

Love Spell 421

Chapter 421

Carlisle could no longer restrain himself. He went to the side of the road and began throwing up violently.

His stomach had been churning for a long time, but had forgotten about it when he saw Wanda.

The love in his heart had overrode his desire to throw up.

"Thank you, Gareth!" Carlisle thanked him while vomiting,

He was truly touched.

Gareth had been on his phone while speeding in his car. He had probably been checking the time of Wanda and Shein's flight then.

In his past life, Carlisle had watched TV shows where men tried to chase after trains in their cars after parting from their loved ones. He had never imagined that he would chase a plane one day.

Gareth's lips curved slightly. However, his smile soon disappeared.

He knew who Wanda's fiancé was.

Her fiancé was from an extremely powerful upper-class family in Yorksle, and his family's influence extended to politics and business.

They had properties across the country.

Gareth didn't know if he should tell Carlisle the news or not.

He looked at Carlisle, who was several years younger than him and shook his head.

He figured that it wouldn't do any good to tell Carlisle. He reckoned that it would just make him feel more stressed.

Shein had taken Wanda away, but perhaps it was only temporary.

Carlisle and Wanda had been growing too close, and Shein would probably keep Wanda in Yorksle to prevent things from getting out of hand.

After all, many people wanted to latch on to the Thompsons because of their influence.

Gareth decided that it would be better if he tried to find a way to make Carlisle forget about Wanda.

He flicked his cigarette stub away.

"Let's go! I'll take you drinking!"

Carlisle had finally recovered after throwing up for some time. His heart felt heavy, and he nodded. He got into the Ferrari with Gareth.

Gareth sped all the way to a bar overlooking the river in Tristream District.

It was late in the afternoon, and few people were in the bar.

The bar manager greeted Gareth and Carlisle enthusiastically.

Gareth was clearly a regular customer.

The host onstage cried out delightfully, "Welcome, Mr. Worth!"

The spotlights fell on Gareth, and more than a dozen pairs of eyes looked over at him from the stage. Most of them looked like delinquents, but there were also a few beautiful women who looked very pure.

Even students still in uniform were present, though it was debatable whether they were genuine students. Gareth explained to Carlisle, "When I'm out, I go by the name of Gareth Worth!"

Gareth raised his hand and clenched it into a fist.

The host immediately shouted, "Mr. Worth's paying the tab today! Let me hear you scream!"

The room echoed with loud screams.

"Mr. Worth! Mr. Worth! Mr. Worth!" the young men and women on stage screamed wildly.

Carlisle did not like the atmosphere.

He said in a low voice, "Let's find a quiet, private room!"

Gareth put an arm around his shoulders and said, "I understand how you feel. Let's just have some fun, shall we? It's not like I'll bring you here often. Besides, this is a bar. There aren't any private rooms that are quiet here!"

He turned and said to the bar manager, "Get me a few pretty, clean ones. I prefer the ones who are still in school!"

The bar manager glanced at Carlisle, and a smile played about his lips as he said, "Don't worry Mr. Worth. I guarantee that you and your friend will be satisfied!"

Gareth was a VIP at the bar, and he always spent at least 100 thousand.

Sometimes, he even paid the bill for the entire bar.

The person managing the place had instructed the staff to cater to their star guest's every whim.

"You go ahead. I'm leaving."

Carlisle turned and walked out.

Wanda had only just left, and yet Gareth had immediately brought him to this kind of place.

He could drown his sorrows in alcohol, but he refused to have any women drink with him.

Wanda was the only one in his world.

"Hey, hey! Fine. We won't have any. Let's just sit in the corner and have a few drinks," Gareth said, hastily grabbing Carlisle's arm.

Chapter 422

The bar manager scowled, as the escort service of the bar brought in the most money.

One sentence from Carlisle had caused the bar to lose out on over ten thousand dollars in profits.

Although he was unhappy about it, he refrained from expressing his displeasure. He had no choice but to smile.

He said, "Fine. I'll take you to the VIP deck!"

A beaded curtain separated the row of seats closest to the floor-to-ceiling windows from the rest of the seats.

The bar manager seated Gareth and Carlisle at the largest table, which already cost 30 thousand.

He brought them the menu personally so that Gareth could order.

Gareth gave the menu to Carlisle, who shook his head and said, "You can order!"

Gareth couldn't be bothered to order off the menu, so he tossed it on the table.

"Give me one of everything."

