

Raul respectfully bowed to Horace thrice and asked, "Mr. Warren, what brings you to this Cartier shop today? Did you come to choose a gift here?"

Although Raul knew nothing about what happened earlier, he was smart enough to deduce Horace's purpose due to the necklace in his hand.

Horace nodded and replied, "Yes, Uncle Raul. I came here to get a gift for someone."

"Mr. Warren, please permit me to say this. The pieces of jewelry in this shop are good and Cartier has a good reputation all over the world, but they are different from the real top-grade ones. I have an idea. How about I take you to see some brilliant jade? I know a good jade shop in Rinas!"

All the pieces of jewelry in this Cartier shop were luxurious, but the most expensive ones were only about one million dollars. They didn't come close to the brilliance of high-grade jade. The first-rate jade was so precious that it cost hundreds of million dollars. For example, the jade bracelet that Farris gave Caylee was worth more than a hundred million dollars.

Horace wanted to take Raul up on his offer, but when he checked the time on his phone, he had to refuse. It was already ten o'clock. He shook his head and declined politely. "Uncle Raul, don't worry. It's already ten o'clock. I don't have enough time to check out the jade shop. I have so many things to do today. Besides, I think this necklace is good. I like it very much!"

"Okay, Mr. Warren. Anything you say. If you are free

in the future, I will take you there. It's a place worth seeing. Trust me, you would like it." Raul nodded helplessly as he tried to set up another meeting. Due to Horace's refusal, he felt that getting close to him was very difficult. 'Aargh! How did this bastard called Farris win Mr. Warren's favor in the blink of an eye? I met him first. I should be the one closest to him now.'

All the Warren family's associates that were present had heard what Egan said before leaving. In summary, even if Horace didn't lift a finger, he would still be the heir of the family because his father would do everything within his power to make him next in line. Some of the obstacles in his way had already been dismantled. Now there were only a few things that were standing in his way. Horace had a lot of power at his fingertips. If he wanted the Warren family to be reunited, his father would surely do it for his sake.

Now was the perfect time to suck up to Horace. They didn't need a soothsayer to tell them that it would be difficult to get close to Horace when he became the successor in the future.

After Raul bitterly lamented in his heart, he continued, "Mr. Warren, since you like Cartier jewelry so much, I will give this shop to you as a gift."

Norene was taken aback by Raul's statement. She rolled her eyes at him. 'What in the world! You have gotten some nerves. You want to give my shop to Mr. Warren. Have you asked for the shareholders' opinions before making such an offer? Mtchew!' she berated him inwardly.

Norene's blood was boiling, but she was no match for Raul. She knew that he was the most mysterious person in the whole city and the boss of the Sea Pavilion. She swallowed her words in order not to get

into trouble.

"Uncle Raul, I don't want this shop. It's useless to me. Owning tons of luxury jewelry is not my thing. I only came here to buy a gift." Horace chuckled and waved his hand.

Nothing would have brought him to a luxury store if he wasn't shopping for Laila's birthday gift.

"Mr. Warren, I understand your point. But you would need to shop for presents for your other friends on their birthdays. You can also come here to do it easily. Please accept this gift from me. It's not as expensive as you think."

Raul unrelentingly tried to convince him. Without waiting for another response, he took out his phone and tapped the screen a few times.

Asides from the other rich men, everyone else in the shop was shocked as they watched the scene. 'Are my ears deceiving me or what? How can you say that this luxury shop is not expensive at all? Could you please consider our feelings? You are worsening our self-esteem. We can't even afford to buy any of these luxury items for ourselves. Each piece of jewelry here cost an arm, but you just offered the entire shop as a gift. That wasn't enough. You also said that the place is cheap. You lie! This life is so unfair. My God!'

"Never mind, Uncle Raul. As I said, it would be useless to me. I don't have many friends. If you insist on giving me this shop, I would only come here a couple of times. You don't have to go through the trouble for something I don't need. Thanks for the offer, anyway."

Horace sighed. He thought of how small his friendship circle was. In high school, the only person he could

call his friend was Laila. A few of his schoolmates didn't bully him, but he never had a good relationship with them. Most of them probably kept him at arm's length for fear that the bullies would transfer aggression on them.

"Oh, Mr. Warren, it's no trouble for me. I've just contacted the shareholders of this shop. Not only that, but I have also made a deal with them. This shop is now yours!"

"Uncle Raul, you have gotten to be kidding me. Wow! You are so efficient!" Horace's mouth flew open in surprise when he heard these words. He had just seen Raul tapping his phone screen a few times. It looked like he wasn't doing anything serious. To his surprise, Raul had actually bought the shop in a trice. That was indeed amazing.

"Mr. Warren, it's no biggie. The shareholders of this

shop are my friends. We have a mutually beneficial relationship. I have rendered help to them in the past. So, as soon as I told them, they began to transfer all their shares."

Raul shrugged his shoulders as he spoke. He was acting as if what he had just done was nothing special.

'Fuck!' This new revelation extinguished Norene's anger. She was too stunned to speak. 'This man is so mysterious. What the hell is his true identity? Something tells me he's not just the boss of the Sea Pavilion. How was he able to convince all the shareholders so easily? They aren't ordinary big shots in Rinas. They all hold top positions in several nearby cities. What did he tell them? I must admit that he's indeed awesome!'

Norene still didn't know how powerful Horace was



even though she had learned that he was from a big family in Antawood. Since she had never been to Antawood before, she had very little idea about his family and everything they controlled.

Meanwhile, the ordinary people present continued to be shocked by all that was happening. It seemed like each new occurrence was even weightier than the former. It got to the extent that their hearts became numb. They previously thought that they were experienced. But everything that happened today made them realize that they had been living under a rock all their lives because they knew practically nothing about how the world of the rich worked.

"Well, in that case, I'll take it. Thank you, Uncle Raul!" Horace had no choice but to accept the gift. Since Raul had already convinced the shareholders to transfer the shop to him, he would come off as rude and ungrateful if he still rejected the gift.

"Mr. Warren, now that's what I'm talking about! You have done the right thing. Anyway, you don't have to thank me. It's nothing!" Raul was excited at this moment.

"No, I disagree, Uncle Raul. This is a huge gift. You deserve my gratitude. Thank you once again."

After saying these words, Horace glanced at all the rich men before saying, "Uncle Raul, Uncle Farris, and... Everybody, I'm running out of time. I have a lot of things to put in place. If I don't leave now, I would be late for lunch!"

When Farris heard him, he suggested, "Mr. Warren, where are you going? How about I drive you there? It would be faster."

It took a while for Horace to think and decide. "Okay,

Uncle Farris. I'm going to the Country Music Restaurant. Thank you for offering to help. You are a lifesaver!"

When Horace checked the time on his phone just now, it was only ten o'clock. He was not yet late. If Farris gave him a ride straight to his destination, it would take at most twenty minutes.

He guessed the guests wouldn't have arrived at the restaurant by twenty past ten. Thus, he readily accepted the ride. It would not only be comfortable, but also spare him some time to check the decoration Edna put together.

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Chapter 52 Two Conspirators

The ride to the Country Music Restaurant took only sixteen minutes. Farris parked his Rolls-Royce in front of the building when they arrived.

He then turned to look at Horace who was sitting in the backseat and asked, "Mr. Warren, we have arrived at the restaurant. Do you want me to go in with you?"

"No, thanks, Uncle Farris. There would be no need for that." After saying these words, Horace waved at Farris and got out of the car.

"Oh my God! Is that a Rolls-Royce?" A girl standing at the corner of the road pointed at Farris's car and screamed excitedly.

"Yes, it is! And it seems to be a Phantom. A Rolls-

Royce Phantom. What a sight to behold!" the other girl standing beside her said with admiration as she stared at Farris's car.

It was at this moment that Horace got out of the car.

When she saw him, her eyes widened in shock. She nudged her friend and asked in a confused tone, "Lucinda, are you seeing what I'm seeing? Look! Isn't that Horace?"

The two excited girls at the corner were Horace's former classmates and also Laila's roommates. Lucinda was the girl that mocked Horace yesterday at the fundraiser, and the other one was Macie Ramos.

"It seems to be Horace!" Lucinda rubbed her eyes and looked at Horace again before she nodded slightly.

Never in their wildest dreams had they imagined that a pauper like Horace would get out of a Rolls-Royce. This was why it was hard to believe now that they saw him with their naked eyes.

Macie was stunned after the confirmation. "Isn't Horace poor? Why did he just get out of the Rolls-Royce? Jeez! Did he rent a car with the donations we made yesterday?"

"Renting a car isn't the only issue here. It seems he also hired a chauffeur. Didn't you see that he got off the back seat?"

