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As soon as Wendy heard that, her face fell.

She could not stop herself from saying, "This question is so difficult that she probably doesn't know how to solve it either. It's not like she knows everything. Also, she sleeps during class. You'd better not waste your time."

He shook his head. "That's all right. It won't take too much time. I'll go and ask her."

With that, he went over to Arielle.

Wendy followed him with her gaze.

Well then, I'd like to see Arielle solve that difficult question. However, I don't think it's likely she'll be able to. She might be clever, but that doesn't mean she knows anything about quantum mechanics.

As that thought crossed Wendy's mind, she stood up and walked over to Arielle's seat too.

I want to see her experience the same humiliation I did.

At that moment, Arielle was busy checking Jared's

answers.

She excelled at mental calculations, so she could quickly calculate the answers in her head.

When Wendy and the student who sat next to her arrived in front of Arielle's seat, Arielle had just finished checking the answers.

Arielle put down her pen and looked up when she sensed someone approaching her.

"Arielle, can you take a look at this question? I have no clue how I should go about solving it."

Jared piped up, "Go ahead. I'm in no hurry. You can help him first."

“Okay,” Arielle replied while nodding.

Wendy could not help saying, “Arielle, this question is related to quantum mechanics. It doesn’t matter if you don’t know how to solve it. We can ask Mr. Baxter together later.”

Arielle ignored Wendy and lowered her head to study the question.

About two minutes later, Arielle picked up her pen and quickly wrote down a few formulas.

“The answer is pi. I’ve written down the steps to solve the equation, but I didn’t input the exact numbers. You can try using my method to solve the equation. If you still aren’t able to solve it, you can come and ask me again,” said Arielle.

“Oh, thank you! That really helps! You’re amazing!” the student exclaimed joyfully.

Wendy frowned and asked suspiciously, “How did you manage to get the answer so quickly? Are you sure you didn’t make a mistake?”

The student who sat next to Wendy interjected, “Arielle didn’t make a mistake. I have the answers to this set of practice questions, and the answer is pi. However, the answer doesn’t show the mathematical working. That’s why I thought to ask you at first.”

Wendy’s expression darkened at once, but he was hopelessly clueless and did not notice it at all. Instead, he continued, “You weren’t able to solve it, but Arielle managed to in just two minutes! Arielle, you’re amazing! You’re a math genius!”

He did not hold back on his praise, nor did he try to hide his admiration.

His words struck Wendy like a slap in the face.

I didn’t expect Arielle to be able to solve it. Could it be a coincidence? After all, many students must have bought the same set of practice questions. Maybe

That must be it!

Just as Wendy was about to expose Arielle’s ‘stroke of genius,’ the hopelessly clueless student suddenly pointed at Jared’s examination papers and asked in surprise, “You’re doing the Advanced Maths Exam Papers?”

Wendy’s ears pricked up at once. She had heard about those exam papers before. She had bought them, but its difficulty level was so advanced that she could not even solve one question. In the end, she had to give up. I can’t believe Jared is able to do those questions!

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Jared nodded indifferently. "Yes. I've done all the questions and wanted Bo- I mean Arielle to help check the answers."

Wendy could not hold in her giggles.

It was not until Jared gazed at her coldly that she stopped laughing. Then, she said apologetically, "I'm sorry, that was rude of me. I just think it's best not to ask Arielle to check such difficult math questions. It'd be better to ask Mr. Baxter instead. Even my previous teacher wasn't able to do them. I think no one other than Mr. Baxter is capable of solving those questions."

After all, the Advanced Maths Exam Papers are much more difficult compared to the question that the guy asked earlier. She may have been able to solve that question on her own. However, these exam papers will stump her for sure.

Jared frowned as he glanced at Wendy.

She's just as bad as Kelsea. The mere sight of her makes me want to puke!

"Why do you care who I ask to check my answers? What does it have to do with you? Why do you want to stick your nose into other people's business? This has nothing to do with you," Jared retorted mercilessly.

Never in a million years did Wendy think a handsome and cheerful person like Jared would say such nasty things.

Her face turned a deep shade of red, and even her neck was flushed. She wanted nothing more than to dig a hole and hide in it.

When have I ever suffered such an injustice? No. I never had to put up with such treatment before I met Arielle, but after she showed up, everything changed.

Wendy was infuriated and resentful, but her resentment was only toward Arielle.