Carlisle's lips twitched.

The kitchen was very efficient, perhaps because Gareth had special privileges.

Within half an hour, the table was laden with food and more than ten kinds of liquor.

Carlisle suddenly felt that all the money he had earned was wasted on him.

He wondered what it was like to enjoy life.

He thought that perhaps, to truly enjoy life, he should use items from high-end brands that were of very high quality.

"Can you finish all of this? It's such a waste to order so much!"

Carlisle hadn't had lunch. He picked up his fork and speared a piece of lamb, stuffing it into his mouth.

Gareth said sternly, "I can spend a million just to listen to music and lighten my mood, but I would never waste a single dollar on food. I pack up the food I can't finish and deliver it to the beggars living near the bridge!"

There were beggars everywhere in that era. Some were real beggars, while others simply pretended to be beggars to scam people for money.

With the advent of the Internet and the rapid spread of information, the citizens would eventually find out about the beggars who were scamming people.

After that, government policies would become more developed, cities would strengthen their

management, and charities would also begin to develop. Eventually, the beggars would disappear from the public eye.

Gareth opened a bottle of Louis XIII and put it in front of Carlisle.

He opened another bottle for himself and said in his Yorksle accent, "Let's have one bottle each and get drunk tonight!"

"Wanda and I are only separated temporarily. I'm not heartbroken. There's no reason for me to get drunk, is there?"

Carlisle saw that the liquor he was holding contained 40% alcohol.

He contemplated if he would end up with gastrointestinal bleeding if he finished the entire bottle.

Gareth said rather impatiently, "Are all you Southerners such dawdlers?"

"Damn! Don't be so prejudiced!"

Carlisle glared at him.

He hated people who stereotyped others based on where they were from.

Carlisle's phone rang.

He took it out and glanced at it. It was Hank.

"Mr. Hank?"

"Carlisle... just call me Hank. I feel like it's disrespectful of me to let you address me as 'Mr. Hank'!"

Hank had become a lot more cheerful compared to before after immersing himself in his work.

Carlisle smiled and asked, "Have you gotten a result?"

Hank said, "Yes. The other party is a total rookie. I've already plucked all his personal information by following the virus' IP address trail. However, this guy is in Cloud Valley, and I've handed it over to their police so that they can handle the rest."

Carlisle glanced at Gareth, who was drinking moodily on his own.

"Gareth, should I call some of my friends to drink with you?"

Gareth rolled his eyes.

"Why would I want to drink with other men? I want young, pretty ladies."

Still, he asked, "Did Hank find something?"

Carlisle nodded.

"The truth will be revealed very soon!"

Gareth grinned.

"You want to get Hank to drink with me, right? You can't possibly think that he can outdrink me!"

"Have you drank with him before?"

"No..."

"Well then, try it out. I don't think you'll be able to outdrink him."

Carlisle knew how strong Hank's tolerance for alcohol was.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that Hank viewed alcohol like it was his life.

No one else would drink Chardonnay as if it were water and use it to quench their thirst!

Gareth laughed slyly.

"Let's make a bet. We'll wager 1% of the shares in our collaborative project. I'll only take 48% of the shares if he can drink me under the table. If the opposite happens, I want 50% of the shares!"

Gareth was paying 200 million, but he only got 49% of the shares.

That meant that the price of every 1% was about 4.08 million dollars.

They were going to wager 4.08 million on this drinking contest!

Carlisle wondered if this was how rich people enjoyed themselves.

He shook his head and said, "Forget it. Drinking is no big deal. It doesn't matter who wins or loses. But if something happens, then it would be a huge deal!"

Gareth was annoyed.

"Hey, man up! If your gaming company succeeds, you will become part of upper society. This kind of thing happens all the time. Besides, if you want to assimilate with the circle that Shein's family is in, there are bound to be events like this that involve alcohol. Just think of it as practice!"

Chapter 423

Gareth's mention of Wanda particularly struck a chord with Carlisle.

"Hank, are you free now? Do you want to come over for a few drinks?" Carlisle asked over the phone.

"Count me in! It's been ages since I had a drink!" Hank responded readily.

He had been thinking of getting some booze since the smartphone prototype was already completed.

Moreover, he overheard Gareth's drinking bet with Carlisle. If he could help Carlisle -his benefactor-win the bet, he was more than happy to be of service.

Half an hour later, Hank arrived at the bar, where Gareth had been waiting patiently for him without taking even a sip of alcohol.

