

Love Burned She Rose Unscathed Novel

Love Burned Chapter 71 - 80

Chapter 71

Leda said happily, "How about a celebratory dinner for passing the preliminary round? My treat.")

Roseanne couldn't suppress a laugh. "Shouldn't I be the one treating you?"

Leda raised an eyebrow. "Come off it. We're best friends. That's settled. Get ready. I'll swing by to pick you up."%

After hanging up, Roseanne returned to her room and opened her closet. She chose a V-neck floral sundress. Two months passed, and her hair had grown down to her collarbones. Given the sweltering weather, she opted for a headband that matched her dress to tie her hair up.

Half an hour later, Leda messaged that she was downstairs. After changing her shoes, Roseanne grabbed her purse and headed down."

Leda's car was at the end of the street. While waiting, Leda pulled out her phone. Glancing up, she saw Owen walking toward her."

A student accompanied him, backpack slung over his shoulder, sporting a buzz cut and radiating a sunny charm.

They were deep in conversation, Owen looking calm and nodding in agreement from time to time. When they finished, the boy turned to leave.}

Spotting Owen, Leda quickly waved him over, "Hey, Owen!{"}

Owen glanced up, his gaze calm behind his glasses. "What brings you here?"

I'm here to grab Anne for dinner. That guy just now is your student?{"?"

The boy wasn't the typical heartthrob of the moment, but his clean, handsome face carried a unique gentleness, especially when he smiled, revealing two small dimples. He had certainly made an impression on Leda!!

Not one to miss the hints, Owen said, “He’s a grad student from another school. He just had a question.”²

Before Leda could inquire further, she heard footsteps echoing from the stairwell. Roseanne was coming down.

Owen pushed up his glasses. “Aren’t you two heading out? I leave you to it.”!

Leda interjected, “Come on, join us for dinner.

“I can’t. Got to head back to the lab. His return was merely to pick up some things.

Roseanne hadn’t reached the ground floor when she heard Owen’s voice. It had been over a month since their last encounter, with Owen buried in his lab work.

In the stairwell, Owen stood on the third step, sunlight filtering through the diamond-shaped grilles, casting mottled shadows on him. His usually indifferent gaze warmed under the light.

Their eyes met, and Roseanne broke the ice, “I haven’t had the chance to return your jacket from last time.”!

She had washed it long ago but hadn’t found the right moment. Her voice was soft, her floral dress accentuating her straight, slender legs, complemented by her nude high heels, giving her an aura of freshness and purity.

Owen momentarily lost his train of thought, then remembered the jacket, his voice slightly hoarse, “I’ve been busy, staying at the lab. Just returned to grab some stuff.

Roseanne could see his exhaustion and nodded, “Then you should get back to it. Take care of yourself.”)

Owen murmured, “Will do.”

As they passed each other, unaccustomed to her heels, Roseanne stumbled, Owen reacted instantly, steadying her with his body and a hand on her waist, preventing a fall.

Catching her breath, she patted her chest and then noticed the scent of pine, Owen’s distinctive

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Roseanne lifted her head, finding Owen’s chin almost resting atop her own. She had avoided practically tumbling into his embrace thanks to Owen’s steadying arms.⁸

Snapping back to reality, Roseanne quickly stepped back.

Owen cleared his throat, pulled back his arm, and offered a bit of advice this time. “High heels can be tricky. Flats are much safer.”³

Roseanne couldn't help but let out a snort of laughter, taking a moment before she replied, “Thanks.”}

After a brief pause, Leda, who hadn't seen Roseanne's arrival, called out from inside with a hint of confusion, “Anne? Is that you?”

Roseanne glanced outside. I'm heading off, see you.”

“Okay.” Owen clenched his fist, and as he walked upstairs, the sounds of conversation from below still reached his ears.

Leda asked, “Why are you just getting here?”⁸

Roseanne didn't go into details. “Ran into a bit of trouble.”⁸

“Did you see Owen?” Leda knew Owen lived nearby but was unaware they were neighbors.}

Roseanne affirmed with a nod.

neal.

Her demeanor was open and honest, and hearing that, Leda didn't pry further, instead shifting the conversation toward where to eventually deciding on a Thai restaurant

During the meal, Leda vented about her recent dating experiences. “One pretentious lot after another acting like they're on top of the world. Why hasn't someone just wiped out these do-nothing trust-fund babies?”}

Everyone in their circle knew Leda loved the high life. Her sudden pivot to going on arranged dates had everyone watching, waiting for her to slip up. Those she met were hardly welcoming, their attitudes suggesting she should settle down and not seek attention, minding her home affairs.