She bit her lip, forcing herself to calm down. Then, she replied, "I was merely reminding you out of the kindness of my heart. You don't have to be so mean-"

"Kindness? Thanks, but no thanks," Jared said bluntly.

Suddenly, Henry stood up and gave Wendy a little push. "How dare you bully my boss? Do you have a death wish?"

It was the first time Wendy had encountered such a situation. She nearly fell over when Henry pushed her, and she struggled to regain her balance. Her face was as pale as a sheet.

Worried that they would try to hit her, Wendy returned to her seat quietly.

It felt as if everyone was laughing at her.

Her red-rimmed eyes flashed with anger, and she fought to hold back her tears. Suddenly, she heard the clueless student who sat next to her ask Arielle, "Can you really

check the answers for the Advanced Maths Exam Papers?"

Arielle murmured her assent softly, but it was audible in the quiet classroom. Everyone heard it, including Wendy

Wendy let out an angry snort.

Who is she trying to fool? Those are the Advanced Maths Exam Papers, for crying out loud! Did she become big-headed after a few compliments and think that she's really a genius?

However, she heard the clueless student answer excitedly, "Can I watch you check them, then? I've done the first paper before, so I'd like to have a look."

Arielle's voice rang out loud and clear. "Sure."

As Wendy turned to look at Arielle with a doubtful gaze, she saw Arielle's hand flying over the paper. Soon, Arielle had finished checking all of the answers.

The clueless student cheered.

Wendy could not believe it. How could she have completed it so quickly? She even checked Jared's answers for him!

Wendy heard Arielle say to Jared, "Not bad. You got seventy-three marks. The ones you got wrong were those that incorporated elements of other subjects. Other than that, you did well. I'll write out the

mathematical workings for those that you got wrong."

"All right," Jared replied. He did not doubt the truth of Arielle's words and seemed to trust that her answers were correct.

Wendy could not bear it any longer. She rose to her feet and asked loudly, "Does anyone here have the answers for the Advanced Maths Exam Papers?"

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The Advanced Maths Exam Papers is a set of papers that didn't include a marking scheme in the book. If one needed the marking scheme, one must purchase them separately. However, because those answers were not from the original author, they weren't guaranteed to be the most accurate solutions to the questions.

Following Wendy's inquiry, someone in the classroom raised their hand hesitantly and said, "I have the answers..."

"Can I borrow it from you? Marking those papers must be really tiring for Arielle, so I wanted to help by lending her the marking scheme." Wendy pursed her lips.

The classmate was amicable and agreed to Wendy's request immediately. Plus, she was also curious to find out if Arielle could genuinely complete those questions in such a short timeframe.

After getting her hands on the marking scheme, Wendy mustered up her courage and paced toward Arielle before handing the latter the sheets of paper. Along the way, she tried her best to ignore Henry's fierce look and Jared's icy gaze. She put up a kind facade and suggested, "Why don't you use the marking scheme? I'm sure it'll make it easier for you to mark those papers."

Arielle muttered expressionlessly, "There's no need."

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"Why don't you need it? Do you think your answers will be more accurate than those given in the marking

scheme itself?" Wendy smirked, to which Arielle calmly responded, "That's right."

Arielle's arrogance left Wendy speechless. She opened her mouth slightly but could not come up with a good argument as she didn't expect Arielle to express her egotism without the slightest hesitation.

That's too bold of you! Do you think you're the author who wrote these examination papers?

Little did Wendy know, Arielle was indeed the author of the widely known book.

Even her nickname, 'San,' was printed at the back of each set of papers.

That was the reason why Arielle could complete a full set of questions from the Advanced Maths Exam Papers within a few minutes. After all, it would be preposterous if she did not know the answers to the questions she designed.

Of course, Arielle had no intention of disclosing her qualifications to Wendy because the latter was nothing but an unworthy opponent in her eyes.

However, to Wendy, Arielle's conceitedness was simply ridiculous. She had never seen someone so vain.

Wendy clenched her jaw and suggested, "Although you refused to use the marking scheme, we are curious to see if your answers were undoubtedly correct. Do you mind if I check Jared's paper again?"

Arielle remained emotionless, as if she weren't the least bothered by anything happening around her. She replied nonchalantly, "This is Jared's paper, so please ask him for his permission instead of me."

