

## Love Spell 371

Chapter 371

Benjamin's eyes widened at Carlisle's text.

Carlisle was asking for 15 million dollars, the same sum he had invested.

Benjamin thought Carlisle ought to take some profit for himself even after recovering his initial investment.

"What did Carlisle say?" Sirius asked tentatively, his face still mapped with bruises.

As far as Sirius could tell, Heath and Benjamin were nothing more than dispensable tools to Carlisle. He didn't seem to think of them as friends, and he had undoubtedly

told Benjamin to sell off those assets so he could pocket the profit.

"See for yourself," Benjamin said as he handed Sirius the phone.

Valin peered over Sirius' shoulder to read the text from Carlisle as well. His and Sirius' jaws fell open when they saw what Carlisle wrote.

They couldn't believe Carlisle was only asking for 15 million dollars.

Being Heath's confidantes, Sirius and Valin knew Carlisle had given Heath the 15 million dollars he needed to kickstart the gang.

In other words, Carlisle was asking for no more than his initial investment. At this point, he was practically running a charity.

“Do you see what kind of person Carlisle is now?” Benjamin drawled.

Sirius looked down at his lap and muttered, “I should have never doubted him. I’ll apologize to Carlisle on my knees when I see him next time.”

Valin sighed and said, “Carlisle must think of you and Heath as true friends or he wouldn’t have sent Heath back home to let his parents care for him.”

Sirius gave a grave nod. “I will gladly die for Carlisle if things come down to it.”

They now regarded him as highly as they did Benjamin and Heath.

Just then, Valin sighed again. “What do we do while Heath is still in a coma?”

Sirius crossed his legs in a leisurely manner and said, “What’s there for us to do other than kick back and relax? I’m sure Heath will have plenty of jobs for us once he wakes up.”

Benjamin stared at the road ahead as he spoke up from the passenger seat. “Carlisle doesn’t think I have what it takes to run our operations, which is why he wants me to wait for Heath to regain consciousness. I have to show him I’m just as capable as Heath.”

Valin and Sirius looked up at Benjamin, who suddenly sounded so grown-up that they didn’t see a trace of the young man who had previously relied on Heath for everything.

Francis couldn’t help casting a sidelong glance at Benjamin, and a thought crossed his mind: the fledgling was ready to take flight.

After texting Benjamin, Carlisle gave Gordon a call.

“Hey, Carlisle,” Gordon greeted in his pleasant baritone.

Carlisle cut to the chase and asked, “Dad, the friend I told you about the other day will be heading to Franklin Complex today. Did you hear back from Mr. Hughes?”

Gordon grumbled, “The old geezer is so full of himself that he thinks 500 dollars is too little to be worth his while.

“I had to give him another thousand dollars before he agreed. I can’t believe this is the thanks I get for helping his son get a job!”

Carlisle sputtered. “1500 dollars isn’t that much, Dad. Even a day in the intensive care unit could cost 2000 dollars.”

He continued, “This friend of mine is important to me. I’d have given Mr. Hughes 15 million dollars if he asked for it.”

“Alright, stop with the jokes. 15 million dollars. Ha! Do you think money grows on trees?” Gordon chided good-naturedly.

He then asked, “By the way, when are they getting here and how many of them are there? Your mother and I will do a quick grocery run for dinner.”

“They’ll likely get there before dinner. As for the numbers... I reckon there’s about a dozen of them,” Carlisle answered.

“What? There’s no room in our house to accommodate all of them!” Gordon

exclaimed incredulously.

“They’ll figure something out,” Carlisle reassured.

“Okay, then, I’m hanging up now. I’ve got groceries to buy,” Gordon said before ending the call.

Just as Carlisle set his phone down, he felt Wanda’s arms suddenly tighten around

his waist. A sheen of cold sweat had broken out on her forehead too.

Carlisle looked at her and wondered if she was having nightmares again.

Chapter 372

Carlisle frowned at the sight. He rubbed soothing circles on Wanda’s back, relieved that the nightmares hadn’t woken her up.

The tension gradually left Wanda’s body as he rubbed her back.

Just then, Carlisle’s phone buzzed with a text from Diego: “Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Zahn, but have you taken a look at the drawings I sent you? Is there anything you’d

like me to amend?”

Carlisle had been so busy the last couple of days that he completely forgot about the matter of designing the office building.

Diego previously promised to email him the drawings by evening, but Carlisle was too lazy to go through them.

He had faith in Diego's tastes and his attention to detail, so he replied, "I've looked at them. They're not bad. I've decided to proceed with your designs, but try to make quick work of the renovation. I don't want this to drag out into a three-month-long project."

"Got it, Mr. Zahn," came Diego's response.

It was 2.00 pm when Wanda let out a long sigh through her nose. Her eyelashes fluttered as she opened her eyes, and she tightened her arms around Carlisle's waist.

Carlisle looked down at her and asked softly, "Hey there, sleepyhead. You awake?"

Wanda grumbled, "No."

Carlisle stifled his laughter and did not call out her obvious lie.

