

### Chapter 72

Karla's voice trembled slightly as she confirmed, "Yes, that's Peterson Rogers." Her eyes remained fixed on the screen, her mind racing to comprehend the significance of the sight before her.

Julie, sensing Karla's astonishment, inquired further, her curiosity piqued. "Hmm, who is that man kneeling in front of him?" she asked, trying to confirm her own observation.

Karla nodded, her attention still captivated by the unfolding scene on the screen. Julie, as if sensing Karla's unspoken thoughts, probed deeper, seeking to understand the context. "And why is he kneeling in front of him?" Julie asked, her voice filled with intrigue and curiosity.

Karla finally tore her gaze away from the screen, meeting Julie's eyes. "Peterson Rogers... he's a famous man in the city," she responded, her voice tinged with awe and a hint of disbelief. The realization that Peterson Rogers, a prominent figure, was shown in such a vulnerable position in front of Duncan, left Karla bewildered, well that was what she expressed through her expression. The video had posed more questions than answers, and both Karla and Julie were now caught up in a whirlwind of speculation and curiosity, eager to uncover the truth behind the surprising scene they had just witnessed.

Julie's eyes remained fixed on Peterson Rogers, noticing the despair and hopelessness etched on his face. She couldn't help but share her observations with Karla, her tone filled with intrigue. "Look at how devastated and hopeless he looks. What's the story behind him kneeling in front of Duncan, your man?" she asked, her curiosity evident.

Karla quickly interjected, a hint of defensiveness in her voice. "Hey, he's

not my man," she clarified, though her words were followed by a subtle glimmer of anticipation. "I mean, who knows? Maybe someday." She found herself blushing at her words.

Julie grinned mischievously, playfully teasing her friend. "Oh, I know. He'll be yours soon," she declared, her tone dripping with playful encouragement.

Karla couldn't help but roll her eyes at Julie's comment, the mention of Abigail hovering around Duncan lingering in her mind. Muttering under her breath, she expressed her frustration, "Only if Abigail stops hovering around him."

Julie caught Karla's muttered words, her curiosity piqued once again. "What did you say?" she asked, leaning in closer, trying to catch Karla's response.

Karla chuckled, brushing off the question. "Huh? Nothing," she replied evasively, not wanting to delve into the topic further. 1

Julie, undeterred, shifted the conversation's focus to Duncan's wealth, drawing Karla's attention. "This Duncan, judging by this video and how he's parading himself, it seems like he's super wealthy. Is he?" Julie inquired, her curiosity getting the better of her.

Karla nodded, about to affirm Julie's assumption, but then paused, the words hanging on the tip of her tongue. She hesitated as she remembered the secrecy of Duncan's real identity and she was happy that she hadn't spilled it out to her cousin, Julie.

Julie, who was eager to know more about Duncan, poked her arm and asked, "Go on. Is he super rich?"

Karla shook her head vehemently. "No, he's super poor."

Julie frowned and taking her phone from Karla, she went back to her seat across the dining table. "But you nodded your head before in affirmation ..."

"No, I didn't mean that," Karla said and smiled.

"So, you like a 'super-poor guy?'" Julie asked with narrowed eyes.

Karla blushed and chuckled at Julie's teasing tone. "Well, it's not about his wealth," she replied. "Duncan is an amazing person. He's kind, intelligent, and has a great sense of humor. He's passionate about his work and has big dreams for the future. Money doesn't define who he is, and I admire him for that."

Julie raised an eyebrow, intrigued. "Wow, he must be really special if you're willing to overlook his financial status. Tell me more about him!"

Karla leaned in, her eyes sparkling with excitement. "Duncan is an artist. He creates breathtaking paintings that evoke such deep emotions. His talent is extraordinary, and he pours his heart and soul into every piece he creates. He's also incredibly humble about his work, which is one of the things I love about him."

Julie listened intently, her curiosity piqued. "That sounds amazing, Karla. I can see why you're drawn to him. Do you think he'll become famous someday?"

Karla nodded enthusiastically. "I truly believe he has the potential to become a renowned artist. His dedication and talent are unmatched, and I have no doubt that he'll make a name for himself in the art world. I feel lucky to have him in my life, and I support him wholeheartedly in his pursuit of his dreams."

Julie smiled, genuinely happy for her cousin. "Karla, it's wonderful to see you so enamored with someone. I hope things work out between you two. And remember, love knows no boundaries, not even financial ones."

