

## The Ashes 361

Chapter 361 Elsie sneered, Mr.

Warren, are you planning to steal it right in front of us? Donald shamelessly replied, As the chief commissioner, I need to inspect what illegal goods.

are inside

Inside is the Blood Phoenix Cicada that Mr.

Lloyd won at our antique auction through stone gambling worth over 100 million dollars.

Its absolutely not illegal goods, Elsie retorted through gritted teeth.

Donald ignored her explanation.

In his mind, there was only one number 100 million dollars! Holy crap, what a jackpot! Donald said excitedly, Well, well, Andrew.

The value of your criminal case amounts to over 100 million.

Now, as the commissioner, I order you to open that case immediately.

Andrew replied calmly, I advise you not to touch my belongings.

Otherwise, I doubt youll keep your position as commissioner for long

1 Donald laughed angrily, You little punk, do as I say, or youll suffer the consequences ! This is my territory.

If I really wanted to kill you right here, all it would take is some paperwork and a slap on the wrist to get away with it.

Elsie grew frightened, genuinely worried that Donald would use excessive force on Andrew.

Mr.

Warren, please dont do anything rash.

If you want to open the case, we will.

Donald said with disdain, Women are always so easily scared.

Since Ms.

Santana is being reasonable, you can open it.

Elsie turned to Andrew pleadingly.

Mr.

Lloyd, lets cooperate and give him the code.

Mr.

Vaughn will definitely help us get it back afterward

Andrew maintained a stoic expression as he faced Donald.

Bring the case here, and III open it.

But even if I open it for you, I can guarantee you wont get to enjoy it.

Thats for me to worry about! Donald smirked.

Click! Andrew entered the code and opened the security case.

Immediately, the Blood Phoenix Cicada appeared before Donalds eyes.

Donalds breathing became heavy at once

He thought, No wonder Aspen came to me for help.

So this is what she was after.

Donald knew little about antiques and precious stones, but anyone could tell at a glance that the Blood Phoenix Cicada was priceless an absolute treasure.

Clutching the open case, Donald rushed back to his office, eager to claim the Blood Phoenix Cicada for himself.

Donald then called in his trusted subordinate.

Get two expendable thugs with records to go and cripple Andrew, he ordered with a sinister smile. Remember, dont kill him just make him disabled, preferably vegetative.

He had told Andrew he would not hurt him if he opened the case, but Donald had harbored ill intentions from the start.

It was unbelievable that punk dared to act tough in his territory.

If he did not teach him a harsh lesson, what kind of enforcer would he be ? However, Donald barely made it back to his office and did not even get the chance to hold the Blood Phoenix Cicada when his subordinate burst through the door.

Mr.

Warren, the Aickers are here! So what if theyre here? Why are you panicking? Donald snapped, though feeling guilty himself

Cedric walked in with seven apprentices plus Francesca, their faces cold as ice.

Well, well, Mr.

Aicker, whats this about? Are you openly defying our police department?

Chapter 362 Donald remained unfazed.

He even propped his feet on the desk, completely dismissing the Alckers presence.

Mr.

Warren, please release Andrew, Francesca demanded coldly.

Why should I? A fraud belongs in prison.

Donald scoffed.

Wheres your evidence? Francesca snapped.

Donald replied, The evidence is for the judge, not for you

Now, all you Aickers better leave Office immediately, or you wont be able to handle the consequences of obstructing justice.

Mr.

Warren, Andrew is not a criminal, Cedric said gravely.

Moreover, he knows Mr.

Thatcher personally.

You'd better not do anything rash.

Donald sneered.

Doctor, don't try to manipulate me

He's just a nobody even if he's met the mayor once, does that count as knowing him? Donald, do you really want this to escalate to the mayor's office? Cedric pressed.

If it comes to that, no one will be able to protect you.

Cedric, you're being ridiculous, Donald mocked

As the chief commissioner of Jayrodale's police department, I am the law here

Do I need anyone's protection? Who in Jayrodale would dare touch me? Donald leisurely lit a cigarette, his face full of contempt

Both Cedric and Francesca felt frustrated and helpless, knowing that the Aickers' current manpower was not enough to oppose Donald.

Just then, an icy voice sounded from outside the office.

My, my, Mr.

