

## The Double 201

### Chapter 201

Nikolai took a deep breath, mentally steeling himself not to squabble with someone who clearly lacked understanding. "Tell me, is the person meant to take this pill, by any chance, suffering from a recent poisoning?"

Poisoning? What on earth?

Collins' face clouded over with confusion, and then he shook his head. "No, my buddy just has some nerve damage."

Nikolai furrowed his brow in response. "That doesn't add up. This Crimson Sage is specifically designed to prevent toxins from spreading throughout the body, and it even offers temporary protection for nerves against toxin damage. If your friend isn't poisoned, why would he need this medication?"

Collins scratched his head in bewilderment. All he wanted to know was whether this medicine was safe to take, and now they were discussing poison. This conversation was veering into realms of fantasy!

Besides, with modern medicine being so advanced, if Leo had been poisoned, the doctors would have detected it during a routine checkup long ago.

Just then, Collins' doctor friend chimed in, "Ahem, Collins, this gentleman is the Nikolai I mentioned before. He's highly skilled in alternative medicine. I dare say you won't find another practitioner in all of Ashford with his level of expertise."

Upon hearing this, Collins was genuinely taken aback, and his expression involuntarily shifted to one of respect. He nodded earnestly at Nikolai and said, "My apologies for earlier, Nikolai."

After a brief pause, Collins addressed the earlier question more seriously. "My injured friend's sister gave him this medicine. I didn't know if it was safe, so I thought it best to consult an expert. Moreover, my friend has been thoroughly checked at the hospital, and other than the spinal nerve damage, there are no other issues."

Turning to Dr. Ray, Collins continued, “If I recall correctly, Dr. Ray, you reviewed my friend’s lab

“results.”

Dr. Ray indeed remembered and nodded in confirmation. “Correct, the patient’s issue was strictly with the spinal nerves.”

Nikolai fell silent for two seconds before speaking again, “Let’s put it this way: this Crimson Sage pill is classified as S+ grade by the Pharmacist Guild. Only a handful of pharmacists can concoct it, and it’s so rare that it’s priceless.”

Not being an insider, Collins didn’t grasp the rarity of an S+ grade medication from the Pharmacist Guild, but Dr. Ray did. His reaction to Nikolai’s statement was one of sheer astonishment.

The Guild’s medications were categorized into four tiers – A, B, C, and D, with A being the most

precious, B and C following suit, and D representing common, albeit high-quality, drugs not typically accessible to the general public.

An S-grade medication indicated a special class of ancient formulae, and the pharmacists capable of creating them were few and far between, their status almost transcending that of other herbalists. Wherever they went, respect was a given.

An S-grade drug was already extraordinary, but S+ was simply beyond imagination. No wonder Nikolai had been so agitated upon receiving the pill.

Collins was dumbfounded, with the phrase “priceless” echoing in his mind. He might not know about the Pharmacist Guild, but the concept of “priceless” was clear to him. It was akin to how Leo’s albums would sell out as soon as they hit the shelves, leaving even the wealthy unable to snag a copy. So, Collins touched the tip of his nose and ventured, “Is this medicine... that valuable?”

likolai glanced at him, his look still laced with palpable disdain. "You couldn't match the value of this pill even if there were a thousand of you."

Collins was taken aback. "That's a bit harsh, don't you think?"

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"You just said your buddy took a hit to the spine, right? Well, that's spot on. This Crimson Sage stuff not only puts the brakes on toxins but also patches up nerve damage. Sounds like just the ticket for his condition."

Nikolai's words came swiftly, a soothing balm to anxious ears. Collins, hearing this, felt a wave of relief wash over him.

"Still, I'd strongly suggest your friend gets a thorough blood workup done. Some of those sneaky toxins don't show their ugly heads right off the bat," Nikolai mentioned casually.

A remedy as rare and targeted as this wasn't something you'd dole out to just any Tom, Dick, or Harry with a boo-boo, now was it? Some things you could just sniff out.

