

## Love Spell 721

### Chapter 721

Carlisle didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

When they were in high school, Wanda had been reticent and timid. She had seemed meek and obedient, like a nerd who had studied so much that it had made her rather dimwitted. After they started university and she started dating Carlisle, she changed. She climbed over walls and sneaked out just to go on dates with him.

Wanda developed the idea of Internet finance in this era and founded the first peer-to-peer online lending company, which proved that she was far more intelligent than the average person.

All she had to do was to use her brain. In this era when security cameras and the Internet weren't fully developed yet, no one would be able to find her. Carlisle sighed.

"Let's go. If she doesn't want anyone to find her, it'll be challenging for us to do so."

Three days had passed in the blink of an eye. It was January 18, and Riverland's temperatures were slowly growing warmer. It was about 50 degrees during the day and about 36 degrees at night.

Carlisle brushed his teeth while listening to a news report on the television.

"Due to the continued effects of the cold, most regions in the country have suffered substantial financial losses. According to an incomplete survey, fisheries have suffered over 27% of losses, and the agricultural industry has lost over 42%. The livestock industry has lost about 29%, while the forestry economy lost about 36%.

"To ameliorate the impact that the disaster has caused, the relevant authorities are already implementing all kinds of aid and subsidies. Here are some of the remedial measures being taken.

"Firstly, emergency funds will be allocated to support regions heavily affected by the weather to help companies and farmers resume production.

"Fisheries will receive free subsidies to encourage fishermen to start fishing once more. Aid will be given to the agricultural industry, including the provision of seeds, fertilizer, and other resources. Its purpose is to help the agricultural industry minimize losses or plant other crops.

"There will be subsidies for livestock to partially make up for what the livestock industry has lost, as well as reduced taxes for companies and individuals who are victims of the disaster.

"Industrial training will be provided for those affected by the disaster to facilitate career changes."

Carlisle finished brushing his teeth and washing his face. He returned to the living room and turned off the television.

In his past life, the severe cold caused almost 40% of financial losses for all the fisheries and livestock businesses in the country. The country implemented various policies to help them, and it took three years for them to recover.

However, three years later, two disasters occurred that significantly impacted the country's

finances. One of these had been an earthquake, which had resulted in losses that weren't just financial.

However, since Carlisle had been reborn, he had to implement some preventive measures. He figured that it was the only reason that justified his rebirth.

Carlisle reached the university. It was the last class of the semester. He had just walked into the noisy classroom when silence suddenly fell.

The students stared at Carlisle. The faces in the crowd displayed a mix of emotions, including worship, admiration, passion, and fear.

Carlisle looked perplexedly at his classmates and asked, "Why are you all looking at me?"

Chapter 722

Christine pointed at the blackboard.

Carlisle turned to see a newspaper printed in color stuck on the blackboard. The headline read: "Aurora Holdings' founder, Carlisle, donates 14 million and ten thousand dollars to Riverland Charity Foundation in Aurora Holdings' name, together with its four affiliated companies!"

There was an accompanying photo.

"This is nothing. I just did what I could."

Carlisle shrugged noncommittally and tore the newspaper off the blackboard. He returned to his seat and sat down.

In the back row, Ruby's eyes were shining like stars.

She poked Carlisle's back and said sweetly, "Carl, you're amazing! My father only donated ten million, but you donated ten thousand more!"

"Don't you think that I did that just to step on your father's toes?"

Carlisle took out the book titled "How to Win Friends and Influence People" from his drawer and continued reading it. The book was written by someone called Dale Carnegie, an expert on social relationships in the 20th century.

There wasn't much content, but it was deeply meaningful. The book provided a guideline for life. It contained theories about improving communication in social relationships, improving oneself, and numerous other human relations theories.

"That's even better! Not everyone could step on my father's toes at such a large charity gala. Did he look very angry?" Ruby asked excitedly.

She could not imagine how Carlisle had grown so much in a short time. He was now even brave enough to provoke Yuriel.

"Your father and I may become business rivals in the future," Carlisle said impassively as he read his book.

"Competition in business is to be expected. My father often says there will be conflict where there are people. In the business world, conflicts can be whipped up like storms, but they also give rise to countless chances and possibilities.

