

THE POOREST BILLIONAIRE

Chapter 21 Unfriendly Welcome

"Girl, are you blind? Can't see that I am worth more than this poverty-stricken loser? I just saw you talking and laughing with him. You may be young, but I think you should be sensible enough to make the right choices. If you agree to have a relationship with me, I can spoil you with all the good things you desire. Choose any expensive restaurant you like in Rinas. You know what? I am so wealthy that I can afford to take you anywhere. Don't mind Horace. He's a big liar. He's making empty promises!"

Ansley's refusal hurt Kole's ego. He couldn't accept that such a beautiful girl refused to be his girlfriend. It was even more annoying that she was friendly to Horace, but spoke to him with such indifference. As far as he was concerned, he should have the upper

hand since he was rich and Horace was poor.

"Kole, are you insane? If you want to woo this girl, you are free to do so. Why must you insult me to feel good about yourself? To put up the appearance of a rich boy, you keep calling me a poverty-stricken loser. In my eyes, you are the one who is a poverty-stricken loser."

Horace spat and added, "What an ill-mannered bastard! Don't get angry now. You provoked me first, so you deserve all the insults."

Now Horace could no longer put up with any form of bullying. He was no longer the pauper that learned to endure oppression because he had no power to deal with the oppressors. But now that he was wealthy and powerful, he didn't have to worry about getting into trouble for standing up to bullies. Although he wasn't arrogant and domineering, he didn't want to be a

pushover.

"Hey, Horace, how dare you speak to me like that? I must say that your new toughness doesn't suit you at all. Why are you putting up an act? Aren't you the same poor boy who begged to eat leftovers before?"

Pointing at Horace, Kole continued slowly, "Despite your new toughness, you are still a beggar. Look at yourself. You came here to meet our former classmates because of the help we want to offer to you. How dare you woo a girl? You can barely afford to eat and dress well, but you just asked the girl to pick any expensive restaurant she likes. How do you intend to pay for it when you can't even afford something on a stall? Our former classmates organized a fundraiser for you here, but instead of going inside to meet them, you are busy bragging and flirting with a girl. Have you no shame? In fact, I will tell the others what you did. I doubt if they would still

donate money to you. Hahaha! Horace, apologize to me now that I am still calm. Maybe I will forgive you."

'Horace's former classmates organized a fundraiser for him?' Ansley was stunned to hear Kole's statement. She knew that Horace was rich, so she was surprised that they were raising money for him. 'I don't get what's happening here? Do his classmates plan to donate one hundred million dollars each?' she thought confusedly. To Ansley, one hundred million dollars seemed to be the least amount that could be donated because Horace was already rich.

'This guy doesn't seem all right upstairs. Maybe he's talking nonsense,'

Ansley sighed in her heart. She had seen many badly-behaved rich kids, but she didn't expect that

someone as young as Kole could be mentally unstable.

"Kole, you are free to tell the others whatever you want. I'm not a coward!" Horace hated cheap blackmail. He didn't even come here to accept their money. After all, he didn't need it. If it had been before, he might have bent a knee for Kole. Now that the tables were turned, his former classmates were the ones that needed to show him respect.

Horace's obstinacy fueled Kole's anger. He muttered three 'okays' before he added, "I can see you have guts now. When our classmates refuse to donate any money, don't cry and beg them. You are nothing but a poverty-stricken loser that badly needs donations. How dare you pretend to be powerful in my presence? I can't believe it!"

"Hey, are you kidding me? Okay, let's do this.

Almighty Kole, please make me cry once! Ha-ha!
Honestly, Kole, you are worse than a scumbag in my eyes. A pathetic scumbag!"

With absolute disdain, Horace eyed Kole from his head to his toes. He made sure to make it obvious that he wasn't afraid of whatever would happen later.

"Okay, Horace. I hope you would have the nerve to laugh later!" After saying these words, Kole snorted coldly and quickly walked into the Lake Hotel.

Horace had provoked him, so he wanted to meet their former classmates in order to dissuade them from donating any money.

Ansley stared at Kole's receding figure before asking curiously, "Horace, aren't you from a rich family? Gifting five million dollars to that old man on the bus wasn't a big deal to you. How come he called you a

loser? Are your former classmates all billionaires?"

"Billionaires? Tsk, tsk, tsk. Young girl, there are only a handful of billionaires in Rinas. You don't have to guess. They all think that I'm a poverty-stricken loser. Ha-ha! Look at the way I'm dressed. Don't you also think I'm poor?"

"To be frank, I will say yes. You look poor. If I hadn't seen what happened on the bus today, I would never have guessed that you are a super-rich man. You are not dressed like one at all!" Ansley looked at the shabby clothes Horace was wearing. She shook her head and sighed.

With a pensive expression, she thought, 'The rich are really good at putting up an act. Why did they suddenly start pretending to be poor? Are they trying to deceive ordinary people into offending them? It seems that it would be dangerous to mess with a poor

person in the future. After all, it could be that a pauper is just a wealthy person in disguise.'

All of a sudden, another voice sounded. "Horace, why are you standing outside? You need to go in. Today's fundraiser was organized for you. How can we start if you are not present?"

Horace turned and saw that the person was his former class monitor, Rhett.

"Hello, Rhett!" Horace greeted him in a friendly tone. He had suffered a lot at the hands of Rhett while they were in high school. However, the impression he had of Rhett changed slightly after the call that morning. He was somewhat willing to forgive him and perhaps befriend him.

"Hey, Horace. Everyone is waiting for you inside. Come in!" Rhett said with a smile, as if he was a

changed man.

"Okay!" Horace nodded. He then said to Ansley, "I need to go in now. Talk to you later!"

"Okay, Horace. It was nice meeting you!" Ansley chuckled coquettishly, which stunned Rhett. He had never seen such a beautiful young girl. Her captivating smile gave him butterflies.

"Let's go, Rhett!" Rhett was staring at Ansley affectionately. He didn't jolt back to reality until Horace called him. He then led the way to Room 202 of the Lake Hotel.

Horace's former classmates were chatting so loudly that he heard their voices as he stood at the door.

"I heard that Amaia dumped Horace!"

"How come a goddess like Amaia agreed to date a pauper like Horace in the first place? She's way out of his league. Well, that serves him right."

"Horace is one of the few people that have no self-knowledge. Didn't he know that Amaia isn't in his league? If he wanted to date so badly, he should have wooed someone in his social class!"

"I wonder if Amaia and Addy will come here later. Their appearance would not only surprise Horace but make him sad. I can't wait to see the look on his face. It would be hilarious!"

Just as they were gossiping, the door swung open. Rhett entered the room with Horace and announced, "Welcome the man of the hour, Horace. Welcome!"

"I thought you were about to announce Addy's arrival. Who cares if Horace is here? Man of the hour, my

foot!" one of Horace's former classmates said with no interest and averted his gaze.

"I don't associate with losers like him. Welcome him if you like. But as for me, I don't care about his arrival!" a female former classmate said disdainfully as she glanced at Horace with disgust.

"Huh!" Horace chuckled. "I'm afraid you are not even worthy enough to welcome me. Save your welcome. I don't need it!"

With a smug smile, Horace found an empty seat close by and sat down. Although they gave him a cold shoulder, he decided to stay and see what would happen since he was already here. He wanted to see who would be humane enough to treat him well.

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Chapter 22 Ex-girlfriend's Defense



The unfriendly welcome Horace received was enough to tell him that his former classmates didn't call him here to donate money. They actually invited him to ridicule him, like old times.

The somewhat good impression he had of Rhett instantly changed. He realized that Rhett had put on a facade just to deceive him.

Horace sighed as he looked at him. If they had really turned a new leaf and organized the fundraiser for him, he was willing to accept them with open arms. He would have given them fame and fortune.

Unfortunately for them, they missed such a golden opportunity. The room was filled with people that looked at him with disgust on their faces. The hatred was even stronger than before.

The nonchalant words that Horace said stunned all his former classmates. They all drew their heads back and laughed out loud. It was obvious that they thought he was putting on airs.

After they stopped laughing, one of them asked with a condescending tone, "Hey, Horace. Isn't your mother in the hospital? Why are you so arrogant? Don't you know you should be kneeling at our feet so we can donate more money for you? We were in the same class for three whole years. Everyone here knows that you are poor!"

