

## Chapter 401

“Huh? What’s going on, here?”

Staying out of the way by the side of the road, Leila and the others watched what was happening in shock.

A veritable fleet of expensive cars lined outside the karaoke bar. A throng of people swarmed about the place.

“Something must have happened! Gosh... could it be that rascal Gerald’s gotten in over his head?” Douglas wondered aloud.

“Must be. I mean, who else in Serene County could stir up this much of a fuss? I should’ve known better than to bring that guy here, no matter what anyone said. Now look at this mess: The moment something major goes down, we’re gonna get dragged into it—Mr Lourdes knows very well he’s with us!” The guys whispered amongst themselves, their outlook seemed bleak.

Cindy had gone pale, hearing their words. If what they said was true, then Gerald’s life might be in extreme danger!

No, she had to go in and see for herself. If things were really that bad, she’d call the cops! Thinking thusly, Cindy threw open the car door and ran for the karaoke bar.

Gerald had left a good impression on Cindy. They’d only just met, so it was still too soon to talk about any real feelings between them... but she just felt that he was a

really nice guy, down-to-earth. What's more, in order to save everybody, he'd taken the whole thing onto himself.

Abandoning him without a second thought, like Leila and the others had done... that was something Cindy simply couldn't do. She couldn't just sit this one out.

"Cindy, are you crazy? Get back here!" Leila had gotten out of the car as well, shrieking hysterically.

Cindy was her best friend. Leila couldn't allow her to do this. Seized by terror, she chased after her, desperate to stop her.

As for Douglas and the rest, they remained right there inside the car, just smoking and keeping watch from afar.

"Holy hell, it's a bloody mess in there! I don't know who Mr Lourdes pissed off, but he's been beaten to a pulp!"

"Anyone else wants to go next? Oh, the horror... but what a twist! Mr Lourdes thought he was the biggest cheese around—never imagined he'd bump into someone even more powerful than him... ahahaha!"

Some young men and women passed by in front of Cindy, chattering noisily about what had happened. Overhearing them, first she was shocked by the news of Mr Lourdes' tragedy...

But what about Gerald?

Anxiously, Cindy stopped them to ask about the situation within. This allowed Leila to catch up.

Aroused by the sight of these two ravishing beauties, the guys scrambled to recount what had happened back at the bar.

“Hey, babes... I guess you weren’t there, so you wouldn’t know—but of course you’ve heard of Mr Louie Lourdes, the richest kid in all Serene County!” One of the guys was so excited he was sputtering. “Just now, a whole gang of black-clad bodyguards beat him within an inch of his life! Totally brutal, and I hear they’re from Mayberry City! Just take a look at all these cars they brought here! Incredible!”

The other guys were eager to contribute as well:

“As for Louie, when he started shouting for someone to get Big Dolph over here, I thought the tables had turned, you know? I was expecting Louie would clean all their clocks out! But when Big Dolph arrived, he was suddenly bowing and scraping for those two, offering them smokes and drinks... Mr Lourdes’ face was a nasty sight, then!”

“The other big players in the room all knew whose side to take, then!”

“But I’m not asking about Louie Lourdes!” Cindy wailed. “I’m asking if there was some other young man who also got hurt! Did Louie... hack up some other guy in there?”

“Huh? Some other guy? Well, Louie and someone he called ‘Uncle’ caught a bloody good thrashing... but no, no one else was hurt... Oh! Louie’s own bodyguards were knocked out cold instantly—but I wouldn’t have called any of them a ‘young man’...”

“How could this be? What about Gerald? Is there any possibility you might have made a mistake?” Leila blurted out in disbelief. “Are you absolutely sure the one who got roughed up was Louie Lourdes?”

“Of course! We’ve all seen his picture before!” Hooting and jeering, the group wandered off.

“Does this mean... Gerald’s alright?” A massive weight in Cindy’s heart was suddenly eased—but then she added, “But why would all these wealthy people suddenly turn on Louie? Leila... do you think Gerald might have summoned them to his aid?”

Thinking back, she’d just remembered how, as Gerald was clearing the way for them to escape, he’d also said something about calling his own people to come deal with Louie.

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He’d meant summoning people to help fight Louie Lourdes.

At that time, Cindy hadn’t paid much thought about it. She’d assumed Gerald was just stalling for time.

But right here right now, were a whole horde of people whom, sure enough, had attacked and vanquished Louie.

What Cindy was suggesting sent a tremor through Leila's entire body.

"Impossible! That guy? I don't know much about him, but isn't he just some penniless loser? How could he have so many rich and powerful friends? Don't you fall for his nonsense, Cindy!"

Heaven's sake! If it turned out to be true... Leila might as well just ram her head against the nearest wall.

But no, haha, it was simply not possible!

Leila turned to gesture for everyone back in the car to come over and join them, where she then shared with them what had been learned. Everyone was gobsmacked by the news that Louie had been wiped out clean. They gazed with admiration at the magnificent cars lining up along the street outside the karaoke bar.

"Look! Isn't that Gerald?" Glancing around, Leila suddenly spotted him in the Western restaurant next door, dining at the window seat.

For a moment, she doubted her own eyes.

"It can't be... no, but it really is him!" Douglas was every bit as stupefied.

Everyone had been convinced that Gerald was dead meat. Instead, he was in a fine restaurant nearby, sitting at their premier table?

This... how... what...

“Gerald’s okay after all! Leila, maybe he was really telling the truth! Maybe all these guys really did come here to back him up! Maybe Gerald really is friends with lots of rich people!” Cindy seemed delighted by this.

“No way, no way! I refuse to believe it!” Leila was stamping her feet in agitation. “Douglas, we’re going over there to get to the bottom of this. Anyway, can you believe that tramp can afford that class of fine dining?”

Someone she held so much contempt for, turned out to be someone so amazing? That would be a right slap to the face!

“Right! Let’s get over there! You, send the drunk ones home first!” Douglas issued this command to one of the boys, ignoring the fact that he wasn’t completely sober himself.

Earlier, quite a few of the guys had downed an entire bottle. Now the alcohol was running its course, and some were no longer able to stay on their feet.

Douglas himself had quite a high tolerance—and anyway, he couldn’t bear to walk away from such a momentous affair, so he would just grit his teeth and bear it.

Leila and Cindy were by his side as he walked straight into that restaurant.

In the grip of a terrible rage, Leila stormed across the floor. “Gerald, do my eyes deceive me? So it really is you... Huh! You came into a place like this, but ordered nothing, just sitting here... Don’t tell me you just slipped out from there, and just needed some place to sit down?”

She’d been a little worried—worried that Gerald might actually turn out to be someone of wealth and influence. However, now that she was standing at his table, she was able to breathe a sigh of relief.

Most likely, he’d only ducked in here to find shelter.

“Leila, perhaps you’re not aware of how exclusive this restaurant is. It’s considered a first-class establishment, with their main branch based in Mayberry. Common folk generally don’t dare to trespass in here—so you could hardly have found a safer hiding place, Gerald! Hahaha!” Douglas added his own mocking comments to the mix.

Gerald just sat there mutely.

Back in that karaoke room, when his bodyguards were giving it to Louie and his grunts, Gerald had watched for a while, but then lost interest.

It was enough just to teach that fool a lesson. There was no reason for him to hang around. That sort of thing wasn't his style.

Anyway, he hadn't had much to eat for lunch earlier, so by now he was starving, and had come out looking for a bite to eat.

But after he'd placed his order, and was taking a moment to contemplate how he'd handle things from here on out...

... Unexpectedly, Leila and company had come charging back into the fray.

What was this? Hadn't he gotten rid of them already? Gerald couldn't even begin to imagine how he'd explain himself now.

At the corner of his eye, he saw six restaurant staff form into a line, trays of food in their hands. And then, they began making their way towards Gerald...

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"Excuse me, miss!" The waitress in the lead smiled at Leila, who stared with mouth gaping wide as a feast was laid out upon the table before Gerald.

"Huh? What?" Leila stuttered for a moment, then exclaimed, "Hey, hey, hey! There must be some mistake—you've got the wrong table!"

Anyone could tell that it was a sumptuous meal worth a small fortune—at least five hundred dollars or more—and it was meant for Gerald?



Leila had always held him in contempt as a man with nothing to his name. One time, she'd let slip that their fathers had been arranging for them to be married, and it had made her a complete laughing stock.

“Hey, Leila! Somewhere on a far away farm, your fiancé’s waiting for you!” She could still see those mocking grins vividly at the back of her mind.

It had been the greatest source of misery in her life. She never spoke of it, but it was always on her mind. As a symbol of her humiliation, she utterly despised Gerald Crawford.

And yet, Gerald was eating so well right now...

“How could there be any mistake? Mr Crawford here ordered our most expensive menu, prepared by the hand of a master chef from France! It costs a thousand dollars in total!” The waitress offered her another sunny smile, then bowed to Gerald, and left him to his meal.

“What? One thousand dollars!” Leila stood stunned. Never had she ever indulged in such luxury!

“Gerald, what are you up to? No one’s poorer than you, and yet you’re burning money like nobody’s business... French cuisine? Are you out of your mind? Have you never thought about taking that one thousand bucks and doing something useful with it?” Leila harangued him acidly.

“That’s right, that’s right,” Douglas joined in. “The poor sure like to act like they’ve got money to spend! Who am I, and who are you? My handphone costs as much as this meal you’re eating here! Did what happened just now scare the wits out of you?”

Truth be told, here in Serene County, a five-hundred-dollar smartphone was a substantial status symbol—but Douglas was one step up: With his thousand-dollar phone, it showed that he was really somebody.

But now, it was nothing more than the price of one meal for Gerald. No one would take this without comment.

“Gerald, it’s not that we’re trying to make you feel bad... But wouldn’t it be better to take this money and buy yourself some nice clothes, or a decent phone, or maybe some kind of makeover... Instead, you’re just... urgh!” Leila shook her head at him in disgust.

Compared to Douglas, whether in terms of manners or intellect, Gerald fell far short.

Bzzt! Gerald’s phone was vibrating. He pulled it out for a quick glance. It was an unknown number calling.

Leila and Douglas stared with eyes as wide as the plates on the table.

Due to the awkwardness of the current situation, Gerald didn’t take the call. Terminating the connection, he tried to shove the phone back into his pocket.

At the end of the day, she was still Uncle Jung's daughter, and he shouldn't cause her too much offence.

"Hold it right there! Let me see that phone!" Seized by a sudden frenzy, Leila snatched it over, and murmured, "This model, it's..."

"It's the latest model to hit the market, four thousand and five hundred dollars apiece. This is your phone, Gerald?" Besides Leila and Douglas, even Cindy was shocked to see it.

"Haha, I borrowed that from a classmate! Just for appearances, you know!" Gerald disparaged himself.

"Hmph! Tell the truth, or else!" Cindy rolled her eyes at him. "Don't you think I can't tell that this belongs to you?"

Leila was no longer able to speak, now.

How could this be possible? The man she hated so... how could he be... Did this mean all those guys back there had truly been summoned here by him?

"Alright, alright... it's just a phone. You guys were only drinking back there—you haven't had anything to eat... How about I treat you all to some French cuisine?" Gerald attempted to change the topic with everything at his disposal.

“Oh, that sounds good! I’m famished—and I’ve never had a thousand-dollar French banquet before! Hahaha! This will be your treat, Gerald!”

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Cindy giggled.

“Of course!”

Stony-faced, Leila snapped, “Cindy! Have you forgotten what you came here to ask about? And, and... weren’t you so worried about Gerald, just a moment ago? Aren’t you curious why he’s unscathed?”

“Oh, right! Gosh, in my excitement I quite forgot. Gerald, tell us. How are you still in one piece? And are all those guys outside your people?”

“Indeed... how am I still in one piece?” Gerald answered dumbly.

“We’re asking you!” Leila frowned, glaring at Gerald.

Then Gerald clapped a hand to his forehead. “Oh, I remember now. Just as I was about to come to blows with Louie, the patrons from next door burst into the room, and maybe they had some kind of grudge against Louie, because everyone started fighting on sight! In all that chaos, I managed to slip away.” Gerald finished with a laugh.

Leila was so mad that words failed her.

Gerald was obviously lying. Slipped away? Like, out of the karaoke bar... and into the restaurant next door, for a spot of fine dining? Who'd believe you!

Ah, forget it! She was too angry now, too agitated!

“Why don't the two of you stay for dinner, too? It'll be my treat, okay?” Gerald said pleasantly to Leila.

To be honest, seeing the mouth-watering feast that had been served, Leila felt extraordinarily tempted. All girls are gluttons, aren't they?

But with the way things were between Gerald and her, how could she accept?

What about her pride?

“Hmph! No need—if we wanted to eat, we'd order something ourselves!” Folding her arms, Leila glanced towards Douglas.

Oh, how she wanted to order something.

Douglas peeked into his wallet. A thousand bucks per pax... he'd started the night with a thousand five hundred on each person. He'd picked up the tab for karaoke

earlier, to the tune of a whopping one thousand and two hundred dollars. There was no way he could afford to whip out another couple thousands for an impromptu feast...

His family held influence—but not so much affluence...

“Um, well... Perhaps next time, Leila. My treat! It’s just... I’ve had too much to drink tonight!”

“You...” Leila could also tell that it was beyond his means.

She sighed wretchedly. Douglas felt the same.

They stood up to leave, but as they turned to go, they ended up knocking over a vase of flowers on a side table.

With a crash, the vase shattered on the floor.

Ah, crap! Douglas froze. A moment later, a waitress hurried into view, having heard the noise.

“Sir, this vase...” she began in a whisper.

“Just a bunch of lousy flowers, barely worth looking at. I’ll pay for them, alright? Here, one hundred. Is that enough?” Fishing out a hundred-dollar bill, he slapped it down on the table.

How’s that for cool?

He glanced at his woman. “Leila, let’s get out of here!”

Swooning for him all of a sudden, Leila nodded submissively.

“Hold a moment, sir!”

“What’s the matter?”

“That was an artistic flower arrangement... Rather than a hundred dollars, it’s worth a thousand five hundred!” The waitress declared with a smile.

Douglas was paralyzed on the spot. “What? A thousand five hundred?”

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“That’s right, sir. One thousand and five hundred dollars!” The waitress beamed.

Douglas’s face was a sight to behold. At first, he’d thought to just toss down a hundred bucks, and then swagger out of there. He’d never expected that bunch of flowers to be worth so much!

If he called his father over to make some noise...

No, that wouldn't do. This restaurant chain was owned by a powerful figure over at Mayberry. Whatever clout his family had counted for nothing in here!

But neither did he have a thousand five hundred on him right now!

"Hmph. So it's a thousand five, so what? No big deal!" Leila sneered. She was this close to slapping the money in that waitress's face.

Gerald was watching. No matter what, she had to have the last word in this!

Leila glanced towards Douglas. He'd definitely be able to do something about this!

Patting his pockets, he leaned in close to whisper to her, "I've only got a few hundred left on me... I can't pay!"

"Ah?" Leila had been expecting Douglas to still have around a thousand left, just like her. That way, they'd be able to pool their money and fumble their way out of this mess somehow... but he barely had any cash on him at all!

Now, this was embarrassing...



Gerald hadn't planned to get involved, until he saw them whispering furtively amongst themselves, and realized that Douglas was probably broke. "Hey, waitress! Add it to my bill! I'll pay in their stead for now!"

Leila was wearing an absolutely hideous expression on her face right then.

Although those two had been very rude to him, Gerald nevertheless couldn't bear to see Leila caught in such a plight. Anyway, when they'd encountered each other again earlier, he'd mentioned something about counting on him in case of any trouble—that was why he spoke up now.

"Hmph! Douglas doesn't need your money! He's got friends, you know?" Leila snapped.

But who was going to lend Douglas a thousand five on short notice? What's more, his dad would hear about it, sooner or later... and then he'd be in for it.

This was his way out. He'd be a fool not to take it.

"Alright, Gerald!" Douglas said. "Just cover for me this time, and I'll pay you back tomorrow!"

"No problem—but you'll have to write me an IOU!" Gerald chuckled.

The waitress produced pen and paper for them.

His face a portrait of misery, Douglas nevertheless wrote out that IOU and presented it to Gerald.

Then he took back that hundred-dollar bill on the side table, and stuffed it back into his wallet, before making his escape with Leila.

Outside, Douglas decided to get back at Gerald a little. “Hmph! Leila, it would have been silly not to take advantage of that fool, back there! I’ve been disgraced in front of him this time, but heh! When he comes calling for me to pay back that IOU, well, fat chance! It’s not like that worm’s got any kind of clout!”

Hearing him speak like this, Leila felt like she didn’t even know who he was anymore. Was this really the man she’d taken as her boyfriend?

What a piece of trash!

That’s what Douglas looked like to her right now. There was a time when Leila used to believe that money wasn’t the most important thing. Having been raised in the lap of luxury, she’d never wanted for money herself. As such, she’d decided that she needn’t find a boyfriend who was totally loaded—as long as he could treat her to a little something once in a while, that’d be fine!

Douglas was well-connected, and had an amazing job, so he’d been her preferred choice. After all, everywhere he went, people looked up to him.

However, after what had happened today in that restaurant, Leila's worldview had been changed completely.

Someone who could give her a little treat, once in a while? Forget that! Without money, they wouldn't even be able to get anything worth eating!

Leila wanted to be at that table with Gerald right now, partaking in that sumptuous feast—but Douglas couldn't afford it.

He couldn't even afford to pay for a broken vase of flowers.

Someone had bailed him out, and now he was plotting revenge against that someone.

Was this her type of guy? Leila shook her head.

"Leila, come on! I'll drive you home!"

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Douglas called out to her, but Leila replied, "That's alright. You go on without me. I'll find my own ride home!" With that, she hailed a passing cab, and departed—leaving Douglas dumbfounded by the side of the road.

He already knew what was wrong—and he blamed Gerald for it!

Some time later, Gerald and Cindy finished their meal together, and exchanged their contact numbers. Then he called for a cab to send her home.

Gerald stepped into the karaoke bar next door to have a look. Everyone had left, and the bar had closed for the night.

He hadn't expected this to be such an eventful day. He was exhausted.

Hailing a cab for himself, he returned to the hotel where he was staying. The moment he stepped into his room, his phone rang again. It was that unknown caller who'd tried to reach him while he was at the restaurant earlier.

Who could it be? Curious, Gerald took the call.

"Gerald, what's going on? Why didn't you pick up?" It was a lovely, feminine voice. Gerald was taken aback when he recognized who was speaking.

"Giya? It was you calling?" he exclaimed, baffled.

It had been half a month since term break started. Gerald had spent most of this time in the hospital looking after Mr Winters. Perhaps because of what had happened on the first day of term break, Giya hadn't spoken to him at all since.

Gerald had been thinking that it was just as well. And so, they'd severed contact with each other.

He hadn't been expecting to get a call from her.

"Hmph. Surprised? I'm calling you from the landline phone in my room. So what am I to make of you not contacting me all this while? Are we not friends anymore?" Giya grumbled.

"Nothing like that... I'm just shocked that you called me!" Gerald responded wryly.

"And just what's wrong with me calling you?" Giya asked teasingly.

"Well, I'm not some rich guy... just a poor loser with no money!"

"I won't allow you to talk about yourself like that!" she snapped.

"It's true! Most girls say that about me!"

"Most girls. I've never looked down on you—if anything, I think more of you than all those rich brats. I know you were only treating me that way for the sake of your girlfriend. If not for her, you'd be much nicer to me, isn't that so?"

"Something like that..." For lack of anything better to say.

Truth be told, a girl like Giya, gorgeous and charismatic, with a heart of gold... Any man would be lucky to have her as their girlfriend.

But Gerald already had Mila. Though he admired Giya... it wasn't like that.

"Was there some reason you called me?" Gerald inquired.

"I can't call you without a reason? Well then... No, no reason! Hang up, won't you?" Giya's tone was sharp as a knife.

Doot... doot... doot...

As instructed, Gerald hung up. A moment later, she called back.

"What the hell? Why did you do that? You're killing me, here! Look, something's come up, alright? Something big!"

"What is it?"

"I'll pay you a visit tomorrow at your place—and then I'll need to stay for a few days. Is that cool? Hello, Gerald? Can you hear me?"

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"What was that?" Gerald couldn't believe his ears.

Stay a few days, at his place? How would he be cool with that? He talked to Mila every day, and on that note: He was spoken for right now—just that his girlfriend was abroad at present—and yet he'd be living together with another woman?

Even if the rest of the world was cool with it, Gerald certainly wasn't! What madness was this?

"No way, forget it!" he answered.

"Oh... haha, it's alright... I thought someone would be willing to help me, but I get it now..." Giya's voice was barely more than a whisper.

"Has something happened over there?" Gerald asked, intrigued.

Come to think of it, Giya was hardly the sort of girl to suddenly run off to crash at some guy's place for a few days without rhyme or reason. Had she fallen for him?

Hah! As though Gerald thought that highly of himself... He was only asking out of curiosity.

After a pause, Giya suddenly announced, "I'm getting engaged!"

"Oh, congrats—" As Gerald began to respond to this, he suddenly realized there had been something odd in her tone. Changing tack, he instead tried, "That's wonderful news! Who's the lucky fellow?"

"Yacob Lincoln. My dad's business has recently hit some rough waters, so he's hoping to win the patronage of the Lincoln family to help us get through this. Meanwhile, Yacob's been after my hand, and when his dad brought up the subject of us getting married... well, Yacob's dad helped save my mom, too—so my dad said yes! Now I'm engaged to Yacob!

"But I don't want to be engaged to anyone, you know? This whole thing feels like a nightmare! I had so many plans... I didn't think I'd even consider marriage until I was thirty! But here I am, not even finished with university yet, and already engaged to somebody—somebody I don't like! I just don't know what I should do!"

“I’m looking for a place to hide—but Yacob knows all my friends, and he’ll definitely be able to find me through them—that’s why I came to you, but you’re leaving me out to dry!” Somewhere along the way, Giya had started sobbing.

Gerald felt he more or less understood, now. Indeed, it was a heavy burden for anyone to have to bear. Furthermore, it wasn’t as though her predicament had nothing at all to do with him...

After all, when Giya’s mother was saved, the one behind it had actually been Gerald. He’d kept quiet about that, in order to minimize his involvement with Giya.

Turns out, the Lincolns had taken full credit for it, and had been holding it over Giya’s family. In that sense, it was also Gerald’s fault that Giya had now been forced into her current dilemma!

So, now what?

It was obvious that Giya was seeking asylum somewhere—and that, by running away from home, she hoped to apply pressure upon her father. That was why she’d sought him out.

If he turned her away, would she be forced into that marriage, after all? To be perfectly honest, a girl like Giya falling into the clutches of a guy like Yacob, it was akin to feeding caviar to pigs. Even Gerald himself considered it a crime against nature.

If he agreed to help her... how would he explain it to Mila?

But he already knew that he’d never forgive himself for abandoning Giya now. He’d planted these seeds himself—now he had to reap the harvest!

“Alright, you can come stay with me,” Gerald said, “But I’m not at my family home—I’m staying in the city. Also... Once this matter has been settled, out you go!”

Since he was the one to blame for all this, it naturally fell to him to resolve the problem. The solution was simple: He’d reveal his true identity! Problem solved.

It would be okay to let Giya come over, because he had it all planned out.



Giya was jubilant. “Alright! You got it! Thanks, Gerald! You’re the best! Don’t worry, I’m only doing this to give my daddy a scare! Once he annuls the engagement, we’ll be in the clear!”

After the call ended, Gerald had some thoughts about the nature of impropriety.