Wendy hated Arielle's unbothered attitude. She felt like she was being looked down on by the latter, even though she was clearly the best amongst everyone in this classroom.

Without saying a word, Wendy snatched Jared's paper away from Arielle and began checking the answers according to the marking scheme.

The classmates couldn't hide their peaking interest and were curious about the results. Some of them turned to look at Wendy as she cross-checked the answers on Jared's paper and the marking scheme, while others surrounded Wendy to get a better look at what was going on.

Wendy couldn't help but scoff at Arielle's confidence when she saw the latter's remarks beside each mistake.

Henry was starting to feel anxious about the situation, so he turned around and whispered to Jared, "Jared, do you believe Boss will mark some questions incorrectly? According to what I've heard, the difficulty of this set of papers is extremely high. How about we stop Wendy right now?"

Jared hesitated for a split second before he shook his head and said, "There's no need." He was confident in Arielle's intelligence.

Besides, the questions were challenging, so what if she got some of them wrong? After all, the answers in the marking scheme were not perfect either. Thus, it wouldn't be a big deal even if Arielle made mistakes.

Meanwhile, Wendy was fixated on checking the

answers, and she was more serious about this task than she was about completing her own papers.

Finally, Wendy went through every multiple-choice question on the paper.

Yet, her face darkened at the outcome.

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Out of ten multiple-choice questions, Jared did three of them wrongly. However, the answers written by Arielle when she marked the papers were precisely the same as the answer sheet.

This would also mean that Arielle did every question correctly without referring to the marking scheme at all.

This is impossible!

Wendy's anxiousness rose. Don't tell me that she's really able to complete the whole paper with no mistakes!

As she held the pen in her hand, her grip tightened, but she quickly persuaded herself.

Even if she could get all multiple-choice questions correct, those are merely the easiest questions in the paper! I'm sure she'll make some slips in the harder questions later!

With that thought in mind, Wendy took a deep breath and carried on with checking the answers.

However, she was upset and bewildered when she realized Arielle's answers matched the ones she saw in the marking scheme even when she had already reached the subjective questions which were supposed to be much more complex.

By then, Wendy was sweating profusely at the thought of facing a backlash from her classmates if she couldn't spot any of Arielle's mistakes after displaying her suspicion toward Arielle.

Please don't make that happen!

Her hand began to tremble uncontrollably.

Finally, Wendy found a mistake in Arielle's answer while checking the last question. She was visibly relieved and pointed at the answer before yelling victoriously, "Look! This answer that Arielle gave was wrong! It was a different answer than what was written in the marking scheme! She's wrong!"

Her voice was obnoxiously loud, as if she was trying to prove a significant discovery to everyone.

Wendy raised her eyes and looked around, hoping to see everyone's disdain for Arielle, but all she saw were looks of admiration directed at the latter.

Wendy was dumbfounded by the unexpectedly positive reaction of her classmates. What's going on? Did everyone not hear what I just said?

"We all know that the difficulty level of these questions was exceptionally high, but Arielle still managed to get only one question wrong. I would say she did quite a great job." Jared spoke before Wendy could.

Henry chimed in, "That's right! Do you think you can make only one mistake if we let you finish the question instead?"

Wendy was stumped and gulped before retorting, "But her attitude was so arrogant a moment ago. She acted as if she could get a perfect score for the questions! Isn't

that ridiculous?"

However, Wendy didn't get the response she expected, and everyone around was staring at her with a strange expression.

Even Trisha, who was the timidest girl in class, couldn't help but stand up for Arielle. "Why is that ridiculous?"

As soon as the others saw Trisha speak up, they followed suit. "Trisha's right! Those are questions from the Advanced Maths Exam Papers, yet Arielle hardly got one question wrong! Isn't she a genius?"

"I know, right? Wendy is so weird. She couldn't even solve her deskmate's question, but she dared to make fun of Arielle for one blunder she made while completing the Advanced Maths Exam Papers? You've got to be kidding me..."

"I feel the same way, too. Isn't she just being jealous that Arielle is prettier and smarter than her?"

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Naturally, Wendy picked up on what her classmates were talking about her. It was a first for her to hear someone call her 'weird.'

Her face turned scarlet, and she felt her earlobes burning, as she was embarrassed by the backlash she was facing.

At this moment, Arielle, who remained quiet throughout the chatters, blurted, "I wasn't wrong."