Warren, such authority you wield, claiming to be the law of Jayrodale

Are you saying you alone control everything in this city? As the voice faded, Lauren entered the room, her expression icy.

Donald frowned, Ms.

Rhodes, dont tell me youre here for that nobody too, just like the Aickers ? Release him.

Now! Lauren commanded.

Donald struggled to contain his anger.

Ms.

Rhodes, lets be reasonable.

This is the police department, not the Rhodes Corporation

Isnt it a bit much to barge in demanding I release someone? Isnt it also a bit much to abuse your power and make false arrests, Mr.

Warren? Lauren responded coldly.

Donald slammed his desk, his anger finally erupted

Lauren, accusations require evidence ! D you really think I wont hold the

Rhodes family accountable for slandering my reputation and integrity? Lauren narrowed her bright eyes, Im not here to argue

Are you going to release him or not? Donalds expression turned ugly.

He felt that the Rhodes heiress was being too aggressive and disrespecting his position as the commissioner

He replied, Even if you are the Rhodes heiress, you cant interfere with police business.

Im sorry, but I cant release him.

Lauren nodded, Fine.

Since you wont listen to reason, Ill have to make you understand the hard way.

With that, she pulled a gun from her purse and pressed it against Donalds forehead

What are you doing? Are you really going to risk murdering a public official? Donald screamed, his eyelids twitching frantically.

He never imagined Lauren would dare to go this far.

Chapter 363 Not only Donald, but even the Aickers were shocked by this turn of events.

Lauren, please stop! Francesca pleaded, her face turning pale

If Lauren actually killed Donald, the ion would escalate beyond control.

Lauren kept the gun pressed against Donalds sweating forehead, completely ignoring Francescas plea. She growled, You pig, Ive been more than courteous with you.

Just because youre the head of Jayrodale police department, you think you can get away with arresting

my man without cause ? Laurens eyes were fierce, and her chilling gaze made Donald tremble

However, a surge of anger quickly rose within him after all, he was one of Jayrodales top dogs and head of the police department.

Donald said coldly, Ms.

Rhodes, if youve got the guts, shoot me right now.

If I die in my office, not only Andrew but you and the entire Rhodes family will face severe consequences

Lauren smiled menacingly, Oh? Do you really think I wont pull the trigger? III send you straight to hell, you pig

Do it! Shoot me right now! Donald roared.

Lets see if any of you make it out of this precinct alive! Lauren suddenly lowered the gun and put it back in her purse.

Sorry, there werent any bullets in the gun.

Otherwise, I might have accidentally blown your brains out, Mr.

Warren.

She had left her ammunition behind when her mother, Tiana, had confiscated her gun earlier.

The whole thing had just been a bluff to scare Donald.

Wiping his cold sweat, Donald straightened up and taunted, Ms.

Rhodes, Dr.

Aicker, its impossible for you to save that punk from me.

Tell me your conditions for releasing him, Lauren demanded icily.

Donald snorted, regaining his arrogant demeanor.

No condition.



Even God himself couldn't get that kid out of here today.

Just as he finished speaking, two people walked into his office.

That's quite a statement, Mr.

Warren

If God can't do it, would you at least show respect to us? The newcomers approached Donald's desk, ignoring the armed officers outside

some Donald looked up, his heart pounding.

Mr.

Garner, Madam Vostokoff, what are you doing here? 1/2 The pair who had entered were Dylan and Natasha, Jayrodale's two underground crime lords.

Mr.

Warren, release him, Dylan said calmly.

Natasha's face remained expressionless as she spoke, Andrews under West End's protection.

Anyone who touches him deals with me personally.

Donald's anger surged.

His day was turning into a nightmare.

Every big shot in Jayrodale seemed to be coming after him, and for what? I don't recall having any beef with you two, Donald growled, though his tone was notably more restrained than with the Aickers and Lauren

After all, these underground leaders were not to be trifled with.

They were hardened criminals who had fought their way to the top.

Mr.

Warren, are you deaf? Natasha snapped impatiently.

I just said Andrews under West Ends protection.

Chapter 364 Dylan threatened, Youd better release him, or fundreds of my South City boys might pay Warrens house a visit.

Donald exploded with rage, Mr.

Garner, are you threatening me? Dylans face suddenly darkened, twisting with menace.

He snarled, Thats exactly what Im doing.

