

Love Spell 261

Chapter 261

“Why? They’re doing well right now. They’re faster than Team 2 in the first two stages!” Daniel questioned with a puzzled expression.

At this rate, Team 5 would definitely make it through.

Carlisle smiled faintly. “Just a guess.”

Daniel’s eyes twinkled with mischief. “Since we’re idling here, how about a bet?”

Carlisle turned to Daniel. “Sure, what do you want to bet on?”

Daniel thought for a moment and said, “I’ll bet you 100 dollars that they’ll definitely complete the mission!”

He glanced at the field again. Wanda was almost through the fourth stage, and he felt much more confident.

Carlisle smirked. “Alright, if I win, I don’t want your 100 dollars. Just give me your meat stew at lunch.”

“A gentleman’s word is his bond!” Daniel agreed without hesitation.

Harvey who had been exercising nearby, suddenly said, “Carlisle, I want to bet too!”

Harvey was Queenie’s cousin, and he knew Wanda well.

Zachary took Queenie and Wanda for outdoor training every summer and winter. He was unsure about Ruby but confident in Wanda’s ability to lead Class 2 to victory.

“Alright, let’s bet!” Carlisle agreed.

Harvey asked, “Same rules as Daniel’s? Lunch if I lose, cash if you lose?”

Carlisle smiled faintly. “I’m fine with that. It’s up to you.”

A smirk crossed Harvey’s face. “You’re going to lose for sure. Just make sure you keep your word.”

Daniel shot Harvey a glance. “Harvey, be more respectful toward Carlisle. He has plenty of—Ow, damn!”

Before he could finish, Carlisle had kicked him off the parallel bars.

Marcus rubbed his hands together as he approached Carlisle. “Carlisle, I want to bet too

.”

As Harvey’s friend, he saw an easy opportunity to win some money. Betting some lunch against 100 dollars seemed like a sure win.

Carlisle nodded with a smile. “Sure, I’ll bet with you.”

With this, more students gathered around, eager to place their bets.

However, Carlisle refused to bet 100 dollars against lunch with the others. He would only bet 100 dollars against 100 dollars.

The reason for this was simple. Three bowls of meat stew were enough to share with Wanda

, Christine

and Phoebe.

At this point, Team 5 had successfully reached the fourth stage.

The fourth stage required climbing over a 500-foot-high barrier made of sandbags.

Wanda merged her two groups. After a quick discussion, she decided to leave four people behind to provide cover fire from the sides of the sandbags. Christine and Phoebe each selected a teammate to stay as well.

Wanda led the rest of the team to crouch low, and they ran toward the trench from multiple directions.

Meanwhile, Ruby led her team in a charge.

Their strategy was to have half of the group lay down suppressive fire whenever the opposition showed themselves.

The staff threw two smoke grenades and then started launching paint rockets.

Wanda immediately shouted, “Incoming fire from the north! Everyone, take cover!”

The Class 2 girls quickly scattered.

Ruby also warned, “Northeast, be careful!”

Half of her group reacted quickly, dodging the incoming paint rockets.

Soon, both groups reached the sandbags.

Once they climbed over, they would reach the fifth stage. Victory was within sight.

Seeing that Wanda’s team was already starting to climb the sandbags, Ruby narrowed her eyes and

whispered, “We can’t let them get ahead. Let’s overtake them.”

The narrow sandbag path only allowed four people at once. Unwilling to fall behind, Ruby decided to play

dirty.

Tiffany hesitantly said, “Mr. Hanson will punish us if he sees this!”

Ruby’s eyes darted around before she smirked. “You go kick the smoke grenade over here.”

Tiffany shook her head fearfully.

Chapter 262

Tiffany blanched. She would be establishing herself as Class 1’s enemy if she kicked the smoke grenade

over.

Ruby’s face darkened. “If you want to keep coming to school here, do as I say.”

A shudder ran down Tiffany’s spine. She swallowed, her eyes turning red with tears as she dove into the smoke and kicked the smoke–releasing grenade toward the sandbag.

At once, smoke obscured Lawrence’s vision.

Seeing the cloud of smoke in the sandbag area, he raised his walkie–talkie to his lips and demanded, “A smoke grenade at the fourth stage? What were you guys thinking?”

The staff members on the other side were equally bewildered.

The person in charge frowned and asked, “Who launched the smoke grenade?”

The crowd shook their heads. One of them said, “I saw three female students kicking the smoke grenade

from the third stage over to the sandbag...”

The person in charge immediately relayed the information to Lawrence through the walkie-talkie.

Lawrence replied, “Hold the attack while I check things out.”

Amid the smoke, Class 1 and Class 2 were fighting for positions. Wanda and Tiffany tried to break fight but to no avail.

