

Chapter 501

By cursing Gerald, Willie was also expressing whose side he was really on.

Gerald was so angry that his face turned pale immediately as he tried to suppress himself from shouting any profanities.

“What are you saying, dad? Gerald! Do come in and take a seat!” retorted Leila angrily.

“Why... Why have you allowed this scum into our house? He’s the kind of trash who keeps taking advantage of us while helping others in secret! Go home and help that Francesca of yours! After all, he’d rather do her a favor instead of us anyway! Not only has Francesca become the vice deputy director because of him, she’s also becoming the director as well! The Jung family hasn’t gained anything from him!” said Leia bitterly.

Leia said this aloud because she knew that the favor Gerald was giving Francesca was simply too outrageous for even him to handle. It would be impossible for him to give so many company businesses to her.

Since she couldn’t get his help, she didn’t need to give him any face anymore, right? Thus, she scolded him as harshly as she could.

“Humph! Our family has already helped you so much and your Uncle Jung was even trying to get you a job! However, you only donated seventy thousand dollars to him even though you still had ninety thousand in your bank account! You’ve already shown how capable you are! Just get lost and do whatever you want, far away from us!” shouted Leia as she signaled for him to leave immediately.

All the guests there simply looked at Gerald as though he were a joke.

Douglas stared coldly at Gerald before smiling. He then said, "That's right! Gerald still had ninety thousand dollars with him but he only gave you seventy thousand! That clearly went against what was agreed upon! How unreasonable!"

Willie's face was so red with anger that he began huffing before pointed toward Gerald. "You! Get out of the Jung family's house immediately!"

A second later, he had picked up a cup of scalding hot tea on the table before throwing it toward Gerald's direction.

The cup shattered at Gerald's feet, splashing hot tea against his trousers.

Gerald could feel the scalding liquid burn against his flesh.

"Dad! What are you doing?! Gerald's the one who had sent me home!" cried out Leila anxiously.

"You're not to associate yourself with this country bumpkin anymore in the future, Leila!" scolded Willie angrily.

Gerald himself glared daggers at Willie and Leila. If they were anyone else, Gerald would have already rushed forward and trampled them to death without even bothering about the consequences.

However, he clenched his fist and swallowed down his resentment before turning around immediately and leaving.

In his mind, he kept telling himself how grand their reaction would be when they one day found out who he actually was. He'd even tell them who his father's true identity was just to rub salt to their wounds! But today was not that day. It wasn't time yet.

Shortly after Gerald had left in a rage, Cindy arrived in a cab. With her, was a bag full of gifts.

After hearing her mother's side of the story, she figured that she and Aunt Leia must have been fighting each other in secret. Knowing that her Aunt Leia had suffered such a huge blow, she decided to personally come over to meet her.

As she entered, Leia smiled at her. "Cindy, you're here!"

Even though the adults were enemies, the children were still innocent. Leia didn't hold anything against Cindy and the same went for Lacy with Leila.

After a few steps into their house, Cindy noticed the broken teacup on the floor. She also saw that Leila was crying.

Clueless of what was happening, she simply nodded and placed the bag of gifts on a table before heading over to Leila's side to comfort her.

"It's going to be fine, Willie. This isn't worth losing your temper over. Unlike the issue with the collapsed buildings before this, you were dragged into your current position! You technically didn't do anything wrong this time to deserve this demotion!"

"I can see only one solution to this matter!" said Gary.

"What's on your mind, Gary?" replied Willie as he slowly regained his breath.

"You'll have to rely on the Dream Investment Group's relations this time. For this matter, you'd be better off looking for more powerful figures, such as those who always hang around Mr. Crawford. As long as they put in a good word for you in front of him, everything should be settled in no time!"

“But how could I possibly get in touch with those people? You’re talking about extremely competent and powerful individuals such as Mr. Lyle and Mr. Zeke,” said Willie.

“Even I can’t get in touch with them. Your best hope would be to look for Jaxon, Mr. Lyle’s driver. He may be the only one who can help you solve this matter! After all, he’s also Mr. Lyle’s confidant, so whatever he says to Mr. Lyle will prove to be extremely useful. Jaxon should be much easier to contact and if everything goes according to plan, soon enough, the issue will be no more!”

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“Also, I’ve heard that Jaxon is quite the zealous and enthusiastic man. Since you’re from Weston Merchants Holdings, he’ll definitely be a prime person to ask for help!”

“Well, do you have his contact information then?” asked Willie.

“Sadly, I don’t yet. I’m also trying to think of a way to contact him!” replied Gary as he shook his head.

Willie then anxiously began inquiring everyone in the room if they knew how to contact Jaxon.

“Uncle Jung! I actually know someone who could help you contact this Jaxon person!” said Cindy aloud.

“...Come again? Is what you said true, Cindy?”

Willie and Gary were equally surprised.

“It’s the truth! My mother’s been getting so much business because of Jaxon! And it was a friend of mine who had told Jaxon to help her!”

As she said that, Cindy also paid close attention to Leia's expressions.

"Then, could you please tell us who your friend is? Could you ask him out to have a meal with me so that he can lend me a hand?" asked Willie as he walked over to Cindy with a smile on his face.

"Hmm? Oh, you know him, Uncle Jung! If you ask him for help, he'll definitely lend a hand!" said Cindy though she was honestly a little doubtful about her own claim.

"What?"

Willie was shocked. Did he know someone that powerful?

"It's Gerald. Jaxon shares a good relationship with him. What more, all it took was a single nod from Gerald for Jaxon to immediately start helping my mother!"

"...What did you say his name was? Gerald?"

Both Willie and Leia were startled. This was especially so for Willie since he hadn't expected Gerald to have such a strong network.

Leia herself had not expected that Gerald had helped Francesca by directly introducing her to Jaxon and Zack.

Gary and Douglas were no less dumbfounded.

"...Cindy, are you sure of what you're saying? Gerald and Jaxon know each other?" asked Leila who was also taken aback.

“A hundred percent certain! What more, they’re not just ordinary acquaintances. Jaxon was actually very polite and respectful toward Gerald!”

Willie’s face turned pale again, this time possibly even paler than before.

“Willie! What should we do? You’ve just made Gerald extremely angry and chased him away!” cried out Leia who looked extremely distressed.

“Humph! We need to call him back!” grunted Willie unhappily.

“Who’s calling him? I was so nasty and harsh toward him earlier!” replied Leia, ashamed of herself.

“Leila, could you...?” asked her mother.

Leila simply nodded in response.

After calling for a short while, she simply shook her head. “He’s not answering any of my calls!”

“Willie, Jaxon’s one of Zack’s favorite men! If you can’t get his help, then you’re truly fighting in a losing battle!” said one of the guests there.

Willie clenched his teeth. He had never expected there to be a day where he would have to beg for Gerald’s help. What more, it was the day that he chased Gerald away!

His embarrassment at that moment was unsurpassable.

“Dad, I know where he’s been living. Why don’t we go look for him instead? If you apologize to him face to face, there’s a chance that he may still forgive you!” said Leila.

“Leila, you want me to apologize to that kind of person?” said Willie as he stared at his daughter.

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Though he was reluctant, Willie couldn’t go against everyone’s persuasion. After all, who else could help him? He had no choice but to rely on Gerald’s mercy this time.

He just had to bite the bullet and he soon found himself headed for the hotel that Gerald had been staying in.

A few other people joined him. However, even after waiting for quite a long time in the hotel’s lobby, there was still no sign of Gerald anywhere.

When his daughter tried to call him again, his phone line was still busy.

Gerald wasn’t doing this on purpose though. He was still talking to his father through the phone after all.

“Dad, I have some news about the pendant. It originated from the southwest and has quite a long history of its own. This kind of jade is extremely valuable and precious. This Xara you’re looking for. She must be a young lady from a rich family, correct?” asked Gerald as he sipped his coffee. He was sitting in a quiet café now.

His father was the one who had initiated the call, since he wanted to know about the jade pendant’s progress.

“That’s right! She is indeed, a young lady from a rich family!” replied his father before laughing.

“But dad, didn’t you say that Xara’s family was from the southeast area? Could she actually be in the southwest instead?” asked Gerald, slightly doubtful.

“Did I? I’m honestly unsure about where Xara’s family is from. I don’t even remember what her last name is! So please, son. You need to investigate and get to the bottom of this as soon as possible. Let me know what the results are as soon as they’re available!” replied his father with a smile.

Hearing that, Gerald wondered whether he should tell his father about Queta. After all, he was pretty certain that she was Xara’s daughter.

However, he refrained from doing so. Even if his father knew about her, it wouldn’t really help with the situation at all.

Hence, Gerald decided to tell his father about her only when he had found more clues in the future.

“Speaking of which, Gerald, it’ll be your birthday soon, right? We haven’t really celebrated together as a family since you were in high school. Since this will be your first birthday after your life of poverty ended, I thought that we could reunite so that we can celebrate your birthday together again after so long!” said his father, his tone slightly apologetic.

Gerald simply laughed. “That’s alright dad, I’m in Serene County now. I’ve been busy settling a few things but after I’m done, I’ll go back to our old house for a few days. Mr. and Mrs. Winter will be there so you don’t have to worry about me being lonely on my birthday!”

“Well, alright then. However, I mentioned the end of your poverty education for a reason. If you’re celebrating it without us, you have to make sure you enjoy a better and livelier birthday! That doesn’t mean you should go overboard like your sister though. Remember that year when she bought an entire island in the Pacific Ocean for her birthday? As if that wasn’t high profile enough, she went ahead and invited celebrities from all over the world to attend it! What I’m saying is make sure you don’t go too high profile, but also make sure your birthday celebration isn’t a shabby one!” instructed his father.

“I got it dad, you don’t have to worry about me!” said Gerald while shaking his head with a smile.

After talking a little while more about some recent business affairs, both of them hung up.

Checking his text messages, he realized that Leila had called him several times. Gerald didn’t plan to call her back, however.

Willie’s matters were his own to deal with. Gerald wanted no part of their family in his life anymore. Today had been the last straw!

If it hadn’t been for their extreme rudeness earlier, Gerald would even have invited them to his planned birthday banquet, just to give them some face.

At that moment, a middle-aged man dressed in a suit entered the café. He held on to an envelope and he walked respectfully toward Gerald.

“Good day, Mr. Crawford. This is the entry recommendation letter that you asked for. I’ve already written it for you. After this, you can use this letter to join the Dream Investment Group directly!”

The man didn’t even dare to sit down, and simply stood beside Gerald as he spoke.

“Thanks for all the trouble. Needless to say, nobody should know about this matter,” said Gerald as he took a sip of coffee.

“Understood!”

Gerald had ordered a top-level executive to help him with the entry recommendation letter.

After his last conversation with Xeno, Gerald had learned that the internal situation in the investment group was quite chaotic.

Therefore, Gerald had planned to join and become part of the investment group to try and understand everything that was going on inside.

Gerald knew that if he were to investigate under the name of Mr. Crawford, he wouldn't be able to find out about anything at all. It'd be extremely difficult in fact.

Since Zack was already busy running between Mayberry City and Serene County while also looking into the jade pendant for Gerald, Gerald felt too embarrassed to trouble him anymore.

By joining the company himself, Gerald would also be able to see first-hand whether the situation was as bad as Xeno had described to him.

Chapter 504

Most of the original staff from Mayberry Commercial Group had stayed back to work on the project developing Yorknorth Mountain as they followed the principles of investing in Serene County.

Therefore, apart from a few other executives who were also originally from the Mayberry Commercial Group, the rest of the executives in the Dream Investment Group were recruited through the company's annexation and new recruitment.

However, the company ignored nepotism, which was probably the reason why there were so many shady dealings.

Gerald understood this, but it could wait. For now, lunch was more important.

He enjoyed a simple lunch before heading back to his room where he changed into a suit and a pair of leather boots.

He brought along a copy of his interview documents and the letter of recommendation before heading toward the Dream Investment Group to attend his interview.

“Hello, beautiful. Is the twenty-sixth floor the place I should be headed to if I’m attending an interview for the investment department?” asked Gerald to a young girl who had just exited the elevator with a pile of documents in hand.