What are you going to do about it? You fat pig, others might fear you, but I dont give a damn about your position.

He added, If anything happens to Mr.

Lloyd, Ill take you down even if it costs me my life.

Am I clear? The ferocity in Dylans voice made Donalds face pale as he struggled to maintain his composure

Donald could not wrap his head around it who the hell was Andrew? Why were even the underground crime lords getting involved? Moreover, Dylans stance seemed to show that he was ready to go to war over this

Donald said through gritted teeth, Think carefully about what youre doing

Even if I release him now under pressure, what about later? Not everyone can get away with disrespecting me like this

Besides, Andrew is a criminal.

Im justified both legally and personally.

Natasha cut in coldly, I dont care if hes a criminal or not.

I just need you to release him.

And Mr.

Warren, I have evidence of your visits to prostitutes.

Dont make me upload that to the internet.

Donald finally cracked, his voice ice cold.

Fine, you win by force of numbers.

But remember, the tide always turns.

Ill get my payback eventually.

Francesca pointed at the security case on the desk.

That case belongs to Andrew too, Mr.

Warren

Please return it to its rightful owner.

Donalds face turned several shades of purple.

He had never had to give up something once he had claimed it.

However, under the death glares from Dylan, Natasha, Lauren, and the Aickers, he had no choice.

Fine

I wont forget this day, Donald spat venomously

Francesca grabbed the case as Donald called for his subordinate.

Go release him.

The subordinate wore an awkward expression.

M Mr.

Warren, hes... already been released! Donald froze, then exploded, Released? Who the hell

authorized that? This was beyond humiliating.

Not only was he forced to release Andrew, but someone had already done

it without his order.

Im going to find out which dead man walking dared to override my authority! Donald snarled with  
a

twisted laugh, desperate to find someone to take his anger out on.

I released him.

So, Mr.

Warren, am I your dead man walking ? A group of people strode into the office with an imposing presence

Donalds temple throbbed with murderous rage.

Did everyone think his office was a public coffee shop? First the Aickers, then Lauren, followed by the crazy duo Dylan and Natasha, and now a fourth wave of visitors who clearly meant business

As several officers respectfully led them in, Donald recognized the two people in front and felt his head spin

His blood ran cold as he realized who had arrived the mayor of Jayrodale and the citys wealthiest businessman.

What the hell was going on?!

Chapter 365 Donald, tell me, am I your dead man walking? Answer me ! Mark roared as he entered, his face livid with rage

Not only did Donald pale in fear, but Natasha, Dylan, Cedric, Francesca, and Lauren were all stunned silent

No one dared to speak, as accompanying Mark was Marvin.

Although Marvin had always maintained a low profile in Jayrodales elite circles, those in the know understood that this billionaire was a tough guy that no one dared to provoke

Not only did he control a massive financial empire that was Jayrodales economic lifeline, but his background from Chetvine made him even more formidable.

Donalds entire body trembled as he nearly burst into tears.

Mr.

Thatcher, Mr.

Yates, what brings you here? Im the worthless one just a blind, stupid piece of trash! Whats wrong? Is your office now off limits to me? Marks voice was cold.

If I hadnt come personally, were you planning to abuse your power and create an even bigger disaster? The moment Mark learned about Andrews detention at the precinct, he knew all hell would break loose. Meeting Maryin on his way here only confirmed his fears Andrews connections and influence could destroy half of Jayrodale.

Do you know what Im feeling right now? Marvin asked with a chilling smile

I want to blow your head off in broad daylight, then use every connection and resource I have as

Jayrodales most powerful businessman to ensure the Warren family never recovers.

Donald collapsed to his knees, sobbing.

Mr.

Yates, if Ive offended you somehow, please show mercy and spare my family.

Ive always kept my distance from you how did I earn your wrath? Marvin replied emotionlessly, Let the Mayor tell you what you did.

But first, Ill collect some interest on your debt.

Donalds throat bobbed as sweat poured down his face.

Interest, Mr.

Yates? What interest? Marvin usually seemed like a harmless, elderly man.

Yet now, his expression was merciless.

With a wave of his hand, two of his men stepped forward one held Donald down while the others blade glinted under the light.

A bloody pinky flew through the air and landed on the floor as Donalds agonized screamts filled the office

Chapter 366 Clutching his bloody hand, Donald nearly passed out from the pain.