It wasn’t until Lawrence showed up that the brawl came to a stop and Team 5 was eliminated.

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Lawrence’s face was stormy as he led the fallen team away and punished them to stand at attention with

a bottle of water balanced on their heads.

Meanwhile, Harvey, Marcus, and Daniel were rendered speechless by the sudden fight that had broken out among the female students, who turned out to be much more savage than their male counterparts.

Daniel shot Carlisle a despairing look. “Did you know they were going to fight, Carlisle?”

Carlisle shook his head. “I didn’t expect it. I thought they would get into a scuffle at worst.”

Wanda had been transferred to Class 1, but she was still assigned to the team comprising Class 2

members—clearly an intentional move on Ruby’s part to sideline her.

As such, Carlisle had predicted that Ruby would pull a dirty move during a crucial moment to keep Wanda from taking the lead. However, he never expected a fight to break out.

Daniel clapped his hand over his forehead and moaned, “Oh, man. There goes my lunch!”

Harvey and Marcus sighed in disappointment as well.

Presently, the sun shone overhead as the girls from Team 5 stood under its blistering rays. Carlisle’s heart tightened when he saw how miserable Wanda looked.

Knowing Wanda, she couldn’t have been the first one to start the fight.

Unfortunately, she could not be separated from her team, which was collectively deemed to be at fault

and punished as a whole. Such were Lawrence’s rules for building a team with integrity.

Not even a half hour had passed before one of the weaker students fainted from the heat.

Lawrence did not let up and instead had one of the staff members on-site carry the unconscious girl to

the infirmary while the other students continued their punishment.

As the boys gathered under a tree to hide from the sun, they couldn’t help feeling sorry for the girls, most

of whom were already drenched in sweat.

Daniel rubbed his chest and said, “Poor Wanda. An angel like her doesn’t deserve to be treated like this!”

Marcus countered, “Ruby’s the angel here. She’s twice as hot as Wanda.”

There was a loud smack as Harvey swatted the back of Marcus’ head. “Shut up, will you?”

Rubbing the back of his head, Marcus muttered incredulously, “Please don’t tell me you’ve got the hots for

Wanda, Harvey.”

“Now you’re just asking for a beating.” Harvey frowned and raised his hand to smack Marcus again.

Marcus kept his arms over his head as he scurried off.

Harvey walked up to Carlisle and said, “You won, Carlisle. But I won’t be giving you my lunch.”

Daniel taunted from behind Carlisle, “Come on, Harvey. Don’t you know it’s unseemly for a big, grown man like you to go back on your word?”

Lifting a brow, Harvey retorted, “I wasn’t talking to you.”

Seeing Harvey’s irritated expression, Marcus quickly stepped forward with two other male students flanking him. “Watch how you speak to Harvey, Daniel,” he warned.

Daniel swallowed and hid behind Carlisle.

At that moment, Carlisle looked up at Harvey and asked, “So you intend to go back on your word?” “No.” Harvey shook his head, explaining, “I was thinking about giving my lunch to Wanda, that’s all.”

Chapter 263

Daniel nudged Carlisle and hissed, “Don’t say yes, Carlisle!”

Harvey might have lost his lunch, but instead of giving it to Carlisle as promised, he wanted to give it to

Wanda in hopes of gaining her attention.

Carlisle wouldn't let another man romantically pursue Wanda even if he didn't stand a chance himself.

After a moment of thought, he chuckled and said to Harvey, "In other words, you're backtracking."

Harvey frowned. "I lost the meat stew, so I won't be eating it. It's not backtracking if I give it to someone

else."

Carlisle scoffed. "Technically, I won the stew. I don't think you get a say in what I do with it."

Narrowing his eyes, Harvey seethed, "Are you looking for trouble, punk?"

"I think you're the one looking for trouble, you piece of shit," Daniel retorted, stepping out from behind

Carlisle and facing off Harvey like a defensive guard dog. "I don't think I've ever met anyone as shameless

as you!"

The vein near Harvey's temple throbbed as he looked at Daniel mutinously, the urge to slap the latter

written on his face.

At that moment, Carlisle interjected, "You can give the meat stew to Wanda, but only if you tell her that

you lost it in a bet against me."

Harvey snorted. "As if."

Queenie had given him specific orders to keep an eye on Wanda and Carlisle. He couldn't let Carlisle get into Wanda's good books with this.

Shrugging, Carlisle replied languidly, "Then I'm afraid we have no deal. Give me the meat stew, or I'll tell everyone in Riverland University you're a sore loser who refuses to hold up his end of the bet."

Harvey gritted his teeth as he glowered at Carlisle. "You wouldn't dare!"

"Feel free to test me," Carlisle said, his expression calm as he shoved his hands into his pockets and walked away with maddening nonchalance.