“Um, yeah! You’re here for an interview, right? The twenty-sixth floor is correct!”

She seemed to be around the same age as Gerald. She had that fresh university graduate look to her.

“Thank you!” said Gerald with a smile.

“You’re very welcome- Ahh!”

As she was too focused on responding to Gerald, she accidentally dropped all her documents onto the ground.

Gerald immediately squatted down to help her pick the documents up.

“Did you apply for an internship here immediately after graduating too?” she asked with a smile as Gerald helped her pick up the documents.

“Bingo! How long have you been working here?” asked Gerald in return.

“Oh, I’ve just started working a few days ago so I don’t know much yet. Hehe... However, I do know that I’m also from the investment department! I wish you good luck with your interview later! Since we’ll most probably be colleagues in the future, I’ll go ahead and introduce myself first! My name’s Fay!” she said as she smiled again.

“Pleasure to meet you, Fay! Gerald!”

“Likewise, Gerald! Also, your elevator’s here! Good luck again for your interview!” said Fay as she made a victory pose for Gerald to see.

Gerald simply nodded with a smile before stepping into the elevator.

The young girl was quite pretty and her responses were refreshing and pleasant. Gerald thought of her as a decent, yet interesting person.

As the elevator stopped on the fifth floor, another beauty stepped in. She wore a black uniform and looked about the same age as Gerald too.

Since Gerald was here for an interview, he naturally had to greet everyone that he met. He smiled while nodding toward her.

However, she simply glanced coldly at him without even nodding back. She continued playing with her phone for a while before noticing the floor that Gerald was headed to.

She looked at him before asking casually, “New to the investment department?”

“No! I’m here for an interview!” said Gerald as he smiled.

“Hehe... So you haven’t even gotten the job yet. You seem quite confident, but I’m honestly unsure if you’ll actually make the cut!” replied the girl as she looked at Gerald.

“Hmm? You seem sure... Why is that?” asked Gerald, slightly puzzled by her response.

“You’ll understand once you arrive upstairs. You’re honestly quite unlucky that the investment department is only looking to hire one man and woman this time!”

Gerald thought about it for a while. He was well dressed today and he knew that he had enough confidence and the proper temperament to be hired. Why would he be out of luck?

Soon enough, they arrived at the twenty-sixty floor.

The moment Gerald arrived at the interview hall, he finally understood what she had meant.

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At least forty handsome men and beautiful women were already there, waiting to be interviewed.

As he walked toward the interview hall, he passed by an office area.

More women were working there and every time they saw a handsome man step out of the elevator, they would gasp loudly and act as though they had never seen a man in their entire lives.

Gerald could tell that there was a noticeably softer gasp when he stepped out of the elevator compared to the man who stepped out next. Did he really lack that much charm?

He couldn’t help but curse slightly in his mind.

“Oh gosh, here comes the thirty-eighth person! They’re only hiring two people today so why did so many of us come for the interview?!”

The voice came from one of the girls who were counting the number of people they had to compete against. It was quite depressing, honestly.

“Hey, check out that guy. He came alone! Does he really think he’ll be able to get the job based on his criteria alone?”

“I know right? Aside from his slightly handsome appearance, there’s nothing much else that’s attractive about him! I don’t even think he can be remotely compared to the handsome guy that we saw just a while ago!”

“Exactly! It’d be better for him to just leave now so that he won’t waste any more of our time!”

These were what the male interviewees waiting there said when they saw Gerald.

They were honestly feeling the pressure too. Most of them had come in groups and because of all the competition, some of them couldn’t help but sneer unceremoniously to keep themselves calm.

Gerald simply took in a deep breath as he listened to their insults and ridiculing.

However, he didn’t react at all. After all, he knew what his purpose here today was.

At that moment, the elevator door opened and a tall girl stepped out. She looked to be at least a hundred and seventy centimeters tall.

She had long, burgundy-colored hair, and her figure was beautiful. Even her skin was extremely fair.

She gave off an extremely good image and temperament as well! What a goddess!

Similar to the others, she walked toward the interview hall with a pile of documents in hand.

When she came closer, most of the girls there immediately went silent. Most of the boys, on the other hand, stared at her with hearts in their eyes.

Even Gerald couldn't avoid looking at her. She was just that beautiful. If he were to be completely honest, her beauty was on par with Giya's.

"Well hello there, beautiful, here for the interview? It's such a great coincidence that we were able to meet! If it's not too inconvenient for you, could you add me to your WeChat? You know, my brother-in-law works in this company as the assistant recruitment manager!" said one of the more handsome interviewees as he walked toward her.

"Thanks, but there's no need for that," said the girl as she shook her head, blushing embarrassedly.

"There's no need to be afraid, you know? Since you have such a good temperament, I believe that you'll definitely fit the recruitment criteria to a tee! They're only hiring a male and a female this time around, so I'm more than certain that it'll be the two of us who will get hired in the end. So why not just add me on WeChat now so that we can get to know each other faster?" replied the boy as he continued to pester her.

Gerald could sense how confident the boy was when he said that. He couldn't help but wonder if his recommendation letter today was going to be useless.

The interviewee was obviously not the casual kind of girl, but since the boy kept pestering her in front of everyone, she had no choice but to add him on WeChat. This made all the other boys feel very jealous.

“Alright, settle down everyone. We’ll now be reading your names off a name list! If you’re present, please reply by saying, ‘here’! After that, you may enter the interview room. First up, Jared Crockford!”

At that moment, the handsome interviewee from before and Gerald shouted ‘here!’ at the same time.

The atmosphere became quite awkward at that moment as both Gerald and the boy looked at each other.

“What’s this? Two people sharing the same name? What’s going on here?”

The female assistant then walked toward Gerald. It was clear, from her actions, that Jared Crockford knew every one of the recruitment assistants. After all, she walked past him and straight to Gerald. As she looked at Gerald’s documents, she raised a brow.

“Isn’t your name Gerald Crawford? Are you trying to make a fool of yourself? Why did you answer when it wasn’t even your name I called out?”

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“Sorry, I misheard you!” said Gerald as he smiled awkwardly.

“Hah! Could it be that he thought that she was calling for Mr. Crawford?” said one of the interviewees as he cackled.

“If we were any more gullible, we would’ve thought that he was the actual Mr. Crawford of Mayberry!”

Everyone there then burst into laughter. Even the beautiful girl from before was smiling. Gerald remained silent, knowing that he had embarrassed himself.

Jared then stood up and entered for his interview. A few moments later, he stepped out with a smug smile on his face.

“Hey Jared, what did they ask during the interview? Care to spare us some tips?”

Several people immediately gathered around him as soon as he stepped out.

“Oh, nothing special, honestly. All I did was talk casually, and I even managed to make them laugh! They’ve even asked me when I’d be available for work! It really wasn’t anything challenging!” said Jared, his hands in his pocket.

The other males stared at Jared in jealousy. He was definitely getting the sole position reserved for the males.

One by one, they each took their turns to get interviewed.

Gerald included his referral letter in the document that he had brought. After being asked a few questions, he was dismissed as well. All that was left to do, was wait for the results to be released.

Some of them left immediately after the interview. Jared himself was busy trying to initiate a conversation with the same girl from before.

“The results are out!” exclaimed the female assistant from before as she held on to two application forms in her hand.

“Who got in?”

Several murmurs of guesses echoed in the room.

“Congratulations to Miss Bianca Snow!”

Without a doubt, Bianca was definitely the ethereal beauty in the room.

“And for the male role, congratulations to Mr. Gerald Crawford!” added the assistant.

“See, I told you!” said Jared as he smiled sweetly toward Bianca. It took him a moment to realize it, but when he did, his expression darkened immediately.

“Wait, why wasn’t I chosen?” asked Jared, stunned.

Everyone else in the room was shocked as well. They all turned to look at Gerald.

Gerald was as cool as a cucumber. He had anticipated that either he or Jared was going to be picked, and it turned out that Gerald won. He exhaled lightly while apologizing to everyone in his mind. He took his application form and, together with Bianca, entered the office to sign up for their positions.

“Nice to meet you, Gerald. Since we’ll be working together from now on, let’s get to know each other better. Where do you live?” asked Bianca, now that it was just the two of them in the office.

“Oh, I live in Touin. It’s in Serene County,” replied Gerald.

“Oh? What a coincidence! I live in Serene County as well! Specifically, Fuenti which is pretty near to Touin!” said Bianca with a smile.

The girl seemed to be quite an outgoing person despite her ethereal beauty. She was also easy to talk to.

“Fuenti, huh. That place is pretty famous for its hot springs, right? I’d like to go there one day myself!” replied Gerald as he smiled back.

“I’ll be your tour guide when that day comes!”

The two had easily become good friends.

“Are the newcomers in here?”

Both of them could hear a female voice coming from outside the office. She seemed to be talking to the HR assistant.

“They are, Manager Ava,” replied the assistant.

“Take me to them,” ordered the manager.

Gerald couldn’t help but feel as though he had heard the manager’s voice somewhere before. Though the voice seemed bright and young, it still felt oddly familiar.

Could it really be her outside this very office?

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When the door swung open, Gerald could finally get a good look at the manager.

She was walking behind the assistant when Gerald exclaimed, “Ava Anderson? Is that really you?”

Ava Anderson was Gerald's classmate during junior high. She was the principal's daughter and also one of the top students alongside Gerald and Xenon. All three of them had even participated in numerous competitions together.

Though they were pretty close to each other back then, they no longer shared the same class when they entered senior high.

The first few days upon entering senior high, Ava would still invite Gerald out for lunch since neither of them were familiar with their new classmates. After school, she would catch up with Gerald and they would talk about how their day had gone.

After those few days, however, Ava started having lunch with her dorm mates instead. This led to them talking less and less and as time passed, they would eventually only get to meet each other once a week. Their distance further increased in the following semester, and they would just give a simple greeting whenever they crossed paths.

By the last year of high school, both of them had reverted back to being complete strangers.

Since Ava went to a university in Yankton and Gerald went to Mayberry, it had been approximately three years since they had last crossed paths.

Ava seemed to be doing quite well on her own. She was able to get the position of manager at such a young age, after all.

"What brings you here, Gerald?" asked Ava, visibly surprised.

It was an understandable response. After all, it had been so long since they had last met. Ava knew all too well that their friendship had deteriorated since their high school days and she felt a sudden wave of awkwardness run through her veins.

“Oh, I’ve just applied for a position. I’ll be working here from now on!” replied Gerald with a smile.

“Oh really now?” She smiled as she skimmed through both of their resumes.

“Look at you Avie, you’re so cool now! You’re a manager!” said Gerald as he stared at her tag.

“Thanks, but do refrain from calling me Avie from now on... You can call me Miss Anderson,” responded Ava slightly coldly.

“Understood!” Gerald said as he nodded.

“Assistant Valen!” said Ava as she closed the files. “I know we’re short by two employees since this is, after all, a new team. However, we prefer quality over quantity so I’ll only pick one of you to help out in the team.”

At that moment, Bianca started to panic. Gerald and Ava knew each other so he was definitely getting chosen!

Contrary to how she imagined it, however, Ava glanced coldly at Gerald before turning to look at Bianca. “Miss Bianca Snow, we require another female here, so welcome to the team!”

“As for you, Gerald...” said Ava as she scanned him from head to toe. “I know that the logistics team is still hiring, so you should help them out. You’d probably need to run around each department and do errands for them!”

Gerald went silent. He didn’t know what else to say.

The assistant then interrupted, “But Manager Ava, Gerald graduated from Mayberry University...”

“I’m aware, but it just can’t be helped. Our current situation only has this position to offer. What do you say, Gerald? If you accept, I’ll send you over to logistics first. If you keep up the good work, I’ll bring this up to the directors and have you join our team later one,” said Ava with a fake smile.

In all honesty, Ava didn’t care for him at all. Even from her high school days, she had come to realize that it was embarrassing to hang out with Gerald.

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Gerald was from a rather poor family after all. Like many others, Ava was slowly swallowed by her own pride the older she got. And just like the others, her pride reached its peak during her university years.