"Humph!" Kole snorted and said sarcastically, "No, you are wrong. Horace is now so awesome! Guess

what I heard him saying when I was on my way here. You will find this very hard to believe. I heard this loser tell a girl that he can treat her to an expensive dinner in the Sea Pavilion!"

"What? Ha-ha! The Sea Pavilion? In his dreams! Or does he want to beg for leftovers there? No, I don't think he's even worthy enough to pass through the gate of the Sea Pavilion. The security guards won't allow such a pauper in. He can only wander around the street in front of Sea Pavilion and beg for food from the rich customers!" Another classmate laughed mockingly when he heard Kole's words. They had no regard for Horace even though he was sitting right there.

A beautiful girl chimed in, "Tell me, Kole. How ugly is that girl? Why did she decide to have a conversation with this pauper? Eww! He's such an annoying and horny man. He just wooed a random woman so

shamelessly!"

"Hello, may I take your order now?" The door of the private dining room was suddenly pushed open. Ansley, who looked sweet and energetic in her waitress uniform, appeared.

With a pen and notepad in her hand, she looked at everyone in the room. Her eyes widened when she saw Horace. It was coincidental that they met again. The manager had assigned her to this room as soon as she resumed her shift.

At this moment, Kole pointed at Ansley and announced, "It's her. She's the young girl that Horace promised to treat to an expensive dinner!"

"Wow! What a lovely girl! No wonder Horace

pretended to be wealthy in her presence!"

"Bah! Any girl that can stoop so low to chat with Horace must have bad taste. Her beauty is useless. She has no class!" The beautiful girl snorted and jealously commented on Ansley.

Ansley was a waitress who had a good work ethic. It was against the rules of the Lake Hotel to get into a fight with customers. For this reason, she plastered a smile on her face even though she was being slandered. She then asked again, "Dear customers, may I take your order?"

A tangle of thoughts swirled in her mind at this moment. 'What kind of person is Horace? Why do all his former classmates look down on him? Are they really not all billionaires? No, it can't be. These badly-behaved youths don't look anything like billionaires. Maybe they have fallen into Horace's trap because of

his good acting. Tut, tut! I wonder how they will react when they find out his true identity.'

"She's beautiful, so what? A pretty face alone doesn't make a woman classy. Look at her, she's nothing but a waitress!" another female former classmate remarked as she eyed Ansley.

"Shut up, all of you. You have gone too far!" Horace shouted as he looked at everyone that spoke ill of Ansley.

Regret tugged at his heart. He wouldn't have come here if he had known of their real intentions.

Even though Horace had only met Ansley today, he liked her a lot. Insults were hurled at her because of him, so he had to speak for her.

"We have gone too far? Tsk, tsk, tsk. Horace, you're

the one that has gone too far. You deceived this innocent and lovely girl. Don't you have any conscience? You are so vicious. No wonder Amaia dumped you!" Kole roared again. He apparently held a grudge against Horace because Ansley had turned down his advances.

Just as he finished speaking, another person appeared at the door. It was Amaia, Horace's ex-girlfriend. With a frown, she pointed at Kole and cursed, "Kole, have you gone mad? What are you talking about? When did I break up with Horace? Stop making silly assumptions about our relationship. I have been in love with Horace since the beginning and will stay in love with him until the end of time."

"What? You have been in love with Horace? Amaia, are you even listening to yourself? Better mind what you say. Remember that Addy would be here soon. If he hears this, he will not only dump you, but also

punish Horace severely." A shocked expression had appeared on Kole's face when he heard Amaia declare her undying love for Horace. However, it only lasted for an instant. He looked at her with disgust. Since the exchange of words he had with Horace outside the hotel, he had wanted to ridicule him. He didn't expect that Amaia would antagonize him. Her words were a slap in his face.

Like the arrogant person that he was, he found it hard to swallow his anger. He mentioned Addy to silence Amaia. He felt that she would take the bait since she had nothing to benefit from a down-and-out man. He also made sure to take a swipe at Horace during this time.

"Addy? I don't care if he comes in here as we speak. All I know is that his presence won't destroy my love with Horace," Amaia retorted and went to sit beside Horace.

"What the hell?" Everyone was stunned to see Amaia behaving this way. Suspicion brewed in their minds. Even when Amaia and Horace were still an item, she had never defended him in this way. She always turned a blind eye when he was being bullied. They wondered why she was defending him now that she was allegedly dating Addy. They thought, 'Something is fishy!'

Is the rumor about Amaia dumping Horace for Addy fake?

Is Amaia out of her mind?' The only positive thing Horace's former classmates saw in him was his good academic performance. He seemed to have a promising future, but they still believed that he wasn't worthy to rub shoulders with Addy, who was from a wealthy and influential family. They thought that even a fool would choose Addy over Horace.

"Amaia, you're doomed. Addy is here. He must have heard what you said just now!" Kole's blood had been boiling when Amaia countered him again. The embarrassment was too much for him. However, he got a surge of power when he looked at the door and saw that Addy was there. Amaia's voice wasn't low when she retorted, so he was sure that Addy heard everything. A good show was about to play out now.

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Chapter 23 Forced Apology



Addy was infuriated when he opened the door. The smug smile on Kole's face made him even angrier. He

pointed at him and shouted, "Kole, have you gone bonkers? I heard what Amaia just said. So what? How does her relationship with Horace concern me? Don't be unfortunate tonight!"

Addy walked into the room and stood in front of everyone. He looked like the shadow of himself. He was haggard and his usual frivolous expression was nowhere to be found.

The woes he was currently facing were wearing him out. His whole life had changed dramatically in less than forty-eight hours.

However, things were not over for his family. His father's previous fortune was self-made. As a result, he still had the zeal to start afresh. They were in great debt, but his father had a glimmer of hope that he would rise again. Addy saw his father's efforts, so he didn't lose all hope in life.

The most remarkable thing about Addy was that he had learned his lesson. Now he greatly respected and admired Horace. His family's company had gone bankrupt within ten minutes, so he reasoned that Horace must be powerful like the top three business tycoons in Rinas.

It never occurred to Addy that Horace, who was the poorest in their class, would turn out to have such a great identity.

'I still can't believe that a trust-fund baby like Horace could pretend to be poor,' Addy thought to himself. With a complicated expression, he looked at Horace and sighed.

Addy was supposed to have inveterate hatred towards Horace since he had made his family go bankrupt. However, he didn't dare to harbor any

hatred because he knew that he wasn't a match for him. His father had given him an earful yesterday. This proved that Horace was the son of a powerful and affluent family in a provincial capital.

Addy was surprised that Horace was keen on acting like a poor man until now. He felt distressed when he thought about all that transpired yesterday.

His father's lecture made him have his head screwed on right. Now he knew that it was better to be on good terms with Horace even if they didn't become good friends. Being in his good books was better than being blacklisted.

Addy would be playing with fire if he attempted to offend Horace again.

Kole was thrown off balance when he heard Addy's angry words. With utter disbelief, he looked at him

and thought to himself, 'Is this the Addy that I know? Does this mean his relationship with Amaia was a false rumor? But even so, this is not how Addy would normally react to things like this. He would have seized the opportunity to oppress Horace! What's wrong with him today?'

Kole was very confused, but he didn't dare to retort or ask any questions. Addy was revered by all his classmates, so he was afraid of offending him.

Like a docile follower, Kole said obsequiously, "Addy, I'm sorry. I take full responsibility for my actions. I shouldn't have spoken without thinking."

The frightened look on Kole's face made Horace sigh. 'Kole and Addy are douchebags. However, sometimes a douchebag needs to be set straight by

his counterpart. Addy is revered by my former high school classmates, so none of them would dare to stand up to him. Their opinion about him won't change even though his family is now bankrupt. Talk about a long-lasting impression! Leaving such an impression seems to be a good thing. Maybe I should become more stone-hearted.'

Addy didn't accept Kole's apology. He snorted with disdain and said, "It's useless to apologize to me. You should be apologizing to Horace. Do that now!"

Addy wanted to address Horace as Mr. Warren. But on second thoughts, he decided that it was improper since Horace was still pretending to be a poor man. He would be doomed if he exposed Horace's true identity.

"What?" Kole's shock quadrupled when he heard Addy's command. He looked at him in disbelief.