Laughing off her frustration, Leda exclaimed, “So, I spilled all their dirty secrets in anger. Being from the same social circle, they know each other's business.)

Roseanne wasn't surprised, knowing Leda's fiery nature. “No wonder the gossip columns have been so lively.”

Whether it was the Lumina family's scandal or a tax evasion case, even Roseanne, buried in her studies, had caught wind of it.

“They can only blame themselves,” Leda sighed, “Our family is among the elite, and even I’m not spared from the constant marriage nagging by my parents. It’s exhausting.

‘But let’s not just talk about me. You might not know, but my aunt is equally worried about Owen’s marriage prospects, always finding new ways to set him up.’⁸

Roseanne pondered for a moment. ‘Is Owen being set up? It’s hard to imagine.’

“But Owen is hardly ever home, giving his mom little chance to meddle,” Leda shrugged, “I’m quite curious to see what kind of girl Owen, who seems isolated from the outside world and never dated, will end up with.”³

Suddenly, Roseanne recalled the encounter in the hallway. Owen appeared aloof, almost celestial, yet he was considerate, detailed, and warm. Whoever would win his heart must indeed be exceptional.!!

Time flew by, and December arrived in a blink. The entrance exams for graduate studies were upon them.

Bellwood’s winter was damp and drearily cold. Despite snow forecasts the previous week, only a smattering of sleet had fallen. By the day of the exam, the roads were icy.

Roseanne bundled up in a thick down jacket, wrapped a cashmere scarf around her neck, donned gloves, and slipped into warm snow boots before leaving her place.

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Before entering the examination room, she double-checked her admission ticket, pens, and the essential calculator. Everything was ready.

Leda had claimed she’d pray and drop her off, symbolizing a grand entrance, but Roseanne knew better. With Leda juggling two big projects, there was no way she’d make it, especially in the dead of winter.

As expected, a quick scan outside the exam venue revealed no signs of Leda. Roseanne wasn’t disappointed, though.

Some friendships didn’t require constant texting or daily check-ins to stay strong. They were always on each other’s minds, a kind of “no-reply-needed friendship” people talked about online.

The exam took two hours. As Roseanne submitted her paper, she noticed the mixed expressions of excitement and disappointment on others’ faces but remained composed.

Stepping out of the exam room, she saw light main and realized hailing a cab would be tough. Opting for the subway home, she hadn't walked far when she heard someone call her name.

"Roseanne?"

Looking up, she saw Hertha standing under the nearby archway. "It is you.")

It had been a while since their last encounter ended without a trip to the hospital as intended. Months had passed, and as far as Hertha knew, Murray and Roseanne hadn't reconciled.

The situation had shaken Beverley's confidence, someone who initially couldn't fathom them breaking up.

Hertha overheard Beverley wondering why Murray had been having stomach issues more frequently since the breakup, something that wasn't a problem when he was with Roseanne.

"Could it be they've ended things? Her mother would muse, baffled at Roseanne risking her chance with the prestigious Sherwood family over a tantrum."

For years, Beverley had voiced that Roseanne wasn't good enough for her son, urging them to split countless times. Now that it had happened, she seemed unsettled by it.

Not just Beverley, Hertha had struggled to come to terms with it. It was not that Hertha was a fan of their relationship, but she was surprised to see Roseanne being more determined in their breakup.

After getting the truth from Cliff, it was clear why Roseanne was upset. Murray showing up with someone new was bound to cause an explosion. Then, Hertha began to accept that a reconciliation might be off the table.

"Hertha," Roseanne greeted her with a smile.

Noticing the clear stationery bag in her hand, Hertha recalled seeing Roseanne at the library, "So you're going through with the grad school exams..."

win

her brother back. But Roseanne was actually serious

Like Beverley, she had assumed Roseanne's efforts were just a show, a tactic to about it.

Roseanne nodded. "Pursuing further studies has always been a goal. I didn't take my chance before, hoping it's not too late now." Hertha eyed her with skepticism. "You started preparing after you and Murray broke up, right?"

right?"

