

## The Ashes 331

Chapter 331 The crowd exchanged bewildered glances.

They could not understand why Andrew had wasted time asking such obvious questions about the bowls value

Are you done wasting time? Can you tell which is real now? Orion asked impatiently.

Without answering, Andrew casually tossed the bowl in his left hand into the air.

Aspen shouted angrily, Andrew, what are you doing? Can you afford to replace a million-dollar piece? Before she finished speaking, the bowl crashed to the ground, shattering into pieces.

The spectators stared in disbelief, wondering if the pressure had made him lose his mind.

Elsie was overwhelmed and could only manage to stutter, Mr.

Lloyd, you- If it were real, Id have to pay for it, right? Andrew asked calmly.

Well, thats obvious, Elsie replied, distressed.

Andrew let out a relieved sigh.

Good thing I broke the fake one.

The crowd was stunned

Some whispered about Andrews unorthodox authentication method, while others bet he was just bluffing

Orion studied Andrew for a long moment before speaking.

I have to say, your luck is incredible

You're right the one you broke was indeed a fake.

The crowd erupted in amazement at Andrews accurate identification.

Someone asked, Fake? Did he seriously identify the authenticity ? Mr.

Kelce, please take a look.

This is something worth tens of millions.

This is no joke

Another mocked, It's my first time seeing someone using this method to identify the authenticity.

I bet 50 cents that he's talking nonsense.

Mr.

Kelce, time to end this fool's delusion, Aspen said coldly: Orion studied Andrew for a long moment before speaking.

I have to say, your luck is incredible.

You're right the one you broke was indeed fake

The crowd erupted in amazement at Andrews accurate identification

That's amazing! Hold on, Orion interrupted the chatter as he stood up.

Since you found the fake, are you saying the one in your hand is authentic? Haven't I already proven that

? Andrew raised an eyebrow.

Orion laughed.

You're too naive.

According to the rules, identifying one piece doesn't end the test; you must authenticate both bowls.

You crafty old fox! Andrew shook his head with a smile.

Francesca clenched her fists

That's not fair! Andrew already proved he could tell them apart - the bet should be over! Rules are rules. Stay out of it if you don't understand, Orion dismissed her.

The crowd's sympathy shifted toward Andrew as they realized Orion's underhanded tactics

By making Andrew authenticate both bowls while Orion had only examined the bronze statue, he was effectively doubling Andrew's challenge.

Despite her discomfort with the unfairness, Aspen stood by Orion's side, determined not to humiliate herself.

Chapter 332 Andrew, Mr.

Kelce is a master appraiser.

You're getting too cocky challenging him, Aspen taunted.

Let's leave, Andrew

We shouldn't play with these shameless people, Francesca urged.

However, Andrew patted her with a smile.

Don't worry, Fran

I'm definitely making this old man get on his knees today.

Andrew raised the remaining bowl high.

Everyone, please witness this! If I can authenticate this bowl, Orion has to kneel and beg me, isn't that right? The crowd cheered encouragingly.

Someone shouted, Exactly! Good luck, kid! We're rooting for you! Even if you misidentify the last bowl, you won't lose, because Orion's previous appraisal also ended in failure.

Yes, it's a draw at best

You're already impressive to have tied with Orion, handsome boy.

Orion fumed

Kid, no matter how lucky you get, you'll never figure out if this last bowl is real or fake.

!! Andrew studied the remaining bowl thoughtfully, Suddenly, he made a motion as if to smash it on the ground like the first one.

Dr.

Lloyd, stop! Cedric shouted in panic.

Andrew paused in his act, asking, What's the matter? Cedric whispered, This must be the real one you'll lose millions! Francesca and Elsie were equally terrified.

Elsie said, Mr.

Lloyd, the previous method wont work the same.

You should think of other ways

Please dont do it again.

My heart cant take it.

Francesca chimed in

Thats right, Andrew

Think about it the fake one has been smashed.

by you

Whats left can only be true.