'What's wrong with Addy today? Didn't he despise Horace the most when we were in high school? Why is he asking me to apologize to someone he once bullied? Is he planning to humiliate Horace in a new way today?

Is this a trick? Forget it, Kole. Just apologize first!' Kole sighed and tried to swallow his pride. But when he looked at Horace, he couldn't get a word out of his mouth.

The young man in front of him was the sore loser in their class before. Kole had bullied him countless, so it was difficult for him to apologize to him.

Noticing that Kole was hesitant, Addy said authoritatively, "We all need to be united as former classmates. There should be no division between us. It's wrong to spread false rumors. They always affect the parties involved. Kole, you are out of line. You

have the chance to apologize to Horace. Do you think my judgment is unfair?"

Kole shook his head subconsciously.

The other students present looked at Addy in astonishment at this instant. This wasn't the Addy that they knew. They wondered why he was behaving weird today. After a while, they all thought, 'Does he have a plan to humiliate Horace in another way?'

Rhett thought the same as the others.

With this thought in mind, a classmate echoed, "Yes, Addy. You are right. We all need to unite. United we stand, divided we fall. Kole, it is time for you to take responsibility for your actions. Apologize now!"

The other students supported the notion. "Kole, it's rather shameful that you spread such a rumor. You

didn't do well. Say sorry to Horace!"

Like devilish plotters, Horace's classmates were dying to see Addy's plan as they urged Kole.

Rumors were indeed disruptive. The false kind always wreaked havoc on the involved parties. Kole accepted this and was filled with regret. Anxiety set in as all his former classmates gave him the thumbs down. Had he known such a thing would happen, he wouldn't have stood out. Now he was made the scapegoat for everyone.

Kole was displeased that the other students turned their backs on him, but he couldn't afford to offend Addy. Neither could he afford to go against so many people.

Finally, he looked at Horace helplessly and muttered quickly, "I'm sorry!"

"Kole, is that what you call an apology? You sound like a mosquito! How could anyone hear you since you spoke in such a low voice? That's not the way to apologize. Besides, who exactly are you apologizing to? How are we supposed to know who owns that apology? Be a man and apologize the right way. Don't tell me that you don't know how to seek someone's forgiveness at this age." Addy didn't hesitate to chastise Kole after the latter whispered.

"Yes, yes. Kole, are you out of your mind? How could you apologize like that? If you were in Horace's shoes, would you accept that silly apology? Apologize to him with a good attitude now!" Some of the students championed Addy's cause. They couldn't wait to see his secret plan unfold.

In the face of this unforeseen humiliation, Kole's heart broke. 'I don't get what's happening. Addy, are you

setting a trap for Horace or just humiliating me? If you truly didn't hear my voice, how did you know that I was apologizing? More so, I shouldn't be the only one apologizing. You have done worse than me. When you get ridiculed in the future, I will make fun of you!

Kole didn't have the effrontery to air his grievance. He couldn't risk saying anything against Addy since it would only make matters worse. After taking a deep breath, he looked up at Horace and shouted, "Horace, I'm sorry. Please forgive me for the bad words I said to you!"

"Good, that's more like it!" Addy nodded with satisfaction.

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Chapter 24 Foolish Plotters

Addy turned to look at Horace and asked earnestly, "Horace, what do you think about Kole's apology? Can you accept it? If you don't like his apology, you can name anything you would like him to do as a punishment. Do you want him to write a self-criticism letter?"

The other students were so excited when they saw Addy turn to look at Horace. They thought it was time for the biggest humiliation for this loser.

Addy's flattering words were not the same when they reached the others' ears.

"Addy is about to take action at last," a girl excitedly said in a low voice.

"Yes! I have been looking forward to this moment since I began to suspect that he was up to something. I wonder what kind of trick he has up his sleeve this time. It must be a big one!" Another girl matched the excitement of her counterpart.

Kole heard the girls' words. His previous displeasure evaporated at the thought of witnessing Horace's biggest humiliation. He looked at Addy with his eyes filled with unquantifiable pleasure and expectancy. Revenge was all that he had in his heart at this moment.

Although Horace knew that Addy was doing all these just to please him, he didn't want to talk to him. He had punished him, but that didn't mean he had forgiven him for everything. He just didn't want to continue dragging the matter.

Horace's lack of response made the other students

shocked. They widened their eyes and glanced at Horace and Addy alternatively. One of them whispered, "How dare Horace ignore Addy? He must be courting death. Doesn't he know that Addy is not someone he should disrespect? Well, I don't pity him. He would surely not walk out of this room with his body intact!"

"We only graduated a few days ago. But how come Horace suddenly becomes full of himself? Why is he giving Addy the cold shoulder?"

"He probably thinks Addy can't beat him up because we have graduated! He's such a naive fool. Addy is even more powerful outside than on school grounds. He has more ferocious minions in the city. It wouldn't take long for Horace to be beaten black and blue. Just watch, he would be begging for mercy at Addy's feet soon!"

The other students chattered in low voices when they saw that Horace was behaving stubbornly. They all looked forward to seeing how Addy would teach him a lesson.

Most of them guessed that Addy would hit Horace for starters. But to their surprise, he didn't get angry at all. He did the exact opposite of what they expected. He sucked up to Horace. Smiling, Addy whispered to him, "Hey, bro, I will just take your silence as your consent."

With his eyebrows knitted, Addy looked at Kole and said calmly, "Kole, do you remember what I said a while ago? You need to write a self-criticism letter to Horace!"

'What the hell? Addy just addressed this poverty-

stricken loser as bro.' Horace's former classmates were stunned. They couldn't understand why Addy wasn't acting the way they predicted.

'Could it be that Addy didn't want Horace to suspect that he was plotting against him, so he called him bro? Is this a plan to make him let his guard down?'

All the other students felt that Addy was playing cat and mouse with Horace. They believed that he wanted to flatter the unsuspecting loser and then strike him when he least expected it.

Everyone shared the same thoughts. They suddenly beamed with admiration in their eyes as they looked at Addy. They reasoned that Horace's new arrogance wouldn't last long and he would be so miserable soon.

The other students were deep in thought at this moment. They kept imagining how Horace would

suffer tonight. As far as they were concerned, Addy would never let him go scot-free.

To show support for Addy, someone suddenly shouted, "Kole, just write a self-criticism letter. Don't be stubborn now!"

"Yes, yes. It must be at least five thousand words!" another person echoed.

The antagonizing words of his former classmates made Kole's heart drop. His excited expression was instantly replaced with a frown. He thought sadly, 'Why am I the only one bearing the brunt? What sort of injustice is this? Can't I just have a good time tonight? I should write at least five thousand words? They have gotten to be kidding me!'

Kole was about to speak up for himself. But he was shut down by his former classmates' chants. "Five

thousand words, five thousand words, five thousand words!"

'What? This is pure wickedness. None of you can write a self-criticism letter that's at least five thousand words. Why are you asking me to write it? Fuck you all!' Kole cursed at them in his mind. He really wanted to fire back at them, but he was no match for them.

This situation was precarious and his hands were tied. The pressure they were mounting on him finally made him succumb. He said obsequiously, "Okay, fine. Addy, it's true that I caused Horace so much pain. I will write a self-criticism letter to show that my apology is sincere. It would be at least five thousand words."

All of a sudden, the door swung open and a voice came. "I'm sorry for coming late, everyone!"

All eyes turned in the direction of the door. Horace also raised his head to look at the person. A smile instantly appeared on his face. He waved excitedly. "Laila, I didn't expect that you would come here too!"

The latecomer was Laila, Horace's one true friend and the girl that worked as a waitress in the Sea Pavilion. She had gotten an invitation since she was also his former classmate.

Horace's enthusiastic greeting took the other students by surprise since he had just ignored Addy. However, they soon became excited.

They wanted to see the kind of trick Addy would play on Horace.

On the spur of the moment, Kole forgot about his problems. He felt that something was about to go down.

When Laila saw Horace waving at her, she smiled brightly. She slowly walked to the other side of Horace and sat down. She then took out a crumpled one hundred dollar bill from her pocket and said, "Horace, I'm sorry. I only have one hundred dollars for you. Please accept it."