"Yeah,"

"That's a pretty tight timeframe. It might be... The chances seemed slim, especially with this year's record number of applicants. Kingswell University was highly competitive, and Roseanne had been out of school for years without relevant work experience. Last-minute cramming wasn't likely to cut it. Hertha didn't want to discourage Roseanne, so she trailed off, leaving her thoughts unfinished.

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Roseanne caught Hertha's underlying skepticism with a small, knowing smile but didn't bother to argue.

Hertha leaned in with curiosity. "Weren't you an undergrad at Kingswell University? Planning to stick with them for grad school?"

"Yep, Kingswell again."

"Research or professional track?"

"Research."

"And the field?"

"Biomedical Sciences."

Hertha raised an eyebrow, surprised. "That's my field, too. Got your eye on any mentors?"

Roseanne nodded. "Yeah. Ms. Payne."

"Madeleine Payne?"

"Right."

Recalling how she'd seen Roseanne cleaning at Madeleine's house, Hertha's expression twisted with doubt. "You don't think doing a bit of housework will make her more inclined to take you on, do you?"

Oops! Roseanne hesitated. "That was a misunderstanding."

“Look, Madeleine is a titan in her field, known for her rigor, Plus, she’s been focusing more on her Ph.D. students lately, hardly taking on any Masters students. It’s going to be tough...7

Hertha paused, choosing her words carefully. “I’m also applying to be her grad student. It might sound like I have an ulterior motive, but you should consider looking for another mentor. There’s still time before the results are out. You can reach out to other professors.”

Feeling she’d said her piece, Hertha awaited a response.

“Thanks,” Roseanne nodded, then excused herself.

Hertha was bewildered. “That’s it?”

Catching the 5 p.m. subway, Roseanne welcomed the blast of warm air, her fingers gradually thawing. Her phone buzzed in her bag. Removing her gloves, she answered with a light tone. “Hello, Ms. Payne.

“How did it go?” Madeleine’s voice was as comforting and optimistic as ever, devoid of pressure. “As usual, I’m not too worried about your exams.”}

I did what I could,” Roseanne responded honestly!

Madeleine was proud. “That’s my girl. I never doubted you with your track record. Just make sure you don’t stay out in this cold for too long.

Roseanne continued, “I’m on the subway now. I heard your leg’s been troubling you again, huh? I’ve picked up some medication. I’ll drop it by after my exams.”)

Madeleine had injured her leg years back, and the pain flared up, especially during the cold or rainy weather.

“Sounds good. I’m home these days. Glancing at her calendar, Madeleine invited, “Come over for dinner this Saturday.”

As Roseanne approached her stop, she ended the call and navigated through the bustling crowd, exiting at the second gate.

The cold wind nearly swept her off her feet, but a steady hand on her back and a shadow looming over her steadied her. She looked up to see Owen, her surprise morphing into a smile. “What brings you here?!”

“Just grabbing some documents from home. Roads are icy, so I took the subway instead.” Owen steadied her as they walked. “How did the exams go?”

Roseanne smiled “Pretty smooth, I guess.

Owen smiled, letting the topic drop as they continued to walk through the chill.

Chapter 75

Winter nights draw in early, and when the clock struck seven,

n, rows of street lamps on both sides of the road lit up, casting a warm glow on the chilly evening.

The stretch from the subway station to Kingswell University had a bustling market where vendors sold anything

Crossing the bridge, Roseanne heard the distant shout of a vendor selling hot dogs. She blinked away the sting from the cold wind and turned to Owen, “Wait here for me, will you?”)

Owen stood still, and she was back in two minutes, cradling two hot dogs in her hands. “Here.”

The hot dogs were a comforting warmth, though biting into them was almost too hot. Roseanne gently blew on hers, took a careful bite, and smiled brightly.

Turning to Owen, she asked, “Is yours good?”

He nodded, admitting it was the best hot dog he’d ever had.

Roseanne couldn’t hide her pride. “See, I always pick the good ones.”

Owen’s smile, infectious from hers, played at the corners of his mouth, a soft laughter lighting up his eyes.

They reached home by seven.!!

After they stepped inside, the underfloor heating wrapped them in warmth. Roseanne took the books and pens she brought back to the study.

Several books were on the desk. Roseanne organized them, put them on the shelf, and noticed one that Owen lent her last week for her studies.

After knocking on his door, she handed Owen the book. “This is the Genish original you lent me last week. I forgot to return it,”

The faint scent of mint filled the air between them, causing an unexpected flutter in Roseanne’s heart.