"This is unbelievable! If someone had told me that Horace rented a car with the money we donated for his mother's medical bills, I wouldn't have believed the story. Worse still, he rented an expensive Rolls-Royce. How can he be so wasteful?" Macie looked at Horace with inestimable disdain, as if he had

committed the gravest offense.

"Yes, you are right. We shouldn't have donated money to a poor man like Horace in the first place. Most poor people lose their senses whenever they get a huge amount of money at once. It's the same thing Horace is doing now. He's squandering our money!" Lucinda snorted and added, "About sixty thousand dollars was donated to him yesterday. He also spent nearly ten thousand dollars for the dinner. This means he only has about fifty thousand dollars left. Renting a Rolls-Royce costs an arm. There's no way he would afford to rent it for several days with just fifty thousand dollars."

"Alas! In all these, I pity Horace's mother the most. She's so unlucky to have such a dumb and unfilial son. She's fighting for her life in the hospital and can't get all the treatment she needs. But her son, who was given some money, has chosen to squander it just to

act rich. There's no one I hate in this world than this guy!" Macie said with a ferocious expression.

"That's right. Horace has no sense. It doesn't pay to live a fake life. It's pointless to brag about a car when it's not even yours. The act of showing off should be left to those trust-fund babies like Addy and Averl, who actually have luxury cars."

"Laila is so annoying. She behaves so weirdly. Why did she invite this loser here today? Phew! Birds of a feather flock together. Poverty is like a strong glue holding them together!"

"Let's not conclude just yet. It's possible that Laila wants to deceive Horace and get the money we donated to him yesterday. You never can tell!"

The two girls stared at Horace as they chatted. Both of them harbored great resentment for him and Laila



in their hearts. Their hatred showed on their faces and in their words.

Horace had no idea that Lucinda and Macie had just seen him, so he didn't know they were backbiting. Standing in front of the restaurant, he waved at Farris again. "Uncle Farris, thank you so much. You can leave now. Bye!"

"Okay, Mr. Warren. You are most welcome. If you need anything, just call me!" Farris nodded and drove away.

"Macie, did you just see that? Horace is really good at pretending to be rich with our money. Look at his poise and manner of talking. The chauffeur he hired even served him a servile manner. Bah! He's so poor that he doesn't know fifty thousand dollars would finish in the blink of an eye. Just wait and see. He would stop acting rich after the money finishes in

three days."

Even though the girls were standing at a distance, Lucinda had sensitive ears. She had heard Farris's statement clearly. His words made her start complaining about Horace. She also predicted when he would run out of cash.

"Did you say three days? Well, I predict that the money wouldn't last until then. Horace would walk home today if he continues to squander money in this manner!" Macie scowled in Horace's direction as she gossiped. She then added, "Isn't he the one that would foot the bills for Laila's birthday party today? We need to seize this opportunity. Let's force him to spend all the money we donated before he leaves here today!"

The corners of Lucinda's mouth raised slightly after she heard Macie's suggestion. A second later, she

replied, "Macie, you have gotten a point there. We can't watch him squander the donation without having our share. Horace shouldn't be the only one to spend fifty thousand dollars. It's a waste if we don't have a hearty meal today. It should be our reward for attending a loser's birthday party too!"

"Yes, it's a good thing the party will be held at the Country Music Restaurant. I heard the food here is delicious and expensive. Horace did well in choosing this place. I give him that!"

"Ha-ha! He set himself up for humiliation. Come on, girl. Let's eat to our fill and make him broke today!"

"It seems poor people know their places and are calculative about so many things including relationships. Horace is a little self-conscious. He knows he doesn't have money and sophisticated girls wouldn't even spare him a glance, so he settled for

someone in his league. Laila is almost as poor as him. She's practically the only girl that would give him an audience. Talk about a poverty relationship!"

"Ha-ha! They are both poor, so they are a perfect match!"

The girls were whispering, so their words didn't get to Horace's ears. He also didn't see them. He just walked into the restaurant.

The moment he stepped foot inside, one of the waitresses came to meet him and said apologetically, "Good day, sir. I'm sorry. Our restaurant is fully booked this noon. Please go to another place for lunch. We apologize for the inconvenience. If you don't know where to go, we can recommend several good restaurants for you."

"Miss, it might interest you to know that I'm the one

who booked the entire restaurant for lunch." Horace chuckled after he heard her dissuasion.

"Eh? You are the one?" The waitress looked at Horace with great suspicion. She squinted her eyes and shook her head doubtfully.

Horace was still wearing shabby clothes just like yesterday. Everything on his body cost less than one hundred dollars. More so, the clothes had already faded due to repeated washing. Some threads were even hanging out. No one in his or her right mind would believe that Horace was the one that booked the entire restaurant for lunch.

It was common knowledge that booking the entire Country Music Restaurant was extremely expensive. Such a thing happened once in a blue moon. Even some trust-fund babies usually became strapped for cash after booking the whole place. This was to say

that there was no chance that a poorly-dressed man like Horace would be able to afford it.

Despite the waitress's doubt, she was well-mannered enough not to drive Horace out immediately.

She finally said, "Sir, please wait here a moment. I will go to invite our manager to confirm your booking right away. Excuse me."

"Okay!" Horace nodded and sighed.

'There are still good employees in the service industry. Edna did a good job in hiring a respectful waitress. She looked confused and doubted my words, but she didn't chase me out like I was some dirt to be gotten rid of.'

Horace was pleased with the customer service here. The waitress didn't treat him harshly like the

attendants in the BVLGARI shop.

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Chapter 53 A Bet On His Sexual Life



Horace had only waited for a few minutes when he saw the waitress walking back with Edna beside her.

It didn't take long for Edna to recognize him from a distance. She chuckled and walked quickly to him. "Oh, Mr. Warren. You came earlier than scheduled. Welcome!" she said in a respectful but naughty tone.

All the waiters and waitresses were shocked when they heard their boss's words. They didn't expect that she would treat this young man with great respect.

This was happening for the first time. The employees in the restaurant knew that their boss never showed respect to anyone, not even to the wealthiest people in the city. It was always the other way round. They would all exchange pleasantries with her politely.

Judging by their boss's influence, they had deduced that she was one of the top personalities in the city. Even people older than her showed her respect. Thus, they found it appalling that she was treating a man younger than her with respect.

'Who is this man? How come our boss respects him so much?'

A few questions ran through the minds of the employees as they stared at Horace in confusion. The waitress that attended to him when he came in was even more confused.



Horace was oblivious to what the employees were thinking. He didn't even notice the confused looks on their faces. His attention was on the woman in front of him. With a smile, he remarked, "Edna, you are completely different from how I imagined you to be!"

A cute smile appeared on Edna's face immediately after she heard those words. She then asked coquettishly, "Mr. Warren, why do you say so? How did you picture me in your head? Did you think I was ugly?"

"Of course not! On the contrary, I thought you would be a mature and intellectual beauty since you became the manager of the Country Music Restaurant at such a young age. Seeing you like this took me by surprise. I guess I'm not just good at imagining people's looks by their voices!"

Horace looked at her and sighed helplessly.

Edna was wearing a T-shirt with a lovely cartoon character on it. There were fringes on the bottom of her snow-white trousers, which was in vogue. She also had on a pair of five-centimeter thick leather boots. Her unique style made her look like a cute little girl.

Horace had read her profile online before now.

Assuming he didn't know that she was twenty-nine years old, he would have guessed she was sixteen or seventeen years old.

"Oh, Mr. Warren. I see that you fancy mature women. What an uncommon taste! In that case, I'll make sure to look mature in the future!" Edna said coquettishly.

After nodding thoughtfully, she looked straight at Horace and suggested, "How about I change my

clothes now, Mr. Warren?"

"Eh? No... No. You look good in this style. Just be yourself." Horace's face turned red as she stared into his eyes deeply.

"Oh my! Mr. Warren, why are you blushing? Do you have a fever?" Edna suddenly got worried and behaved innocently. She gently reached out to touch Horace's cheek with her slender hand.

"Jeez! Mr. Warren, you are burning up!"

As soon as Edna's hand landed on his cheek, Horace felt an electric shock travel from his face down to the sole of his feet. His whole body instantly went numb.

His face became even redder.

The entire staff watched the scene in shock. They all

gave their boss confused stares. Although Edna looked cute because of her sense of style, she wasn't a gentle woman at all. She was very strict.

She behaved indifferently to them and other diners no matter their status.

The employees were shocked to see that she was flirting with Horace.

Since he could elicit another side to their boss, they all thought that he was really something.

All of them sighed in unison and continued to look at their boss. This was a rare sight, so they didn't want to miss any part of it.

The gap between Edna and Horace was very small at this moment. She inched her face closer and blew air on his face. Afterward, she asked, "Mr. Warren, how

about I cool your temperature by spraying air on your face?"