When Hank saw the table full of premium liquors, he couldn't help but gulp in anticipation. Louis XIII, XO, Hennessy Richard-all the liquors were worth at least ten thousand dollars each.

"Man, am I thirsty," Hank said as he downed a glass of XO in one gulp.

Gareth narrowed his eyes. He had heard that many big companies rejected Hank due to his drinking problem, yet he wondered how much the extremely talented computer genius could really handle.

In fact, Gareth was quite the drink himself, too. He had attended hundreds of drinking occasions over the years and had never lost a drinking game.

"Some manners you've got there, huh? Didn't you see your boss sitting right here? You could at least greet him before drinking. I say you should be punished with three more drinks, man," Gareth said casually.

Aware of Gareth's intention to make Hank drink more, Carlisle responded with a smile. "Hank and I are buddies. We don't bother with those formalities!"

However, Hank replied nonchalantly, "It's okay, Carlisle. Three more drinks it is. Mr. Spencer must have had a few while waiting. It's only fair that I have some, too, before our game begins."

With that, he downed another three glasses, finishing a bottle of Louis XIII 40 Degree, leaving Carlisle staring at him dumbfounded.

Gareth's expression grew solemn, sensing a challenge as Hank effortlessly polished off a bottle of liquor while he had only consumed a glass so far. He had to hand it to Hank.

Noticing Gareth's serious expression, Carlisle couldn't help but feel smug, knowing that Gareth had met his match.

Hank opened another bottle of liquor, filled his glass, and said to Gareth with a smile, "So, Mr. Spencer, how should we play this?"

Clearly, the game had only just begun.

Carlisle buried his head in his food, avoiding eye contact to avoid being pulled into their drinking contest.

Without hesitation, Hank raised his glass and declared, "Well, let's talk less and drink more, Mr. Spencer!"

He downed another glass in one go.

Gareth smiled lightly and followed suit.

Hank poured another and said, "Bottoms up!"

Gareth began to feel a tingling sensation in his scalp, wondering if Hank intended to drown him in alcohol. However, he couldn't back off now. Otherwise, he would lose the 1% stake he had bet on this game.

After Gareth downed another glass, Hank immediately refilled his own glass and downed it in one go without hesitation.

Gareth took a deep breath, downing his third glass of liquor without even a moment to catch his breath, feeling his stomach starting to burn.

Carlisle suddenly interjected, "Don't just focus on drinking. Eat something to line your stomach!"

Chapter 424

Hank smiled and cut a piece of lamb leg, shoving it into his mouth.

Gareth, having filled his own glass, urged Hank, "Don't just eat. Drink!"

Hank smirked at Gareth's enthusiasm and filled his glass. He clinked it with Gareth's. The two then continued drinking one after another.

Soon, all the premium liquors on the table were gone. Gareth called for the waiter and ordered another ten bottles of Louis XIII.

Hank stood up, patting his round belly.

"I'm going to take a leak. When I get back, I'll punish myself with an extra glass."

"ed a leak, too. I'll take a glass as punishment as well!" Gareth said, standing up and wrapping his arm around Hank's shoulder.

The two went to the restroom together.

Carlisle noticed it was already five in the afternoon, three hours since Wanda had left for Yorksle.

Casting his gaze at the river outside the window, he murmured, "Wanda, have you reached Yorksle?"

Wanda was taken to a secluded psychiatric rehabilitation hospital deep in the mountains of Yorksle, where several luxury villas nestled, resembling an isolated paradise. The hospital housed only two departments-neurology and psychology.

Accompanied by several good-looking nurses, Wanda underwent various examinations. After the exams, she found her mother waiting outside the ward.

"Mom..."

Wanda ran to Josie with a pout.

Gently embracing Wanda, Josie's voice choked with emotion as she said, "My poor Wanda..."

Wanda sniffled and asked, "Will I be staying here for long?"

Josie's gaze subtly flickered before she gently replied, "No, you won't..."

Meanwhile, Shein discussed treatment plans with hospital experts in the meeting room. After reviewing Wanda's examination reports, the gray-haired experts swiftly concluded her condition.

"It's post-traumatic stress disorder-PTSD," announced Noel Dolton, the hospital director, who was sitting in the chairman's seat.

Shein was no stranger to the term. A few years ago, one of his bodyguards, a retired special forces soldier, suffered similar mental issues. Whenever triggered, the bodyguard would recall the painful memories that haunted him.