“Sure thing!” said Gerald as he nodded. He didn’t really mind, though he was slightly taken aback at how coldly Ava had just treated him.

Immediately after completing the application process, Gerald and Bianca started working at their assigned positions.

Gerald sat in a small corner in the office and started working immediately. His job was to manage and sort files. He was rather glad since it would help his investigation greatly.

After a while, Gerald decided to head to the gents. After he was done, he was about to leave when he heard faint whispering coming from the ladies.

“Come by the office to get an interview done. You’ll have to be quick though. I’ve saved a position for you, so you owe me one!” echoed the barely audible voice across the stalls.

“What? No more positions? Well, you’re right but something unexpected happened. Our director’s brother in law was supposed to be accepted, but somehow, my junior high classmate was the one who got the job!”

“Heh, don’t worry about it. I already know about his background so any job will do for him. I sent him to the logistics team and that idiot gladly accepted my offer! So listen here, you still have a chance. Don’t let this opportunity go to waste!”

All the color drained from Gerald’s face. That was definitely Ava.

It seemed that he had been set up. Gerald could recall how surprised the assistant had been a while ago. So Ava was bringing her own people into the company too.

‘This newly formed investment group seems to just be for show’ Gerald thought to himself. He now realized how much information he could gather just by being an undercover spy in the company.

Ava hadn’t spared him any mercy this time, so Gerald would be sure to return the favor when the time came. He made a mental note of the incident before returning to work.

As was expected, a full day of work in the office was definitely boring. Thankfully, it didn’t take too long before Gerald was able to get off work.

However, Gerald couldn’t leave just yet. Bianca had invited Gerald to dinner after work via text message. Gerald could sense that this was probably Bianca feeling bad since he wasn’t able to join the team.

Since she was being considerate of his feelings, he accepted her invitation. It was just a simple dinner after all.

Since the team was still having their meeting, Gerald decided to wait for her at the lobby entrance.

After waiting for about ten minutes, Gerald saw Bianca exiting the lobby. However, she wasn't alone. Ava followed closely behind her.

"Oh, Gerald! I'm sorry! I forgot to inform you that I can't make it for dinner tonight! Manager Ava's told me that she has someone she wants to introduce me to over dinner!" said Bianca as she smiled apologetically.

"No worries, have fun!" replied Gerald as he smiled rather sadly.

Ava on the other hand, simply looked at him for a brief moment, acknowledging his presence before getting into her car with Bianca.

As she drove off with her, Gerald's phone began to ring. It was a call from Zack Lyle.

Chapter 509

"Mr. Crawford, I'd just like to ask. You've mentioned that you'd like to provide dorms for our employees, right? I know you said you'd like to do this yourself, but I'd like to provide my assistance if you're busy. I just came back to Serene County!" Zack said.

"Don't worry about it. I already have an area in mind. I'll have you do the rest when I've bought it. I think you should focus on the jade incident." Gerald replied reassuringly.

"Okay then, Mr. Crawford. Oh, but one more thing, it's rather personal, hehe. Your birthday is coming up. We've always been organizing a big party for you following our family tradition. So, where would you like it to be held?"

"I'd rather celebrate my birthday back where I used to live. I don't think a party would be necessary. Let's all just have a nice dinner together." Gerald said as he mustered up a fake smile.

Since young, Gerald was used to not celebrating his birthday. Back then, all he did was have a nice meal on his own or with the Winters. Besides, his immediate family no longer lived with him since high school. Even if he wanted to celebrate his birthday, there was no one here to do so with him.

“Sure, anything you say, Mr. Crawford!” Zack exclaimed. Gerald then hung up right after.

Speaking of buying property for the employees’ dorms, Gerald already had an area in mind. It was where he bought the property the last time. It was pretty near the company, and the environment was decent as well. Since his dinner was ruined, Gerald then walked to the real estate center to deal with this project at hand.

In front of the real estate center, two cars pulled up at the entrance, and a group of eight exited their cars one by one.

“Hello there, are you here to find a property? I can show you around if you’d like!” A real estate agent immediately greeted them.

“These two would like to buy a house for their wedding. We’re just here to accompany them!” One of the girls exclaimed.

“Say, Morgana, your boyfriend already has a big enough house. Wouldn’t it be nice to live with his family too? Isn’t it kind of irrational to buy a new house? And this is the most expensive one in the city!” Another girl asked.

It seemed that the ones buying a new property were Morgana Lopez and her boyfriend.

“I think it’s way better to move out, it’s really inconvenient to live with parents! With a new house, you two can spend some alone time together!” Yet another girl exclaimed.

“That’s exactly what we’re thinking. We’d like to be able to spend some alone time together. By the way, Lilian, didn’t you say you found yourself a wonderful boyfriend? Why didn’t he come with us today?” Morgana asked.

Since they were all friends since high school, the group wanted to meet up again after all these years. However, they had to wait for Morgana to get off work from the hospital and choose a new house. Hence, all of them came with her to the center.

“My boyfriend... won’t be coming today!” Lilian responded awkwardly. Lilian knew that she didn’t actually have a boyfriend. Even if she did, that was just Gerald acting as her boyfriend. It wasn’t real anyway.

“What about you, Sharon? Didn’t you say your boyfriend was joining us?” Morgana then turned to Sharon and asked.

“He’ll be here in a bit!” Sharon glanced at Lilian’s direction, then turned back to Morgana.

Everyone there was aware of rumors of what happened between Sharon and Lilian. Hence, they all try to keep their thoughts to themselves on this sensitive topic.

“Let’s just go take a look at the properties, then we can go have some fun after choosing one!” Howard suggested.

All of them stepped into the center and started choosing from their various options. But the mood seemed a bit somber; hence they needed a change of topic to lighten up the mood.

Suddenly, Sharon broke the silence, “Oh yeah, why aren’t Xella and Waylon joining us today? Back then, Waylon would always join gatherings like this!”

“Oh, let’s just not mention them. Waylon seems to be occupied with family matters. And Xella, I gave her a rang, and she said she wasn’t feeling well, so she’s not coming too.”

“Ah, then I guess we’ll see them next time. By the way, Morgana, you’ve never told us your secret; how are you progressing so much? You switched industries almost too quickly!” Sharon asked. Upon hearing this question, Howard’s expression turned awkward.

Morgana coughed, visibly awkward as well, “It’s because of the help of Gerald. And well, Howard helped me out a lot too!”

“Gerald?” Upon hearing his name, both Sharon and Lilian were startled. In reality, Sharon had been asking them about every single classmate, as if she was studying abroad and wanted to catch up with everyone, although she had only been in Mayberry this entire time.

Both of the girls were dying to ask if Gerald was joining them, but they ended up asking about every other classmate but him. They couldn’t help it as Gerald was a touchy topic for both of them.

“Oh yeah, you guys may not know this, but Gerald has been doing really well! He’s a completely different person now!” Morgana exclaimed gratefully.

Lilian and Sharon went silent. How could they not know he’s a different man now?

“Hmph, he just has a few connections around the area, big deal!” Howard huffed. Now that Gerald took the spotlight away from him, Howard’s reputation in the class was no longer at the top. During high school, he and Waylon were both the talk of the class. But it seems like. Lately, all they’ve been talking about was Gerald.

Suddenly, one of the girls said in a surprised tone, “Guys, look! Isn’t that Gerald? Why is he here?”

“Huh?” Everyone turned to the direction she was pointing towards, and Gerald’s silhouette fell into their field of vision.

“It really is him!” Lilian exclaimed. She had been texting him since she came back, but he never responded to any of her texts. She settled disappointedly that Gerald had lost all feelings towards her. His sudden appearance filled her with delight and relief.

Sharon, on the other hand, was just as excited. That excitement, however, didn’t last long and was followed by slight disappointment. Although Gerald was doing quite well now, he had also been giving her the cold shoulder.

Basically, both of them were drowned in mixed emotions at this very moment.

Morgana seemed to have noticed it. “Lilian, Sharon, did anything happen between you two and Gerald back in Mayberry?”

“No, not really. Even if there was, I’d say that a certain someone is getting the cold shoulder from Gerald, though he was the nicest to her back then!” scoffed Lilian.

“It was just that one time that he picked you up, big deal! Who told you that he’s giving me the cold shoulder?” Sharon pouted.

They seemed to be on the verge of initiating a fight. One of the girls then came up with an idea and suggested, “Why don’t we just sit over there and see who Gerald greets first when he sees us?”

“Sure, it would be a surprise for him too. As soon as he looks over, he’d realize we’re all here. That would surely give him a shock!” chuckled Morgana.

Howard was submerged in jealousy, but everyone had sat on the sofa at the side, so he had to follow them as well.

Just at that very moment, Gerald slowly made his way to the real estate center...

Chapter 511

Gerald was in a great rush. He knew that this should've been over and done with two days ago.

However, due to that hiccup with Xeno, this dorm project was delayed.

Since some of the areas were chosen explicitly by Gerald, he decided to pay a personal visit to the real estate center.

Gerald entered the center and immediately approached the front counter.

The moment the real estate agent noticed Gerald, her expression immediately darkened. She was filled with awkwardness and dejection.

She had thought that Gerald was just another poor idiot without enough money to afford a property. Hence, when he had come by under the company of Leila Jung, she insisted that Gerald take up a loan.

Her attitude towards Gerald was cold as well; she thought he wasn't worth the effort since he didn't seem to be the wealthy type.

Then the very next day, he decided not to take up a loan. Instead, he wanted to buy the property with full payment. This would mean that the agent would have earned the lowest possible commission fees.

She immediately put off her professional attitude and scowled at Gerald, “Are you an idiot? I said you should take up a loan! Are you stupid, or are you just plain dumb? Do you really think you’re all that with just this bit of money?”

Those were indeed very harsh words.

Gerald, however, would have none of it, throwing a bag of cash to her feet.

“Quit wasting my time and get on with it!”

As his voice echoed through the lobby, everyone was stunned in place. All of them shot dirty looks at the real estate agent, and she was humiliated thoroughly this time around.

Seeing the very man who humiliated her in public, mixed emotions flooded the agent.

“I’d like to ask. Oh, just before that, I’d like to ask you another thing. Why wouldn’t you reply to any of my texts? You wouldn’t even answer my calls! What kind of customer service is this? Am I no longer your customer after I’ve bought the property?”

Gerald was slightly annoyed as she had been actively ignoring him for the past two days.

“Hmph, what do you want this time? Did you change your mind and would like to take up a loan now? Oops, too bad, that’s not possible. Also, if you’d like to furnish the property, you’d have to wait till the grant deed is registered. Now that I’m done answering your questions, do you still need anything else? If not, I have other customers to tend to. I’m a very busy woman, after all.” Agent Luna rolled her eyes at Gerald.

Other agents who were present giggled softly in the back. They seemed to be enjoying the show.

Everyone in the lobby knew that Luna Maddison was the feistiest agent out of all of them.

Of course, she would want revenge after being humiliated. With swift movements, Luna gathered all her documents and went to the other side of the counter to continue her work.

“Don’t you dare give me an attitude! I am a customer!” Gerald scowled.

“Hah, what attitude? What kind of attitude would you like me to have? All you did is buy a house, get over it! I wasn’t even able to earn much commission from you. Three hundred dollars of commission? Oh please. If you want it back that much, I literally don’t give a damn! Have it and never come back! Hmph!” Luna spat and turned away.

If he were to apply for a mortgage, she would’ve been able to earn much more than merely three hundred dollars. She would’ve even made a bonus after successfully selling the property. Without this, Luna’s salary might even be deducted.

“Where is your manager? Are you all just a bunch of animals without supervision?” Gerald didn’t expect that Luna would be giving him such a nasty attitude this time around.

The employees at the front counter just kept their heads low, ignoring Gerald as well. It was clear as day that he was being looked down on.

Suddenly, a middle-aged woman walked into the lobby, “Hey Luna, what is the meaning of this? You were the employee with the most amount of sales last year. How are you publicly arguing with others now!”

Chapter 512

All of the employees at the front counter instantly stood up at attention and greeted her politely.