As Edna's warm breath sprayed on his face, Horace shivered uncontrollably. The redness of his face suddenly spread to his ears. He also felt a lump in his throat.

"Edna, please...please step back a little," Horace whispered to Edna after swallowing hard. She was blowing air on his ear at this time.

"Ha-ha!" Edna suddenly laughed out loud when she noticed Horace's embarrassed countenance.

After taking two steps backward, she patted him on the shoulder and remarked, "Oh, Mr. Warren. You are indeed a virgin."

"A virgin? What do you mean? Edna, can you explain

your last statement?" Horace asked in confusion.

"Well, I'm trying to say that you haven't had sex yet!" Edna explained without mincing words.

"Huh! How is my sex life any of your business, Edna? What would you do with that information even if I told you?"

Horace began to blush again as he fired questions at her. Her response wasn't what he had been expecting at all.

"Well, Mr. Warren, Farris told me yesterday that you have never been sexually active. I thought he was fibbing, so we made a bet. Just now, I realized that he was actually telling the truth. I find it surprising that you are still a virgin. Even people younger than you have gotten laid. Mr. Warren, you are already eighteen years old. You are not getting any younger.

You should have some fun!"

"No, thanks. I'm only an eighteen-year-old child. My idea of having fun isn't in any way connected to getting laid. And I intend to keep it that way!" With the back of his hand, Horace wiped away the cold sweat on his forehead. She had just put him on the spot. He didn't expect her to be so straightforward and blunt.

Something suddenly occurred to him at this moment. "Did you just say Farris?" he asked in confusion.

"Yes, Farris Rivera." Edna looked at him with an amusing smile. She nodded and added, "Well, Mr. Warren, you are just a child in my eyes!"

"Uncle Farris?" Perplexity overwhelmed him at first. A second later, he understood what had happened. He had bumped into Farris at the Vloni Bakery last night. Farris had heard him when he gave the Country

Music Restaurant as the delivery address for the cake. He soon concluded that it wasn't surprising that Farris would come here. He was always everywhere and anywhere.

Afterward, Horace further queried, "What exactly did Uncle Farris come here to talk to you about? How come my sexual life became a topic of discussion?"

"Mr. Warren, Farris came here yesterday and told me a lot of things about you. He asked me to support you! We talked for a long time, so I can't remember all the details. However, I do remember that he said you had a hard time in the past eighteen years. It was then he revealed you haven't touched a woman before! I didn't believe him, so we made a bet!"

Edna chuckled as she recounted her meeting with Farris.



"Ah! Uncle Farris is such a blabbermouth!"

"Ha-ha, Mr. Warren, you can say that again. I must admit that Farris's mouth is out of control when he wants to gossip. He's the only congenial friend I have in this city because he never keeps anything under wraps when we are discussing. He tells it all! So, I swear my allegiance to you today. You are the only one I recognize as the heir of the Warren family!"

As Horace stared at this forthright young woman in front of him, he thought, 'It's such a pity that you were born a woman in this men's world!'

After a while, he said sincerely, "Thank you, Edna!"

"Thank you? Come off it, Mr. Warren. You have a noble identity. Don't say thank you so casually to your subordinates. You have to be cold and unapproachable. Do you understand?" Edna advised

seriously.

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Chapter 54 Anxious Birthday Girl



"How can I be cold and unapproachable? Should I have turned a deaf ear to your words? Or should I have looked down on you with a frown?" Horace chuckled and shook his head. Waving her suggestion aside, he looked at her and complained, "Edna, why did you book the whole restaurant for me? I told you to reserve just a table. I'm only treating my friend and her roommates for her birthday. More so, I want to keep a low profile."

"Mr. Warren, I must say that you are really different

from other rich people!" Edna couldn't help praising him. She then complained coquettishly, "Why didn't you make it clear to me on the phone this morning? I had no idea that you intend to keep a low profile during the party here. You are the third young descendant of the Warren family that I have met. The others are always ready to throw money around. You are the first one that is cautious in spending. You don't even want to have the entire restaurant to yourself!"

"Ha-ha!" Horace immediately asked, "Edna, you know more about my family than me. I haven't seen the two other young descendants. Tell me, are they very powerful? Why did they have to book the whole restaurant just to have a meal?"

"I can bet my entire life savings that they are not as powerful as you. After all, you are the son of the head of the Warren family. You are not on the same level

as them. They may be members of the Warren family, but they are not the direct descendant of the current head. They don't even come close to you in terms of power and riches. Besides, I don't like them at all. They are so pompous and extravagant. That reminds me. Back in Antawood, Marcus once treated a friend to dinner. He booked the whole hotel. Gosh! He was so arrogant then. I can't stand him!" Edna slowly recounted how one of the young descendants lived an extravagant life.

"Marcus? This is the second time I am hearing his name today. According to Mr. Hudson's words, he was an excellent young descendant of the family!" Horace remembered Egan's words.

"Mr. Hudson?" The mention of that name stunned Edna. With her eyes opened wide, she asked, "Mr. Warren, are you by chance speaking of Egan Hudson, the man who has been serving your father in

Antawood for decades now?"

"Yes. What's wrong? Do you know him?"

"Of course I know him, Mr. Warren. Mr. Hudson is the highest-ranking staff in the Warren family. Almost all family members and associates know about him. So, he came to Rinas to see you? This is unbelievable!"

Edna was shocked to hear the news. She knew that Egan had spent many years serving Randall and that he had a very high status because of his loyalty. It was even more shocking that Randall sent his most trusted staff to see Horace in Rinas despite the serious internal crisis going on.

This act alone was enough to make her deduce that Horace held a special place in Randall's heart even though he had been missing for eighteen whole years. 'Wow! No wonder the head of the family is

trying so hard to quell the crisis and defeat the most recent opposition that reared its ugly head. From the look of things, he would have a tough duel with the Board Of Elders!

The thought of this sent a shiver down Edna's spine. She knew this was going to be a tough battle. Also, she didn't know if Randall was going to win or not. Currently, many people wanted to compete for the position of the heir. If Randall successfully defeated the current opposition, there would be no need to hold such a competition. The successor would definitely be the young man standing in front of her now. She was certain because the other competitors' backers would either be down-and-out or not be a match for Randall at that time.

'Edna, you need to stop worrying. You are not even one of the top elites of the Warren family in Rinas yet. Why are you getting worked up over what would

happen in Antawood soon? You will cross that bridge when you get there. Get your acts together. All you need to do now is to serve Mr. Warren first!' Edna advised herself inwardly.

She then asked Horace, "Mr. Warren, what do you say? Are you really not going to book the whole restaurant?"

"Edna, I don't want to book the whole restaurant. Other people can come to have their lunch." After giving this order, he added, "I'm going to spend twenty thousand dollars on the meal today. Which table should I sit at?"

"Huh? Twenty thousand dollars? I hate to break it to you, Mr. Warren. Although the average meal in our restaurant costs twenty thousand dollars, it doesn't cover for the VIP service here. How about I arrange a table for you by the window?"

Even though Horace was the owner of this place, Edna told him the truth about what his money could cater for. Afterward, she said to the waitress next to her, "Did you hear what Mr. Warren said? He doesn't want to book the entire restaurant anymore. Take off that sign by the door and don't turn any customers away."

"Okay, Edna, just make the necessary arrangements now," Horace uttered.

This was the first time Horace was coming to the Country Music Restaurant. He didn't know how much a meal would cost. Thus, he told Edna his budget and asked her to prepare a table for him.

"Okay, Mr. Warren. This way, please!" Edna nodded and led the way to a table by the window.



Horace sat down in one of the chairs and said, "Edna, you are the manager of this place. If you keep me company here, you would raise eyebrows. You can go back to your work now. I'll inform a waitress if I need anything!"

"Okay, Mr. Warren!" Edna nodded in agreement. She then snapped her fingers to call the attention of the waiters and waitresses. "Make sure you attend to Mr. Warren and his invitees well. It doesn't matter how many the other diners in the restaurant are. Mr. Warren should be your number one priority. Have I made myself clear?"

"Yes, Miss Avila. We will do exactly as you have said!"

The entire staff agreed to her command in unison. Edna then curtsied to Horace and remarked, "Mr. Warren, have a wonderful time here. I will take my

leave now."

She left after Horace nodded.

Once Edna went back to her office, all the employees raised their heads and took a good look at Horace. They wondered who he was. 'Who is this guy exactly? Why did our boss treat him with so much respect? She even said we should prioritize him over the other customers.' Everyone told themselves that they would treat him well today. Although they didn't know how powerful he was, they reasoned that he would change their lives if they left a good impression on him.

The thought of putting a conscious effort to please Horace made some of them nervous. They were afraid of making any mistakes.

Horace sensed that they were on tenterhooks. He gently waved his hand and said, "You all, don't be so

nervous. You shouldn't stress yourself too much. Just treat me as an ordinary customer!"