'Birds of a feather flock together. It seems these two are close because they are both poor losers,' a classmate thought to himself when he saw Laila sit close to Horace. However, his disdain changed to surprise when he saw her take out one hundred dollars from her pocket. It was a huge sum of money for high school graduates like them. Despite not being from poor homes, they didn't get such an amount as pocket money, let alone donate it to someone.

Laila's kind gesture warmed Horace's heart. He stared at the dollar bill before waving his hand. "Laila,

you are far too kind. You lent me six hundred dollars yesterday. How can I accept your money again? Please take it back."

"What? Isn't Laila from a very poor home? How come she lent Horace six hundred dollars?" a classmate whispered in bewilderment.

Six hundred dollars was enough to cater for the monthly living expenses of a child from an average family. Thus, it was a huge sum for a poor teenager to have.

"Six hundred dollars yesterday, and one hundred dollars today? Is Laila planning to make Horace her gigolo? Tsk, tsk, tsk. Poor people are so unpredictable and pretentious. It's hard to know what's going on in their poverty-stricken minds!" A jealous girl effectively laced her comment with insults.

All the girls present still harbored inveterate hatred for Laila because she was beautiful.

'What kind of person is Horace? The more I stay around him, the more I get curious to know his true identity!' Everyone had completely forgotten Ansley since Amaia arrived. However, she wasn't anxious at all. Since she was an outsider, she just watched the drama unfold. The scene that played out made her even more curious about Horace. She felt that he was an interesting young man.

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Chapter 25 The Failed Trap



Addy suddenly clapped his hands to capture everyone's attention. He then said, "Laila has set a good example for all of us. It's time to get down to business. We are all gathered here today to raise funds for Horace!"

The excitement of all the malicious students skyrocketed at this moment. They felt that it was showtime. They all sat up straight and eagerly waited for Addy's next move.

Contrary to what they expected, Addy dipped his hand into his pocket and took out a bundle of money. He put it on the table and announced, "I donate fifty thousand dollars to Horace to help him get through this tough time!"

A trace of doubt glimmered in Horace's eyes as he stared at the bundle of money. 'Shouldn't Addy's family be in debt now? How come he can afford to

donate fifty thousand dollars? Does this mean his family is not fully bankrupt?' Some questions teemed in Horace's head. But on second thought, he decided to let it go. Addy had already received enough punishment. There was no point in investigating the source of this money.

Unbeknown to Horace, Addy's father had completely put his pride aside for this fifty thousand dollars. He had found out that the gathering was a fundraiser for Horace, so he immediately ran around and brazenly borrowed money from several good friends. This gesture was to appease Horace so that he wouldn't throw a monkey wrench in their works now that they were starting afresh.

"Jeez! Addy is awesome. He just donated such a whopping amount. He's just too generous. Wait, there's something strange about this. What's Addy's plan? And when is he going to strike?" The other

students looked at the bundle of money on the table and they were amazed. Doubt also set in at this time.

"I donate ten thousand dollars!" Before the other students could get over the shock of Addy's donation, Amaia also brought out a bundle of money from her bag.

Amaia wasn't from a very rich home, but she had made a lot of money because she hooked up with Addy for a long time. She was a squanderer who spent too lavishly, but she had managed to save some money.

'What the hell is going on? Ten thousand dollars? Where did Amaia get that kind of money from? How is it even possible since she denied ever dating Addy? Is her donation part of Addy's plan? Are they in this together?' Some of the girls stared at the bundle of money in Amaia's hand with jealousy. In their hearts,

they criticized her for having such money. Most of them concluded that she sold her body for it. These girls weren't as poor as Laila and Horace, but they were from average families. They only got a few hundred dollars for their monthly living expenses. They had never seen ten thousand dollars personally, let alone donate it without hesitation.

They all thought that Horace was going to leave here a rich man.

Afterward, they sighed with envy.

Laila felt that Amaia's donation was very fishy. An inexplicable feeling arose in her heart. 'Averi said yesterday that Amaia broke up with Horace. From his account, it seemed like they ended things on a bad note. Why is she now donating ten thousand dollars

to him? More so, why are they sitting together? Does this mean that the rumor about their breakup was false? But Horace didn't refute yesterday. What's really going on?'

The first three donations opened up the floor for more donations. The other students began to donate money one after the other. However, their donations were in lower denominations like ten, twenty, and fifty dollars.

At the sight of the donations, Ansley's lips curled up in a smile subconsciously. She found it funny that they were donating ten or twenty dollars for a wealthy person like Horace.

She didn't dare to voice out her thought. Otherwise, they wouldn't let it slide.

In the end, all the donations summed up to sixty-two

thousand dollars, of which one thousand came from Rhett. It was obvious that the money donated by the others was only a small percent of the total sum.

Rhett arranged the entire donation into one bundle and put it in front of Horace. He then said, "Horace, this is our contribution towards the expenses you have to sort out. Please make good use of it."

With a mischievous smirk, he added, "Horace, since everyone has helped you tonight, shouldn't you treat all of us to dinner?"

Rhett's original plan was to humiliate Horace here. Dinner at the Lake Hotel was very expensive. He thought that Horace wouldn't be able to afford to eat here even if their former classmates donated money to him. But to his surprise, Addy and Amaia had donated a total of sixty thousand dollars. This spoiled his plan. Rhett was a little resentful about it. If it had

been someone else that donated such a huge amount, he would have scolded the person. However, he couldn't say anything because he was afraid of Addy.

Despite the unfavorable turnout of things, he still decided to ask Horace that question.

Rhett was taken aback by Addy's voice as soon as he finished speaking. "The reason why we gathered here is to raise money for Horace. If we tell him to use the donation to treat us to dinner, our efforts would be useless. I have decided to treat you all. Eat and be merry. The bill is on me tonight!"

'Hey, Addy. Are you here to mess with me? Are you out of your mind? I thought you had a good plan up your sleeve, but I was wrong. Now that I have taken things into my own hands, why are you disrupting my plan?' Rhett complained in his mind. He didn't expect

that Addy of all people would be the one to ruin his plan.

Although Rhett was furious, he didn't dare to turn down Addy's offer. He nodded and said, "Addy, you are right. It's inappropriate for Horace to pay for dinner. However, I feel that it would be unfair if you foot the bill alone tonight. How about we split the bill?"

Since Rhett didn't dare to ask Addy to foot the bill in the first place, in order to feign concern, he suggested that they went Dutch. He knew him to be a proud young man. He believed that Addy would insist on footing the entire bill.

Surprisingly, Addy nodded and said, "Okay, let's all have dinner and then split the bill. It's fair that way."

This decision angered the other malicious students. They cursed Rhett and Addy in their hearts. This

wasn't what they bargained for. They had only brought a few dollars with the hope that Horace would be forced to buy dinner and then get humiliated. The plan they drafted with Rhett was in ruins now and they had to split the bill. In this private dining room, there were over thirty people present.

Dinner for all of them would cost a minimum of five thousand dollars. This meant that each of them would have to pay one hundred and fifty dollars. The malicious students didn't have that kind of money.

They all began to think that Rhett had called this gathering to humiliate them, not Horace. It was even worse that he dared to offer Addy help when the latter had readily offered to foot the bill. 'Is this a trap? Rhett and Addy tricked us. If it's not a trap, why has Addy not dealt with Horace? Why is he helping him out instead?'

Several questions teemed in the minds of the malicious students at this moment. They didn't understand why a gathering that was specially organized to humiliate Horace ended up like this. It seemed like they had fallen into their own trap.

'Rhett is such a bastard! He just took us for a sleigh ride. We should have noticed this early enough!' Many of the students began to rain insults on Rhett in their minds.

All of them decided not to stress themselves over how the bill would be sorted. Since Rhett had been the one that suggested they organized the fundraiser, he should take responsibility for it. This was his punishment for deceiving them.

Rhett was on the hot seat at this moment. He was so desperate that a cold sweat broke out on his forehead even though the air conditioner was on. He greatly

suspected that Addy intentionally came here to trick him.

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THE POOREST BILLIONAIRE

Chapter 26 The Turned Tables



"I am sure some of us are famished by now. Since we have achieved the main agenda of this gathering, and it's clear how the bill will be sorted, let's make our order." With these words, Addy turned to Ansley and asked, "Excuse me, where is the menu? Please take our orders now."

