Limits 143

Chapter 143

As Jack's gift was finally brought forward, Wesley couldn't resist teasing him.

"Jack, what kind of big surprise did you prepare for the campus queen?"

He had seen Jack borrow money earlier and figured Jack must've gone all out on a gift for Phoebe. The thought made him curious—and a little amused.

Feena and Phoebe also turned their attention to Jack's gift, eager to see what he had picked out.

Phoebe carefully unwrapped the package, handling it delicately as if afraid of damaging whatever was inside.

Meanwhile, Jack felt a sinking feeling in his gut.

Then, under everyone's watchful eyes, Phoebe pulled out a watch.

At first glance, it looked fine, but a closer look revealed rough engravings and an unimpressive finish. It was clear that this watch wasn't expensive.

The room fell silent for a split second. Then came the inevitable reactions-shock, snickers, and even outright disdain.

Jack already felt awkward, but Mia's next words made him want to disappear.

"Wait a second," she said, narrowing her eyes. "I think I've seen this watch before... Oh! Isn't this from that little shop on campus? You can buy one for, like, 20 dollars."

Thomas turned to Jack with a smirk.

"Be honest. Did you really get this from the campus strip mall?"

Jack wanted to lie-just something, anything, to get out of this moment.

But then he saw Phoebe's eyes-clear, calm, and expectant. And suddenly, he couldn't do it.

The whispers grew louder. The quiet snickers turned into full-blown amusement.

Not wanting to leave a bad impression on Phoebe or Feena, Jack explained, "Phoebe, I actually wanted to get you something better, but I lent most of my money to a friend."

Wesley realized what Jack was talking about and quickly stepped in to back him up. "It's true! Jack spent everything on this gift. He even borrowed money from me just to grab a meal earlier."

His intent was to show that Jack cared and that he had given everything he had.

Feena, understanding Jack's situation, said gently, "Phoebe, the watch does cost quite a bit."

But Mia rolled her eyes.

"Quite a bit? Please. I know the shop owner. These watches cost, like, ten dollars to make. Even if you're broke, you could've picked something better. This just shows he doesn't care about Phoebe at all."

Thomas nodded in agreement.

"Yeah, someone like that isn't even worthy of being Phoebe's friend."

Just as Jack's hands clenched into fists under the table, Phoebe did something no one expected.

She shook her head and held the watch in her palm, her fingers tightening around

it.

"I like it," she said softly. "Thank you, Jack."

It was the first time she had ever thanked a guy so directly for a gift. But most people in the room believed she was just trying to spare Jack's dignity. No one thought she actually meant it.

Mia scowled but dropped the subject, knowing she couldn't openly argue with Phoebe.

But Leslie's expression darkened.

At this point, the gifts were mostly unwrapped.

Jack was starting to feel out of place. He still had rehearsals to get to, and sticking around any longer was pointless. So he excused himself, saying he needed to use the restroom.

As Jack left, Mia smirked as she said, "Pathetic. Couldn't even buy a decent gift and had to make up some excuse about lending money. What a joke."

One of Leslie's friends chimed in, "Or maybe he really did spend all his money on the gift. In that case... his family must be dirt poor."

Another girl chuckled and added, "You guys know he used to chase after Bella, right? Yeah, that Bella-the classic rich girl. And he showed up wearing knockoff brands thinking he had a chance. She dumped him, obviously. But rumor is, he kept chasing after her like a lost puppy."

Mia let out a sharp laugh. "Bella? Oh, I know her. And him? He was never even in the running."

Wesley's fists tightened. He couldn't take the way they were talking about Jack. "Say what you want," he said firmly. "I know Jack. He's not cheap, and if he says he lent his money to someone, I believe him."

The room stared at Wesley.

No one argued, but their expressions made it clear. They thought he was just as pathetic as Jack.

A few minutes later, Jack returned from the restroom. He walked straight to Phoebe.