He then flashed them a friendly smile.

As expected, his smile eased the employees' tensed nerves slightly.

Since Horace was superior to their boss, they deduced that he was a wealthy and influential man. They had met many rich men who were full of themselves. Hence, they didn't expect that Horace would be so approachable.

The entire staff was lost in thought as they stared at him.

All of a sudden, a woman's angry voice rang out. "Horace, you shameless bastard! So, you are using the money we donated for your mother's medical bills

to pick up girls! Have you no ounce of shame?"

Lucinda and Macie entered the restaurant immediately. They both looked at Horace with absolute disdain. The angry voice was Lucinda's.

The next second, another timid voice came from the door. "Horace, I had no idea yesterday that this place was so expensive. How about we change to somewhere cheaper?"

Laila entered the restaurant and walked towards her former classmates. Anxiety was written all over her face.

When Horace had told her about the Country Music Restaurant yesterday, she had thought it was just an ordinary restaurant. She was shocked to learn the exact opposite when she searched for the restaurant's information online after she got home last night. The

per capita consumption here was more than a thousand dollars.

'Horace's mother is currently in the hospital. Her medical bills haven't been sorted out yet. I can't allow him to spend this much for my birthday!' These were the thoughts that came to Laila's mind after she saw the restaurant's price list last night. Now she wanted them to leave for a cheaper place.

Before Horace could respond to her, Lucinda and Macie quickly sat at Horace's table. Afterward, Lucinda said defiantly, "We're already here. Why should we leave? It would be too much trouble to switch restaurants now." With a scowl, she added sternly, "Laila, it's your birthday today. Don't start with me!"

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Chapter 55 Unverified Accusations



Horace was displeased when he heard the way Lucinda spoke rudely to Laila. With a sneer, he said, "Lucinda, I'm here to celebrate Laila's birthday. It has absolutely nothing to do with you. Even though you prefer this restaurant, just shut up. It's not your decision make!"

"Huh!" Lucinda was livid when she heard these words. She glared at him and fired back. "Horace, spare me all that nonsense. Just admit that you are squandering the remaining fifty dollars we donated for you yesterday. The donation was to be used for your mother's medical bills! Why are you pretending to be a rich man in our presence? Everyone knows that you

are an impoverished loser!"

'Eh? Did she just say he's an impoverished loser? What the hell is going on here?' All the waiters and waitresses were stunned due to Lucinda's outburst. In an instant, there was a tangle of thoughts in their heads. 'Isn't this young man super-rich? Why did this lady say that he was poor? Is she just fibbing? Or are these two women richer than him? But they don't look rich at all. Why then are they talking down on him?'

Like the professionals that they were, none of the employees dared to ask any questions. They didn't want to get in the bad books of their boss's superior.

Laila sat at the table with a confused expression. She looked at Horace and said, "I'm sorry, Horace. It's all my fault. Please don't take it to heart!"

These words extinguished Horace's flickering anger.

He clenched his fists and ignored the nonsense the two troublesome women had just spewed. With a smile, he asked, "Laila, why did you apologize to me? You have done nothing wrong. Why should I blame you for someone else's transgressions? Are you taking the fall because it's your birthday and they were invited?"

With a hint of grievance in his voice, he further queried, "Can't I even celebrate your birthday?"

"No, Horace, that's not what I meant. It's just that I don't see the need to celebrate my birthday in such a fancy place. A simple meal in a cheap restaurant is more than enough to make my day extra special!"

Laila didn't hesitate to explain because she feared that he would misunderstand her. Her eyes glistened with anxiety.

"It doesn't matter, Laila. Irrespective of how much



money it would cost me, I'm willing to do anything to make your day memorable." At that moment, Horace remembered how Laila behaved yesterday. To drive his point, he added, "After all, you are my best friend!"

"I'm your best friend? Well, you are also my best friend!" Laila nodded hard and flashed him a bright smile.

"Ha-ha! Look at them. This is so funny!" Lucinda's mocking voice rang out. She pointed at Horace and said disdainfully, "Horace, you need to cut the crap. You can't dodge my question with your silly acting. We are your former classmates. Do you seriously think that we know nothing about what you did? News flash! Macie and I know everything. I would have fallen for your acting if I hadn't know the truth. How much money do you have left? I can bet on my life that you only have the fifty thousand dollars that remained from the donation we made yesterday!"

With a disgusted grimace, she looked at Laila and commented, "Anyway, I must admit that you two are a perfect match. Both of you are as poor as church mice! Right, Macie?"

Lucinda's words reignited Horace's fury. He looked at her with bloodshot eyes and snapped, "Lucinda, you'd better watch your tongue. If you didn't come here to happily celebrate Laila's birthday, please leave right now. You should know that I'm the one footing the bill today!"

Horace was only restraining himself from teaching these troublesome girls a lesson because of his respect for Laila. Although he had a good temper, it didn't mean that he was a pushover.

"You!" Lucinda was enraged. She unrelentingly continued, "Horace, don't use your anger to cover up

the truth. Didn't you receive fifty thousand dollars from us? How dare you behave so arrogantly?"

She suddenly stood up and pointed at Horace. She then shouted, "Listen up, everyone. Guess what? This guy is my former classmate. His mother is terminally ill. Yesterday, our high school classmates organized a fundraiser for him and we raised the sum of sixty-two thousand dollars for his mother's medical bills. Like an ungrateful bastard, he didn't utter a word of appreciation after we gave him the money. Not only that. He's now using the money to woo our roommate. What's even more annoying is that he rented a Rolls-Royce today!"

Macie also rose to her feet and corroborated. "Yes, it's true. He not only rented a Rolls-Royce, but also hired a chauffeur. Keeping up with such a fake lifestyle would cost him thousands of dollars daily. His mother is fighting for her life in the hospital and she

needs money for treatment, but he's busy spending money on useless things. Don't you think he is unfilial and cruel?"

There weren't any other customers in the restaurant besides from them. The other people present were just the waiters and waitresses.

Due to the conversation Edna had with Horace a while ago, the staff knew that he wasn't an ordinary young man.

Now that they heard Lucinda and Macie making accusations against him, they all looked at the two women as if they were crazy. In their minds, they thought, 'Are these two women out of their mind? Why have they been talking nonsense since they arrived? Don't they know that Mr. Warren can afford to spend tens of thousands of dollars daily on whatever he liked? It's not a big deal at all.'

'These women have no idea who they are dealing with. Mr. Warren has a good temper. He hasn't flipped out since they began to insult him. He's so different from the other rich kids. Such a tolerant and well-behaved young man!'

Horace's current behavior left a better impression on the staff. They previously thought that their boss's superior was an arrogant trust-fund baby. It was surprising to find out that he was easy-going and nothing like the other rich kids.

"Horace!" Everything that Lucinda and Macie said shocked Laila. She stared at Horace and asked, "Is what they said true? Did you really rent a Rolls-Royce?"

"Laila, what do you mean? Don't you believe me?" Lucinda asked when she sensed the doubt in Laila's

words. She then added, "We were standing outside in a corner when we saw Horace get out of a Rolls-Royce. I'm dead sure that the car doesn't belong to him. He had rented it. He can't afford to buy one. Right, Macie?"

"Yes!" Macie concurred immediately. She then added, "It's true. Horace indeed arrived here in a Rolls-Royce. I saw it with my own eyes. He must have rented it!"

Ignoring Macie and Lucinda's verbal attack, Horace assured Laila. "Laila, you know me well. Honestly, I didn't rent a car. Do you believe me?"

Laila saw the sincerity in his eyes. She nodded hard and replied, "Horace, I believe you!"

Laila's trust brought solace to his heart at this moment. As he stared at her trusting eyes, he stated,

"Thank you!"

All of a sudden, a fashionably dressed woman in a tight leather coat walked into the restaurant and went straight to their table. She linked arms with a man who looked about thirty years old.

She looked at the celebrant and asked, "Laila, I hope you don't mind if my boyfriend attends your birthday party?"

This sophisticated woman was Laila's third roommate named, Della Cullen.

Laila shook her head and replied, "I don't mind!"

Laila was too submissive and easy-going. Even though she wasn't particularly pleased that Della brought a plus-one, she couldn't refuse.

Horace couldn't say anything since the celebrant had already agreed.

Everyone that was invited to the party was here. There was even an uninvited guest, Della's boyfriend.

After Della sat at the table, she asked Lucinda in confusion, "Lucinda, what were you talking about just now? Did you just say something about a Rolls-Royce?"

"Della, let me fill you in! Horace..." Lucinda held her hand and narrated everything that just happened.

