

Chapter 422 Rose Pocket Watch

Kassidy's rage was palpable, her nerves on edge. She yearned to counterattack, yet a frosty gaze from Florence held her back.

Florence, after issuing a silent reprimand to Kassidy, pivoted and extended a radiant smile towards Grady, "Dear, why not take Loraine on a tour of our gathering? We are the hosts, after all, and it's unseemly to neglect our duties."

The recent spectacle had revealed something extraordinary to Florence.

Loraine was in possession of a crown once worn by the Queen herself.

This new discovery amplified Florence's enthusiasm for bringing Grady and Loraine closer.

Grady, naturally, was keen on bonding with Loraine. He gazed at Loraine with anticipation, fearful she might reject his offer, and swiftly proposed, "Loraine, wouldn't you like to witness Endy Hewitt's masterpiece? Let's head there right now."

Loraine offered no resistance. She was indeed interested in observing Endy's work.

Watching the pair depart in unison, Kassidy was filled with envy and resentment, a profound disdain for Loraine boiling within her.

However, Loraine remained oblivious to Cassidy's feelings, merely trailing Grady to the exhibition hall.

As they traversed the exhibits, Grady, with an infectious enthusiasm lighting up his face, enthusiastically detailed the origin and backstory of each displayed item to Loraine.

But Loraine's attention was elsewhere. She scanned the showcases intently, as if searching for something specific.

Then, abruptly, she paused in front of a showcase, riveted.

Inside was a dark gold pocket watch.

The watch, adorned with intricate rose designs on its surface and a violet dial within, featured two tiny white relief figures on its face, their arms intertwined like an angel.

One of these figures held a bell that rang out a soothing melody each time the second hand completed a circle.

Caught in a reverie, Loraine stared at the timepiece, deep in contemplation.

This watch was nearly identical to the one her father owned.

In front of the showcase, a brief description noted that the design was also the handiwork of Endy Hewitt.

Turning around, Grady noticed Loraine's preoccupation with the showcase.

He was well aware of Loraine's discerning eye, for she could tell the antique from the Victorian era at a glance. Only the truly remarkable could capture her attention.

As Loraine's gaze lingered, Grady found himself following it,

surprised when it landed on Endy's pocket watch. Clearly, it had captivated her.

"Lorraine, does this watch intrigue you?"

Pulled back from her senses, Lorraine nodded. Raising hopeful eyes to Grady, she inquired, "May I speak with the owner?"

Grady's heart pounded under her intense gaze, a blush creeping onto his cheeks. Words failed him momentarily.

Interpreting his silence as hesitation, Lorraine spoke again, firmly this time. "I wish to purchase this watch. I am prepared to pay whatever price it commands."

After realizing what was happening, Grady nodded in understanding.

The owner of the watch was none other than Mrs. Lyons, a lady from a distinguished lineage, whom Grady had met through Florence.

Mrs. Lyons was taken aback when Lorraine approached her willingly, and her joy only grew upon learning Lorraine's purpose.

She had acquired the watch at an overseas antique fair, drawn to its aesthetic appeal and the reputation of its artist. Its cost had been relatively affordable for her.

The level of Lorraine's interest was unexpected.

In Vagow, it was common knowledge that Lorraine, the president of Universe Group, had achieved tremendous success with her new project, drawing considerable attention.

Mrs. Lyons had been seeking an opportunity to cultivate a friendship with Loraine, and this seemed like the perfect chance.

Oblivious to Mrs. Lyons' thoughts, Loraine made her intentions known, saying solemnly, "Mrs. Lyons, I am prepared to pay any price you ask if you will agree to part with it."

"Price is not an issue, dear. If it brings you joy, I am happy to sell it to you. Consider it a token of our budding friendship!" Mrs. Lyons responded warmly.

By selling it to Loraine, not only could she profit handsomely, but she would also be doing her a favor. It seemed like a win-win.

At Mrs. Lyons' words, Loraine exhaled, a weight lifted from her shoulders. As she started to respond with a grateful smile, she was interrupted.

"Wait, Mrs. Lyons. I am interested in buying the watch as well, and I am willing to outbid Loraine!" A haughty voice intruded.

Loraine spun around to find Cassidy striding towards her, a challenge in her eyes and a defiant smirk on her face.



Chapter 423 Bidding

Kassidy fixed Loraine with a challenging stare, striding to stand as a barrier between Loraine and Grady, much like a petulant and pampered child might.

"Grady, I have a fondness for this pocket watch as well. Could Mrs. Lyons perhaps let me purchase it instead?"

A shadow crept onto Grady's face as he responded, "Kassidy, why are you here? Avoid causing a scene!"

When Grady admonished her, Kassidy quickly adjusted her expression and snorted, "I'm not causing a scene. I have a liking for this watch too. How come Loraine is allowed to buy it and I'm not?"

Grady wasn't well-versed in handling such irrationality. Although incensed, he found himself unable to voice his anger sharply.