Even Dylan and Natasha were shocked by this display of brutality

While they had been willing to threaten Donald and risk their lives against him, they would never dare to actually harm him in his own precinct with armed officers outside.

Yet Marvin, the billionaire, had just severed Donalds pinky right there, showing a level of power that far exceeded their underground influence.

Mr.

Yates, wheres Andrew ? Lauren asked urgently.

Marvin smiled.

Go see him, Lauren.

Hes fine, and hell be happier with you there.

Lauren blushed slightly before heading off with Francesca and the Aickers to find Andrew.

Sir, how should we proceed? Mark asked respectfully.

tas Marvin snorted.

Jayrodale is your jurisdiction, and Donald is your man.

Handle it as you see fit.

Without another word, he left, not even bothering to show deference to the mayor.

Marks face twitched this was exactly what he had feared

Without clear direction, the implications could vary wildly from letting Donald off the hook to ending his life for his foolishness

You idiot! Why did you arrest him without cause? Mark roared.

Donald cried out in pain.

Mr.

Thatcher, I had no idea you and Mr.

Yates knew Andrew! If Id known, I wouldnt have dared touch him even if I had the courage of a thousand

men! Mark said through gritted teeth, Listen carefully and answer my questions truthfully.

Dont try to hide anything.



Marvin clearly wants you dead if you weren't the chief commissioner, Dylan would have already torn you to pieces on his orders.

Donald's pants darkened as he wet himself.

Mr.

Thatcher, I know I was wrong! Please save me, please make Mr.

Yates spare me ! 1 Mark paced anxiously, Normally, as my city's official, I'd discipline you but not destroy you

However, you absolute moron, you should never have messed with Mr.

Lloyd

You're right, I shouldn't have bothered Mr.

Lloyd! Donald nodded frantically.

He knows Mr.

Yates, and he's under his protection I was asking for trouble; it was suicidal! Mark laughed coldly, You really are as stupid as you look.

You're wrong Mr

Lloyd isn't under Marvin's protection

On the contrary, Marvin and Mr.

Lloyd have a mysterious

relationship that even I don't fully understand.

From what I can tell, Mr.

Lloyd appears to be Marvin's superior.

Now, do you understand what kind of mess you've created?

Clutching his bloody hand, Donald nearly passed out from the pain.

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Now, do you understand what kind of mess youve created? Donalds mind was blown by the revelation, and putrid.

What? Andrew is Mr.

Yatess superior? Th Mr.

Thatcher, please save me ! Donald sobbed

forgiveness, whatever he wants! Just please don! Donalds mind was blown

by the revelation, and the puddle beneath him grew larger and more putrid.

What? Andrew is Mr.

Yatess superior? Thats ... thats impossible ! Mr.

Thatcher, please save me! Donald sobbed.

Ill do anything be his slave, beg for forgiveness, whatever he wants! Just please dont let me die

Chapter 367 If Jayrodales wealthiest man could destroy him so easily, Donald shuddered to think about the power level of someone who commanded that kind of authority.

The sense of impending doom was overwhelming

Mark said coldly, Your tears are useless now... Its too late.

Tell me, what possessed you to arrest Mr.

Lloyd in the first place? Donalds face crumpled as he explained, It was Aspen Stevens.

She told me Mr.

Lloyd committed fraud at the antique appraisal convention, causing her to lose tens of millions, so I Mark cut him off with a sneer.

So, you just blindly acted on this womans word? You didnt follow proper procedure or gather evidence? You just took her baseless accusations at face value? Donald shrank back, stammering, I I didnt think it through

Aspens my old classmate, and I thought Id do her a favor.

Mark stated indifferently, What else? You better tell me everything.

Otherwise, I wont be able to protect you if Marvin comes back.

Donald swallowed hard and spilled everything without reservation

I actually wanted to sleep with Aspen, so when she called for help, I agreed without thinking

I figured shed owe me a favor, and I could legitimately ask her to meet me at a hotel afterward. He continued, I also heard Mr.

Lloyd had discovered a priceless treasure worth millions at the event.

I got greedy and thought Id bring it back to the precinct to see what was so special about it. Mark mocked, You werent just looking you were blinded by greed and had a death wish. Coveting Mr.

Lloyds possessions? Donald, its a miracle youre still alive! Donald asked cautiously, Mr. Thatcher, who exactly is Mr.