Luna had told him earlier that Wanda's psychological fragility might cause her to process things a lot slower than usual. In other words, there would be moments

when she might behave like a child.

However, Carlisle found this side of Wanda rather endearing.

After what felt like a long time, Wanda slowly drew away from Carlisle's embrace and rubbed the sleep from her eyes. She asked softly, "What time is it? Are we supposed to go to class?"

The nightmare from earlier coupled with Carlisle's warm embrace had made her sweat in her sleep. A few strands of her hair clung to her damp skin.

"It's free period this afternoon, so we don't have to go back to campus," Carlisle said.

He pulled out a couple of tissues and began wiping the sweat off Wanda's brows. When he saw the trace of drool on the corner of her mouth, he chuckled and asked, "Why did you drool? Were you dreaming of food?"

In the past, Wanda would have wished for a hole to open up in the ground and swallow her whole.

But now,

good..."

she giggled sheepishly as she said, "I dreamed of having steak. It was so

Carlisle pinched her cheek gently and said indulgently, "Why don't we have steak for dinner tonight?"

"Yes, please!" Wanda nodded eagerly. "But we should probably go back to campus.

before Ms. Lowe thinks we're playing hooky."

"Alright. Come on, let's go wash up," Carlisle said.

He led her to the washroom and cleaned her face with his towel. He only had one set. of toiletries in the apartment, and he made a mental note to get a new set for Wanda

after they were done with classes.

Given that the students had free periods in the afternoon, most of the students. headed outdoors. Only a small number of students remained in the classrooms.

Phoebe and Christine were busy taking and making phone calls.

SwiftFunds Financial Investments had somehow managed to loan out its capital of three million dollars. Thankfully, a few business deals did not go through.

As Phoebe ended her latest phone call, she asked Christine, “How did our funds run out so quickly, Christine? I thought we only deal with small loans.”

“Most of the loans were approved by Wanda, so I’ve no idea,” Christine explained, frowning “Wait, does that mean we’re completely out of funds?”

Phoebe pouted Guess we have to give up on these potential clients. What a shame; they all have rather good credit backgrounds.

Carlisle and Wanda were strolling around campus when he stumbled upon Christine. and Phoebe. Noting their distress, he stopped in his tracks and asked, “Did you guys

run into trouble?”

Phoebe and Christine exchanged a brief look, each questioning the other if they should tell Carlisle about their situation.

When they glanced at Wanda for help, they saw her staring at Carlisle.

Carlisle chuckled. “Did your company run out of funds?”

Chapter 373

In truth, Carlisle had overheard Christine and Phoebe’s conversation earlier.

SwiftFunds Financial Investments was the first online moneylending business in the country, and its reputation would only grow with the widespread usage of the

internet.

As such, SwiftFunds Financial Investments would need an astronomical sum of funds to keep up with its ever-growing clientele.

Christine pursed her lips and nodded. “That’s right. We have a few potential customers who are looking to borrow two million dollars, but the repayment for the first loan we issued won’t be due for another week.”

Phoebe asked, “Do you know anyone who might be interested in investing in our company, Carlisle? Could you pull some strings?”

Carlisle grinned. “You’ve got a keen investor right here.”

Phoebe and Christine froze. The former was the first to recover from her shock and said, “Carlisle, we need two million dollars, not 200 thousand. That gaming workshop of yours can’t possibly make that much money!”

“How narrow-minded of you,” Carlisle said dryly. “You have no idea how profitable online games are.”

With that, he pulled out a blank check. “Give me a pen,” he said to Phoebe as he extended his hand.

Once again, Phoebe stiffened in shock. He had a checkbook with him, and he seemed ready to invest two million dollars into SwiftFunds Financial Investment.



Christine had already given Carlisle her pen.

Carlisle wrote the check for two million dollars and signed on it with a flourish.

When Christine saw this, she had to pinch her calf to make sure she wasn't

dreaming. The sharp pain told her she was, indeed, awake.

She never imagined Carlisle to be someone who could fork out two million dollars

without even batting an eye. It was as if he had become a different person from when he was in high school.

Even Wanda had less than a million dollars in savings when she launched

SwiftFunds Financial Investments.

Phoebe's eyes were as wide as saucers. "Carlisle, you're not pulling our legs, are you?

"Do I look like I'm joking? Carlisle countered while chuckling. He added, "This company of yours will make it big one day. You should look for more investors.

The grace period you've afforded your clients is at odds with the number of loans you put out. You'll need more funds if you want to keep the business running."

With that, Carlisle took Wanda by the hand and led her out of the classroom.

Phoebe felt as if she was in a dream as she stared at the check in her hands.

All this while, she thought Carlisle had successfully set up a gaming workshop

because he had Wanda's help. It seemed she was wrong.

If Carlisle could fork out two million dollars without batting an eye, Phoebe reckoned his net worth must not be less than five million dollars.

He couldn't very well have given Phoebe and Christine all his savings to help them.

Christine took a deep breath. "Carlisle's right; we have to find investors as soon as possible..."