"Okay, sir. The menu is right here. Please have a look." As Ansley spoke, she took out a menu from the

drawer and gave it to Addy.

Addy put the menu in front of Horace and suggested, "Since Horace is the man of the hour, how about we let him order the dishes? I think it's a great idea. Or does anyone have any objections?"

Everyone shook their heads with fearful glints in their eyes. Addy enjoyed great prestige among them for a long time. None of them dared to oppose him even though they were not comfortable with his suggestion. They hadn't experienced Addy's cruelty first-hand, but the rumors about him were enough to instill fear in their hearts. One of the rumors involved a senior who had graduated and provoked Addy. Later, Addy accosted him with his men and they beat him to a pulp.

This incident earned him great respect and the fear of all the students in the school. No one dared to step on

his toes. They buried their opinions deep in their hearts whenever they had objections.

Rhett also didn't have the audacity to speak despite being the former class monitor and the main organizer of this meeting.

He just nodded in agreement and said, "Whatever you say, Addy!"

All the malicious students were confused at this moment. They wondered why Addy was behaving so weird today. Only one question lingered in their minds, 'Why is Addy helping Horace so much?' They wanted to believe that Addy was just putting up a show and he would soon humiliate Horace, but they were finding it very hard to convince themselves. Something just wasn't right.

'Did Horace become Addy's henchman? Is that why

Addy has been helping him since he got here? Or did they become friends without our knowledge? How is that even possible?' Several questions filled the malicious students' minds, but they still couldn't figure out what was happening. It dawned on some of them that there was no big humiliation coming up.

Horace saw the confusion and perplexity on his former classmates' faces. With a faint smile, he handed the menu to the person beside him and said, "I don't know what you guys like to eat. Why don't we each order one dish?"

Without hesitation, everyone nodded and said in unison, "Yes, that's the best!"

In this way, everyone took turns to look at the menu and make their order. Each of them ordered only one dish. Before they came here today, they had planned to order a variety of dishes because they wanted to

put Horace in trouble. Now that they had to split the bill, they sensibly ordered the cheapest dishes on the menu. There were thirty people in the room, but they ordered sixteen cold dishes. The Lake Hotel's menu comprised of eighteen cold dishes in total. The two remaining dishes were off the table. These two dishes cost the same as many hot dishes, so no one ordered them.

When the menu was back in Horace's hand again, he looked at the prices of the dishes that his former classmates ordered. Except for Rhett, Amaia, and Addy's orders, all the other dishes were measly cheap. It was a rule in the Lake Hotel that each dish could only be ordered once. If there was no rule like this, the majority of the other students would have ordered potatoes because it was the cheapest on the menu. Even so, two people ordered a plate of

potatoes each. One was sour and spicy potatoes, and the other one was shredded potatoes with vinegar sauce.

The Lake Hotel wasn't as luxurious as the Sea Pavilion, but it was still expensive. It was impossible for ordinary high school students, who mostly came from average families, to afford to have dinner here. The cheap dishes were the only thing they could afford.

As Horace thought about his former classmates' trouble, he opened the first page of the menu. It only took him a second to pick out a dish. Pointing at the dish named, Lake Pot, which was the most expensive dish on the menu, he said to Ansley, "Hey, Ansley, what a coincidence. I'll have this one, please!"

"Okay, Horace. I'll send the order to the kitchen right away. Please hold on for a while. And have a nice

meal!" Ansley flashed Horace a friendly smile and then clicked the confirmation button of the ordering machine in her hand.

"Horace?" Laila was a little surprised that the waitress here knew Horace's name. She pondered in confusion, 'How did Horace know such a beautiful girl? Did they meet before today?'

Laila had arrived late, so she knew nothing of what transpired before her arrival.

Meanwhile, the friendship between Horace and Ansley was the last thing on the other students' minds. Their eyes had widened in shock when they heard Horace's order.

None of them expected that he would order a dish so expensive. In fact, they expected him to order a plate of potatoes.

The Lake Pot was the signature dish of the Lake Hotel. One serving alone cost two thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight dollars. The price of the dishes ordered by the students, except Addy, Rhett, and Amaia, wasn't even up to that amount.

"Oh my God, this is unbelievable! How come everything is going well for Horace. Aargh! He must have connived with Addy and Rhett to humiliate us tonight!" one of the malicious students whispered to the people close by when he heard Horace's order.

"Yes, Rhett is so wicked. He set us up. Didn't he say we should all join hands to humiliate Horace tonight? How come we fell into the trap instead? I've gotten a bone to pick with Rhett. We all do. Just watch, I will make sure Rhett suffers pain for what he has done to us today!"

A strong classmate clenched his fists tightly and glared at Rhett with the rage of a thousand scorching suns.

He had a husky voice that became even louder now that he was angry. Almost all the students seated at the table heard his curse. Some of them began to declare their support.

"Count me in!"

"Me too!"

"Tell me the location and time. I will be there!"

In a short time, ten more people agreed to take revenge on Rhett. They didn't hide their anger at all.

"What the fuck!" Rhett couldn't help swearing when he saw that they ganged up against him.

He was sitting right there, but they all planned to go after him. Spirals of sadness and indignation filled his heart as he looked at the first person that instigated the revenge talks against him. 'Why do I always get hurt? I wanted to give them some fun today, but things didn't go as planned. Now they are angry because Horace ordered an expensive dish. How is that my fault?'

Despite the pain tugging at Rhett's heart, he couldn't voice out his displeasure. He buried it in order not to make matters worse. There was a lump in his throat at this moment. Eleven people were coming after him. He was no match for the strong former classmate, let alone ten other people. He felt that he would probably die in their hands.

The hatred Rhett had for Horace quadrupled just like his current problems. He believed that everything was

this pauper's fault. If his eyes could kill, Horace would have died many times within a short time.

Horace could feel the hot sparks of hatred in Rhett's long stare, but he didn't take it seriously. He hadn't ordered the most expensive dish to spite them at all. He only ordered it because most of them had ordered cold dishes, and there were only a few hot dishes. The hot dishes wouldn't be enough for over thirty people in the dining room. Although they had bullied him in the past and even tried to set him up for humiliation today, Horace didn't want to be ruthless to them. He believed that someone had to step up to the plate and behave kindly. This was also a farewell dinner to him. He forgave them, but didn't want to have anything to do with them in the future.

The dishes were served shortly after Ansley sent their order. At this time, Laila was still sitting beside Horace and she looked at him in confusion. Something didn't

feel the same about him. He seemed like he had changed into a whole new person.

She thought about it for a while and then she discovered what changed about him. It was his confidence. Horace was no longer the pushover she knew in high school.

'Lucky him! I wish I can also be more confident,' Laila sighed. She was born into a poor family. For this reason, she battled with an inferiority complex right from childhood.

Everyone else dug into the food while Laila was lost in thought.

Due to everything that transpired between Addy and Rhett, no one dared to show their hatred for Horace. Sheer resentment was in their hearts for him, but they kept it there. They didn't want to get into Addy's bad

books. Thus, Horace gulped down his food eagerly, and nothing special happened.

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Chapter 27 More Disappointmen



The spiteful students' resentment soon changed to fear. They were afraid that Horace would feel that the food wasn't enough and would order more dishes. They didn't want to be embarrassed since they couldn't afford it.

Fortunately, Horace didn't order more dishes.

The moment everyone had a taste of the food, they all

closed their eyes momentarily and took deep breaths. There were bursts of different flavors in their mouths. The awesome taste of the food explained why the Lake Hotel was named one of the best hotels in Rinas. The food tasted like heaven. Everyone present loved the taste.

In particular, the expensive dish Horace ordered was colorful and had a pleasant aroma. Most importantly, it was delicious. Everyone that tasted it only had good things to say about it. They wanted to eat more of it, but they controlled their appetites because they were afraid Horace wouldn't be satisfied and he would make another order.

Horace also thought that the food was excellent. Although they didn't taste as good as the dishes made in the Sea Pavilion, he agreed that they were exceptional.

After relishing the food for a while, he waved at Ansley and asked her to come over.

Ansley saw his wave from where she stood. She walked to him quickly and asked, "Horace, is there anything else I can do for you?"

"One Lake Pot to go, please. It's so delicious. My conscience would prick me if I don't buy some for my mother. She would love it too!"