Well, too late for regrets—he’d already said yes!

Anyway, he was renting a suite here, which was convenient for having guests over—besides taking care of Mr Winters, he also had to meet with Zack Lyle and the others regularly. It wasn’t merely a one-bedded room.

Gerald had decided to drop the ruse with Giya, and let her know who he really was!

First thing the next morning, Giya arrived by train. Gerald drove to the station in his Mercedes-Benz G500 to get her. If not because he’d left it behind at the Mountain Top Villa, he would have taken his Lamborghini instead.

If he was going to reveal his big secret to her, as part of helping to resolve this matter, Gerald was sure that all he needed to do was show off a little.

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He parked the 4WD outside the train station. As expected, it attracted a lot of attention. There were even some girls coming over to snap pictures on their phones.

After all, this was a car that cost over three hundred thousand dollars!

“Oh, wow! A G500 here in Serene County? Who’s inside? Must be some rich kid!”

“Gosh... Hey, how do I look? What if he gets off the car, and falls for me at first sight? What will I do?”

“Hahaha! Get over yourself!”

“Girls, let’s go over there and say hi!”

The girls whispered amongst themselves, giggling out loud every so often.

Just then, an old woman of eighty approached the girls and said, “Whoever owns that car must be loaded, I guess?”

“Of course! The G500 goes for over three hundred thousand dollars! What’s up, grandma? Hoping to catch a big fish? He’s probably some young lordling, though...”  
The girls chortled with laughter.

“So what if I’m old? I’ve still got just as much right to flirt around. Hmph!” the old woman replied flippantly.

Saying so, she began to hobble towards the car. The girls followed after her.

A crowd was growing outside the train station. More and more people were gathering to look.

Inside the car, Gerald sucked in a deep breath. This should be the first time he’d ever made such a show of himself.

He'd always kept a low profile before this. He admitted to some excitement over the occasional moment in the limelight.

How would he describe these feelings? He'd been waiting three years for a moment like this. He was going to make a statement—not about how great he was, but about how he was going to get back everything he'd lost!

Hahh...

Gerald put on his sunglasses, and withdrew the car keys from the ignition.

Time to make his debut.

Wham! When he opened the door, he seemed to hit something. A moment later, there was a cry of agony.

A white-haired old woman was sprawled across the ground outside, her cane still rolling away from her.

Good heavens! Gerald stared in shock.

“Young man, ahh... I hope your car's alright...” the old woman mumbled in fright, still prone on the ground.

“What’s happened here?” Someone arrived on the scene immediately. The crowd surged forward.

“Hah! What do you think happened? When that young man opened his door, he knocked that old woman down—but I saw that she was lying in wait beforehand... and rushed forward just as he was getting out! It’s a scam!”

“So that’s how it is!”

But other onlookers continued to arrive, ignorant of what had really happened.

“Goodness, how could that guy be so careless? Repairing a G500 is gonna cost an arm and a leg!” someone remarked.

Annoyed, Gerald stepped out of the car to help the old woman to her feet.

“Don’t touch me! It’s no concern of yours! I fell down all by myself!” the old woman wept. “I live all alone by myself, no sons or daughters... I simply can’t pay you back for your car!”

“Hmph! Don’t you worry, ma’am! Being rich doesn’t make him untouchable! Even a rich man has to pay for injuring somebody! He opened the door and knocked you down, isn’t that right? Rest assured, ma’am—we’ll get you justice!” There were some hot-blooded youths, hollering with fury.

Soon, the police arrived on the scene, and dispersed the crowd.

Although the old woman had tried to set him up, it couldn't be denied that he'd knocked her down with his own hand. She was sent to the hospital, and Gerald was brought to the police station so they could take down a statement from him, that sort of thing.

Gerald was on the verge of tears. Why was any of this happening?

It took forty minutes to settle everything. Gerald even gave some money to the old woman.

Leaving the police station, he got a call from Giya: "Didn't you say you'd be picking me up from the station? Where are you?"

"Oh! I'm on my way right now!" Gerald spluttered.

"Forget it! I'm already in a cab, heading to your place!"

Chapter 409

"Gerald, I bought these fruits for you. I've already washed them, so come over and eat them!"

Giya set a tray of fruits down upon the coffee table, then took an apple herself and began munching on it as she watched the television.

Rather than a runaway fiancée escaping an arranged marriage, Gerald thought she looked more like she'd come for a pleasant holiday.

He'd returned half an hour ago. After helping Giya get settled in, he'd gone to take a bath.

At the moment, he wasn't sure what to say about this relaxed, untroubled mood she was in. Regarding the luxurious suite he was in, Gerald had only mumbled some throw-away excuse so far.

His earlier attempt at theatrics had flopped, and now he was no longer in the mood. Imagine bringing it up out of nowhere...

Gerald took a seat. "So, about your engagement... I think it's best to talk things through with your father. Certainly, you can't keep running away from it forever. The trouble with his business will ease in time—surely it's not worth sacrificing his daughter's happiness forever?"

Anyway, if the Quarrington family was facing any financial issues, he could simply make an investment in their interests.

"I get that... but it's not as simple as you think! Gah, I finally managed to calm myself down a little—could you not keep bringing that up?" Giya sulked at him.

Then, with a simpering smile, she said, "Gerald, I haven't seen you in a while... Your skin's turned fairer, and you've become so handsome now!"

"Is that so..." Gerald chuckled dryly.

That was when Giya's phone rang. It was easy to see that she didn't want to pick up, but after a moment, she did.

"What is it? I already said I'm not going back! Don't try to find me, either! I'm not coming home until you call this whole thing off! There's no way I'm marrying him! I don't like a single thing about him! In fact, I despise him! And I don't plan to get hitched so soon, whatever you say! I'm doing just fine over here! If there's nothing else, I'm hanging up!"

Giya tossed the phone down on the table, in abject misery.

Gerald had heard it all. That had most likely been her father, trying to persuade her to return.

And then Giya's phone rang again.

"Argh, so annoying!" Giya testily snatched up her phone once again. "Didn't you hear me? Oh, it's you, Tammy..." Giya eased off a little. Setting the phone to speaker mode, she laid her hands on her lap, and her head on her knees, and the two girls began chatting.

"Giya, you didn't really run off to Gerald? You know, just now your dad even called my dad, asking if you were here! He's asked all the girls from our dorm, too! He's worried sick!" Tammy burbled.

"Yeah, I'm with Gerald right now. Let him worry... as long as he knows there's no way I'm marrying that guy!"

"Mm-hmm... Hey, I've got nothing going on right now. I know some people over in Serene County, too. How about I come over there to hang out with the two of you? Now that the two of you are an item, Gerald owes us all a treat, surely... Hahaha, you know... for Gerald to become your boyfriend, it's truly a case of scattering pearls before—"

Tammy was spilling all the beans right now! Giya turned off the speaker in a hurry—and then, with infinitesimal care, she stole a peek over at Gerald, who sat there in stunned silence.

Indeed, Gerald was thunderstruck! Exactly when did he become Giya's boyfriend? What had this girl been telling everyone?

Some moments later, Giya finished with her phone call, then came back.

Sheepishly, she said to him, "Gerald... they all know I'm with you right now. I didn't want to raise a scandal, so I also told them that you're my boyfriend. You don't mind, right?"

Gerald shook his head. "Not at all!" What else could he say?

"Also, Tammy said she'd be swinging by in a bit. She's got a relative staying in these parts—let's all go out and have some fun together! I mean, if you don't go, then they might start to think..." Giya was pleading with him.

“Alright, I’ll go!” Since he’d already promised to help her, he couldn’t very well refuse.

It was almost noon when Tammy arrived with a younger cousin sister—a high school girl from Mayberry.

## Chapter 410

Tammy’s car was a handsome Camry.

The very first thing she said to him was, “Hmph! Gerald Crawford... to think that a bottom-feeder like you could snare yourself a goddess like Giya—what a dream come true for you!”

“Yes! Yes, indeed!” Gerald nodded.

“Huh? Tammy, this guy is Giya’s boyfriend? Ah... what is this world coming to?” Tammy’s cousin clutched her forehead, staggering in place.

After all, anyone who knew Giya, knew that she was a beauty among beauties, a goddess among goddesses. No one would have expected her to find someone like this to be her boyfriend.

It seemed that Tammy and her cousin were of like mind. They stood there now, scowling contemptuously at Gerald.

‘Wipe those dirty looks off your faces!’ Gerald thought to himself.

“Alright, that’s enough,” Giya cut in. “Oh, Tammy—didn’t you say you had a bunch of distant relatives here in Serene County? Are they not joining us?”

As she said this, she hugged Gerald’s arm tenderly... and also rolled her eyes at him, as though to say, ‘There, you see! Everyone thinks you hit the jackpot, scoring a girlfriend like me! But some people don’t seem to appreciate their good fortune!’

“Oh, they’re coming. I just got off the phone with them—they were asking me where we’d be eating, you know? Gerald, what have you got planned for lunch?” Tammy’s tone was kind of sharp as she posed this question, as though Gerald’s relationship with Giya came as some sort of affront to her.



As though she held some sort of grudge against him.

Indeed, Tammy didn't hold Gerald in high regard. She grew up in the cosmopolitan city; he was a country bumpkin. He was simple and poor, a lightning rod for ridicule.

The thought of him becoming a mainstay of her inner circle... she just couldn't stand it!

With a grimace, Gerald replied, "On the subject of lunch... just leave that to me! There's a decent place here in Serene County, called Mead Hall. Let's eat over there!"

"Hmph! You should have told us that earlier! Come on, Giya! We'll go in my car!"

And so they found their way to Mead Hall, the finest restaurant in Serene County, frequented mainly by the rich and powerful.

When they arrived, Tammy announced with a mysterious air that she needed to find a place to park her car, and wanted Giya with her. Gerald was to go ahead and reserve a table for them.

Since that had been his intention all along, anyway, Gerald went inside and asked for a table for eight. Rather than having any private dining rooms to offer them, all the patrons were seated in the same enormous hall together.

Just as a table was found for them...

"Oh, gosh! Is that you, Gerald?" someone called out.

"It really is him! What's he doing in Mead Hall?"

A group of young men and women, halfway through their own meal, exclaimed with surprise when they spotted him.

Gerald turned when he heard someone calling his name, and saw six or seven people sitting together over there. Not just anyone, either—they were his classmates from high school, including Morgana Lopez and Cameron Laver.

What a coincidence! Almost as though...

“Gerald, did you come here to have lunch?” Morgana enquired, with no small amount of disbelief.

At the table sat Morgana, her boyfriend, Cameron, and several others. Everyone was smiling his way.

Mead Hall was unmistakably an upper-crust establishment, and you paid by the head here, from a starting minimum of thirty dollars per pax. After accounting for drinks and so on, each meal could easily cost hundreds.

Everyone knew Gerald wasn't rich, so this was a fairly peculiar circumstance.

Gerald smiled back at them. “That's right! I'm meeting with some friends, and I thought I'd treat them all to lunch here! Who would have thought I'd run into you guys here, too!”

“Pfft! We eat here all the time!”

“Ah, Gerald... It's nice that you're treating your friends to something, but do you know they charge at least thirty dollars per person here? Are you sure this is a good idea?” This was coming from a girl seated beside Morgana, who had also gone to the same high school with them.

Sully was her name. Not a bad-looking girl. She pursed her mouth as she gave him that warning.

This was a high-class place, after all, meant only for people like her, who already held a certain standing in society. It wasn't as though she took especial pride in eating here, but... come on, a hobo like Gerald taking his lunch here? That just put her off her palate.

People like him ought to just stick with fast food joints and hot dog stands, that sort of thing.

It was downright disgraceful. Did Gerald presume to being their equals?

That was why she'd taken such an acrimonious tone with him.

"Hey now, Sully! You shouldn't talk to Gerald like that—he's got his pride, too! If he wants to eat here, then that's that. Anyway, this is a chance for us to get to know the friends he's made! Hahaha!" Cameron sneered as he said this.

Whether in terms of family background or career prospects, he was indisputably the alpha at this table, making him the keystone of the group.

Sully cackled. "Goodness, Cameron... The sort of friends a guy like Gerald would make—are you sure you'd like to shake hands with them? Anyway, I only said that for his own good: Without taking stock of his own capacities, thinking to eat wherever he pleases... are appearances all he thinks about? Living beyond his own means... no one respects a person like that!"

She had disliked Gerald since high school: some impoverished bum prancing about before her... Pathetic! She could hardly care less about his feelings.

Anyway, for Gerald to be eating in the same restaurant as her showed that he didn't care about her feelings, either.

"Alright, Gerald's friends will be here any moment. Pipe down, you guys!" Morgana couldn't bear to watch any longer.

Gerald gave her a smile and a nod.

"Cameron, who's this guy? A classmate from high school?" An exquisitely made-up girl beside Cameron inquired curiously.

"That's right, ahahaha! Think he's cute? If he's your type, Gerald's still single—you could be his girlfriend!" Cameron burst out laughing.

"Hey! Cameron, you're the worst! Keep this up, and I'm not talking to you anymore!" The girl pinched the tender portion of his arm.

Everyone chuckled. Gerald kept quiet and continued nodding away.

"Hey, look! Gerald's blushing! I know... he must really like the idea of Maybelline becoming his girlfriend! Otherwise why would his face be turning red like that? Haha!" Another one of the guys decided to join in.

“Yo! Serious offer, Gerald. If this girl’s to your taste, she’s all yours. My word is good!” Cameron guffawed again.

“That’s alright—I already have a girlfriend!” Gerald replied in exasperation, although he understood that they’d only been making fun of him with that. It had been the same back in high school. Gerald knew it was best to just keep quiet.

## Chapter 412

He couldn’t very well go around telling everyone that he was rich, like some fool who’d just won the lottery, and try to show up everyone, right?

Feh. What would that achieve?

“Heaven have mercy! Gerald’s actually found himself a girlfriend?” One of the guys exclaimed. “Holy hell, this is big news! We’ve got a high school reunion coming up in a few days, right? Everyone will be floored when they hear about this!”

“Gosh, what sort of girl would take a fancy to him? Oh, no... who’s grandma is it?” Sully shook her head, and took a sip of her juice.

This elicited a round of merry laughter from everyone at her table.

Morgana watched Gerald with a growing sense of disquiet. Then she said, “Gerald, today we’re actually celebrating my promotion at work—to the Reserve Department, no less. Cameron’s my guest here today. How many friends of yours will be coming? I’d be glad to have them join us.”

“No, I can’t accept that. There may be seven or eight of them!” Gerald said with a laugh.

So Morgana had finally settled that problem of hers. He remembered bumping into Zack Lyle, there. However, Zack hadn’t followed up with him on that matter, probably because he considered it too minor to be worth his attention.

As for her recent stroke of good fortune... Gerald couldn’t say if that was thanks to him, or Cameron. As such, he didn’t offer any comments, only nodded. Then he took a seat at the next table.

Honestly, he felt embarrassed to be here, too. However, the restaurant was packed right now, and there were no other tables available further away—even if there were, it would be too awkward to switch places now. Neither could he just walk out of here...

He could only sit there and sweat.

Just then, Giya and Tammy entered. Following after them, besides Tammy’s cousin, were also two other guys and girls each—presumably Tammy’s aforementioned distant relatives.

“Wow, wow, wow! Babes! Hot babes!” Cameron and the other guys had noticed the new arrivals, and were too stunned to do much more than gape. Such beauty as had suddenly graced this hall!

“Who are they? They’re smoking hot! Absolute, top-tier charisma!” One guy beside Cameron noted.

“Hmph! They’re not that hot. They’re just really tall and sorta skinny. Pah!” Sully actually thought Giya and Tammy looked like celebrity supermodels, and had been moved by envy to speak.

As for that girl in the heavy make-up, sitting on Cameron’s other side... Compared to the girls who’d just walked in, she looked like a party clown.

“Anyone got the stones to go ask for their numbers? Whoever steps up, I shall know him as my lord!” The guy who said this was positively drooling.

And then, all eyes turned to Cameron.

After all, whether in terms of family background, or career prospects... he was the alpha!

Cameron was already getting up from his seat. He cleared his throat, smoothed out his shirt...

“Watch this. I’m going in!”

“Oh, yeah! Cameron rocks!”

“All our hopes ride with you, my lord!”

But Cameron had already intercepted the targets. “Hey there, sweet things... Here for lunch? Found a table yet? Maybe I could be of assistance—I come here all the time!” They were even more dazzling up close. Cameron’s heart was racing out of control.

“We’re fine, thanks!” Giya and Tammy calmly deflected his advances. Something about him just put them off.

Cameron fished out his phone. “Ahem... Could I ask you ladies for your numbers? Call me Cameron. You may have heard of my family—”

“He’s over there! Come on, let’s go!” Spying her target across the hall, Tammy completely ignored Cameron, and led her entourage straight towards Gerald.

Chapter 413

“Hmph! Gerald, don’t you even know how to wait for us outside once you’ve got a table?” When Tammy reached him, Giya was by her side. The first thing that spewed out of her mouth was abuse.

Gerald put down his phone and smiled faintly. He’d been preoccupied with reading investment reports coming in from Zack Lyle.



Meanwhile, Sully and the others were staring as though their eyes might pop out of their sockets. “What? What! These are the friends Gerald was going on about?”

Cameron still stood there, phone in hand, his face now turning blue.

They ignored him, but yet, they were so friendly to Gerald? Blast! It was indeed a vicious slap across the face!

“Huh? Gerald, happen to know those people at the next table?”

Giya had taken a seat beside him, and she now wondered why everyone at the adjacent table seemed to be gawking strangely in his direction.

“Hey, hey! Gerald, why don’t you introduce your friends to us? When I went up to welcome them, those ladies just brushed me off, you know?”

Cameron, smiling stiffly, tried again.

He thought Gerald perhaps hadn’t moved to receive the girls, hoping that Cameron might get some humiliation there.

He continued in an aggravated tone, “How are you doing, ladies? We went to the same high school as Gerald! How lucky we must be to meet such gorgeous girls today... Really, this isn’t right of you, Gerald—the ladies have already taken their

seats, so why aren't you ordering anything to eat? How could you bear to watch these beauties starve?"

Desperate to salvage his dignity, Cameron was now hovering beside Gerald's table, trying to assert himself as someone handy, hoping to attract the attention of those girls.

"Indeed, they're my ex-classmates from high school. What a small world we live in!" Gerald reluctantly admitted.

Giya laughed merrily.

"That's great! You ought to introduce these old friends of yours to me! After all, as your girlfriend, I can't possibly not know who your friends are."

To her, it was simple: Gerald's friends were her friends and though they were just masquerading as a couple, it was becoming more real to her with each passing moment.

However, that last thing she said left everyone at the next table wholly disconcerted.

What? Really? This epitome of loveliness was Gerald's girlfriend? Seriously?

Fires of jealousy flared in the eyes of the other guys.

Who were they? Uptown boys they were—filthy rich, set for life.

Who was Gerald again? Some loser who couldn't even rub two pennies together.

Not all of them had even found their own girlfriends, yet here was Gerald, a supermodel by his side. Who wouldn't be jealous? Without a doubt, Cameron was turning viridian green with swathes of envy oozing out of his chest.

“So you're Gerald's girlfriend, I see! How do you do? I'm Cameron. My parents are in the Health Bureau. I do hospital work. Ahaha!” As he made clear his superiority, Cameron reached out to shake hands with Giya.

With a flick of his wrist, a watch with the commanding price tag of well over a thousand dollars slid into view.

Giya considered this fool before her, one who felt the inexplicable need to introduce not only himself but his parents as well. What an odd way to go about things.

She decided not to take the hand he was offering her.

Anxious not to embarrass Cameron too much, Gerald shook his hand instead, at least so he wouldn't be left hanging there.

“Haha! Who would have thought: Gerald Crawford, the renowned tramp of our year, back in high school... reviled and loathed everywhere he went...” Cameron went on.

“Who could have possibly imagined that he might have caught himself such a ravishing beauty of a girlfriend?”

As he said this, he shot a meaningful look at one of the other guys back at his table.

The indicated henchman slapped the tabletop hard! “That’s right! Gerald,” he shouted. “I can’t believe your luck! Do you all still remember that one time when Gerald almost couldn’t pay his own tuition fees because he was just six bucks short or something? Great Scott, our teacher chased him right out of the classroom! Hahaha! And guess what—I think it rained heavily that day!”

“Of course I remember,” Sully sneered. “Gerald trudged through the rain looking for trash to sell and somehow managed to scrape together those last six dollars, just so he could stay in school. Hahaha! No one in class cared to lift a hand to help him! He’s sure come a long way, hosting his own table at Mead Hall with that doll at his side... Well done!”

There was a strange parade of veiled hints getting passed around here. They were digging up all manner of dirt from Gerald’s past, all to be stripped bare before Giya and her friends.

Predictably, Tammy’s cousin and several of her friends were already peering at Gerald’s askance. Thus far, he sounded all but a sorry loser.

“Never mind that, Gerald!” one of the guys hooted. “To commemorate your girlfriend’s first-ever visit to Serene County, you can’t start lower than sixty dollars each, right?”

Cameron frowned.

“What nonsense are you spouting over there? Only sixty dollars?! This pair of goddesses are worth far more than that! Gerald, if you don’t go straight for the best quality at a hundred dollars per person, you don’t deserve the company of these ladies! Haha! But worry not, Gerald—if you’re strapped for cash, I’ll pay for you. It’s important to keep up appearances, after all!”

Just then, the waiter arrived to take their order.

Chapter 414

“What grade will you select today?”

Across all tables, all eyes turned to Gerald.

“Give me your best. A hundred per pax!”

It was what he’d been planning for all along, anyway.

“Pfft!” Cameron and company tried to hold in their laughter.

What an imbecile! A hundred dollars per head, plus drinks—the final bill would add up to a thousand dollars!

Tammy's side of the table was equally shocked by the turn of events. They reached the same conclusion: Gerald was a complete fool. Anyone could see that Cameron was up to no good, provoking him intentionally. Yet, Gerald walked straight into his trap. Really?

Gerald's lack of affluence was hardly news to Tammy. She'd already agreed with Giya not to allow Gerald to foot this meal's bill.

Now, Gerald was going for the most expensive option available? Argh! May the heavens help her!

"I beg your pardon—that's not what we want. Something simpler will do just fine," Giya interceded.

"Nope, a hundred it is. Go on, then!" Gerald was losing his temper under the barrage of jeers from Cameron and the rest.

"Hmph! Let him order what he pleases. We'll see what he does when the bill arrives," Tammy's cousin declared.

And so, the best food in the house was brought to their table. Cameron's table deliberately ate as slowly as possible. As Gerald's table was being cleared, both parties rose in unison to pay.

"Oh? Leaving already, Mr. Laver?"

The cashier smiled and waved when she saw Cameron.

Cameron made sure his wristwatch was in full view as he waved back. “That lady’s a good friend of mine,” he pointed toward Morgana. “Please set a good price for her!”

“No problem, sir. 30% off! In fact, please accept this exquisite tea set and our best compliments! Each set is worth quite a bit, and it’s just a promotion we are running at the moment.”

The cashier, clearly older than Cameron, beamed as she answered him.

“Aha! Hanging out with Cameron Laver means good times all the way,” cheered one of the other guys.

Morgana settled the bill, but Cameron continued to hang around—Gerald would be next to pay.

“Another friend of yours, Mr. Laver?”

The cashier could tell that they were acquainted, meaning she’d have to extend certain courtesies to Gerald as well.

Cameron pretended he didn’t hear it, peering at his watch.

The cashier understood what it meant.