She wasn't speaking loudly, but Della's boyfriend could hear her from where he sat. The moment Lucinda finished speaking, he said, "Hello, ladies and gentleman. Please forgive my manners. I forgot to introduce myself just now. My name is Cayson Flores, the vice-president of the Hstead Car Rental



Company. The words of this beautiful lady reminded me that someone came to rent a Rolls-Royce Phantom from my company this morning. I don't know if it's the same one she's talking about. However, I just thought I should put it out there!"

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Chapter 56 Awesome Liar



Lucinda mischievously clapped her hands the moment Cayson finished speaking. She remarked, "Aha! There you have it, Horace. Now that we have a witness, what else do you want to argue? How about you just admit that you indeed rented a car? You fucking coward!"

With an awkward smile, Cayson said to Horace, "Oh, I'm sorry. If I had known that you were Della's former classmate, I wouldn't have received your money for the Rolls-Royce you rented this morning. I hope we can get along well. You don't have to be formal or polite to me."

In the heat of the moment, Macie spat at Horace and said, "Eww! Horace, you make me sick. Did you think your status would be elevated and sophisticated girls like us would spare you a glance if you rented a luxury car and treated us to a meal in this restaurant? Humph! This is the most ridiculous thing I have witnessed this year. The only people that can truly afford these luxuries are from wealthy families. In your case, you have only a small amount of money that would run out soon. None of us will fall in love with you, except for Laila!"

Macie put two and two together and concluded why

Horace was behaving so rich today. As far as she was concerned, his gimmicks wouldn't work on sophisticated girls. He didn't need to come to a fancy restaurant and hire a car if he just wanted to woo Laila. She felt that Laila would be more than happy if she went to a small and cheap restaurant. The fact that Horace put in so much effort to act like a rich man made her conclude that he wanted to pursue her or another classy girl.

'Jeez! Someone tell me this isn't real. This poor guy has a crush on one of us. He chose this expensive restaurant to impress us. What a dumbass!' Macie concluded inwardly.

Macie's thoughts were so ridiculous and baseless. If Horace could read her mind, he would definitely sneer at her. He didn't want to get into a war of words with these troublesome women. He just wanted to give Laila a memorable birthday party. Money wasn't his

problem at all. He could afford to pay for anything here.

Laila's face turned red when she heard Macie's last sentence. After suppressing her embarrassment a little, she cautioned her. "Macie, I think you are mistaken. For me, money is not the only criteria to consider when choosing a boyfriend. His personality and love are more important!"

Like a good friend, Laila's trust in Horace was unshaken despite her roommates' accusations and Cayson's confirmation. She couldn't help feeling displeased with them.

Macie's slander made her a little unhappy. Horace had taken it upon himself to organize this birthday party for her. He was doing it to make her happy. She had anticipated a party void of any drama. She wasn't pleased that Macie made a scene by attacking her

best friend. It was inappropriate for her to do something like that.

When Lucinda heard Laila's words, she smirked and remarked disdainfully, "What a little Miss Goody-two shoes! We are not stuck in a fantasy land like you, Laila. Love and a good personality don't fund a relationship. So, don't impose your outdated opinion on us!"

Rolling her eyes, she added, "You are so poor. Have you ever experienced riches in your life?"

"You speak like you have experienced riches yourself. Then would you do us the honor by telling us how it feels like to be rich?" Horace chimed in when he couldn't take her disdainful words to Laila anymore. His chuckle sounded as if he was mocking Lucinda for being an arrogant, but poor woman.

It had been more than thirty minutes since Horace arrived at the Country Music Restaurant. There weren't many customers in the restaurant at this time, but some of the tables had already been occupied.

At this moment, a delivery staff from the Vloni Bakery walked into the restaurant with a digital signature device in his hand. He announced respectfully, "Excuse me, I have some cakes for a customer and the last four digits of his phone number are 8910. Is he here? The cakes he ordered are here. I need him to sign for it!"

With these words, the staff waved at the door. Six employees dressed in the Vloni Bakery's uniforms came in with three different six-layer cakes.

"Oh my God! Are they the tricolored cakes of the Vloni Bakery?" Macie exclaimed as she stared at the three six-layered cakes that were just delivered. With her

eyes opened wide, she added, "All three of these cakes are the most expensive in the Vloni Bakery. Each one costs nothing less than eight thousand, eight hundred and eighty-eight dollars. They have three different colors, red, green, and yellow. I have never seen them out of the cake shop before. More so, I didn't expect to see all of them here today. Wow! I wonder which rich guy ordered these cakes and which lucky girl would receive them as a gift. She must be the happiest woman in the world today. How I wish someone could do such a thing for me too!"

After sighing helplessly, Macie turned to look at Laila and asked, "That reminds me, Laila. You also ordered your birthday cake from the Vloni Bakery, didn't you? Which one did you order? Is it the cheapest cake?"

"Huh!" Lucinda suddenly chuckled with disdain. She added, "Macie, do you really need to ask that question? It's should be pretty obvious. Our dear

roommate here must have ordered that cake that costs only five hundred and ninety-nine dollars. It's the cheapest one in the cake shop."

The contemptuous attitude of Macie and Lucinda changed to shock in a trice. Their eyes widened when they saw that Horace suddenly raised his hand and called the attention of the delivery staff. "Hey, sir! My name is Horace Warren. The last four digits of my phone number are 8910. I was the one who ordered these cakes!"

"Okay, sir. Please, hold on a second." The delivery staff checked Horace's name on the digital signature device in his hand. After the confirmation, he directed the other employees and they put the three cakes on the table Horace was sitting at.

"Oh, my God! Is he a low-profile rich man?" One of the customers who had just reached the restaurant



was stunned when he saw Horace's shabby clothes.

This man wasn't the only one shocked. Other customers were also surprised to see that three top-grade cakes were delivered to Horace's table. He didn't look like he could afford even one of the cakes. The customers could only assume that he was a rich man in disguise.

"Alas!" Another customer glanced at Laila and her roommates who were sitting at the table. "Rich people always have many beautiful women around them," he remarked.

These customers weren't here when Lucinda and Macie made a scene by leveling accusations against Horace. Thus, they subconsciously regarded him as a rich young man. Their guess was right even though they knew nothing about his true identity.

On the other hand, Macie and her friends didn't think so. They knew Horace to be a pauper who even struggled to feed. They all heard the whispers of the other customers. In fury, Macie huffed, "Bah! What rich man? Don't let him fool you. He's just an unfilial son from a poor family. He only has about fifty thousand dollars. The worse thing is that his mother is currently sick. Instead of paying for her treatment, he's using the money to chase girls. Horace, these three cakes must have cost you more than twenty thousand dollars. Have you gone nuts? Do you think the money we donated was plucked from the tree? It was our hard-earned money. Mark my words. I'll tell all our former classmates what you have done today!"

"What? What's going on?" The customers' jaws dropped when they heard Macie's statement. They were all at sea as they stared at the people sitting at Horace's table.

"No, it's not like that!" Laila immediately stepped in. She stood up and scanned through the sea of eyes. On Horace's behalf, she explained, "These cakes are a gift from the Vloni Bakery's boss. We met him yesterday. Horace didn't waste the money we donated!"

"A gift from the boss? Why are you lying through your teeth, Laila? Do you take us for fools? Don't be stupid. How can a poverty-stricken man like Horace know the boss of the Vloni Bakery?" Lucinda retorted with a sneer. She then added sarcastically, "Horace, I had no idea that you were this awesome. You came here in a Rolls-Royce, but you insisted that you didn't rent it. You also ordered the three most expensive cakes from the Vloni Bakery, but Laila claimed that the boss gifted them to you. What other surprise do you have in store for us? Do you plan to say that the boss of this restaurant would foot the bill for our meal later? Wow! You are so powerful, Horace!"

"Alas!" Horace sighed and shook his head slightly. "From the look of things, there's a very low probability that you would believe me if I truthfully explained everything to you. Why then should I bother?" He shrugged indifferently.

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Chapter 57 The Wealth Competition



Horace decided it was time to change the topic instead of going back and forth with these women. He waved at the waitress close by and said, "Please give me the menu."

"Yes, sir. Please wait a moment!" The waitress

brought the menu and said with a smile, "Here you go, sir."

"Thank you!" As soon as Horace collected the menu, Macie asked, "Horace, you organized this party for Laila. It's your treat, right?"

"Yes. What's wrong? Do you want to pay the bill?" Horace glanced at her, and then at the other mean girls before saying, "If you don't want me to pay for your lunch, you are free to sort out yourselves."

"No, no. That's not what I meant. We don't want to take this opportunity from you." Lucinda inched closer to him and whispered, "Horace, if you pay for lunch today and play your cards right, maybe Laila would fall in love with you. This is a golden opportunity. Don't let stinginess get in the way of your love. To be honest, you two are a match made in heaven. You both come from poor families. How perfect can it

get?"