Acting confident, Daniel threatened, "I'd tell everyone about this even if Carlisle wouldn't, Harvey!"

With that, he imitated Carlisle and shoved his hands into his pockets, looking equally nonchalant as he

bounded after Carlisle.

Harvey's fists clenched at his sides as cold fury flashed in his eyes.

He might simmer down if he were dealing with upperclassmen, whom he would think twice before

crossing. However, Carlisle was in his year; he had no right to act like he was better than

Harvey.

Marcus' brows furrowed. "Harvey, should we teach them a lesson when the opportunity presents itself?"

"We have plenty of time

To think of ways to make him suffer," Harvey said in a hushed tone,

compromising despite his rage.

Harvey had gotten into Riverland University only after his grandfather pulled some strings. His grandfather had, in turn, warned him that if he caused any trouble on campus, he would be left on his own.

At lunchtime, all the students packed into the training base cafeteria.

Only those on Team 2 had meat stew with their meals. As for the rest of the teams, they weren't even entitled to pasta. Their lunch was made up of a simple oatmeal with brown sugar.

A few of the male students from Class 2 who had been assigned to Team 2 were fighting to give Ruby

their chicken drumsticks.

Despite Ruby's polite rejection, they persisted.

"Aw, you guys are so sweet! Thanks," she relented in a cheerful voice, batting her eyelashes.

The male students were grinning from ear to ear at her acceptance.

Ruby proceeded to split the meat pieces among a few of her close friends.

Tiffany swallowed, thinking Ruby might give her a piece for all the work she had done. She was even contemplating turning her down if Ruby offered it since her accomplishments weren't exactly something to be proud of.

But a moment later, Tiffany realized she had overestimated Ruby, for the latter never planned on giving her anything at all.

Disappointed, Tiffany lowered her gaze and continued eating her oatmeal.

Meanwhile, the other female students from Class 2 had a table to themselves. When they saw the bowls of meat stew in front of Ruby, they looked down in silence.

Chapter 264

Phoebe scooped up a mouthful of oatmeal heaped with brown sugar and pouted as she said, "Those

bowls of meat stew could have been ours if those bitches hadn't played dirty."

Wanda laughed. "Cheer up. Let's grab some kebabs tonight and have all the meat we want. My treat."

She was moved when the students in Class 2 had defended her during the fight earlier even though she

had already been transferred to Class 1.

Just then, Harvey walked toward their table carrying his food tray, which he set down in front of Wanda.

He said quietly, "Here, you can have the stew..."

"Wow," a few of the girls mused enviously in unison.

Only Phoebe and Christine frowned as they cast a sharp look in Carlisle's direction, who did not so much

as glance in their direction.

Wanda shook her head. “Thanks, but I’ll just stick to oatmeal.”

“I... lost this meat stew to Carlisle,” Harvey admitted with some difficulty as color crept into his cheeks.

“Oh! So, this bowl is from Carlisle?” Wanda asked, her eyes sparkling.

“No. I lost it to him, but I’m giving it to you,” Harvey reiterated.

“You can’t give Wanda something that you lost to Carlisle; it doesn’t belong to you anymore,” Phoebe pointed out, seemingly baffled by Harvey’s line of argument.

Harvey picked up the bowl and placed it on Wanda’s tray. He glared at Phoebe and demanded, “Did you

see that? I just gave Wanda the stew.”

Phoebe gaped at him incredulously. “You-”

She had never felt like someone was insulting her intelligence more than at that moment. She even wondered if Harvey only got into Riverland University through connections.

Marcus and Daniel were making their way over to Wanda’s table with their food trays. Marcus explained, I lost my bowl to Carlisle too, and he told me to give it to Phoebe.”

Phoebe did not hesitate before taking the bowl from Marcus’ tray and placing it on her own. She beamed

at him. “Thank Carlisle for me, would you?”

Daniel asked, “Which one of you is Christine?”

Christine looked up in surprise. “That would be me.”

Daniel’s breath hitched when his gaze met Christine’s. She had the most stunning eyes he had ever seen.

With her delicate features, Christine’s beauty was on par with Wanda’s—though she was not quite as elegant and her skin was not as flawless.

Christine blushed when she noticed Daniel staring at her. She looked down and muttered, “Stop staring.”

Only then did Daniel snap out of his daze. Embarrassed, he explained, “I lost my lunch to Carlisle as well. I was told to give it to you.”

“Y–You don’t have to,” Christine stammered. She didn’t want Wanda to get the wrong idea.

While Phoebe and Carlisle were practically strangers, Christine was his fellow high school alumnus. To make matters worse, she had a crush on him back in the day.

“For heaven’s sake, just take the food!” Phoebe prompted, grabbing the bowl from Daniel’s tray and transferring it onto Christine’s. “You’d be insane to turn it down.”