"Oh, please. Investors don't just fall out of the sky," Phoebe cut her off wryly.

Besides, I think we should take things one step at a time.

"We'll only approve and put out loans after we've received our dues; that should lower our risks."

Christine sputtered. "We should reconsider our company name then."

The company hadn't been named SwiftFunds Financial Investments for nothing; the name itself guaranteed a fast lending process.

The slower the lending process, the more their reputation would take a hit. They would end up losing customers at this rate.

Meanwhile, Carlisle took Wanda to the man-made lake behind campus. There were several couples here, all of whom were seniors.

Most of them refrained from physical touch, though. The most they did was huddle around and talk

Not many of them held hands like Carlisle and Wanda did. None of them looked to be freshmen, either.

Some of the seniors were looking at Carlisle and Wanda with envy.

Over at Imperial Hotel, Gareth smacked his desk in executive suite no. 8 as he seethed, “Damn you, Isaiah!”

There was a feral look on his handsome face, and his eyes were bloodshot as he grimaced.

Gareth was childhood friends with Isaiah Osbourne. They grew up together in the same neighborhood.

When Gareth agreed to collaborate with Isaiah in wine production, he never expected the sulfur dioxide used in this batch of wine to be over the safety index.

Usually, a controlled amount of sulfur dioxide was used to stop any unwanted bacteria from growing on the grapes used in making wine, but too much of the compound could endanger human life.

The batch of wine in question was the first batch to be launched, and over 30 bottles of it contained ten times more sulfur dioxide than the allowable concentration. That

was enough to kill a man.

Chapter 374

In other words, over 30 bottles in this batch of wine were essentially poison.

Max’s face was ashen, and a chill ran down his spine as he pointed out, “Thank goodness you took Carlisle’s advice or something terrible might have happened!”

The vein near Gareth's temple was throbbing. Grimacing, he seethed, "That piece of shit was trying to screw me and Grandpa over!"

Had this batch of wine been launched on the market, a lot of people would have died from drinking it.

Max suggested, "This is a serious problem. You should tell your grandfather about it and see what he says. I'm worried Isaiah could be working for the enemy."

Gareth's grandfather, Theodore Spencer, was an important figure.

Isaiah could be plotting against Gareth's father, Amos with this batch of wine, for all Gareth knew.

With a shaky hand, Gareth lit a cigarette and took a long drag. It was only after the thick smoke had unfurled in his lungs, and the nicotine had spread through his veins that his heartbeat slowed to a steady beat.

A while later, he grabbed his phone and gave Theodore a call.

"Gareth, to what do I owe the pleasure?" Theodore's warm voice sounded on the other line.

Gareth snubbed the remaining half of his cigarette in the ashtray and said hoarsely, "

Grandpa, Isaiah is trying to screw me-

Theodore mused, "I didn't think the kid had such preferences."

Gareth blinked. “Grandpa, what I meant was, Isaiah is plotting to destroy our family!”

“Oh? Tell me what brought this on,” Theodore prompted.

Gareth told Theodore about the results of his investigation.

After listening to everything, Theodore fell silent on the other line. Gareth continued,

Max thinks Isaiah might be working for the enemy.”

“Does Isaiah know about you investigating him?” Theodore asked.

Not yet

“Good keep it that way for now and pretend you don’t know about the wine,” Theodore instructed slowly. “I’ll take care of the rest.”

With that, he hung up.

Gareth leaned against his seat and breathed out slowly. “Carlisle said our family

might go bankrupt at best and be eradicated at worst.”

Max narrowed his eyes and asked, “You don’t suppose Carlisle knows Isaiah, do you?”

“Isaiah is too proud to meet with someone like Carlisle,” Gareth said, his lips curling.”

Besides, haven’t we looked into Carlisle’s background before?

“He’s new in Riverland, and he came here for university after graduating high school.”

Having given it a thought, Gareth picked up his phone and called Carlisle.

Presently, Carlisle and Wanda were lounging on a stone bench under the willow tree by the man-made lake.

Wanda was tucked close to Carlisle as she gazed at the shimmering lake. He had his arm around her shoulders, indulging in the idyllic moment as the gentle breeze caressed his face.

Just then, his phone buzzed.

While Wanda was not asleep, Carlisle worried a loud ringtone might scare her and had set his phone to silent mode for her benefit.

He had only just put the call through when a familiar voice sounded from the other line. "Hey, Carlisle. Where are you?"

"On campus," Carlisle answered.

"Care to take the day off and join me for a drink?"

"I can't. I have a bonfire party to attend tonight," Carlisle explained.

"Fine. I'll meet you after your classes, then."

Carlisle turned down the caller. "Yeah, no can do. I'm bringing my girlfriend out for steak this evening."

“Damn it,” Gareth cursed on the other line. There were plenty of people who would line up to have a meal with him.

Even Yuriel and the mayor himself had invited Gareth for a meal when he first arrived in Riverland, but he had turned them both down.

He couldn’t believe Carlisle, of all people, was refusing to dine with him today.