Horace's mother was always on his mind. He wanted her to enjoy whatever he enjoyed.

Everyone was shocked when they heard his new order.

"Horace, you've gone too far!" a girl blurted out angrily without considering the repercussions.

Rhett had organized today's fundraiser so that they could trick Horace into buying them free dinner. The tables had turned since they not only donated money, but also had to split the bill for dinner. They barely had enough money to pay for the first set of orders. Horace's second order of the most expensive dish was the height of it all. They felt that he was taking advantage of them.

Before Horace could say anything, Addy pointed at the girl and retorted, "Lucinda, shut up. What did Horace do wrong? Have you suddenly forgotten that his mother is in the hospital? Doesn't she deserve to taste this delicious dish? Why are you been so selfish? You are a girl, but your heart is filled with wickedness. You are like the devil's daughter!"

'What the fuck!' Lucinda Lee cursed Addy in her heart for raining insults on her. 'What's wrong with Addy today? Is he now Horace's lackey?

I'm not in the wrong. Why is Horace ordering such an expensive dish for his mother on our tab? Does he take us for fools? Addy had better watch his mouth. I mean, this bastard called me the devil's daughter even though I did nothing wrong. It shall not be well with Rhett from today onwards. People would deceive him just like he has done to us today!

Lucinda had a lot of awful things to say to Addy, but she knew that she would be doomed if she did that. She instantly became sheep who cowered in the presence of a ferocious lion.

It wasn't until this moment that Horace finally decided to respond to Lucinda. With his eyebrows raised, he asked, "Lucinda, do you also want to order one?"

"Humph! Horace, I am not as shameless and inconsiderate as you. We all donated money for you, but you are taking advantage of us!" Lucinda snorted and glared at him, as if his action was absolutely preposterous.

"Huh!" A disdainful smirk appeared on Horace's face after Lucinda rebuked him. He stared at her with sarcasm in his eyes. "Anyway, thank you for your donation today!"

Lucinda was top on the list of the people Horace didn't like. She was the beautiful girl that made snide remarks about Ansley a while ago.

More so, she always looked down on him and sometimes set traps for him.

Horace wasn't the only one that received Lucinda's hatred in high school. She also hated Amaia, who

dated her punching bag for a whole year.

There was bad blood between Amaia and Lucinda. They couldn't stand each other at all.

In the heat of the moment, Amaia pointed at Lucinda and warned, "Bitch, you'd better watch your tongue. Why are you so arrogant? Everyone else donated at least ten dollars, but you only donated a dollar. What makes you think that you have the right to complain? The fundraiser was organized to generate funds for Horace's mother's medical bills. It's not a big deal if he decides to order a dish for her too. Now shut up that sewage you call a mouth or I will shut it for you!"

Amaia's outburst came as a surprise to everyone. They couldn't believe their ears for a second. She had dated Horace for a whole year, but she didn't love him that much. 'Wow! This is a first! Why did Amaia quarrel with Lucinda just to defend this pauper?

Worse still, Horace has refused to acknowledge her presence since she arrived. What's her deal?'

Everyone at the table knew that Amaia and Lucinda never saw eye to eye. However, they both avoided each other like the plague. They never expected that Amaia would take a swipe at her enemy just because of Horace.

"Don't tell me to shut up. I have the right to speak. We are all going Dutch on the bill tonight. It's unfair that Horace wants to order such an expensive dish for his mother at our own expense. I think we should all put it to a vote!"

"Does anyone have objections?" Addy chimed in at this time. His tone was threatening and rage flickered in his eyes. He had taken it upon himself to ask that question because he knew some of them would have objections if Amaia or Lucinda asked.

Everyone looked at him and answered fearfully, "No!"

"You!" Lucinda looked at everyone close to her with a flash of anger in her eyes. The spark in her eyes immediately disappeared when she looked at Addy again. Her shoulders slouched in a split second.

Addy was too powerful. The only person that could stand up to him was Averil. Unfortunately, Averil didn't show up today. Addy was now the most influential person amongst them.

Tension was brewing at a rapid pace. All of a sudden, Horace waved his hand and said, "Forget it. I didn't intend to let you pay for the dinner, anyway!"

After saying that, he looked at Ansley and said, "I will pay the bill alone."

"Okay, Horace!" Ansley printed out the invoice and handed it to him. "Horace, the bill is nine thousand eight hundred and seventy-two dollars. I'll give you a discount. You just need to pay nine thousand five hundred dollars for the meal. Do you want to pay via card or in cash?"

Horace nodded thoughtfully, took out ten thousand dollars from the money donated, and then handed it to Ansley. "Here you go, Ansley. This is ten thousand dollars. Keep the change."

'My goodness. The nerve of this guy!' Rhett and the spiteful students were annoyed with Horace's behavior. They never expected that he would be so pompous while spending the money they donated. 'This guy is so annoying. To make matters worse, he gifted the beautiful waitress five hundred dollars just to paint himself as a rich man.

Aargh! This was unfair!

With malice and anger in their hearts, they looked at Addy, and then at Amaia. They wanted to see how the two highest donors would react to Horace squandering the money. To their disappointment, Amaia and Addy neither uttered a word nor looked angry. They acted as if Horace had every right to spend the money anyhow he liked.

'These people are becoming more and more annoying. What's wrong with both of them? Did someone tamper with their brains?' Confusion filled the spiteful students' minds.

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Chapter 28 Cutting All Ties

Ansley knew of Horace's extreme generosity, but she didn't want to accept his tip. She took out five hundred dollars from the bundle of money that he gave her and then handed the dollar bills to him. With a smile, she said politely, "Here you go, Horace. I can't accept the tip. However, you need to fulfill your promise of treating me to an expensive dinner in the future."

"Ansley, you are a kind girl. Don't worry, I am a man of my words. I can even treat you to one hundred meals if you like!" Horace took back the five hundred dollars without urging her to accept it. He knew she wouldn't give in.

"One hundred meals? Horace, are you going to squander the donation on girls? We donated that money for your mother's medical bills, not for you to

spend on irrelevant things!" Kole was livid and unhappy when he saw that Horace was behaving like a rich man in Ansley's presence. His anger also emanated from the fact that he had donated some money. Thus, he didn't bridle his tongue at this moment.

As Addy did earlier, he didn't give Horace the chance to stand up for himself. He pointed at Kole and cursed, "Kole, are you out of your fucking mind? What gives you the right to speak? You only donated ten dollars. You can't even afford the food. How Horace decides to spend the money is none of your damn business! Stop interfering, you busybody! Since you have a lot to say as if you are wealthy, why don't you foot the bill instead?"

'Oh, my God! Can someone tell me what's going on now? Why is Addy defending this sore loser relentlessly? Is he mentally deranged? What the fuck!'

Kole criticized Addy in his mind. The insults annoyed him, but he put on a flattering smile and said, "Addy, I'm sorry. Your words have made me realize that I shouldn't stick my nose into someone else's business. Please forgive me. Horace, excuse my thoughtlessness. This would never repeat itself!"

It became clear to all the spiteful students that Addy wasn't going to play a trick on Horace. He was just going to defend him throughout. They had been so wrong.

When did Horace become Addy's friend? Had Horace voluntarily given Amaia to him? If so, why was Amaia not afraid of Addy at all? Were they just acting? Or could it be that Horace had something on Addy?

All the spiteful students made a thousand and one guesses in their heads. However, none of them guessed that Horace was now a rich and powerful

man.

Out of everyone present, Laila was the one that paid the most attention to Horace. She didn't speak much during the dinner, but she kept thinking about him.

'What happened to Horace? Why has he changed so much? He's not only confident but also spending lavishly. He used to be so frugal that he cherished every dollar bill he got. Why is he a squanderer now? Did his mother's illness affect him negatively?'

Everyone knew that Horace's mother was still admitted to the hospital. Laila, like the others, also knew that she had stage 3 rectal cancer. It was still curable, but the treatment was very expensive. The sixty-two thousand dollars they raised today was likely to be a drop in the ocean.

There was no reason to stay in the Lake Hotel since the dinner was over. The malicious students wanted to leave immediately to avoid getting into trouble with Addy or Horace. And no one wanted to be a scapegoat.

