

Chapter 81

Peterson's thoughts raced, trying to piece together any clues or explanations. Has there been some sort of error or glitch? Or worse, had he fallen victim to a malicious act? The uncertainty gnawed at him, and a mixture of frustration and fear settled in his chest.

Peterson knew he needed to take immediate action. With trembling hands, he dialed the customer service number for his bank, hoping to get some answers and resolve the alarming situation. As he waited anxiously for someone to answer on the other end of the line, he couldn't shake off the sinking feeling that his life had taken an unexpected turn, and he was about to face a daunting financial crisis.

Frustration and impatience welled up within Peterson as the call to the bank's customer service continued to go unanswered. Growling in exasperation, he abruptly stood up, tossing the phone onto the bed. His voice resonated throughout the room as he expressed his frustration with the empty air.

"What's happening?" he questioned, his tone filled with annoyance and confusion. "Why doesn't this stupid bank customer service answer the damn calls?!"

Deciding to attribute the incident to a mere glitch, Peterson stormed into the bathroom, seeking solace in a quick shower. The cascading water helped to momentarily calm his racing thoughts, but his concern about his vanished money lingered in the back of his mind.

After hastily finishing his shower, Peterson emerged from the bathroom, his senses now sharpened with anticipation. Rushing to his phone, he anxiously checked for any messages indicating that the error had been

rectified.

As he scanned through his inbox, his heart sank. There were no messages or notifications that offered any explanation or resolution to his financial predicament. Doubt and worry crept back into his thoughts, intensifying the knot of anxiety in his stomach. He felt a sense of helplessness, unsure of where to turn or how to recover his lost funds.

Overwhelmed by the weight of his financial loss, Peterson cried out in despair, the phone slipping from his grasp and clattering onto the floor. "No, no, no," he repeated, his voice filled with anguish. "My money disappeared overnight. How could this...?"

His train of thought abruptly halted as a memory from the previous night resurfaced. He vividly recalled his encounter with Duncan who had remained surprisingly calm and composed even after Peterson had lashed out in frustration. The echo of his own harsh words to Duncan echoed in his mind, "You're capable of nothing..."

As realization dawned upon him, Peterson's eyes widened in a mix of shock and suspicion. A thought took hold in his mind, connecting the dots.

"Could Duncan have a hand in this?" he wondered, his thoughts racing. The idea seemed incredulous, almost impossible to believe, and yet a seed of doubt had been planted.

"No, it can't be," Peterson muttered, attempting to dismiss the notion. He couldn't fathom that someone as ordinary as Duncan could be involved in such a significant financial loss. But the nagging doubt lingered, refusing to be completely silenced.

Just as the uncertainty swirled within him, his phone suddenly rang,

jolting him out of his contemplation. Startled, Peterson quickly reached for the device, his heart pounding in anticipation.

Peterson, feeling a mix of surprise and curiosity, answered the call in a grumpy manner, "Hello, who's this?" His voice carried a tinge of annoyance as if he expected an undesired interruption.

"It's me, Peterson. Morrison, the manager of New World Bank," the man on the other end introduced himself.

Peterson's eyes widened as he immediately recognized the caller as the manager of his bank. A flicker of hope ignited within him, as he saw an opportunity to address his concerns directly to someone who could potentially help.

With a newfound sense of anticipation, Peterson was about to pour out his problem to the bank manager. However, before he could utter a word, the manager interrupted him with an unexpected statement.

"Peterson Rogers, I can see you're playing a game with us, right?" The manager's tone shifted from a friendly introduction to a more accusatory one, leaving Peterson perplexed and caught off guard.

Confused, Peterson responded, "What do you mean?" He couldn't fathom why the manager would accuse him of playing a game, as he genuinely had an issue he wanted to discuss.

The manager, seemingly undeterred, replied, "Well, keep it up. We'll catch up with you soon." With those enigmatic words, the man abruptly ended the call, leaving Peterson hanging and filled with even more questions than before.

Peterson was left to ponder the manager's cryptic statement. Was there a misunderstanding? Did someone impersonate him? Or was there

something else entirely going on? The mixture of hope and confusion lingered in his mind as he awaited further clarification from the New World Bank.

"No, Peterson, you can't just wait for them to give further clarification. I have to see to all this myself," Peterson thought aloud, his determination overpowering the confusion that lingered in his mind. Without wasting another moment, he rushed to his closet, shaking his head to clear his thoughts. He swiftly pulled open the closet doors, grabbed a set of clothes, and hurriedly dressed himself.

With a sense of urgency, Peterson made his way out of his house and headed straight to the bank.