More importantly, Carlisle had turned down his invitation so he could bring his girlfriend out for steak! Couldn’t they have steak–tomorrow?

“I assume you’ve found a problem with the batch of wine,” Carlisle mused breezily.

“I’ll talk to you about that in person!” Gareth hung up after that.

He rose to his feet and said to Max, “Come on, Max. We’re going to Riverland University.”

“What for?” Max asked.

“To see Carlisle.”

Chapter 375

Gareth walked out of the hotel expressionlessly.

He was convinced that Carlisle was a fortune teller.

If he hadn’t been careful, he would have led his family down the path of destruction. Plus, all the money he had put into Scarlet Corporation would have gone down the

drain.

As such, Gareth wanted to see Carlisle to ask if there was anything he could do to change his fate.

The shimmering man-made lake at Riverland University was awash with a golden glow as the setting sun cast its rays over the water.

It made for a lovely sight.

Tucked under Carlisle's arm and gazing at the lake, Wanda mused to herself, "It is almost impossible to watch a sunset and not dream."

When Carlisle heard Wanda recite the famous quote word for word, he looked down at her in surprise and asked, "Wanda, do you feel better?"

Wanda did not answer him and simply stared at the lake in silence.

Carlisle sighed inwardly and tightened his arm around her, drawing her closer.

Just then, Daniel called out to them from the nearby lawn, wearing earphones that were plugged into an MP3 player. "Hey, Carlisle! The bonfire party's about to start! We'll go grab seats!"

Shane quirked his lips and pointed out, "You shouldn't have bothered Carlisle like that, Daniel."

Daniel grinned. "I was only thinking of his best interests. If we go early, we could grab front-row seats and avoid having to cram with the others in the back."

Shane blinked. "You do realize that students have been camping out near the bonfire



site to grab front-row seats since the afternoon, right? Even if we go now, we'd be stuck in the back row."

"Oh dam, I should have gone in the afternoon to grab seats for us!" Daniel smacked his forehead in frustration.

He whined. "Word has it that a few seniors would be doing some exotic dances on stage, and those seniors are supposedly total babes!

"How am I supposed to enjoy the show from the back?"

Shane frowned. "That's a shame, but I have a way for us to get good seats."

"What is it?" Daniel demanded, turning to look at Shane with comical desperation

Shane rubbed his thumb and index finger together, the implication of the gesture as clear as day. good seats came at a price.

Daniel gritted his teeth and said, "Find out how much the seats cost. I'll grab a couple for Wanda and Carlisle."

\$200 dollars for a seat in the second row, and a hundred for a seat in the third,"

Shane said.

Frowning, Daniel pressed, "What about the first row? If I'm going to pay for seats, I might as well grab those in the first row!"

Shane chuckled. "The first row is reserved for honored guests, all of whom were invited by the university board. Those seats aren't for sale."

“Oh, fine,” Daniel conceded and pulled out bills amounting to 800 dollars from his pocket. “Grab four seats in the second row. I want the middle section.”

Shane scrunched his nose. “Mm, that’s going to cost you an extra 50 bucks for each seat.”

“The hell? You’re telling me the seats cost more than entry tickets for a third-rate singer’s concert?” Daniel cursed.

He slipped off his left sneaker and pulled out two hundred-dollar bills. Both of which came with a pungent odor, given their hiding spot. Shane frowned but kept his remarks to himself.

Just like that, Shane left with the money Daniel had given him.

At that moment, Carlisle led Wanda to where Daniel stood.

Daniel chuckled and said, “Hey, Carlisle, L...”

“ed to take a phone call,” Carlisle interrupted him. His phone was buzzing, and he glanced at the screen to see it was a call from Lethan.

Daniel nodded. “Go ahead.”

Carlisle answered the call and heard Lethan say, “Hey, Carlisle. Where are you? I just got an invite to the bonfire party at your campus.”

“Come over, then. I’m at the university right now,” Carlisle said.

“Great. I’ve got two extra seats in the front row with the other honored guests. Why

don't you and Wanda sit with me?" Lethan offered.

"Sounds good," Carlisle replied.

"Great. See you later, then!"

www

"Yeah, see you." After hanging up, Carlisle turned to Daniel and asked, "So, what did you want to tell me?"

Daniel choked. "Uh... Nothing."

Chapter 376

Daniel had heard what was being said on the other line during Carlisle's phone conversation. With a tight smile, he shook his head at Carlisle and pretended he had nothing to say.

Carlisle smiled. "Could you go to the dorm and grab my guitar for me while I take

Wanda to the stadium?"

"For sure," Daniel said and turned to make his way to the dormitory.

A stage had been set up in the stadium, and before it was the audience seating area. A total of 25 rows had been allocated, and there were 30 seats in each row.

Shane found the student who was selling seats and handed him 800 dollars. "I'll give you 800 dollars for four seats in the middle section, second row. It's a non-negotiable

offer.