“Hello, sir. That will be nine hundred and seven dollars in all. Cash or credit card?” she asked smoothly.

“Surely, you can round off the last seven dollars,” Gerald chuckled. Cameron could leave him out in the cold if it were what suited him. One meal wasn’t something worth fretting over.

With her face resting idly on her palms, the cashier responded indifferently.

“Forgive me, sir. Our prices are not open to haggling. Seven dollars or seven cents, you’ll have to pay it all, just the same.”

She saw it all from behind the counter—Cameron had deliberately coerced that fellow into going for the top of their line. It was apparent the man didn’t have much in the way of money. There was no need to be too nice to him.

“Hey! You gave that bunch a thirty-percent discount! Now what’s all that ‘no haggling’ about?”

Giya was first to lose her patience after seeing how everyone ganged up to give Gerald a hard time.

Gerald shook his head. “Forget about it, Giya. We’ll just pay for our food and leave.”



“Hmph! You’ll be offering us a tea set too, at the very least? We’ve spent over a thousand bucks at your place!” Giya hissed icily.

The cashier replied without the slightest sincerity, “We’d certainly like to—but you must forgive us, miss... These gift sets are only limited to fifty pieces per day—and the fiftieth has just been given to Mr. Laver. Perhaps if you come again tomorrow, I’ll make sure I reserve a set just for you!”

At the end of the day, these were only one-time customers. It made more sense to appease a big spender like Cameron Laver. Furthermore, her own little sister was currently in the Laver Academy. The cashier knew that if she kept playing for this side of the field, her little sister would have a smooth sailing journey in the future.

“Hey... Bring me the bill!”

Right at that moment, a hoarse voice boomed across the hall. Someone strode up and slapped a hand on the countertop.

It was a young man, and when the cashier, Cameron, and friends included, saw who it was...

Chapter 415

“Mr. Lourdes...” Cameron murmured. He suddenly felt silly for waving his watch around earlier. He stood at attention, much like a misbehaving student before the discipline teacher.

“Cameron, which Mr. Lourdes did you mean?” the girl beside him wondered aloud.

“Who else could I have meant? Louie Lourdes, scion, and heir to the Lourdes family mining conglomerate! The big kahunas!”

“So, it’s that guy!”

“I didn’t know he was that handsome in person!”

Morgana, Sully, and the other girls gazed with ardent admiration at the legendary character.

The guys, meanwhile, seemed afraid even to breathe too loudly.

Not mentioning the cashier, who was already on her feet, displaying the most professional smile she could muster.

Louie had a handful of people with him, not even bothering to look at Gerald or his guests as he cut in front of them.

“My bill!” Louie barked.

The cashier’s smile didn’t falter. “Of course, Mr. Lourdes. Your bill this time comes up to one thousand, two hundred dollars. To this, sir, we are pleased to offer you a 70% discount!”

As she spoke, she also leaned forward, inviting gazes at her cleavage. Who knew... perhaps her figure might entice the interest of the great man?

“Bah! Who needs your discount? I’ll pay the full price!” Louie hurled a wad of money on the counter.

“Understood, Mr. Lourdes. Any of our promotional gifts tickle your fancy, sir? We will provide you with anything you want,” the cashier responded reverently.

“None of that hogwash! Just give me my receipt!”

“Gosh, so this is the real Mr. Lourdes! What commanding aura he has!”

The girl standing beside Cameron was about to go cross-eyed from amazement.

Even Morgana and Sully were exchanging stares from the corner of their eyes, wondering when they’d be able to find a man his equal.

Meanwhile, Tammy simply wasn’t in the mood to play games between Gerald and his stupid friends. Seeing somebody cutting the line, her temper instantly flared up.

“Hey, now... haven’t you ever heard of first come, first serve? Don’t you know you’ve interrupted us right in the middle of our turn?”

“That’s right, bro. First come, first serve. I’ve been waiting in line for a while now too.”

Gerald hadn’t expected to run into Louie here. He could still see the fresh scars on his face. What a pounding he must have been given that night.

Barely a couple of days later, here he was, coming out looking for trouble again.

A wry smile worked its way across Gerald’s face.

“Hmph! Be quiet, you. Your comments are not welcome. If Mr. Lourdes is here, you’ll all have to wait then.”

The cashier had utterly abandoned all gestures of courtesy toward them. She rolled her eyes at Gerald.

“Good lord, this blind fool!” Cameron cackled from the side. “Don’t you know Mr Lourdes? He’s obviously in a foul mood today... this Gerald is really tempting for misfortune today!”

Now, even the cashier had started ridiculing Gerald. Louie, on the other hand, pretended to have heard nothing. Now, it was his turn to get angry.

He planted his foot hard into Louie’s butt.

Whack!

“Ow!” Louie cried out, his wounds searing with pain once again.

Louie smacked the counter hard. “God d\*mn it; I’ll kill you!”

Cameron and the others couldn’t believe their eyes. Gerald actually dared to strike Mr. Lourdes? The only thing that could happen next was him getting beaten to a pulp.

As Louie whipped around to retaliate, his fist suddenly halted mid-air.

“Cr... Crawford?”

Louie was paralyzed.

Wasn’t this the same Gerald Crawford who’d summoned all those guys to clean his clock at the karaoke bar the other day?

Those men were skilled fighters. The beating he’d taken from them nearly crippled him, yet, they left no incriminating marks.

His misery definitely hadn’t ended. That very same night, his dad had been summoned by a few who demanded to speak with him.

On the other hand, Louie had been expecting his father to respond with all his wrath and fury and leaving the men bowing and scraping like a winded dog. Afterward, Louie's father had come away from that meeting, practically skipping with delight.

## Chapter 416

Louie's father had even told him that he deserved to be beaten up.

His father explained that the person who had beaten him up was none other than the extremely rich and humble heir, Mr. Gerald Crawford from Mayberry.

Hearing that, Louie felt chills run down his spine.

He had almost brought great trouble upon himself that day.

Perhaps like his father had said, being beaten up was a good thing after all. Maybe it could even get Mr. Crawford to invest in his company.

Thus, with that possibility in mind, Louie was faced with a cocktail of surprise, fear, and joy at the same time the moment he saw Gerald.

"Gerald! So you were eating here as well!" said Louie with a chuckle as he patted his hurt bottom.

'What.'

Cameron and the others were all thinking the same thing. They had all been eager for some drama but Louie's reaction only left them stunned.

'What? Why does Louie know Gerald? He even addressed Gerald in such a familiar way!'

'How is that possible!'

"That's right. If we weren't, how else could we have seen you cutting the queue?" replied Gerald with a faint smile on his face.

In his mind, he was wondering if he had not beaten Louie severely enough that night.

"W-well, you see, my dad's invested quite a bit in this place before. Because of that, I'm used to not having to queue! But don't you worry Gerald! Your meal's on me today! Actually, scratch that. All of your meals here in the future will be on me!" said Louie as he rubbed his hands together.

"That won't be necessary. This lady here won't even lower the price by a dollar for me. We aren't being given any special gifts either. I'm afraid that this will be the last time I ever come here," replied Gerald, a smile on his face.

"What? Give me a minute, Gerald!"

Realizing that it was the cashier lady who had offended Gerald, Louie turned to glare at her. She had been standing beside them all this time, a dumbfounded expression on her face.

“Ah! Louie, so this gentleman here is your friend!”

The cashier lady was terrified now. She began thinking up excuses in her mind as cold sweat dripped down her forehead.

‘I only treated him like that because Cameron had signaled me too! He told me to make it difficult for Gerald so I was only following his orders!’

‘Cameron’s family works in the health department so of course I wouldn’t dare disobey him!’

‘Besides, that Gerald guy looked like a loser so I didn’t think twice about it. To think that he knew you, Louie!’

Before she could even begin explaining herself, a slap was heard.

Louie’s hand left her now reddened cheek as he shouted, “How could you look down on a customer! Isn’t Gerald just here to enjoy a meal? How dare you bully a customer you’re not even familiar with! I better hear about your resignation the next time I come here!”



“But I... I only did it because...”

Her left cheek was swollen and red and in pain as she looked toward Cameron.

Cameron had already been nervous even before she looked at him. He simply pretended as if the incident had nothing to do with him as he quietly began sneaking out of the place.

He didn't want to retreat like a coward, but the situation was a difficult one so with a great reluctance and unwillingness in his heart, he left the premise.

He regretted his actions tremendously.

As for Gerald, he exchanged a few pleasantries with Louie before finally leaving with Giya and the others.

Gerald already knew that Louie was just a rich and useless brat so he didn't want to get too close to him.

Upon leaving the shop, they caught sight of Cameron and the others standing not too far away from them.

In the beginning, Cameron and the others had wanted to enjoy Gerald's misfortune, but humiliation greeted them headfirst instead.

This was especially true for Cameron who had a terrible expression on his face.

“How on earth does Gerald know Louie?!” said Sully.

Her respect for Gerald had grown tremendously now.

Cameron simply sneered at her question. “He just showed Gerald a little respect! He said all that but Gerald was still the one who paid the bill in the end! It’s only a matter of respect. Don’t you know who Louie is? He would never befriend a person like Gerald!”

Cameron was brimming with jealousy.

As per usual, Gerald made up a story regarding him and Louie to casually explain what had just happened to Giya and the others.

They then left and returned to the hotel.

“Oh my god! Why is Gerald staying in such a grand hotel?”

Since Tammy and the others had not entered the hotel earlier, the little cousin was shocked when they stepped through its front doors for the first time.

What more, Gerald had spent a lot of money just on the meal they were treated to earlier. He also knew a lot of people. Tammy and the other distant relatives were constantly surprised the longer they stayed around Gerald.

As they went further into the hotel, a few men tried to gain Giya's affection. However, they gave up immediately the moment they knew that they first had to rival Gerald. They were nothing compared to him.

Once they got into their room, Gerald put his phone on the coffee table to wash some fruits for them.

"Oh my god! Tammy! Tammy come look! Look at the phone Gerald's been using!"

The little cousin picked the phone up to show her, an expression of surprise on her face.

Tammy was equally stunned.

'That phone could easily amount to two to three thousand dollars... Why would Gerald have it?'

At that moment, his phone began to ring.

"...Hmm? The most beloved Mila? Who is this person?" said the little cousin as she looked at the caller ID. She was dumbfounded by the discovery.

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The little cousin's surprise turned into a sneer. "Who is this 'most beloved' Mila? Doesn't he like you most Giya? Let's see who she is!"

Giya couldn't react fast enough and before she could stop her, the little cousin had already answered Mila's call.

"Hello? Who is this?" asked the little cousin.

"What? You're definitely not Gerald's girlfriend. Stop spouting nonsense!"

Even though she said that, the little cousin was stunned.

She then looked toward Giya before saying, "Giya! This girl's saying that she's Gerald's girlfriend!"

"That's quite enough, Felicia! Hand me the phone immediately!"

Giya then snatched the phone from her and hung up immediately.

Giya, for one, definitely knew who Mila was. She was Gerald's girlfriend who was in a long-distance relationship with him.

However, that was all Giya knew about Mila. She had been quite curious about what Mila was like in person ever since she knew about her existence.

Still, it would be inappropriate for her to say anything else at the moment.

“Felicia, what did you say? What did that other girl say again?” asked Tammy as she confirmed with Felicia if she had heard right.

Felicia simply sneered again. “I asked her who she was and she said that she was Gerald’s girlfriend! She even asked me where Gerald was!”

Felicia spoke as if she had just uncovered a great secret.

“Giya, do you know that girl?” asked Tammy as rage brewed in her mind.

‘What the actual f\*ck! How sleazy is this guy! To get Giya to be his girlfriend is no easy feat and yet look at him! How bold and absolutely disgusting! To think that he still dares to fool around with other women when he already has Giya!’

“What are you all talking about? I have some fruits with me!”

At that moment, Gerald finally came back, holding a plate of fruits in his hands.

“To hell with the fruits! Who’s this Mila, Gerald! You better have a good explanation!” sneered Tammy.

She snatched the phone from Giya and held on to it as she glared daggers at Gerald.

Gerald didn’t even know how to begin explaining the situation.

Mila was his actual girlfriend of course.

“It had never crossed my mind that you were such a vile and disloyal man! How dare you treat Giya this way!” scolded Felicia next.

“That’s enough! Don’t scold him anymore! I already knew about this and... And let me just admit that we’ve never been a couple!”

There was no use hiding it anymore so Giya simply shouted the truth out.

“...What? You two aren’t a couple? Oh god, then why are you living with him if you’re not his girlfriend?” asked Tammy, shocked.

“I did it so that no one would get suspicious! I needed Gerald’s cooperation to lie to my dad, otherwise, he would definitely continue to force me!” explained Giya truthfully.

“You scared me half to death! I thought you really had become Gerald’s girlfriend! But I guess it really is impossible. It’s a little hard to believe that since Gerald’s been treating you so well today even though he already has a girlfriend. He’s even given you so many expensive things!” said Tammy as she glared at Gerald.

Women hated vile and disloyal men.

It was clear that Gerald had that label on him now.

“That’s enough, Tammy. Didn’t your mom call earlier? Asking you to go home immediately? And you need to promise to keep this a secret for me. Please don’t meddle with Gerald’s business!” said Giya in a persuading tone.

Eventually, Giya managed to persuade them to leave.

Only Gerald and Giya were left in the room now.

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It definitely took Gerald a while to explain the entire situation properly to Mila.

By the time he was done, Mila was no longer angry.

Gerald sighed. He had never anticipated for that crazy girl to actually pick up and answer his phone.

He was stuck in an extremely awkward position now.

“Say, Gerald, do have a seat... I have something I want to ask you,” said Giya as she looked toward him. On her face was a demure smile.

“I’m fine standing. What’s your question?”

“Do you really like Mila that much?”

“Of course I do!” replied Gerald without hesitation.

Giya took in a deep breath before continuing. “Then, if that’s the case, why did you give me such an expensive gift in the first place? In case you weren’t aware, when I learned that it was the most priceless gift your family could offer, I was touched beyond compare!”

“I’ve never been in a relationship before, Gerald. Though many other men have given me expensive gifts before, those gifts were different from yours. Your gift was meaningful. And to tell you the truth, to me, you’re different from the other men.”

Deep inside, Giya knew that she was trying to win Gerald’s affection.

She couldn’t explain why. She was just in love with him.



Initially, she had thought that his long-distance relationship girlfriend posed no threat to her. However, Giya now realized how much Gerald cared for her.

Gerald on the other hand, was filled with self-reproach at that moment.

He knew that the dragon jade bracelet was never his family's heirloom.

However, back at university that day, he couldn't just say that for fear that his identity would be exposed. His lies became the truth that day, at least for those who heard it.

He had lied because he had assumed back then that he was nothing but a loser compared to Giya, Tammy, and the others.

His logic was that there was no way that they would ever feel anything for him.

What more, lying wouldn't matter since he had also assumed that he would never have to contact any of them again once the jade bracelet had been handed over.

Never could he have imagined the complex chain of events that would soon follow and eventually lead to this very day.

Now here he was, in a room together with Giya. A Giya who had misunderstood his intentions from the moment he had given her the bracelet.

It was getting too messy. Gerald knew he couldn't hide the fact from Giya any longer. It was useless to even hide his identity from her at this point.

Gerald took in a deep breath before saying, "The truth is, Giya, I lied to you. The dragon jade bracelet is not a family heirloom like what you and the other girls thought. I bought two bracelets from the shop, the dragon jade bracelet being one of them. You were supposed to receive the other, as I just wanted to compensate for the one I broke."

"However, I somehow mixed the two up and gave you the wrong one," he said as he left the room. He came back soon after along with the two jade bracelets and placed them in front of Giya.

He didn't want Giya to believe the lie any longer. With the proof in front of her now, she definitely couldn't.

Giya bit her lower lip softly before smiling bitterly. She nodded slowly.

"So that's the entire story... No man would ever be that stupid and give his family heirloom to a girl he barely even knew! I guess I've just been overthinking everything!"

Gerald looked down with a sigh. The weight on his chest had been lifted. It felt relieving to finally be able to clear things up with her.

“Alright then Gerald, I won’t be disturbing you anymore. I’ve given it some thought and I know that I’ll only end up troubling you more by staying here. I really shouldn’t worry my dad too much either. Though Yacob has numerous flaws, at least I can trust that he’ll be sincere. I’ve decided. I’m going home now.”

As soon as she ended her sentence, she stood up immediately and began packing her things up.

Giya had made up her mind. She would return home to be engaged to Yacob.

Gerald felt uneasy but who was he to stop her?

He had Mila now. What right did he have to have ambiguous relationships with other women? With that thought in his head, he chose not to stop her.

As he sent Giya off, he thought that the incident was now truly over.

He could finally focus all his attention on the investment of Serene County.

Sometime later, Gerald received a call...

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It was a call from Morgana.

She told him that the gathering for high school friends was going to be held that afternoon.

Morgana had simply called to remind him about the event and to tell him to be there early.

It had been three days since Gerald had last eaten a meal at Mead Hall.

So Giya had been gone for three days now.

Morgana had elaborated on the event the day before. Soon, many of their classmates would start their internships or work.

Therefore, the gathering was planned for old friends to catch up with one another while they were still here.

At first, Gerald had not wanted to participate. However, Gerald had attended an opening ceremony for a newly invested company the day before. As he was about to leave, he bumped into Morgana and a few others who had gone to the carnival to have some fun.

Tagging along with Morgana was another female high school friend by the name of XellaJaquin.

She was their assistant monitor back then and she was definitely one of the class beauties. She was excellent in her academics as well. Similar to the old Sharon, she had always had a good relationship with Gerald who shared an equally good academic performance.

Gerald found out that Xella had returned to Serene County for future prospects. She seemed to have also found a nice job there.

The moment they saw Gerald, they tried their best to invite him over as well.

Gerald found it hard to reject so many people so he ended up promising that he would go.

After telling Morgana he hadn't forgotten, he hung up.

A few seconds later, he received a message on his phone. It was Xella.

"So when are we going, Gerald?"

Gerald knew that she lived in Serene County. Actually, it wasn't too far off from the hotel Gerald was currently staying in.

On the day they met, Gerald had joked that they should go to the gathering together.

However, he hadn't expected Xella to agree to that.

"I'll be right there soon!" replied Gerald.

"No need to rush. I need another forty minutes to wash my hair and some other things. Let's meet up at the Tranquil Road bus stop later!"

"No problem!"

Though Xella used to be the assistant class monitor, she was a quiet and gentle girl who rarely talked.

She just liked to study and her friends in class were mostly the more studious people.

A good example would be how she didn't like talking to people like Cameron—who had a powerful family background—and Waylon Letts—who was the wealthiest in class—since they were both quite mischievous. Money and power just weren't how she chose her friends.

Meeting her again, however, Gerald could see that Xella had undergone some big changes from when they had last met years ago.

The way she presented herself, she had become quite optimistic and capable. She was even able to joke with the others, much unlike her past self.

It seemed that girls would naturally change after experiencing different things in society.

Ignoring all that, something much more important was on Gerald's mind. He remembered back when he had an ambiguous relationship with Xella at the start of their junior year.

She had been with him not because of his charm.

Back then, Gerald was still considerably handsome. However, the things that mattered to her was his honesty and his studious nature. Adding to that, he also liked to listen to a group of girls—which she was a part of—when they told him things. As a result, an ambiguous relationship blossomed between the two.

However, his ambiguous relationship with Xella lasted only for a short while. It ended not too long after.

Shaking his head, he batted the old memories away before taking his car key out.

Gerald then drove his Mercedes-Benz G-Class to the Tranquil Road bus stop.

He didn't need to keep a low profile anymore since he was no longer in the university.

Besides, he wasn't driving the car to show off. He simply needed a vehicle to get somewhere.

He knew that there was a chance that Sharon and Lilian might be at the gathering as well. Though they didn't know who his true identity was, they at least already knew that he was rich. Knowing that, Gerald didn't think too much about them.

When he arrived at the bus stop, there was still half an hour left before the appointed time.

Since he still had some time before she arrived, he parked his car at a nearby parking lot.

He then went to a coffee shop to buy two cups of coffee before finally walking toward the bus stop to wait for Xella.

"Gerald?"

While sitting there, he heard a female voice call out to him.

Gerald turned around.

Before him, was a girl intimately locking arms with a man. Both of them were wearing sunglasses and they were dressed up fashionably.



Though her eyes were hidden, the rest of her face was beautiful. She even had a nice figure going for her. The man, on the other hand, looked slightly displeasing to the eye to be absolutely honest. He was short, plump, and ugly. His face was filled with pockmarks too.

Despite them looking like night and day, they appeared to be a couple.

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“What, it’s only been a few years, Gerald. Have you already forgotten about me?” said the girl as she removed her sunglasses.

“You’re Rae!” said Gerald, recognizing her immediately.

After hearing him say that, her partner took his sunglasses off as well. Gerald immediately realized who he was after that.

His name was Heath Seaver. His classmates liked calling him ‘tycoon’ since he definitely looked the part. He was actually quite rich back when they were still in school. However, he was also famously known for trying to gain the affection of up to ten girls back then, though he was rejected more than fifteen times.

How was that possible? It was because some of the girls rejected him twice!

The issue always boiled down to his face having too many pockmarks.

Aside from that, he had suffered from a high fever once when he was young, so his reactions were always a bit slower compared to the others.

When it came to bullying back then, the victims were always either Gerald or him. Both of them suffered the same misfortune.

And what about Rae Walker?

She had been a beauty even back then.

She was from the school's art team and she danced Latin just like Lilian.

However, compared to Lilian, she was way more attractive and seductive.

Gerald still remembered how much Rae had enjoyed herself during the schooling years. There were always several people trying to gain her affection. As a result, she had been in love many, many times.

Some of the boys she dated had rich family backgrounds and were quite famous in school.

Others were from the school's sports team. Back then, they all looked like they would become celebrities one day.

Rae had even dated handsome gangsters from outside their school before.

During that period, a few magnificent motorcycles could always be seen parked at the entrance of the school during weekends. It meant that she was going out on a date, and it always made for a spectacular scene.

It was a surprise to Gerald that she would end up being together with the tycoon after graduating from high school.

His surprise was obvious to them as his eyes were wide open.

“What are you staring at? Actually, I never expected to see you attending the gathering! It’s really been quite a while since we’ve last met!” said Rae as she placed a hand on Heath’s shoulder while rolling her eyes at Gerald.

“It truly has been. Both of you are even together now!” replied Gerald with a smile.

Rae simply sneered. “That’s right, we are. What about it? He loves me very much and that’s all that matters. He even owns a few shops in the county town!”

Gerald couldn’t tell whether she was trying to show off, but she really liked talking.

Seeing that he had gone quiet, Rae showed a smug expression on her face as she locked her arms with Heath’s again.

She could sense Gerald's astonishment at how the tycoon and her were a couple now.

Gerald couldn't deny that he was slightly jealous.

However, it wasn't about love. Gerald and Heath were both losers at heart. However, one of them had a beautiful girlfriend now while the other remained the same.

With that in mind, anyone would be unhappy about that.

Rae enjoyed seeing Gerald's mood sour.

"Xella will be here soon. Let's go together!" said Gerald as he smiled bitterly while shaking his head.

Rae simply sneered again. "We're definitely not taking the bus. We're just waiting for our ride here. Jason and the others will be picking us up later. That's only because the tycoon hasn't had the time to get his driving license yet. Otherwise, we would have bought a car by now!" replied Rae.

"I see!"

It was unpleasant talking to her so he spent the remaining time chatting idly with them.

It was sometime later when he heard a female voice calling out to him.

“Gerald!”