Karla nodded, grateful for Julie's understanding. "Thank you, Julie. Your support means a lot to me. I believe that love is about connection, shared values, and genuine care for each other. Duncan and I have that, and I couldn't ask for anything more."

Suddenly, Julie's skepticism was evident in her question, "Is he really an artist?" She seemed doubtful about Duncan's true occupation. Karla, feeling a bit uneasy, blinked and reluctantly nodded in response. The truth was that she had fabricated Duncan's profession. Unsure of what else to say, she had chosen the label of an artist as it appeared to be the most believable to her at that moment.

Upon hearing Karla's affirmation, Julie's tone shifted to one of approval. "That's great," she said. "You fell for an artist. Cool. I hope he genuinely likes you and not just for your wealth."

Karla quickly jumped in to defend Duncan's character. "Duncan isn't that kind of guy," she insisted. "He's genuine, and my wealth means nothing to him."

Julie rolled her eyes in confusion as she asked, "What?"

"I mean, it's insignificant compared to what he'll have in the future," Karla rephrased.

Karla's last statement was a clumsy attempt to rectify her earlier slip-up. She had intended to convey that Duncan's aspirations and potential success were far more important to him than her current wealth. However, her choice of words came across as vague and confusing.

Julie nodded, taking Karla's words for it.

"You know, in the video, the comments have it that Duncan was being begged by Peterson to help him out."

As Julie shared the comments from the video, Karla listened attentively, her curiosity piqued. She continued eating while processing the information. The notion that Peterson Rogers had been pleading with Duncan for assistance surprised her a bit.

Karla's initial reaction was one of disbelief. "Really?" she asked, slightly perplexed. "But there's nothing Duncan can do to help him."

Julie went on, relaying additional comments from the viewers. Some claimed that Peterson had been waiting for Duncan at the bar. This revelation seemed to strike a chord with Karla, and a smile slowly formed on her face.

Unbeknownst to Julie, Karla's thoughts took a vindictive turn. She silently pondered the situation, thinking, "It serves Peterson right. He should beg for Duncan's forgiveness before he ruins him." Her anger and resentment towards Peterson were evident in her inner monologue. She couldn't help but think of more drastic turns Peterson's life was going to take.

Realizing her silence, Julie urged Karla to speak up. "Karla, talk," she prompted, eager to hear her friend's thoughts on the matter.

"Oh, sorry," Karla responded, initially caught off guard by Julie's prompt. "But what can I say?"

Confused by Karla's response, Julie asked, "Hmm?"

Karla hesitated for a moment, carefully choosing her words. "Well, I think whatever bad happened to Peterson Rogers, he deserves it."

Julie immediately interjected, cautioning Karla against such a judgment. "Hey, don't say that. Peterson doesn't seem like someone who would hurt anyone."

Karla, clearly displeased with Julie's defense of Peterson, dropped her spoon, unable to contain her frustration. She felt compelled to express her true feelings about Peterson. "Peterson is a jerk," Karla exclaimed, her tone filled with disdain. "Sure, he might have a nice face, but he has a dark heart. Behind people's observations, he has wronged innocent individuals."

Caught off guard by Karla's passionate response, Julie attempted to diffuse the situation. "Woah, chill," she said. "You're talking like he wronged Duncan."

Karla let out a sigh, realizing that her intensity had escalated the conversation. She took a moment to compose herself before responding.

"Don't mind me, Julie. Let's just eat and forget about Peterson Rogers," Karla suggested, attempting to steer the conversation away from the contentious topic.

Julie playfully saluted, acknowledging Karla's request, and both of them shared a laugh, lightening the atmosphere.

However, as they continued their meal, Karla noticed Julie sneak a quick glance at her phone. Intrigued, Karla couldn't help but inquire, "Hey, what's going on? What did you find now again?"

Julie hesitated for a moment before revealing the new information. "

Well, it turns out that Peterson actually left the bar in an angry mood after delivering a punch to Duncan," she disclosed.

"What?" Shocked by this revelation, Karla immediately stood up and took the phone from Julie. She played the video, fast-forwarding it to the end, where she noticed a trickle of blood on the corner of Duncan's lip.

"How dare he?" Karla scoffed, her anger palpable. The sight of Duncan injured and the realization that Peterson had physically attacked him stirred up a mixture of rage and concern within her.