The crowd began pleading with Andrew not to destroy what they assumed must be the authentic piece Someone shouted, Dont be so impulsive! Dont do it, young man! You cant afford to replace it if its real! A serious antique collector even threatened Andrew not to waste the antiques and he would rather use his life as a guarantee.

Ill bet my life this is the real one! Since you broke the fake, this has to be authentic! Orion sat back down with a mysterious smirk, his thoughts unreadable.

Aspen whispered, Mr.

Kelce, is the bowl authentic? Yet, Orion simply shook his head and replied, Just know that this kids efforts are useless

Aspen felt relieved, her mind racing.

She thought Mr.

Kelce is crafty if he says its real, its fake, and vice versa.

But with a million dollar bowl at stake, Andrew will probably overthink it and fall into Mr.

Kelces trap

So this remaining bowl must be ... real!

Chapter 333 When Andrew approached Orion, the latter thought he was ready to give up.

Orion said smugly, Kid, its time to learn your lesson.

Andrew simply replied, I know whether its real or fake.

Get ready to kneel before me, Orion retorted, Then prove it.

Is it real or fake? Announce it.

Andrew, its reall This old fox is playing mind games.

He wants you to overthink it! The experts in the crowd agreed.

They had faced Orion before and knew his tricky methods.

Since the fake was already revealed, they reasoned, this had to be authentic.

However, Andrew suddenly smashed the second bowl to pieces.

The crowd stood frozen in shock, wondering how he could destroy what might have been a million dollar piece.

You fell for Orions trap, Elsie muttered in dismay.

Francesca was extremely disappointed.

If she had known, she would have tried to dissuade Andrew.

Cedric grumbled, Orion youre so cruel.

Aspen emerged from the crowd, smirking.

Andrew, reaching a tie with Mr.

Kelce is impressive enough, even if it was just luck.

Christina chimed in, At least youre not a complete laughingstock.

But be million in damages ! ready to pay that While everyone sympathized with Andrew, Orions face had turned ashen with rage.

Everyone thinks I just broke the real bowl, Andrew said calmly.

I disagree Mr.

Kelce, why dont you give us your expert opinion? Orion stood up, his voice ice cold.

How did you know the last bowl was also a fake? The crowd froze, some gasping, Fake? They were all puzzled about what was going on.

1 Aspen asked urgently, Mr.

Kelce, what did you say? The last bowl was fake too? So he was right? Orion snapped, Shut up, all of you! I refuse to believe this kid got that lucky! His outburst confirmed everyones suspicion, and the crowd erupted in amazement.

I cant believe the young guy was right! Both bowls were fakes.

Someone asked, Wait does it mean Mr.

Kelce lost to Mr.

Lloyd? Whats going on? No expert in Jayrodale had ever beaten Mr.

Kelce at authentication, yet this newcomer had done it effortlessly!

Chapter 334 In stark contrast, Orion, Aspen, and his followers stood there, furious yet helpless.

Meanwhile, Christina stared at Andrew in disbelief.

She wondered if he really emerged victorious again.

Orion was furious and growled, How did you know they were fakes? What tricks did you use? Francesca scoffed.

What a loser he cant even accept his defeat graciously! Andrew shrugged.

Does it matter how I knew? What matters is I was right about both bowls, which means you lost. Time to kneel before me.

The crowd was shocked by Andrews unexpected victory.

His triumph brought pride to Jayrodales antique community, and they relished seeing the arrogant Orion get his comeuppance

Youre always talking about rules, Orion, Cedric beamed, finally getting his revenge.

Well, a bet's a bet, kneel! Exactly, Mr.

Kelce ! Are you going back on your words now? Mr.

Kelce, this is Jayrodale, not Bridgefields.

I told you to be less arrogant, but you didn't listen.

Now you're being punished by Mr.

Lloyd. Mr.

Lloyd is amazing! He's Jayrodale's rare antique genius! Orion was about furious and shouted at the laughing crowd, You nobodies couldn't match

my expertise in a hundred years! He glared at Andrew and snarled, I refuse to believe you got this lucky!

I won't concede until you explain how you knew both bowls were fake Andrew shook his head and turned to the shop owner.

Thanks for your help, sir.