Daniel glanced at Christine once more before returning to Carlisle’s table and sitting down.

Carlisle ate his stew at a leisurely pace, savoring the herb–infused and smoky flavors appreciatively.

When he saw Daniel sitting down on the bench across the table, he asked curiously, “Interested in

Christine?”

Daniel turned to look at Christine, and a goofy grin spread across his face when he saw her eating the stew he had given her. “Carlisle, do you believe in love at first sight?”

Carlisle raised a brow and countered in amusement, “When it comes to you, I think it’s more like lust at first sight.”

Daniel rolled his eyes. “I’m serious. My heart skipped a beat when I saw Christine just now. I felt like I was staring at my future wife!”

One of the students next to Daniel cursed, “Shit, could you not be so corny about it?”

Quirking his lips, Daniel said, “I bet you’ll be single for the next three years.”

The student scoffed. “So what? It’s not like I’m looking for love on campus. I actually care about graduating.”

Daniel refused to entertain the other student’s retort and instead asked Carlisle, “Do you think I have a

shot with Christine?”

“It’s hard to say...”

Chapter 265

Carlisle’s response was as blunt as it was brutal.

Daniel’s smile slipped from his face. “What, is it because of my looks?”

Carlisle chuckled and said, “No, you’re actually pretty good-looking.”

“Then why do you make it sound like my looks are my downfall?” Daniel demanded in puzzlement.

Rolling his eyes, Carlisle pointed out, “Because looks aren’t all that matters.”

“I’m rich too, if that helps. Aren’t chicks into rich and handsome men?” Daniel asked in exasperation.

“Not all of them,” Carlisle said solemnly. “You’d be surprised that most of them value love more than anything else. If you’re serious about Christine, you could try and pursue her.”

In an era where the Internet had yet to become advanced, love was a straightforward matter and untainted by worldly views.

Once the internet started gaining traction alongside modern movies and novels, women might have different standards for love.

When that happened, women would either fantasize about fictional men or envision themselves as the

lead character of a romance novel or movie.

In all fairness, not all women would develop such outlandish expectations, at least not in the present age.

More importantly, the

women in this present age might not even want love. Some of them—like Sarah—might seek material comfort instead.

Birds of a feather flocked together, as the saying went. Sarah and Sienna were more likely than not to

want the same things out of a relationship.

Daniel swallowed a mouthful of oatmeal and said with determination, “I’ll convince Christine to go out

with me.” He then grinned mischievously at Carlisle as he asked, “Would you mind passing her a note for

me?”

Carlisle countered dryly, “Where’s the romance in that? She might think you lack sincerity if you have me

deliver the note for you. Do it yourself if you’re serious about pursuing her.”

Daniel froze. “Really? But... who even delivers their own love notes these days?”

“Why are you following the masses?”

Carlisle argued, “Everyone has their own way of dealing with romance. And if you want to show your sincerity at all, you should deliver the note yourself!”

“Fine, then,” Daniel acceded. He thought Carlisle made a rather good point.

He was already thinking about the content he would put into that note and how he could deliver it to Christine without humiliating himself.

That afternoon, Lawrence rallied the students for a hiking trip.

The military training that morning had left the students exhausted; and now, they wouldn’t stop moaning as they trudged their way up the mountain.

To commemorate the occasion, Lawrence took a photo of the students with a camera he had borrowed. They did not begin their descent until it was around 6:00 pm.

The drive back to Riverland University was quiet. Most of the students had fallen into a deep slumber from exhaustion.

It was at that moment that

Carlisle received a call from Sean. "Carlisle, sorry about yesterday. I got caught up with some stuff, but I'm free to drop by your place later."

"That's fine by me," Carlisle replied.

After hanging up the phone, he closed his eyes and slept.

It was past 8:00 pm when the students reached campus.

Carlisle dragged his aching and exhausted body to the dorm. Having washed up and put on a change of

clothes, he wrote a check and went out of campus to meet with Sean.

They agreed to meet at a nearby diner. After ordering a couple of things off the menu, Carlisle handed

Sean the check and said, "We're racing against time here, so get the job done as soon as possible."

Sean reached for the check with both hands, his grip tentative as he stared at the figure. He swore his

heart nearly leapt out of his throat when he counted the zeroes.

"Impressive as ever, Carlisle. I don't know how you could so casually hand over a huge sum of money like

this," he praised.

Carlisle helped himself to the dishes and said through a mouthful of food, "Go and incorporate the company tomorrow. I want 51% of the shares, and the remaining 49% is yours to distribute as you like."

Sean's eyes widened. "Carlisle, are you..."

The check was for a million dollars. By giving Sean a 49% stake in the company, Carlisle was as good as

offering him 490 thousand dollars!