Back then in high school, Laila and Horace were despised by all their classmates. They considered them to be outcasts. Horace was paying for lunch today and it was Laila's birthday, but their former classmates still looked down on them. Just as a leopard cannot change its spots, Lucinda and the others couldn't change their contemptuous attitudes.

Horace's face turned cold when he heard Lucinda's words. He didn't care about how much the meal would cost. What annoyed him was that Lucinda was making a mockery of Laila. That was a no-no for him. He was also pissed that she was poking her nose into his relationship with Laila.

With angry sparks in his eyes, he said coldly,  
"Remember, this lunch is in Laila's honor. You came here to celebrate her birthday. I would have driven

you out long ago if it weren't for her. Watch your mouth. If you don't mind your damn business, I will teach you a lesson you would never forget! After all, I would spend less money on lunch if you were out of the picture. One less mouth to feed would be a welcome development for me!"

The next second, Cayson laughed scornfully and commented, "Well, you don't need to beat about the bush. If you can't afford it, just come out straight. There's no need to pretend like you are capable. It won't end well. Just take a good look at yourself. If you say that you can't afford the lunch, no one will be surprised. You are just a poor loser. Why are you pretending to be rich? Tsk, tsk, tsk. You have only fifty thousand dollars? Humph! That's my monthly salary. It's just chicken feed!" Since Cayson arrived, he had been listening to all the insults the troublesome ladies hurled at Horace. He guessed Horace's family background based on everything that they said and

by his appearance.

"Oh, fifty thousand dollars is your monthly salary? That's really a huge amount of money!" Horace sneered at Cayson. He then continued, "Do you know how much is the daily interest on the money in my account? Hmmm. My mind is in a muddle. I'm not sure of the exact figures, but it should be several million dollars!"

"Ha-ha! Horace, are you still daydreaming? Wake up!" Macie burst into laughter and clapped her hands in mockery. She found it funny that Horace was so boastful.

"Horace, remember I said earlier that I hope we get along well because you are Della's former classmate. Well, I want to warn you to think twice before bragging in my presence in the future. Am I a joke to you? How can the daily interest on your bank account be several



million dollars? Do you even have the slightest idea of how much money could generate such a huge interest? For your information, it would be ten billion dollars at least. Do you have that amount? Listen to me. Even if you want to tell lies in the future, make sure your lies are believable. Don't try to fool the other party. Otherwise, you might just end up making a fool of yourself!"

Cayson gave Horace an earful as he sat next to his girlfriend, Della.

"Ahem... Oh, really?" Horace sighed and asked helplessly, "Why does no one believe me anytime I'm telling the truth?"

With a smirk, he looked at Cayson and suggested, "Since you are so awesome... Why don't you make it your treat today?"

"Horace, why the sudden change of plans? Didn't you say you would foot the bills today? Oh, I get it. You want to take advantage of my boyfriend because you know he's rich! Let me tell you. That won't happen under my watch!" Della retorted before Cayson could say anything to Horace.

"It's clear that it's my treat today, right? Good. Now, all I want you to do is to enjoy your meal. Stop talking nonsense!" He looked at Cayson and added, "If you think I'm pretending to be rich, you can set things straight by competing with me. Let's see who is richer between us! There's something I would like to make very clear. I have a good temper, but that doesn't mean I'm a pushover. Should you try to insult me again, you have three options. You either get out of here, offer to pay for the meal, or you can compete with me to see who's richer. Remember actions speak louder than words!"

"Horace, didn't you receive the sixty-two thousand dollars we donated yesterday? Why are you so arrogant as if you had got millions of dollars. Yuck! You disgust me!" Lucinda looked at him with a disgusted expression.

Cayson was provoked due to Horace's audacity. He said coldly, "Horace, I have had it up to here with you. I'm up for the challenge. How do you want us to compete? Should we take out our phones and show our recent bank statements?"

Cayson was a successful businessman. Thus, he felt insulted that a poor loser was daring him.

"No, it's boring to check bank statements. I have an idea. How about we split the bill today? If I can't afford half of the bill and you can, then you win. My punishment is that I would be at your mercy and do whatever you ask of me. However, if it turns out that I

can afford half of the bill and you can't, I'll show you mercy since you're so old. I only have one request. You must kneel at my feet and admit defeat! In the event that we can both afford it, then it would be a tie! If neither of us can foot half of the bill, then there would be no winner or loser!"

As they grew more and more aggressive, Horace decided not to hold back anymore.

He continued, "Now to the major rule of this competition. When you want to pay the bill, it must be done within ten minutes. The person who takes more than ten minutes to finish the payment would automatically be the loser. What do you say? Are you in?"

"Yes! I am in!" Cayson glanced at Horace and stated coldly, "Young man, stop being so full of yourself. You should accept that there's always someone better

than you. I can't believe that you are being so arrogant because of fifty thousand dollars. That's an insignificant amount of money in this day and age!"

"Blah, blah, blah! Why are you stressing yourself by talking unnecessarily? As I said, actions speak louder than words. We have already decided to compete. Let's start ordering now!" Horace threw the menu on the table.

He pointed at the Kobe steak at the top of the menu and said to the waitress, "Please bring six servings of this steak!"

Lucinda was appalled when she heard Horace's order. A trace of doubt flashed in her eyes. A serving of the Kobe steak cost twenty thousand dollars. This meant that six servings would cost one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. If the bill was split in two, Horace and Cayson would have to pay sixty thousand

dollars each. 'What is this dumbass doing? He's setting himself up for humiliation. He only had fifty thousand dollars left from the donation yesterday. Besides, he ordered three cakes worth more than twenty thousand dollars in total. He would run out of money soon. I doubt if he even has up to sixty thousand dollars on him now.'

Lucinda made calculations in her head. She felt that Horace was shooting himself in the foot because he was in a desperate situation.

'One hundred and twenty thousand dollars?' At this time, Cayson also calculated the price of six servings of Kobe steaks. The same thought that just occurred to Lucinda went through his mind too.

'Humph! For a second, I thought you were smart. But it turns out you are missing brain cells. Look at how you just threw caution to the wind. Ha-ha! I have

found myself a new slave!' Cayson stared at Horace with a complacent smirk. 'The first course of the meal is already above his net worth. I should just order all the cheap dishes.'

With this thought in mind, Cayson ordered a vegetable salad which cost only seventy dollars.

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Chapter 58 Game On



Horace chuckled after Cayson ordered a vegetable salad. He queried, "Cayson, I thought you are so rich. Why then did you order a vegetable salad? Isn't it too cheap for you?"

"Horace, shut up! If you want to trick my boyfriend into spending more money, just say it. Stop beating around the bush!" Della fired back at him before Cayson could even respond.

It seemed like she made it her point of duty to defend Cayson against Horace. Her boyfriend was rich and she liked to spend his money, but it didn't mean she would allow others to do the same, let alone take advantage of him.

Like a female knight in shiny armor, she continued, "Horace, you think you are tricking my boyfriend into paying half of the bill. But you are actually setting yourself up. I'm dead sure you don't even have up to thirty thousand dollars in your pocket now. How dare you order six servings of Kobe steaks? You fucking bastard! You wanted my boyfriend to pay the bill from the very beginning, didn't you? Everything is clear to me now. Since you even set a punishment for the



loser, it seems you would love to serve us like a dog!"

None of the invitees believed that the three cakes on the table were a gift. Horace and Laila didn't bother to convince them anymore.

The total money donated at the fundraiser was sixty-two thousand dollars. Horace had spent nearly ten thousand dollars for dinner last night. After the doubting Thomases deducted the money for the expensive cakes and the rental car today, they estimated that Horace had only thirty thousand dollars on him. This was the highest estimate they could make.

"Ha-ha! Really?" Horace sneered with anger.

Suggesting the competition wasn't to trick Cayson into paying half of the bill. He had just wanted to teach him a good lesson. Della's accusation made his blood boil. He turned to the waitress and ordered, "Please tell all

the customers present that every meal ordered this noon would be placed on my tab. They don't have to pay a dime. This also covers for the customers that would come after the announcement is made."

"Okay, sir. I'll inform them right away!" The waitress didn't hesitate for a second. She remembered the stern warning her boss had given all the employees before now.

She quickly walked to the music bar in the restaurant. Afterward, she picked up the microphone and announced articulately, "Dear esteemed customers, please can I have your attention? Mr. Horace Warren has offered to pay the bill for everyone here this noon!" She pointed at Horace as she spoke.

Although Edna hadn't told the employees Horace's full name, they had overheard the conversation of his former classmates at their table. Now they knew his

full name was Horace Warren.

"Great! This is our lucky day!" The customers were few, but they all screamed in surprise and appreciation. Many of them even picked up their cell phones and started making calls.