The owner panicked.

What are you thanking me for? Don't make things up! Aspen seized the opportunity and said, Aha! So you and the owner were in cahoots! You knew the bowls were fake all along! The contest doesn't count! She was overjoyed, believing she had salvaged their defeat.

If Andrew had colluded with the owner, the test results would have been invalid, which meant she and Orion, both from Bridgefields, would not have lost.

When Andrew approached Orion, the latter thought he was ready to give up.

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Chapter 335 The crowd, stirred up by Aspens accusations, began to eye Andrew again with suspicion. If he had really cheated by colluding with the owner, it would be a scandal of epic proportions

Andrew remained unfazed and responded calmly, I thanked the owner, but not because he told me which piece was genuine

In fact, I dont even know this man, he continued, his tone light yet firm.

If anything, Id say this seller is more likely to be Mr.

Kelces acquaintance.

Orions face darkened, his teeth clenched tightly as he stayed silent.

Aspens heart skipped a beat.

Could Andrews claim be true? Was the owner actually on Orions side? If that were the case, her earlier accusations would make no sense.

After all, there was no reason for someone to align with Orion to help Andrew cheat.

Elsie stepped forward with a calm but serious expression.

Mr.

Cooper, as one of the event organizers, we have access to your background.

Youre from Bridgefields, correct? And from what we know, you and Mr.

Kelce have partnered together at these appraisal events for years.

John Cooper forced an awkward smile and replied, Thats correct.

I am from Bridgefields, which is exactly why Id never side with Mr. Lloyd against Mr.

Kelce

He then added with visible discomfort, Both bowls are indeed fakes. Mr.

Kelce instructed me to bring them here.

This doesnt break any rules, but I must admit, I never expected Mr.

Lloyd to figure out the truth so decisively

The crowd erupted in shock at his admission.

Aspen was thoroughly humiliated, and she stood frozen with her mouth agape, unable to process what had just happened.

The audience, including collectors and antique enthusiasts, began shouting angrily at both John and Orion.

The two had clearly schemed together, setting a trap for Andrew

Luckily, Andrews sharp eye and bold confidence not only exposed the ruse but also left Orion utterly defeated

Enraged by the uproar, Orion shouted, Enough! Everyone, shut up! He jabbed a finger at Andrew and growled, Now tell me, how did you figure out which bowl was fake? If you cant explain it, Im not acknowledging this win! Andrew chuckled and said, Its simple.

While Mr Cooper didnt say a word to me about which was real, his reactions gave it away.

Aspen sneered.

Reactions? Andrew, are you serious? Do you think anyone here is buying that? John was visibly panicked, and he waved his hands in protest

Mr.

Lloyd, youre a genius, but please, dont involve me in your story! I didnt give you any clues intentionally or otherwise

If you keep this up, Ill be a pariah when I return to Bridgefields

The man looked genuinely distressed, as though Andrews words were about to land him in serious trouble with both Aspen and Orion.

Andrew stayed calm and stated, Lets go back to what I asked earlier.

Remember when I questioned Mr.

Cooper about how much the genuine bowl would be worth? Andrew reminded them, The piece was supposedly worth millions one of a kind in the world of porcelain.

Mr.

Cooper said it was highly valuable and precious.

Francesca blinked, confused.

But what does that have to do with determining which bowl was fake? Andrew grinned. Everything

Didnt you all notice what I did during the appraisal? Each time, I threw the bowl into the air as if I were ready to let it smash to the ground

When I did that, everyone held their breath, terrified that I might destroy it.

No one wanted to be responsible for damaging something so rare and priceless not even Mr.

Cooper, the supposed owner of the piece.

Cedric nodded

Exactly! A bowl like that should never be treated so carelessly.

Andrew smiled and added, And thats the key.

A bowl worth millions wouldn't be thrown around lightly if it were real.

The owner Mr

Cooper should have been a nervous wreck every time I tossed it.

His lack of reaction spoke volumes.

Chapter 336 However- Andrew began.

Just then, Christina cut in excitedly.

While everyone was nervous, Mr.