Despite only having known Kassidy for a brief period, he had managed to form a clear image of her disposition.

Although Kassidy had a knack for appreciating art, her interests didn't exactly lean towards mechanical design. Instead, she had an inclination towards jewelry. It was evident that Kassidy's intention was to rival Loraine.

Moreover, it seemed Kassidy had hurried over upon hearing of Loraine's intent to buy the pocket watch. It was likely she hadn't even seen the watch yet.

Grady swallowed his fury and asked, "Kassidy, is your





interest in this watch genuine or merely a ploy to best Loraine?"

Kassidy, caught off-guard, instinctively wanted to snap back, but the realization that Grady was standing up for Loraine provoked her.

"Yes, you're right. I simply don't want Loraine to get her way!"

She then turned to Mrs. Lyons, her voice steeped in arrogance, "Mrs. Lyons, according to exhibition rules, should multiple guests wish to purchase the same item, the highest bidder wins. I'm prepared to outbid Loraine. Please, let me purchase this watch."

Mrs. Lyons' smile seemed to freeze on her face. She hadn't anticipated that the piece she had stumbled upon would garner such interest from the wealthy ladies.

Although she had no wish to upset Loraine, she was eager for a larger profit, thus she feigned indecision. "Let me ponder over it," Mrs. Lyons said, sounding unsure.

Grady, fuming with anger, wanted to intervene, "Enough, Kassidy!"

But Kassidy had already quoted an very high price to Mrs. Lyons. "I offer two million!"

Mrs. Lyons' smile widened. The price Kassidy had quoted was a sum more than tenfold the watch's initial cost!

Kassidy then directed her gaze at Loraine, a provoking challenge in her voice, "Lorraine, do you dare to match my offer?"

Lorraine had no interest in such childish baiting, and simply

responded with a serene smile.

However, this led Cassidy to assume that Loraine couldn't afford to match the price, further boosting her smugness. Cassidy sneered, "Loraine, as a Torres family heiress, are you unable to spare such a sum?"

Upon hearing the commotion, the crowd grew intrigued and turned their gazes upon the unfolding drama.

Despite Grady's attempts, he was unable to prevent Cassidy's actions, causing Loraine to once again bear the brunt of public criticism. Helpless, Grady glanced apologetically at Loraine.

Desperate to set things right, he made a bold proposal to Mrs. Lyons. "Mrs. Lyons, I'm prepared to pay double the asking price. Would you consider selling the watch to me?"

Cassidy stared at Grady, her face reflecting pure disbelief. Her hands instinctively moved to her chest in a protective gesture, her voice choked with pain as she asked, "Cousin, are you planning to buy that for Loraine?"

Grady, with an air of indifference, shot her a glance, but he didn't contradict her assumption.

Tears started to gather in Cassidy's eyes, her lower lip trembling. It felt as though she had been stabbed in the back.

She had envisioned herself as Grady's future wife, but this turn of events was something she was unable to stomach.

How could Grady do such a thing to her! He'd left her humiliated, and for a stranger, no less!

Loraine, meanwhile, found herself bewildered by Grady's



choice. She didn't require anyone to purchase the watch for her. How had things escalated to this point?

Despite Cassidy's immature attempts to acquire the watch, and how exasperating it was, Loraine didn't desire to engage in such a frivolous battle with Cassidy.

When it came to Grady, she certainly didn't want to be in his debt.

Loraine cleared her throat and grinned, saying, "Mrs. Lyons, this watch holds immeasurable value to me. I propose exchanging it for the Queen's crown. How does that sound?"

Gasps of surprise echoed among the onlookers.

What?

Trading a crown once worn by the Queen for a mere pocket watch?

Any observer would instantly realize the crown Loraine offered was of immeasurable worth. Even though the pocket watch was indeed a masterpiece, its artistic merit surpassed its practical value and paled in comparison to the crown!

A wave of despair washed over Cassidy, her face drained of color.

No matter how deep her pockets were, she could never outbid Loraine.

Furthermore, it was unrealistic to expect her family to pay such an astronomical price for the sake of her pride.

Mrs. Lyons was overjoyed.



It's true that every woman would appreciate a stunning crown. Especially one with a royal past. It was beyond precious!

Worried that Loraine might change her mind, Mrs. Lyons hastily replied, "That's settled then. Miss Rivera, you needn't bid further. I'm selling the watch to Loraine!"



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Chapter 424 Cassidy's Jealousy

Astonishment swept over Grady. Understanding the worth of the crown, he couldn't resist questioning, "Loraine, are you absolutely certain you've given this enough thought? Just to avoid any potential regret..."

In response, Loraine simply shook her head. The feelings reflected in her eyes were a mystery to Grady.

She declared, "I've made up my mind, and I won't regret it. To some, the crown might hold more value, but to me, this pocket watch is the world's greatest treasure."

Her extravagant and fearless demeanor stirred a wave of envy amongst the onlookers, and once again, Loraine was the center of attention at the party.