It took great boldness for one of them to stand up and bid everyone goodbye. His departure opened the floor for the others. They all left one after the other, including, Laila, Amaia, and Addy.

The moment Horace was left alone at the table, he stretched himself. He said with a yawn, "Thank God this damn dinner is finally over!" He was rather fortunate that he discovered he was the heir of the Warren family yesterday. Otherwise, that bastard called Rhett would have humiliated him today. Addy and Amaia would have also added insult to injury. "I need to sever all ties with these wicked and two-faced former classmates of mine. Even though we have

graduated, all of them, except Laila, still look down on me. Anyway, it's their loss, not mine. They have lost the opportunity to be rich and powerful. Laila is the only person I would continue being friends with!"

"Horace, you are so rich. Why do you pretend to be poor? Are you trying to look for true love?" Ansley was the only one who didn't leave the private dining room. She was an employee here, so she had to clean up after them. She couldn't help asking Horace the question that had lingered on her mind for a long time.

She had only worked at the Lake Hotel for a short time, but she had already seen several rich kids. These kids weren't as wealthy as Horace, but they left a bad impression on her. They were all arrogant and rude. They always looked down on her and made her job more difficult. On the contrary, Horace was modest, cautious, and friendly.

"Ansley, you have misunderstood me yet again. I have never pretended to be poor. It's just that no one has ever asked me how much I have!" Horace stood up and smiled at her as he spoke.

"You have a point there, Horace. I don't think you are obligated to tell people that you are from a rich family. Let them drown in their ignorance!" Ansley concurred with him.

As Horace made his way to the door, she reminded him, "Horace, please don't forget what you promised me."

"Trust me, I won't forget. When you are free, just inform me via WeChat. As I said earlier, you can choose any restaurant in Rinas. I have gotten you covered," he said while taking out his phone and motioning for Ansley to scan his WeChat QR code.

"Even if you want the Supreme VIP card of the Sea Pavilion, I can give it to you easily," he added.

"Really? Horace, the Sea Pavilion is the best restaurant in Rinas. Can you really get its Supreme VIP card? Wow! You are awesome!" Ansley admired him a lot. Her joy knew no bounds when he made such promises. As a waitress, she knew about the other hotels and restaurants in Rinas. She was aware of how expensive and luxurious the Sea Pavilion was. It was the place for the top wealthiest people. There were less than a hundred VIP cards in the whole Rinas. This only meant that the Supreme VIP cards would be fewer in number. At the thought of this, a doubtful glint flashed in Ansley's eyes.

"What's wrong? You have doubts, don't you? Okay, I'll call someone and ask them to bring it to you today. I must say that you are a well-mannered and kind-hearted girl. Keep it up!" Horace immediately took out

his phone again, intending to call Raul, but Ansley stopped him.

"Horace, I truly appreciate your kindness. But even if you give me the Sea Pavilion's Supreme VIP card, I can't afford to eat there. It would be a waste. All I want is for you to treat me to dinner there in the future."

Ansley was a brilliant girl. She calculated that having dinner with Horace was worth more than getting a Supreme VIP card. It would afford her the opportunity to know more about him. Perhaps from there, she could build a strong and beneficial friendship with him.

After hearing Ansley's words, Horace nodded and put his phone back into his pocket. He said, "Okay, Ansley. Whenever you are ready for dinner, just contact me. I will take my leave now. Goodbye!"

Horace waved at her and then stepped out of the private dining room. He walked straight to the main

exit of the Lake Hotel.

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Chapter 29 Unacceptable Embarrassmen



Horace wanted to take a taxi back to the hospital after he left the Lake Hotel. But when he passed by the cake shop next to the hotel, a thought suddenly occurred to him. 'I only bought a dish for my mother. There's no rice. She doesn't like to eat greasy foods without starchy foods. Since there's no other dish, I should buy some dessert for her. I don't think she has ever had one.'

This was a great idea, so Horace walked into the cake

shop. He was greeted with the sight of a familiar figure. He then called out, "Laila?"

The familiar figure was Laila, his one true friend. She turned around in confusion and looked at him. A smile appeared on her beautiful face immediately. "Why are you here, Horace?" she asked in surprise.

"Well, I came to buy dessert for my mother. She has never eaten one before." Horace was very open about his intentions. Laila was his good friend, so he had nothing to hide from her. Afterward, he asked, "What about you? What are you doing here?"

'Phew! I thought he had changed. It seems he's still a filial son!' Laila thought to herself after hearing his explanation.

Waving her thoughts aside, she replied, "Horace, my birthday is in a few days. I want to order a cake from

here!"

"Eh?" Horace was stunned by her response. There were different prices stuck on each cake section in the display counter. The cheapest cake he saw was five hundred and ninety-nine dollars. He knew that Laila was from a poor family and she was very frugal with money. It was surprising that she wanted to spend such an amount on a single cake. For a moment, he wondered, 'Is Laila a trust-fund baby? Has she been pretending to be poor all this while?'

Noticing Horace's confusion, Laila quickly explained, "Horace, it's not what you think. My roommates want to celebrate it with me. They told me that the cake here is their favorite, so I came to check if I can afford one."

'Silly girl, why are you so innocent and cute? Can't you see that your roommates are trying to take

advantage of you? They are just using your birthday as an excuse to eat something expensive.' Horace took a look at her and sighed inwardly. They were close friends from similar backgrounds, so he knew her well. She was so naive. Thus, people found it easy to deceive her. Horace was not that naive. Even though he didn't know her roommates, he knew that they had just offered to celebrate her birthday with her and directed her here because they wanted to satisfy their cravings at her expense. Like the naive girl that Laila was, she really came here to check the cakes out.

"Laila, didn't you lend me some money yesterday? Do you still have money to buy a cake?" Just like Laila knew him well before he had a new identity, he also knew her well. He knew that she was struggling to make ends meet.

A sad glint flickered in Laila's eyes. She answered truthfully, "Horace, I don't have much. Remember that you returned the one hundred dollars I donated. So, I came here to check if any of the cakes here costs that amount."

There were no other customers in the cake shop at this time. They had been speaking in low voices, but the silence made it possible for the shop attendants to hear their conversation clearly.

The moment Laila finished speaking, one of the shop attendants burst into a mocking laughter. She remarked, "Did you just say one hundred dollars? You want to use that amount to buy a cake from the Vloni Bakery? Are you kidding me? Ha-ha! This is the funniest joke I've heard this year. You should consider a career in comedy. Well, for your information, we don't have any cake worth one hundred dollars.

Please leave!"

"What?" The tall shop attendant's harshness took Laila aback. As a calm person, she nodded and said, "Okay, I'll leave now."

Just as she was about to leave, Horace grabbed her hand and pulled her back. He then said to the mean attendant disapprovingly, "Is this how you treat your customers here? Weren't you trained before you began to work here? What's the point of ridiculing her? You could have made your point without being so rude. Besides, who says she can't afford it?"

Horace glared at the rude attendant before turning to look at the other one, who looked lovely and friendly. He ordered calmly, "Please, take out the most expensive cakes here. I want to choose one of them."

"Horace, don't waste your money like that. The cakes

here are too expensive. I can just go to another shop and pick one that fits my budget." Laila was moved by his kind gesture, but she didn't want him to waste his money. She tugged at his shirt with her free hand and tried to dissuade him softly.

"No, Laila. We are not going anywhere else. We will buy the cake from here. And I will celebrate your birthday with you." Laila was dear to his heart, so he couldn't watch her get humiliated and walk out of here with no cake. He felt pity for her when he saw that she was timid and ashamed.

"Well... Ermm... Horace, please listen to me. I should be the one giving you more money. You need it more than I do. In fact, I don't need to celebrate my birthday. I will explain things to my roommates. I believe they would see reasons with me." Somehow, his adamancy was making Laila so nervous that she couldn't speak fluently.

"Ha-ha!" The tall attendant was unrepentant. She suddenly laughed when she saw that Laila was trying to dissuade Horace. She said condescendingly, "The two of you are poor! Even if you give me all the money you have... You won't be able to afford the cheapest cake in this shop. Our cakes are not for church mice like you. You can't afford it, so you are not our customers!"