Confused, Wendy looked in Arielle's direction, to which the latter continued, "The answer for the last question is 'one.' The answer in the marking scheme is wrong."

"Huh? How dare you question the preciseness of the marking scheme?" Wendy scoffed and asked.

"Why can't I?" Arielle remained poised and continued, "After all, there is no specific marking scheme for these sets of papers. The solutions you have were solved by someone other than the author. So, isn't it natural for it to have some errors in them?"

"You're kidding me, right?" Wendy slammed the papers onto Arielle's desk and retorted, "These are all answers given by a lecturer from Jadeborough University's mathematics faculty. You're merely a student, and yet you dare doubt the accuracy of a lecturer's answer?"

Arielle glanced at Wendy coldly and muttered, "So, you're telling me that lecturers can't be wrong?"

Right then, a booming voice came from outside the door. "Why are all of you being so noisy during class? Don't you all know when you should and should not have idle chatters?"

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The others turned around subconsciously and noticed Donovan approaching with a darkened expression.

Most of them scurried back to their seats. However, Wendy's eyes glinted at the sight of him as she picked up the paper and answer sheet before walking over to his side.

"Mr. Baxter, we're discussing the questions for the Advanced Maths Exam Papers. Could you help us out by taking a look? May I know what's the answer to the last question right here?"

Upon realizing that his students were merely discussing schoolwork, Donovan's sullen expression eased a little.

He didn't think of himself as a very strict teacher. Besides, he was glad that his students took their schoolwork seriously.

His anger soon dissipated into thin air as he reached out to take over the paper in Wendy's hands.

After taking one look, he realized that it was a challenging question. He told her to wait before writing the question, as well as its solution on the blackboard.

After about ten minutes, Donovan finally solved the question.

Using a chalk, he wrote the number 'l' on the blackboard.

Wendy widened her eyes in disbelief.

The answer is really 'l' instead of the '0.618' written on the answer sheet. Wait, this means Arielle's right!

Wendy suddenly heard a buzzing sound ringing through her head.

She had the feeling that everyone was silently ridiculing her for even questioning Arielle in the first place.

D*mn it, how did she get it right, though?

Her grip tightened on the pencil in her hand as it punched a hole through the question paper.

Donovan did not notice that Wendy was almost breaking down. He placed his chalk back down and turned around to say to his students, "This question is really quite the challenge as it requires knowledge in both chemistry and physics to

solve it. This is way beyond your syllabus and it's not necessary for all of you to understand this. Given your current understanding of the subject, it's not likely that you will be able to understand the solution anyway. So, I think it's good enough that you guys have a rough understanding of it."

Henry spoke up right away. "Mr. Baxter, someone in our class solved it!"

Stumped, Donovan lifted his head and asked in a surprised tone. "Who managed to answer it?"

He subconsciously turned to ask Wendy, "Was it you, Wendy?"

Sure enough, Wendy's face darkened as she bit her lip in indignation.

Somehow, the clueless classmate beside her could not seem to read the room and said, "Mr. Baxter, it's not Wendy. She can't even solve my practice questions. Arielle's the one who solved the question."

Wendy felt her heart sting. She did not even dare to lift her head to meet Donovan's eyes.

He must really admire Arielle now, right?

Unexpectedly, Donovan grimaced in response.

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He looked at Arielle who was sitting right behind and said with an impassive voice, "These questions are a waste of time. Don't squander your time solving it, or

Arielle did not seem to mind Donovan's words. Wendy, however, was pleasantly surprised.

Yes, that's right. As long as Mr. Baxter doesn't like Arielle, it won't matter even if she's the smartest student in the whole damn world. He'll still chase her out one day! It doesn't matter if she's a genius at advanced math. People out there wouldn't even pay heed to her once they know she's been expelled from Jadeborough University anyway.

Wendy started to feel all was right with the world again.

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Jared furrowed his brows and wanted to say something to defend Arielle. He cast a glance over at Arielle and noticed that she was shaking her head, signaling for him to just keep it to himself.

He understood what Arielle meant and lowered his head as he bit his tongue.

He did not understand the reason Donovan favored an average student like Wendy over a top student like Arielle. Is he blind or what?

He was not the only one thinking that way as other students started to feel quite indignant on behalf of Arielle.

“Why do I get the feeling that Mr. Baxter’s picking on Arielle?”

“Well, I hear that he absolutely loathes nepotism and I think Arielle got in through connections.”