Collins' expression grew earnest, and after a moment's contemplation, he offered Nikolai a respectful nod. "Could I possibly trouble you to take a look at my friend another day? Rest

can handle the fee, no matter the cost."

assured, we

Even though Nick was a whiz with nerves, he hadn't spotted any extra issues. Nikolai's words carried a weight that demanded attention. After all, alternative medicine was played by a different set of rules than conventional medicine. What if Nikolai could work some magic on

Leo?

Nikolai gave Collins a measured look before his gaze drifted back to the pill, neatly sealed in its transparent plastic sanctuary, his mind wheeling with thoughts, "I don't see an issue with taking a look,

but I do have a small favor to ask in return."

Collins was quick on the uptake and didn't miss a beat. "Much obliged, Nikolai. I'll ask my friend's sister about the origins of this remedy right away."

With a polite nod, Nikolai's eyes sparkled with a hint of anticipation.

Without Mirabella's contact details, Collins had no choice but to ring up Leo. The call connected swiftly, and Collins relayed the situation in a nutshell.

"I'll ask her," was Leo's terse reply from the other end.

Collins ended the call, his mind wandering back to the earlier hospital encounter with Mirabella. If only he'd brought her along...

By the time Leo reached out to Mirabella, she was already ensconced in the back of a cab. With earbuds in place, she pressed the answer button. "Hey, Leo."

"So, I was wondering where you got that medicine you gave me. It seems to be working wonders."

Leo kept mum about Collins' call. No need to stir the pot – if Mirabella got wind of Collins taking her remedy to a doctor, it might ruffle her feathers.

Gazing thoughtfully out the window, Mirabella pieced things together quickly against the backdrop of her earlier run-in with Leo's agent, "A friend shared it with me, but his remedies aren't usually up for sale."

Leo, caught off-guard by her response, didn't press further. "Ah, okay. When are you getting home?"

“About fifteen minutes,” came Mirabella’s reply.

“Alright, stay safe.”

After hanging up, Leo wasted no time relaying his sister’s words to Collins, unfiltered and precise.

Nikolai fell silent upon hearing this, his expression a mix of regret and understanding. After a moment, he handed the precious Crimson Sage back to Collins. The exchange was tinged with reluctance, even a touch of heartache, which made Collins hesitate to reach out. Yet, thinking of the medicine’s supposed rarity and potential benefit for Leo, any thought of offering it back to Nikolai was quickly squashed.

After a brief inner battle, Collins’ decision crystallized within a heartbeat, and without further ado, he pocketed the pill. A revered alternative medicine guru like Nikolai surely wouldn’t miss one little capsule anyway.

## Chapter 203

When Collins left, Nikolai made a point of asking for his contact details.

After Collins had departed, Dr. Ray fixed Nikolai with a serious gaze. “Nikolai,” he began, using Nikolai’s nickname. “you don’t think that medicine came from the Pharmacist’s Guild, do you?”

Nikolai settled back down on the couch, lifting a teacup from the coffee table and sipping it thoughtfully before replying, “No, it didn’t.”

“Even Devon, with all his skills, couldn’t produce a medicine of this S+ grade. I’ve only ever come across it once before, through an acquaintance, who, unfortunately, had also won it in an online auction. After that, it just vanished from the market for a year or two.” Nikolai’s gaze drifted off into the distance.

Ancient remedies were not easily concocted, and even when they were, it was rare to achieve an S grade!

Dr. Ray's face registered shock again. Devon was a senior pharmacist within the Guild, a genius among geniuses. If he couldn't even produce this kind of medicine... Then, how incredibly gifted must this mysterious medicine maker be? No wonder Nikolai had asked for Collins' contact information.

"It seemed like the Pharmacist's Guild was full of hidden geniuses, but I never imagined the real experts to be out there in the world," Dr. Ray mused after a long pause.