Lloyd ? Not only did the Aickers, the Rhodes family, and the two underground crime lords Dylan and Natasha come running, but even you and Mr.

Yates showed up at my humble office I nearly passed out of fright! Mark clasped his hands behind his back and replied flatly, Dont ask questions you shouldnt.

However, Im curious about his background, too.

If Im not mistaken, hes probably from one of the powerful old money families or even centuries old royalties of Chetvine

Donald shivered at the revelation.

In Holtrien, centuries old royalties were even more.

powerful than those old money families.

One more question, Mark continued.

Did anything happen between you and Aspen ? Donald hesitated, Is this ... relevant to the situation with Mr.

Lloyd? Just answer the question unless you dont value your life anymore, Mark snapped impatiently

Ill tell you, Ill tell you! Dont be angry, Dona Aspen yet.

Shes too clever I made suggestions Mark frowned, Youre married with kids, and y still trying to do such sleazy things? impatiently.

Ill tell you, Ill tell you! Dont be angry, Donald quickly replied.

Nothing happened with Aspen yet.

Shes too clever I made suggestions, but she said shed wait for results first.

Mark frowned, You're married with kids, and you're the chief commissioner. Why are you still trying to do such sleazy things?

Chapter 368 Donald forced a laugh, Sir, I'm not as noble as you.

You know what they say the grass is always greener on the other side.

Donald continued, Aspen is a brilliant and beautiful woman from the Bridgefields Stevens family. Wanting her is only natural.

And... When Donald hesitated, Mark pressed, And what? Tell me everything so I can try to help you find a way out of this mess.

Donald shifted uncomfortably before admitting, And sleeping with someone like Aspen isn't just about the pleasure and the thrill of conquest.

I was planning to secretly record it, so I could enjoy it again later.

With that kind of video, I could even make her come back for more ... Mark took a deep breath, staring at Donald intently.

Donald, you should have been a porn director elsewhere instead of a chief commissioner in Jayrodale. Donald's eyes lit up excitedly, Mr.

Thatcher, so you're into that too! No wonder you asked so many detailed questions! Shut up! Mark snapped, his face reddening.

That was for the investigation not everyone is a perverted pig like you! Here's what we'll do: come with me to apologize to Mr.

Lloyd in person.

With my mediation and the fact that you didn't hurt him or damage the gem, we might be able to resolve this.



Donald was overjoyed and exclaimed, Thank you, Mr.

Thatcher ! I can never repay your kindness in saving my life! I'll definitely take this lesson to heart!  
Mark warned, Remember, everything we discussed today stays between us.

Donald replied eagerly, Of course! Later, Mark escorted Donald to meet Andrew, who was being treated as an honored guest in the precincts VIP room.

Elsie was present, watching in shock as Donald transformed from his previous arrogance into a groveling , apologetic figure before Andrew.

She was stunned into numbness, realizing how narrow her perspective had been when she had thought Andrew was being overconfident earlier.

Andrew set down his teacup and said calmly, Mr.

Warren, you dont blame me for your missing pinky, do you? Donalds face paled as he quickly assured, Not at all, Mr.

Lloyd ! I deserved it Im actually grateful for the lesson.

Your attitude is so proper now, its almost uncomfortable, Andrew remarked blandly.

I almost miss the arrogant chief commissioner from before.

Lloyd, I was blind not to recognize your status, Donald replied with a pained smile.

If Id known who you were, I would never have dared.

Andrew asked, So, was it Aspen who put you up to this?

Chapter 369 Donald nodded vigorously, Yes, it was Aspen.

If she hadn't slandered you, Mr.

Lloyd, I would never have made that move.

Andrew waved his hand dismissively.

Very well I believe you know how to handle the situation moving forward.

Donald's face turned sinister.

Rest assured, Mr.

Lloyd

That bitch nearly got me killed.

She won't get away with this.

Andrew remarked with a knowing smile, Yet I heard from Mr.

Thatcher that you wanted to sleep with her, That was just my hormones talking, Mr.

Lloyd ! Donald quickly exclaimed.

I've come to my senses now I just want to cut all ties with that woman and teach her a lesson. After Donald's submissive departure, Lauren smiled.

Dr.

Lloyd, I'm relieved you're okay.

I should head home while Fran and the others leave too.