Owen took the book, spotting the notes and a quirky doodle she had used as a bookmark

His smile deepened at the sight

Catching the amusement in his gaze, Roseanne quickly ripped off the bookmark. "Ah, just some doodles I do when I'm bored."

Changing the subject, she added, "Do you have time soon? After exams, I'd like to invite you to dinner to thank you for all your help these

past months."

Upon seeing her sincerity, Owen didn't refuse but suggested, "Why not here? I prefer your cooking.

Roseanne laughed. "How about tomorrow? After my last exam, I'll go grocery shopping, and you can come straight to dinner after your

lab work."

Owen agreed, "Sounds good."

The next day, the rain held off, and a few rays of sunlight peeked through the large swathes of dark clouds.

Roseanne headed to the supermarket after her

er exam and then caught a ride home.

At six, there was a knock on the door.

Opening it, Owen stepped in, slipping into the men's slippers Roseanne had prepared for him, and headed to the kitchen, familiar with the drill

Seeing him ready to help, Roseanne handed him the vegetables to wash, "Here, as usual, it's all yours"

Then she turned to start chopping

Owen watched her for a moment, a subtle smile curling his lips. "Okay"

He suddenly realized that while this life might be new to him, it was enjoyable.!!

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Chapter 76

On a pleasant Saturday, the weather was just right.

Thick clouds allowed streaks of warm sunlight to peek through, making Roseanne break into a slight sweat during her morning jog. After a refreshing shower and changing clothes, she grabbed the medicine she had purchased earlier and hailed a cab to Madeleine's place.

"Ms. Payne, please take these three times a day. It's chilly these days, so you don't need to refrigerate them. Just ensure to warm them up before drinking." Roseanne explained as she handed over the medications.

A staunch woman unafraid of much, Madeleine had one particular aversion to the taste and smell of medications. She eyed the dark liquid distastefully, distancing herself before voicing her struggle. "Do I have to take this?"

"Absolutely" Roseanne replied. "I've arranged with your housekeeper to make sure you take it three times daily without skipping."

Madeleine grimaced in resignation. "Okay, I got it."

Madeleine couldn't dismiss Roseanne's kind gesture, no matter how much she detested the idea.

Seeing Madeleine's face contorted in disgust like a petulant child, Roseanne couldn't help but chuckle softly. "I know it's bitter, so I brought you some pistachio fudge from Sweet Delights downtown. Have a piece after your medicine, and it won't taste so bad."

Madeleine's gloomy expression instantly disappeared, replaced by a grin. "Now you're talking."

After some light-hearted banter, the conversation turned to more serious matters.

"Kingswell University's Biology Department will set up a new research team next year. Three members have been on the list, leaving two spots open. The criteria are strict. Candidates must have excellent grades and an overall high average in all subjects. Additionally, candidates must have scored at least two As in their lab work." B

Roseanne was surprised by the rigorous requirements.

Madeleine noticed her reaction and explained, "Being part of this team comes with perks. Outstanding members might go straight to a Ph.D. program or get an offer from NexTech Innovations to join their research lab."

A leading biotech firm not just in Faeland but globally, NexTech Innovations was a dream workplace for many in the field, known as a scientist's paradise, owned by the Reynolds family and boasting the industry's most advanced equipment and a formidable collaborative team, producing groundbreaking biotech research.

"I'm well aware of your academic performance, so I've never doubted your capabilities, Madeleine said, locking eyes with Roseanne. "What you're missing now is hands-on lab experience."

Over the years, Roseanne had barely set foot in a lab. Familiarity with procedures, agility with equipment, and understanding of new technologies were all areas of concern. Beyond innate talent, significant time investment was essential.

After all, Owen was spending all that time in the lab

for a reason, right? You build your skills and experience over time.

Suddenly, Madeleine's aged yet warm hands enveloped Roseanne's. Looking up, she saw Madeleine's encouraging smile. "I believe in your potential. It's never too late to start."

Roseanne felt a surge of determination and nodded firmly.

Madeleine advised, "As for your postgraduate studies, I'm not worried. You have a few months before the interviews, so you can use this time to master the books and materials I've given you."

Madeleine had been working on an experimental project for five years, which hadn't had results. She planned to involve Roseanne when the semester began, considering the project tailored for her from the start. However, unforeseen detours had occurred

But that was all water under the bridge. It was time to get back on track, leaving the twists and turns of the journey unspoken.