Nikolai stroked his salt-and-pepper beard, his tone enigmatic as he observed. "There are always higher skies above us and people beyond our reach. The Guild, when compared to some of these reclusive families, doesn't really count for much."

At this, Dr. Ray fell into a deep silence, realizing there were levels to this world he simply couldn't fathom.

After dinner, Mirabella retreated to her room. Fresh from the shower, she took out her phone. and shot a video call to Catherine via Messenger. Within moments, Catherine's familiar face. popped up on the screen. Mirabella talked while drying her hair. "You look much better."

Holding the phone, Catherine beamed like a child seeking praise, "I've been taking your medicine on time."

"Good, and the Gilberts haven't tried to coax you back home

casually.

have they?" Mirabella asked

"No, I'm doing well here at home. Don't worry about me," Catherine replied with a pause, then suddenly added, "By the way, Mira, some neighbors mentioned that someone's been asking. around for a miracle healer."

Mirabella's hand paused mid-stroke through her hair, and her eyes narrowed slightly.

“You mentioned before that your mentor practices alternative medicine. Could they be looking for him?” Catherine inquired further.

“I doubt it.” Mirabella responded coolly, not betraying any emotion.

“Oh, that’s good to hear. Also, I’ve taken the liberty of tidying up some things for you in the cottage,” Catherine added.

At this, Mirabella pursed her lips and nodded slightly.

Twenty minutes later, after ending the video call with Catherine, Mirabella sat pensively for a while. Then, standing up, she retrieved a piece of paper from the jacket hanging over a chair the one Vincent had given her.

Unfolding the paper, she looked at the physics problem with a sense of melancholy. Eventually, she picked up a pen and began to work on the solution.

Summer had just returned to the Gilberts after a get-together with her girl group. The atmosphere at home was tense; her parents, Colton and Mandy, along with her brother Aiden. were not in the best of moods – the air was thick with gloom.

Summer furrowed her brow and caught a glimpse of Aiden’s smug expression. Summer could guess why the family mood was so heavy. Composing herself, she walked over and greeted them as usual.

“Hey, Mom, Dad.”

Mandy looked at her and couldn’t help but confront her, “What happened with your competition results this term? They were terrible.”

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Sure enough.

Summer's lips twitched slightly before she mustered a patient tone. "I think it's quite lucky for me to have made it to the national competition with my grades."

Upon hearing this, Colton's brow furrowed deeply. "Didn't you get revision material from the teacher's association? And what's the deal with Mirabella? Top score, first place? You can't even beat her?"

Summer knew Colton would react this way and let out a light chuckle. "True. I had the study guides, but my dear brother sneakily passed them on to her."

Aiden immediately jumped up in denial, "You're blaming me for your poor performance? As if I have nothing better to do than to hand over your materials to her. You're making a scene over nothing!"

Without arguing, Summer calmly pulled out a delivery receipt from her bag. "You sent this. didn't you?"

"What is this?" Mandy stood up, took the delivery receipt, and saw her son's name as the sender and Mirabella as the recipient. She immediately turned her gaze to Aiden.

Upon seeing the receipt, Aiden couldn't help but show a guilty expression, but he still stubbornly denied, "I never sent anything!"

Summer watched Aiden with disappointment and shook her head, "Aiden, I know you don't want to acknowledge me as your sister, but there was really no need to send my study materials to Mirabella. Where do you think you're placing the pride of our parents and the Gilbert family?"

Mentioning the matter of family pride, Colton's face darkened even more than before. He snatched the delivery receipt from Mandy's hand, glanced over it, and turned to Aiden. "Your little brat!"

He had always wondered how his adopted daughter, who hadn't even made it to the county's top high school, could possibly score full marks and come first in the competition. Now, it all made sense.



Normally brash and unruly, Aiden still felt intimidated by the sight

dared not utter another word.

of Colton's furious scowl and

Rubbing his forehead, Colton roared in a low voice, "Do you have any idea how many strings I had to pull to get your sister this opportunity? How could you do this? Is your brain made of pudding?"