Looking up, he saw her standing opposite the road, a parasol in hand. Her body appeared slim and tall, and her shoulder-length curls were red. She was walking toward him now.

The closer she came, the more attention she received from the other men waiting at the bus stop. Their eyes were glued onto her.

With her beauty and grace, who could blame them?

The woman who now stood before Gerald, was none other than Xella.

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“Here comes Xella!” said Rae as she and the others smiled toward Xella.

“Have you waited for a long time, Gerald?” asked Xella, smiling as she looked at him.

“Not at all!” replied Gerald.

Xella was dressed charmingly that day. She was certainly the kind of woman who could bewitch others with a single glance.

However, Gerald knew better and actively stopped himself from thinking unnecessary thoughts.

“Speaking of which, Xella, I looked at the group chat yesterday. The others were discussing how you had landed a great job. How did you manage to get into the Dream Investment Group? I heard that a billion dollars were required for the registered capital!” said Rae, a slight jealousy projected in her voice.

Initially, Rae was considered much better compared to her other classmates in the group.

Since she was now dating the tycoon whose family owned a few shops, she was considered quite well-to-do and she was proud of that.

She had a great life as well.

However, comparing herself to Xella, she felt like a small fry.

Everyone knew that the Dream Investment Group was established with the funds provided by Mr. Crawford from Mayberry. In the near future, it was planned to become a large development project in Serene County. Whoever managed to enter the group would continue their efforts even though they had to pay about one to two billion dollars that year.

Naturally, when the news was shared in the group chat, everyone became excited.

It was a sign that Serene County was going to undergo some drastic changes soon.

“I just so happened to be recruited by the company. I’m not too sure how its development will end up being and to be frank, I don’t have much confidence either. Besides, it’s not like I’m working in the headquarters of Dream Investment Group. I’m just working in a subsidiary investment holding company under them, it’s not as mysterious and good as most people say!” said Xyla as she smiled bitterly.

“That’s still quite an exceptional post, Xella! You don’t have to be modest!” replied Rae, her jealousy more apparent in her voice now.

Gerald on the other hand, was standing beside them and he appeared quite shocked.

So Xella had been recruited by a subsidiary company under Dream Investment Company.

And who owned the Dream Investment Company?

It was, of course, Gerald!

No wonder Xella and the others were there the other day! After completing the procedures for the opening ceremony, he had bumped into them in the main square just outside the hall.

Quite a few celebrities had attended the carnival the day before so it hadn't crossed Gerald's mind that Xella was involved with the Dream Investment Company.

With her role as an employee of the subsidiary company under Gerald's, it was definitely alright for her to bring along a few friends to enjoy themselves there.

Gerald couldn't help but think to himself, 'What a great coincidence!'

"Since we're all here, let's get on the bus together!" said Xella.

"It's fine, someone's picking us up later! Actually Xella, why don't you come with us instead?"

Just as Xella was about to reply, her phone started ringing.

The moment she picked up, she stepped to the side before saying something, a blush forming on her cheeks. She continued talking for a while before finally hanging up.

"Your boyfriend?" asked Gerald with a smile. He couldn't help it, seeing her face all shy and flustered.

"What are you talking about? I'm single! That's just a friend!" she replied with a smile though her voice was quivering awkwardly.



Gerald shook his head with a smile before fishing his car keys out. He was ready to drive her to the gathering.

All of a sudden, a new white Audi A4L could be seen and heard dashing toward the bus stop.

The brakes were slammed and the car stopped abruptly right next to the surprised crowd.

The car's window was rolled down and a man in sunglasses poked his head out.

"Come on, Xella! Your classmates will be there soon! Let's get there before them, just the two of us!" said the man.

Naturally, the car caught a lot of attention from the people who were waiting for the bus there.

As usual, the beautiful one would always get picked up by the rich kid.

This was what a few of the boys there thought as their inferiority complex sank in.

"Ah, hello Waylon. Is this the newest car you've bought?"

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Rae recognized the man and she bore a look of surprise on her face.

Seeing that Rae and the tycoon were there, Waylon was surprised as well.

He got out of his car and leaned against it with one hand in his pocket. He then smiled and said, "Bought it about half a month ago. I finally found a chance to drive it today!"

Waylon was another of Gerald's old classmates.

Back when they were still in school together, there were only two boys who were very rich and powerful. They still are today.

One of them was Cameron, whose family was related to the health department. The other was none other than Waylon.

Both Waylon and Cameron shared a good relationship back then. They enjoyed messing around during class.

Since the two of them had wealth and power, they both lived good lives even after graduating from high school.

However, Gerald was more interested in Waylon's relationship with Xella. The two of them had never had a good relationship, even quarreling with each other at times, at least as far as Gerald could remember. They now looked like they shared quite a good relationship.

As they were chatting with each other, Rae pointed at Gerald before saying, "Say, Waylon, Gerald's here too. Why don't you talk to him?"

Waylon then finally looked toward Gerald who had been standing beside them all this time.

"Oh goodness! If you hadn't told me about it, I really wouldn't have recognized him. You're here too, Gerald!" said Waylon as he smiled faintly.

Rae simply sneered at that. "What, have you forgotten already, Waylon? You once asked Gerald to lend you his workbook so that you could copy his answers. Gerald didn't let you so you took a chair and beat him up all the way from the platform to the back of the classroom. I remember him looking scared half to death back then since you did it so harshly," said Rae as she reminisced.

Gerald was placed in an extremely awkward position as soon as she said that.

He distinctly remembered that incident and it had been a reoccurring bad memory for him. Waylon was like a shadow in Gerald's heart since he always ridiculed Gerald openly. That wasn't the only time he had beaten Gerald up either.

It had been so traumatizing that whenever Gerald heard even his name, he grew instinctively frightened.

During that incident, both Xella and Sharon had quarreled fiercely with Waylon because they wanted to help Gerald.

Xella had even taken a textbook and smashed it on Waylon so that she could avenge Gerald.

It was an unpleasant experience as a whole and Gerald could only reply with a bitter smile.

However, Waylon was indifferent to the situation and simply changed the topic. "Well, that's enough chit chat. When I called Xella earlier I thought she was going to be here alone. It turns out that all of you were here waiting for the bus! Either way, come on Xella, let's go."

'Xella must have been afraid that I would misunderstand earlier, so that's why she answered the call secretly' Gerald thought to himself.

It wasn't really necessary. Gerald didn't care, quite honestly.

However, she had promised and agreed that they would be going to the gathering together. As it turned out, she had both Gerald and Waylon waiting to take her there. That was the only thing that slightly troubled Gerald.

"Sure. Let's go in Waylon's car together, Gerald. You don't have to take the bus too!" said Xella as she blushed slightly while looking toward Gerald.

In their minds, the tycoon and Rae had added themselves to the picture. 'Imagine riding in an Audi! That would feel so good! We could even deepen our relationship with Waylon! How nice!'

"I'm afraid that just won't be possible. I need to pick up another classmate later and if Gerald joins, there won't be any space in the car left!" said Waylon, a grimace on his face as he stepped into his car.

Xella was now sitting beside Waylon who had just gotten into the driver's seat.

This made Xella feel even more awkward. "I... see... Then... What should we do then?"

"How about this, Gerald can just hail a taxi since it'll only cost about ten dollars!" replied Waylon.

"You don't need to do that! Aren't there Ofo bikes by the street? Just scan one then ride the bike to the gathering!" said Rae.

"D\*mn! That's just too pathetic!" Waylon then burst out laughing.

Once he stopped, he said, "Let's just meet later at the hotel then, Gerald."

After that, he just drove off without saying another word.

Xella had wanted to say something to Gerald but in the end, she couldn't bring herself to say anything. She could only roll up the car's window.

She sighed internally. 'What else could I have said...'

Once they left, several people were already looking at Gerald pitifully. A few others simply sniggered.

'That Gerald guy there was clearly being looked down upon. He's so pitiful!' That was what almost everyone there was thinking at that moment.

However, Gerald didn't let it bother him. He simply smiled in resignation before walking to the parking lot beside the bus stop.

He passed by the bus stop as his Mercedes-Benz G-Class drove swiftly toward the venue of the gathering.

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Once he had parked his car, Gerald entered the private room. Almost half of his classmates were already there.

There were about twenty people and the atmosphere was quite lively.

The dining table that they had booked was huge as well.

Most of the students there only greeted Gerald casually before turning to look away and continuing talking among themselves.

To them, Gerald was simply a poor loser so he was naturally easy to be ignored.

Going back to Gerald, there was one thing that surprised him.

Both Lilian and Sharon were nowhere to be seen.

“By the way, Waylon, why aren’t Lilian and Sharon here? Didn’t they say they would join us?”

Similar to Gerald, some of the other classmates were also puzzled.

Waylon simply smiled faintly. “They won’t be joining us. They’re not the same as they used to be. They’ve entered rich and powerful circles. They’re arguably the most powerful among us! Why would they ever attend such a small event such as this?”

“Oh my, is that really true? What else do you know, Waylon?” asked Xella who was sitting beside him. Her curiosity had gotten the better of her.

“Well, Sharon’s found herself quite a powerful boyfriend in Mayberry. Do any of you know about Yorknorth Mountain Entertainment City?” said Waylon as he lit a cigarette.

“Of course we all do! It’s net famous! Yorknorth Mountain is going to be developed and transformed into a tourism, food, and culture focused city. Literally everyone has heard about it!”

“Well, Sharon’s boyfriend came from Yorknorth Village, though the village has now been demolished. But that’s beside the point. See, her boyfriend’s family owns a few shops on the commercial street in Yorknorth Mountain Entertainment City. The amount of money they’ll be earning in the future will be almost impossible to calculate!”

“Holy cr\*p! They sound really powerful!”

Hearing that, everyone was astounded.

“Her boyfriend’s name is Hayward, and he’s quite famous in Mayberry. I had visited Mayberry last month for a little entertainment and fun. I called Sharon while I was there and met up with her boyfriend too. We had a meal together and exchanged contact information too,” said Waylon rather proudly.

“D\*mn Waylon! You’re so great!”

“Back when we were in school, Waylon and Cameron were equally influential and powerful! Waylon still is! How about you Cameron? No news from you? You’ve got to work harder!” teased a few girls who were sitting casually beside Cameron.

A hint of jealousy could be seen in Cameron’s eyes.



Cameron knew that he couldn't compare himself to Waylon.

This was especially true now since Waylon had already grown to know a lot of people from Mayberry whereas Cameron's contacts were only limited to those from the health department.

Thinking about it made Cameron both anxious and restless.

He felt like he was being humiliated.

"Hey, hey, don't say that! Cameron's a great guy too! If your family or relatives work in hospitals or something close to that you can just give Cameron a call! Come over here Cameron! The guest of honor seat is your's to claim!"

Waylon was already sitting on the main seat while Xella was sitting to his left as the secondary guest of honor. The only seat left was reserved for the guest of honor so who else could sit there other than Cameron?

"But Waylon, wouldn't it be better for you to take the guest of honor seat? You're definitely the most powerful among us here! Besides, I'll let all of you know something. Waylon's company has also received funding from the Dream Investment Group!" said a classmate as he smiled while looking at Waylon.

Waylon was enjoying himself. He felt smug that the others knew about his achievements.

When his other classmates heard that, their eyes widened as they turned to look toward Waylon.

“They are companies that belong to my family, so they’re none of my business. I’ve established my own company but it’s still quite useless since I’ve yet to yield any results!” said Waylon while smiling bitterly.

Many of his classmates were both jealous and envious of him.

His declaration only made Cameron feel more and more inferior.

As he smiled awkwardly, he suddenly noticed Gerald who had been sitting near the door. With a cold smile on his face, he said, “Speaking of which, Waylon. We shouldn’t just pass the seat of honor among ourselves. Gerald should be the rightful one sitting there!”

Cameron had had enough. He was annoyed and he didn’t want to be compared to Waylon anymore so he changed the topic to Gerald.

“What? You’re suggesting Gerald take it?” said a random classmate as he burst out laughing.

Cameron simply sneered.

“Of course he should. You may not know it, but Gerald’s quite close with our Serene County’s Louie. We met two days ago at a restaurant and Louie even wanted to pay the bill for Gerald!”

Chapter 424

Cameron smiled coldly as he said that.

“What? Very funny, Cameron! As if Louie could ever be acquainted with Gerald!”

“I know right? The difference between Louie and Gerald’s status is synonymous with comparing a planet with some dirt!”

“You can choose not to believe me, but Xella knows it’s true. She saw it too!”

As he looked at Xella, she simply nodded in agreement.

“Well, d\*mn!”

At that moment, several of the classmates began looking at Gerald in a slightly different light.

However, there were also a few others who turned to look at Waylon.

Everyone was aware of the incident where Waylon had severely beaten Gerald up back in high school.

Gerald was somehow rich now, and he was even well acquainted with Louie who was known for having a good rapport with both good and bad guys. How would Waylon respond to that? What kind of face would he make?

On Waylon's face was a scornful and bitter smile. "So what if he knows Louie? Also, I'm assuming that most of you don't know about this, but Louie was beaten up by someone in a KTV a few days ago. His father was even warned by that person. What more, their Lourdes Mining Group shares are being taken over by someone else as well! With that in mind, do you still think that Louie is that f\*cking great?" said Waylon.

Waylon then continued sharing other information that he had heard regarding what had happened to the Lourdes.

By the time he was done, everyone was finally able to see the entire picture.

"You know Gerald, you look like an honest person! But in the end, you got acquainted with such a person! I would never have expected you to be like that, Gerald!" said Waylon with a smug smile before he continued.

"Are you surprised at how I know all this, Gerald? Unlike some people, I'm not afraid to tell others about these things! See, the person who had framed the Lourdes this time around was none other than the powerful boss from Mayberry, Zack Lyle. He did something to them and whatever he had done, it made them obedient to him. Some time ago, my dad had a meal with Jaxon, more commonly known as Mr. Lyle's driver. During the meal, Jaxon became so drunk that he ended up telling my dad about it. I was present during that meal and Jaxon even patted me on the shoulder and told me

to work harder. I've even received his permission to give him a call should anything happen!"

Waylon ended his sentence with a faint smile.

The others were all dumbfounded.

"Mr. Lyle's driver? Your father knows Mr. Lyle's driver, Waylon?"

Everyone there knew who Zack Lyle was. It was literally impossible not to know about him if you were from Mayberry.

He was an extremely powerful and influential businessman.

His driver must be very well to do as well!

"Yeah, my dad's had a few meals with him before. Jaxon's quite a dominant man. You know, I think that we really should have more gatherings like this in the future. If any of you need any help, I'll definitely lend you a hand. And don't just think I'm sitting here telling lies either! Have a look at this photograph! Took it while I had that meal with Jaxon and my dad!"

Waylon then held his phone out to show the picture to everyone.

Curious, Gerald took a look at it too.

It was indeed, Jaxon Sanders in the photograph.

In it, he could be seen dressed up nicely and wearing an expensive-looking watch.

It was surprising to Gerald, to say the least. He would never have expected to see Jaxon like that.

In the past, Zack had always assigned Jaxon to be Gerald's chauffeur when Gerald went to Wayfair Mountain Entertainment. Gerald had been quite close to Jaxon.

He had initially thought that Jaxon was an honest and sincere man, as he presented himself as a simple and plain person whenever Gerald saw him in the past.

To Gerald's surprise, he was actually a quite dominant man.

Not that there was anything wrong with that. Everyone had a private life after all.

"So don't think that Louie is some kind of big shot. The people who fawn over him aren't going to be of any use to you either. Just find me if you have any trouble!"

Waylon then peeked at Gerald before looking toward Xella.

“And Xella, don’t you worry! I’ll help you deal with that person from your company today. No matter what it takes, I’ll help you resolve that issue!”

“Hmm? You’re facing troubles at your company Xella?” asked Rae.

Gerald’s ears perked at Rae’s question and he looked at Xella as well.

Chapter 425

“Yeah, come on Xella, tell us. What’s wrong?” asked a few of the classmates curiously.

Xella nodded before she began sharing an incident that had happened to her in great detail.

Not too long after, Gerald’s curiosity was sated.

It turned out that not long after she had been recruited by the company, her superior began constantly harassing her. The superior in question was a deputy manager of one of the departments.

According to Xella’s description, the deputy manager was a balding man who had lost all his hair around the crown of his head. He looked quite old and obscene in general.

Initially, he hadn’t dared to do much. He simply asked Xella out to have meals with him.

After rejecting him several times, Xella eventually found it difficult to continue doing so. Hence, she finally decided to accept and have a meal with him one day.

From that day onward, the man became more perverted and daring.

He constantly called Xella to his office. At the start, he would only say imprudent things to her from time to time. Now, things were getting physical and it was not uncommon for him to use both his hands and legs to harass her.

About two days before the carnival, the deputy manager had called Xella to come over. This resulted in her thigh being caressed by him.

She was so nervous at the time that she instinctively picked a glass of water up and poured it all over the deputy manager.

Now, she was being threatened to be fired. He wanted her to obey him, otherwise she would have to resign from the company. She was told to be sensible and act accordingly as well.

After that incident, Xella ended up telling Waylon about what had happened.

Only Waylon was powerful and influential enough to set the deputy manager straight. Help from her classmates was also welcome.



“Well d\*mn! Now I really want to beat up that old pervert! How dare he bully our goddess!” shouted some of the men indignantly.

“That’s the spirit! However, we women really need to learn how to better protect ourselves. We’re always being harassed and bullied. You know, a few people who didn’t know about my connections or background had constantly requested me to do things for them back when I first arrived at the hospital. Once they got to know who my boyfriend was, nobody tried anything funny with me anymore!” said Morgana.

“I know right? Speaking of which, Xella, you and Sharon were both equally the most beautiful girls in our class during our school days. Sharon’s already found herself a good and powerful boyfriend so you should definitely do the same! Find yourself a man like that who cherishes you and you’ll bump into way fewer problems like this in the future!” added Rae.

Xella only blushed slightly at this before looking toward the floor.

“Don’t worry, Xella. After today’s gathering ends I’ll resolve the issue for you! He’s just a deputy manager after all!” said Waylon confidently.

“Waylon I just want you to scare him a little so that he’ll stop bothering me, please don’t do anything unnecessary!” replied Xella with a slightly worried tone.

“Don’t worry, I know what I’m doing!”

“If you want to scare him off, you need to look no further! Gerald’s here and he can easily ask Louie to help with that!” said Cameron as he looked at Gerald.

Gerald looked back at him and could only give a cold smile as the others burst out laughing.

It was a rare moment for Gerald to have finally found someone equally fun, good, and capable. However, it didn’t matter in the end.

Xella looked toward Gerald for a brief moment before averting her gaze and looking back at Waylon.

Her answer was quite obvious.

Back in high school, Xella had shared quite a good relationship with Gerald, up to the point where she actively defended him from Waylon.

Now, however, she was much closer to Waylon.

Waylon was naturally considered to be the most powerful among the classmates and he had a lot more connections and resources compared to the others as well. Gerald had nothing except for Louie, as far as the people there knew.

Gerald could understand her reasoning and couldn’t fully blame her.

After experiencing enough in society, ordinary people usually concluded that money and resources were much more important than actual friendship.

Gerald was honestly slightly upset since it happened to someone he had treated like a close friend before.

However, Gerald chose to not say anything about it.

He simply looked at the others when the topic was changed to ridicule him again.

Chapter 426

After a while, Gerald stood up and went to the washroom.

Not long after he had entered the gents, Xella stood up to head to the washroom herself.

After washing his hands, Gerald bumped into Xella who had also left the bathroom at the same time.

The meeting was awkward, to say the least.

“Speaking of which, I haven’t had a chance to properly talk with you. How’ve you been recently?” said Xella with a bright smile as she tried to conceal her awkwardness.

She knew how her relationship with Gerald was like in the past, and she was also very aware of the conflicts between Gerald and Waylon.

However, now she had become quite close to Waylon. Even if he didn't say it, Gerald would definitely not feel alright with that.

"Not bad!" said Gerald as he wiped his hands dry with some tissue paper.

"I heard that you haven't found a job yet, is that true? Do you have any plans for the future?" asked Xella.

"I plan to make a name for myself," replied Gerald honestly.

Xella frowned slightly at that before shaking her head with a faint smile on her face. "Listen Gerald, I really suggest that you go look for a job. It doesn't matter what kind of job you get. You know very well that you're different from the others!"

"Or, you could even try to please Waylon. He's started his own company and he's looking for people to hire. If you want, I could put in a word for you so that he'll be more willing to take you in! The basic salary is around three hundred dollars a month and that's better than nothing!" advised Xella.

"I appreciate it, but I'll have to refuse," said Gerald as he smiled.

Xella simply sighed. “Gerald, I know that Waylon beat you up badly back then, but he was young so please try to understand. Why don’t you try looking at it this way? If you had let him copy your answers then he wouldn’t have beaten you up! Now that you’ve graduated from university, who knows? He may be willing to lend a hand!” continued Xella.

“I don’t take that incident to heart anymore. Also, regarding the issue with your deputy manager. All you need to do is to tell your manager or report the incident to the other superiors at your company. They’ll definitely punish him severely!”

The manager and several of the superiors there were originally staff from Mayberry International Inc. so Gerald knew about their capabilities and virtues well. They would definitely not allow any sort of harassment to continue.

Xella simply looked at Gerald for a while before smiling bitterly and shaking her head. “You don’t know much about what goes on at my workplace. You don’t have to bother about it anymore. Anyway, it’s been nice talking to you again, and thank you, Gerald!”

After ending her sentence, she simply waved at Gerald before turning away and leaving.

It made Gerald feel that Xella herself was quite a strange person.

It was just like back when he had met Sharon. She had acted strangely to him as well.

Feeling disappointed, Gerald began walking back himself.

Less than two dozen steps later, he saw that Xella's path had been blocked by a middle-aged man. The man was even trying to hold her hand.

"What are you doing, Mr. Zabel?" said Xella as she moved her hand away from his.

"Xella, I was planning to have my meal here today. I didn't expect to bump into you. Since we're both here, why not have a drink with me? I can introduce some colleagues from our company to you!" said Mr. Zabel, lust reflected in his eyes.

"Come now. Stop trying to leave or I'll get angry soon!" he said.

"Let go of her!"

At that moment, a loud, angry roar could be heard.

Chapter 427

The roar had come from none other than Waylon himself who had just left the private room.

Earlier, another girl had left for the washroom but as she was about to exit the private room, she saw a man blocking Xella's path.

Once Waylon learned about the fact, he immediately got up and headed toward the washroom alongside a few others.

“What’s this? A group of uncouth b\*stards! Who’re you yelling at?”

Though perverted, Mr. Zabel was certainly no small fry. His expression was cold as he asked the question.

“That girl’s my classmate. Why are you blocking her path?” asked Waylon, unafraid.

Xella was so frightened that she instinctively hid behind Waylon.

“Xella, I’ll go ahead and say this. The colleagues waiting for me this time around are no ordinary people. If you know what’s best for yourself, follow me. Also, why don’t you tell these b\*stards who I am?” replied Mr. Zabel, his arms folded behind his back.

“Waylon... His name is Charlie Zabel... And he’s the deputy manager of my department!” said Xella.

“D\*mn! So this is the guy!”

Waylon had initially decided to deal with Charlie that afternoon. However, Charlie had been kind enough to show up in front of Waylon! Good, he didn’t need to waste any time looking for him!

Xella clearly had not expected to bump into that old pervert here either.

Waylon sneered before saying, “How convenient. I had planned to go looking for you but here you are, Mr. Zabel. Let’s have a chat, shall we? First of all, do you know who I am? My dad is Spencer Leets! My family owns Queenzon Enterprise! The biggest company in Serene County!”