"My father even said that competition is a challenge and a catalyst to growth. It allows us to transform completely through challenges and rise through difficulties. It can make us stronger.

"That's why I support you challenging my father, Carl!" Ruby reasoned.

Carlisle only shook his head in resignation.

"You're a very supportive daughter."

What Ruby said was very reasonable, but she neglected to mention the cruelty of conflicts in business.

Ryan was a good example. Terrence had taken the fruits of Ryan's work and monopolized the market share of knockoff CPUs in the domestic market. The company had gone

bankrupt, which led Ryan to almost commit suicide.

Business wars were cruel. People could lose money and, in extreme circumstances, their entire fortune.

They self-studied the entire morning. When classes were about to end, Susan entered the classroom to announce the break and the beginning of the next semester. She told everyone that they didn't need to return to class that afternoon.

The students in the classroom cheered, but Carlisle turned to look at Wanda's empty seat and murmured to himself, "Time passes by so fast... In the blink of an eye, the semester is over. Will we see each other next semester?"

"Carl, Carl!"

Daniel waved from outside as Phoebe sat by the door.

She stared at the red mark on Daniel's neck and surprisedly said, "Daniel, are you dating someone?"

Daniel hastily wound his scarf tighter around his neck.

He was in high spirits as he said, "What do you mean by that? Wise people wouldn't plunge themselves into the river of love. They'd work on building up this country instead. My goal is to become a pillar of the country. How could I allow myself to be distracted by relationships?"

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Phoebe curled her lip, and she said, "Stop putting on an act. I saw everything earlier! Don't tell me that you got those red marks on your neck from mosquito bites! Experts have said that this cold snap has destroyed at least 80% of the mosquito population!"

Carlisle walked over, holding a bunch of books.

"Daniel, what did you want to see me for?"

Daniel grinned and said, "We're on vacation now, right? Let's hang out with the other guys in our dormitory!"

"Where are we meeting? Have you chosen a place?"

Carlisle rarely stayed at the dormitory and didn't interact much with his roommates. The semester was almost over, and he felt that they should meet.

"Let's eat at A1 Seafood Restaurant. Shane chose the venue. He says he wants to treat us all to a good meal today, as he's been earning a lot of money lately."

Daniel looked perplexed.

"Why does he always manage to come up with ideas to earn money when I can't?"

Carlisle ignored Daniel. He turned and looked at Christine, who was putting books into her bag.

He asked, "Christine, has Wanda contacted you today?"

Over the last few days, Carlisle had asked Christine if Wanda had contacted her. He had told Christine about Wanda's escape from the rehabilitation hospital and asked her to tell him at once if she had heard from her.

Christine hesitated momentarily, then nodded and said, "I received a message this morning from an unfamiliar number. It had an account number, and I was asked to transfer ten

thousand dollars to her for an emergency. I didn't have time to do it because I was in class, so I asked Jenny. I'm guessing that Wanda is safe!"

Carlisle looked shocked.

He asked eagerly, "What was the number? Did you call to ask-"

Behind Christine, a young woman suddenly said in a small voice, "Christine, I got the same message this morning..."

Chapter 723

Carlisle's excitement level immediately plummeted.

Phoebe bit her finger and said, "Christine, you didn't get scammed, did you? Try giving them a call now! Usually, you can't get through to scammers' phone numbers like that!" Christine's eyes reddened instantly. She took out her phone and flipped through her messages, her fingers trembling. When she found the message interface, she pressed the dial button. The call went through.

Christine smiled.

"I knew it. I can't always be that unlucky-"

"Hello?"

A husky male voice sounded from the other end of the line.

Christine asked quickly, "Is Wanda with you? Can you tell her to come to the phone?"

The man hesitated and said in a choked voice, "Wanda's been in a car accident, and she's currently in the hospital receiving emergency treatment. I've been asking around everywhere to borrow money for her so that she'll have enough for the operation. Could you transfer another 20 thousand dollars to that bank account?"

"Huh? A car accident? Is it serious?" Christine asked, her voice trembling. She had turned pale.

"It's very serious. Her right leg is a pulp right now. If they don't operate soon, they might have to amputate it," the man said, sobbing.