Cooper remained completely calm! That's how you knew both bowls were fake.

He would have been panicking about their safety if they were real.

Exactly.

Andrew nodded with approval.

Christina felt conflicted

She was smart enough to run Jayrodale as CEO, but she would never have thought of such a brilliantly simple method

It seemed that her intelligence was nothing compared to Andrews.

The crowd erupted in amazement as the mystery was solved.

Incredible ! He used psychology to authenticate antiques.

Mr.

Lloyd, youre truly the best! Another expert clainted, This is pure genius! Ive been authenticating pieces for 20 years, but todays lesson has shown me Ive still got more to learn! Theres no doubt that Mr.

Kelce has lost! Aspen desperately searched for another angle to refute Andrews claims but found none. She thought bitterly, He really beat Mr.

Kelce.

As fellow Bridgefields residents, weve embarrassed ourselves.

Aspen felt like Andrew had just slapped her hard across the face.

She bit her lip, standing silently on the edge of the crowd, unable to say a word

Her gaze flickered to Orion, and the sight of him made her heart sink he was clearly furious but she did

not dare to show it, pacing anxiously like a cornered animal, completely out of options.

Mr.

Kelce, Im sorry, Aspen thought to herself with a faint sense of pity.

But even I cant help you now

Without realizing it, she edged further away from the crowd, unwilling to get involved.

Mr.

Kelce, you lost.

Francescas voice rang out loud and clear, filled with malice.

And since you lost, shouldnt you follow through on what you promised? Isnt it time to kneel before him? Francesca was not about to let Orion off the hook.

She loathed the man, and this was her chance for payback.

Her words immediately turned the crowds attention to him, their eyes brimming with expectation and disdain.

The message was obvious: kneel and admit his flaws, or the hundreds of collectors and dealers gathered here would not let him walk away unscathed.

Orion gritted his teeth.

Fine, Ill admit it I underestimated you.

But to kneel and apologize? Do you even realize what it would mean if someone like me, Orion Kelce, bowed down to you? Could you even handle it? Andrew clasped his hands behind his back, his expression calm but laced with a mocking smile.

Mr.

Kelce, thats such a strange thing to say.

Why wouldnt I be able to handle it? Having a renowned figure like you admitting his mistakes and kneeling before me sounds great, doesnt it? His smile widened as he added, Honestly, Id be thrilled! Orions face turned red with rage, and his voice thundered, You insolent brat! Do you really intend to humiliate me to the very end? He had not even lanelt yet, and this arrogant kid was already acting like he was the elder in charge.

Orion had spent his entire life towering over others, receiving their bows and gratitude as they called him respectfully

Never not once had he been forced to kneel before someone.

To him, this was not just a loss; it was the ultimate insult.

And it was utterly unbearable.

Chapter 337 Aspen's face darkened, and she could not help but step in.

Andrew, let it go.

Think about it- Mr.

Kelce is someone of his age and stature, and you're ... well, you're not.

Forcing him to kneel is just risking your own life.

Andrew's tone was calm as he replied, I'm not worried.

I'm built tough : I'd gladly accept it if he kneels and begs before me.

Aspen clenched her fists in anger and retorted, Andrew, do you realize what you're risking? Mr.

Kelce commands the loyalty of thousands in Bridgefields

Not only is he respected in the antique community there, but he also has powerful connections in martial arts circles.

Are you ready for the retaliation that's bound to come your way if you force him to kneel today?  
Andrew let out a cold laugh.

Aspen, I see what you're trying to do.

You're just trying to get him off the hook.

And you're threatening me with Bridgefields big shots and antique tycoons? Whether I'm afraid or not is one thing, but do you think these Jayrodale folks here will let you run your mouth unchecked? Elsie was the first to speak up, her voice icy.

Ms Stevens, as a guest from Bridgefields, you're welcome at today's antique appraisal event.

But if you're not going to act like a guest and instead try to take over, then Radiant Group won't hesitate to put you in your place.

The Jayrodale antique experts quickly chimed in, their tones sharp and unyielding.

Ms.

Stevens, this is Jayrodale, not Bridgefields.