The student who was selling the seats was an upperclassman. He glanced at the 800 dollars Shane was holding out to him and frowned. “Kid, you’re kind of driving a

hard bargain here.

“We agreed that the seats in the middle section wouldn’t go for anything less than

300 dollars, which was why I held the reservation for you.

“Now you’re offering a third less than the agreed price? Come on.”

Shane didn’t want to offend a senior, so he feigned despair as he mumbled, “Concert

tickets only go for about 100 dollars per show; 300 dollars for a seat at the bonfire

party is too steep. Can’t you go any lower than that?”

“Damn it, fine!” the upperclassman growled. “Rough day for business, I guess. Follow

me.

The upperclassman took the 800 dollars from Shane and led him toward the

audience seating area.

Shane hid his glee as he fell in step behind the upperclassman.

A lot of the students at Rive and University hailed from affluent backgrounds. While

200 dollars might seem a lot for the average working-class person, it was nothing to

the rich.

A seat for 300 dollars would be considered a steal for these students, and even if the seats went for 500 dollars, Shane would bet his last coin that the scions would still

fight for them.

By grabbing four seats for 800 dollars, Shane had saved close to 400 dollars for

Daniel.

As the sky darkened, the lights in the stadium flickered to life.

Images depicting the glory days of Riverland University and its many

accomplishments began to play on the large screen behind the stage.

While the quality was far from high definition, the freshmen found the whole set-up

impressive.

After all, a lot of the villages in the country were still considered underdeveloped, and it was a miracle for anyone to own a black-and-white television.

A large screen projecting color images was relatively new and wondrous to the

freshmen.

Daniel had Carlisle's guitar strapped to his back when he bumped into Christine and

Phoebe outside the stadium.

Up until a second ago, he had been worried about the two extra seats that Carlisle

and Wanda no longer needed.

Now, he bounded up to Christine and Phoebe like they were his beacons of hope.”

Hey there, gorgeous ladies!”

“Daniel, are you trying to give me a heart attack?” Phoebe snapped, patting her chest

to calm her beating heart when she saw that the person who had come up to her

was none other than Daniel.

It wasn’t her fault that she was shocked; it was dark outside the stadium, after all.

Christine glanced at Daniel indifferently.

Daniel chuckled sheepishly “Sorry, I might have been a little loud.”

Phoebe saw the guitar poking out from behind his shoulder and asked incredulously, “You play the guitar?”

you!

“It’s one of the easiest instruments to pick up, you know,” Daniel said cockily.

He wasn’t bluffing. He came from a well-to-do family, and he had dabbled in several musical instruments during junior high.

While he was no expert in any of them, he could play a few simple tunes if he tried.

Phoebe pressed, “So what song are you playing tonight?”

Another sheepish chuckle escaped him as he said, “Uh... I didn’t sign up for the performance tonight.”

“Then why do you have a guitar?” Phoebe asked, quirking her lips in amusement.

“It’s Carlisle’s,” Daniel explained.

“Do you know what song he’ll be performing?” Phoebe inquired.

“Nope, he didn’t tell me,” Daniel said sadly.

Phoebe rolled her eyes. “What do you know anyway? Come on, Christine. Let’s go.”

She linked arms with Christine and led the latter toward the stadium doors.

At that moment, Daniel ran over to them and cut them off. “You guys, wait!”

He sneaked a glance at Christine and saw nothing but indifference on her face.

Phoebe asked with a raised brow, “What?”

Daniel explained, “Look, I had someone grab four seats for me in the second row. Two of the seats were originally meant for Carlisle and Wanda, but they’ll be sitting in the first row with the guests.

“I was hoping you guys would do me a favor and take up the two extra seats.”

Chapter 377

Phoebe’s eyes lit up at the offer. “Seriously?”

The audience seating area was likely full, and she had planned to stake out a corner with Christine so they could watch the performance. Neither of them expected to get seats in the second row.

Christine seemed tempted by the offer as well.

Daniel caught the shift in Christine's expression and brightened up. me, ladies!"

"Yeah, so follow

Phoebe gave Christine a prim look and asked quietly, "Do we follow him, Christine?"

Christine was hesitant as well. If the note Daniel had given her this morning was any indication, he seemed to have feelings for her.

Daniel's throat tightened when he sensed Christine's hesitation. She wouldn't turn down his offer, would she?

"Why not? The seats are free, anyway," Christine said, deciding that she would take Daniel up on his offer to watch the performance from the second row.

Carlisle and Wanda had signed up to perform tonight. Although the latter was out of commission due to her delicate state, Carlisle's performance would still go on.

Christine certainly didn't want to miss out on either of their performances.

"Come on, I'll take you to your seats." The crease between Daniel's brows smoothed

out when he heard Christine's acceptance.

He led the two young ladies into the stadium, which was already packed.

Peter and a few other board executives were ushering in the honored guests.



Ten honored guests had been invited to the party. All of whom were businessmen

who had made generous donations to the university in recent years..

Two extra seats were given to each guest in anticipation of them bringing their

family members or loved ones.