Sean suddenly grew ashamed of whining about Carlisle not being a good friend.

Carlisle looked up at him and said plainly

Sean's eyes turned red

"I truly think of you as a friend, Sean."

everything you ask of me tears as he choked out, "I won't go against you anymore, Carlisle. I'll do

even if it means dying. I don't deserve to live after what I did to you!"

Chapter 266

Carlisle said, "Stop giving me all that sentimental nonsense and start eating."

"Whatever you say, Carlisle!" Sean grinned. He shoved the check into his wallet and picked-up a fork as he

fell into a comfortable conversation with Carlisle.

They were halfway through their meal when Carlisle received yet another call, this time from Lethan.

"Hey, Carlisle. Are you free tonight? Let's grab a meal with a few other stakeholders so that we can go over the work to be carried out," Lethan suggested.

"You guys go ahead without me. I'm a little tied up at the moment," Carlisle replied.

“Alright. Also, I’m going to need you to rustle up the 50 million dollars. I’ve already put in the remaining 50

million dollars,” Lethan informed.

Carlisle proposed, “Sure. I’ll be done with classes by lunchtime tomorrow. Why don’t you come over then

and I’ll hand you the check?”

“Sounds good. I’ll leave you to your business then. See you.”

Inside a private dining lounge at Imperial Hotel, Lethan was having dinner with Shania and Nathan when

he made the call to Carlisle.

After hanging up, he shrugged and addressed his companions. “Carlisle won’t be joining us this evening. Guess it’s just the three of us.”

Shania asked, “Lethan, where did you get the 50 million dollars?”

Lethan sounded exasperated as he explained, “I demanded a couple of payments in advance. You have no idea how many clients I’ve pissed off just to get the money.”

Shania sighed. “Go big or go home, huh? I hope this gamble works out because the alternative means suffering Josie’s wrath,”

Taking a sip of his red wine, Lethan said in a steely voice, “Like I said, I trust Carlisle. The man’s pulled off some amazing stuff.”

Slicing through his rib-eye steak and popping it into his mouth, Nathan savored its tenderness as he asked, “Do we have a business proposal?”

“Yes. You can take a look at it and see if you have any questions. Shania pulled out the proposal from her backpack and handed it to Nathan.

He took it and read its contents, musing. “It seems we need an aquaculture expert.”

Shania drew a sharp breath. “I completely forgot about that!”

She wanted to bury herself in a hole somewhere.

They couldn’t very well raise fish in any random fish pond; they needed an expert to oversee the temperature and quality control of the water.

Nathan went on to say, “We lack manpower for the construction, especially if we have only a month to finish building works

Pursing her lips, Shania said in dismay, “We still have time, don’t we? We could save costs if we avoid

hiring too many workers, especially in this stifling hot weather.”

*The northern region would start snowing by November, and since we can’t predict when the cold wave

would arrive, we should probably make haste.” Nathan countered.

“Fine, I’ll add a few more construction teams to our current manpower,” Shania agreed.

Never one to dawdle once a plan had been set, she couldn’t be bothered with finishing her dinner and

immediately called up the company’s project department.

“Ms. Warbane?” the person on the other line greeted.

“Wasn’t there a guy by the name of Gerard Zahn who wanted a contract with us? Do we know how his construction company is faring? Shania asked

“It’s subpar at best, with only about 30 employees. I don’t think he could accomplish any work we give him on time,” came the project manager’s reply

“In that case, have him reach out to two other construction companies so that they could form something of a coalition. The work must be delivered in a month” Shania said.

“Roger that, Ms. Warbane

Shania asked, “Also, I need about eight more teams for our current project. Could you make the arrangements?”

The person on the other line stammered, “Eight is.”

“Can you or

r can you not make the arrangements? Shania demanded icily. “If not, you’re fired.”

“I can.” the person on the other line said cautiously. “But I need three days.

“You only get one,” Shania countered

Chapter 267

The project manager on the other line had broken out in a cold sweat as he replied shakily, “Yes, ma’am.”

It was nearly impossible for him to rally eight more construction teams in a day, but he had no choice other than to agree to Shania’s request for now.

After ending the call, Shania turned and asked Nathan, “Anything else?”

“None for now,” Nathan replied. “Let our brother take a look at the proposal.

He handed the proposal back to Shania, who accepted it. Belated realization dawned upon her as she

gaped at Nathan incredulously. “Wait, what did you just say?”

“Let our brother take a look at it. As in, let Lethan read the proposal,” Nathan answered innocently.

“Lethan’s not your brother! He’s mine!” Shania snapped.

Nathan scrunched up his nose, chuckling as he said, “I mean, I’ve known you for long enough to see him

as my brother too.”