"Did you just call us church mice? Humph! Even if we are poor, we are still human beings like you. Simple courtesy demands that you treat anyone that comes into your shop politely. Being poor is not a good reason for you to be so rude and mean!" After saying that, Horace turned to look at the lovely attendant and asked, "Hey, why aren't you showing us the most expensive cakes in the shop? Do you also think we are too poor to afford any of them?"

"Davina, don't be afraid. They are just two poor losers. It's so obvious that they can't afford any cake here!" the tall attendant said to her lovely colleague. She then continued, "Poor people always have silly tricks up their sleeves. The two of them might be trying to pull a fast one on us. But their plan will not work!"

After the lovely attendant, Davina Foster, heard her colleague's words, she nodded in agreement and didn't attend to Horace and Laila.

"Are you really not going to attend to us?" Horace shook his head in disappointment as he took out a bundle of dollar bills from his bulgy pocket. He threw it on the counter of the cake shop, and said to the tall attendant, "Here is ten thousand dollars in cash. Now open your damn eyes wide and see if I can afford the most expensive cake in your shop or not."

The Vlani Bakery was known for its good and expensive cakes, but it was not one of the elite cake shops. The prices of cakes here were substantially lower than the big cake shops. The most expensive cake here cost only eight thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight dollars. Horace had dropped ten thousand dollars on the counter, so it was more than enough.

The tall attendant raised her eyebrows in shock when she saw the bundle of money. She stared at the money and exclaimed, "How is this possible?"

'How come an impoverished loser has ten thousand dollars?' In confusion, she looked at Horace's clothes.

Seeing that they didn't move an inch, Horace took out another bundle of money from his pocket and threw it on the counter. He said, "If the first bundle of money is not enough, here is another bundle!"

'What? Who is this guy? Why does he have so much money despite being so poorly dressed?' The tall attendant stared at the bundles of money on the counter in complete puzzlement.

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[THE POOREST BILLIONAIRE](#)

Chapter 30 Bad Customer Service



Horace's action of taking out twenty thousand dollars warmed Laila's heart, but she was still not comfortable with spending so much money. She tugged at his shirt and said weakly, "Thank you, Horace. However, you don't have to spend this huge amount just to get me a cake. Celebrating my birthday is not that important. It

doesn't matter if there's cake or not. You really need this money. Don't waste it."

"Laila, if I tell you that I'm now rich, would you believe me?" Horace stared into her eyes as he asked this question. The considerate spark in her eyes made his heart warm. Laila was the only one that had never looked down on him in high school. She had also given him food whenever he was starving. Thus, he was beyond grateful for her friendship.

When Laila heard his question, she smiled and replied, "Horace, I know that you have money. But it was donated for you to sort out part of your mother's medical bills. You shouldn't waste it on me.

Anyway, thank you for offering to help. Even if there's no cake, I think this will be the happiest birthday I have ever had!"

The urge to reveal his true identity to Laila was so strong at this moment. He already had the words on his tongue. He didn't like to show off, but he badly wanted to protect his friend. She was so innocent that he felt she needed his protection.

After contemplating it for a while, Horace decided against it. Laila suffered from a severe inferiority complex. He was afraid that she would deliberately avoid him if she found out he was rich.

"You silly girl!" Horace just teased her after swallowing all the words he wanted to say to her. He turned to look at the lovely attendant, Davina, and queried, "Miss. I have already taken out a lot of money. Do you still think we can't afford your most expensive cake?"

"Humph!" The rude tall attendant snorted with disdain. Her puzzlement had been dispelled after she heard

Laila's statement a while ago. With a tone filled with disgust, she berated Horace, "You are such a loser. You are not only poor but also a scumbag. Your mother is lying sick in the hospital. Some people donated money for her medical bills, but you have decided to squander it on girls. What a ruthless and unfilial son!"

"Stop saying what you know nothing about. This is my money, so I can choose to do whatever I want to do with it. It's none of your business!" Horace shot her a cold stare. He then looked back at Davina.

It was at this moment that Davina finally gave in. "Sir, this way please. I'll show you the most expensive cake in the shop," she said in an extremely weak voice.

Davina was naturally a timid and submissive young woman. Her rude colleague often oppressed her and

forced her to be rude to some customers. At first, she didn't attend to Horace because she was influenced by her colleague's words and was afraid of getting bullied.

However, she plucked up the courage to go against her colleague's wishes because of Horace's domineering aura. She couldn't refuse to attend to him any longer.

"Davina!" The tall attendant angrily called out her name when she saw her walking away. Her eyes blazed with fury as if Davina had done something unpardonable.

"What?" The angry scream that came from behind stunned Davina. She suddenly halted in her tracks. She slowly turned around and looked at her colleague

in fear. Her body trembled at the sight of the tall attendant's glare.

"Miss, are you afraid of her? Both of you are attendants here. You have the same power in this shop. Why are you afraid of her? Please ignore her glare. Just take me to see the cake now. If you do your job, I will not complain about you. I'll only file a complaint against your colleague for her shoddy customer service." Horace had seen the conspicuous fear in Davina's eyes and the change in her body language. He instantly deduced that she was a victim of the tall attendant's bullying.

"You will file a complaint against me?" The tall attendant chuckled when she heard his threat. "Do you think I would grovel at your feet because of your empty threat? Bah! You can do no more than an ant. You impoverished loser, go ahead and file the complaint. Let's see if you can get me into any

trouble!"

"What? I don't get what's happening. Is it now a norm for attendants to be rude to customers? I just came here to buy a cake, but you sound like I have offended you before or I'm owing you something." The insult was getting too much. As a result, Horace couldn't help but wonder if he ever offended her before.

He had worked as a part-time shop attendant before. His experience made him realize that it wasn't an easy job. For this reason, he made sure he never made things difficult for any attendant. However, this attendant was just being plain rude to him. She made him have a change of mind. The most shocking thing about her was that she had divided customers into different levels based on their financial status. Horace was naturally someone who loved to mind his own business. But the person involved in this

embarrassing situation was his good friend, Laila. He couldn't turn a blind eye when he could help.

"Your presence here is making me sick. I can't stand poor people. Since you are so poor, why did you come to this shop? Stop wasting our precious time here. You need to pay for the amount of time you wasted, you know? That means you owe us!"

"Hey, is something wrong with your eyes, or are you just hell-bent on being mean? Can't you see that I have dropped more than enough money on the counter?"

"Of course, I can see clearly. Not only that, I can also hear clearly. Your friend here just said this money was donated for your mother's medical bills. Although you are willing to squander it here, we won't accept it. We don't want to get into trouble. If the fundraising organization comes here to make a scene, it would

taint our reputation. You two, get out of here with your money. We won't sell any cakes to you today!"

The tall attendant thought she knew Horace and Laila well just by listening to their conversation. She had no idea that she was so wrong.

"As I said earlier, stop saying what you know nothing about. This is my money, so I can choose to do whatever I want to do with it. It's none of your business!"

"Yes, it's none of my business. I can say the same for you. My decision not to sell the cake to you is none of your business. Everything you want to buy has finished. The other cakes here have been pre-ordered by some wealthy people. Take your money and leave. You are not welcome here. For every second you spend here, you are polluting the fresh air of our shop with your poverty. What do you think would happen if

our boss comes in here and smells the poverty in here?"

The tall attendant looked at Horace and Laila like they were pieces of trash.

"You are so arrogant. At least, the money here is mine. Is this shop yours? Who calls the shots here? You or your boss? Since you don't want to attend to us, I want to speak to your boss now. I need to know if what you just said is true!" Horace was now a little infuriated. He was fed up with all the insults from this rude attendant.

Meanwhile, Laila began to regret coming here to check out the cakes in the first place. At the same time, she was moved as Horace relentlessly defended her. The situation was swiftly getting out of hand. To avoid more trouble, she tugged at his shirt and pleaded, "Horace, please forget it. Let's go!"

"Ha-ha, it seems your little girlfriend is sensible enough. She knows that things wouldn't turn out well if you stay here. You'd better listen to her." The tall attendant flashed a triumphant smile when she saw that Laila wanted to leave.

In a trice, Laila's face turned red when she heard the words, 'little girlfriend'. She held one of her cheeks and it was a little hot.

However, Horace, who was standing in front of her, didn't notice that she was blushing. He paid no heed to the tall attendant. With a commanding tone, he ordered Davina, "Miss, please go and call your boss now!"

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