An icy female voice said, "Who's the patient's guardian? We will stop giving emergency treatment if you don't pay the operation fees."

The man said quickly, "I'll pay right now! I'm going to the bank to get the money. Keep trying to save her!"

When Christine heard the conversation, she began trembling all over.

She said tearfully, "How much more money do you still need? I'll go to the bank right now and transfer it to you!"

Although Swiftfunds Financial Investments hadn't made any profit yet, the staff still received their salaries. Christine had 28 thousand dollars on her card. If it weren't for Wanda, she would never have been able to earn so much money. Now that Wanda's life was in danger, she would be willing to give up every cent to save her.

The man's voice trembled as he said, "Just transfer 20 thousand to me. I don't think it'll be enough, but it's alright. I'll simply sell my blood to get more!"

The other person's voice rang out once more.

"Are you crazy? Didn't you just sell 400 cc just now? You'll die if you sell blood again!"

The man said firmly, "As long as my younger sister can survive, it doesn't matter if I die!" Christine was touched.

She said, "Don't sell your blood anymore. I still have 28 thousand dollars on my card. I'll

transfer 25 thousand to you!"

"Alright. Thank you so much! I'll go to the bank right now. Transfer the money. Hurry!" the man said before abruptly hanging up.

Christine grabbed her bag and towed Phoebe out.

"Wanda's been in a car accident. Let's go to the hospital and transfer money to her for the operation!"

Phoebe had heard the voices on the phone just now, and she thought she had even heard a nurse speaking. She figured that it must be true, so she followed Christine out.

Carlisle leaned one hand on the door frame and stopped the two of them.

He said expressionlessly, "Do you really believe that nonsense?"

"It's true! I even heard the nurse speaking!" Christine explained, staring anxiously at Carlisle.

Carlisle's lips twitched.

"Don't you think it was just a couple who putting on an act?"



Phone scams started as far back as 2000, first appearing in Taiwan before reaching Casmania in 2003. As the craftsmanship for mobile phones in this era wasn't as advanced, especially for cheap knockoffs, transmitted sounds would often become distorted. On the phone, people sounded different.

When phone scams first gained popularity, most people did not have prevention awareness, which is why many were deceived.

Christine said, "He called out Wanda's name just now, though! How would he know about Wanda if he was lying?"

"You asked him if Wanda was with him. Forget it. I can't be bothered to explain this to you dummies. Hey, lend me your phone," Carlisle said, looking at the young woman sitting in the row behind Christine.

## Chapter 724

Daniel was at a loss for words. How could Carlisle not know his classmates' names after an entire semester? He found Carlisle's behavior ridiculous.

"Um... I'm Carmen Weber."

Carmen blushed as she handed her PHS phone to Carlisle. Carlisle took the phone and dialed the number from the text message. He put the call on speaker and pressed a finger to his lips, signaling for everyone to stay quiet. A moment later, the same deep male voice came through.

"Hello?"

Mimicking an old man's voice, Carlisle asked, "Son, is that you?"

"Dad..."

The man's voice instantly turned frail, crying, "I had a car accident. You need to send me money for surgery right away. Otherwise, I won't make it through the night, Dad!"

The speaker's voice and emotion were so genuine that it was hard not to believe him. It was apparent that he had undergone professional training.

Christine and Phoebe were left dumbfounded. They found the story so convincing that they couldn't believe it was a scam. Christine's eyes welled up with tears as she recalled having even asked Jenny to transfer ten thousand dollars to her.

Carlisle continued in a shaky old man's voice, "Son... Which hospital are you at? I'll bring the money over right away!"

But the man on the phone replied weakly, "You won't make it in time, Dad! I'm very far from home. Why don't you visit the bank and transfer the money to me? If you don't know how to do it, get someone to help you..."

The man coughed.

Suddenly, a woman's voice took over the phone and said, "Are you the patient's father? If he doesn't get the surgery immediately, he won't make it through the night!"

Carlisle played along, hoping to help Christine get her money back.

In a panicked old man's voice, he said, "Give me the hospital address. I'll bring the money right over! We were compensated 300 thousand after three of our old houses were demolished for redevelopment!"

Upon hearing this, the woman quickly added, "Your son's lower body was severely crushed in the accident. Even his testicles were smashed! We're sorry to inform you that the surgery can save his life, but it won't restore his fertility.