“Ah, Mrs. Millers, welcome!”

“Wow, Mrs. Millers, still as beautiful as always!” everyone chimed.

Luna smiled brightly, saying, “Mrs. Millers, it was just this man over here, causing a nuisance. If my cousin hadn’t asked me to help him, I wouldn’t have even talked to him in the first place. So Mr. Millers, how many properties would you like to buy this time?” She turned to her husband and asked.

Mr. Millers, an interior designer, was the type to buy many properties and give them a whole new look.

These properties would then be rented out. Hence, he was one of the biggest customers of the company.

“I’d just like to buy just one this time, but I need it done fast!” Mr. Millers said as he hugged his wife by the waist.

The couple then shot Gerald a dirty look; it would seem that they have developed a sense of superiority. Everyone was flocking towards them but ignoring Gerald after all.

In the VIP area, all of Gerald’s old classmates had witnessed the whole incident. Lilian wanted to go up to him, but it would seem that Gerald had gotten himself into an argument with the agent.

After hesitating briefly, Lilian decided to stay put. Moreover, it was way too awkward to approach him, now that he has been humiliated. If anyone were to approach him directly, his self-esteem would probably be shattered.

Luna, still seemingly angered, handed Mr. Millers a few documents.

She then turned to a petite girl behind her and handed her the remaining documents in her hands. “Hey, Nicki! You’re going to have to handle this customer from now on. All you need to do is change my name to yours! Oh, and I’ll transfer the three hundred dollars of commission to you later through Paypal. He’s yours to deal with now. Bloody hell.”

After making sure that Nicki had made the correct changes, she glared at Gerald then turned to Mr. Millers with a cheery smile plastered on her face.

On the other hand, a soft voice spoke out, “Mr. Crawford, I’ll be working with you now. If you have any questions, you... erm... feel free to ask!” Nicki seemed to be very timid, and she was very young for an agent; she was at most 21 years old.

She was most likely new to the job. However, she seemed to be passionate about her job despite the hint of nervousness in her eyes.

Gerald glanced at Luna coldly, then smiled softly to Nicki, “Okay then, can you show me the layout of these two buildings? B1 and B2, please.”

“Okay, sir, I’ll give you a brief introduction!” Nicki nodded.

“Hmph, Nicki, he already bought a house. He’s probably just trying to waste your time. Why do you even bother? Tell him to leave if he doesn’t have any other business here, and get a life!” Luna scoffed upon hearing their conversation.

“Oh Luna dear, why bother conversing with him? Hah, he probably doesn’t even own more than three properties. That’s why he keeps wanting to look at different properties! It’s wishful thinking, I tell you!” Mr. Millers snickered.

“Honey, you don’t say the prices for properties in our city have inflated so much. Being able to buy a property is probably the greatest achievement for them in this economy!” Mrs. Millers added sarcastically.

Despite the ridicule, Nicki still dug out the layout for B1 and B2 and handed them to Gerald. Both of these buildings were new projects. Hence they weren’t for sale just yet.

Nicki then explained to Gerald thoroughly and patiently. Gerald nodded, closed the documents in his hands, and said, “Okay, I’ve decided to buy both of these buildings, bring me the legal documents!”

Chapter 513

“What?!”

Everyone in the lobby, including Luna, was stunned.

What followed after was a room full of laughter. Especially Luna and the Millers, they laughed so hard that tears were welling up in their eyes.

“Hahaha, holy f*ck my dude, you can’t just go around bluffing like that!” Mr. Millers laughed, holding his abdomen.

“Is he insane?”

“Yeah, two whole buildings! I thought I f*cking misheard him, hahaha!”

“Yo... do we need to call for security?”

Even the employees at the front counter seemed to be running out of breath from all the laughing.

Suddenly, the manager walked into the lobby with a stern expression.

“What happened? Where is everyone’s sense of professionalism? Just look at all of you! Ridiculous!”

Luna bit her lip to keep her composure. “No... No sir, this man over here, Gerald Crawford, he... he said he wanted two of our buildings! Hahaha!” Tears streamed down her bright red cheeks.

The manager seemed to be more professional than these agents. He took a deep breath and stared at Gerald for a brief moment before approaching him with a bland expression.

“Mr. Crawford was it...? Pfft!” Although he hadn’t said much, the manager could not help but let out a loud chuckle too.

What Gerald just said was just way too hilarious. Their principle was to always remain professional front no matter how ridiculous their customers are unless they couldn’t hold in their laughter any longer.

“You’re laughing?” Gerald said coldly as he brushed the tip of his nose. These people were getting on his nerves, but he knew just how to shut them up.

“Tell me, how much for one building, Nicki? Are you done calculating yet?” Gerald asked with a cold expression.

“Oh, I know! One building has around a hundred units, and the total for one is a million dollars. After our promotion, it will be two million for two buildings, sir!”

Nicki replied professionally. She was the only one not laughing in the room.

Gerald then thought to himself, half of these units can be used for the employees' dorms while the other half can be rented out. This would work out just perfectly.

"Right then, I'll have someone wire the money over now. Bring me the documents!" Gerald said as he took out his phone.

He then made a phone call and said, "Send two million over to that real estate center I've been to, in cash!"

Gerald leaned on the front counter after hanging up, still observing the group of people laughing hysterically. He wondered if they'd continue laughing at him later on.

"Sir, please calm down. You can't simply just sign these documents!" The manager was able to catch his breath and advised. Gerald ignored him and looked away.

Twenty minutes later, a big truck had parked itself in front of the real estate center, and not even security could stop it.

"Huh? What's happening?" Everyone was stunned and flooded the lobby entrance out of curiosity. Even the manager tried squeezing through the crowd, he too was curious as to what was happening.

Just at that very moment, Gerald's phone rang. It was a call from his underlings.

"Mr. Crawford, we have arrived with the money, all in cash as you requested. Do we send someone to bring it in, or do we request someone on their side to do so?" The underling asked.

He knew that something was up when he heard Gerald speak in such an annoyed tone during the phone call. Hence, he decided to cause a scene on purpose.

“To hell with that!” Gerald said as he signed the documents. He then threw his pen to the ground, “Dump it all at the front entrance!”

“Yes, sir!” As soon as he hung up, the truck’s trunk opened up, and within it, a mountain of cash.

The compartment then slowly raised up, and stacks of cash tumbled out of the truck, right onto the pavement in front of the lobby entrance.

“Jesus Christ!!”

The manager fell to the ground in shock. The documents in Luna’s arms slipped to the ground as her arms weakened. She stood there, her face drained off all color.

Chapter 514

Everyone in the lobby fell silent. Their eyes widened in disbelief as they tried to take in the scene right in front of him.

Who even is this man? This was way too much!

Then, a man in a suit carefully made his way through the pile of money and entered the lobby.

He then approached Gerald and whispered into his ear, “I have done as you asked, Mr. Crawford.”

“Ah yes, good job. I’ll leave the rest to you guys. I had already chosen the buildings I wanted. Miss Nicki here will tell you what else we’d need.” Gerald said as he patted Nicki on her shoulder.

On the other hand, Nicki gulped and dared not to say a word. If she could have these two buildings signed, the commission fee would be out of this world!

Nicki felt as if she had ascended to heaven and found paradise.

Luna, still stunned, was now drowning in fear and regret. She didn't expect him to actually buy it. If it wasn't for her attitude, she could've been the one earning such a large amount of commission fees.

She didn't even have to work for the rest of her life after this! But unfortunately, it was just twenty minutes ago where she had already assigned Nicki to Gerald...

Luna's face, which was blushing red from laughter earlier drained of all its color, was now pale with fear.

The employees who ignored Gerald were too shocked to their core. As for the Millers, they stood frozen with their mouths wide open, staring blankly at the piles of cash.

What a shame! Gerald had wanted to keep a low profile. Even if Luna had given him a little attitude, he didn't want to humiliate her any further.

However, these people continued to treat him like dirt, and he just couldn't let it slide. If he did, they probably would've crushed the little self-esteem he had within himself.

But with everyone staring at him with such shocking expressions, Gerald felt a little embarrassed for causing a scene.

Hence, he decided that he should leave. It would be quite awkward if someone he knew noticed him now, but fate was just funny like that.

As Gerald turned around, his eyes stumbled onto a few familiar faces.

In the VIP area stood all of his old classmates, Sharon, Lilian, Morgana and Howard, and a few other girls. All of them stared at him in horror, still frozen in place.

“Gerald... y-y-you...!” Even Lilian was stuttering over her words.

They had been observing Gerald from the very beginning, especially when he said he’d buy two whole buildings and made that phone call.

Just a few moments ago, the girls had laughed at him as well. Once they saw what went down, fear rose within them.

They have never seen Gerald being this aggressive, although they’ve known him for years. It was as if they were looking at a stranger.

Clunk!

Howard’s phone fell to the ground as he lost his grasp on it. Beside him, Sharon started hyperventilating. It felt like her heart was being stung by a hive of bees. Although she had anticipated this, the most horrifying thing had just happened.

Oh Sharon, would you ever regret what you did to Gerald when he becomes very powerful? No, why would I? Most he could do is win a lottery and make new connections. How big of a deal can he be? He could never compete with Hayward! However, these were all just excuses Sharon made for herself.

All her excuses shattered into pieces like glass as if a humongous boulder had crashed down on her.

“Oh sh*t, when were you guys here?” Gerald took his hands out of his pockets immediately.

Just a few seconds ago, Gerald was at his last straw, which caused him to act the way he did. However, with Lilian and the others around, he didn't feel the need to pretend like he was some sort of influential figure. He didn't like acting like that anyway...

"Gerald, my man, we've been here since the beginning!" Howard gulped.

Chapter 515

"Gerald, we're having a little gathering, and we were going to invite you along with us!" Lilian rushed to his side and explained.

Everyone was now staring at Gerald, waiting for a response.

It would seem that being able to even stand next to Gerald would help heighten your status. Sharon stared at him, blankly. Still being doused in mixed emotions, she fell silent once again.

"Okay, have fun then! I still have some matters to tend to, so I have to go now!" Gerald smiled.

Without hesitation, he then exited the lobby immediately.

Sharon was mildly annoyed when she saw Gerald taking off. He didn't even glance in her direction. Dismayed, she felt like she could hear the sound of her heart-shattering.

As Gerald left the lobby, he slowly walked towards the road and decided to call a taxi.

However, another voice called out to him. "Gerald? Are you waiting for the bus?"

A Camry then stopped in front of him, with its windows down. It was Bianca, and next to her was Ava. And for the driver, it was a dashing man who looked like he was of the same age as Gerald.

Gerald then remembered that Bianca had wanted to treat him to dinner, but Ava insisted that she followed along. Ava, on the other hand, did not want to invite Gerald along, which was why he ended up at the real estate center. It appeared they had just finished dinner.

“I’m on my way home!” Gerald replied.

He peeked at Ava, who seemed to be occupied with her phone. She pretended as if she didn’t see him. Gerald didn’t want to greet her, as she was the one who didn’t like to acknowledge him in the first place.

“Oh, okay. Sorry again for today. Let’s set up a time tomorrow; I’ll treat you to something nice!” Bianca smiled apologetically.

“Yeah, that’s quite alright with me!” Gerald smiled back.

“We’ll be off now!” Bianca didn’t dare to ask Gerald to pool with them since this wasn’t her car after all.

The driver glared at Gerald and drove off immediately.

“Bianca, who was that? A friend?” The driver asked, visibly jealous.

The main reason why Ava invited Bianca to dinner was that the vice team leader had his eyes on her ever since she joined the team. He wanted to get to know her even more through the dinner.

However, the dinner didn’t go as well as they had planned, and his advances were rather weak.

Bianca had only responded to him dismissively, which was why he seemed slightly irritated.

When he saw Gerald being able to talk to Bianca so casually, Nathaniel Chandler was green with envy.

“He’s my new colleague, Mr. Chandler,” Bianca said softly.

“Hah, haven’t I mentioned him to you previously? He’s Gerald, my junior high classmate!” In a cold tone, Ava added.