Fearing her husband might lash out at their child, Mandy quickly stepped in front of Aiden. "Aiden just wasn't thinking straight..."

"It was all set for Summer to find a mentor in Riverdale during the nationals, but now, with this last-place result, how could she possibly face them?" Colton was too angry for words.

10:07

Any influential family in Riverdale was leagues beyond the Gilbert family. If they could forge a connection, the Gilberts' status in Ashford could rise exponentially. That was why Colton had been scheming to pave the way for Summer.

Mandy's expression fell, her mind buzzing, completely at a loss for words.

Observing her parents, who were only concerned with their own interests and reputation, Summer spoke indifferently. "If there's nothing else, I'll head back to my room."

Colton glanced at her but, in the end, said nothing more.

The next day.

Mirabella had barely settled into the classroom when Vincent appeared at the back door of The Advanced Class. Since Mirabella sat in the last row, he didn't bother with formalities and strode in from the back door. "Got the answers worked out?"

Mirabella glanced at him emotionlessly, pulled out a book from her backpack, and said, "Don't come to me with science problems next time. I'm a humanities student now."

With that, she impatiently extracted a sheet of paper with the solved equations from the book.

## Chapter 205

Vincent's eyebrows twitched slightly as his gaze fell upon the piece of paper he had just received. Initially nonchalant, his expression shifted dramatically upon seeing the solution to the physics problem written on it.

The problem he had posed was a notorious one from last year's International Physics Olympiad, a challenge so daunting that it was conquered by only a single student across the globe. It was infamous for its borderline diabolical complexity.

The equations and steps laid out in this paper were even more concise than those of the proclaimed genius from the previous year, with a completely original approach to boot. Even though he had studied this problem in depth, Vincent still found it hard to believe there was another way to solve it. If this solution were to be posted online, it could probably send waves of despair through the ranks of otherwise brilliant students.

As some of his classmates noticed the once-reigning academic titan of their grade approaching the current top dog, they couldn't help but gather around, eager to catch a glimpse of the paper that had so visibly affected Vincent's demeanor.

When the crowd laid eyes on the inscrutable equations scattered across the page, the liberal arts majors in The Advanced Class were left utterly dumbfounded. Love letters were out of the question. The world of the academically gifted was a realm forever beyond the grasp of the struggling students.

With a complicated look, Vincent turned to Mirabella, who seemed utterly oblivious to the commotion, nonchalantly pulling out a book in French and beginning to read. After a moment of hesitation, Vincent finally spoke up, "With science grades like yours, why would you stick around in a liberal arts class?"

Without even glancing up, Mirabella answered in a breezy tone. "It doesn't make a difference which class I'm in."

Once, such brazen confidence was Vincent's trademark. Hearing it from someone else was irritatingly intriguing.

Vincent didn't linger much longer in The Advanced Class. After he left, the classroom buzzed back to life.

"Did Vincent just imply that Queen Mira's science grades are even better? Am I hearing this right?"

"No need to overthink. It's just the plain truth."

"Ah, today's another day that challenges my intellect."

Having left The Advanced Class behind, Vincent had made it some distance towards the Prodigy Class when he abruptly stopped, turned on his heel, and headed towards the physics

teacher's office.

Deep in lesson preparation, the physics teacher looked up in surprise at Vincent's entrance. Vincent placed the paper with the equations on the teacher's desk. "Take a look at this, would you?"

The teacher set down his pen and, upon glancing at the problem, instinctively remarked, "Int this the problem from last year's Olympiad that stumped countless students?"

"Yes."

As the teacher continued to peruse the solution, his expression quickly turned to one of utter astonishment. Looking up after a moment, he asked with excitement, "Did you come up with this solution?"

Vincent shook his head, "Not me." He paused before adding. "It was Mirabella from The Advanced Class."

"The Mirabella who topped this month's exams?" the teacher asked, hand trembling.

"That's the one from last year." Vincent couldn't hide his admiration. "I spent a week and couldn't crack it. She did it in one evening."