Chapter 77

Roseanne knew how much Madeleine cared about her situation. "Don't worry. I won't let you down."

After she arrived home, Roseanne started reviewing the materials she brought back. Compared to the grad exam textbooks, these papers were tougher to get through because they zeroed in on specific operations and research results, demanding quite a bit of hands-on experience.

She lost track of time diving into the documents until nearly midnight. Rubbing her tired eyes, Roseanne decided it was time to sleep. As she settled down, she heard a frantic knocking at her door.

“Roseanne, open up! I know you’re in there!” Even through the living room and bedroom doors, Murray’s voice pierced through to her ears. Bang, bang, bang! The knocking grew louder.

When remembering the last time at the study where Murray almost forced himself on her, Roseanne’s lips turned pale, gripping her blanket tighter.

Murray kept shouting at the door.

“Roseanne..

“Open up!”

Anne...

Roseanne covered her ears, hoping Murray would give up and leave without a response.

But five minutes passed, and Murray was still hammering away at the door, determined to keep going unless she opened up. The old apartment building had poor soundproofing, and complaints were inevitable with his commotion in the dead of night. “Who’s that, making a racket at this hour? What the hell is wrong with him?”

“What kind of mad dog is barking in the middle of the night?”

“I swear, if you don’t buzz off, I’m calling the cops

With no choice left, Roseanne reluctantly got out of bed, slipped into her slippers, and approached the door

“Murray, have you lost your mind?” she hissed through clenched teeth.

“I knew you were there.

“So what?”

“Open the door. Let me in.

“And why should I? Who do you think you are, thinking you can just waltz in whenever you feel like it?!”

Murray cracked a smile. Fine, then I’ll keep knocking.”

“You..“I

Tm knocking “2

Left with no other option, Roseanne begrudgingly opened the door.

Murray seized the moment to push through, fearing she might change her mind and shut the door on him. Reeking of alcohol, his cheeks flushed unnaturally, and he swayed as if he might collapse at any second.

Roseanne frowned and took three steps back to keep her distance. “What do you want, exactly?”

Murray, his eyes gloomy and glazed from drinking, fixed his gaze on her without saying a word.

After a long while, he finally spoke softly, “Anne, come back...”

Roseanne shook her head, wrapping her coat tighter. “You know it’s impossible

“Hasn’t it been long enough after six months?

“Murray, this isn’t a game. Do you understand?”

“I don’t get it. What do you want? An apology? Amends? Or should I kneel to beg for your forgiveness?”

That was the furthest Murray could go in bending his pride, the utmost he could lower himself. Despite their countless arguments before, he had never shown such vulnerability.

Yet, Roseanne still shook her head.

“Enough‘ Don’t push it too for Murray roared, panting heavily. “Letting me into the house means there’s still a chance for us, right? Tell

me, what are your conditions? Just say it!“?

Murray clenched his teeth. He had backed down to this extent. What more did she want?2

“Letting you in was only to avoid disturbing others, nothing more,” Roseanne said. “You’ve said it yourself. Once it’s over, it’s over. We should be clear-cut and move on. So, what are you doing now?”

Murray took two steps forward, attempting to reach for her shoulder.

But Roseanne recoiled in fear her eyes filled with terror. “Don’t touch

Chapter 78

Murray froze in place. “You...”

Remembering what he did to her at the villa, Roseanne looked at him with both fear and caution.!

“Don’t come any closer! Stay away from me!”

“Anne...” A pang of pain shot through Murray’s heart. “That day, T

Roseanne cut him off. “Stop it! Just leave. We have nothing to talk about.”

“Anne...” With his eyes bloodshot, Murray stood rigidly, “I’m sorry. It was my fault. Can’t we stop fighting? I shouldn’t have, shouldn’t have said and done those things...”

“I missed you too much... It was just a moment of impulse....

..I’m here because I want you to come back to me...

“Come back?” Roseanne shot him a cold look. “To be what, your mistress?”

Murray blurted out, “If you agree to come home. I’ll break up with Millie immediately.

Roseanne shook her head. “I refuse.”

“Anne... Just as Murray attempted to approach her again, Roseanne quickly turned and ran back to her bedroom, slamming the door shut behind her.!

After a moment, the outside noise faded away, and she cautiously stepped out to check. She found Murray slumped against the wall, asleep.!

Roseanne sighed, not knowing what to say.