“So what if she got in through connections? She’s better than me by leaps and bounds even though I was offered a place here.”

Donovan could not hear what his students were talking about as they were murmuring in between themselves.

Displeased, he slammed on the desk and bellowed, “Silence!”

Only then did the classroom fell silent.

Donovan said, “All right. We’re going to start the class right now. I’m going to start with the attendance.”

Soon, it was Arielle’s turn. For some reason, he grew so exasperated at the sight of the name that he just skipped over it altogether.

She won’t be my student after the next test anyway.

Skipping over Arielle’s name, he proceeded to call out Kelsea’s name.

However, nobody answered him.

He lifted his head and glanced in the direction of Kelsea’s spot, only to notice that the seat was vacant.

Furrowing his brows, Donovan asked, “Where’s Kelsea?”

Her deskmate shook her head and replied, "I'm not sure. She did not turn up for the revision session either."

Donovan's face sank. It was already the second time Kelsea was absent without a valid reason.

Among the four students who entered his class by means of a back door, he had thought that Kelsea would be the most malleable one. Donovan was even thinking that Kelsea might be the only one out of the four to be able to make it through his class.

It seems like I've made the wrong judgment. I should have known that people who got in through connections

are hopeless at best.

After he was done taking the attendance, Donovan said, "We're going to start the class now. Flip your textbook to page 14. We're going to discuss a new topic..."

Someone knocked on the door right after Donovan was done speaking

He thought it was Kelsea, but it turned out to be members of the student council.

"What's the matter?" Donovan raised a brow.

Arielle looked toward the door and noticed that it was the president of the student council, Christopher, the guy who warned her to be wary of Kelsea.

Christopher was holding onto a name list as he replied, "Mr. Baxter, I'm here to call out three students in your class who are involved in the freshman party. They need to follow me to the hall for the rehearsal."

Donovan wasn't too pleased with the request but agreed nonetheless. "All right then. Let them come back as soon as possible, though. I'm teaching a new topic today."

"Yes, sir." Christopher held up the name list and said, "Wendy Greene, Trisha Hughes, and uh... Arielle Moore. Please follow me."

Wendy stiffened when she heard Arielle's name.

She's joining the freshman party too? This Arielle is such a copycat. Why does she have to tag along with everything I do? Does she really wish to stand out that much?

Wendy grew exasperated at the thought.

She knew she was no match for Arielle in math. However, she was adamant that she would not lose out to a country bumpkin like Arielle in terms of performing arts.

Wendy held her head high as she walked over to the door.

Just when Arielle was about to exit the classroom, she noticed that Wendy was giving her the stink eye.

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Perplexed, Arielle did not understand the reason behind Wendy's dirty look. She decided to just ignore Wendy and wait for Trisha.

Trisha blushed furiously as she gulped and stuttered, "Arielle, c-can I really make it?"

Arielle smiled and said, "Of course. I'll let them know that it's not necessary for you to show up on stage. You could just stay behind the curtains and draw."

Trisha heaved a sigh of relief after listening to Arielle before thanking her, "Thank you so much, Arielle..."

"You're most welcome." Arielle's smile was a great reassurance to Trisha.

Right then, Wendy stepped forward and said mockingly, "You're quite adept at winning over people's hearts, huh? I see that you're able to charm both men and women alike. I gotta say I'm impressed."

With half a smile, Arielle rebutted, "I know, right? My charisma knows no bounds. I could open a class and teach you my secrets if you'd like."

Wendy was infuriated by Arielle's deliberate provocation and spat, "You b*tch!"

Christopher stepped forward when Arielle was about to rebuke her. "Wendy, if I hear you cursing out loud again, I'm going to demerit you. You best keep in mind that 12 demerit marks will earn you a punishment."

Wendy did not understand why Christopher was siding with Arielle as she grew even more frustrated. This further cemented her impression that Arielle was a seductress who would get it on with just anybody.

"Let's go," Arielle said, "or else we're going to miss the rehearsal."

She knew she did not need a rehearsal to perform well, but Trisha needed one.

Christopher nodded at Arielle and paid no heed to Wendy again as he led them toward the hall.

Despite feeling frustrated, there was nothing Wendy could do except catch up to them.

With Christopher backing Arielle up, Wendy did not dare to scold Arielle anymore.

What will Susanne think of me if I received a punishment?