Who do you think you are, threatening Mr.

Lloyd ? Exactly.

Is the Stevens family from Bridgefields really all that? One more disrespectful word to Mr.

Lloyd, and we'll see if you can walk out of here.

Remember, you're in Jayrodale now.

If you keep talking nonsense, we'll have no choice but to escort you out.

Aspens face flushed with frustration and rage.

She never expected to find herself being targeted instead.

Worse still, it seemed they were serious about throwing her out.

She glared at Andrew and spat, Fine, Andrew, you've got some guts.

But this appraisal event isn't over yet.

I'll show you what real expertise looks like and prove what it means to be a true master of antiques! Aspen was not someone who took losses lying down.

As the pride of the Stevens family in Bridgefields, she had grown up surrounded by praise and adoration.

Here in Jayrodale, she was determined to make a name for herself, and she would not back down not even against Andrew.

Meanwhile, in the commotion, Orion tried to sneak away, but someone landed a sharp kick on his backside, sending him tumbling forward into the center of the crowd.

Andrew smirked and asked, What's this? You've finally made up your mind to kneel before me? Orion's face burned crimson as he roared, Who kicked me? Show yourself, or I'll skin you alive! No one responded, but the crowd had closed in around him, leaving him no escape.

Get down on your knees! Bow your head! You made a bet, now keep your word! you The shouts and demands echoed around him, and Orion's expression turned from fury to fear.

He realized with dread that there was no way out. The crowd was too large, and no one was on his side. Swallowing his pride, he finally croaked, You win ... I was wrong! His voice was shaky with suppressed rage as he bowed his head to Andrew, his fists clenched tight with humiliation.

Finally, he dropped to his knees and admitted his loss.

The crowd erupted in laughter, their jeers filling the air.

Orion Kelce, the once untouchable figure from Bridgefields, had been utterly humiliated.

His name, once feared and respected, was now a laughingstock.

Andrew raised his hand and said mockingly, Good, you can get up now.

But remember this next time youre out in the world, dont act so high and mighty.

Otherwise, I might have to teach you another lesson

Francesca burst into laughter, unable to hold it in Andrew, youre so bad! Oh, this is too good!

Chapter 338 Orion staggered to his feet, his bloodshot eyes glaring at Andrew as he roared, Andrew, you insolent brat! This isnt over between us ! Andrew barked, How dare you use that tone with me! Do you have a death wish? Covering his face in humiliation, Orlon, supported by his followers, scrambled toward the exit of the antiques fair

He did not want to stay even a second longer, fleeing down the bustling street with his pride in shambles

Christina hesitated and turned to Aspen.

Aspen, no matter what, Mr.

Kelce is still one of the most prominent figures from Bridgefields.

Are you really not going to check on him after such a humiliating defeat? Aspens tone was icy.

Check on him? Not a chance.

It doesnt matter.

Mr.

Kelces fury will be something Andrew absolutely cant handle.

Just wait Mr.

Kelce will definitely come back to settle the score, and Andrews the one whos in real trouble now.  
Christina frowned

She could not help but feel that Andrew had gone too far.

Winning was one thing, but forcing someone as esteemed as Orion to kneel and bow was excessive.  
Actions like that did not resolve anything.

They only bred resentment and invited retaliation.

Aspen sneered

Christina, dont be fooled by Andrews arrogance

Soon enough, hell learn what it means to pay the price for his recklessness.

Christinas eyes widened in surprise.

Aspen, dont tell me youre planning to challenge Andrew in antique appraisal again? Aspen smirked confidently.

Whats the fun in that? The real excitement is about to begin anyway.

The upcoming portion of this event is where the true masters shine, where only those with vision and courage can play.

Meanwhile, on Andrews side, the Jayrodale experts escorted him to a seat of honor with the utmost respect.

Cedric jumped at the chance to claim connections.

Mr.

Lloyd and I go way back.

If any of you want to work with him, you can count on me to make the introductions.

Instantly, the other experts began flocking to Cedric .

Dr.

Aicker, you know Mr.

Lloyd ? Thats incredible! Please, speak highly of me to him! Dr.