The teacher's eyes widened in disbelief, "One evening?"

For a problem of such difficulty, even a seasoned physicist like himself would need a day or two to solve it—let alone a student in one evening....

The physics teacher felt a buzzing in his head, at a loss for words. The revelation was simply too much to process.

## Chapter 206

It might have been just another physics problem, but when a student from the liberal arts class cracked it, people were more than just impressed.

This wasn't any ordinary problem, though. It was concocted by a team of physics professors from some of the most prestigious Ivy League institutions. The complexity and depth of the problem were beyond what any standard textbook could offer.

And that's why the last year's prodigy, the only one to solve it before graduation, was immediately courted by these top-notch universities.

Here was Mirabella, a student steeped in the humanities, whose solution was even more elegant and straightforward than last year's wunderkind. Her talent was not just extraordinary: it was nothing short of a physics marvel.

But what on earth was a physics genius like her doing in a liberal arts class?

The physics teacher felt a pang of regret as he picked up the paper and stood up. He gave Vincent a wave. "You should head back to class."

Vincent blinked, watching the physics teacher, who had already breezed out of the office, and thought, 'Could you maybe leave that paper with me before you dash off?'

The physics teacher hustled over to Mr. Hammond's office, bursting in with urgency, "Mr. Hammond, there's a matter of great importance I need to discuss with... Oh, Morgan, you're here too?"

Morgan was mid-conversation with Mr. Hammond and stopped upon the physics teacher's entrance, turning to him with a pause, "Yes, I'm discussing a situation with Mr. Hammond."

"Oh, I'll wait outside then until you're finished," said the physics teacher, suddenly noticing Morgan's perturbed expression. Trying to be discreet, he hid the paper behind his back, ready to step out again.

Morgan stopped him, "No need for privacy. It's not a secret. Stay."

Taking the cue, the physics teacher glanced at Mr. Hammond, who motioned towards a chair. He sat down, and as he did, his eyes returned to the problem on the paper in his hands.

Morgan turned back to Mr. Hammond. "Mr. Hammond, I really think we should thoroughly investigate the misconduct allegations against Mirabella during the competition. This is not just any school exam. If word gets out, it could tarnish the reputation of Parkside High School." The physics teacher, overhearing Mirabella's name, couldn't help but look up, his interest piqued. Cheating in a competition? What was this about?

Mr. Hammond's gaze on Morgan was icy from the moment he started talking about Mirabella.

The last mess with nepotism, initiated by Morgan, nearly cost him a brilliant student. And now this talk of competition misconduct? He couldn't fathom Morgan's angle. Mirabella's academic performance and capabilities were evident—topping competitions and leading her grade. What was there to question? What was Morgan thinking?

Mr. Hammond took a deep breath, "Morgan, let me ask you, are you convinced that there's a problem with Mirabella's character? Are her studies questionable?"

Morgan pursed his lips. "That's not what I mean. I received a report, and as a teacher, it's my duty to bring it to you."

Mr. Hammond scoffed, "Duty? How can you speak of responsibility when you don't even have a shred of trust in your own student?"

"These are not comparable situations. I understand that Mirabella is a student you recruited. but you can't let that be the reason for your bias, can you?" Morgan countered stubbornly.

## Chapter 207

Mr. Hammond scoffed at Morgan's insistence, his voice dripping with skepticism. "Alright then, you claim there's a student tip-off? Show me the proof."

Seemingly prepared for this challenge. Morgan calmly responded, "Due to privacy concerns, all I can disclose is that Mirabella definitely had prior access to the competition questions."

At the mention of the competition material, Mr. Hammond's gaze on Morgan shifted, now tinged with a hint of intrigue. He opened his mouth to interject, but Morgan continued unabated.

"I must admit my doubts about Miss Mirabella," Morgan stated firmly. "How could a humanities major possibly outperform Vincent in our Prodigy Class in science and math?"