"However, we can perform a testicular transplant for him. One testicle costs 150 thousand dollars, so it'll be 300 thousand dollars for two. Adding the 20-thousand-dollar surgery fee, you'll need to bring a total of 320 thousand dollars to the hospital."

"Sure. Okay. Which hospital are you at?" Carlisle asked.

"Riverwatch District Second Hospital!" the woman replied.

"Alright. Please proceed with the surgery. I'm on my way now," Carlisle said before hanging up.

Christine and Phoebe lowered their heads, avoiding Carlisle's gaze like kids caught doing something wrong. If it weren't for Carlisle, they would have probably been conned out of every last penny.

"Let's go get your ten thousand dollars back!"

Carlisle then turned to Carmen and said, "Sorry, Carmen, but I'll need to use your phone later. Could you please come with us?"

With that, Carlisle led everyone to the hospital.

Willow Grove was just two streets away from the school, so Carlisle usually walked there. Francis, Wendell, and Kevin often hung out nearby, either sipping smoothies at the smoothie shop or watching the old men play chess at the pavilion. When Carlisle stepped out, Francis and Wendell immediately approached him.

Carlisle instructed, "Get me two cars. We're going to Riverwatch District."

"Yes, boss," Francis replied, pulling out his phone to make a call.

Four bodyguards were stationed at Willow Grove, all of whom could drive. When Francis was on duty outside the school, he would hand them the car keys.

Christine pointed to a seven-seater van parked across the road and said, "We can take my company's car if you like."

Chapter 725

The seven-seater van was quite spacious. In addition to the driver's and front passenger seats, there were two seats in the middle and three in the back.

Francis sat in the front passenger seat, with Carlisle and Daniel in the middle row, while Christine, Phoebe, and Carmen took the back row.

"Where should I sit?" Wendell asked, standing by the door.

"You can take the boss' car," Francis said, shutting the door before instructing the driver, " Let's go."

The driver drove off as directed.

The car smelled like the perfume Christine and Phoebe were wearing. It was clear this vehicle was exclusively for them.

"It sure smells nice in here!" Daniel remarked, closing his eyes and taking a deep breath. He inexplicably abruptly crossed his legs.

Sitting in the back, Phoebe whispered, "Carmen, why didn't you fall for that message in the first place?"

Blushing, Carmen replied, "I only have a hundred dollars. I couldn't possibly gather ten thousand, even if my parents gave me all of their savings. Since there was nothing I could do to help, I decided to ignore the message."

Christine sighed.

"So much for all the education I've had!"

Phoebe held Christine's hand and comforted her, "It wasn't your fault. These scammers were just too good at their act. Even I fell for it."

Looking at the seat in front of her, Carmen remarked, "It's a good thing our class monitor, Carlisle, is too smart to be fooled. He could tell it was a scam even before picking up the call."

Carlisle scratched his nose, feeling a little embarrassed. He had actually learned his lesson after falling for a scam in his past life.

A black SUV was parked outside Riverwatch District Second Hospital. Four large men sat silently in the backseat.

Xane Clifton, a skinny man with a mohawk, occupied the driver's seat while Anna Stone, a pregnant woman, sat beside him.

"Xane, let's call it quits after these last jobs, okay?" Anna gently touched her belly as she spoke softly.

Xane leaned in and placed his ear on her belly.

"Like I said, we're out once we hit three million. We've been through enough, and I don't want our kid to go through what we have."

"But..."

"It's for the sake of our baby," Xane cut her off with a serious look.

Suddenly, his phone rang.

Slumping back in his seat, Xane answered the call weakly, "Dad, are you here yet?"

There was silence on the other end.

"Dad?" Xane called out again.

"Yes, son?"

Daniel suddenly appeared outside the car window, holding a phone. He scared the hell out of Xane.

"Who the hell are you? You want a piece of me, huh?"

Xane glared at Daniel, his voice filled with fury.

Daniel held the phone to his ear and responded playfully, "Sonny, it's me-your daddy!"

The four burly men in the back seat immediately emerged and surrounded Daniel, crossing their arms and staring at him with intimidating looks. Even though Daniel was five foot two and weighed 170 pounds, he appeared relatively small beside them.