At exactly 7:00 pm, the bonfire party commenced with an opening ceremony Two upperclassmen took to the stage to welcome the crowd.

They made a fine couple on stage.

The young lady was none other than Queenie's best friend, Luna, She wore an exquisite evening gown that shimmered under the stage lights.

The young man, on the other hand, was Derek Russell. He sported an athletic build and a handsome face. He appeared to have a rather friendly disposition and bore some resemblance to a celebrity.

This was not the first time Luna had served as the host of a bonfire party.

There was no trace of anxiety on her radiant face as she brought the microphone to her lips and said, "To our distinguished guests, esteemed members of the faculty, and our fellow students..."

"Good evening, and thank you for being here!" Luna and Derek said in unison.

Luna continued, "Welcome to our annual bonfire party. I'm Luna, and I'll be your host for tonight."

"And I'm Derek, Luna's trusty partner on stage," Derek introduced himself brightly.

“We’ve gathered here for a special occasion today—to welcome our new students on campus and celebrate a new semester together!” Luna announced.

Derek continued smoothly, “We hope the freshmen will bring new dreams and ambitions to this new semester. Your presence here has given this school new life and energy. Because of you, our campus life is made even more vibrant!”

Luna added, “Tonight, we’ve prepared a series of fascinating performances, including mesmerizing songs and captivating dance numbers. We even have a few comedy segments lined up for your amusement!

“All these programs are meant to showcase our student body’s many talents and our appreciation for the freshmen.”

“I believe tonight will be a night of laughter and unforgettable memories,” Derek said with a dazzling smile. “Let us forget our worries and relax as we enjoy this wonderful

occasion!

Luna said, “Now, let the bonfire party begin!

We hereby begin the night’s festivities. I

Derek announced, “Our first performance is-

Derek was cut off when Peter suddenly came up on stage..

Thinking on his feet, Derek quickly smiled and said, “But before that, let us give a round of applause to our dean, Mr. Smith, who will be giving a speech!”

Luna handed the microphone to Peter.

Peter took the microphone and addressed the audience apologetically, “I’m not supposed to be giving a speech this evening, but the occasion calls for it.

“We have a special guest among us today who has donated three million dollars to

our university to construct a new library.

“That special guest is Mr. Gareth Spencer, the man behind Scarlet Corporation! Let us give him a round of applause!”

At once, Gareth stood up in the audience seating area.

When the spotlight fell upon him, the female students in the audience squealed. “Oh my gosh, he’s gorgeous!”

“Three million dollars? He’s so generous!” another gushed.

“I wonder if he’s single.”

“Please, like someone as rich and handsome as him could be single!” Gareth sat down with a smile but kept his gaze fixed on Luna.

Chapter 378

Gareth was taken aback by how much Luna resembled the woman he met the other

day.

Luna was just as surprised to see Gareth. Wasn’t he the dirt-poor loser Naomi had told her about the other day? And yet, here he was being introduced as the chairman

of Scarlet Corporation!

Luna had heard about Scarlet Corporation and how the man behind it had spent a

billion dollars curating it as a high-end brand.

Her eyes widened as she contemplated the possibility of Gareth being the man in

question. If that were the case, Naomi had seriously misjudged him!

“Let us continue with this evening’s programs,” Peter said as he passed the microphone back to Luna.

Snapping out of her daze, Luna took the microphone and said, “We’ll begin tonight’s festivities...”

Meanwhile, in the audience seating area, Lethan glanced at Carlisle and asked with a smile, “Did you ask Gareth to come over?”

Carlisle shook his head. “Nope.”

Crossing his arms, Lethan let out a dry chuckle and said, “I guess such generosity is expected of the chairman of Scarlet Corporation.

“I can’t believe he donated three million dollars to the university. That’s the total amount of donations I’ve made to this school over the last three years!”

Carlisle laughed as he pointed out, “You should try a little harder next time.”

Lethan curled his lips in amusement. “Business has been rough these days. I’m strapped for cash. If my customers don’t pay their dues on time, I’ll have to tank my savings to make up for their credit. I might have to eat instant mac and cheese with you.”

“You would be lucky to even have instant mac and cheese,” Carlisle jested.

He knew money was tight for Lethan right now, Since Investing in Holly Fisheries, Isla Clothing’s checking account was nearly drained despite the company’s

reputation as an industry leader.

Wanda was seated next to Carlisle, clutching the hem of his shirt while watching the performance on stage.

“How come Shein and Yuriel aren’t here? Carlisle asked.

Shein and Yuriel were titans in the business industry. Carlisle expected invitations to have been sent out to both of them.

Lethan explained, “Their philanthropic contributions aren’t limited to Riverland University. Other schools are holding initiation ceremonies this evening as well.”

Carlisle laughed. “But their daughters are here.”

After a moment of thought, Lethan said, “I’m guessing it’s because of the incident yesterday.”

Carlisle nodded and did not probe any further.

In the center of the first row, Gareth turned to Max and asked, “Max, don’t you think Luna looks rather familiar?”