Aicker, youre one of us in Jayrodales antiques circle.

Dont keep this connection to yourself! Dr.

Aicker, were practically family.

Next time I want to visit Master Lloyd, Ill be counting on.

you to set it up! Cedrics face lit up with pride as he happily accepted their praises

Riding the wave of Andrews triumph, Cedric found himself basking in newfound admiration from the antiques community.

E Francesca crossed her arms, pouting.

Grandpa, stop dragging Andrew into your messes ! Cedric chuckled and said, How is it a mess?  
With my relationship with Dr.

Lloyd, this is all perfectly natural.

Francesca stomped her foot in frustration, though her annoyance was tinged with amusement.

Elsie chimed in with a smile.

Ms.

Aicker, try to understand.

Dr.

Aicker has always been passionate about antiques but never really fit into the community.

Thanks to Mr.

Lloyd, hes finally earned his place and a bit of respect.

Francesca paused, her frustration softening

She had to admit it made sense.

Orion had deceived her grandfather before, and as a renowned doctor In Jayrodale, the humiliation had stung deeply.

With Andrew backing him up and restoring his dignity, Cedrics elation was understandable.

She turned to Andrew with a warm smile.

Andrew, you're truly a jack of all trades, aren't you? On behalf of my grandpa, thank you for stepping in and helping him

Francesca felt a genuine sense of respect and admiration toward Andrew.

His brilliance in medicine was unmatched, and his skill in martial arts seemed bottomless.

Even in the rarefied world of antiques and collectibles, he had demonstrated expertise far beyond anyone's expectations

She could not help but wonder in awe how on earth he managed to master it all.

Chapter 339 Andrew smiled.

Don't mention it.

I didn't do much for Dr.

Aicker anyway.

That relic just seemed to have a natural connection with him.

Elsie stood quietly to the side, observing Andrew with subtle interest.

Her thoughts churned as she wondered to herself, Could a man like this truly exist? Someone so

composed, charming, and effortlessly skilled in everything he does? From his demeanor and words to his charisma and even his looks, Andrew checked every box for Elsie.

She had to admit he had a magnetic pull on her, yet she felt a pang of disappointment.

No matter

she did, her charm did not catch his attention at all

Just then, a staff member whispered something in Elsie's ear, and she hesitated for a moment before speaking up.

Mr.

Lloyd, the Jayrodale Antiques Association would like to invite you to join as a member.

Are you interested? Andrew instinctively wanted to decline.

He was never one to care about club memberships, VIP titles, or committee positions.

Those labels might impress others, but they held no appeal for him, as he preferred to keep to himself.

Before he could turn it down, Francesca interjected with a cheerful laugh.

That's a great honor! I've heard that being part of the antiques association earns you much respect. Andrew, this is perfect for you, especially at your age.

Thank you so much, Ms.

Santana! Elsie's face lit up.

Then it's settled! I'll speak to the association president and let them know Mr.

Lloyd is officially joining our association.

With both women looking so pleased, Andrew felt it would be rude to dampen their excitement, so he held back his objections.

He let out a small sigh, resigned to going along with their enthusiasm for now.

After a short break, Elsie announced, Mr.

Lloyd, were about to start the highlight of the antiques festival.

Andrew raised an eyebrow, intrigued

I thought the event was already lively enough.

Whats this highlight youre talking about? Elsie gave him a sly smile and whispered, The most thrilling part of the festival is stone gambling

Its a tradition where fortunes are made or lost on the gamble of what lies.

hidden inside raw stones

Francescas eyes sparkled with excitement.

Oh, Ive heard about that! Its all about the adrenaline rush and the thrill of the unknown, right? Even wealthy collectors and business.

tycoons are cautious about playing, though.

Elsie nodded.

Exactly.

The stakes are so high that one mistake or streak of bad luck could ruin someone completely.

I once saw a prominent antiques expert risk his entire fortune on a single uncut stone

When the stone turned out to be worthless, he lost everything and eventually ended up on the streets completely broken.