Hearing that, Charlie’s heart skipped a beat.

He definitely knew about Queenzon Enterprise.

In the past, it had just been an ordinary company. Now, however, things were completely different.

Due to Queenzon Enterprise’s high environmental protection standards, they had gained funding from the Dream Investment Group.

One could even say that it’s one of Dream Investment Group’s development projects.

The Leets family’s status greatly benefitted from this, and they now enjoyed a powerful and influential status in Serene County.

Similarly, Mr. Zabel had also received funding from the group. However, as a mere deputy manager of a company, he still needed to think and behave properly.



“Ah, do you’re from the Letts! But Mr. Letts, I have some business to attend to with Xella which only concerns our company. It would be inappropriate for you to intervene in such private affairs, don’t you think?” said Charlie coldly.

His company’s percentage of investment was much higher than the factory and company belonging to Queenzon Enterprise. Comparing the two, Charlie’s company was definitely a more important asset for the Dream Investment Group. Charlie didn’t have to be too scared when it came to the aspect of power and background.

“Oh, but I do wish to intervene. No matter what you say!”

Waylon spoke without filtering his words, projecting his assertiveness in the situation.

Things got physical soon after due to both men feeling the need to protect their pride.

Waylon was first to attack. He rushed toward Charlie and began punching him without even flinching.

Seeing that, Cameron and the others began taking action as well.

In their minds, they all thought that the deputy manager was not as powerful and influential as Waylon’s family.

In the end, Charlie was beaten up quite severely.

Xella had been standing beside them the entire time, trying to get them to stop fighting but to no avail.

“You absolute b\*stards! How dare all of you! Just you wait!” Charlie shouted with a hand on his bruised cheek as he ran away in a rather pitiful manner.

Not too long after, a group of people rushed out of Charlie’s own private room.

The leader of the group seemed to be a middle-aged man in a suit.

“Who was it who started it all?” asked the leader, coldly.

Charlie immediately pointed at both Waylon and Cameron before whispering something into the leader’s ear.

The man simply sneered. “Like I care whose son he is! Today’s my first day reporting to duty at your company as a senior executive! These brats need to be taught a lesson, otherwise, they’ll think we’re small fries that can be bullied easily!”

While the tensions continued to heighten, Gerald simply continued standing at the side. He really didn’t know whose side he should be on now.

On one hand, Waylon was definitely a useless, rich brat but he was efficient when it came to fighting.

On the other, the middle-aged man was clearly not any saint either.

As Gerald thought to himself, someone from Charlie's group smashed a wine bottle against Waylon's head. Blood soon started dripping down his face.

"Hey! Stop fighting! Cease this!"

Noticing how bad the situation already was, Gerald quickly rushed forward along with a few other men. They tried to persuade both teams to stop fighting.

After all, those people who were beating the others up were Gerald's subordinates. On the other hand, Waylon was the one who was being beaten up. Although Waylon could almost be considered as Gerald's enemy, it was imprudent to cause such a great mess since they were having a gathering that day.

It was something that just shouldn't happen that day.

Charlie's subordinates finally stopped beating up Waylon after the staff from the hotel gave their cooperation to stop the fight. Charlie then paid the bill and left the hotel in a huff, surrounded by the people from his company.

“Oh no, what are we going to do? Waylon, you’re bleeding!” said Rae, extremely frightened.

“They’re the first bunch of b\*stards who have ever dared to beat me up. I’m calling my dad! Those b\*stards are going to pay a terrible price for this!” shouted Waylon, his eyes bloodshot.

Gerald had observed how Waylon had fought earlier. He was clearly someone who would never allow himself to accept loss or defeat that easily.

## Chapter 428

Due to his father’s power and influence, Waylon had always done as he pleased, acting smugly and arrogantly in front of all his classmates.

It had never occurred to him that Charlie’s subordinate could act even fiercer. They had even severely beaten him up.

At that moment, Waylon was a wreck both physically and emotionally.

“He needs medical attention immediately!” shouted Morgana before taking her phone out and calling for an ambulance.

The ambulance soon arrived and since Morgana herself was a clinician, she entered the ambulance as well to help bandage his wounds. She left for the hospital together with Waylon.

“Waylon was beaten up and now he’s being sent to the hospital... What should we do?”

“Let’s just leave for now... What if those madmen come back with reinforcements?”

“You’re right! They don’t seem like ordinary people...”

The classmates continued discussing the situation among themselves, all of them quite indecisive on whether pride or safety was more important.

Since no immediate conclusion was achieved, they all turned to look at Cameron.

Cameron looked back at them, dumbfounded.

Cameron had been lying on the floor throughout most of the second half of the fight. He had been kicked down and he stayed there. He was afraid of fighting back the moment he found out that the leader was some kind of senior executive.

It was also the reason why only Waylon was beaten up when the fight began again.

He had initially been worried but seeing how everyone was expecting him to make the next decision, he soon became smug again.

“Everyone remain calm! Let’s just head to the hospital first. Waylon’s father will definitely be going there as well!” said Cameron.

The rest of his classmates agreed and they all headed toward the hotel’s underground parking lot together.

For a brief moment, Gerald was too stunned to move but he simply shook his head before heading downstairs to get his own car as well.

‘These people seriously like making a mountain out of a molehill! If Xella had only reported it to her superiors, none of this would have happened! Charlie would definitely be dealt with easily!’

‘All she needed to do was give me a call and everything would’ve ended just like that!’

‘What a mess this has become...’ These were the thoughts going on in Gerald’s mind.

All of them were now in the parking lot.

“Alright, we have four cars with us now. Who else drove here?” asked Cameron.

At that moment, Xella started crying out loud.

“I’m so sorry everyone! It’s my problem but I pulled you all into it as well!”

Xella wailed, a terrible guilt weighing on her heart.

“How could we blame you Xella? I witnessed the old pervert blocking your way with my own eyes! What more, Gerald had been standing beside you but he didn’t do anything! If he had done something, maybe all of this wouldn’t have happened! It’s all his fault!”

“That’s right! If anyone’s to blame it should be Gerald! Don’t blame yourself! Let’s just get into the car and head to the hospital now!” said Rae.

The classmates then began entering the available cars. Xella herself got into Cameron’s car.

“Oh god, look! Gerald’s here too!”

At that moment, everyone finally took notice of Gerald who had just arrived at the parking lot.

“What’s that idiot doing down here? All the seats in the available cars have been filled! Didn’t he come here by hailing a taxi?” asked a female classmate coldly.

“That’s right! Since you took a taxi here why are you down here with us? Were you planning on joining us in a car? You won’t be of any use even if you come along with us! Just hail a taxi and stop blocking our path here!” said Rae with a cold sneer.

Xella simply glanced at Gerald though she said nothing else before looking away.

“Don’t bother about him, Cameron. Is your car or Waylon’s faster?” asked Rae as she rolled her eyes while looking at Gerald.

“They’re almost the same! We’ll be heading out first! Sit tight!” shouted Cameron as he stepped on the pedal, sending the car lunging forward.

What followed was a loud bang.

Cameron had not held on to the steering wheel firmly enough. His car had crashed against the back of a white car that had been parked in front of them.

The hood of Cameron’s car was lifted. It looked like it had been badly damaged.

“F\*ck!” yelled Cameron in shock.

All of them got out of his car and Rae immediately started screaming. Her mouth was covered with her hands in shock.



“Cameron. Cameron look! I think you crashed into a Mercedes-Benz G500!”

“What? How could that be?”

Most of the other classmates didn't think too much about it. To them, it just felt impossible that such a luxurious car would even be in Serene County.

However, when they approached the car, Rae had unfortunately been correct. It really was a Mercedes-Benz G-Class...

Chapter 429

“F\*ck! A Mercedes-Benz G-Class is worth more than three hundred thousand dollars!” shouted a classmate in a worried voice.

Though the two cars had collided, the Mercedes-Benz G-Class had suffered much less compared to Cameron's own car.

However, if compensation was required, Cameron knew he had to fork out at least a hundred thousand dollars. He quivered slightly in fear.

“I'm so sorry Cameron! If it wasn't for me you wouldn't have hit that car!” wailed Xella as another burden was added to her heart.

She sighed internally while holding back her tears. ‘If it wasn't for me, none of these incidents would have happened today...’

'Waylon's been beaten up, and now Cameron's just crashed into another car when he was just trying to send me to the hospital to visit Waylon! What can we even do now?'

Xella's mind was filled with negativity and it only made her feel more flustered and agitated than she already was.

The others were starting to feel afraid as well. They began discussing how to resolve the issue regarding the expensive car.

"Just go ahead, it's no big deal. Go to the hospital, all of you!" said Gerald with a sigh while he slid his hands into his pockets.

It was quite unfortunate but of course, the car Cameron had crashed into was Gerald's.

His Lamborghini was hit by someone and now his Mercedes-Benz G-Class faced the same fate. Was he really that unlucky?

Though it was his car that had been hit, he found it difficult to ask them for a maintenance fee, given how terrified they all already looked thinking about how much money they would have to fork out.

"For f\*cks sake! Do you even understand the value of this car, Gerald? This is a Mercedes-Benz G-Class! Who would dare to just leave like that! If the owner of this car ever found out who we were, we would definitely have to pay an even heavier

price! Do you even understand half of what I'm saying?!" shouted Rae, her anxiety now in high gear.

"Let's calm down and think about this. How about we all wait here for the driver. When they arrive, we'll apologize sincerely to them and with any luck, they might let us leave if they're satisfied with just that," suggested one of the girls.

"That's the best idea we have at the moment. It definitely beats leaving the car like this!"

This seemed to be what the majority agreed with.

Some of the girls even had other things on their minds. They wanted to see whether the driver was a handsome young man.

"Say, Cameron, why don't you leave with the others first? I'll stay behind and wait for the driver. I'll settle the issue of the maintenance fee!" said Xella out of the blue.

Although she didn't have much money, she couldn't just allow Cameron to pay for the maintenance fee all on his own.

"No way, we can't just leave you here! How about this, everyone, please try to use your connections to see if you can find out who owns the car. Maybe someone you know may know who the owner is!" suggested Rae.

The idea was approved by almost everyone there and they began taking action.

“One of my cousins works in the construction zone. I’ll ask him!”

“My uncle is responsible for the housing and building projects. He knows quite a lot of people too. Let me ask him!”

“My uncle’s a teacher. He’ll know a lot of people as well!”

Several of them started calling up whatever relevant connections they knew of.

Xella herself joined in on the effort.

“You guys. You really don’t have to do this, just listen to me! Get going now!” Gerald was getting more and more perplexed at how complicated this simple thing was turning into.

“And what? Let you handle it? What could a loser like you even do!”

“You barely have any common sense in you!”

Before they could continue mocking him, the Mercedes-Benz G-Class made a sound.

Gerald had given up trying to explain. He had retrieved his car key and pressed a button on it. The lights of the car flashed for a moment following the sound of the car unlocking.

At that moment, everyone present was stupefied.

“...What?”

“What the hell?”

Some of the girls couldn't hold back their shock and accidentally shouted out whatever was on their minds.

Even Xella put down her phone as she looked toward Gerald in immense shock.

All of them were in utter disbelief.

‘How could that Mercedes-Benz G-Class belong to Gerald?’

‘Didn't he hail a taxi to get here?’

‘Isn't he a pauper?’

Everyone had the same questions in their heads. It was nothing short of astounding.

By the time everyone had gotten back to their senses, Gerald had already driven his car out of the parking space. The car had not been severely damaged and he made a mental note that he would find an automobile sales service shop later to get any dents repaired.

## Chapter 430

Whatever the case was, Cameron's car certainly wasn't going to be driving anyone anywhere with that damaged hood.

Everything that had gone wrong had stemmed from Xella, but there really was no use crying over spilled milk.

Besides, Gerald didn't think that it was appropriate to just leave them like that. They were friends in the past after all.

"Come on, get into my car. I'll give you a ride to the hospital!" said Gerald calmly.

This new mature and calm Gerald felt quite strange to the others.

Thinking back, no wonder he seemed so calm and casual earlier when he was talking to them at the bus stop.

They honestly hadn't paid much attention to his demeanor then since they thought he was still a loser.

However, now when they paid more attention to the way he spoke, they found that his tone sounded cold and composed as opposed to the old Gerald they knew. It was somewhat awe worthy.

“Gerald! Is... Is this your car?” asked Rae, her eyes wide open.

“Yep. It’s still pretty new,” replied Gerald as he nodded slowly.

“Why are you talking so casually about a Mercedes-Benz G-Class?! My god! Who would have ever thought that Gerald would buy such an expensive car!” said Rae, almost jumping in excitement.

“Um... Gerald? Can I ride in your car?”

“Sure, why not.”

“Oh god. I get to ride in a Mercedes-Benz G-Class!” Rae squealed as she clapped her hands happily before getting into the car.

Xella simply stood at the side, her face flushed red.

‘Well this is embarrassing... I even advised him to get a job just now but to think that he’s doing so well! He even has a Mercedes-Benz G-Class!’

'We had promised to meet each other at the bus stop yet I left for the gathering without him... So it turns out he had wanted to drive us there in his car!'

"Come on Xella, we don't have all day," said Gerald with a smile. He could see that Xella was clearly feeling embarrassed.

Though she hesitated at first, she nodded slowly before getting into the seat next to Gerald's.

The car was full by the time Gerald began driving off to the hospital.

On their way there, Rae had rolled down the window and poked her head out to take several photographs.

"So Gerald, how did you manage to afford this car? Have you become rich?" asked Rae curiously while her head was still outside the car.

"I didn't buy this car. I attended an event and I just so happened to win it!" said Gerald honestly.

The car that he had bought—his Lamborghini—was still parked at Mountain Top.

"Ah. So it's just a grand prize," said Rae, a slight disappointment in her voice.



Aside from Rae, the other girls were also already planning their next moves.

None of them had boyfriends yet.

Even if Gerald wasn't actually rich, selling the car alone would instantly grant him three hundred thousand dollars. With that kind of money, they could buy a house and an ordinary car. In other words, a standard well-to-do family.

As they thought about this, some of the girls began developing feelings for Gerald.

However, Xella's reaction was the complete opposite.

When she heard that the car was only a gift, her surprise instantly disappeared.

Instead of surprise, she now felt only ridicule.

So it was just a prize... At that moment, she concluded in her mind that the reason Gerald had promised to meet her today was to just show off the car that he had won.

Waylon was different. He definitely had the money and capabilities needed to buy himself the Audi A4. Thus, whatever regret she had toward Gerald ceased entirely at that moment.

“Still, I never would have thought that you’d own a Mercedes-Benz G-Class! Ignoring how you actually acquired the car, you’re still a rich person now! Why did you keep such a low profile at the gathering earlier? You should show off a little!” said Rae in a flattering tone.

“Do rich people need to show off? I don’t like looking down on others because even though some people may look ordinary, they may be the only people who can help you one day!”

Gerald was talking like Mr. Crawford.

The girls, however, didn’t agree with his statement.

Xella frowned as well, averting her gaze out the window with a tinge of disgust reflected in her eyes.

Since he was greeted only by silence, Gerald stopped talking as well.

It wasn’t long before they reached the hospital.

By the time they arrived, all of Waylon’s wounds had been bandaged. He was on the phone talking to someone when his classmates entered his ward.

“Hey Jaxon, my dad called you earlier. I’m in the hospital right now, could you please come over for a bit? I heard from my dad that they’re quite a difficult bunch to deal with!”

Chapter 431

Waylon was definitely asking Jaxon for help.

However, before they could hear about the specifics, Waylon had already hung up. This was because he had noticed Xella and the rest entering the room.

“I’m so sorry Waylon! It’s all my fault!” said Xella apologetically.

“What are you talking about Xella? I was just caught by surprise when they started beating us up without even making the situation clear first! Don’t worry, my dad’s subordinates are dealing with them right now! My dad’s heard about your troubles as well!” said Waylon in a fierce voice.

Xella was just about to say something when her phone began ringing.

Taking in a deep breath, she answered it. It was only a brief talk and she hung up not long after.

“...It’s all over now! The call was from my president and he informed me that I was fired!” said Xella weakly.

She knew that she had just lost her chance of having a great career. Since she was now fired, she would no longer be able to enter any excellent subsidiary companies or investment in companies under the Dream Investment Group.

It was all gone.

“...What? You were fired?”

Somehow Waylon had never considered that possibility. At first, all he wanted to do was to show off his capabilities in front of Xella.

His goal was to make her admire and fall in love with him.

He had fought and taken a beating to help her but not only did that fail to resolve Xella's issue, it only increased her burdens since she was now essentially jobless.

“Waylon... what should we do now? It definitely feels like they'll continue to harass Xella!” asked Rae, being the meddling person she was.

“Don't forget! We still have Waylon's father on our side! He's definitely much more powerful than some deputy manager!” sneered a male classmate as he analyzed the situation.

At that moment, Waylon's phone rang.

He picked it up immediately.

“How is it, dad? ...What did you say? Oh god. Alright, I got it. What about me? Alright, dad. I get it!”

When he finally hung up, his face was pale and his hand was trembling so much that the phone dropped onto the bed.

“...Waylon? What’s wrong?” asked Xella, concerned.

“...It’s all over for me. The person who had beaten me up was the senior executive from the headquarters. Though dad wanted to manipulate his connections with Jaxon, in the end, Jaxon is just a driver. He’s definitely not as influential as that senior executive... What more, the senior executive has worked for Mr. Michael Zeke before... He’s Mr. Zeke’s loyal confidant! Even Jaxon doesn’t want to get involved in this. My dad’s begging them now and he called to tell me to apologize to that deputy manager tonight!”

Waylon wiped the cold sweat off his forehead with his sleeve.

Xella was in utter dismay.

So it turns out that Waylon was also in deep trouble.

“Also Xella... My dad told me... told all of us not to act too rashly anymore... Charlie had harassed you in the company. The issue could have been solved easily with you filing a complaint to your superiors... They’d definitely punish that pervert severely once they find out about his misdeeds... All that we’ve done today has only made the situation much, much worse... Nothing is going right. I’m in deep trouble now and you lost your job too!” said Waylon in an uncharacteristically soft tone. He was finally speaking like a humble person now.

Hearing that, Xella felt as if someone had given her the exact same advice before...

As her view panned across the wardroom, she noticed Gerald standing by the door. Of course. It was exactly as Gerald had advised her to do when they had met outside the washrooms earlier.

Before this, she had thought that Gerald was inexperienced. She had even disapproved of his suggestion...

In the end, if she had only followed his advice, none of this would have happened. The matter could have been resolved easily.

But it was too late to regret it...

The classmates then tried to cheer the mood by sharing possible positive outcomes from today’s events. However deep inside, they all knew that they were just consoling each other.

At that moment, Xella's phone rang again.

She picked the call up and just like before, she only talked for a short while.

However, the details of the call seemed to be either very shocking or very important to Xella. This was because nearing the end of the call, her eyes were wide open and an expression of utter disbelief was painted on her face.

"Xella? What's wrong?"

It took Xela a while to answer as she was still dumbfounded by the call.

"The boss... My company's boss called me in person just now. He told me that I could resume my work there and that I was going to be transferred to the personnel department. I'll work as a trainee there and I'll even be given training so that I'll be able to hold much higher posts in the department in the future... He even apologized to me about the issue regarding Charlie... He told me that Charlie had been fired and he even said that it was a decision made by the superiors!"

"...Eh?"

Chapter 432

Everyone was stunned. In their minds, they were all thinking the same thing.

'...What? That's such a drastic change! And so quickly too!'

“...Xella, I definitely think that someone’s been pulling the strings behind the scenes to help you... Otherwise, why would your boss even step forward to deal with the pervert in the first place? Investigating the matter doesn’t require the boss’s involvement and yet he still called your personal number to apologize! What more, the pervert’s been fired!”

“I agree. You said it yourself that the decision was made by the superiors. Someone must definitely have used their connections to do this!”

Rae and the others were openly discussing their speculations now.

“I think that’s the case as well. It’s extremely difficult to get appointed as a potential trainee for the personnel department. I can’t help but wonder who has that much power to make even the boss and my superiors take action...” said Xella as she rubbed her temple gently.

Suddenly, she froze before looking up and fixing her gaze on Gerald.

“Gerald!” she unconsciously shouted as she stood up.

“...Eh? Gerald?”

Everyone else in the room looked at him in shock.

Gerald had not expected Xella’s reaction, even though she was right.



Earlier when the rest were discussing among themselves, Gerald had left the wardroom to give Zach a call. Zach was ordered to resolve the issue as soon as he could.

Now that everything had been resolved, it surprised Gerald that Xella could guess the truth so quickly.

“I think I know who helped me, Gerald!” she said as she walked toward him.

“You know, thinking back, on our way here you had said that we shouldn’t look down on others since they may be the only people who can help us in the end, even though we had initially looked down on them. Thank you for reminding me about this Gerald!” Xella continued to express her gratitude to Gerald.

‘You think you know who helped you?’ Gerald thought to himself. Did that mean that the cat wasn’t out of the bag yet?

She then began explaining. “I was hired by the deputy manager from the personnel department. He’s a diligent young manager and every time we meet, he nods slightly and says a simple greeting. Though it doesn’t sound like much, I think that he’s been the one helping me a lot in secret!”

“At first, I simply thought that he was an honest and well-behaved man who only focused his attention on his work. Thinking back, however, he may be much more humble and sophisticated than I thought. I’m saying this now because I heard from

my colleagues the other day that he may not be who he portrays himself to be!” said Xella.

Gerald’s confusion was cleared the moment she finished her explanation. So she had guessed wrong after all, though it didn’t really bother him.

Xella however, still felt the need to confirm her theory so she called up a close female colleague of hers.

“Hello? Lyla? Do you still remember our talk about the deputy manager from the personnel department? I think I remember you saying that he’s a cousin to a superior? Alright. Yeah, it’s nothing. Thanks! You can resume your work now!”

After hanging up, Xella looked so excited that even her eyes were now teary.

“Xella? Are you really sure it was him? Does he like you or something?” asked Rae, her inevitable jealousy firing up again.

“Whether he likes me or not, I’m unsure. However, I’m sure that he’s helped me several times in secret by now. He must have been one of the first people to find out that I was getting fired! Whatever the case, I’ll ask him to clarify all this when I get to work tomorrow!”

“I’m so jealous of all of you. Morgana was helped by Cameron so she’s now an official doctor while Xella has both Waylon and the deputy manager constantly aiding her! Sharon even has a rich heir as her partner! I don’t have anything that fancy!” said Rae

while biting her lower lip in jealousy. She glanced at the tycoon once without saying anything else.

Morgana could only smile bitterly at her statement while she consoled Rae.

“Don’t say that, Rae. The tycoon isn’t that bad! Also, since you're so free standing there, could you get some hot water?” asked Morgana as she turned to look at Gerald.

‘Really? Everyone else is standing here doing nothing too!’ Gerald sighed as he thought to himself.

Still, he couldn’t refuse so he simply walked over to a table with an empty glass jug on it.

“Dr. Lopez, both the president and the vice president are coming to the ward now!” said a nurse who had stuck her head into the room. After passing the message, she left.

“Eh? The president is coming?” asked Morgana, shocked.

Waylon was shocked as well. “Maybe the president found out that I had been admitted to the hospital so he’s coming over to pay me a visit. Xella, come help me up. My dad is acquainted with the president so I need to look my best.”

Seconds ago, Waylon was honestly still angry that his moment had been snatched away by Xella's deputy manager.