Meanwhile, at Walton Imperial Company, Karla marched into Duncan's office, worry etched on her face. She had been informed that Duncan had not yet arrived at the office. Despite the pressure and the responsibilities she had to handle for the day, Karla decided to wait, determined to see Duncan.

Karla took a seat in Duncan's office, her mind focused on the tasks that awaited her attention. She glanced at her watch, keeping a close eye on the time, hoping that Duncan would arrive soon so that she could discuss the pressing matters at hand and proceed with her day's responsibilities.

Her worry for Duncan had crept in that morning after she watched the video again, replaying the scene where Peterson had hit Duncan in the bar. The anger she felt towards Peterson the night before had faded, replaced by a deep concern for Duncan's well-being. The more she thought about it, the more her worry doubled.

As the minutes ticked by, Karla couldn't help but feel a growing impatience. She knew she had a lot on her plate for the day, but her

concern for Duncan took precedence. She wanted to confront him, to express her worry and frustration over his recent behavior. She was determined to let him know how she felt, even if it meant scolding him.

Finally, the moment arrived. Duncan entered the office and was taken aback to see Karla waiting for him. Her expression was a mix of relief and annoyance.

"Karla?" Duncan said, surprised by her presence.

"Oh, you're here," Karla replied, standing up from her chair. "It's past 10 a.m., and you're just arriving now? What sort of CEO are you?"

Duncan raised an eyebrow at her boldness. "Are you scolding me?" he asked, a hint of amusement in his voice.

Karla, though feigning annoyance, didn't hold back. "Yes, I am," she declared, her voice firm. "I was worried sick when I saw that video of you and Peterson. You disappeared last night, and I had no idea what had happened to you. You can't just brush it off like it's nothing!"

Her words hung in the air as she stared directly into Duncan's eyes, her concern and frustration evident. She hoped that her scolding would make him realize the impact of his actions and the worry they had caused her.

Taken aback by Karla's scolding, Duncan was momentarily at a loss for words. He had expected a confrontation, but her intensity caught him off guard. Before he could collect his thoughts and respond, Karla continued speaking.

"You refused to tell me anything when I called last night, and..." Karla abruptly paused mid-sentence, her eyes fixated on something on Duncan's face. Gasping, she rushed up to him, her concern overriding her previous anger. She gently held his face, her touch surprisingly tender.

"What's this?" she asked, her voice filled with worry, her gaze locked on the blister in the corner of his lips.

Duncan's surprise turned to realization as he understood what had caught Karla's attention. He had managed to conceal the blisters from Lady Zelda and Sir Logan during their breakfast. However, it seemed that Karla had a keen eye and had noticed the marks.

He exhaled slowly, his expression softening. "It's nothing," he replied, trying to downplay the significance of the blisters. "Just a minor irritation, really."

Karla's eyes narrowed, unconvinced. "Don't lie to me, Duncan," she said firmly. "These blisters didn't just appear out of thin air. Something happened, and I deserve to know the truth."

Duncan hesitated for a moment, realizing that he couldn't keep Karla in the dark any longer.

He also realized he couldn't brush the truth away, so he mustered the courage to reveal the source of his blisters. "I got them from Peterson's punch," he admitted, his voice tinged with a mixture of frustration and resignation.

"I thought so," Karla exclaimed, her eyes widening with a mixture of concern and anger. Without hesitation, she took hold of his hand and gently guided him to his seat behind the desk, treating him as if he were a child in need of care. She firmly settled him down, ensuring his comfort.

"I'm sure you didn't go to the hospital to get it treated," she stated, a hint of worry evident in her voice.

Duncan shrugged dismissively. "Why should I? It's nothing serious..." he

began, attempting to downplay the significance of his injuries.

Karla's eyes narrowed as she interrupted him, her concern overriding any patience she had left. "Come on, Duncan, it is serious. You could have an infection. You can't just ignore it," she claimed, her uncertainty lacing her words.

Duncan couldn't help but chuckle at her claim, finding her concern endearing. "I've never heard of blisters causing infections," he replied, his tone lighthearted.

Karla snapped, her frustration bubbling to the surface. "That's because you're being dumb about it!" she retorted, her voice sharp.

Without giving him a chance to retort, she started searching her bag roughly. Duncan couldn't help but watch in surprise as Karla rummaged through her bag, determined to find something. He opened his mouth to ask her what she was searching for, but she paid no attention to his question. Finally, she retrieved a tube of ointment and a small sterile adhesive bandage, causing Duncan's curiosity to pique further.

"What do you want to...?"

Before he could finish inquiring about her intentions, Karla swiftly positioned herself between his legs, facing him. She held the ointment in her hand and, with a gentle touch, began applying it to the blister on his lip. Duncan's surprise grew, his lips parting slightly in astonishment.