With that thought, Wendy decided to stay calm and be patient. The best time to show Susanne how different she was from Arielle would be during the freshman party.

It did not take long for the four of them to reach the hall.

The rehearsal was arranged according to their classes, and Arielle arrived just in time for her turn.

The teacher who was in charge of the rehearsal did not seem too pleased at the sight of them. "Why are you guys so late? Other classes are already done with their rehearsal practice at least once."

Arielle was about to apologize but was interrupted by Wendy as she said in an indignant manner, "I'm sorry. Our homeroom teacher is quite strict."

"Who's your homeroom teacher?"

"Mr. Baxter."

The teacher in charge of the rehearsal seemed to understand their conundrum and said, "Then you guys might as well wait a little while longer for other classes to finish the practice. You guys can then practice two rounds after they're all done."

"Yes, sir." Wendy nodded her head as she flashed a sweet smile at the teacher.

Meanwhile, Arielle was rendered speechless at the side.

How could she pretend like she's the best student ever in front of Mr. Baxter, and then turn around to sell him out like that? I wonder what will Mr. Baxter think if he knew about this?

Nonetheless, Arielle said nothing as she led Trisha to take a seat.

Trisha could not help but complain, "Arielle, how could Wendy say that? Mr. Baxter treats her so well... and yet

she blamed everything on him."

Arielle merely shrugged and said, "I don't know, really. Since we're late, there are fewer students around. I think you can really relax and just do your best. Have you asked them to prepare everything needed for your sand painting?"

Trisha nodded. "My dad said he will ask his friend to send it over. I think he will be here soon."

Right after she was done, Trisha's eyes glinted as she pointed at the entrance of the hall and said, "My dad's friend is here!"

Arielle turned around and noticed the signature shiny bald head of the principal, Marcus Brown

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Arielle noticed that two security guards were trailing behind Marcus as the two men carried the equipment needed for Trisha's sand painting.

Stumped, Arielle asked, "Your dad's friend is Mr. Brown?"

Trisha nodded. "We're neighbors."

Despite being shocked by the news, Arielle could understand why Trisha had never mentioned it. If it were anybody else, they would have kept bragging about how they're neighbors with the principal. But I guess it's different with Trisha. She's really a down-to earth and humble girl.

Arielle grew fonder of Trisha.

She walked over to the entrance of the hall with Trisha.

Just then, a thin silhouette rushed past them and reached the principal first. Wendy was all smiles when she greeted Marcus. "Hello, Mr. Brown. Are you here to watch the rehearsal?!"

Arielle let out a low chuckle as she led Trisha to approach Marcus.

The principal merely uttered a generic reply to Wendy before greeting Trisha with a broad smile. "Hey, Trish!"

"Hey, Uncle Brown." Trisha smiled back at him. "Sorry for troubling you."

"Ah, it's nothing. I'm glad that you're performing. Good luck! I'll be cheering you offstage."

Trisha went crimson red as she nodded her head.

Abashed as she was, Trisha did not forget to introduce Arielle. "Uncle Brown, this is my friend, Arielle, from the same class. She will be performing together with me. If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't have the courage to perform."

Marcus turned to Arielle and said merrily, "Ah, it's you, Arielle. I remember you. Thank you for taking care of Trish. She's quite a shy girl so you'd have to bring out her courageous self. You're more than welcome to look for me should you encounter any problems at school."

Arielle nodded. "Thank you, Mr. Brown."

"Ah, no worries. I watched Trish growing up. She's like a daughter to me."

Arielle smiled and said nothing. Then, she turned her head around to look at Wendy who was being completely ignored by Marcus.

Sure enough, Wendy was sulking with a familiar grimace.

Amused, Arielle chuckled and checked on the sand painting equipment together with Trisha.

A storm was brewing in Wendy's chest as she was left all alone.

Arielle Moore, you again! You vixen! How are you everywhere? Ahhhh!

Soon, students from other classes left after they were done with their rehearsal practice, leaving Arielle, Trisha, and Wendy behind.

Wendy raised her hand and said, "Sir, I'd like to go first."

The teacher had quite a good impression of Wendy and smiled. "All right then. The piano is already on the stage. Students from other classes are going to play the piano too. By the way, what song are you playing?"

Wendy deliberately said with a straight face on, "Reborn."

"Reborn?" Startled by the piece, the teacher's voice rose an octave, garnering the attention of other teachers.