However, knowing that the president was personally coming over to meet him calmed his rage slightly. As Xella supported him, he slowly got to his feet, feeling slightly excited.

Gerald on the other hand, wanted to leave the room since the number of people there was going to increase again. He grabbed the jug and headed for the door to get some hot water.

At that moment, the door opened and in front of him, was the president himself.

"Oh? Mr. Crawford, what are you doing here?"

Chapter 433

He rubbed his hands together excitedly as he asked the question, a smile on his face.

"...Eh? Mr. Crawford?"

The others in the ward were dumbfounded when they heard the name.

This was especially the case for Waylon who had been ready to greet the president and act smugly in front of the others. He was twice as stunned as anyone else in the room.

‘Why did he address Gerald as Mr. Crawford?’

“You know who I am, president?” asked Gerald. He was stunned as well.

“Of course I do! Back then when Mr. Winters had been admitted to the hospital, I went to pay him a visit as well. However, I wasn’t able to catch you in time before you left!” said the president as he continued to smile.

Thinking about his words, Gerald pieced the puzzle together quickly.

When Mr. Winters had been admitted to the hospital, he had bumped into Morgana at the cafeteria. Back then, Morgana was troubled with her issue at work.

When he left and met up with Zack later, he had told him about Morgana’s job issues.

Though her issues were eventually resolved, the credit had been snatched by Cameron in the end.

It must have been sometime then when the president had heard about Gerald.

Thinking back, Mr. Winters had also mentioned the president visiting him a while back ago though Gerald hadn’t paid it much notice then.

“Mr. Crawford, I heard from the head nurse that you were here so I specifically came over to meet you! Do tell us if you have any requests. We’ll get it done immediately!” continued the president.

He then looked at Morgana who had been standing beside them. “Look here, Mr. Crawford! After being recommended by you, Morgana is now an official doctor here! She’s quite a diligent and responsible employee so she’s been receiving high praise from both the patients and our staff! It was kind of you to recommend such a good and talented person to us!” The smile on the president’s face widened as he said that.

The two of them continued to chat about some other things. A few talented people who had been standing behind the president shook hands with Gerald before all of them finally left.

Back then, Gerald had simply told Zack to use his connections in the province to resolve Morgana’s issues. Gerald wasn’t even directly part of that.

However, it would seem that the president was quite a capable man himself. After all, he managed to learn that Zack was just Gerald’s subordinate acting under Gerald’s orders.

When their backs could no longer be seen, Gerald turned to look back into the room.

It was then when he realized that all his classmates had been looking at him in shock.

This was especially true for Waylon. He appeared stupefied as he stood beside his bed, frozen in place.

So the president hadn't come to meet him. He had come to personally meet Gerald alone! How humiliating!

"...I'll uh... Go get some hot water first!" said Gerald before turning for the door once more.

"G-Gerald!"

It was Morgana who had called out to him, a look of disbelief on her face.

"...Yes? What's wrong, Morgana?" asked Gerald.

"Was... Was it you who had helped me? Were you the reason why I managed to become an official doctor here so easily?"

The president had clearly said that earlier. That it was Gerald who had recommended such a good doctor to the hospital.

Back when she first got the job, even she was puzzled. She simply assumed that it was Cameron who had helped her.

Her father had even thanked Cameron's father for that! However Cameron's father just appeared to be a cold and aloof man. The extent of his hospitality to her father was a single glass of water before sending him off.

If it truly was Cameron who had helped her, why would that have happened?

It all made sense now. It was Gerald who had been helping her from the start.

It turned out that Gerald was quite close to the president.

"Well, yes. It's no big deal though. I'm just lucky to know a few relevant people so I told them about you," said Gerald as he smiled softly.

Morgana was filled with regret after hearing that.

She remembered the first time she had met Gerald again after such a long time. She had only treated him to a meal in the cafeteria while Cameron was treated to a grand feast in a magnificent hotel.

The actual person who had thought about her future and helped her resolve all her issues was Gerald.

Looking at Gerald again, Morgana found herself looking at him in a different light.



“...Oh god. Gerald, you were driving that Mercedes-Benz G-Class earlier! You even have such great connections with influential people! What exactly are you working as now, Gerald?”

Chapter 434

The question had come from Rae.

“What did you say? He’s driving a Mercedes-Benz G-Class?” said Waylon, shocked.

Thinking back, Gerald had simply smiled calmly at the side while Waylon was showing off his car earlier.

He had thought that it was jealousy, but Gerald was just having fun looking at the fool showing his Audi A4L car off! With the current price of a Mercedes-Benz G-Class, that amount of money could easily buy eight or nine Audi A4L cars!

“As I said before, I won it as a prize! It’s just a vehicle to help me get around,” said Gerald calmly as he smiled.

He then put the jug down and left the ward.

Xella had not said anything, but she now respected Gerald more than she ever had.

He had simply left the ward once the issues had been resolved without expecting any appreciation at all.

In her mind, she knew that even though she had constantly thought that others had been helping her, Gerald didn't care as long as there were no more issues.

Even by the time Gerald had gotten into his car, his classmates had not moved an inch. They were still staring at each other in shock that he had just left like that.

While Gerald drove on, his phone began to ring.

It surprised him slightly that the caller was Tammy but he still picked up.

"Gerald, please advise Giya to come home. Mr. Quarrington's been extremely anxious. He's tried to call Giya several times now but her phone's probably been switched off. She isn't even replying to any of my messages anymore! Please advise her, I'll meet up with her this afternoon!" said Tammy.

Hearing that, Gerald was momentarily stunned.

He immediately stopped his car at the side of the road. "What? What do you mean he's worried? Hasn't Giya gone home?"

He knew very well that Giya had said that she would return home before she left. Gerald hadn't even contacted her at all since then.

He had thought that it was fine just ending it like that.

After all, he couldn't let her stay, otherwise it would only increase the chances of Mila misunderstanding in the future.

Where had she gone? And why couldn't anyone contact Giya now?

"...Eh? What? What do you mean by that? I was still able to contact her yesterday before I found out that I couldn't even reach her anymore today. She had put on a great show and now her father is truly scared. Please don't pretend anymore, her dad isn't at my home. Pass the phone to Giya now!" said Tammy.

She wanted to think that Gerald was only pretending.

"Tammy, I'm dead serious. Don't scare me please. You left my place three days ago and the morning after that, Giya had ridden a car back to Mayberry. She said that she was going to get engaged with Yacob the moment she returned home."

Gerald dabbed his sleeve against his forehead as cold sweat began to form.

He explained to Tammy everything that had happened the day Giya had left.

"D\*mn it! Even if that's the case, we should still be able to reach her but we can't! Did she really tell you that she was going to be engaged with Yacob?"

"Who else could it be?"

“I’m just going to say this. The person she was supposed to get engaged with isn’t Yacob. It’s a man from Yanken known only by others as Mr. Long. However, Giya doesn’t want to be with him so she ran away from home. I suspect that she went to you with several excuses in mind just in case you wouldn’t take her in! Oh, Giya... Now I’m just worried that something has happened to her!” cried out Tammy in a worried voice.

After sharing whatever they knew about the situation, Gerald hung up before immediately trying to call Giya.

However, it was true. Her phone had indeed been turned off.

He tried contacting her through other social media as well but the result was the same.

‘F\*cking hell! What happened, Giya!’

‘Even though her disappearance isn’t directly related to me, the last place she was seen at was still my place!’

Gerald was deeply upset and he was filled with self-reproach.

‘If I hadn’t said those things Giya may not have left in the first place...’

‘If only I had given her a call after she had left, I might still know where she is now.’

'But it's too late for that. I wouldn't have been able to anticipate this happening anyway. Something's happened to Giya and I need to find her immediately.'

'Tammy had also said that she thought Giya was still together with me.'

Gerald scratched his head in frustration. In his mind, there were countless possibilities of things that could have happened to her. Each possibility he thought of only made him even more frightened than the previous one.

He smacked his steering wheel hard to calm himself down a little.

Shaking his head, he then turned the car around immediately.

He was now returning to Mayberry...

## Chapter 435

While all this was happening, a sigh was heard. "Tammy, Mr. Quarrington is extremely nervous now. He's even gone to the police station to launch a report. What should we do? How much longer should we wait here for that Gerald?"

Something had happened to Giya and her family and friends definitely knew about it.

The one who had sighed was one of Giya's roommates.

They were all now waiting for Gerald at the entrance of Mayberry University.

Tammy had agreed to meet him there on the phone earlier.

Since Mr. Quarrington had gone to make a police report, Tammy and the others had acted sensibly by going to the university. Informing and sharing what they knew with the university was really all that they could do at that moment.

“Let’s just wait for him. He’s the one who knows most about the situation since Giya was last seen at his place. However, he’s not free from being taught a lesson by us later! Her disappearance is still related to him!” said Tammy angrily.

The other girls were angry as well. They had decided that they would beat him up as soon as he arrived.

“D\*mn it! How did Giya ever get bewitched by such a loser! What more, he hadn’t even bothered to contact her since the day she left!” said the girls angrily.

All of a sudden, a girl pointed toward the road. “Hey, Hey all of you! That’s a Mercedes-Benz G-Class! The driver must be a handsome guy!”

“For god’s sake, Yvette! Read the mood a little! How could you still have more interest in luxury cars and handsome men at this moment!”

Though the roommate had said that, she and the rest of the girls still ended up staring at the Mercedes-Benz G-Class. It was, after all, a magnificent and cool looking car.

“...Hey. Look at the window. Doesn’t that look a bit like Gerald?” said Yvette.

“As if that could ever be possible! He’s a poor loser! I’m expecting him to appear before us on a bike!” scolded Tammy.

However, the Mercedes-Benz G-Class was coming closer.

Gerald hit the brakes once the car was in front of them and got out of the car immediately.

“What’s the situation like?” he asked anxiously.

After a short silence, one of the roommates screamed.

Tammy and the others were equally as astounded.

They had always had the impression that he was just a regular poor loser. But here he was! Driving a Mercedes-Benz G-Class!

Tammy had initially assumed that she knew Gerald inside out. However at that moment, all she could do gape her mouth in shock.

“Why do you have a Mercedes-Benz G-Class, Gerald?” she finally managed to ask.

“I got it a while back but is that really what’s important now? What’s the situation like?” asked Gerald again.

Tammy gulped, suppressing the shock that she was still feeling.

She then told him the details of the current situation. In short, it didn’t look very promising.

Despite having launched a police report, not much progress had been done. No further clues had been uncovered either.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Quarrington were worried out of their minds now.

At first, they had been quite upset to know that the Longs from Yanken had wanted to force a marriage on their daughter to marry their son.

Now that Giya was missing, the weights on their chests had been doubled. Their grief was immeasurable.



As Gerald heard all of this, his self-reproach only intensified.

As for Tammy and the others, they didn't dare to beat Gerald up now after seeing his Mercedes-Benz G-Class. Their tones had turned polite as well.

“However, you don't have to worry that much, Gerald. I've thought up a plan. See, my cousin, Felicia, had told me that one of her classmates was in charge of controlling the live broadcasts of a famous anchor. A month ago, their live studio had asked for help from their fans to look for a young boy who had been missing for several years. Shockingly enough, by investigating through different social media and forums, they actually succeeded in finding him!”

Chapter 436

“I've called Felicia and told her about the situation. She's told me that she'll try to get her classmate to help us. Hopefully it goes well! With the help of the anchor's fans, we could finally locate where Giya is! There is strength in numbers after all!” said Tammy.

Gerald nodded. He thought that it was a good idea.

Normal people didn't understand the true capabilities of those who worked with mass media and those who treated the internet like their second home.

As long as one was willing to research, the information they needed would definitely be found.

Gerald called Drake and Tyson to investigate the matter as well. None of them were taking any chances.

“Felicia’s here!”

At that moment, a black car parked by the road and Tammy’s little cousin hopped out. A handsome man in glasses guided her toward the group.

Gerald had met Felicia the other day along with Tammy, so he knew who she was.

She definitely knew what had happened to Giya since the moment she saw Gerald, she rolled her eyes in disgust.

“I’ve brought Quade along, Tammy. He’s my classmate. As I’ve explained earlier in the car, Giya’s missing. We would like to ask for you to broadcast a missing person report so that the anchor’s fans can help look for her! We’ll definitely pay for it!” said Felicia.

Quade adjusted his glasses slightly before saying, “You don’t need to worry about the pay. The Internet Celebrity Carnival is coming soon and the anchorwoman is thinking of doing some charity to increase her influence. It’s definitely not a problem!”

“Also, her office is here in the city of Mayberry University. I’ll bring all of you over to meet her. You can then give her a general understanding of the situation!”

“...Wait, is the anchorwoman you’re referring to Felicity?” asked Gerald, stunned.

Quade simply sneered as he looked at Gerald. “Who else could it be? You?”

“Oh god, Gerald! I asked my classmate to come look for Giya! You’re just looking for the anchorwoman! Could you please stop being such a loser you b\*stard?” said Felicia coldly.

“That’s enough. Time is ticking so let’s just use it to find Giya with Quade’s help!” said Tammy.

“Alright! Get in the car, I’ll bring you there!”

At first, Gerald had thought that tackling the issue would be slightly inefficient if they didn’t know who the anchor was.

Now that he knew that it was none other than Felicity, he became slightly more excited and hopeful.

Since Felicity had become famous with the help of Ordinary Man, she would definitely listen to him.

As Gerald opened the door of his car, a shout was heard.

“Oh my god, is that a Mercedes-Benz G-Class?” Felicia asked, stunned.

“Gerald, is that car yours?”

“Just get in the car already!” said Gerald in resignation.

Quade had a surprised look on his face. He adjusted his glasses again. Though Gerald looked like a loser, he drove such a luxurious car.

Tammy drove her own car as they set off. Gerald knew the way there well. Soon, they reached the Entrepreneur Base which belonged to the university students.

Quade worked there. He was a person who had never finished high school yet he dreamed of becoming an internet celebrity. In the end, he became the person who controlled the live broadcasts for Felicity.

“Miss Dunn, Tammy and the others are here!” said Quade as he brought Gerald and the others into the office.

A girl had her back facing them when they first saw her. She was none other than Gerald’s classmate, Yvonne Dunn.

“Ah, alright...”

When she turned to walk toward them in her high heels, she was momentarily stunned.

“Gerald? Why are you here?”

Chapter 437

Yvonne had been working as Felicity’s assistant which explained why she was there. She was clearly shocked when she saw Gerald there.

“Don’t worry about it first. More importantly, we need your help!”

It felt like ages ago since Gerald had last met Yvonne and Felicity.

They had not met face to face since the day he had saved them when they were kidnapped.

Gerald felt slightly uneasy talking to them now.

“Wait here for a moment. Felicity’s still having her makeup done. I’ll tell her that you’re all here first!”

Yvonne wasn’t as mean as she used to be toward Gerald now.

A lot had happened since then and it probably really was Gerald who had saved the four of them. Gerald definitely held quite a bit of power and influence. They knew that much.

Now, Yvonne wanted to instead try to please Gerald. Felicity clearly had the same thought process.

His background was suspicious to them, to say the least.

They were in such grave danger back then yet nobody would have been able to help since nobody even knew that they had been kidnapped.

Well, except for Gerald of course.

What more, the incidents regarding Cassandra's power bank and Gerald's coat being left behind in the Maybach car also further increased their suspicion. His items just seemed to be present whenever such a situation occurred.

Once they reached that conclusion, Felicity decided to treat Gerald better.

"Gerald? Why are you here?" asked Felicity as she walked toward the group. She had only light makeup on, but she was still very charming and attractive.

It was a surprise to Tammy and the others.

It had never occurred to them that internet celebrities could look so charming even with basic makeup on.

Tammy, Felicia, and Quade, however, looked even more shocked. “You know her Gerald?”

“She’s my classmate of course she would!” said Gerald calmly.

“Gerald, this Giya girl. What’s your relationship with her?” asked Yvonne slightly anxiously.

“She’s a good friend. Please ask for help from your fans to look for her. Once she’s found, there’ll definitely be a reward waiting for you!”

Gerald was in no mood to keep a low profile at that moment so every word he said sounded dominant and strong.

However, both Felicity and Yvonne didn’t think that it was out of place.

They had speculated about his true identity long enough, and this only served to prove that their theories were right.

“I’ll help. However, I’ll need you to come into my office with me, Gerald. I need to talk to you about something personally. Yvonne, please serve Quade’s friends for me.”

Felicity then turned around and re-entered her office.

Gerald followed after her.

In his mind, he had already concluded that both girls already knew his true identity by now.

It was because he wasn't careful enough the few times he had saved them. He had left behind enough clues for them to piece the puzzle together.

Why else would Felicity ask him to enter her office? In fact, Yvonne would have scolded him immediately and kicked him out if she didn't know who he really was.

However, Gerald wasn't one to hold resentment toward Felicity, even if she had constantly remarked sarcastically at him in the past.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have allowed her to become the famous anchorwoman that she was today.

"I'll make this clear, I'll definitely help you with this no matter what. However, Gerald, could you please tell me something and be truthful about it? Are you Ordinary Man? And are you also Mr. Crawford from Mayberry?"

Felicity bit her lower lip as she finally decided to ask Gerald face to face.



Felicity had had extremely complicated feelings the moment she met Gerald again after quite some time.

Was Gerald really the person that she had liked all this time?

Ordinary Man had always treated her well.

Although they had never personally met, Felicity had grown to have feelings for him after receiving his help a few times. It was the kind of feeling that just stuck strongly to her heart.

It had also been the reason why she felt nothing whenever other rich and young men tried to gain her affection or help her.

Chapter 438

Recently after Felicity had become famous, several men who were both handsome and rich began stepping up to help her. Once, she had a minor fever but even then, a few young and rich men had driven over to her place to send her medicine in person.

Some of them would even chat with her every night.

Technically, by doing all that for her, those men were already good enough to reach her 'partner standards'.

Ordinary Man himself had not spoken much with Felicity for a few months now. She had never met him in person either.

Despite all that, Felicity still felt nothing for the others.

It was definite proof of her admiration toward Ordinary Man.

She had even imagined how he looked, countless times.

However, with every passing clue that she got, it further revealed the fuller picture that Ordinary Man was none other than the person that she had always looked down upon, Gerald. How could she not have complicated feelings about that?

‘Could it really be Gerald?’

‘If it is, then is Gerald the one for me? Will I... Will I still love him?’

‘I honestly can’t believe that I’ve fallen for Gerald!’

Such questions and thoughts would fill her mind from the day they last met at the restaurant.

She had been constantly anxious about it, and she was now more anxious than ever with him standing before her.

She couldn't hold herself back anymore so she asked him for the truth.

"And what if I were? Would you still like me?" asked Gerald back, a bitter smile on his face.

Felicity bit her lower lip slightly before shaking her head. "I... I don't know! I don't know if I'd be able to like you even if you truly are Ordinary Man!"

Gerald chuckled at this. "You're just overthinking this. How on earth could I ever be Ordinary Man?"

Though his voice was calm, his face couldn't fully hide his unease. Gerald was having complicated feelings as well as he looked at Felicity.

Gerald was afraid that meeting her again in the future would be awkward if she knew the truth, so he kept silent about his identity.

After what had happened with Giya, Gerald now knew better not to flirt with other girls if he wasn't determined to give them happiness and good prospects in the future.

He was aware as well, that Felicity would definitely be in great pain and confusion if he admitted to her claim. There was nothing to be gained by doing so.

“I don’t buy it! You’re definitely lying about that!” said Felicity as she stared straight into Gerald’s eyes.

“Gerald, please... I... I just want to hear the truth from you. If you tell me the truth, I’ll... I’ll share some information with you! I’m positive that you’ll definitely find the news interesting. How about that?” asked Felicity as she slowly approached Gerald.

“I’m neither Mr. Crawford, nor am I Ordinary Man. There are no lies there. I just won the lottery and it was a great amount of money. If I really were Mr. Crawford, why would I ever keep such a low profile? Besides, Mr. Crawford comes from a huge family. We’ve been in the same class for the past three years now. Do I look like someone who comes from a huge family?” replied Gerald.

Felicity simply nodded.

Despite that, she still couldn’t bring herself to hate Gerald anymore, even if he wasn’t Mr. Crawford or Ordinary Man.

“...Fine! I’ll believe what you said for now! Also, are you interested in the information?” she asked while shaking her head to regain her composure.

“What happened?”

“Half a month ago, I attended a function in Yanken. I bumped into a girl there!”

As Felicity said that, she peeked at Gerald. She was curious to see what reaction he would give.

“Go on. Do I know that girl?” asked Gerald.

“Of course you do. You’re quite close to her as well!”

“I hadn’t expected to bump into her there, but here’s the thing. She’s changed drastically! If you ever plan to meet her again, I can guarantee that you’ll find yourself very surprised!”

Gerald couldn’t help scratching the back of his head in confusion.

“She’s Xavia! Your ex! Could you already have forgotten about her?” said Felicity when she realized that he still couldn’t guess who the girl was.

“Xavia?”

It was Gerald’s turn to be shocked this time.

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“Xavia’s in Yanken?”

He was stunned just hearing that name again. He hadn’t heard from her for months.

He felt a sudden excruciating pain in his heart.

After all, he had been a couple with Xavia for two years. His memories at Mayberry University mostly consisted of both of them being together. However, she had severely hurt his feelings. At one point, Gerald felt only resentment toward her.

After he revealed his identity as Mr. Crawford to her, he became quite cold toward Xavia.

She received such a great blow from that, that she dropped out of university.

Since that happened, any resentment he had for her ceased to exist.

He was instead filled with self-reproach.

In the past, he had nothing. Yet Xavia didn't dislike him for that. She still chose to be with him.

They had their meals together, and even went shopping together.

While it was true that Xavia had changed in the end, she was much better compared to Alice and the others.

After all, she hadn't been disgusted with him for being poor. That was what touched Gerald back then since most girls naturally preferred rich partners.

His coldness back then literally ruined her future, to the point where she could not even complete her studies at the university.

Gerald had pondered before about getting someone to look for Xavia. If he was able to find her, he could provide her with a job that had a steady income and good prospects. He would be able to rest much easier if he knew she could still sustain herself.

However, Gerald gave up on that idea because he felt that she would hate him even more if she ever found out.

"What kind of response even is that? Are you happy? Excited? Or maybe you're just blaming yourself in your head now?" Felicity asked curiously.

"How is she now? Is she doing well?" asked Gerald, ignoring her question.

"Oh, you don't have to worry about her. Honestly, she's doing great! She's living such a good life that it'll definitely be beyond your expectations. Before we parted ways, she told me that she'll return to Mayberry one day to retrieve what she's lost there!"

"She had quite a scary expression on her face as she said that. When I asked her about it, she didn't say anything else regarding the matter. Speaking of which, Gerald, why did Xavia drop out of university?"

Back then, Xavia had told her to pass a message to Gerald. Felicity, however, was uninterested in anything related to Gerald so she simply kept the message to herself.

Of course, things were much different now, plus she was curious about what Xavia had meant.

“I wonder...” said Gerald, a bitter smile on his face.

She had announced that she would retrieve what she had lost in Mayberry... Xavia was definitely going to have her revenge on Gerald.

What on earth had Xavia gone through throughout the past few months?

Gerald had no idea where to even begin speculating. However, one thing was for sure. Xavia was doing great and that was all that mattered to him.

“Well, it’s fine if you don’t want to talk about it. I’ll just find out when she finally returns one day!” said Felicity before sighing.

“Alright, that’s enough chit chat! I need to finish up my makeup for the live broadcast this afternoon!”