Forcing a nervous grin, Daniel stammered, "I, um... sorry?"

With that, he quickly turned and sprinted away.

"Get him!" Xane shouted.

## Chapter 726

The four burly men immediately chased after Daniel.

Meanwhile, Francis jumped out of the car and sprinted toward them. In a flash, he delivered a powerful kick to one of them, sending the man-who weighed at least 200 pounds-flying back nearly ten feet away.

The man's companions were left dumbfounded, realizing that Francis must have been professionally trained. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to send a man as heavy as their companion that far with a single kick.

One of the chubby men suggested to his companion, "Boss, we should get out of here! I didn't sign up for this for merely 50 bucks!"

When the man addressed as "boss" heard this, he started running. At this sight, the others took off without a second thought.

"Way to go, Francis!"

Daniel ran forward excitedly and shouted, "Who's the tough guy now, fatsoes?"

The man who'd just been kicked struggled to get up, his eyes filled with horror as he stared at Francis. Francis might have broken his ribs with that kick if not for his chubby physique cushioning the blow.

Francis could tell that the men were simply trying to intimidate them, so he didn't bother chasing them. Instead, he walked toward the SUV and knocked on the driver's window. "Get out."

Having witnessed Francis send a 200-pound man flying with a kick, Xane knew he was in serious trouble. He quickly started the car, ready to make his escape.

Francis' gaze turned icy. He threw a forceful punch at the car window. However, the window didn't crack as he had anticipated. Clearly, this car's window was of higher quality than the one in the vehicle they had taken before.

Slightly angered, Francis threw a second punch, causing the glass to splinter. When he threw a third punch, the window finally shattered completely.

Xane's face turned as pale as a sheet at the sight. Fortunately, he managed to start the engine just in time. Without buckling up, he stepped on the gas pedal as soon as he released the clutch.

Francis swiftly grabbed Xane by the collar and yanked him out through the window.

"Xane!" Anna screamed in panic. She suddenly clutched her stomach and cried out, "Xane... I-I think the baby is coming!"

Carlisle had approached with Christine and the others in tow as Xane struggled desperately. "Let go of me! My wife is about to give birth. Let me go!"

Daniel mocked, "You sure know how to act, man. You should quit being a conman and start a career as an actor."

Christine and Phoebe watched him impassively. They had learned their lesson and were no longer swayed by his words.

However, noticing Anna's pale expression, sweaty forehead, and the veins popping in her hands as she clutched her stomach, Carlisle began to doubt if she was faking.

He slowly instructed, "Release him and let him take her to the hospital."

As soon as Francis let go of Xane, the latter bolted to the passenger seat and, after opening the door, whispered to Anna, "Honey, run while you can. I'll hold them off!"

"Seriously, Xane? I'm about to give birth here!" Anna said in pain, wrapping her arm around Xane's neck.

Xane's eyes widened. He quickly tried to regain his composure and attempted to pick Anna up, but he was too thin and weak to lift her.

With a sigh, Francis stepped in, pushed Xane aside, and carried Anna in his arms, heading toward the hospital.

15 minutes later, Anna was taken to the delivery room while Xane confessed his crimes outside.

Xane and Anna had been high school classmates, both dreaming of becoming stars. They applied to Yorksle Drama University together, hoping they could one day rise to fame and make their families proud.

However, reality hit them hard-they both failed to get in. Still clinging to their dreams, they decided to stay in Yorksle and make a living.

Ten years had passed, and they were still nameless and penniless. The competition for minor acting roles had become fiercer, with many new faces emerging from prestigious universities.

Despite running from one film set to another, they barely landed any roles, and their pay was just enough to scrape by.

As Anna's due date neared, Xane knew he had to find another way to support them. He remembered meeting a group of scammers while taking some shots in Wangow and knew they could make millions every month through scams.



Tempted, Xane brought Anna to Riverland, where he borrowed a car from a friend and acquired a high-tech device from his contacts in Wangow. The device could connect to his phone and forcibly send texts to nearby phones.

"We only got the equipment and learned how to use it two weeks ago. Before we could start our operation, the cold wave came. I didn't want Anna to suffer in the cold. So, I only started scamming after it ended," Xane explained.