Clenching his fists, Shein asked, "Is it treatable?"

Noel and the experts discussed among themselves before replying, "Yes, it's curable. We have developed several treatment plans: cognitive behavioral therapy, hypnosis, psychoanalysis, sonar EEG therapy, and medication therapy. We have successfully treated 30 patients in the past three years, achieving a 60% success rate!"

Unable to follow Noel's professional terms, Shein asked calmly, "Can it be cured within a year?"

"Absolutely," Noel replied confidently.

But then he hesitated and added, "However, your daughter might suffer partial memory loss."

Shein scoffed and said, "That would be the cherry on top if she could forget about the memories that are haunting her!"

Noel continued, "She might not only forget the bad memories but also the happiest moments in her life."

Assuming Wanda's happiest moments were her time with Carlisle, Shein's smile widened. "Suits me just fine!"

Noel glanced at Shein with a complicated expression. He had presumed that Shein was a doting father, but given Shein's happy reaction to the possibility of Wanda losing her happy memories, it seemed he was wrong.

With a heavy heart, Noel said, "It's settled then. The treatment will take about six months. You can visit the patient once a month."

Shein nodded in acknowledgment.

"Where do I settle the bill?"

Noel smiled and said, "You're a friend of our boss, so we were instructed to charge you only the necessary expenses. The sum is six million dollars."

Among the diseases in the world, fatal illnesses are numerous. Many wealthy people with terminal illnesses invested in specialized research institutions to study extraordinary treatments. The research often required high costs, resulting in extremely high treatment fees.

Due to the unique nature of such private hospitals, the government had no authority over their charging standards and did not recognize their existence.

Based on the rehabilitation hospital's pricing, Wanda's treatment would typically cost

around 20 million. Therefore, Shein was offered a good deal at only six million.

Josie took Wanda to a luxury villa that was surrounded by flower gardens, lawns, and fish ponds. The interior design was pink and cartoonish, resembling a princess's room from a fairy tale.

The rehabilitation hospital's attendant smiled and said, "The previous owner of this villa was also a young lady around 17. She shared similar symptoms with your daughter and was cured in just three months!"

Chapter 425

Josie gently squeezed Wanda's cold hand and asked, "Wanda, do you like it here?"

Wanda pouted, shaking her head, her eyes devoid of joy. Even if this were paradise, she wouldn't want to stay a minute longer without Carlisle by her side. All she wanted was to recover as soon as possible so she could return to her everyday life.

Josie glanced around and commented concernedly, "Everything here seems fine, but it could use some more liveliness."

The thought of leaving her daughter in such a cold, unfamiliar environment made her feel reluctant.

The attendant chuckled and replied, "This is a rehabilitation hospital. All our patients are admitted through connections, and each of them will receive a personalized team of companions and teachers to keep them company while keeping up with their studies."

Josie finally smiled in relief upon hearing the attendant's reassurance.

That night, Kelly and seven of her classmates were drinking in a corner booth at The Pearl Lounge. Kelly sat alone in the corner, sipping her beer.

Since junior high school, Kelly had always been the center of attention among her classmates. She thought she would continue to enjoy such privilege even in university, but reality didn't meet her expectations.

Despite Kelly being a wealthy kid with a monthly allowance of two thousand dollars, her schoolmates were equally affluent. Some of them even drove a BMW to school. Her classmate, Laura Robinson, used customized LV bags worth at least 80 thousand dollars as schoolbags.

Laura, in fact, had organized this gathering where all attendees were to split the bill. Kelly glanced at the total sum of 32 thousand dollars. This meant that each person needed to pay four thousand dollars.

Kelly's father had recently taken a 500 thousand dollars loan for a large project, resulting in her allowance being cut in half. Despite this, she agreed to attend the gathering to mingle with the wealthy. However, her savings amounted to only 3.5 thousand dollars.

"I wonder who that Mr. Worth is. He's paying for everyone. That'll probably cost him millions!" remarked Laura as she glanced at the biggest booth in the bar.

Ywain Bulton, another classmate, whispered, "That's nothing. When I was last here on a weekend, they had a promotion, and the place was packed. I heard Mr. Worth also footed the bill, spending over three million!"

Everyone present gasped in awe at Mr. Worth's generosity and extravagant spending.

Laura sighed.

"Even Austin Gust wouldn't dream of spending that much money, I guess."

