Limits 265

Chapter 265

The woman sat by a seat close to the window upon entering the private room. She admired the view outside before turning to Jack and saying indifferently, "Stop standing there. Have a seat."

After he did as told, a staff member brought them expensive coffee. The woman waved a hand to dismiss the staff before handing Jack the menu. "Order whatever you want."

She paid attention to his reaction as he took the menu. She wanted to see whether the exorbitant prices would make him feel embarrassed and uneasy.

Sure enough, he frowned upon reading the menu. It wasn't because he was embarrassed he couldn't afford the food there, though. He only felt that the prices were much too high.

The woman said, "Go ahead and order. Don't worry about the bill."

Jack ordered a few dishes and put the menu down. He waited for her to get to the point.

She sipped her coffee gracefully, seemingly savoring its aroma. Finally, she put the cup down and looked at Jack gently. "Hi, I'm Bella's mother. I've observed you for some time, and it seems to me that you're dating her. Am I right?"

The realization dawned on him-no wonder he'd found her familiar earlier. She and Bella resembled each other. His attitude became more respectful when he learned who she was. "It's nice to meet you, Mrs. Cole."

Her name was Clarice Avans. She nodded, and her tone took on a hint of forcefulness. "Not only have I investigated you, but I've also learned everything there is to learn about your family back in Perther City. That includes your parents and sister."

Her words made Jack feel a little uncomfortable. He didn't like people digging into his family as and when they liked. He had a feeling something dramatic was about to go down, and his expression turned

slightly frosty. "Was there something you were trying to achieve when investigating my family, Mrs. Cole?"

Clarice smiled, seemingly unfazed by his bluntness. "Allow me to explain. I don't mean any harm by investigating you-I'm just doing this for my daughter's future. I'm sure you can understand that no responsible parent would want their daughter to marry a thug or hooligan."

Jack didn't say anything. He chose to continue listening. She pulled out a cigarette from her bag and lit it, taking a drag as she took a trip down memory lane. "Coincidentally, Bella and I are actually alumni. Her father and I both graduated from Alnewgo University, and we had the freedom to choose who we dated.

"We were very much in love, but my parents vehemently opposed when I decided to marry him. He came from a poor family, but I had faith in his talent and charm. I thought we could get everything we wanted as long as we remained united. So, he and I eloped without my parents' blessing."

She smiled wryly. "He worked hard and planned for our future. By most people's standards, he achieved a respectable level of success-getting promoted to assistant director by the age of 40. But in the end, we still got divorced."

Jack's heart sank. Now, he understood why he'd only met Phillip when meeting Bella's parents for the first time. It turned out Phillip and Clarice were divorced. It looked like he had to pass Clarice's test after passing Phillip's.

Clarice paused and looked at him pointedly. "Do you know why we got divorced?" "Why?" he asked.

Phillip was an outstanding man. Why did the divorce happen?

"Because I was disappointed in him!" she said frankly.