“Oh, that’s him. Then why didn’t you greet him just now, Ava?” Thinking back to what Ava had spoken of Gerald, Nathaniel felt much lighter with relief.

“He’s not on our level, who cares honestly. Also, Bianca, please refrain from calling him your colleague. He’s not in the marketing department. He’s in logistics!” Ava then turned to Bianca.

“Pfft, damn! I was just going to ask which team he had joined. Logistics? Really? Haha! Bianca, you should stay away from him from now on. You two aren’t on the same level. You’re a white-collar, you know that right?” scoffed Nathaniel.

Within the investment department, also known as Dream Investment Group, employees were separated into different teams. There was the research team, the analysis team, etc.

As for Ava, she was in charge of all of the groups, making her the manager. In Ava’s point of view, the logistics team was nothing but a group of errand boys.

Chapter 516

After some small talk, the three of them then returned to their homes.

When morning came, Gerald headed to the office earlier than usual. After stepping into the elevator, Gerald realized that there was someone else in there with him. Turning to look to his side, he found out, to his annoyance, that he knew the man carrying the briefcase who was also staring back at him. It was Nathaniel, the man who had been clinging on to Bianca the day before.

Nathaniel immediately shot a dirty glare at Gerald once he knew who was standing beside him. An awkward silence ensued before Nathaniel finally said, “Hey, you’re the logistics guy, right? You’re acquainted with Bianca, huh?”

“Yeah, I befriended her yesterday,” replied Gerald dismissively. Gerald had seen how Nathaniel looked at him the day before, and he knew that the man was definitely holding something against him. However, Gerald also knew that putting up with him was only going to be a waste of time and effort.

“Heh, sure. Just keep your distance from her. She only treated you to dinner to be polite. As if she’d ever try to impress someone from as low a class as you are,” he scoffed. Nathaniel felt that Gerald needed to be put in his place since Bianca would naturally only deserve to be with men like him.

“And you should learn to mind your own business. Who do you even think you are? Talking about classes like you’re the one who gets to decide that,” snapped Gerald in return. At that moment, a ‘ping’ was heard and the elevator doors slid open. Gerald immediately walked out without even caring to look back at Nathaniel.

“Y-you motherf*cker! I’ll make sure that your life will be a living hell if it’s the last thing I do!” yelled Nathaniel, enraged. Nobody had ever talked to him like that before and he wasn’t going to allow Gerald to just get away with it so easily.

While the anger continued to seep through Nathaniel, Gerald had already made it to his desk.

“Good morning, Gerald!” greeted a female voice.

“Morning!” replied Gerald with a smile as he switched his computer on. When he looked up to see who had greeted him, he was delighted to know that it was Fay.

He remembered when he had bumped into Fay Foster on the day of his interview. He didn't know that she was also part of the team since she was out running errands when he first joined. "Fay! So you're here too!"

From what Gerald now knew, the logistics team consisted of three people. A somewhat chubby male, Fay, and Gerald himself.

"Hehe... Gerald, right? I knew it was you the moment I saw your name on the list! Sadly, I couldn't welcome you yesterday since you guys had already left by the time I got back from running my errands. It seems like we're colleagues now!" exclaimed Fay.

Before he could reply, a woman approached them. She pointed at Gerald before saying, "Hey, you there, help me out here. Take this USB and download at least 20 movies into it. I'll need it back by noon!"

Gerald looked at the fairly pretty, but somewhat cold and reserved woman who had cut into their conversation. To his surprise, it was the same woman whom he had met briefly in the elevator the day before.

He remembered her mostly for her statement claiming that he wouldn't even have a fighting chance to get employed.

Her name was Mina Miles, and she too was born and raised in Serene County.

While it was normal for those in the marketing department to have the logistics team run errands for them... Downloading movies? Now that was just an absurd order.

"Miss Miles, I don't think that it's appropriate for me to be downloading movies during work. After all, I have other work to finish up as well."

“Pfft. Work? You call what you’re doing work? I’m just asking for a small favor and you’re already complaining? If I end up missing my movie hours, you can kiss your job goodbye!” huffed Mina before slamming her USB onto his desk and leaving.

After she left, Fay motioned for him to come closer before whispering, “Hey, Gerald! You know how there are hidden rules in every company right? Well, in this one, you should try your hardest not to get on her nerves. Do you even know who she is?”

Chapter 517

“Who exactly is she?” asked Gerald.

“Well, Miss Miles is the godsister of the vice-head of the marketing department. It’d be best if you just watched out whenever she’s around!” whispered Fay.

Gerald simply shrugged and proceeded to do as he had been told. Since he wanted to continue being undercover for as long as he could, he may as well just listen to her. With that, he began downloading some movies.

“Hey, hey you! Logistics guy, what on earth are you doing?” asked a middle-aged man in a cold tone. His arms were folded against his back. Since Gerald was seated near the lobby entrance, the man must have caught sight of Gerald’s computer screen.

Behind the man, stood another employee, but this wasn’t just any regular employee. It was the vice team leader in Ava’s group himself, Nathaniel. He seemed to be enjoying the show and he smirked as he said, “Mr. Murphy, it seems that this employee is downloading movies during office hours! Haha! How ballsy! And to think that this is just his first day at work! Atrocious, I say!”

In an instant, Mr. Murphy was now standing directly behind Gerald. Though Gerald had managed to minimize the tab, he hadn’t done so quickly enough to avoid Mr. Murphy’s sharp eyes!

As Mr. Murphy clicked on the tab, Gerald knew that he had no choice but to surrender this time. Mr. Murphy then proceeded to yell angrily, “Who told you that you could download movies during working hours? What do you take our company as? What’s your name?”

At that moment, everyone in the lobby, including the employees of the department team, came to see what the ruckus was about. Bianca was among them and upon seeing Gerald getting lectured, she felt slightly embarrassed for him as well.

“It’s not like I wanted to!” protested Gerald.

“Oh really? Then what made you do it?” asked Mr. Murphy as he pressed into the issue.

“Miss Miles was the one who told me to download them!” shouted Gerald as he pointed toward Mina.

Gerald wasn’t afraid to get into trouble since his true purpose wasn’t to work there anyway. Knowing this, he was definitely not going to take the blame for anyone, especially not for Mina. He also took the opportunity to observe how the superiors were going to handle the situation.

Mina, as expected, was outraged. She had not expected such a low-level employee to actually report her to the higher-ups. Her first reaction was to throw a file in Gerald’s direction before yelling, “How dare you accuse me?!”

It was clear as day that she was definitely at fault this time around. However, being as arrogant as she was, she would rather die first than to admit her wrongdoings.

As Mina lunged toward Gerald as though she had gone mad, Mr. Murphy’s brows immediately furrowed and he shouted, “Cease this immediately, Mina! What sort of behavior is this? Take your USB back and get back to work! If this happens again, know that I won’t let you off that easily!”

He then glared at Gerald before leaving the scene.

Gerald was left shocked. She wasn't even given a warning letter even though she had clearly gone against the company's rules!

Nathaniel on the other hand, simply let out a sarcastic chuckle as he looked at Gerald. He left with a smug smile on his face as though he had just won the lottery. Once the two of them left, the racket died down as soon as it had started.

Mina now held a tremendous grudge against Gerald. From the moment Mr. Murphy left, she would take any chance she could to say passive-aggressive things to Gerald. At times, she would also simply resort to cursing at him without any good reason.

Her main goal was to make every word she threw toward Gerald sting, and though the entire department was aware of her verbal abuse, none of them dared to speak up. Everyone was clearly afraid of her.

Gerald however, just went on with his work.

After some time, Gerald began feeling bored so he got up and headed for the gents. He would use the opportunity to stretch a little as well. However, the moment he stepped into the restroom, he was greeted by the strong odor of cigarettes. It would appear that quite a few employees were smoking in there.

Chapter 518

"Heh, hey Nate! That new guy's really screwed up big time, hasn't he? Wait till his trial period ends. The department head is definitely not letting him through!" said one of the smokers cockily.

"You got that right! He dared to get on Nate's nerves. Nate's definitely going to make that guy's life a living nightmare as long as he's still here!" added another guy.

“Ballsy to say the least! I’ll screw with him too then!” said a third person.

“By the way guys, I have my eyes set on Bianca, so make sure none of you dare to even make the slightest move on her!” echoed a familiar, arrogant voice.

“Wouldn’t dream of it, Nate!” said everyone else hiding in the washroom. They all then left one by one after throwing their cigarette butts away.

Gerald had been hiding in one of the stalls himself, and he had overheard their entire conversation. The Nate they were talking to was without a doubt, Nathaniel.

It was clear that Nathaniel was the one who had summoned Mr. Murphy to the office earlier. As the vice team leader, he would definitely know about Mina’s habits in the office. After seeing her hand her USB over to Gerald and knowing how much of a hot-tempered woman she was, Nathaniel had used that turn of events as a prime opportunity to humiliate him. What a cunning b*stard that man was!

Though Gerald had heard rumors of employees playing dirty within the workforce, he hadn’t anticipated facing such treatment on the very first day of work. Nathaniel clearly saw Gerald as a love rival now, and wanted him gone as soon as possible.

‘Well two can play at that game. You’re in for quite a show,’ Gerald thought to himself.

Gerald then continued with his day, despite having to deal with the added sour remarks from Mina. Sometime later after running some errands, he returned to the office to find everyone standing at the entrance.

None of them seemed to be planning on leaving. Rather, they seemed to be waiting for someone to pick them up and a few of them were even on their phones. Fay and the chubby guy from his team were waiting there as well.

“What are you guys waiting for?” asked Gerald with a smile.

“Huh? What do you mean? Didn’t you receive the text, Gerald?” asked Fay in return, clearly surprised.

“Text?”

“Well, the marketing department is hosting a welcome party for the newcomers! It’s for the two of you, you know? That’s why we’re all here. I experienced it too when I first joined, and I had a really fun time!”

“I don’t think I’ve been informed about this at all, though,” replied Gerald as he checked for any new messages in his phone.

“Let me have a look!” Taking his phone, she scrolled through his first few messages and saw that he wasn’t lying. There really weren’t any texts regarding the party.

Fay then took her own phone out and showed Gerald the message that she had received. It wrote, “Marketing Department: welcome party of the month. Fay Foster: Room 202.”

‘Well this is absolutely uncalled for! They invited everyone but me!’ Gerald thought to himself. Though he knew that he shouldn’t waste his time or energy being angry over such a trivial matter, he could still feel his blood boiling under his skin.

“Which room are you in, Gerald? Are we in the same one?” asked Bianca who was walking toward him.

“I wasn’t invited,” said Gerald in a calm tone before sighing slightly.

“What? That’s not possible. Maybe Miss Miles and Mr. Chandler simply forgot? I’ll ask them immediately!” replied Bianca. She wasn’t going to just leave him out since both of them had joined the company together. The way she saw it, there was a special bond between them because of that.

“It’s fine, really! You guys can just go on without me,” said Gerald as soon as he realized that it was both Mina and Nathaniel who were organizing the event. It was clear that they didn’t invite him on purpose. As some of his female co-workers snickered, Gerald simply walked out of the lobby with a slight hint of loneliness.

After reaching his hotel, Gerald was just about to take a long shower when he suddenly heard knocking on the door. “Mr. Crawford? Are you there? Mr. Lyle sent me here!”

Chapter 519

When he opened the door, Gerald was greeted by Zack Lyle’s secretary. She was here to have him sign a few contracts. Since there were several projects in progress, the number of contracts to be signed had naturally increased as well.

“Hmm? Hold on, what’s this?” called Gerald out to the secretary just as she was about to leave. He noticed an envelope that she had left on his desk. When he opened it, he saw a stack of concert tickets inside. From what he could tell, there were approximately fifty of them.

“Ah, well, Mr. Crawford, since seven different projects are in progress right now, the company decided to organize a concert. Around thirty singers have been invited, and that number doesn’t include the number of bands that are participating as well!” explained the secretary with a smile.

“As Mr. Lyle said, you have several friends living here in Serene County. Thus, he told me to send a stack of tickets your way. If any more are needed, Mr. Lyle would be more than happy to send the amount desired over!”