Even Marcus overheard it and came over. "Wendy, are you going to play 'Reborn'?"

Wendy, nodded, knowing full well that it was an impressive feat. That being said, she continued to feign ignorance and asked, "Yes, Mr. Brown. What's the matter?"

Clearly, Marcus was impressed. "No problem at all. This piece is quite the challenge, though. It seems like this year's freshman party will be quite interesting. I think I'll need to invite some media outlets over to report this. We could use your performance to promote

our university as being an institution that cultivates all rounded individuals."

Wendy suddenly felt that her indignation from being ignored dissipated into thin air.

She snuck a glance in Arielle's direction.

To her dismay, Arielle did not hear a single thing and was instead engrossed in checking the condition of the sand painting equipment with Trisha.

She's just pretending to not hear me, right?

Wendy knew that Arielle was going to play the piano as well. Hence, she was positive that nobody would care to pay heed to Arielle once everyone knew that she was going to play 'Reborn.'

The teacher in charge of the rehearsal was excited to hear that Wendy was going to play the challenging song and hurriedly ushered her on stage. "The piano's been tuned. So why don't you go on stage and play 'Reborn' now? I'm really eager to listen to it."

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"All right, sir," Wendy replied with a sweet smile. Gracefully, she made her way on stage and played a few notes to test the piano's pitch.

As soon as her fingers touched the keys, Wendy realized that the piano had poor craftsmanship. Never in her life had she played on a piano with such horrendous quality. It looks like I'll have to borrow the Nightshire Manor's grand piano from Susanne.

After Wendy tested the piano, she placed her fingers on the keys and began to play. Immediately, a harmonious melody filled the air.

'Reborn,' the piece Wendy played, was inspired by the character Adonis from ancient Greek mythology. He was a man with mesmerizing looks and would reincarnate every year.

According to the song, thousands of creatures mourned his tragic death each time he died. When Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, first set her sights on Adonis, she became enamored instantly.

Wendy's skillful playing mesmerized her audience. Her touching melody seemed to bring Aphrodite to life.

Even Arielle couldn't help but lift her head to look at Wendy.

Though Wendy's technique was impressive, Arielle noticed that Wendy had made a handful of mistakes when she first began playing.

Although these mistakes would have been detrimental to a pianist, it was no great matter because Wendy was performing at a freshman party. Furthermore, this was an advanced song.

The corners of Arielle's lips curved upward as she looked away from Wendy and focused her attention on Trisha's drawing instead.

Trisha's drawing depicted a veiled goddess under the moonlight.

This goddess was the main female protagonist in the song Arielle would perform—In the Moonlight.

A few moments later, Wendy's piece came to an end. Immediately, the audience responded with thunderous applause.

The loud cheers prompted Trisha to look up as a doubtful look crossed her face. "We are performing right after Wendy. Seeing she did so well, will people still pay attention to our performance?" Trisha asked hesitantly.

"They will," Arielle replied firmly. "Trust me; our performance will be much more exciting than hers."

Though Trisha trusted Arielle, Wendy's superb performance caused her confidence to waver.

Yet, she soon changed her way of thinking. Who cares if we can't compete with Wendy? As long as we give it our best, I'll be more than happy.

Gradually, Trisha regained her confidence.

All of a sudden, a loud crash echoed on stage.

When Arielle looked up, she saw that Wendy had bumped into the decorative vase on the piano by accident. Upon impact, the water in the vase spilled all over the keyboard.

"I-I'm so sorry," Wendy stammered in panic.

But Arielle's keen eyesight noticed that Wendy had done it entirely on purpose.

A few teachers hurried on stage to test the piano keys. After playing a few notes, their moods visibly darkened.

One of the teachers sighed and shook his head in exasperation. "It's ruined. Looks like we'll have to get someone to fix it. But since the freshman party is happening tomorrow night, there might not be enough time to get it done by then..."

"I'm so sorry!" Wendy apologized profusely. "I can bring over the piano in my home. Additionally, I'll pay for all the reparation expenses and send over a new piano. I promise that it will be delivered before the freshman party."

Hearing her words, a look of relief washed over the teachers' faces.

"Since you are willing to take responsibility for your actions, we will go along with your plans."

Just then, Marcus turned toward Arielle and Trish before he said, "Doesn't this mean that Trish and Arielle cannot rehearse their performance?"