## Chapter 727

Xane slumped in a chair in the waiting area, his gaze fixed on the delivery room door.

Sitting next to him, Carlisle casually asked, "You've been to high school, so you know that fraud is illegal, right?"

Xane smiled bitterly.

"Anna and I have struggled to make ends meet for ten years. I just wanted to give her a better life. Maybe even a home for our baby."

"That doesn't mean you can commit a crime to get what you want. Have you thought about the fact that you probably won't be able to live peacefully with your family after getting money through scams?"

"What would your child think if they discovered their father was a scammer? Your actions won't just burden you. They'll weigh on your wife and child, too!"

Carlisle glanced at Xane, his expression emotionless. He wouldn't cut Xane any slack just because the latter had a rough past. After all, there were people out there in even worse situations. If he hadn't intervened, Xane might have scammed more people-including those whose lives were more desperate than his own.

In his previous life, Carlisle had seen countless cases where victims' emergency funds were stolen or stolen through schemes in shared videos.

Suddenly, the delivery room door swung open.

A female doctor stepped out and asked, "Who is the patient's family?"

"I am," Xane quickly stood up and walked over.

The doctor glanced at Xane and announced solemnly, "There's a complication in your wife's delivery. We can't proceed with a natural birth, so we need to perform a C-section."

Xane asked anxiously, "H-How much is that going to cost?"

He only had ten thousand dollars in his account, which he'd scammed that morning. He would need to return it to its rightful owner later.

"A C-section costs 1,350 dollars. With the additional costs for post-op care and the hospital stay, you'll need at least three thousand dollars," the doctor replied.

Noticing Xane's financial strain, she added, "Can you come up with three thousand dollars? If so, please sign this consent form. Otherwise, we'll have to figure out another way."

"C-Can I pay later?" Xane asked, feeling the absurdity of his own question.

The doctor's expression grew serious.

"Let me make this clear. If we don't perform the surgery, there could be serious risks to both your wife and the baby."

Xane's face turned pale. He felt helpless and lost.

Suddenly, Francis stepped in and said, "Please proceed with the surgery. My boss will cover all the costs."

The doctor nodded and returned to the delivery room. Francis then handed Xane a check for 30 thousand dollars.

"This is a gift from my boss to cover your wife's delivery fees and aftercare expenses."

"This... This is too much!" Xane said, his hands shaking as he took the check. Overwhelmed with guilt, he said gratefully, "Thank you so much! I'll return the money I scammed from you shortly"

"Before you go any further, let me finish," Francis interrupted, glancing at Xane. "I talked to our company's lawyer. Given your situation, you're probably looking at a year in prison. "But if you turn yourself in, there's a chance you could reduce your sentence. With good behavior, you might be out in six months. This 30 thousand should be enough to get your wife a place to live and hire a nanny to care for her and the baby until you're released." Xane was stunned. He stared at Francis in disbelief and asked, "You... called the police?"

"We're sorry for what you and your girlfriend have been through, but that doesn't justify committing a crime. My boss is willing to give you this money unconditionally, but he hopes you'll stop with your scams.

"We haven't called the police yet because my boss wants you to surrender yourself while you still have the chance."

With that, Francis left.

Stunned, Xane stood there for a long time.

## Chapter 728

Xane was lost in reflection and regret. It wasn't until Carlisle and the others stood up to leave that he regained his composure and saw them off with respect and gratitude.

After settling Anna and the baby, Xane turned himself into the police.

During his time in prison, he focused on reflecting, studying, and reforming. Due to his good behavior, he was released after four months. He even visited Carlisle at Aurora Holdings afterward.

From then on, he dedicated himself to scriptwriting. Years later, he became a well-known screenwriter and director in the country.

That night, Carlisle and his roommates had a gathering at A1 Seafood Restaurant.

Shane showed up in ripped jeans, a shiny leather jacket, and a small braid at the back of his head.

Carlisle's presence made everyone feel slightly stiff, so they all sat up straight like model students. It wasn't until Carlisle initiated some casual conversation and had a few drinks that they began to loosen up.

"Shane, I heard you made a good chunk of money lately. Why not treat yourself to some better clothes?" Carlisle asked, his smile mischievous.