“Alright!” said Gerald as he nodded his head. As he was about to walk out of the office, Felicity called out to him. As he waited for her to say something, she walked up to him before blocking the door with her arms spread out.

“Also, Gerald. I hope that you’ll promise me one thing since I’m helping you this time around.”

“What is it?”

“You can’t marry before I learn who Ordinary Man’s true identity is. That’s my only request. Is that possible?” asked Felicity as she bit her lower lip.

She didn’t even understand why she was asking for such an absurd thing from Gerald.

‘Could this possibly mean that I’ve fallen for him since I know that he’s most probably Ordinary Man?’

‘If Gerald really is Ordinary Man and he marries someone else... What would happen?’

Felicity didn’t want to have to feel such bitter remorse. As she pondered her own question a bit more, she realized that that must have been the reason why she had told him to make such a promise.

She still wasn’t even sure if she truly loved Gerald.

After hearing Felicity's request, Gerald looked at her in surprise.

"Don't get any misunderstandings. I don't like you, I'm just looking for an answer!" said Felicity.

"Alright, you have my promise!"

In all honesty, Gerald was still feeling slightly flustered after hearing Xavia's name again.

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He made the promise without even the slightest hesitation.

It was much better than telling Felicity that he was actually Ordinary Man.

But now wasn't the time for that. Now was the time for Felicity to ask her fans to look for Giya.

After he descended the stairs, the other could see that Gerald clearly had something weighing on his mind.

As he paced around slowly, both Felicia and Quade followed closely behind him.

Felicia kept alternating between poking Quade and nudging her head toward Gerald's back. It was clear that Quade wanted to say something to Gerald.

Quade, however, definitely looked like he didn't dare to go up to Gerald.

"Quade, it's really no big deal. Go ahead and talk to Gerald about it!" said Tammy as she sighed, looking at the two. She couldn't bear seeing them act so sneakily behind Gerald anymore.

Gerald heard his name being called and he turned around. Behind him, he saw Felicia poking Quade while both of them stared back.

Gerald was slightly confused at the scene but he shook his head before looking at Quade and asking, "What's the matter?"

Quade coughed while adjusting his glasses. "I need your help with something, but I'm not sure if you'll be willing to lend a hand..."

Initially, Quade had looked down on Gerald but when he saw that he drove a Mercedes-Benz G-Class, he was shocked.

"Go on..."

"Well, my elder sister works in a leasing company. She needs to lease a Mercedes-Benz G-Class this month though she hasn't had any luck getting her hands on one

yet... If she fails to hit her target this month she might get fired. You may already have guessed by now, but could you please lease it to my sister's company for three days? Just three days. My sister will definitely pay you the leasing fee!" said Quade.

Gerald understood Quade's situation.

Some companies specialized in stuff like that. People would sign leases for cars for different reasons such as shooting for movies.

Once the lease was signed, if anything happened to the car, the leaser would not be held responsible for it. The leaser didn't have to bother about all the expenses either. The car would just be leased for a few days and they could earn three thousand dollars without needing to do anything else.

"If that's the case, sure. I'll lease it to her," said Gerald as he smiled faintly.

Gerald found no reason to decline. Quade had a hand in helping Gerald find Giya too after all.

What more, Gerald approved of him, seeing how much he cared for his sister. Gerald could understand his worries since he had a sister himself.

If Gerald's sister was ever in any trouble, Gerald would rush over to help her without the slightest fear or hesitation.

“Thank you, Gerald! I’ll call my sister now to tell her the good news! She’ll be coming over soon with a contract for you to sign!” said Quade excitedly.

Soon after, his sister arrived and the contract was signed. Once that was done, Tammy and the others went home to try getting their connections to help resolve the issue of Giya’s disappearance.

Gerald called Zack up himself along with a few others.

They needed to find something. Anything that could give a clue as to where Giya’s whereabouts was.

Otherwise, Gerald knew that he would not be able to rest easy for the rest of his life.

Night came soon enough.

Gerald was exhausted and hungry after doing all that he could the entire day.

He retreated for the moment to a restaurant to fill his belly up before resuming the search.

“What do you mean? Do you think I’m unnecessary? Am I that bad?”

While he was having his meal, Gerald suddenly heard arguing coming from a dining table not too far from his.

There were voices of two women and a man.

All three voices came from the same dining table. It seemed that the man had been caught red-handed cheating with another woman. The man's original lover was the one doing most of the shouting as the cheating duo remained silent.

"I treated you so well! What do I lack that she has? You loved me before this... Do you not anymore? Why do you want to be with her?" The woman continued shouting at them.

This sort of scene wasn't uncommon. Gerald really didn't need to look at them at all.

However, he had glanced up out of curiosity since they were being so noisy. This resulted in his gaze being fixed upon the trio.

The shouting woman turned out to be Lilian.

As for the pair who had been caught cheating, they were none other than Hayward and Sharon.

Turning back the clock to the day of the class gathering, Gerald remembered hearing from Waylon that Sharon was now Hayward's girlfriend.

Lilian must have been anxious all this time since she liked Hayward too.

A slap was heard, and the shouting ceased.

The recipient of the slap was Lilian.

Sharon had stood up, a cold expression on her face. "Lilian, that's enough. Are you out of your mind?"

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"Sharon, you- You! How dare you slap me! Hayward this b\*tch just slapped me!"

While she said that, Lilian looked at Hayward while cupping a hand over her hurt cheek.

However, Hayward only averted his gaze. It was clear whose side he was on.

"I... I see... So that's how it is... To think that I was that blind before to not be able to see what kind of person you really were..."

Lilian's voice was quivering. She then turned around and ran away in tears.

Sharon slammed her fork and spoon on the table. She was in no mood to enjoy her meal anymore after such a mess. Soon after, both of them left the restaurant.

‘What a pity to see two best friends fighting like enemies now...’ Gerald thought to himself.

From what had played out before him, Gerald could get the gist of what had happened among the three.

It would seem that Lilian and Sharon were both getting more assertive over Hayward because of the properties that he now owned.

In the past when Hayward was still poor, they never treated him well even though he had always stayed by their sides.

It was a completely different story now. Ever since he owned a few properties and managed to get some great connections, he had essentially become a rich and handsome man to them.

What more, to both Lilian and Sharon, the experience he had gained while obtaining the properties and connections must also have made him more solemn and mature.

Gerald could definitely understand their situation.

However, he wasn’t sure how the two girls would react if they ever caught wind that the things Hayward now had were all given to him.



Gerald simply sneered while shaking his head before smiling in resignation.

After finishing his meal, he left the restaurant. However, the minute Gerald's foot stepped out of the restaurant, a hand grabbed on to his other.

"Oh! My grandson, please wait for a short while!"

Looking down to see who was holding on to his leg, Gerald saw an old man sitting by the entrance.

"My god, what are you doing?" said Gerald, stunned.

"My grandson, you must be rich since you can afford to eat at this restaurant! Please spare me some money, I haven't eaten in days now!" said the old beggar as he crawled closer to hug Gerald's thigh.

The old beggar looked dirty and his white hair stank.

He wouldn't let go of Gerald's leg until he got some money.

Understanding this, Gerald could only sigh as he reached into his wallet and handed a hundred dollar bill to the beggar.

In his mind, the old beggar was chuckling victoriously. 'I was right to choose this boy, he's filthy rich!'

The beggar immediately slid the money into his dirty front pocket but he didn't let go.

"Are you done?" asked Gerald, his tone getting angrier.

"My grandson, I need help with something else too... Could you please send me to a clinic? My leg is injured and I need to have it cured!"

"D\*amn it you old beggar! Just because you're old you think you can blackmail me?"

Gerald was angry but also speechless.

"What old beggar? I just got into some trouble! I'm no beggar!" the man replied.

By then, several people were starting to surround the two. Naturally, the gossiping soon began as well.

Gerald sighed, thinking how unlucky he was. The old man had even addressed him as his grandson all this time.

In the end, Gerald brought him to the clinic across the road, defeated.

The Chinese medicine practitioner there treated the old man's leg in no time. As Gerald paid the hundred dollar bill, he could only glare at the old man bitterly.

However, it was upon closer inspection that he saw that there was a tattoo on the old man's chest. It was the head of a dragon that looked rather intimidating.

'Could it really be that he really is some hero who's down on his luck?' Gerald thought to himself.

Maybe the old man really was influential and great once. Then again, it was none of Gerald's business.

He had spent a total of two hundred dollars on that old man. Usually he would never do something like that but it was just his luck that the old man had clung on so tightly on his leg and in public no less.

Gerald was just about to leave when he noticed some news being broadcasted on a TV in the clinic. The news was being broadcasted on Mayberry TV and it was regarding Giya's disappearance. It was stated in the news that the police were already investigating the case.

It was clear that Giya's father had thought of using mass media to help look for Giya too.

Seeing the news, Gerald began blaming himself again.

There were a few more patients in the waiting room, waiting for their turn to meet the Chinese medicine practitioner. One of them sighed. "Such a beautiful girl... I do hope that she's safe. The world is filled with all kinds of villainous and perverted people nowadays..."

"I know right? Girls need to learn how to protect themselves when they're out and about..." said another patient.

"Hmm... I seem to recall seeing her a while back. She was blocked by a few men..." said the old beggar who had limped out and saw the news as well, now that his leg had been treated.

Gerald had just begun walking toward the door again when he froze in place.

"What? What did you say? You've met her?"

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Gerald's voice was filled with anxiety as he asked.

The old man simply chuckled as he looked at Gerald. "Why yes, I did. Met her outside Mayberry Station around noon that day, alone. I distinctly remember her because she was so fair, tall, and beautiful. A few people were waiting for her at the station though. After a short chat, she got into their car hurriedly and that was the last time I saw her."

"You seem interested. You know her or something?" asked the old man as he smiled.

“We’re acquainted, yes,” said Gerald as he nodded before asking the old man for more details.

Based on the old man’s description of the event, the person he had seen that day truly was Giya and the timing was right too.

As long as he knew where Giya first went missing, whether she was kidnapped or not, the situation could be resolved rather easily.

As he was about to leave, the old man grabbed his arm nervously.

“What else do you want?” asked Gerald.

“My grandson, you’re a very kind man... May I please know your name?”

“Gerald Crawford...”

Since he had given Gerald such a vital clue, Gerald felt no reason not to tell him his name.

“Your surname is Crawford you say... Can I have a look at your chest?”

The old man’s voice had suddenly become a mix of agitation and excitement.

Before Gerald could even reply, the old man was already tugging on his collar.

Naturally, Gerald tried to resist but the old man was something else. Though he looked frail, when he needed to, the old man was strong enough to make sure Gerald couldn't even move his arm anymore.

Once Gerald's collar had been pulled apart, the old man frowned slightly.

"How queer! It's not here!" said the old man as he released Gerald.

'This old man's crazy!' Gerald thought to himself as he gently rubbed his wrists.

While the old man was still in a daze, Gerald made a dash for the exit and didn't look back.

After running quite some distance away from the clinic, Gerald called Drake, Tyson, and Tammy. He told them about what he had found out.

He knew that both Drake and Tyson would be able to get to the bottom of this very soon.

Thinking about the case, Gerald felt that the kidnapping involved lots of fraud and deception. However, his priority was always Giya's safety.

What a surprising turn of events though. To think that that old man knew about Giya... What a great coincidence!

However, it wasn't time to dwell on that now.

It was an hour later when Drake and Tyson contacted Gerald again. As expected of highly trained men, they had found their next lead.

Giya had apparently been lied to which consequently led to her being kidnapped. From what they could deduce, she had been locked up in a house in a luxurious neighborhood for about two days now.

After some research, it was found that a student by the name of Yacob was the cause of all of this chaos.

Yacob had owed the gangsters in Mayberry a sum of money, so they were now using Giya to make him pay.

'F\*ck!' Gerald cursed in his mind.

Drake and Tyson were immediately ordered to get their men ready to save Giya.

However, being the professionals they were, both of them were already at the neighborhood with their men. They had been waiting there for their next command from the moment they called Gerald to inform him about their findings.

Hearing that, Gerald wanted to rush over himself. However, he realized that his Mercedes-Benz G-Class had just been leased out. He couldn't go to Mountain Top Villa to retrieve his car either.

Thankfully, the neighborhood was not too far away so he got an Ofo bike and rushed there immediately.

A roar of thunder could be heard and soon, it began raining heavily.

Gerald updated Tammy on the situation and he was thankfully able to relay all the vital information before his phone battery died. Cursing under his breath, he continued cycling in the pouring rain till he finally reached St. Cloud Neighborhood.

While Gerald was still making his way there, about a hundred Maybach cars had gathered around the neighborhood, causing a terrible traffic congestion there. All four entrances of the neighborhood had been completely blocked as well.

What more, several men in black suits were standing under umbrellas as they waited outside their cars. It was a rather incredible scene to behold.

Naturally, people began taking photographs of the event through the windows of their homes. There was definitely something big going on.



There were no hints as to what was happening or who had offended who. To put simply, the entire situation was both confusing and shocking to the clueless residents living there.

While all this was happening, a few young men and women were standing behind the door of a restaurant in St. Cloud Neighborhood.

“Counselor, it’s raining heavily and all the entrances of the neighborhood have apparently been blocked! We can’t leave even if we wanted to!” said one of the girls.

“Why don’t we just stay at the counselor’s house then? Since she’s just moved into a new one here!” said the man as he cleared his throat.

“Speaking of her house, if the counselor hadn’t asked us to help her move to her new house, we could easily have missed the scene happening outside. They’re all Maybach cars!”

Earlier, the students had been surprised to see that it wasn’t just a regular congestion since all the cars causing it were Maybach cars.

“...Hmm? Counselor, look there. Doesn’t that man on the Ofo bike look familiar?” said another girl who pointed at someone cycling an Ofo bike into the neighborhood.

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“...Hey. That’s Gerald isn’t it?” said a man who recognized the cycling figure in the rain.

“I think you’re right! Oh god, he’s cycling in such heavy rain! And he seems to be rushing as well!”

“I heard he won a car or something but it turns out that he’s as shabby as ever!”

“Yeah. To think I once admired him the moment I found out he had won a lottery.”

The group of women there began discussing Gerald.

All ten of those standing by the door were his classmates. The counselor, as most would have guessed by now, was none other than Cassandra.

It just so happened that Cassandra was moving into a new house again today. She didn’t need to live in the faculty apartment anymore.

Since St. Cloud Neighborhood was a luxurious neighborhood, the house had cost around four hundred thousand dollars.

Cassandra had been working as a lecturer in the university for some time now. She had even established her own online shop, working as an online seller.

With the help of Felicity promoting her shop and products, it was no wonder that Cassandra had managed to earn so much money.

With that kind of money, she could afford to buy herself a new house with three bedrooms, a living room, and a kitchen.

Since she needed to move her belongings to her new house, she had asked for help from the students at Mayberry University.

Once the moving was completed, she treated all of them to a meal in a local restaurant which explained why they were all huddled near the restaurant's door in the first place.

Seeing Gerald again after some time, Cassandra could feel her heart skip a beat.

She was just like Felicity as both of them had liked Ordinary Man. Knowing that Gerald could most probably be the real Ordinary Man, she felt sensitive whenever things regarding Gerald came up.

Moving back to Gerald, since it was raining very heavily, he just couldn't cycle fast enough no matter how hard he tried.

At that moment, three cars rushed past him consecutively, all of them moving toward the entrance of St. Cloud Neighborhood.

Once the last car hit the brakes, Felicity, Yvonne, and a few others rushed out. In their hands were their phones along with other live broadcasting equipment.

Gerald had updated Tammy about what he had found out earlier before his phone had died. She must have told everyone else about it.

By the time Gerald got to the house, he saw Tammy and Giya's parents trying to get past several bodyguards who were standing guard over the entrance.

"Let me pass! Let me see my daughter!" cried Giya's mother.

Realizing that they were the victim's parents, the guards looked at each other before noticing Gerald standing in the rain. He gestured for them to let them in and they immediately allowed the rest of the people there in.

A guard hurriedly ran over to Gerald before whispering something in his ear. Gerald's legs felt weak as he could finally breathe a sigh of relief. Drake and Tyson had rescued Giya. Gerald nodded to the guard and the guard ran back into the house to deal with other things.

Gerald noticed that Felicity was just about to enter the house so he walked to her and told her about the good news. Felicity stopped in her tracks for a moment before nodding. Gerald simply nodded back, a tired smile on his face before he walked away slowly.

As she watched him walk away, a voice suddenly called out to her.

"Felicity! Here! Over here!"

The students from earlier had left the restaurant to get a closer look and one of the girls just so happened to catch sight of Felicity.

Felicity was shocked. Why were so many of her classmates here?

Noticing that Yvonne was there, she went up to her.

“Felicity, you’re awesome! They hadn’t allowed anyone in but you’re being given access to enter along with your crew! What exactly is happening in there?” asked a girl curiously.

Felicity had just been told to come along to broadcast the scene so even she was shocked when she first saw all the Maybach cars blocking the entrances. Thankfully, Tammy had told the guards that Gerald had sent them so they were allowed access into the neighborhood.

“A girl was kidnapped. We received news about it so we rushed here without knowing how large a scale the rescue mission actually was. I’m as shocked as all of you are to see this many people involved!”

“Eh? Who’s the girl? Looking at how her parents reacted they don’t seem to be the leader of this group...” asked another girl.

Cassandra was curious as well so she looked at Felicity.

Felicity simply shook her head. "I'm not too sure either. Gerald was the one who told us about the girl's location in the first place. I was talking to him just seconds ago and he told me that she had been saved as well. She had apparently been kept in the dark about what was happening and she was shocked to find out that she was now in a house in St. Cloud Neighborhood!"

"Gerald?" said Cassandra, stunned.

"Yes, the girl in question is his friend. He was the one who asked for my help to look for her in the first place..."

After saying that, she paused for a moment.

Both Felicity and Cassandra looked at each other, shock reflected in their eyes.

Out of the blue, someone burst into laughter. "Everyone, look! Gerald's drenched from head to toe! Someone's late to the party!"

"Look at him! How pathetic! Hey, Yoana! Didn't you say that you liked him earlier? Why don't you go confess to him now?"

"F\*ck that, only fools would ever confess to him!"

As the students continued laughing at him, a shout was heard.

“Mr. Crawford!”

Several bodyguards holding black umbrellas suddenly shouted in unison. The shout was so loud and clear that the entire neighborhood could probably hear it.

Two bodyguards then instantly rushed toward Gerald to shelter him from the rain.

Gerald shook his head as he wiped his face dry with his hanky. As another guard quickly handed him another one, Gerald pointed toward the Ofo bike laying on the ground.

When he arrived at the scene, he had gotten off the Ofo bike immediately and it had tumbled onto the ground when he was rushing toward the front door. A guard moved toward the bike, putting it upright. Gerald knew the guard would take care of the rest.

“Mr. Crawford, we successfully saved the girl. However, she fainted once she found out where she had been held captive all this time. Rest assured, she isn’t injured, just a little tired,” said a bodyguard who had stepped forth.

“That’s a relief. Take me to her.”

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Though Gerald was relieved, he still felt the need to see her with his own eyes before believing it.

As he walked forward under the umbrellas held by the two guards from before, the guards who had guarded the door lined up in two rows, bowing respectfully as he walked past them.

Inside, a few bodyguards who were dealing with the final procedures of the operation ran over when they saw Gerald entering.

Just like the guards standing guard over the entrance, those present inside stood in two lines respectfully before bowing as well.

“Mr. Crawford!” they shouted in unison.

Tammy, Giya’s parents, and a few others were present in the room when that scene happened and they all looked at Gerald in shock.

“Mr. Crawford?...”

“Gerald... He’s that Mr. Crawford?”

Tammy and the other girls she had brought along all quivered in fright.

They now knew who his true identity was.



Gerald didn't bother about it since he wasn't worried about Tammy and her group of friends at all.

However, when he heard something drop, he turned around and froze.

Felicity had accidentally dropped one of the broadcasting equipment she was holding on to. Behind her, Cassandra and a few others were trying to squeeze through the confused guards who were unsure whether to let them enter the house.

'Why are they here?'

Though the situation was awkward, he signaled to the guards to allow them in. All his classmates were deeply astonished by this.

Gerald sighed. They could wait. What was more important now was to check if Giya was safe.

"Mr. Crawford, you're here!" said Michael who had seen Gerald while exiting one of the rooms.

"We've confirmed it. The rich gangster heir of Mayberry, Kevin Sanford, was the leader of the operation and Yacob was their target. They imprisoned Miss Quarrington to get Yacob to pay up what he owed the Sanfords. He had been given three days and if he failed to return the money by then, it was said that they would r\*pe her!" said Michael as he detailed what he had learned from his investigation.

Since Kevin had tried to resist earlier, Drake and Tyson had thrown him off the building. Kevin was now unconscious.

Zack, on the other hand, had continued to pressure the Sanfords till they finally gave in.

That was the basic summary of the entire situation.

Gerald was led into the room where Giya currently was. He didn't want to bother about Tammy, Cassandra, Felicity, or the others who were still in a daze just yet.

A few guards were looking after Giya who had been placed on a couch. She was unconscious as the guard earlier had said.

Relieved that she was still in one piece, Gerald ordered for an ambulance to be called. He could finally breathe a bit easier the moment the ambulance transporting Giya to the hospital drove off into the distance.

While he continued looking out the door, Tammy, Cassandra, and a few others slowly walked toward him.

All of them equally felt that it was strange seeing Gerald like this.

"Gerald... His real identity is Mr. Crawford from Mayberry? Holy c\*ap! This is too much for me to take in!" Yoana said aloud as she bit her lower lip in remorse.

The others there were all feeling more or less the same but the revelation affected Cassandra and Felicity the most. They felt their chest tighten the more they thought about it.

“So... It really was true... The one who had always been helping me was Gerald! The rich heir I had been trying so hard to find had been in my class all along! We were so close by!” said Felicity as her phone dropped to the ground. Her hands were trembling badly and her mind had gone blank.

Gerald took in a deep breath before turning to look at all of them. He slowly walked forward, picked up Felicity’s phone and returned it to her.

“I had not expected all of you to be here, counselor... What are you guys doing here today?” asked Gerald, a soft and tired smile on his face.

“We were helping the counselor move Mr. Crawford... Wait, no! We were helping her move her things to her new house, Mr. Crawford! Because we helped, she treated us to a meal in a restaurant nearby...” said a girl, blushing hard.

“I see... What a coincidence you were all here while all this happened... Well, since you’re all stuck here because of my cars in the first place... I’ll give all of you a ride back,” said Gerald as he walked out of the house.

A guard opened the door of a car that had been waiting for Gerald outside.

He got inside without another word and left the scene. He knew that even if he stayed for any longer, there was not much else he could say anyway.

Felicity trembled in place as the car Gerald was in slowly disappeared from sight.

“It’s... really him...” whispered Felicity to herself.

“Oh Lilian, don’t be upset anymore! I wonder what’s happening here today... Why are there so many people?”

At that moment, three women walked out of a building unit.

The girl who hadn’t spoken quickly grabbed Lilian’s arm, pulling her out the door to show her all the cars that were slowly leaving. Lilian however, was still in a slight daze. She looked like she had just finished crying not too long ago.

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“You’re right! Look at all the luxurious cars!” said the other girl.

Lilian was momentarily stunned out of her daze when she saw that they were telling the truth.

All of them were Maybach cars and every single one of them was worth as much as a single housing unit on the street they were currently in.

Imagine getting married to a person from such a rich and powerful family... How envious the others would feel.

Lilian sighed internally. 'That god d\*mn Sharon... I'm much more beautiful than she is yet Hayward still chose her! That b\*tch!'