Ywain frowned and exclaimed, "It's too bad we didn't arrive earlier. Otherwise, we could have gotten a freebie tonight."

They had only arrived ten minutes ago.

According to the bar's rules, when someone decided to foot the bill, it only covered orders placed before their arrival. If not, even beggars might seize the opportunity to grab a few bottles of Louis XIII for free. Therefore, getting a freebie still depended on luck.

Laura pursed her lips and asked, "Ywain, isn't your father's company expanding? Has he found investors?"

Ywain's gaze flickered before he raised his glass to sip the Louis XIII.

He replied with a smile, "Who knows? I'm only concerned about receiving my monthly allowance. I don't bother with his business."

Laura chuckled and turned to Kelly.

"Is something bothering you, Kelly? You seem quiet tonight."

Kelly shook her head with a smile.

"There's nothing. Just thinking about the homework our teacher assigned."

Everyone exchanged meaningful smiles at her response.

Laura adopted a disdainful tone as she said, "We're merely Tier 3 university students for crying out loud! Why so serious? Your father's a businessman, isn't he? Why are you worried about getting a job in the future?"

Chapter 426

Kelly weakly tugged at the corners of her mouth.

"I... I'm just—"

Laura nonchalantly interjected, "Come on. We're here to have a good time. Quit thinking about school. You can always hire someone to do your homework for a few bucks—"

A female classmate abruptly stood up and said, "Sorry, everyone! My mom asked me to go shopping with her, so I gotta leave now!"

She then took out five thousand dollars and handed it to Laura.

"Here's five thousand. Give me back the change, if any, okay?"

"Alright. See you!"

Laura smiled sweetly.

Ywain asked, "Does anyone still want to order? If not, we'll settle the bill now!"

Glancing at the bill, Laura added, "It's a total of 32 thousand, so it'll be four thousand each."

As everyone began counting cash from their bags, Kelly felt her heart in her throat.

She didn't know what to do. She only had 3.5 thousand dollars with her, and she felt that it would be humiliating if she couldn't pay her share of the split bill.

Suddenly, Kelly noticed a familiar face stumbling toward the restroom.

"Carlisle? That was Carlisle, wasn't it? What was he doing here? The minimum spending here was over ten thousand. How could he possibly afford that?" Kelly thought to herself.

"Kelly..." Laura called out to Kelly, who was lost in her thoughts.

Kelly was the only one who hadn't paid yet.

"M-My stomach hurts. I need to run to the restroom now..." Kelly frowned as she clutched her stomach.

She stood up and headed to the restroom.

"Running to the restroom when the bill comes? Isn't that a classic trick to skip out on paying?" Yelena Scott, another classmate, commented while sneering.

Laura glanced at her.

"Quit with the snide remarks. Kelly's father is a businessman too, you know?"

Yelena retorted, "Even selling at the roadside stand or a farmer's market is considered a business too, Laura. Just look at her knock-off designer clothes! She's got some nerve, trying to blend in with us rich kids!"

Laura was left speechless by Yelena's remark. As much as Ywain wanted to speak up for Kelly, he decided to remain silent.

Yelena's father was Terrence Scott, Riverland's semiconductor industry leader, making her the most affluent among them.

Yelena crossed her arms.

"Well, I'll wait right here and see how Kelly's game plays out."

Meanwhile, Kelly waited outside the restroom. She planned to borrow five hundred dollars from Carlisle to cover her bill. She waited for several minutes, but there was no sign of Carlisle.

Kelly had no choice but to approach the nearby booths and ask if anyone wanted her to accompany them for a drink at 100 dollars per glass.

After being rejected by a few booths, she finally found a few half-naked middle-aged men who accepted her offer. The men were low-tier consumers judging from the beers and small snacks on their tables.

After finishing five glasses of beer, Kelly said with a content smile, "There. I've finished. So, pay up!"

When the men suddenly laughed, Kelly's expression changed. She felt alarmed.

"Y-You agreed to pay."

Cody Ledger, a man with yellowish teeth who had accepted Kelly's service, said, "Young lady, you drank our beer, and now you're asking us to pay you? We should be the ones charging you."

"Y-You liars,"

Kelly's eyes reddened, realizing she had been tricked.

The men exchanged glances and laughed loudly.

Paul Fry, a shirtless man with a big belly, pulled Kelly into his arms, his hands resting on her waist.

"Why don't you give me a kiss, and I'll give you five hundred, pretty?"