As Lethan took the proposal from Shania, he eyed them with amusement and pointed out, “You’re both

old enough to start going out, I think.”

Shania shoveled food into her mouth as she grumbled, “Don’t be ridiculous. Nathan isn’t my type; I like

them manly.”

Lethan laughed and lowered his head as he scanned the contents of the proposal.

Nathan’s face darkened as he said in hushed tones, “How am I not manly? I’ve got abs for days and the

height of a supermodel!”

“Yeah, but you’re so princely and meek, Shania countered.

“I can change all that!” he argued.

“Oh? I look forward to it then,” she said.

“If I succeed, does that mean I’ll have a shot with you?” Nathan asked.

“We’ll see,” Shania groused.

Nathan’s gaze darkened as he looked down and continued eating. Shania let out a quiet breath of relief.

All she wanted was to work on her career; she wasn’t looking to date anyone. She saw no reason to rush

into marriage even before Lethan had

Carlisle went back to the dorm and called it a night after grabbing dinner with Sean.

However, he had only just lay down in bed when Lawrence showed up at the dorm entrance with a notebook in hand.

“Good evening, Mr. Hanson.” Daniel was sitting up in bed and massaging his swollen calves, flashing Lawrence a grin as he asked, “Are you here to tell us we get a day off tomorrow?”

Lawrence said unsympathetically, “We’ll be training as usual tomorrow.”

Carlisle sat up in bed as well and greeted, “Good evening, Mr. Hanson.”

Nodding in acknowledgment, Lawrence said, “The bonfire party’s next Monday. Your guidance counselor wanted me to ask you guys if you’d like to perform that night.”

Daniel's eyes lit up. This was his chance to showcase his talent and gain Christine's attention. At the thought of this, he told Lawrence, "I can dance, Mr. Hanson!"

Lawrence laughed and asked, "Breakdancing?"

"Yes, sir. I've been learning since I was in grade school," Daniel said. "I was even dance champion in a few city-wide competitions!"

"Pretty impressive," Lawrence praised as he jotted down Daniel's name in his notebook. "In that case, from tomorrow onward, you can get off training two hours before the rest of your peers."

Hearing this, Daniel said arrogantly, "Come on, Mr. Hanson, I was a dance champion! I don't need to rehearse."

Regret filled him instantly, and he wanted to pull out his own tongue. If he could get off training earlier, he could at least take a nap in the dorm. Why did he let his stupid pride get baited like that?

Chapter 268

Daniel quickly changed his mind when he saw the amusement on Lawrence's face. "I think rehearsing might be a good idea. I haven't danced in a while. Might have gotten rusty."

Lawrence glanced at Carlisle. "What about you, Carlisle?"

"I'm good, Carlisle said. He had picked up the guitar in his past life to impress Sarah. He even took formal lessons up until the tenth grade.

However, making money was his priority now, and he had no intention of showing off his guitar skills,

"Ms. Lowe speaks highly of you. With no one else from your class volunteering as performers for the bonfire party, I figured you and Daniel could do a little breakdance sequence together," Lawrence suggested.

He was sure an excellent student like Carlisle was talented, and he wanted to see the latter take his rightful place on center stage.

*Come on, Carlisle, we can practice together for three hours every day. I guarantee you'll pick up the basics in no time. You'll look so damn cool!" Daniel encouraged with a grin.

"I'll sign up then, Carlisle relented. "But I won't be dancing. I'd like to perform an old song."

He wasn't about to let Susan down if she had such high expectations of him.

Lawrence raised a brow, seemingly impressed. "You play the piano?"

*Guitar, Carlisle corrected.

"Well, then, I look forward to your performance. You and Daniel can get off training two hours earlier from tomorrow onward and practice your act, Lawrence said, jotting down Carlisle's name in his notebook before leaving the room.

Shane came into the room after airing his laundry and flashed Carlisle a mischievous grin. "Are you looking to get a guitar for the performance, Carlisle?"

"I have a friend who runs a music shop. Want me to ask him for suggestions?"

"Nah, just take me to the shop tomorrow." A yawn escaped Carlisle as he added, "Keep your voices down. I'm going to sleep now."

The other students in his dorm who were chatting among themselves fell quiet. Even Kelvin, who had been talking to his father on the phone, hung up in a hurry.

Training went on as usual the next morning. At lunchtime, Carlisle went back to the dorm and wrote a check for fifty million dollars. He then went to the bank and withdrew ten thousand dollars.

Lethan drove to Riverland University and pulled up outside the gates. Carlisle promptly handed him the

check.

After that, Carlisle left for the music shop with Shane.

The most expensive guitar in the shop cost five thousand dollars. Carlisle tested out its acoustics and decided he liked them enough to buy the guitar.

Courtesy of Shane, the shop owner very generously took 500 dollars off the final price. Carlisle ended up paying 4500 dollars for the guitar.