'The only thing Sharon is good at is pretending!'

Lilian was here because she had rented a house alongside her two other female colleagues there.

Looking at all the Maybach cars refueled Lilian's jealousy toward Sharon and she fumed.

Soon after, the cars all left and everything returned to normal.

As for Yacob, naturally, he was taken away by the police.

The very next day, Gerald immediately headed to the hospital after he woke up to visit Giya.

"Thank you for saving me, Gerald!" were the first words she said the moment she saw him entering her ward.

After she had regained consciousness, her parents had told her what had happened the day before.

“It was my fault for not taking care of you in the first place. I’m just glad you’re safe!” said Gerald, a tired smile on his face.

“I’ve been wondering... Did you save my mother too? I’m asking since Yacob had made some confessions to the police officers. He said that him saving my mother was a lie! If he hadn’t mentioned the incident, I wouldn’t have entered the car with him the other day!” said Giya as she looked at Gerald.

She had been terribly shocked when she heard from her father that Gerald was actually Mr. Crawford.

“Well, yes I saved her,” replied Gerald as he nodded. He didn’t need to keep it a secret anymore.

“You idiot! Why didn’t you tell me about that earlier? You know, there was a time when I thought of becoming Yacob’s girlfriend! If I ever got into such a situation I’d have blamed you for burdening me like that!” said Giya as she pinched his arm lightly.

“Hey Gerald... Are you afraid that I’ll cling onto you and continue to pester you for the rest of your life?” asked Giya, her eyes serious.

“After thinking about it, I finally understand why you’re so unwilling to be with me. You’re Mr. Crawford from Mayberry, a highly prestigious person! It would be impossible for you to fall in love with a girl like me!”

“Not at all! I’ve already told you before! I’m with Mila now... It’s impossible for me to fall in love with another woman!” replied Gerald honestly.

“I was just pulling your leg, I understood that the first time you told me... Actually, now that I think about it, maybe I was never truly in love with you in the first place. I was probably just touched by the precious gift you had given me the other day... However, now that I know your true identity, I understand that that gift must have been worth nothing much to you!”

“Aah... I’ve been overthinking about this for way too long! I think it’s better this way... I’m feeling much more relieved now... I think I can honestly say this now too. Gerald, I hope that you’ll be happy together with Mila!” said Giya as she smiled brightly.

Gerald felt the tenseness leave his shoulders when he saw that Giya had finally understood and accepted the situation.

“Alright so... We’re good friends from now on, okay? If you have any troubles, I’ll lend a hand as long as I’m able to!” said Gerald as he returned a smile.

In all honesty, Gerald was still filled with self-reproach.

He had canceled so many of her plans in the past. His inactions had also nearly gotten her r\*ped if he had acted any slower!

So Gerald really meant what he said.

“Hmmm... Fine then. I’ll remember what you told me today! If I ask for help in the future you better not try to run away!” joked Giya.

“I won’t! Alright... For now, just focus on resting. I’ll get you some porridge from the cafeteria!” said Gerald as he got up and left the room.

As the door closed behind him, the smile on her face slowly faded. She then clenched on to her blanket tightly.

As Gerald continued walking to the cafeteria with Giya’s lunchbox in hand, he nearly knocked into someone.

“Hey! You blind? Look where you’re going!” scolded the woman who had almost been knocked over. She was being supported by a girl who was also holding on to her IV bottle.

“I’m sorry, I wasn’t- ...Lilian?”

“...Gerald? What are you doing here?” asked Lilian in surprise.



The night before, Lilian's housemates had accompanied her as she had her IV.

She had suffered from a great shock and she was also fully drenched due to the heavy rain by the time she got home.

Though she showed symptoms of having a high fever, they couldn't do much about it last night due to all the cars congesting their neighborhood.

Lilian had even thought that the fever would be gone by the time morning came.

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Unfortunately, her condition had only worsened by the time her roommates woke her up.

Her roommates then immediately rushed her to the hospital.

Now that she had the drip on, she was finally starting to feel a little better again.

Unexpectedly, she bumped into Gerald here!

"Well, my friend's been hospitalized here. I'm about to get her some porridge now," said Gerald as he smiled.

"Gerald? Oh! Is this the Gerald from your class who keeps running errands for rich heirs?" said one of the girls as she looked at Gerald with contempt.

“Quilla! What are you talking about?” said Lilian in embarrassment.

“What? Isn’t this the guy? Look, he’s even running an errand for a rich heir now! He said he was getting porridge for someone, remember?” sneered Quilla.

Lilian’s face alternated between turning red and pale, unsure which emotion she should be feeling first.

Quilla had always been like this. She had been this straightforward for as long as Lilian knew her.

Honestly, Quilla was even more heartless compared to her.

Though Lilian had indeed been the one who told Quilla about all of that before this.

This was because Gerald had been awesome the last time they were at the Yorknorth Mountain Celebration Festival. Back then, Lilian had insisted on giving her cup of milk tea to Gerald. She was even prepared to lick his boots if she needed to.

She had thought of pursuing Gerald then as well.

Sharon, Hayward, and Lilian were all still speculating on Gerald’s true identity back then. They just couldn’t understand how he had so many good and close connections with rich heirs. What more, the rich heirs were treating him well!

In the end, Hayward looked into the matter and eventually found out that Gerald wasn't as awesome as they had initially thought. In truth, he had just been running an errand for someone and he was even looking after their home on their behalf!

Lilian and Sharon had no trouble believing Hayward's words.

However, they both kept in mind that they would have to treat Gerald better in the future. After all, he was very close to quite a number of young and rich heirs.

Thinking back, it was precisely because of Lilian's thoughts and her performance during the Yorknorth Mountain Celebration Festival that Hayward felt that she was no good, instead opting for Sharon.

'That b\*tch had just been too shocked to react that day!' Lilian thought to herself, fuming slightly.

Between the two of them, Sharon definitely looked down on Gerald more!

Though both of them were shocked and filled with regrets when they found out that Gerald's connections were better than Haywards, Lilian was the only one who had reacted while that b\*tch didn't react at all.

After that, Lilian had given it some thought and she came to the realization that just pleasing Gerald just because he had good connections and interpersonal relationships was quite unrealistic. After all, Gerald had nothing else going for him.

Hayward on the other hand, had his assets and also his shop.

What more, he had even helped Sharon by arranging for a better job for her.

This was just the reality of the situation.

Back in the present, Lilian was embarrassed yet again by Quilla's comment and she immediately said, "Don't listen to her nonsense, Gerald. Speaking of which, where are all your young and rich friends?"

Though Lilian still looked down on Gerald for being nothing more than an errand boy, he was still close to several rich heirs, so he wasn't that bad.

"Oh, they've gone to Harnsley to play, I think!" replied Gerald.

"Why didn't they bring you along?" asked Lilian.

"What reason would they have to bring me there?" said Gerald with a bitter smile on his face.

While that group of young and rich heirs enjoyed spending their money specifically only for having fun, Gerald himself liked leading a plain and simple life. Aside from special events or the usual drinking, he didn't really join them for anything else.

Lilian curled her lips slightly. In her mind, she thought that they wouldn't want to bring him along with them anyway.

After chatting a little longer, they eventually went their separate ways.

"You know, he was actually pretty handsome! If he was a little more capable I might have considered pursuing him! Such a pity..." said Quilla.

Lilian looked at her before snorting,

"Pft, if he really was a young and rich heir I'd have pursued him long ago. Unfortunately, that's just how it is. Speaking of which, I honestly thought of pursuing him just a few days ago."

"Even though he's not rich himself, he's still acquainted with several rich heirs. Life might be a little shabby but we would always have the heirs' backup and support. That way, I would be able to give Hayward a slap to make him regret choosing that b\*tch over me! Plus, Hayward's always had an inferiority complex whenever it came to Gerald."

"Once Hayward's complex is triggered, he'll definitely change his mind and try to get me back! Once that happens, I'll have Hayward all to myself!"

"It's such a pity that those rich heirs are playing by themselves at Harnsley now... D\*mn it! If only Hayward didn't know everything about Gerald's background..."

Gerald's still somewhere at the bottom of the food chain now! How am I ever going to make Hayward regret not choosing me?" said Lilian sadly.

"Hmm... Actually, while you were talking, I suddenly had an idea that just might help you get him back! If it works, he'll be begging on his knees for you to come back!" said the girl as she grinned.

"What do you have in mind?" asked Lilian immediately, her interest piqued.

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The moment Gerald finally got his hands on some porridge, he felt a light pat on his shoulder.

It was Lilian with a bag of food in hand.

"Say, Gerald! You haven't eaten yet, right? Come sit with me! I've just bought some delicious food from outside the hospital so let's eat together!"

"I'm fine. Aren't you still on drips? Why are you here at the cafeteria?" asked Gerald as he smiled.

He didn't know why Lilian had suddenly become so enthusiastic. It was slightly uncomfortable.

However, despite the fact that she would often ridicule him, Gerald didn't hold it against her at all.

That was the only reason why he was still speaking politely to her.

“I- I’m fine! I was fine the moment I saw you! You’re... Just like my medicine! Didn’t you know?” asked Lilian with a questionable smile on her face as she looked at Gerald.

She was now standing very close to Gerald and her arm would rub against his from time to time.

Gerald could feel goosebumps all over his body.

To be honest, Lilian had a perfect body figure and looked extremely beautiful. This was because she used to be an art student and she was the captain of the Latin dance team as well.

Compared to Sharon, she definitely looked more enchanting and she was more seductive too.

However, when Gerald had talked to her just a little earlier, her attitude wasn’t like this at all. What had happened under the course of half an hour to make her this enthusiastic? Honestly, she was somehow too enthusiastic this time around.

“Is there something you need, Lilian?” asked Gerald, thoroughly weirded out.

“Oh, don’t worry about it! Food comes first! You know, I ran downstairs to buy some food just now because we all know cafeteria food isn’t the greatest in the world! They’re overpriced here too! But enough of that, look at what I’ve bought!”

In addition to some roast chicken, some drinks, and various other dishes, Lilian had also bought a hot egg crepe.

“I know how much you like eating egg crepes. I remember back during our high school days, you would usually only eat steamed buns with pickles for lunch but on weekends, you’d be willing to treat yourself to an egg crepe after saving a few dollars. Since I saw a stall selling egg crepes by the roadside, I got one for you!”

Before Gerald could reply, she had pulled him down to sit with her.

Gerald felt a little moved when he saw the egg crepe. Back when he was still living in poverty, egg crepes were like food for royalty for him.

He still didn’t know what Lilian was up to. However, seeing how enthusiastic she was and how much food she had bought for him, Gerald felt like it would be a little too cruel to just turn around and leave her like that.

Besides, Lilian was also now starting work as a teacher at the Scothow Elementary School. It was a school that he had built himself, so he would be able to look out for her in the future. Looking at it that way, Gerald became more willing to accept this treat from her this time.



However, the main reason he continued sitting there was still because he didn't like the idea of outright rejecting her before even listening to what she had to say.

"Come now, eat the food while it's hot! Why don't you put the porridge down first? I'll tell you something once you're done eating!" said Lilian as she pushed the food toward Gerald.

After doing so, she cupped her hands on her face as she looked at Gerald with a smile.

Gerald began eating and after a while, he asked, "So, what's the matter? You can tell me already."

Gerald couldn't help but hope that Lilian really had a change of heart. If that were the case, then Gerald would definitely be more willing to help her out since they were classmates in the past after all.

"Well... Hehe... I want you to pretend to be my boyfriend for one day! Just for tomorrow! If you help, I'll always remember your kind deed!"

"...What?"

Gerald was so shocked that he almost spit out the egg crepe in his mouth.

Again with pretending to be someone's boyfriend?

This wasn't Gerald's first time doing that and he knew it wouldn't be his last either.

It was exactly because of that that he had inadvertently given some girls the wrong idea when he teased them while pretending to be their boyfriend.

Since it was all just for show, it would be impossible for him to really get close to the person anyway. So why should he even pretend to be their boyfriend?

Gerald was sensitive to the matter for sure.

This was because Gerald was really afraid that eventually, someone would come up to him to ask his help for a fake marriage too! That would open an entirely different can of worms.

"Hmm? What are you afraid of? It's just for one day, and you'll just need to help me put on a show. Please?" asked Lilian as she placed her hand on top of Gerald's gently.

She was begging sincerely for his help.

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"Be honest with me... Is it because of Hayward?"

Gerald didn't need to be a rocket scientist to figure that one out. He sighed.

People wouldn't treat you well without a reason. Gerald knew this as a fact since there were no such things as free lunches in this world!

"Bingo! I just need you to act a little so that I can slightly provoke him! If he takes the bait, he'll definitely change his mind soon enough! Hayward's a very petty and narcissistic person so he'll definitely never be able to accept that I'm going out with someone more outstanding than he is!" replied Lilian with a smile on her face.

Gerald sighed as he replied, "Then rather than provoke him, I think he'll only end up laughing at you if we go along with this plan... I'm nowhere near as outstanding as he is... His family is developing Yorknorth Mountain and he even has a shop there! He's lightyears better than me!" lied Gerald as naturally as he breathed.

"Of course I know that, which is why I specified the word, 'act'! Let me tell you something, Gerald, did you know that Hayward's always been rather sensitive whenever it came to you? Not only did you have an ambiguous relationship with that b\*tch- I mean Sharon in the past, but you've also put him in tough and awkward situations for quite a few times now! If you change your identity and appear before him, then he'll definitely feel jealous! Consequently, since I'll be pretending to be your date, he'll surely regret not choosing me in the first place! That's why I feel that you're the perfect candidate for this task!" replied Lilian confidently.

It was her friend who had given her this idea earlier. Though Gerald wasn't really a rich and young heir, he could definitely play the part!

"Hold up, change my identity? Elaborate on that please," said Gerald in confusion.

“Oh that, it’s simple, really. All you need to do is pretend that you’ve become filthy rich by winning the lottery! By saying that, in a way, you’ll be even wealthier than Hayward! Can you drive? I’ve rented a luxury car for you to help keep the illusion up. As long as you’re willing to act according to how my friend and I have planned, I’ll definitely be able to give Hayward a tight slap on his face tomorrow!”

“I’ll owe you one if you help me, Gerald. I’ve also already rented the car so please agree to my request!” pleaded Lilian.

It seemed that Lilian was really going the extra mile just to regain Hayward’s love and attention.

Knowing how much this meant to her, Gerald found it hard to turn down her request.

He had initially planned to say goodbye to Giya tomorrow and drive her back to Serene County since his car would be due by then.

However, it seemed that his plans would have to be delayed for another day.

“Alright fine, I’m in,” said Gerald as he nodded.

“Yes!” said Lilian as she smiled excitedly.

“I am curious though, how are you so certain that we’ll be able to meet Hayward tomorrow?”

“Oh, we definitely will! You don’t have to worry about that. You just need to meet up with me at the hospital’s entrance tomorrow. I’ll pick you up there!”

Once he finished eating, he left the cafeteria with Lilian. Lilian looked much more energized now and it seemed like her fever had subsided.

Gerald couldn’t help but think that this was the power of love. Could love really make a girl go crazy?

Then again, since it was Lilian he was talking about, it could also possibly just be the power of money.

Gerald simply sighed.

After the two parted ways, Gerald went back to Giya and fed her the porridge.

Nothing notable happened for the rest of that day.

Early the next morning, Gerald waited for Lilian at the park next to the hospital as they had previously agreed to meet there.

He didn’t have to wait long when a brand-new dazzling white Mercedes Benz G500 drove over and stopped in front of Gerald.

When the car window was rolled down, Gerald saw that both Lilian and her friend were inside.

“I really wasn’t expecting you to be this punctual! Alright, get in! We’re bringing you to a hairstylist next!” said Lilian.

“Hey, Hey! Snap out of it, Gerald! Are you shocked because you’re looking at such a luxurious car? Get in already! You’re in for a treat today because you’ll get to ride in a Mercedes Benz G500 today!”

Gerald rubbed his temple as he shook his head.

Of course he would be shocked! After all, this Mercedes Benz G500 felt way too familiar...

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“Is... This the car you rented?”

Once he got into the car, his doubts were cleared. It really was the same Mercedes Benz G500 that he had leased to Quade’s sister, Quartney!

This was way too coincidental.

“It is. Also, I’m assuming that though you’re acquainted with many rich and young heirs, they don’t usually bring you along to play with them, right? You’ve probably

never had the chance to sit in such a good car before, have you Gerald?" said Lilian arrogantly as she drove.

"You know, this model costs a full, three hundred thousand dollars! What more, this car is brand-new! Lilian and I paid fifteen thousand dollars each for the deposit just to rent it! Our saving accounts are barren right now!" said Lilian's friend proudly for some reason.

She then took her cell phone out and started recording some videos.

"Lilian, why don't you open the sunroof? I want to stick my head out and take some pictures!" said Lilian's friend excitedly.

"Opening it now! But please control yourself up there! The amount we can claim back will be deducted if even the tiniest scratch appears on the car!" said Lilian as she looked for the sunroof's button.

"...Wait, which is the button for the sunroof? It seems to work both ways? I don't understand!" said Lilian, confused.

It was natural for her to get confused with how the car operated since it was her first time in it after all.

Gerald had been sitting at the back of the car and he couldn't help but feel slightly uncomfortable as he watched Lilian press all the buttons she could find.

It wasn't long before he gave up and told her which button opened the sunroof.

Lilian tried it and it turned out that he was right.

"Well, look at you! I didn't expect you to be this capable! You seem to know this car pretty well!" said Lilian.

"Oh right, you used to like cars a lot back in high school right? It seems that you still maintain your interests from back then!"

Gerald simply nodded with a wry smile on his face.

With the sunroof now open, Lilian's friend popped her head out to take some pictures.

Not too long after, all three of them arrived at a hairstylist and Gerald was given a cool new look.

They then gave Gerald a suit, a white shirt, and a pair of leather shoes to put on.

Lilian and her friend couldn't help but feel that Gerald looked a little handsome after going through that makeover.



Though Lilian had high standards for her men, she couldn't help but feel impressed and secretly peeked at Gerald whenever she could.

"So where are we going now?" asked Gerald after they got into the car again.

"We're going to the coffee shop next to Mayberry Hotel. Also, Gerald, you should know a few things first. Since you know Aiden and his friends, you know how rich and young men usually behave. However, you're pretending to be a completely different kind of rich and young man today. Since you 'won the lottery', you'll have to display a more rebellious and haughty attitude so that Hayward will take the bait. That's the usual mentality of the nouveau riche, do you get what I'm saying?" replied Lilian.

"I... See. Do I really have to act that way just because I got rich overnight?" asked Gerald, a bitter smile on his face.

Gerald couldn't help but think to himself. If he really had become extremely rich overnight, why would Lilian still be trying to pursue Hayward?

"Just do as I say and everything will turn out just fine! You'll also have to listen to all of Quilla's arrangements! She'll be helping you with all the preparations!"

Hearing that, Gerald could only nod helplessly. What else could he say?

Upon arriving at the coffee shop, Lilian began putting up her act.

She clung on to Gerald's arm as he placed his hand over hers while they entered the coffee shop.

Gerald saw that both Hayward and Sharon were having coffee there as well. Admiration toward Lilian grew in Gerald, understanding how much research she must have done to plan all this out.

Both of them acted like a real couple as they walked toward a table next to Hayward and Sharon before sitting down.

It wasn't long before Sharon idly looked to the side and saw the two beside them.

She was startled silent for a moment.

"May I take your order?" asked a waiter respectfully after he walked over. Seeing how formal both Gerald and Lilian looked and dressed, the waiter was careful to be on his best and most polite behavior.

"Hmm. Give us your most expensive coffee!"

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As Lilian had instructed him, Gerald was now acting out the impression of someone nouveau riche.

He even sat with his legs crossed.

“Our most expensive coffee? Sir, our most expensive one costs forty-five dollars each,” replied the waiter, slightly surprised.

“So be it! Nothing is too expensive for me! Two cups of that coffee and make sure they’re brewed perfectly!”

“Right away, sir!” said the waiter before bowing and running off.

Lilian found it both curious and funny when she saw Gerald acting so ostentatiously while flaunting his wealth. He even shook his watch from time to time to let others see it! Honestly, Lilian hadn’t expected that Gerald could be this cool!

By then, Hayward had already noticed Gerald and Lilian sitting next to them.

His face turned sour the moment he heard Gerald ordering two cups of coffee which cost forty-five dollars each.

What more, wasn’t Lilian being a little too intimate with Gerald? Hayward felt very uncomfortable.

He used to have her sticking close to him every day after all. Truth be told, he also enjoyed her constantly fawning over him back then.

When he chose Sharon over her, he knew that Lilian would still love him, being as vain as he was. However, now that she was being intimate with another man, he was feeling extremely dissatisfied.

He had not expected Lilian to move on so quickly.

And to think that she had chosen Gerald! The person he had always felt sensitive and competitive toward!

A fuse snapped in Hayward's mind as he slammed his hands onto the coffee table.

"Pft! Why are you pretending to be rich? Do you think I don't know about your background? Stop being so pretentious!" said Hayward coldly.

Sharon looked at Gerald and Lilian before trying to calm Hayward down.

"Speaking of which, Gerald, you've just bought a new car right? Where are we going to have fun later? Can we go to Mayberry Commercial Street? I saw a skirt that I really liked there so can we please go there later to buy it? It only costs four hundred and fifty dollars! Please!" pleaded Lilian as she gently shook Gerald's arm.

"Four hundred and fifty dollars? Are you a beggar? You're only to wear clothes that cost at least a thousand dollars! Otherwise, don't even bother telling me about it! Have some shame!" replied Gerald as he carefully pushed her hands away from his arm.

Lilian really hadn't expected nouveau riche Gerald to be this cool.

She simply put on a cute and helpless face before nodding obediently when she heard his words.

"Humph! Showing off when you're just in charge of running errands for others?"

Hayward was getting more and more agitated by the second when he saw Lilian being so submissive toward Gerald after being reprimanded by him. His jealousy was reaching new heights.

D\*mn it! What did Gerald have that he didn't? How could Gerald ever be better than him in any way?

"Relax, Hayward. Some people just like to show off. They're just being pretentious so you don't have to bother even looking at them!" said Sharon as she added her two cents to the conversation.

"Oh right, there was a time when we really thought that you were just an ordinary errand boy for rich people! I'm glad to say that we were wrong about that! While you were helping them you must have gotten some of their good luck as well! Hahaha! I really hadn't expected you to win that much money from the lottery!"

Seeing that she had hooked Hayward deep into her trap, she began speaking even more admiringly toward Gerald as she held on to his hand.

“...What? Won what lottery?”

Her words had caught Hayward’s attention.

“Gerald, how much did you win?” asked Sharon as she stared at Gerald nervously.

It would be impossible for Gerald to get a girl like Lilian to fawn over him like this if he had only won fifty thousand dollars. What more, Gerald was also spending so lavishly now.

The figure needed to be immense.

Sharon was really afraid that Gerald would surpass Hayward. If that happened, then she would probably be the one regretting it the most. Knowing that, her anxiety and nervousness only grew as she waited for Gerald to answer.

“Oh, I was just lucky... I didn’t think I’d win so much money just like that. As for the amount I won... Well, let’s just say that it isn’t convenient for me to reveal such information to you” said Gerald as he winked at Lilian with a smile on his face.

At that moment, Gerald reached into his pocket to take his cell phone out.

As a result, his car key ‘accidentally’ fell to the ground.

When Hayward and Sharon looked down, their eyes widened in shock.

“That’s... That’s the car key of a Mercedes Benz G500?!”