Dawn broke, and the first sunlight gently filled the room through the windows. The figure on the couch stirred, and as Murray opened his eyes, a wave of dizziness hit him, causing him to squint uncontrollably. Once the dizziness subsided, he sat up, rubbed his temples, and instinctively scanned his surroundings.

Although clean and tidy, the unfamiliar setting and the cramped layout felt too simple and constricting for him.”

Roseanne emerged from the bedroom.

Murray looked up, suddenly locking eyes with her clear eyes. "Anne?"

Roseanne sat down expressionlessly. "Do you remember what you did last night?"

Murray frowned, then shook his head.

The sober him would never say, "Anne, come back" like that.

Roseanne coldly smirked, "Last night at eleven, you wouldn't stop knocking on my door, disturbing my life, bothering others. So, please don't do such childish things again, We're adults, and let's act like one."

Murray's head still ached, and her words felt like a punch to the gut

His critical gaze swept the room, and he scoffed, "This tiny, old dump? Do you think I'd want to come here? Even if you begged me, I wouldn't come back!"

After that, he grabbed his coat and stormed out, slamming the door behind him.

Reaching the corner of the street, he dialed Cliff's number. "What are you up to? Come out. I need a drink!"

"Man, you look like you just left a party. You still smell like booze.

Summoned to the bar, Cliff found Murray alone, downing drinks in the clothes from the previous day. He sat down beside Murray, teasing him with a smile.

Murray retorted, "I called you here to drink, not to chat

Cliff raised his hands in surrender, "Fine, fine, I'll drink."

Daytime at the bar, with the staff gone, just the two of them were drinking awkwardly.

Murray asked, "Where's everyone else?"

Cliff sipped his wine. "York got called back by his dad, and Corley's been busy lately. Don't know what he's up to, haven't seen him in days" Murray was only

was only making conversation, not concerned. He picked up his drink and downed it in one gulp.

Seeing his friend's mood, Cliff stayed by his side. They drank from day into night until Cliff called a cab to take the drunken Murray

to the mansion

After finally settling him in, Cliff watched Murray fast asleep, mumbling “Anne” repeatedly, and couldn’t help but shake his head

Chapter 79

“Why bother if it hurts so bad? Now he is stuck between a rock and a hard place, huhni

The

After Murray visited the day before, the house became a disaster zone. Once he left, Roseanne tidied up the mess from top to bottom. Noticing it was getting late, she skipped the library visit and tackled practice questions at home, wrapping up her study session for the day.

She made two pancakes for dinner but couldn’t finish them, leaving quite a bit behind. When she sat down after cleaning the kitchen, it was already 8 p.m.

She planned to review another set of practice questions before calling it a night. Just as she set her alarm, her phone buzzed with a notification. She picked it up and noticed it was a friend request with the note reading Corley

Roseanne blinked in confusion, wondering why Corley would want to add her

Corley was Murray’s close buddy, but they weren’t that close themselves. They’d shared countless meals together, but their conversations were few and far between.

After a moment’s hesitation, worried he might have something critical to say, she accepted the request. But half an hour passed with no word from him. It seemed like he might’ve sent that request by mistake

Roseanne found it odd but didn’t dwell on it, setting her phone aside to focus on her questions.

Corley pocketed his phone at the bar looking at Cliff, who had just returned from dropping Murray off. His gaze slightly hardened, “Got her home safe??

Cliff nodded, taking a swig of his beer. “Lucky I got out fast, or I’d have run into Beverly. That would’ve been a hassle.”%

Beverly had dropped by the villa more frequently these past few days. If out of luck, getting caught by her meant a barrage of questions

“Speaking of, you’ve been hard to reach lately. How come you’re free tonight?” Cliff asked.

Corley stared into his glass of bourbon, a faint smile on his lips, "Wrapped up some stuff"

"Ah, just remembered something!" Cliff suddenly set down his glass."

"What's up?"

Cliff asked, "Did Roseanne finish her exams?!"

Corley answered, "The day before yesterday."

"Really?"

"Yeah, the day before yesterday."

Cliff chuckled, "You really keep up with things, huh?"

Corley smirked, "Have I ever not?"

"True, true. A finance guy, detail-oriented as always."

Corley curled up his lips. "Appreciate the compliment."

"Not modest at all, huh? But man, it's been almost half a year, and Murray and Roseanne still haven't patched things up. Unbelievable" Cliff found it hard to believe:]

Corley just said, "Oh."