Chapter 427

Kelly broke free from Paul's grasp and responded angrily, "Stay away from me. You can keep your money."

With that, she turned to flee from the scene, only to find that the exit was being blocked by a few men.

Kelly's expression turned as pale as a sheet. She recalled a vocational high schooler from her neighborhood who had jumped off a roof after being assaulted by a group of men in a nightclub. Unfortunately, such tragedies were not uncommon.

"Young lady, you drank our beer. Now you're leaving without paying?"

Cody sneered, his gaze lustrous and malicious as he eyed Kelly's body.

They were accustomed to frequenting bars to take advantage of intoxicated women. Lately, luck hadn't been on their side, so they were reluctant to let go of Kelly, who had unwittingly fallen into their trap.

Kelly couldn't stop quivering, her face filled with horror.

"I-I'll pay you. How much do you want? I'll pay you..."

The bar was noisy. It was filled with women shrieking when they lost in games and people shouting on stage. Kelly doubted anyone could hear her if she screamed for help.

Cody scratched his crotch.

With a cheeky smile, he said, "It's been a while since we've had some fun with a woman. All we want is to enjoy ourselves a bit."

Sensing Paul holding her from behind, Kelly let out a shocked cry. "H-Help!"

Paul covered her mouth and pushed her down onto the couch.

In the dimly lit bar, it was hard to make out others' expressions within 16 feet. Cody and his gang kept watch over their booth while smoking cigarettes, their faces filled with excitement.

Despite Kelly's efforts to break free, as a freshman university student, she was powerless against the strength of a middle-aged man.

Kelly felt like her head was about to explode as Paul ripped her jeans' belt in two. Suddenly, she saw Carlisle walking past Cody and his gang.

"Carlisle..."

Kelly shook her head vigorously, trying to shout for help. Paul firmly covered her mouth and nose, almost suffocating her.

At the faint sound of his name being called, Carlisle turned around and glanced at Cody and his gang, who were smoking in the hallway.

Cody stared at him fiercely, gesturing for Carlisle to look away and mind his own business. He was confident that he could intimidate Carlisle into leaving them alone.

Shaking his spinning head, Carlisle figured he might have had too much to drink and possibly misheard.

As he headed toward his VIP booth, he heard the voice again from behind Cody and his "Carlisle... Help..."

gang.

"Kelly?"

Carlisle's expression darkened. Without hesitation, he grabbed a brand-new bottle of champagne from a nearby booth and headed toward Cody.

"Hey, that's my cham-"

Carlisle smashed the bottle against Cody's head, causing the champagne's owner to fidget and grab a fruit plate to shield herself.

Cody let out a painful shriek while clutching his head.

As Cody's gang swarmed to attack, Carlisle jabbed the broken bottle into one of the men's thighs.

"Damn it!" the man shouted in agony.

Hearing the commotion, Paul quickly got up from the couch, leaving Kelly with her torn T- shirt. Grabbing the shattered remnants of her shirt, Kelly wrapped herself in fear, her hair disheveled as she quivered uncontrollably.

Chapter 428

With Paul joining the fight, Carlisle found himself outnumbered by the four middle-aged men, powerless against their strength. Soon, two punches mercilessly landed on his face.

Amidst the chaos, he grabbed an ashtray from the table and smashed it against Paul's face. With blood streaming down his face, Cody pulled a small knife from his belt and lunged at Carlisle.

"Carlisle, watch out!" Kelly screamed, covering her face.

Carlisle reacted swiftly, dodging the attack. Nonetheless, his shoulder was grazed.

Cody's face contorted in rage as he shouted furiously, "Damn it! I swear on my 40 years of life that I'll make you regret this today!"

With that, he aimed another lunge at Carlisle's throat.

Carlisle managed to seize Cody's wrist with both hands, but Cody brutally pinned him against the wall.

"Stop!" shouted the bar manager, arriving with a dozen security guards.

However, Cody had no intention of stopping. Clenching his teeth, he tightened his grip instead.

Recognizing Carlisle, the manager immediately instructed the guards, "Q-Quick, release him from that guy! He's a friend of our top customer!"

Realizing the gravity of the situation, the guards swiftly pulled out their batons and

skillfully subdued Cody and his gang.

Carlisle gritted his teeth while clutching his burning shoulder.

The manager hurried over and asked concernedly, "Are you alright, sir?"

Carlisle nodded and replied, "I'm fine."

The manager turned around and kicked Cody in the face.