“I’ve reviewed the competition questions myself. The majority are complex, science–based problems. Without having studied specific preparatory materials in advance, I find it hard to believe that a humanities student could answer them all correctly,” Morgan declared with confidence. After all, he had been nurturing minds for two decades, encountering a myriad of students. He’d met all–rounders in both arts and sciences before. Lacking the ability to sniff out a hint of deceit would mean he’d spent those years in vain.

The physics teacher, who had been listening intently to Morgan’s words, suddenly displayed a

peculiar expression. He glanced at the stack of papers he was holding, pondered for a moment.

and then decided it was time to chime in. Standing up, he approached Morgan and handed him a sheet of paper, clearing his throat, “Ahem, Morgan, take a look at this.”

Caught up in a crucial discussion with Mr. Hammond, Morgan was slightly irked by the interruption, yet he patiently accepted the paper. “What is this…” Before he could finish his sentence, his eyes locked

onto the contents of the paper.

Morgan, a math teacher with a firm grasp of physics, was stunned by the solutions outlined on the sheet. After a prolonged silence, Morgan looked up at the physics teacher, “Who solved this problem?”

“It was Vincent who brought this to me just now,” the physics teacher replied, his tone casual.

Mr. Hammond, unable to resist, leaned in to examine the paper, filled with equations and symbols that made sense to him only as a physics problem, but beyond that, he was lost. Though he did not know the physics teacher’s intention in bringing up the problem at that moment. Mr. Hammond chose not to interrupt.

Upon hearing Vincent’s name, Morgan’s face lit up with surprise and delight, “Vincent solved this? Even the student recruited by the Ivy League powerhouses last year couldn’t produce such an elegant and clever solution, right?”

A wave of excitement surged within Morgan, but before he could finish his thought, the physics teacher interjected. "This problem wasn't solved by him."

Morgan paused, his gaze fixed on the physics teacher, and after a moment, he regained his

composure. "It wasn't him? Then who?"

The physics teacher carefully smoothed out the creases on the sheet before slowly revealing two words: "Mirabella Davis."

Morgan's eyes widened in disbelief, his first instinct to shake his head. "Impossible! That's a question from last year's Physics Olympiad. How could she possibly solve it? You must be joking?!"

He could believe anyone else might have solved it, but Mirabella... that was something he refused to accept.

## Chapter 208

The physics teacher's gaze lingered on Morgan with an increasingly peculiar curiosity. He simply inquired. "Why can't Mirabella crack it, Morgan? Are you perhaps harboring a bit of a bias?"

Morgan choked on his words, blindsided by the counter-question. After a few seconds of silence, he managed to stammer out, "You're the one deep into physics. You know the level of difficulty we're talking about here. She's from the humanities.."

Although Mr. Hammond couldn't make heads or tails of the physics problem, he was well aware that an Olympiad question was no walk in the park. He had heard Morgan harp on about 'Mirabella being a humanities student' one time too many, couldn't hold back any longer, and chimed in. "Morgan, you seem to have forgotten something. Initially, I wanted to place her in your Prodigy Class."

e own



His implication was clear. She was meant to be a science student all along. Morgan's doing led to the twist of fate, which landed her in the humanities class.

Mr. Hammond's reminder hit Morgan like a ton of bricks, almost making him stagger. He had always refused to entertain, let alone admit, the fact that he had personally pushed Mirabella out of the Prodigy Class. Every time Mirabella topped the charts with remarkable grades, he would deliberately turn a blind eye, stop his ears, and shun any twinge of regret. But as Mr. Hammond brought it up, it struck him like thunder, shattering his self-deception.

Unaware of this backstory, the physics teacher piped up upon Mr. Hammond's revelation, "So Mirabella is originally a science student? No wonder she's so good at physics. I was wondering why such a promising student was in the humanities. I've been meaning to suggest we transfer her to the science class, Mr. Hammond."

Noting the physics teacher's astuteness, Mr. Hammond glanced at Morgan again, smirking. "You've got quite the eye for talent."