Carlisle handed Shane a hundred bucks to thank him for his effort, over which Shane couldn't stop smiling.

For the next few days, Carlisle got off training two hours early to practice his song. There was barely enough space in the rehearsal room for him to practice, so he claimed the dorm rooftop as a rehearsal space instead.

Daniel wore baggy clothes and had his cap on backward as he danced to a catchy beat. Carlisle, on the other hand, perched on the bench and strummed his guitar in earnest.

When Daniel stopped for a drink and listened to Carlisle play, he didn't have the faintest idea what song the latter was playing.

"I don't see you listening to music a lot, Carlisle. How about I give you ideas of songs you could play? The one Copperhead released last year was pretty good.

"I bet all the ladies on campus will go crazy over you if they hear an acoustic version of 'Someday,'" Daniel suggested brightly, sipping water.

"I don't need them to go crazy over me—I already have someone I like," Carlisle said with a smile as he plucked out the opening notes for Copperhead's "Someday".

Daniel was a huge fan of Copperhead. His jaw went slack when he heard the familiar melody. "Dude, don't you need to look at a music sheet or something? Even if you don't, you're still playing remarkably well. This is some grade-five-and-above quality!"

Carlisle closed his eyes and hummed the tune. He wouldn't be performing "Someday" at the bonfire party, but he saw no harm in amusing Daniel while the latter was taking a break from dancing.

Daniel was right. Copperhead had made a rather strong impression in the noughties with their discography.

Carlisle could win over plenty of young ladies on campus if he played even one of their songs.

However, he didn't want the other ladies' attention. He had already decided on the song he wanted to play, and performing it once on stage was enough.

Chapter 269

On Friday, Lawrence bid goodbye to the students when training officially ended. After spending half a month with the students, he had become something of a friend to them.

He might be tough and built like a stone wall, but he could never help tearing up during the farewell ceremony for each year's training program.

The students were also moved to tears by Lawrence's passionate and motivational speech, at the end of which he concluded in a breaking voice, "Everyone, dismissed!"

His voice rang through the campus. This was followed by raucous cheering from the students, some of

whom looked crestfallen.

A few of the female students gathered around Lawrence to ask for his contact details, but he turned

them all down,

He said emotionally. "This is the last time I'll be in charge of training. I'll be reporting back to base

tomorrow, and if all goes well, we won't be seeing each other again."

The female students were crushed once more.

Meanwhile, Wanda, Phoebe, and Christine were discussing work not too far away.

Christine clutched Wanda's wrist and asked, "Don't you have dance rehearsal later, Wanda? Phoebe and I

can meet the client without you."

For the last two days, a huge client of theirs had applied for a loan of 50 thousand, but negotiations were still ongoing as they had yet to work out the installments and interest rates.

Wanda had signed up to perform at the bonfire party and had been practicing for the last couple of days. With the party on Monday, the last thing Christine wanted was for Wanda to be distracted by work.

"Something's fishy about this client. He wants a low interest and a long repayment period but demands that the funds be released right away. He probably thinks he can push us around because we're so young,"

Phoebe groused.

"We can bring Ms. Robson with us to the negotiations. If the client insists on his terms, we won't offer him a deal," Wanda said expressionlessly, looking every bit an intimidating leader.

After Lawrence managed to escape from the gaggle of young ladies vying for his attention, he made his way over to Carlisle.

Carlisle and Daniel were going over their dinner plans when the latter noticed Lawrence approaching. He looked heartbroken as he wailed, "I'm going to miss you, Mr. Hanson!"

Lawrence gave him a withering look. “Really? Could have fooled me with all the cursing and complaining you did behind my back.”

Daniel’s eyes widened as he demanded, “Which bastard told you? I need names!”

“If you didn’t want me to find out, you shouldn’t have been so loud with the complaints. I heard you

badmouthing me on four occasions,” Lawrence pointed out with a wicked grin.

“What? No. I think you’ve got it all wrong, Mr. Hanson. I wasn’t badmouthing you; I was praising you! For your dedication and hard work! I have nothing but love and respect for you,” Daniel lied as he stepped behind Carlisle and bolted.

Lawrence did not go after him and instead turned to Carlisle. “Mr. Zahn, if it’s not too much for me to ask of you once again, please be kind to our sergeant.”

Carlisle smiled. “Don’t worry. He’s practically a brother to me.”

After all, how bad could a retired sergeant be?

Before Lawrence could respond, Carlisle added, “How about we grab a meal together? I can invite Francis.

Lawrence shook his head, chuckling as he said, “It’s fine. Farewells are hard enough as they are. Besides, I have a date with my girlfriend.”

Carlisle pointed out teasingly, “I think you’re lying about the whole farewell thing just so you can go on your date.”

