stop pulling my leg."