Morgan's face paled even further.

"With all this distraction, I almost forgot what we were talking about. Morgan, you mentioned the competition materials, correct?" As Mr. Hammond spoke, he made his way to his desk, pulled open a drawer, and retrieved a book. He tossed it casually onto the desk, "Is this what you were looking for?"

Morgan's eyes fell upon the book. After a few seconds of silence, he picked it up and began to leaf through it tentatively.

Leaning against the desk, Mr. Hammond's gaze was indifferent. "Mirabella gave me that material a few days ago. She said someone had couriered it to her place by mistake and passed it on to me since she had no use for it. I thought I'd make a few copies for the students to review."

Flipping through a few more pages, Morgan found various types of questions and answers.

including those from previous competitions—all documented within. Looking up, he began, “This...”

“Oh, that’s right,” Mr. Hammond interjected, as if recalling something after a brief pause. “Mirabella also mentioned she found some of the solutions in there a bit too cumbersome and old-fashioned. She was concerned that some might exploit the materials, so she said her approach would be slightly different...”

He paused as if pondering for a moment, then added softly. “Since we’re investigating. I’ll stop by the Education Association at noon, pull up Mirabella’s exam paper, and make a copy for all the teachers to review and compare.”

At the close of Mr. Hammond’s words, Morgan’s complexion turned a ghastly shade. Dropping the materials on the desk, he seemed to deflate as if all the life had been drained from him in

that instant.

The physics teacher glanced at Morgan, shook his head with a mixture of pity and

astonishment, then casually picked up the book, thumbing through it before clicking his tongue in disappointment.

## Chapter 209

“According to our star student Mirabella’s approach, these answers are quite elaborate. For a whiz kid like her, I bet it’s a walk in the park,” the physics teacher remarked casually as he set the papers down. After all, she was a prodigy who could breeze through problems that stump even International Olympiad competitors.

Mr. Hammond turned his gaze toward Morgan, his expression unreadable. “Morgan, are you still insisting that I investigate whether Mirabella has been cheating?”

Morgan stood rooted to the spot, feeling more embarrassed than ever before. The corners of his mouth twitched as he realized that his years of accumulated professional integrity had just been shattered.

The silence that filled the room was palpable.

The physics teacher glanced between the two men and then coughed behind his hand, breaking the quiet.

“By the way. Mr. Hammond, you really should consider my suggestion. Having Mirabella in a humanities class is a waste of talent. If there’s nothing else we can do, we should at least have her sit in on my physics lectures,” he suggested.

Mr. Hammond didn’t press Morgan further. It wasn’t that he didn’t care, but he knew that sometimes, stopping just short of an outright accusation could instill a deeper sense of shame—a shame that would haunt a person for life.

Collecting his thoughts, Mr. Hammond replied to the physics teacher, “I’m afraid you’ll have to ask her yourself. I’ve suggested a class transfer before, but she refused.”

Morgan’s hand trembled slightly.

“Alright, I’ll have a word with her. We can’t let such talent go to waste,” the physics teacher said offhandedly. Mr. Hammond offered a wry smile and said no more.

After lunch, Mirabella returned to the classroom and sprawled lazily across her desk, using a book to shield her eyes from the light.

Meanwhile, on the school’s forum, an anonymous post surfaced claiming Mirabella had cheated in the competition by getting her hands on the questions in advance. The post even listed her previous grades from the county school, which were far from stellar.

As the forum erupted in speculation and gossip, comments poured in.

[Those grades... they’ve got to be fake, right?]

[What's going on this semester? It seems like there's a new rumor about Queen Mira every other day. Aren't they tired of getting their faces smacked?]

Isn't Mirabella a humanities student? I heard this competition was heavy on math and science—think about that.]

I just started stanning Queen Mira, and now I can't tell fact from fiction. Can someone clarify this mess?)

The post had already amassed hundreds of comments.