Wendy smirked. That's right, I wanted to stop Arielle from rehearsing

Without any rehearsals or practice, I doubt Arielle will be able to perform flawlessly at the freshman party.

Arielle, you can't blame me for being cruel. Your actions have repeatedly caught me off guard. It's in my best interests to protect myself.

Despite Wendy's malicious thoughts, she maintained a perfect mask of anguish and innocence. "Mr. Brown, I'm terribly sorry for my actions. It's all my fault," Wendy mumbled apologetically.

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"It's all right," Arielle called out calmly. "We have completed our rehearsal."

Arielle pointed toward Trisha's sand painting as she spoke.

From their position on stage, the teachers had a perfect view of Trisha's sand painting.

The goddess in her painting looked so realistic that it felt like she could step out of the sand painting at any moment. Trisha's talented artistic skills further enhanced the painting's beauty.

Amongst the teachers, Marcus was the first to offer his praise. "That is a beautiful painting. Trish, I'm proud to have you as my goddaughter."

Hearing his words, the other teachers jolted in shock.

Although they knew that Marcus had a son studying at Maxwell University, they weren't aware of his

goddaughter. I can't believe Marcus's goddaughter's attending the freshman party!

"I have a piano at home. If the two of you don't mind the hassle, I can offer you a lift. There, you can rehearse your performance." One of the teachers who were eager to gain Marcus's favor stepped forward and extended an invitation to both girls.

Arielle rejected his offer with a shake of her head. "It's all right. We can perform tomorrow without any more rehearsals."

The teacher was stunned by Arielle's response. "Are you sure you don't need a rehearsal?"

"Nope. I am familiar with this piece. I'm confident that I don't need any more practice." Arielle shook her head again.

"Okay." The teacher relented. "Then, to compensate for the lack of rehearsals, I'll give you the green light on the proposal you suggested before. Trisha can sit backstage and use the projector to project her painting on the big screen."

His words caused Trisha's heart to leap with joy as she clutched Arielle's hand in excitement.

On stage, Wendy looked at their clasped hands with simmering jealousy.

Being the principal's goddaughter, shouldn't she befriend someone like me? Since I'm from Horrington, it's only right if she mingles with someone of similar status. I can't believe she's so close with Arielle. Isn't she embarrassed to be seen with a country bumpkin like Arielle?

Envious of Arielle's connections, Wendy seized the opportunity to approach Trisha when Arielle went to the washroom.

"Is your name Trish?" Wendy asked sweetly.

Wendy knew Trisha's personality like the back of her hand. Due to Trisha's timidity, she made sure to look as

friendly as possible. But the moment she opened her mouth, Trisha was so startled that she stumbled backward in fear.

Trisha's actions left Wendy displeased. Why is she so afraid of me? Although my looks aren't drop-dead gorgeous, I'm still beautiful enough to pass as a celebrity. So why is Trisha looking at me with such a fierce gaze?

"What are you trying to do?" Trisha asked warily.

Her question left Wendy stunned. Arielle must have been spreading spiteful lies about me behind my back! No wonder Trisha is so wary of me.

Right away, Wendy acted as if she had been wronged. "It looks like Arielle has been telling you lies about me. In truth, I'm nothing like the person she makes me out to be. Don't you know that Arielle is the problem here? She's nothing but a s*ut who tricked Christopher. Didn't you see him defending her earlier? Let me give you a piece of advice; it'd be best if you keep your distance from her."

"Wendy, Arielle has never spoken badly about you. Instead, you are the one who keeps belittling her. Has she ever done anything to earn your insults? She's clearly a good person." Trisha mustered her courage to defend Arielle fiercely.

"A good person?" Wendy felt disgusted by Trisha's description of Arielle. "I don't think a good person would act like such a s*ut. You shouldn't hang around

with her so much," Wendy replied coldly.

Promptly, a dark look loomed across Trisha's face.

"Wendy, if you slander Arielle again, I will not hesitate to report you to the student council!" For the first time in her life, Trisha raised her tone.

"You—" Wendy gritted her teeth in anger. Knowing that she couldn't sway Trisha anymore, Wendy spun on her heel and left after a final sentence. "You can't tell the difference between good and evil!"

At the same time, Arielle emerged from the washroom and caught sight of Wendy, who left the scene with a dark look. From a distance, Trisha glared at Wendy's retreating figure as she huffed angrily.

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