Max nodded. “She does. Given that the woman from the other day shares the same family name, there’s a high chance they’re sisters.”

Gareth silently sipped his water and grimaced at how tasteless it was. He was dying for a whiff of nicotine, but he doubted it was appropriate for him to smoke here.

“Mr. Spencer, it’s a pleasure to meet you,” a sweet-looking young lady greeted from the side.

Gareth glanced at her and was surprised to see how attractive she was. However, she seemed a little too young for his tastes.

“You must be a freshman,” he gathered.

She nodded demurely and said, “Yes. I’m Sarah Gates.”

Connections were vital in one’s journey to success and wealth. Sarah had decided that today was the day she expanded her network.

An odd look flickered past Max’s face as he whispered something into Gareth’s ear.

Gareth’s gaze turned icy at once. He looked up at Sarah and said, “Now that you’ve introduced yourself, you may return to your seat.”

Sarah thought she had misheard him at first. He was a top businessman, after all. Surely she could expect more decorum from him.

However, when she did not leave, Gareth frowned and demanded, “Do you not understand a word I just said?”

Chapter 379

Sarah nearly lost her temper. She couldn’t believe Gareth could be so rude as to condescend to her like this. How could anyone with zero emotional intelligence and

decorum like him be a successful businessman?

He must have inherited the company from his father or grandfather. That had to be it.

At the thought of this, Sarah did not bother concealing the scorn in her eyes as she

asked softly, “Do you think I’m too young to be a worthy connection, Mr. Spencer?”

“At least you figured that out for yourself,” Gareth said, crossing his legs as he shot

her an indifferent glance.

When Max looked into Carlisle's background, he had taken notes on a couple of worthwhile instances from the latter's high school life.

One of them had been his failed romantic pursuit of Sarah, who had played Carlisle for a fool.

Sarah tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear and said, "I don't think a person's worth is dictated by their age, Mr. Spencer. You're a good example of that.

"It's impressive how you've curated the most popular wine in the nation at such a young age, and I believe you're a role model for aspiring entrepreneurs like us.

"I approached you in hopes of learning about your experience and your take on the business world."

"Guess you're in for a disappointment, then. I inherited the company, so I have no worthy experience to speak of," Gareth drawled, not sounding very apologetic at all.

He had seen the scorn in her eyes earlier. She obviously thought of him as an unrefined, philandering scion. He might as well act the part.

"In that case, I'm sorry for bothering you. Have a good evening, Mr. Spencer," Sarah said in a clipped tone as she turned on her heels and left.

She saw no point in continuing a conversation with someone who clearly had no interest in being civil.

Max remarked, “That young lady has the potential to become a great businesswoman. With proper instruction, she could be a force of nature.”

Gareth shook his head. “She may have business acuity, but she doesn’t have the makings of a fine businesswoman. Also, she’s too greedy for her own good. I doubt she could make it as an entrepreneur.”

Max countered in amusement, “Last I checked, greed and business went hand in hand.”

“Why must you always pick a fight with me?” Gareth asked, rolling his eyes in exasperation.

An hour into the performance, it was Sarah’s turn to go up on stage and perform a jazz dance number. She had paid 5000 dollars for one-on-one lessons with a professional dance instructor.

With her fair looks and skimpy dance outfit, Sarah won the audience over. One might even say she had what it took to compete against a third-rate celebrity.

Some students had already listed her as one of the top ten belles on campus.

When the dance was over, Sarah bowed to the audience.

Derek took to the microphone once more and said, “What a spectacular performance! Who would’ve thought our freshmen had such unbridled talent?”

“Let us give the beautiful dancer, Ms. Sarah Gates, a huge round of applause!”

The audience obliged and burst into thunderous applause.



Luna then said, “Next up, we have Carlisle Zahn, a freshman from Class 2 of the e-commerce department who will be performing a song for us tonight!”

With that, she turned and began walking backstage.

A few students in the audience began to question Luna’s announcement. “What the heck?”

“Did Luna forget her script?”

“Yeah! Why didn’t she mention the song title?”

Even Derek was stumped. He had never expected Luna, of all people, to forget her lines.

He decided to save the day. Derek smiled as he took over the microphone. “The song Carlisle will be performing this evening is...”

The smile slipped from his face when he glanced at the card in his hand and realized it was blank. There was no song title written under Carlisle’s name.

He mentally cursed the person who had made the card. There must have been a mistake.

“So what song is it?” someone asked in the audience.

“Yeah, tell us already! Is it Copperhead?”

“I can’t believe this clown is a host.”

The audience grew restless and began hurling insults at Derek, who wanted nothing more than to burrow into a hole in the ground.

He should have looked at the card before going out on the stage. He was only trying to help Luna, but it seemed his good intentions were misplaced and had put him in

trouble.

“This song is called ‘Rest of My Life’,” Carlisle said, his deep and husky voice coming out of the gigantic speakers on either side of the stage.

Derek finally heaved a sigh of relief as he quickly did damage control. “Next up, we have Carlisle Zahn, a freshman from Class 2 of the e-commerce department who will be performing ‘Rest of My Life’ for us!”