Jenna, clasping her phone, rushed back into the classroom and saw Mirabella still napping. She couldn't wait any longer and snatched the book off her face, "Mira, we've got a big problem."

Mirabella lazily turned her head, still half-asleep and visibly annoyed at being disturbed.

Jenna touched her nose sheepishly and handed the phone to Mirabella. "Someone's saying you cheated in the competition and that you had prior access to the materials, which is why you always come in first."

Mirabella barely glanced at Jenna's phone and yawned, "Boring." She then casually pulled out another book and placed it over her face again.

Jenna's lips twitched in frustration. Not daring to disturb Mirabella further, she simply said, "It might be boring, but it's all over the school forum. If we let them slander you, what will the underclassmen think? Whoever posted this clearly wants you out of Parkside High School for good!"

So annoying!

Mirabella flipped the book off her face and stood up abruptly, storming out of the room.

Jenna jumped as Mirabella rose abruptly from her seat, scrambling to catch up. "Mira, what's got you storming off like that?" she called out.

Without pausing or looking back, Mirabella's voice was as cool and detached as ever. Just changing my sleeping quarters."

Jenna's temple throbbed. "That's no simple quest for a new place to crash. You're radiating murderous vibes, girl. You're probably off to chop someone's head off. Ah, well. Best keep up and see what's up."

In no time, Jenna was trailing Mirabella to the Prodigy Class.

The Prodigy Class wasn't too crowded at the moment. Summer had just returned to the classroom with Madeline. They were sitting at their desks, chatting and scrolling through their phones, looking quite pleased with themselves.

Standing at the doorway, Mirabella spotted Summer in the third row with just one glance. She stepped into the classroom with an expressionless face and strode toward Summer. "You seem to have an awful lot of free time on your hands, don't you?"

Oblivious to Mirabella's entrance, Summer looked up, startled by the icy voice above her head. Her face showed a brief surprise before quickly resuming a casual demeanor. "What are you getting at?"

Mirabella's gaze was sharp, her impatience clear. "Quit playing the fool with me. Sending out info, smearing my name on forums – can't you come up with something a tad more sophisticated?"

Jenna, who had hesitated at the doorway, couldn't help but snort at the 'quit playing the fool with me.'

Summer's face darkened as she stood up, her voice equally frosty. "Mind your manners when you talk to me. What docs? What forum smear? I've got no clue what you're on about!"

Mirabella sneered, "You don't know, or you're just scared to admit it?"

Summer's brows knitted tightly in frustration.

Madeline was caught off guard by Mirabella's direct approach. She was clearly here because of that forum post. Madeline felt a twinge of guilt—after all, she was the one who posted it without Summer's knowledge.

However, remembering the things Summer had said to her earlier, Madeline's confidence returned. She stood up, looking disdainfully at Mirabella, "You got caught cheating in a competition and got exposed on the school forum, and now you have the audacity to come here and hassle Summer?"

As her words hung in the air, Summer suddenly turned to Madeline, "What forum post?"

Madeline cleared her throat, gave a brief explanation, then whipped out her phone, logged onto the school forum, and showed Summer the post that had garnered a thousand comments.

Summer scrolled through the thread, her heart sinking.

This idiot.

She didn't want Mirabella to steal the spotlight at school but never intended for the competition materials situation to blow up. After all, she leaked those documents from the Education Association, and making a mountain out of this molehill served no benefit to her!

Taking a deep breath, Summer put the phone down and looked steadily at Mirabella. "I didn't post that thread, and besides, the innocent have nothing to hide. Your coming here to question me seems rather pointless."

A smirk briefly played on Mirabella's lips as she leaned forward casually, her palms resting on the e

edge of the desk. Her smile didn't reach her eyes as she said, "It doesn't matter who posted it. What matters is the moment that post went live, you were destined to pay for your foolishness."

Summer's brows twisted, a bad feeling suddenly rising within her. Mirabella was too arrogant. It was as if she held all the cards in her hand.