Having listened to Loraine, Grady found himself completely taken aback by her bold and resolute nature. His heart pounded in his chest, captivated by her.

Kassidy's sneering comment was a self-inflicted insult. Witnessing Grady's besotted gaze directed at Loraine, she gritted her teeth in fury.

Fueled by envy, Cassidy scoffed, "Loraine, I had thought you were capable of discerning value, or perhaps it's all a joke? Apparently, you're nothing more than a wealthy simpleton, wasting a fortune on a watch!"

Mrs. Lyons wore a stern expression, but the rest of the

crowd nodded along to Cassidy's sentiment, murmuring their agreement that it wasn't a worthy trade.

Upon hearing the commotion, Florence hurried to the scene and reprimanded Cassidy. "Cassidy, enough with your wild accusations."

She then turned to Loraine. "Loraine, if this watch is what you desire, you can buy it with your money. But why swap it with a crown of such high value? They are not of the same worth."

In Florence's mind, she had already considered Loraine as a future member of the Cruz family, and therefore considered Loraine's possessions as her own.

The thought of exchanging a valuable crown for a simple watch was agonizing for Florence.

In front of the others, she didn't want to seem too harsh, but she resolved to find an opportunity to teach Loraine the importance of frugality in managing household affairs.

Loraine paid no attention to the comment and delicately took the watch from Mrs. Lyons. Excitement filled her as she gently caressed the pocket watch, eager to return home and share it with her grandfather.

She was indifferent to Cassidy's derision and Florence's "kind" advice.

They were all focused on their own gains. How could they possibly comprehend the value this pocket watch held for her?

She didn't feel the need, nor did she plan to justify her actions to these strangers. After storing the watch, Loraine was eager to make her exit.



However, the others weren't keen on letting her slip away.

As Florence had reproached Loraine for her extravagance, Cassidy felt a smug satisfaction, assuming Florence was on her side. She sneered at Loraine once again.

"Loraine, if you can't discern between the superior and the inferior, allow me to assist you in choosing something more fitting. Why would you barter something priceless for this pocket watch?"

Receiving no response from Loraine, Florence felt a sense of embarrassment creeping in. She grew annoyed at the thought that if Loraine were to marry Grady someday, she would have to invest more time in teaching her how to be an obedient daughter-in-law.

Listening to Cassidy, Florence saw a chance to bluff and seized it, echoing with affirmation, "Indeed, Cassidy's right. You can't behave recklessly just because you have many treasures."

Surprisingly, their words fell on deaf ears, not just with Loraine, but also with the other guests who regarded them with disdain.

Earlier, when Loraine had assessed the value of Cassidy's brooch, her expertise had earned the admiration of many.

Contrarily, Cassidy, oblivious to the authenticity of her own family heirloom, how could she dare to cast aspersions on Loraine?

Simultaneously, whispers suggested that Loraine's interest in buying the watch had an ulterior motive.

"Could the art world's next big thing be Endy Hewitt?"

"Seems plausible. Mr. T, Loraine's uncle, is the trendsetter of the art world. Endy's pieces will skyrocket soon!"

Following the discussion, there was a rush of people eager to purchase Endy's artwork. All his design pieces showcased at the exhibition were quickly sold out, and the prices surged dramatically.

The Cruz family, possessing numerous Endy's pieces, capitalized on this sudden demand and sold their collection for a handsome profit.

Florence was elated, viewing Loraine's pocket watch purchase as a mere trifling matter.

Grady, pondering this, figured Loraine genuinely cherished these artworks and offered, "If you appreciate Endy's work, I can source more for you..."

He was cut off by an indignant Cassidy, "Grady, I want some too!"

Grady, with a creased brow, bluntly retorted, "If you want them, find them yourself. What's the point of involving me?"

Consumed by jealousy, Cassidy blurted out without thinking, "You have no connection with Loraine. Why would you do something for her and not for me? Wake up! It's me who's your family, not her!"

Grady paled at her words. He glanced at Loraine awkwardly and defended, "Loraine, please don't misunderstand. She's not part of my family. I don't have a relationship with her."

Yet Loraine remained unmoved, indifferent. She coolly responded, "There's no need for explanations, Grady. This issue is between you and Cassidy, not me."

Grady's heart filled with pain, and his eyes grew increasingly somber.

Upon witnessing this, Cassidy's jealousy heightened. As she watched Florence approach, an idea flashed through her mind. Raising her voice, she declared, "Aunt Florence commended me highly. She wants my family and the Cruz family to have a stronger bond. I am to marry Grady and become part of the Cruz family!"

With a triumphant glance at Loraine, Cassidy awaited a reaction. But Loraine remained unbothered, not exhibiting the anger Cassidy anticipated. Instead, it was Florence who reacted, her face storming over upon hearing Cassidy's proclamation. She marched up and admonished Cassidy sternly.

"Shut up! I never uttered those words! Stop making things up!"