They wanted to inform their close family and friends to come and have free lunch at the Country Music Restaurant. Such a good thing happened only once in a blue moon. They couldn't just keep it to themselves.

Edna was sitting at a corner of the restaurant when she heard the waitress's announcement. With a chuckle, she looked at Horace murmured to herself, "Now he's behaving like the son of the Warren family's head. It's a good thing that he's proving to those arrogant fellows that he is not a man to be trifled with!"

She had been listening to their conversation all along.

Everyone at Horace's table was stunned to hear the announcement. Della sneered and remarked, "Horace, you can achieve a tie with Cayson by doing this, but do you have any idea how much you will owe in the end? You organized this party and Laila invited us. We have no hand in whatever game you are playing. We didn't sign up to pay for other people's meals. You have to take full responsibility when it's time! Listen to me carefully. It's not too late to go back on your words before people begin to troop in here."

Della was getting very anxious. She didn't want her boyfriend to go bankrupt because of Horace's games.

The meals in this restaurant were already expensive. The customers here would eat to their fill because Horace had just given them an open check. By the time they were done, he would have to pay hundreds

of thousands of dollars. If he couldn't, the management may call the police on everyone seated at this table.

"Horace!" Laila suddenly held his hand and looked at him worriedly.

She had looked forward to this party with great expectation, but this wasn't how she had imagined it to be. She felt that Horace was behaving rather weird today. However, she still felt sorry for him because he wouldn't have made a bet with Cayson if he wasn't trying to please her.

When Horace sensed her perplexity, he gave her a reassuring smile. He then looked at Della and said disdainfully, "Della, you are stressing yourself over nothing. There will be no tie today. I will come out as the winner. Just watch and see!"

After he finished speaking, he took out the boxed Jusete un Clou necklace he had bought from the Cartier shop and handed it to Laila. "Before our food comes, let me give you a gift. Happy birthday, Laila," he said with a smile.

Laila thought Horace had just gotten her a normal birthday gift. She had no idea what was inside the gift box. When she took the box and opened it, she was greeted with the shiny brilliance of a beautiful necklace. She exclaimed, "This gift is so beautiful! Horace, thank you very much!"

The others stretched their necks to see what was in the gift box. They were attracted by the radiating brilliance of the necklace. When Macie set eyes on it, she exclaimed, "My goodness! This is one of the Jusete un Clou necklace series by Cartier. It's so beautiful!"

"Are my eyes deceiving me? No, it's indeed the expensive nail necklace by Cartier. Even if it was sold at a discount, it wouldn't be worth less than thirty thousand dollars. How did you get it?" Della was lost in thought for a while as she stared at the necklace. The next second, she chuckled. "Horace, you are a crook! You don't have much money since you have bought the cakes and the necklace, do you? You cunning bastard! From the very beginning, you knew you couldn't afford to pay for lunch. Since I brought my rich boyfriend here, you devised a plan so you can indirectly rope him into paying the bills. Horace, you're really something! No wonder you have been behaving so arrogantly and trying to provoke my boyfriend since we got here. It turns out you premeditated everything. This competition was a trap!"

Della felt like Sherlock Holmes as she made a series of deductions through observation and logical reasoning. When she was done, she nodded her

head with assurance.

"Horace, there's something I would like you to make clear. I don't understand why you pretended to be rich when you are actually penniless. Did you do that just to save face? How dumb can you be? If you had come out clean about your penniless state, I would have asked Cayson to foot the bill. You wouldn't have had to face any humiliation. But now you have landed us into trouble!"

"Ha-ha!" Horace burst out laughing. He then clapped his hands thrice and said, "Wonderful! Your speech is wonderful, Della. You would make a good detective in the future! Who knows? Your name might go down in history as the female Sherlock Holmes! Honestly, I don't just like your boyfriend. This has gotten nothing to do with you. Don't stick your oar into my business or try to pity me. Even if I accrue a debt worth hundreds of millions of dollars in the end, it's none of



your business. Anyway, I won't lose today!"

Meanwhile, Laila had heard everything Della said. The happy expression on her face was instantly replaced with sheer worry. She closed the gift box and pushed it back to Horace. "I can't accept such an expensive gift, Horace!" she uttered, shaking her head.

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Chapter 59 Mischievous Tactics



Horace looked at the necklace that Laila had returned to him. He smiled and said, "Do you think this necklace is expensive? As far as I'm concerned, it doesn't fully represent how valuable you are to me,

Laila. If I had known what would happen earlier, I would have gone to the jade shop with Uncle Raul. Only an expensive jade can truly represent what you mean to me."

Horace's words touched Laila's heart. She was so happy that he held her dear to his heart. She didn't know who Uncle Raul was, but she still tingled with excitement.

Laila was naturally a reasonable young woman. Despite her excitement, she didn't let his words cloud her sense of reasoning. With a smile, she said, "Horace, I appreciate your kindness. I'm so happy that you made great efforts just to make my birthday memorable. However, this necklace is too expensive. Please return it. You still need a lot of money for other pressing issues."

"He should return it?" Lucinda chuckled with mockery

written on her face. She then uttered disdainfully, "Just so you know, you can't return any piece of jewelry from a luxury brand like Cartier. The only exception is if there's a quality problem. From the look of things, there's no problem with the necklace, so you are stuck with it!"

Della looked at Horace and shook her head.

"This necklace doesn't even cost a quarter of the price for lunch. It's the least of our worries now. Laila, you'd better think of what you would do for Horace today. Don't just sit there as he makes bad decisions. If he can't foot the bill later, everyone at this table would be held responsible. He's the one that gave the other customers an open check. Even if we try to explain it to the police, they wouldn't have any of it. We will be doomed!"

The only reason why Della had accepted Laila's

invitation and brought her boyfriend along was that she wanted to see how Horace would be humiliated by her boyfriend. 'I didn't expect that Horace would be so brazen. It turned out that he prefers to shoot himself in the foot than to admit defeat. What a crazy man!' she thought.

"Humph! It's a bet between your boyfriend and Horace. No one should involve me in something I have no hand in. Please!" Macie washed her hands off the situation.

"How can you speak like a child that was born yesterday, Macie? Do you have any recording of when they were making the bet? No, right? That means we have no proof to show the police when they get here. Do you think Horace would turn himself in and clear our names? Yeah, I thought so too!"

Horace did a facepalm and chuckled. "Don't frame

me, Della. Why are you anticipating that the police would get involved? You need to chill out. Just to put your mind at rest. I promise to own up no matter what happens. However, I can't say the same for your boyfriend. Something tells me that he would chicken out!"

"You brat! Stop making silly assumptions when you know nothing about me. Anyway, I hope you would still be so confident when it's time to pay the bill!"

Cayson glared at Horace as he spoke angrily.

He wasn't worried about the bill at all. He was sure that if things went out of hand, he could still afford his bill and Della's.

"Don't worry. I'm always optimistic and confident. I don't cower in the face of adversity. Despite your defiance, I still can't take your word for it. How about we both sign an agreement? Who knows? You might

disappear into thin air if something unplanned happens later!" Horace stared at Cayson doubtfully.

"What? How dare you question my character? Who the hell are you? You brat, I don't trust you, either. Come on. Get me a piece of paper and a pen!" Cayson ordered the waitress after sneering at Horace.

Just when the two competitors were about to sign their names, Cayson said, "Horace, you are the one that was supposed to pay for this meal. You said it was your treat. If this competition ends in a tie and the bill is unaffordable, you still have to sort it out. You need to add this clause to the agreement if you want me to sign it!"

Cayson stared at his opponent with an intimidating expression. He wanted to see how Horace would back out in the face of difficulty. To his dismay, he

nodded and assented. "Okay, no problem!"

Horace added the clause to the agreement and appended his signature without hesitation. He then pushed the note to Cayson and said, "Come on, it's time to show how courageous you are!"

Cayson read through all that was written on the paper patiently. When he confirmed that the clauses were beneficial to him, he signed it.

After they both put their signatures to the agreement, Macie looked at Horace in surprise and commented, "Wow! You keep surprising me today. I didn't know that you could be so brave!"

She then turned to look at Della and asked, "Since they have both signed the agreement, everything is okay now, isn't it?"

"Yeah!" Della could only sigh helplessly. For some weird reason, she became very worried about her boyfriend after she saw the confident look on Horace's face. She wanted to dissuade Cayson from appending his signature.

Cayson called the waitress and ordered, "Miss, please serve everyone present a plate of the Kobe steak. It should be added to our bill!"

Although Horace had offered to pay for everyone who was having lunch here, Cayson knew that some of the customers would be reasonable enough not to order the most expensive dish. They wouldn't want to take his kindness for granted. However, Cayson wanted it the other way round. He wanted the bill to be weighty. Playing tricks on Horace was the only way he could vent his anger.