Ms.

Rhodes, is everything alright with the Rhodes family lately? Andrew asked with surprise.

You seem unusually busy.

Lauren avoided his gaze, smiling.

Just some minor matters

I'll come to see you once things settle down.

Wait a moment, Ms.

Rhodes.

I have something for you, Andrew said, presenting her with the security case containing the Blood Phoenix Cicada.

Lauren's eyes widened in shock.

She firmly refused it, knowing how precious the item was.

Dr.

Lloyd, this is far too valuable.

I can't accept it, Andrew smiled, Please take it.

I already gave Fran a Royal Violet Crystal, and when I first acquired this Blood Phoenix Cicada at the auction, you were the first person I thought of

Laurens beautiful face flushed red, her heart racing, Dr.

Lloyd, y you really thought of me first? Andrew suddenly realized his words had sounded quite intimate and laughed awkwardly, I just thought its beauty would complement your elegance.

If you dont want it, I could always give it to someone else.

Lauren quickly grabbed the case, pouting.

In that case, III accept! I wouldnt want you giving it to anyone else! Do you like it? Andrew asked softly. Lauren glanced up at him before quickly looking down again, I I love it! Id cherish anything you gave me , even if it were just a blank piece of paper.

She hurried out with the case, fleeing from the intensity she had seen in Andrews eyes

Andrew felt a twinge of regret at missing out on the lovely sight of her bashful expression. Andrew, since everyones okay, should we head back? Francesca entered, wondering what had transpired between Andrew and Lauren to make her best friends face so flushed.

You, Mr.

Aicker, and Ms.

Santana go ahead, Andrew replied thoughtfully.

I need to discuss some things with Dylan and Natasha.

Alright then, Francesca said with slight disappointment.

But Andrew, you should keep your distance from Natasha.

Chapter 370 Ive heard that since Natasha has been a widow for so long, she tends to pursue attractive young men, Francesca warned. Andrew chuckled.

Dont worry.

She likes pretty boys, which Im not .

Dont brush this off! Im serious, Francesca insisted.

Natasha doesnt have the best reputation, and while I your choices, I just dont want to see you get caught up with her.

Control Andrew teased lightly, With a friend like you looking out for me, how could I get caught up with anyone else? Francescas face reddened as she rushed out, reminding herself that Andrew was off limits as her best friends love interest.

Dylan and Natasha entered the VIP room shortly after.

Andrew, sensing they had important matters to discuss, suggested they move to a more private location

About 20 minutes later, the three arrived at West End headquarters.

The members greeted Andrew respectfully, especially Conan, who had previously dismissed him.

Mr.

Lloyd, please feel free to visit us at West End anytime.

Were all family now! Conan said enthusiastically.

Andrew smiled.

I remember you weren't so welcoming before, Conan

I thought you might set the dogs on me if I came around too often.

Conan laughed heartily, Mr.

Lloyd, you're truly exceptional.

I was wrong to underestimate you before we street folks aren't known for our judgment.

Natasha gave Andrew a meaningful look before turning to Conan.

Bring us some tea

We have business to discuss.

After they were settled, Dylan got straight to the point.

Mr.

Lloyd, we've found an opportunity to move against Atlas.

1 What kind of opportunity? Andrew asked calmly.

Natasha explained, After Atlas falling out with Finley, the Northern District has been in chaos.

We managed to get inside information about his movements.

Andrew nodded approvingly.

Well done

So, you've identified when he'll be vulnerable? Natasha covered her mouth and laughed softly, As expected of my brilliant darling, you've figured it out.

We discovered Atlas will be spending the night alone at his villa in the suburbs, which is why we decided to make our move.

Could it be a trap? Andrew asked cautiously.

Dylan smiled.

What you don't know, Mr.

Lloyd, is that after ending things with Yvonne, Atlas couldn't stand being alone.

He's got himself a new girlfriend

He continued, But this time, Atlas seems to have changed his taste instead of movie stars, he's now going for influencers

He's meeting her at the villa tonight for a romantic rendezvous, Dylan added with a knowing look. Which is why we're confident it's not a trap

Andrew smiled wryly, He certainly knows how to enjoy himself.

After a moment's contemplation, he took out a small white bottle and placed it on the table.

The instant Dylan and Natasha saw it, they could not take their eyes off it.