Shane seemed different from his previous self. He used to fawn over his roommates and classmates, but now he seemed more laid-back and confident. Even his smile appeared more genuine.

Shane sipped his beer, saying, "Well, I've realized that money is just a means to an end, not the end itself. For instance, clothes are meant to keep us warm and covered, not to show off. "Besides, I worry that I might forget my initial intentions after earning money, so I wear my old clothes to remind me of those tough times. That's what keeps me motivated to keep earning."

Jasper teased, "Since when did you become a philosopher?"

Shane chuckled.

"I've been reading philosophy books for about a month now. It really helps to expand your mind!"

Dylan took a sip of his Coke and asked curiously, "So what's the point of making all this money then?"

Shane replied, "So it's there when I need it."

Carlisle then asked, "Shane, how much have you made over the past few months?"

Everyone turned their attention to Shane. They knew he'd made a lot but didn't know the precise amount.

Shane pulled out a bank card and placed it in front of Carlisle.

"Carl, I made 380 thousand dollars. There's 300 thousand on this card, and it's for you. I'm keeping the remaining 80 thousand dollars to maintain the website!"

"Dang. 300 thousand dollars? Shane, buddy, can I get in on this project too?" Jasper asked eagerly. He could buy three houses in their small town with that kind of money.

"Count me in too! I'm not greedy. All I ask is to earn two thousand dollars a month!" Dylan added, grinning.

"You call that 'not greedy'?" Daniel exclaimed in disbelief.

"Do your parents even make that much in a month?"

After peeling and popping a shrimp into his mouth, Carlisle asked, "How are you making this money? Was it through paid downloads or subscriptions?"

Shane looked confused.

"Huh? What are those?"

Carlisle suddenly realized that paid downloads and subscriptions weren't a thing yet.

He then rephrased, "Why don't you tell us how you're earning so much?"

Shane explained, "At first, I burned CDs and sold them at stalls. Then, I started storing the songs on memory cards and selling them.

"Later, I got someone to build a music website and promote the songs online. Once the site gained some buzz, I started taking on ads. That's how I made over 300 thousand dollars!"

## Chapter 729

"It's amazing that you've made over 300 thousand dollars in just three months at your age! This definitely calls for a celebration!" Carlisle complimented, raising his glass in admiration.

If he hadn't been reborn and already aware of future business opportunities, he might not even be close to where Shane was now. In this era, 300 thousand dollars could buy three houses. When property prices skyrocket in the future, those houses will be worth millions. "Carl's right! We should celebrate! Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

They clinked their glasses and downed their drinks in one go.

After putting his glass down, Jasper sighed and said, "You know, Shane's had a rough ride, too. Back when he was selling CDs, he used to climb over walls to sneak back to school in the middle of the night.

"On weekends, he'd be out selling CDs before sunrise. I even saw him get beaten up by a few competitors under a bridge a few times! So, I can't be jealous that Shane's earning big money now. He's earned his success through hard work and struggles."

Daniel's eyes widened in anger.

"What? Shane, why didn't you tell us you were getting bullied out there?"

Dylan added, "Yeah! If that ever happens again, just give us a call. Even if we can't handle it, Carl's always got our back!"

Everyone knew about Carlisle's connection to Arthur. With Arthur and his men involved, those thugs would definitely think twice before messing with Shane.

"Well... I was partly to blame for that. When I first started selling CDs, my mobile stall took up a spot that belonged to a permanent tenant. Understandably, the tenant was upset, but we eventually sorted things out," Shane replied, smiling. His friends' support deeply touched him.

Shane had lost his parents at 12 and his grandparents at 13. Olivia was the only one who had ever shown him warmth. But now, he also found genuine care from his roommates. Even though he was making a lot of money, he knew his roommates weren't trying to flatter him for that reason, especially considering their decent family backgrounds.

Carlisle poured himself a cup of tea and sipped it as he listened to the conversation.

When the subject shifted from music websites to pop music, Shane got excited and pulled out a portable cassette player from his backpack, playing a song called "Countless Reasons".

"When our relationship neared its end,

And you decided to walk away..."

The song was filled with a heartfelt melody and poignant lyrics. The singer's unique voice conveyed the pain and longing in the song unreservedly, capturing the sorrow and helplessness of those tortured by love.