The waitress's mouth was slightly agape when she



heard his command. She had watched the gambling between the two competitors.

She pursed her lips and thought, 'This man is not smart at all. I can't believe that you are a vice-president. Why can't you put on your thinking cap? It might interest you to know that when we were about to book the entire restaurant for Mr. Warren, we didn't check his assets. Normally, we do this for other customers. There's only an exception for the top wealthiest people in Rinas. You have no idea how rich Mr. Warren is. Now you said we should serve each of the customers a plate of the Kobe steak. Even if all the seats in this restaurant were occupied, the bill would only be a drop in the ocean for our boss, let alone our boss's superior. You have already lost even before the end of the competition. You're so stupid!'

Just as the waitress was criticizing Cayson inwardly, Horace snapped his fingers to call her attention. He

then said, "Miss, the customers here are very few. I don't know if there are still enough steaks left in the restaurant. If there's enough, please serve them to the customers irrespective of the time they arrive this noon. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir. Each customer will get one serving of the Kobe steak even if they don't order it. On behalf of our customers, I want to thank you for your kindness. You indeed made their day!"

The waitress smiled at Horace and curtsied respectfully.

Her behavior angered Cayson. He was furious that she gave Horace a beautiful smile and even thanked him. 'This is ridiculous! I was the one that suggested that each customer got a serving of steak. Why is she smiling at Horace instead of me?'

No one could answer his question since he only asked it inwardly.

As time went by, more customers trooped into the restaurant in their numbers. The previously empty seats became occupied.

These new customers had found out about what was happening in the Country Music Restaurant through their relatives and friends that called them. It was already past lunchtime for most offices. But some of the customers asked for leave for the rest of the day just so they could enjoy a free meal here.

The average cost of a meal in this restaurant was much more than the daily wages of some of the customers present. Most of them had never eaten such luxurious meals before.

Cayson couldn't help laughing as more people

trooped into the restaurant. He was sure that he would win today because Horace would plunge into debts.

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Chapter 60 Penniless Egois



Lunch was served and everyone seated at Horace's table dug in. By the time Horace was done eating, he leaned back in the chair and touched his bulging belly. 'Phew! I didn't expect the food here to be so good. Although it's not as delicious as that of the Sea Pavilion, it beats the meals of the Lake Hotel hands down. I can't be the only one to taste this heavenly meal. I should pack some for my mother!' he thought to himself.

Without hesitation, he waved at the waitress and said, "Miss, please pack two servings of the Kobe steaks for me."

"Horace, are you alright upstairs? It seems to me that you are not. Or have you given up? Even in this desperate situation, you are still planning to take away two servings of the Kobe steaks. Do you have any idea how many customers have come here and bought something on your tab?" Della scolded Horace as she glared at him.

This wasn't because she cared about him plunging into debt. He could go to hell for all she cared. She only wanted to see the worries on his face after he realized that he put himself into trouble.

But to her dismay, there was no change in Horace's expression. His bright and satisfied smile was still

plastered on his face. He also exuded the same confidence he had since she came in here.

'What the hell is going on? Why is this bastard so unmoved?' Della stared at Horace in confusion. She began to feel more anxious. The lunch was about to come to an end. This meant that the bill would be brought soon.

'Can Horace really afford it?' A weird question that she had never thought of before now suddenly crossed her mind. This was because of the confidence Horace was unrelentingly exuding.

At this time, Della wasn't the only one feeling perplexed. Lucinda and Macie also felt the same way. Given that Horace would have to pay a huge amount of money for the bill, it was only logical that he should be uneasy. However, he was completely fine. He even ordered takeout as if he didn't have a pile of

debt hanging over his head.

Out of curiosity, Macie asked, "Horace, we are almost done eating. Aren't you worried at all?"

"Worried? Why should I be? Is there anything bad happening?" Horace was taken aback by her question. Afterward, he asked, "Macie, are you talking about the bill I have to pay later?"

"Yes, Horace! Aren't you worried about it at all? I just saw many people trooping into this restaurant just to have free meals. They were about one hundred! All of them were given the most expensive meal on the menu. It stands to reason that the entire bill would run into two million dollars or more. Aren't you afraid?"

Macie stared into Horace's eyes. She met with a great shocker. There was not even the smallest trace of panic in his eyes.

"Ha-ha! Macie, why should I be afraid? Besides, I am not the only one footing the entire bill. It would be split equally between Cayson and me. There's no cause for alarm." After saying that, Horace pointed at Cayson and said, "This guy right here is the one that should be afraid. Direct your questions at him, not me!"

"Humph! You silly brat, we are almost done eating. There's no point wasting any more time. How about we pay the bill now?" A sinister gleam appeared in Cayson's eyes as he stared at his opponent. He didn't have one million dollars to pay half of the bill. He looked at the agreement and read the last clause. If the two of them couldn't afford it, Horace would have to pay since it was his treat in the first place. This condition was perfect.

'Alas, it's a pity that I didn't win against this nonentity.



If I had defeated him, I would have made him my slave and shown him nothing but suffering. What a waste!' Cayson sighed with disappointment on his face as he thought about everything he would have done to torture Horace.

At this moment, Horace nodded and remarked, "Okay!"

He waved to the waitress and said, "Miss, the bill, please!"

The customers around heard when he asked for the bill. They all paused and pricked up their ears. It was common knowledge that Horace was the one that offered them free food today.

They all knew that the meals they ate had been placed on his tab.

Although Horace was dressed in threadbare clothes, his charisma and manner prevented the customers from concentrating on his dressing.

Horace looked so handsome that several girls swooned over him as he spoke.

The waitress came from the counter to Horace's table with the bill in her hand. She said politely, "Hello, sir. The total bill is two million and thirty thousand dollars. However, our manager has given you a discount. Now you only need to pay one million and six hundred thousand dollars. Cash or credit card, sir?"

She handed the bill to Horace as she spoke.

"What?" The customers mumbled in shock when they heard the total cost for all the meals. The restaurant became a little noisy.

"Oh my God! One million and six hundred thousand dollars? He could buy a Maserati with that money. What a fucking rich man!" one of the diners murmured in shock.

Horace looked at the bill. He then said to Cayson, "The total bill is one million and six hundred thousand dollars, so we both have to pay eight hundred thousand dollars each. I like to respect my elders even if the person is a stranger or only a few years older than me. Hence, how about you pay first? Would it be in cash or via your credit card?"

Cayson folded his arms and whispered, "I can't afford it."

"I'm sorry. My ears have been having some issues recently. I didn't hear what you said because your voice was so low. Please can you repeat yourself?"

Horace flashed a sinister smile at his perplexed opponent. This wasn't how he had planned for the lunch to be. He had only organized this lunch to celebrate Laila's birthday. He didn't expect that the invitees would take delight in mocking him and the celebrant.

Inviting them was out of the goodness of his heart, but these badly-behaved people didn't appreciate it. They decided to make a scene without regard for Laila's feelings. This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Horace was done making any efforts to befriend them. It was a lost cause.

At this time, Della chirped, "Horace, that's enough! Don't tell me you have something stuffed in your ears. He just said that he can't afford it! There you go. Hope you heard clearly now?"

"Oh, yes. I heard it clearly. But that's your statement,

not your boyfriend's. You two are not married yet. I'm afraid that you have no right to speak for him. I want to hear from the horse's mouth. Let him speak for himself. Last I checked, he's not dumb!"

Horace rolled his eyes at Della and then turned to look at Cayson. He said apologetically, "I'm sorry. As I said earlier, I have had trouble with my ears recently. Could you please repeat what you said?"

"You!" Cayson pointed at Horace. He wanted to curse him out, but he was speechless for a moment. Finally, he closed his eyes and shouted with embarrassment, "I can't afford it! Did you hear me now, you stupid brat?"

"Oh, man. You scared the shit out of me. You didn't have to shout like that!"

Horace held his chest and took deep breaths as if he

were indeed frightened. After a while, he added, "It's fine that you can't afford it. However, I was expecting you to have some more shame. I can't believe you said it so loudly like it's something to be proud of, or as if I'm owing you!"

'Fuck you, bastard!' Cayson cursed Horace inwardly as he glared at him. Clenching his fists, he said, "Don't be so arrogant. It's your turn now. Let's see how you intend to pay the eight hundred thousand dollars."

"Hold your horses, Cayson. It's just a mere eight hundred thousand dollars. It's chicken feed to me." Horace snickered and shrugged indifferently. He then took out a crumpled coupon from his pocket and handed it to the waitress close by. "Miss, can I pay half of the bill with this coupon?" he asked politely.

The waitress took a look at the black coupon and

replied softly, "Yes, sir. This is a fifty percent off coupon. Eight hundred thousand dollars would be deducted from the bill. Now you only need to pay the remaining eight hundred thousand dollars."

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