Limits 144

Chapter 144

Jack said to Phoebe, "I've got something to take care of, so I'll be heading out now. Let's catch up another time."

The people around them exchanged knowing looks. At least he knew when to leave. He clearly wasn't welcome here, so he was smart enough to make himself

scarce.

Phoebe, understanding Jack's position, gave him a small nod and stood up. "I'll walk you out."

But Jack quickly waved her off. "No need. Stay and enjoy the party with your friends."

Just as he was about to leave, the hotel doors swung open.

A young man walked in, carefully supporting a middle-aged woman carrying a wooden shoulder pole with baskets hanging from both ends.

He spoke gently to her, his tone full of concern. "Mom, take it slow. Watch your step."

The woman wasn't that old, but years of hard labor had aged her beyond her years. Her skin was darkened from the sun, her face lined with deep creases from a life of struggle. The baskets she carried contained a bundle of blankets and some farm produce.

Stepping into the lavishly decorated restaurant, the woman immediately grew uneasy.

"Sam, this place looks expensive," she whispered nervously. "We can't waste money like this. Let's leave before we dirty their fancy carpets. I can just have a couple of scones."

Samuel gently held her back and reassured her, "Mom, don't worry. The owner here is my friend. I get to eat here for really cheap."

Jack squinted at the guy and suddenly recognized him. It was Samuel.

Surprised, Jack called out, "Samuel? What are you doing here?"

Samuel's head snapped up, and when he saw Jack, his face lit up with excitement.

"Jack! You're here too? I'm just bringing my mom out for a nice meal. After that, I was planning to head to the dorm to find you!"

Upon hearing this, Samuel's mother, Meredith Zeller, glanced at Jack and asked him, "Sam, is this your classmate?"

Samuel nodded eagerly, his eyes shining. "Mom, this is Jack, the friend I always talk about. He's the one who helped us when Dad was in the hospital. He lent me all the money we needed."

The moment she heard this, Meredith froze, her eyes widening in shock.

Then, without warning, she dropped to her knees with a loud thud.

Her voice trembled as she choked out, "You're our savior! Thank you for helping our family. We owe you so much! Please, let me thank you!"

Before Jack could react, she reached for Samuel and pulled him down with her. "Sam, you need to bow to him! We have to show our gratitude properly!"

Jack panicked and said, "Mrs. Cooper, no! Please, get up!" He rushed forward, trying to help her up. "You don't need to do this! I was just giving a helping hand, it's no big deal."

Samuel also hurriedly helped Meredith stand up straight, though she continued to wipe her eyes, overcome with emotion.

Still sniffling, she clutched Jack's hands and said, "You don't understand, child. We truly don't know how to repay you. Sam's father... he passed away, but he left peacefully, knowing his son has a good friend like you. We'll never forget your kindness. If there's anything our family can do for you, just say the word."

Jack shook his head firmly. "Please, don't say things like that. Samuel just hit a rough patch, that's all. It was the right thing to do. And don't call me your 'savior'— just call me Jack. Samuel and I are friends. That's what friends do."

She wiped her eyes again, smiling through her tears. "Alright, Jack. We're still so grateful."

Looking around, she suddenly seemed at a loss. She had nothing fancy to give him, nothing that could match the help he had provided.

Then, her face lit up. She reached into one of the baskets and pulled out a handful of freshly harvested peanuts, still covered in dirt.

"Jack, we don't have much, but these are homegrown peanuts. I roasted them myself they're delicious."

Some of the wealthier guests in the room wrinkled their noses at the sight of the dirt-streaked peanuts, but Jack didn't hesitate. He took one, cracked it open, and popped it into his mouth with a big smile.

"Wow! These are amazing! Mrs. Cooper, how'd you know I love peanuts?"

Meredith beamed. "If you like them, then take more!"

Before Jack could protest, she scooped another handful and shoved them into his pocket. Then another. And another.

She did that until his pockets were completely stuffed.