“That won’t be necessary. I don’t have that many friends in the first place. This will be enough,” said Gerald in a calm tone.

The secretary simply bowed before leaving. Unfortunately, though she had made sure to expose ample of her bosom as she bowed, Gerald hadn't seemed to take any notice of her efforts. With her attempt failed, she left feeling both slightly embarrassed and disappointed.

"Who should I even give these to? Heh, Zack really knows how to run a business, what a considerate guy!" said Gerald to himself as he chuckled. "Ah, I can send some over to Xeno and Sienna! I'll give some to Fay tomorrow as well!"

It had been a long day at work and Fay had been the nicest person to him in the company so far. Gerald figured that it was only fair to repay the favor.

After brushing his teeth, Gerald lay on his bed and began video chatting with Mila. It had been about two months since she had gone abroad. If things went accordingly, she would be back within another month's time.

After talking to each other for three hours straight, the call finally ended and Gerald was able to get a good night's sleep. Morning came soon enough, and Gerald was up early for work as per usual. By the time he arrived, quite a few of his colleagues were already there.

They seemed to be discussing the party last night, and their chattering echoed throughout the office.

"Haha! That was the most fun I've had in a while! You know, you guys probably missed it, but when we went for karaoke, Ethan was ready to kiss Leon! My sides still hurt thinking about it!"

"Hah! Also, remember how Greg tried to confess to Fay? That pervert tried to hug her just because she looked so gentle. Nobody expected her to smack him hard on the face as soon as his arms encircled her. It was hilarious! You should've seen the look on his face!"

A girl's hushed voice was heard next. "I heard some juicy news myself last night while I was on my way to the bathroom!"

"Spill it, girl!" said another female curiously.

"Well, you know the vice team leader of the fourth team? Nathaniel Chandler? I think he confessed to the newbie, Bianca! He even bought a big bouquet of flowers! Not only that, Ava was there too and she was acting as their wing-woman!"

"Hot d*mn! Now that's juicy! What happened next? How did Bianca react?"

Everyone's ears were perked as they awaited her answer.

"I don't know! I wanted to stick around for a little longer but their team members saw me and I was forced out of the room! My guess is that she rejected him though!" continued the girl.

"That's just your guess though."

"Well it is, but you should've seen how desperate Nathaniel was last night. He somehow found out that Bianca liked Ashley, the singer! He knew that Ashley, alongside several other famous singers and bands, was going to participate in a concert here soon, so he told her that he'd get a ticket for her no matter what!"

"Oh lord, really? I heard that the pricing for that concert's tickets is crazy! You'd need at least three hundred dollars to sit in the last row! I'm telling you, even if he has the money, it'd be nearly impossible for him to land a ticket!"

Chapter 520

The more the girls discussed it, the more disappointed they became. The concert was being advertised not only on every social media platform, but also on multiple billboards. Everyone knew

about it, and everyone was also aware of how the ticket prices were skyrocketing as they spoke, even for just the final row seats.

Though three hundred dollars had been the original price set by the organizers for the final row seats, some re-sellers were selling them for over nine hundred dollars! Even if you had the money, the market for the tickets was so competitive that the right connections were equally as important!

Several celebrities had been invited to the concert, including the current top-ranking boy bands. Everyone wanted to snag a ticket just to be able to see their favorite idols perform live. Most of these people, however, knew that in the end, they would only be able to watch the concert online.

“If he really manages to get his hands on some tickets, Bianca definitely needs to accept his offer, right? Oh! And you can bet that Mina will be trying to get herself a ticket too! She probably won’t even consider coming to work that day! She simply adores Kai to the point where her phone is filled with reality shows and movies with him in them! She won’t let the chance slip by her that easily!” The chattering continued to echo through the office.

Not too long after, the office started getting crowded as more and more people arrived for work. By then, Fay had arrived as well.

“Morning, Gerald!” said Fay with a weak smile. She seemed to be in a bad mood.

“Morning, Fay!” replied Gerald with his own smile. From what he had heard earlier, he knew that Fay didn’t exactly have a good time yesterday, so he refrained from asking her why she was looking blue.

“Oh, by the way, Gerald, I seem to have bought too many buns. Have you eaten? I don’t think I can finish all of these... Would you like some?” offered Fay.

“Why thank you! I actually haven’t had breakfast yet!” replied Gerald as he took a bun for himself and bit into it rather greedily.

As he watched her turn her computer on, Gerald noticed that her desktop background was that of a famous celebrity. Curious, Gerald asked, “Hey Fay, do you like that celebrity? I heard that she’s going to be performing at the concert!”

Turning to look at him, she nodded with a smile before taking a sip of soy milk. “I am! And I’m excited about the concert too! You know, back when I was still in high school, my biggest dream was to earn enough money to attend one of her concerts and hear her sing live! However, looking at the ticket prices, it doesn’t seem like I’ll be achieving that goal any time soon... Like, for real! Nine hundred dollars for a ticket? Are you kidding me? I can’t afford to go broke for a concert!” she said with a sigh, visibly disappointed.

Gerald then took another big bite into his bun and with his mouth full, he said, “I actually have a few relevant connections, so if you want, I could get you a ticket!”

Since she was a nice girl in general and she had even offered him some buns for breakfast, Gerald saw no problem with giving her a ticket. Besides, he had so many of them that it would truly be a waste if he only kept them to himself.

“...Wait, what? For real?” exclaimed Fay. Though her eyes sparkled with excitement at that moment, they soon reflected a slight skepticism. “Hey, you’re pulling my leg, aren’t you Gerald? Or is there some kind of catch?”

“I’m not kidding! Here, have it!” he replied as he took a ticket out of his bag and handed it to her. “That’s a ticket for the middle row! Since that area is slightly elevated, it shouldn’t be too crowded there and you’ll be able to take lots of nice photos! What more, you’ll be able to see your favorite singer from up there clearly!”

“...H-huh?” Fay was stunned. She hadn’t expected him to be serious.

“G-Gerald! I... T-thank you so much!” stuttered Fay as she took the ticket from him with trembling hands. She wanted to pay him back, but Gerald simply refused, insisting that she took it for free.

After finishing his breakfast, Gerald felt slightly thirsty so he decided to go to the water dispenser. Just as he was about to get up, another group of employees entered the office.

“Ugh! This is so unfair!” said an irritated female voice as she stomped all the way to her seat. She slammed her purse onto her desk the moment she got to it, and everyone there was startled.

“What’s wrong, Miss Mina?” asked an employee.

The woman causing the ruckus was of course, Mina Miles.

Chapter 521

“I tried getting tickets for the concert last night, but they were all sold out! Can you believe that? This is just so unfair!” yelled Mina almost hysterically.

At that moment, Nathaniel entered the office. Unlike Mina, however, he seemed to be in quite a good mood.

“Mr. Chandler, you were trying to get some tickets too, right? How did that go? Were you able to get your hands on any?” asked several employees as they surrounded him.

“Hehe... Luck truly was on my side this time! Though they’re just final row seats, I managed to secure two tickets!” replied Nathaniel with a smug smile on his face.

“Holy! You actually managed to get two! That’s amazing, Mr. Chandler!” exclaimed the girls there with envy in their voices. As they continued talking to him, some of the girls tried subtly making physical contact with him. Maybe by doing so, they could have a chance of being invited instead!

“Nate, since you have two tickets, do you mind selling one to me? I really want to go!” said Mina as her eyes sparkled with hope. Despite being a concert organized by the Dream Investment Group, even their own employees had a hard time getting their hands on the tickets. After all, this wasn’t some employee exclusive event! Many rich people from Mayberry would be attending the concert as well.

“Sorry, Mina, but this ticket is for Bianca. We’re going to the concert together!” replied Nathaniel as he shook his head.

“Humph! She’d first have to accept your offer. You’re acting pretty desperate, you know Nate?” yelled Mina in response.

“What do you mean, desperate! You don’t know a thing about how I feel!” yelled Nathaniel back.

Since both Nathaniel and Mina refused to back down, they were on the verge of fighting when Ava approached them to defuse the argument. The two of them were equally short-tempered and if both of them were to continue fighting over the tickets, chaos would surely ensue.

Right then, Bianca arrived at the office. Everyone went silent when they saw her, and she was well aware that all her colleagues were staring at her. Feeling embarrassed, she hurriedly approached Gerald.

“So Gerald, you said you had a surprise for me, right? What is it?” said Bianca in a soft voice. She knew that Gerald wasn’t exactly the most favorite employee in the company, so if she stood near him, maybe it would help draw the attention off her.

Besides, Gerald had texted her yesterday, mentioning that he had a surprise for her, so she wasn’t going to just turn that down. Nathaniel on the other hand, was filled with rage and jealousy.

“O-oh... You want it now?” asked Gerald, slightly taken aback. He had heard the entirety of Mina and Nathaniel’s argument and he wasn’t sure if now was the best time to give her the ticket.

“Of course! Haha! Don’t tell me you were just joking about that? Humph! And to think that someone was boasting that he had tickets to the concert for me!” said Bianca in a playful tone. Truthfully, she had figured that Gerald was just bluffing her. Then again, having an awkward conversation with him was much better than having all the attention on her.

“Hah! How hilarious! As if he could ever get his hands on a ticket! If he has even a single ticket, I’ll do anything he says!” said Nathaniel angrily. “Ignore him, Bianca! Come, look what I’ve got for you!” he continued as he pulled his final row ticket out for her to see.

Gerald was now feeling incredibly annoyed. He had wanted to keep a low profile, but after hearing Nathaniel’s taunts, Gerald wasn’t going to back down this time. “So, Mr. Chandler, you said you’d do anything I say if I managed to get my hands on a ticket, correct? Are you sure you don’t want to take that back while you can? Everyone’s watching you know?”

“Pfft. Still trying to bluff, I see. And what if you don’t manage to get one? I’ll have you walk around the company in only your underpants as punishment!” scoffed Nathaniel.

Chapter 522

“Sure thing!” said Gerald with a smile as he pulled ten tickets out of his pocket. He then handed one over to Bianca.

“...What the f*ck?” Everyone in the office was stunned.

“...Are... are those real?”

“What? Gerald’s actually managed to get so many tickets?”

“Hold on, there’s no way those could be real!” shouted the girls as they surrounded Gerald.

“...Oh god, these tickets are for the highest point of the T zone! Celebrities will greet their fans there! If you have these tickets you’ll be able to see them up close!”

Taking a closer look at the tickets, they all squealed at about the same time. “Oh my god! These tickets are the real deal!”

Mina, in disbelief, took a peek at the tickets as well. After confirming their authenticity, she was left frozen in place.

It was a natural reaction since Gerald had been on her blacklist after all. Mina had always considered him to be of a lower class than she was, so the fact that he was able to get so many good tickets instantly switched the power dynamic. Her heart felt extremely heavy, understanding that he clearly had much more power than she did at that moment.

“Ten tickets! How did you even manage to get your hands on so many?” asked one of the girls as all of them stared at him, eager to know his source.

“I have my ways. Also, now that I have proof that I do indeed have tickets... Mr. Chandler? I hope you’ll keep your word,” said Gerald as he turned to look at Nathaniel. Nathaniel bore an expression of pure fear on his face.

“W-word? What word?” stuttered Nathaniel in panic.

“Don’t you dare play dumb now! Everyone heard that you had said that you’d do anything Gerald told you to if he was able to get his hands on even a single ticket!” said another girl. The group of girls was now on Gerald’s side.

“She’s right. Man up, Nate! Or are you unable to keep to your word? What a joke!” added Mina. Everyone was against Nathaniel now.

“F-fine! What do you want?” said Nathaniel as he glared daggers at Gerald in his attempt to warn him not to try anything funny.

“What do I want? Well, you did say that you’d make me walk around the company in my underwear if I wasn’t able to get a ticket... I won’t tell you to do that though, since I’m not filthy scum like you!” replied Gerald.

“Humph! You wouldn’t dare to give that order in the first place!” huffed Nathaniel.