Toward the end of his announcement, Derek’s voice dropped by a fraction.

He had never heard of the song before, and he considered himself an aficionado of popular music. He had listened to many songs in many languages, and yet he had

never come across a song with such a title.

Derek wasn’t the only one who was baffled. The music lovers in the audience were just as confused.

Gareth mused, “How interesting. You don’t suppose he wrote this song, do you?”

A light strum rang through the air as Carlisle perched on the stool in the center of the stage. He had propped his guitar up on one leg as he ran his thumb over the strings..

There were two microphones set up before him: the taller one was meant for his vocals, and the shorter one was meant for his guitar.

The moment he strummed his guitar, the audience fell silent.

The spotlight fixed upon Carlisle's silhouette as he took a deep breath. He looked up and stared straight at Wanda.

Wanda was holding Shania's arm as she cast her pretty eyes on Carlisle.

A smile played on Shania's lips as she said, "Did you hear the song title? 'Rest of My Life'. I bet this song is dedicated to you!"

Carlisle began playing the opening chords of the song.

This was a love song, and it was meant to be sung with the rawest of emotions. He opened his mouth and sang, "I was looking for sunshine in windless places.

Chapter 380

"Searching for you among unfamiliar faces..."

The moment Carlisle sang the first verse of the song, the audience was blown away. Holy crap, he sounds good!" someone exclaimed in surprise.

"Hey, shut up, you dingbat!" someone hissed, and the stadium quieted down once

more.

Carlisle crooned into the microphone, "You say our days are numbered, that the stakes are just too high, but all I know is I want you for the rest of my life."

The large stadium had never witnessed such silence before. There were a thousand students packed into the space, and yet not one of them made a sound.

Even the students who had just gotten out of classes stopped in their tracks when they passed by the stadium and heard the song. All of them were hooked onto the line.

"I only want you for the rest of my life".

Carlisle continued singing, his voice rising by an octave as the pitch changed. “We’ll grow old together and watch the snowflakes fall; I’ll thank the heavens for the words. to this song; I’ll love you for the rest of my life.”

The lyrics were by no means poetry, but the simple lines were captivating all the

same. It was as if the words had encompassed the unwavering promise of eternal.

love.

The song evoked the imagery of growing old together with one’s true love and

building a life with them. A song that spoke of twin flames.

Although straightforward, the song awakened the long–forgotten memories of the heartbroken, who shed tears as they recalled the love they had lost and mourned.

The couples in the audience grew even more resolved to hold on to their one true

love.

Even those who were single in the crowd began to hope for love and picture

themselves finding their soulmates.

Everyone here wanted their happily–ever–afters. Each soul longed for someone with whom they could spend the rest of their lives.

Everyone wanted a love that could weather through the change of the seasons and the ups and downs of life.

They all wanted someone who could stick by them be it in health or sickness, for

richer or for poorer.

When one was in love with the right person, nothing else mattered.

As Carlisle continued signing on stage, some of the young and impressionable ladies in the audience began crying.

Queenie was seated in the front row with the other guests of honor, taking up the seats meant for Shein and Zachary. The two men couldn't make it to the bonfire party and told Queenie to attend the party on their behalf instead.

There was an unreadable look in Queenie's eyes as she watched Carlisle on stage.

In the last two years, she'd had to replace her personal stereo twice because of how frequently she used them, eventually wearing them out.

She had bookmarked no less than a dozen music websites, and every time a new song came out, she would download it onto her personal stereo.

And yet, she had never heard the song Carlisle was performing on stage, and the melody was unfamiliar to her. She was a huge Copperhead fan, but after tonight, she could very well become Carlisle's fan.

"Rest of My Life", the song was called. It was obviously written for Wanda.

Queenie cast a sidelong glance at Wanda, who was leaning against Shania as she stared at Carlisle. Wanda's gaze was hollow, but there was a faint smile playing on

her lips.

"I want to show you the world, and tell everyone you're mine," Carlisle sang

second verse.

the

No less than a thousand people had gathered at the stadium to hear him sing.

A few couples who were in their honeymoon phase were embracing each other,

while a few of the heartbroken had tears streaming down their cheeks as they willed themselves not to sob.

Even the security guards were stunned by Carlisle's singing, even if they couldn't quite understand the meaning of the song. But judging by the reaction of the students at the stadium, they reckoned the song must be good.

The song was, naturally, very good. It would go on to win several awards in the future, beating out other dazzling contenders.

"I just can't take my eyes off you..." Carlisle sang, his voice dipping into a cadence to signify the end of the song.

The lyrics were simple, but they struck a chord within the audience.

A hush fell upon the stadium, and even the crowd outside was quiet. It seemed the song had left everyone in a daze.

The moving melody and the beautiful lyrics seemed to echo in their ears.

"Thank you, everyone!" Carlisle said a while later when neither Derek nor Luna came up on stage to take over the set.

He stood up and bowed to the audience, wrapping up his performance.