Francescas expression turned sympathetic

To gamble away everything for something so uncertain... Why would anyone do that? The risk seems far too great its like betting your entire life on one spin of a roulette wheel.

Andrew shrugged and said calmly, Thats exactly the allure of stone gambling.

People enjoy the process of turning nothing into something, of taking a risk and hoping for a reward. Youd be surprised how many are drawn to the thrill.

Francesca looked at Elsie in surprise.

Ms.

Santana, is Andrew right? Are that many people really into this? Elsie smiled knowingly.

Hes absolutely right.

The magic of stone gambling lies in its unpredictability and the hope it offers.

Even knowing the risks, people still cant resist diving in, chasing that one chance to strike it big. Francesca shook her head in disbelief.

I honestly cant understand how anyone could take a risk like that.

Chapter 340 Elsie chuckled and said, Its not as exaggerated as it sounds, Ms. Aicker.

True experts at stone

gambling know how to play smart theyre looking for a jackpot.

All it takes is uncovering one rare gemstone worth millions, and theyre set for life.

Why wouldn't they take the risk? She leaned in slightly, adding, The most famous case in modern history

is the King of Emerald discovery from an overseas quarry.

That guy, as if blessed by luck itself, unearthed a gemstone worth over a billion dollars from an unassuming stone.

The news caused a worldwide sensation, even catching the attention of royalty from across the world. Francescas eyes sparkled with excitement, completely captivated by the story.

A billion-dollar gemstone? That's incredible! Andrew, we should definitely try our luck with a few stones later, don't you think? Andrew smirked and teased, Didn't you just say that the risks were too high, and we shouldn't play? Blushing, Francesca laughed awkwardly.

Well, we could just play with smaller stones

You know, for fun and to get a feel for it.

Andrew shrugged and smiled

Sure, if it seems interesting, why not? Elsie quickly chimed in with a word of caution.

Mr.

Lloyd, Ms.

Acker, if you do play, make sure to avoid spending too much

If you come across stones priced in the hundreds of thousands or millions, just walk away.

Andrew grinned mischievously.

What if we happen to strike gold or rather, something even better? Wouldn't that be worth it? Elsie smiled politely but did not reply

While she acknowledged Andrew's earlier success in appraising antiques, she knew stone gambling required a completely different level of skill and expertise

It was not something that luck alone could carry you through, and she doubted Andrew would fare well in this arena

She hoped they had played conservatively and avoided unnecessary losses.

At that moment, the antique vendors began clearing the central plaza where the event was taking place.

In their place, trucks began unloading large, uncut stones of various shapes and sizes.

Each stone was marked with its place of origin, giving the event an air of professionalism.

Elsie gestured to the stones and explained, These have been sourced from reputable quarries around the world, all arranged by Mr.

Vaughn, Among them, the stones from Auqanias mines.

are considered the most promising

That's where most players will likely focus their bets.

Crowds surged in from the surrounding streets, eager to watch the spectacle.

The plaza buzzed with anticipation as players rushed to examine the stones and place their bets

Cheers erupted whenever someone uncovered something valuable, while groans and curses followed poor results

The excitement was palpable

Aspen strode into the plaza with Christina at her side, both women exuding confidence and instantly drawing attention

Aspen walked up to one of the larger stones and pointed decisively.

Ill take this one, she said to the cutting expert standing nearby.

The man hesitated before replying with a cautious smile.

Miss, this is a premium grade stone.

Cutting this one will cost you 200 thousand dollars.

Without batting an eye, Aspen replied, Put it on my card

Her effortless confidence turned heads, and murmurs spread through the crowd.

Once the payment was made, the cutter prepared to make the first incision.

Aspen ordered sharply, stopping him in his tracks.

Wait

Youll cut it exactly the way I tell you to.

Follow my lines and directions to the letter.

If you make even the slightest mistake, expect a full refund, plus compensation in the form of another stone of equal quality

Her assertiveness sent ripples through the crowd, especially among the more experienced attendees. They could tell this was not her first time Aspen clearly knew what she was doing.

This princess of Bridgefields Stevens family was not just a bold spender she was a pro at stone gambling