“Oh, I wouldn’t? Well, instead of parading in your underwear around the company, I’ll just have you do so within our department’s walls then,” continued Gerald.

“Pfft! Hahaha! Yeah, do it here!” The girls’ laughter echoed through their office.

Nathaniel’s face was now brimming with both fear and embarrassment. His entire body was frozen in place and it felt difficult to even move a muscle.

“Hmm? Hey, Mr. Chandler, don’t tell me you’re not wearing anything underneath. Is that why you’re refusing to strip?”

“Oh god, that must be the reason why! He’s not wearing any underwear, what a pervert! To think that he was also hitting on Bianca!”

“Not only that, he’s not a man of his word either! Actually, I think calling him a man now is a bit of an overstatement!”

Their words were hurting Nathaniel much more than any physical wound could. At his wit's end, he finally shouted, "Fine, fine! I'll strip! How dare any of you claim I'm not a man of my word! And I'm certainly no pervert! Here, I'll show all of you!" He then angrily undid his belt before pulling his pants down to his knees.

"Say that I'm not wearing any underwear again, I dare you!" he yelled, his face flushed.

"Nathaniel Chandler! What is the meaning of this?!" shouted a ferocious voice at that moment. Everyone went deathly silent and immediately returned to their seats as soon as they saw who had shouted.

"M-Mr. Briggs!"

The middle-aged man who had yelled was the head of the marketing department.

"Pull your pants up this instant and meet me in my office! You're the vice team leader and this sort of behavior will not be tolerated!" scolded Mr. Briggs before walking back to his office.

Nathaniel immediately pulled his pants up in defeat before glaring at Gerald who was clearly enjoying the show. He then dejectedly followed after Mr. Briggs as well.

"Gerald!"

As soon as both of them left, Mina cried out to Gerald, her cheeks flushed.

Chapter 523

"I'm so sorry, Gerald! Please forgive me!" said Mina while bowing toward Gerald as though she was deeply regretting her past actions. Gerald was surprised, to say the least, at her sudden change of attitude. He wasn't alone either, as the entire department was staring at her in shock as well.

“Please, Gerald! I really want a ticket... Could you sell one to me?” said Mina in a soft tone as she stared into Gerald’s eyes. She was Kai’s hardcore fan, so she was willing to give anything just to be able to see him perform live.

Gerald was rightfully hesitant since he was, after all, mad at her before this. Normally, he would choose to ignore her at all costs. However, she now seemed to be truly sorry for her past actions, and seeing that softened Gerald’s heart. So be it, he would grant her, her wish.

“Just take one. I have plenty anyway!” replied Gerald as he handed her a ticket. Mina’s eyes glimmered with immense gratitude and she bowed again toward him as she took the ticket from his hand.

“U-um... Gerald, may I have one too?”

“M-me too!”

“Gerald, could you sell some to us? We’re colleagues after all, aren’t we?”

From what Gerald could see, there were about seven other girls who were hardcore fans like Mina. They surrounded him instantly, displaying big puppy dog eyes to ensure that they would each get a ticket.

More of Gerald’s other colleagues started crowding around him as well, and with fangirls coming from all four teams, the total headcount easily amounted to thirty people. However, Gerald didn’t have that many tickets on hand at that moment.

He had no choice but to place the stack of tickets on his desk before saying, “I won’t be needing so many anyway, so take one each and have fun!”

Hearing that, all the girls gasped before rushing over to his table to grab their tickets.

Ava, on the other hand, hadn't budged from her initial spot. She was staring at Gerald with mixed emotions brewing within her. Gerald hadn't mentioned how he had gotten his hands on all those tickets, but she knew that the ticket prices were soaring high.

'How much money had he used to get his hands on so many tickets?

'And he's giving them away so nonchalantly!

'Could he have won the lottery?'

All these thoughts filled Ava's head and she felt as though she was being crushed by a boulder. Just the day before, Nathaniel had told her to remove Gerald from the party list. Ava had done so without the slightest hesitation since she was well aware of how Nathaniel was trying to get everyone to boycott Gerald. With any luck, Gerald would be out of sight and out of mind soon enough, but oh how the tables had turned now.

If she were to be completely honest, Ava wanted a ticket herself. However, she dismissed the thought and immediately returned to her work. She simply couldn't bring herself to beg someone—especially a person whom she looked down on—for something she wanted.

Moving back to Nathaniel, he had reached rock bottom with his luck. Not only did he fail to ask Bianca out, he had also been relieved of his position as the vice team leader. Under Mr. Briggs's orders, he was now under probation as well.

When lunchtime came, the employee's canteen filled up quickly as usual. The girls from the marketing department sat at their usual table and gossiped as they had their lunch.

“Hey girls, do you think that Gerald’s secretly a billionaire? Like, those low-profile ones? Maybe he’s just here to experience the working life of an average Joe in our company!” exclaimed a girl as she held on to her ticket.

“Huh? That’s a bold claim... Do you have anything to back that up with?” asked another female employee as the group of girls huddled closer together.

“Well, just think about it! How much would all those tickets have cost? And they’re not just any regular tickets either. Gerald was able to secure twenty T zone tickets when we were all struggling to even get ones for the last row! What more, he simply gave them out to us like they didn’t even matter to him. I bet he still has many more on him!”

“You’re right! Who do you think he really is? I bet he’s just trying to humble himself down, don’t you think, girls?” asked yet another colleague.

“I believe so too! He must be quite a powerful person! He’s definitely far from what someone had described him to be like during the party! Hah, imagine thinking for a second that Gerald was actually broke as a joke!” added a fifth girl as she looked toward Ava.

Ava had been sitting within listening distance and she had been visibly annoyed throughout their conversation about Gerald.

“I know right? Half of the party was just her bad-mouthing Gerald. The audacity of some people!” This time, it was Mina who spoke. Ava Anderson knew clear as day that they were all referring to her.

Chapter 524

“As if he could ever be a billionaire. Who knows how he got all those tickets? Big deal! I’m leaving!” said Ava aloud as she slammed her chopsticks on her bowl.

None of the girls even bothered to respond to her taunt. They were all more focused on trying to figure out what they could do to return the favor to Gerald. They soon thought of something and by the time evening came, a mountain of snacks was on Gerald's desk.

"Hey babes, I'm back!" said a voice out of the blue.

A dashing young man then entered the office as he announced his arrival with arms spread out as though he were anticipating a welcome hug. However, all he heard was, "Hey, Gerald! Please tell us how you got those tickets. Come one, tell us!"

Everyone else was still focused on Gerald, and nobody welcomed the young man. Well, aside from one person.

"Oh? Stuart, you're finally back!" said Ava as she stood up and welcomed him warmly.

Who exactly was Stuart?

Stuart was the team leader for the second team, and he had been sent to Mayberry for training. During his training, he had gone to different cities to check how well the company was doing in the other areas.

As for his physical traits, he was very good looking and only seemed to be slightly older than Gerald.

He was the one who had led Ava when she first joined the company, and she had the biggest crush on him. This was no secret either, as everyone in the company knew how much she adored him. Stuart, however, was a lone wolf. A wild man. Though Ava had made multiple attempts to woo him, he had managed to deflect every single one of them. Despite that, he still treated both her and his good friend, Nathaniel, rather nicely.

“Hmm? Who’s that, Ava? A new face?” asked Stuart, rather irritated that his spotlight had been stolen by a small fry.

“Humph. He’s just my high school classmate. His name is Gerald Crawford, but don’t worry, Stuart. My heart will always belong to you!” replied Ava.

“Gerald huh? He’s new to the company, yet he’s already fooling around with his co-workers and not doing his work as he should? How dare he?” said Stuart as he nodded to himself. He looked as though he was planning to do something.

Gerald was finally able to have some peace of mind when his shift came close to ending.

Just as he was thinking so, he was startled by the sound of a mug being slammed on his desk.

“Hey newbie, get me some hot water as soon as the water boils!” ordered Stuart.

“I don’t think that getting water involves my field of work,” replied Gerald calmly. Gerald was no pushover, so he wasn’t going to back down easily.

“You’re just a newbie, so get to it!” said Stuart, his voice even colder this time.

“Oh, Gerald, it should be an honor for you to run errands for Stuart. Just do as you’re told! Who do you think you are, some kind of billionaire?” said Ava as she walked over and stood next to Stuart. She seemed to be even more annoyed than Stuart himself when she heard Gerald talking back to him.

“Give me one good reason why I should do so.” Gerald simply refused to give in.

“Stuart’s the king of business here, but you probably didn’t know that, right? About sixty percent of our investments were all thanks to Stuart! How’s that for a reason?” scoffed Ava.

“Also, you probably don’t even know how powerful his family truly is! Haha, I bet you really thought that you were someone special for a second there, didn’t you?” she added before shooting a dirty look toward Gerald. She seemed to be extremely proud of herself whenever she mentioned anything about Stuart.

Just as Mina and the others were about to stand up for Gerald, Stuart’s phone began to ring and he immediately picked up the call.

“Yes, this is Stuart... Wait, what? How did this happen? That’s impossible! Could you repeat that?” yelled Stuart into his phone as the color on his face slowly drained away.

Chapter 525

“What’s wrong, Stuart?” asked Ava, looking visibly worried.

“It’s ruined!” said Stuart, his face pale as a sheet. He then ran down the stairs immediately and Ava followed close behind. She waited for him to be done with his phone call before slowly approaching him.

“Stuart...? What’s wrong? Please don’t scare me!” asked Ava, repeating her question. She was getting increasingly worried with every passing second.

Stuart wasn’t a man who only had his looks. He had properties within Mayberry and his parents were fairly successful people as well. Essentially, he had the whole package. He just seemed to naturally outshine all of Ava’s other colleagues in the company, which was one of the reasons why she liked him so much in the first place.

Ava had always dreamed of marrying Stuart in Mayberry one day. If she was lucky, she’d love to be able to work there as well. Due to her father being the principal of her high school, she had been both

prideful and cynical from a young age. All her crushes she had had up to this point were on men who had powerful backgrounds and were very rich.

“This is bad, Ava. Remember that company that we invested in with Mr. Wilson? Something’s gone wrong!” said Stuart in a panicked voice.

Ava immediately knew what he was talking about. The investment in that company had been ordered by one of the directors. Stuart, as well as Mr. Wilson, were involved in the process. Since the company wanted to earn more through investing, it was natural for everyone in the company to want more of that money too. Money was money, after all.

Thus, they decided to invest in a company as well. They would operate on their own and report back to the main branch so that they’d provide funds for investment purposes. This particular company had already been given funds of over eighty million dollars, but only those involved knew about the company.

Everything seemed to be sailing so smoothly. The main branch had already approved of their funding requests, and they thought that with all the investments going around, they would never be found out. Besides, the company had provided double insurances since they were using the name of another local business. Nothing should’ve gone wrong.

“I have no idea what the higher-ups were smoking, but they’ve just decided to check in on our company! What more, they seemed to know what they were checking for! Since they weren’t able to balance the financial statements, they had suspected that someone was committing fraud!”

Stuart was having a panic attack. He knew that this was it.

“It’s weird though! The business isn’t that big and we didn’t provide that much funding either! We even made sure to use another business’ name too! There’s no way they could have detected this that easily!”

“I have no idea how either but that’s the least of my problems! The higher-ups are now investigating both the director and Mr. Wilson. I’m most likely going to go down with them too! Oh god, what should I do? If the company decides to report us, we’ll be sentenced to jail!”

Seeing how panicked he was, Ava began panicking herself. However, she suddenly had an idea. Patting herself on the head, she explained, “Wait, there may be a solution to this! Why don’t you use a scapegoat? They can take the full blame for you then all your problems should be solved, right?”

“Who though? This is serious business!”

Ava thought for a while before snapping her fingers. “I think I have a plan!”

While all this was happening, Gerald was calmly filing documents for the company.

Fay simply smiled when she saw him working. “You’re so hardworking Gerald! You just keep on going, company after company!”

Gerald simply smiled back before replying, “Well, I have to make sure that everything’s been checked. Besides, I quite enjoy doing this and I’ve learned a lot too!”