Carlisle put down his cup of tea, poured himself another beer, and downed it in one go. He had listened to this song countless times in his previous life, but with his different romantic experiences from two lifetimes, the song struck him in a completely new way. Jasper and Dylan were also deeply moved, their eyes welling with tears. They remembered their first love from high school, which ended when they went to different universities or for other reasons.

"He isn't called the prince of love songs for nothing. His singing almost made me cry!" Daniel chuckled and took a sip of his drink. He had never been in a relationship or experienced a breakup, so he couldn't fully relate to the song.

Shane chuckled before saying, "Even though the album won't be released until January 5th, this song has already hit over a million streams and 120 thousand ringtone downloads in just a few days! I bet it'll hit ten million downloads and make it into the top five ringtone charts this year!"

Carlisle looked at Shane thoughtfully. He thought that Shane might not have a talent for singing, but he really knew his stuff when it came to music.

His prediction was spot on. In 2005, this song would break the ringtone sales record with 15 million downloads. And in the years that followed, it would skyrocket to a mind-blowing 120 million downloads.

## Chapter 730

The minimum price for a ringtone was two dollars. With 120 million downloads, it could

bring in over 200 million dollars, and the singer would receive at least 100 million dollars as their share.

Taking a sip of his tea, Carlisle asked, "Shane, are you interested in getting into showbiz?" Shane was startled.

"Are you asking me to be your manager?"

Carlisle rolled his eyes and said, "I'm not a celebrity!"

"Then what are you getting at, Carl?" Shane asked, puzzled.

He hoped Carlisle wasn't thinking of writing a song for him to sing. He was well aware of his own voice and knew that it definitely wouldn't make him shine in the singing industry.

"I plan to invest in a media company to break into the music and film business," Carlisle explained casually.

Shane's lips twitched.

"You do know that signing big names could cost you a fortune, right?"

Carlisle smiled and replied, "Who says we need big names? We can nurture our own artists!"



While it might be tough to attract top-tier celebrities, Carlisle planned to sign some promising singers and actors before they became famous. He figured that he could even write the songs and movies that would bring them to fame based on his memories from his previous life. He was confident these artists would reach their career peaks sooner than they knew.

Shane's eyes lit up with excitement.

"So you're writing songs for the potential singers to perform?"

"You could say that," Carlisle replied vaguely.

After thinking it over, Shane asked, "What about my music website?"

Carlisle pondered briefly before answering, "Here's the plan. I'll invest in starting a

company, Aurora Entertainment. You can merge your music website into Aurora

Entertainment as a subsidiary.

"All the songs owned by Aurora Entertainment's artists will be exclusively licensed to your site. With Alumni Network backing us, we could easily boost your music website!"

Shane chuckled and said, "Alright, Carl. I'm all in with your plan!"

Jasper and Dylan looked at Shane with admiration. Carlisle's decision to start a media company implied that he was granting Shane a significant role. Although Jasper's and Dylan's families could support their living expenses, they were still far from being financially independent.

Casting a glance at Jasper and Dylan, Carlisle added, "You should include them too, Shane. Having a few familiar faces around will make work less of a drag."

"Thank you, Carl!" Jasper and Dylan exclaimed with joy.

After a few more drinks, they wrapped up the gathering and called it a night. Carlisle returned to his apartment, turned on his computer, and sat at his desk. He compiled a business proposal detailing Aurora Entertainment's future direction and strategy, then jotted down a few names of potential artists to recruit.

"Eason Bullock joined the Just Show It audition in May 2005.

"Chloe Hart, Emily Bishop, and Amy Bowen joined the Wonder Girls audition in May 2005.

"Beatrice Wynter joined The Next Yahoo's Star in May 2006.

"Jacob Murphy, a student at Everwood Medical University."

Carlisle cut the names from the proposal document and pasted them into a new one before emailing his proposal to Selena.

Almost immediately after sending the email, Carlisle's phone rang with a call from Selena. "Yes, Ms. Johansen?" he answered.

"Mr. Zahn, Hermès has invited you and Mr. Woodsen to a collaboration cocktail party. The governor will be there, too. The party is tomorrow afternoon at five!" Selena reported.