"How dare you cause trouble in The Pearl Lounge! Do you have any idea whose place this is? You're ready to kiss your ass goodbye, aren't you?"

Cody stared angrily at Carlisle and said, "I'll remember you, punk! Just wait. I swear on my life that you'll pay for this one day!"

Seeing Cody's defiance, the manager instructed the guards, "Take them away and teach them a lesson!"

As ordered, the guards dragged Cody and his three companions to a small black room.

The manager immediately understood the events that had transpired when he saw Kelly curled on the couch.

He spat on the ground and cursed, "These scumbags must be from the drunk rape gang! Filthy animals!"

Suddenly, the manager's phone rang. Glancing at the caller ID, his face immediately changed to a sycophantic smile.

"Mr. Lee... Yes, of course we have seats for you. We always save a seat for you, sir," the manager said as he walked to a quiet corner to answer the call.

Carlisle approached the booth, removed his white shirt, and handed it to Kelly.

With an expressionless face, he asked, "What are you doing in a place like this?"

Although Carlisle didn't have a high opinion of Kelly, they still shared the same last name and had the same grandparents.

Before Kelly could say anything, she noticed Laura and Yelena approaching. She quickly put on Carlisle's shirt and tidied her disheveled hair.

"Well, well, Kelly! I thought you went to the restroom, but it seems like you're hitting on some guy now," Yelena said mockingly.

Carlisle frowned at Yelena.

Laura quickly interjected, "Kelly, where's your four thousand dollars? Yelena doubted you could come up with the money. Why don't you show her the money and shut her up!"

Carlisle gathered Kelly was there for a wealthy kids' gathering. He sat quietly aside, observing how she would handle the situation.

Kelly lowered her head, tears streaming down her face. For the sake of five hundred dollars, she had nearly been assaulted.

Not only had she realized that she shouldn't pretend to be as wealthy as others, but she also regretted looking down on Carlisle's family.

She might be wealthy, but there were countless people wealthier than her. While her group's 30-thousand-dollar bill might seem high, Mr. Worth was capable of paying everyone's bill at The Pearl Lounge. This realization made her wonder what the point of comparing with others was.

"So, does this mean you lied to us, Kelly?" Laura's gaze tinged with slight disappointment.

Chapter 429

"That's right. I don't have the money. I don't deserve to be in your circle. I've only got 3.5 thousand dollars in my bag, and that's all I could gather after breaking my piggy bank!"

Kelly lifted her head and admitted resolutely.

After what she had just experienced, she ultimately came to terms with reality. She wasn't poor. She was simply not as wealthy as these rich kids.

She knew that her allowance was twice that of most of her classmates, allowing her to enjoy all the food and drinks as she pleased. So why should she live with a face facade every day?

Yelena covered her mouth and giggled.

"Is that why you excused yourself to the restroom? Don't tell me you're trying to offer this guy your service to earn money?"

Yelena cast a meaningful glance at Carlisle, prompting others to look at him and the shirt Kelly was wearing.

"Oh my God, I can't believe we have such a lowlife in our group!"

"How despicable! It's just five hundred dollars for crying out loud! If you don't have the money, I can always spare you some!"

"I must request to change my seat tomorrow. Having her sit in front of me is such a sore sight!"

"I think we should report this to the dean's office. We can't have such a problematic student in our school!"

Noticing Yelena's dislike toward Kelly, the female students added some insults to side with Yelena. They figured that if they could please Yelena, perhaps she would treat them next time.

"Cut it out, ladies. We're all classmates, after all. Is it necessary to take things to that extent?" Ywain interjected, unable to tolerate it further.

The female students immediately fell silent.

In the world of the rich, whoever had the most money naturally had the most say. Therefore, Ywain—who had been driving a BMW 5 series since he was 18 and received a monthly allowance of at least ten thousand dollars—was one of the most influential in their group.

However, Yelena chuckled and added, "You guys probably haven't heard, but Ywain's family business, East Edge Ventures, had its majority shares taken over by other shareholders. His dad isn't the largest shareholder anymore!"

"East Edge Ventures? So he's Harry Bulton's son?" Carlisle thought as he glanced at Ywain. "Nonsense!" Ywain roared, his face reddening.

In fact, Ywain was aware of the situation. That was why he had made up an excuse to cover it up when Laura asked him about his family's company expansion. He hadn't expected Yelena to expose it to everyone.