Cliff was curious. "Aren't you surprised?"

"Surprised about what?" Corley's tone suddenly turned cold, "It was bound to happen"

"Right, those two were bound to get back together eventually" Cliff interpreted his words in his way.

Corley remained silent. "So, you and Roseanne are close?"

Cliff instinctively puffed up his chest, "Of course! I've had her signature stomach-soothing oatmeal more than once. We're not just close We're great friends",

A shadow passed over Corley's eyes. "Then you should celebrate her finishing exams"

"Celebrate? How?"

Corley suggested, "Why not take her out for a meal? It might help patch things up between those two "I

Thinking of Murray's recent brooding, Cliff lit up, "Right Sounds great. Roseanne might not want to do Murray any favors, but she

wouldn't turn me down. I'll arrange something, a little celebration for her exams being over. Then I can try to set them up and give them a

chance.")

"You've got good ideas." Corley nodded, his lips curling into a smile hidden by his glass.

Chapter 80

dit: Cliff "Just do it,"

Immediately pulled out his phone and called Roseanne.}

"Hey, Roseanne, what's up? I've got something I need to talk to you about..."8

After explaining his intentions, there was a moment of silence on the other end.

Cliff guessed what she was hesitating about and reassured her, "Listen, Roseanne, chill. This one's on me. We're talking old friends. catching up over a meal, no strings attached. Murray won't be there, I promise."

"Okay," Roseanne finally agreed.

Cliff shrugged after hanging up. He said so, but if a "chance encounter happened, that wouldn't be his fault, would it?

Corley eagerly volunteered, "I'll take care of letting Murray know

"Deal. It's settled then!" Cliff was excited. He'd be the hero of the hour if he could pull off getting them back together.

It was a day with clear skies and the sun shining bright. Cliff had booked a table at Sapphire Bistro ahead of time. It was their old haunt. Just by mentioning the name, Roseanne would know where to find it.

When she walked in, Cliff was waving at her like a madman before she could look around. The waiter led her over, and Roseanne sat across from him.

"Roseanne. I heard you just wrapped up your exams. Big congrats! I've ordered and got all your favorites. Let's have a drink to celebrate!"

Cliff wasn't as well-off as the others but had the best heart. He'd helped her with a few things before, so their friendship had grown.

Roseanne smiled. "Thanks, I've always appreciated your kindness."}

Cliff laughed. "Come on, Roseanne, don't be a stranger. We're friends, aren't we?"

He snapped his fingers, and the dishes came in no time.

"Cliff? What a coincidence? A deep voice sounded from above them.

Cliff looked up, and for a second, his smile froze. He looked past Corley, trying to spot where Murray was.²

Wasn't it supposed to be a "chance encounter"??

"Hey, fancy seeing you here!" Cliff managed to recover, greeting with a forced smile."

Corley asked, "You don't mind if I join you, right?"

Confused, Cliff could only respond, "No, not at all.

Before Cliff could protest, Corley had seated himself, out of the corner of his eye, glancing at Roseanne. "What's the special occasion today?"

Cliff smiled faintly, "Just catching up with Roseanne to celebrate..."

Then his eyes desperately signaled to Corley, silently asking, "Where's Murray? Weren't you supposed to bring him?"

Corley smiled, not picking up the cue, and turned his attention to Roseanne. "Oh? Celebrating what?"

The question was for Roseanne. Though they weren't close, it would be impolite not to answer!

Roseanne said, "I just fi

finished my exams."

Corley mused for a moment. "Based on the timing, was it for your master's?"

Cliff internally rolled his eyes. "What's with the act?"

Roseanne nodded 1

"Which university are you aiming for?"

"Kingswell University

“And your major?”

“Bioinformatics,”

“Ah, a cross–disciplinary science based on biology, mathematics, and
and information science?”

For the first time, Roseanne gave him a curious look. “You know about this stuff?”

“I’ve dabbled a bit, but I’m no expert. I’ve always been curious about the differences
between Applied Life Sciences, Bioinformatics, and Biology

Roseanne explained more seriously, “Applied Life Sciences explore the practical
applications of biological molecules in anthropology.

chemistry, biology, and physics. Biology is a branch of natural science that broadly
studies the functions and properties of living organisms, whereas Bioinformatics studies
biological big data using computers. Uh, is it too complicated?”%