“Don’t announce it to the world,” Lawrence said, glaring at Carlisle.

The two made idle small talk before Lawrence’s ringtone interrupted them. He pulled out his phone, and Carlisle caught a glimpse of the name flashing on the screen: Susan,

Lawrence walked away from Carlisle before putting the call through. When he conversed with Susan, he cupped his hand over his mouth as if terrified someone might hear him.

Carlisle did not hang around and instead made his way back to the dorm where Daniel was waiting for him downstairs.

When he saw Carlisle, he bounded up to him and asked, “Carlisle, want to go get a haircut this evening? I heard a lot of freshmen are working at the hair salon part-time.”

Carlisle eyed him with faint amusement. “Didn’t you say you were going to pursue Christine romantically? I don’t think going to the hair salon is a wise move.”

“But I haven’t made a move on Christine yet, have I?” Daniel rubbed the back of his neck, mumbling, “I figured I could try out some of my flirting moves and see which ones I could use on her.”

“Yeah, right,” Carlisle snorted. “If you go to one of those shady salons, I’ll tell your dad.”

“Okay, okay! I won’t go!” Daniel felt his knees go weak at the threat, knowing he might not survive his father’s wrath if the latter knew he went to one of those “hair salons”.

Upon returning to the dorm, Carlisle saw Shane lying stomach-down on the bed and flipping through a photo album.

Most of the photos were of a beautiful young lady in her school uniform, and Shane was in a few photos with her too.

“What the hell? Is that your girlfriend, Shane?” Daniel demanded, looking like he had just stumbled upon a

treasure trove as he snatched the album away from Shane and flipped through the pages.

Chapter 270

Shane beamed proudly. “Yeah. She’s pretty, huh?”

“Not bad at all, you punk. She’s a total babe!” Daniel said. He smiled as he handed the album back to Shane. But in that instant, he thought about something and pulled out his phone to go through a few messages in his inbox.

It didn’t take him long to find the photo of a female high school student dressed in her uniform—who looked exactly like Shane’s girlfriend in the photo album.

The photo in the MMS message was captioned with the price: 1800 dollars.

Carlisle saw the photo on Daniel’s phone. According to the time stamp, the photo had been sent around lunchtime.

At that moment, Carlisle and Daniel turned to look at Shane.

“Why are you both staring at me?” Shane asked, meeting their gazes in confusion as he shoved the photo album under his pillow.

Daniel’s expression was inscrutable, but before he could speak, Carlisle bumped his knee against the side of Daniel’s leg and said, “Step out to the balcony with me.”

“Okay,” Daniel said.

He did as he was told and followed Carlisle out to the balcony, where he immediately asked, “Don’t you think we should tell the poor guy that his girlfriend is selling her body?”

“Call the hair salon and tell them to hold off any transaction that concerns her,” Carlisle ordered. When he saw the MMS message earlier, he had guessed that Shane’s girlfriend must have run into some sort of trouble.

There was no need for Shane to know about this, lest he thought any lesser of his girlfriend.

Daniel called the number that sent him the MMS message.

It took only seconds before his call went through and he said plainly, “Hi, I’m calling about that young lady in the school uniform. I’m interested in the offer. How about I go over in a while?”

“Oh, so sorry, but another client has shown interest in that young lady,” came the voice of an older woman.

Daniel looked up at Carlisle in alarm as he whispered, “She’s been booked by someone else.”

Carlisle snatched the phone away and said, “I’ll pay double.”

The older woman on the other line was audibly conflicted as she said, “Listen here, handsome. Money isn’t the problem here...”

“Triple, then,” Carlisle pressed.

“Look...”

“Make that five times the original selling price, Carlisle drove home his bargain.

The older woman was convinced. “I’ll talk to the other guy then.”

She ended the call after that.

“Let’s go over to that hair salon now, Daniel,” Carlisle said. He didn’t bother showering as he put on a change of clothes and called Francis.

Daniel had put on a change of clothes as well. They left the dorm in a hurry, and Shane followed them..

Noticing this, Daniel stopped in his tracks and asked, “Why are you following us?”

“Aren’t we grabbing dinner?” Shane countered.

“Go do our laundry. We’ll bring takeout for you,” Daniel offered.

“Fine,” Shane muttered. His gaze darkened as he felt his confidence shrivel up. He was not as well-off as Daniel and Carlisle. He would never be able to keep up with their fancy lifestyle.

Carlisle didn’t try to understand how Shane must have felt at that moment as he and Daniel quickly made their way out of the school gates.

Five minutes later, Francis’ car pulled up.

Immediately after getting into the car, Daniel said, “We need to get to Gale’s Hair Salon at Whitebox Avenue!”

Francis was incredulous. “Come again?”