It was normal for people to want to maintain their dignity, especially the rich. Yet, Ywain had always kept a low profile and never acted superior to those from less affluent backgrounds.

Yelena exposing his family's company affairs before others had undoubtedly trampled on his dignity.

"You, of all people, should know whether I'm talking nonsense or not, Ywain."

Yelena sneered.

"That's it! The bill's on me today!"

"You poor fellows should just stop pretending to be rich and accept the fact that you're poor! Don't mingle in the circle you don't belong to. That'll only make you stick out like a sore thumb."

Despite Yelena's harsh remark, Carlisle didn't speak up for Kelly. He hoped that this would teach Kelly a lesson and help her to become a more mature person.

Yelena suddenly turned to Carlisle and advised him with a smirk, "A piece of advice, handsome. You'd better get checked out at the hospital. Considering Kelly would sell herself for a mere five hundred bucks, there's no guarantee what kind of disease she carries."

"I did not sell myself!" Kelly bolted up and shouted, her whole body trembling with emotion.

"Then, how do you explain the man's shirt on you and your fake Chanel belt on the floor?" Yelena questioned mockingly.

Chapter 430

Laura and Ywain lowered their heads in silence. Despite their decent relationship with Kelly,

they were reluctant to offend Yelena, who came from a wealthy background and had strong connections at school.

Tears welled up in Kelly's eyes as she bit her quivering lips without uttering a word.

"Are you done?"

Carlisle finally broke the silence.

Yelena stared at Carlisle and asked, "Do you attend our university too?"

Carlisle calmly replied, "I'm from Riverland University."

"Ah, Riverland University! So, does that make you feel superior to us? Do you think attending a Tier 1 university guarantees you'll earn big in the future?" Yelena mocked.

She felt displeased as she thought about how her cousin had also been accepted into Riverland University while she had only managed to get into a Tier 3 university.

With a smile, Carlisle responded, "Did I hit a nerve? You seem worked up. Did someone you dislike get into Riverland University while you were only accepted by a Tier 3 university?" Yelena's smile vanished.

With a cold expression, she retorted, "You've gotten into Riverland University, so what? You'll still end up working for someone for a living. Do you know how many Riverland University graduates and top-notch students from prestigious universities work for my father?"

Carlisle's smile widened as he replied, "Here, I thought you were talking about your own accomplishments. Turns out you're just boasting about your father's achievements instead of your own. Seriously, what would you be without your father?"

"I'm my father's only child, so his company will one day be mine! On the other hand, what do you have? You're just a poor guy who will pay five hundred bucks to have fun with a woman. The hostesses here charge at least eight hundred, you know?" Yelena retorted, her tone fueled with rage.

She had always been the one mocking others. No one had ever humiliated her like this.

Carlisle remained unaffected by her provocation, aware that losing his temper now might jeopardize his stance.

"First of all, Kelly is my cousin. She was harassed by some drunks earlier, and her clothes were torn. That's why I gave her my shirt. The manager had them escorted out. You can verify with him if you doubt my words.

"Secondly, I'm a freshman at Riverland University's E-commerce Department and a startup entrepreneur-not the 'poor guy' you claim me to be."

"Lastly, your father, whom you boast about, means nothing to me. There's no need to flaunt his achievements," Carlisle calmly stated, crossing his legs and maintaining eye contact with Yelena.

Laura and Ywain breathed a sigh of relief at Carlisle's explanation, grateful that Kelly hadn't compromised herself out of desperation and had preserved her dignity.

Laura glanced at Carlisle. She was surprised to find Kelly's cousin as good-looking as her. Clearly, their good genes ran in the family.

"Birds of a feather flock together indeed. I thought Kelly was shameless, pretending to be rich, and now her cousin is pretending to be some big shot, too!" Yelena remarked.

She then added, "My father means nothing to you, huh? Do you know who he is? Ever heard of Wind Semiconductors? Even scions from the Thompson and Gust families are scrambling to collaborate with him. Still think he means nothing to you?"

Regaining her composure, Yelena smiled confidently, thinking she had plenty to boast about.

If Kelly couldn't even come up with four thousand dollars, Yelena doubted that her cousin was any better off.

Carlisle chuckled and said, "Oh, so you're Terrence's daughter. Like father, like daughter—" Gareth abruptly interrupted with a burp.

His words slurred as he said between hiccups, "...Who called my bro a fake big shot?... The scions of the Thompson and Gust families? They're nothing compared to me..."