The main reason the company was being investigated on was because Ava had been boasting so much about Stuart’s achievements. When Gerald found out that Nathaniel and Stuart were very close, he immediately checked on the projects that they had proposed.

After some investigating, he was able to detect multiple errors in their documents. One of the companies that Stuart had proposed was even under the name of Waylon’s father’s business.

It wasn’t really that big of a deal at first, but how would a fairly successful company not branch out?

Gerald was familiar with Waylon's family. Since when had they opened a company that was completely unrelated to their family's business?

After some thorough investigation, Gerald found that there was a problem and he immediately sent a message to Zack to have him double-check for him.

"Come on, tell me. What did you find?" said Fay with a smile. It was just a background check after all. Why did Gerald make it sound so grand?

"You wouldn't get it, but just know that I've found something big!" said Gerald before chuckling.

At that moment, Gerald received a call from Ava which surprised him slightly.

"Gerald? Are you doing anything after work tonight?" asked Ava as soon as he picked up.

"Why? What do you need?" asked Gerald rather coldly.

Though Gerald used to treat Ava kindly, her constant cold behavior toward him made him want to treat her equally as coldly.

"Well, I was thinking of treating you to dinner. You've joined the company for two days now and I still haven't treated you to a meal. So... care to have dinner with me tonight?" asked Ava with a smile on the other side of the line.

"Who else will be there?" asked Gerald in return. He knew that Ava was definitely up to something. However, since Ava and Stuart were so close to each other, he felt that this would be a prime opportunity to get to know more about them.

“It’ll just be the both of us! Nobody else!” replied Ava.

Shortly after, both of them agreed on a meeting time and place before she hung up.

Ava didn’t return to her desk for the rest of the day. Once Gerald clocked out, he headed for the agreed meeting place. It was just a small restaurant that wasn’t too far off from the office.

As he entered a small, private dining area, he saw Ava. He was surprised, to say the least. She had been true to her word, as she was the only one waiting for him there.

“Over here, Gerald! Come, have a seat! What do you think of this place? It’s pretty good, right?” said Ava with a smile as she opened a bottle of red wine and poured some out for Gerald.

“It’s definitely a pretty nice place. What’s the special occasion though? I wouldn’t have minded going somewhere cheaper!” replied Gerald with a slightly wry smile.

“How could I ever treat you to something cheap? Also, just so you know, I’ve constantly wanted to have a personal conversation with you in the past two days. However, the office just didn’t seem to be a convenient place to talk! Now that we’re alone, it’s about time we both got caught up with the good old days!” said Ava as she inched closer to Gerald, her elbow gently nudging his.

What exactly was this girl up to? Gerald had not the slightest clue.

However, he did notice how flirty Ava was being with him. She had even tried to figure out how he got those tickets earlier along with his other colleagues. ‘Catching up on the good old days’ was definitely not her true intention.

After drinking and talking for quite a bit, Gerald’s face began turning red as he grew tipsy.

“Ava, I think I’ve had enough. We’ve been drinking way too much!” said Gerald as he shook his head.

“Alright then, shall we get going? Ah, could you send me back, Gerald?”

“Sure!”

After Ava settled the bill, Gerald accompanied her back to her place.

He hadn’t been able to find out what she was up to since she kept avoiding answering his questions.

After Ava arrived home safely, Gerald was just about to leave when she grabbed his arm.

“Gerald, don’t leave!”

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After grabbing on to his arm, she began looking at Gerald flirtatiously.

Though her eyes were indeed, very attractive, Gerald was still shocked.

“Ava, are you alright?”

“No... No, I’m not. Could you please accompany me?” she asked as she pulled him deeper into her house. Eventually, Gerald ended up being pushed onto her bed.

She then began taking her dress off seductively.

Gerald could only gulp.

Ava was really beautiful, after all. She had fair skin and a great figure. As she pressed her body against his, Gerald felt heat rushing through his body.

His throat felt dry as Ava continued undressing. Her upper body was now mostly exposed.

All of a sudden, the door was kicked open and two people rushed in!

Ava immediately rolled off the bed and covered herself with some clothes as she screamed, "Hurry! Get the d*mn pictures!"

One of the two men who had entered was Nathaniel while the other was of course, Stuart. Nathaniel seemed to be recording as Ava started crying.

"Stuart! Save me please!" she cried out.

"Don't worry, Ava! We're here now so this b*stard can't do anything! I can't believe him! This Gerald seemed like such an honest guy but to think he was this sleazy! How dare he set up a trap for his own ex-classmate!"

"I didn't know he was such a person either! I just wanted to treat him to dinner! He then offered to send me back but... but... He ended up assaulting me! Thank god you guys are here now!" wailed Ava.

"No worries Ava, we've caught everything on tape! Let's go report him immediately!" sneered Nathaniel.

He knew that Gerald was now as good as dead.

Gerald on the other hand, had sobered up and he now realized that he had been set up.

He knew that something was wrong the moment Ava started undressing. What more, she had been exceptionally nice to him all evening!

Gerald just couldn't believe that his own ex-classmate would treat him like this.

Though, what reason did she have to set him up?

'We've been friends for at least seven years, Ava. What the hell?' Gerald thought to himself, a wry smile on his face.

"So, what should we do with you now, Gerald?" said Stuart coldly.

"I don't know, it's up to you guys, isn't it? What do you even want me to do?" replied Gerald with a grim smile.

"Well look at you! You sound decisive!" said Nathaniel with a chuckle.

"It's simple, really. Just sign this contract and you'll be the legal owner of it. Isn't that easy?" said Stuart as he took a contract out for Gerald to see.

When he saw the name of the company on the contract, Gerald was finally able to put two and two together.

The name of the company was the exact one that he had told Zack to investigate into.

It seemed that his predictions had been right. Stuart was definitely a suspicious individual and there were several problems with his and Waylon's business.

Since the matter had been revealed, they were now obviously trying to find a scapegoat.

This was a matter of life and death! If he signed the papers, he would be deemed the traitor and should Zack find out about it, the person ending up in jail would most definitely be Gerald!

At that moment, Stuart had no idea who he was truly going up against!

Chapter 528

Gerald smiled.

The trio before him would never be able to remotely even come close to anticipating that he was the actual owner of the company.

He then looked toward Ava before saying, "High school friends, huh? Why are you doing all this to me? Since when have you become this way, Ava?"

"Don't even think about playing the friendship card, you b*stard! After laying your dirty hands on me, don't even dream that I'll let you off easily! Since you're talking about friendship now, why didn't you save a ticket for me earlier this afternoon then?"

"The most hilarious thing is that you lack even the most basic of common sense! Did you really think that I'd ever fall for or even make out with you? Keep fantasizing about it, that's all you'll ever get!"

Since they weren't filming anymore, Ava found no further reason to filter her words.

She knew Gerald well. All Gerald was, was a poor and powerless pauper. Knowing the difference in power between them allowed Ava to execute her plan without the slightest hesitation. She wasn't even remotely afraid, to be completely honest.

"Oh, I see how it is now. It seems that I've really thought too much!" replied Gerald with a chuckle.

"I don't really want to believe this, honestly. I truly trusted that you wanted to treat me to dinner because of our past friendship. If you had just been sincere, I would definitely have been willing to help you in the future should you get into any trouble!" replied Gerald.

Though Gerald had anticipated that Ava had some ploy when she called him out for dinner, he had truly felt touched while they reminisced about their old days back at the restaurant. That was the reason why he had decided to accompany her back home in the first place.

Before they entered Ava's house, Gerald had already made up his mind that he would continue to help her out, even if they weren't as close to each other as they were before.

After all this had happened however, he was now completely disappointed in her.

"You? Help me? Who do you even think you are? Look, we're letting you off easy. Think about it, you just have to sign these papers and the company will be yours!"

"Oh I'll sign them, but you'll just have to wait for tomorrow. My identification card isn't with me now and I can't remember my identification number!" said Gerald as he thought of that excuse on the spot.

"The hell? You don't even remember your own identification number?" cursed Stuart.

However, he wasn't too worried since they still had the recordings now. Gerald couldn't run from them and Stuart knew it.

Tomorrow it was then.

"So be it. You'll sign these papers the moment you arrive at the office tomorrow. And don't you dare tell anyone about this or I'll call the police immediately! You'll definitely be charged for attempted r*pe if the recording gets out!" said Stuart.

"Tomorrow it is!" replied Gerald.

He was then let off. Once Gerald left the building, he immediately contacted Zack and told him everything that had happened.

He was feeling very upset since despite being disappointed in her, he still felt sorry for Ava.

He had initially gone undercover to try gathering information from the culprits he found. To think that his ex-classmate would be this involved with the matter.

When the next day came, Gerald entered the office and was just about to take a seat when both Stuart and Ava walked up to him.

"Gerald, please come to my office now!" said Stuart as he looked at Gerald. He also motioned for Gerald to remember to bring along his identification card.

"Sure thing!" replied Gerald as he followed both of them. Nathaniel was already waiting in Stuart's office for them.

The office doubled as a printing room, and not many people usually went there.

“Alright, sign this quickly. We still have other formalities to go through. Hurry up!” said Stuart as he took the contract from the night before out.

However, Gerald simply sat there with his legs crossed. He had clearly no intention of signing it.

“What the hell are you waiting for? Hurry up and sign it already!” warned Stuart with a slightly raised voice.

Gerald’s response was to simply look at his watch before saying, “Just wait for a little while more. I’ll sign it when everyone else has arrived. That’ll save you the time to look for the right person to process your formalities!”

“Huh? What do you mean by that?”

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“Oh, you’ll see what I mean in a little while,” said Gerald with a smile.

At that moment, a few cars arrived at the entrance of the building.

When their doors were opened, out stepped Spencer—Waylon’s father—, Jarvan Wilson—the current deputy minister—and Norman Lay—the investment company’s assistant manager. All of them bore serious expressions on their faces.

Zack Lyle and Michael Zeke were present as well, both looking equally upset.

If Gerald hadn’t sent Zack a message telling him that there were problems with the company, neither Zack nor Michael would have ever found out that all this was happening under their noses.

As it turned out, the profit of the company and the departments within it were all involved just because of a few people.

After hearing what Gerald had found the night before, Zack called everyone relevant back to the office before interrogating them thoroughly throughout the entire night.

Under Gerald's order, he was to bring them to the office now. As the group approached the building's main entrance, they saw a man and woman waiting outside.

"Why did you even tell me to come over, Waylon? How should I know where your father is? I didn't even know that the company was in trouble!" said the woman, her tone slightly irritated.

"Xella, could you please not be like this? You have to help me... D*mn it! My dad's here!" replied Waylon as he looked up.

Waylon's father hadn't been home the entire night. Mostly clueless about what was happening, all Waylon knew was that his father was going to the office early the next day.

He decided to wait for his father at the office to try and get a better understanding of his father's situation. Since he knew that Xella had been to the company's headquarters quite a few times, he called her over to accompany him.

As Spencer came closer, Waylon ran over to him and realized that his father's face looked awful.

"Dad, what's wrong?"

"Son, just go home first. This is none of your business. Mr. Crawford's here to see us!" said Spencer unhappily.

“...Huh? Mr. Crawford? He’s here in Serene County?” asked both Waylon and Xella, the two of them equally shocked.

“You heard me,” replied Spencer as he nodded.

“Let’s go. Mr. Crawford shouldn’t wait for us a second longer!” said Zack.

“Yes, Mr. Lyle...”

It wasn’t just Spencer’s face that looked awful. Everyone else being escorted into the building bore equally terrible expressions.

After the group went into the building, Waylon said, “There must be something terribly wrong. I’ve never seen my dad like that! I have to see what happened for myself!”

As for Xella, since the time Cindy’s mother had treated them to a meal last time, she hadn’t wanted to talk to Waylon anymore. However, she really wanted to know what Mr. Crawford looked like. That was the main reason why she had agreed to accompany Waylon.

Meanwhile in the investment marketing department, the mood had been rather lively.

Most of the employees were standing up to look at all the people walking up and down the hallway.

The people in question included higher management people from the headquarters and also some very important individuals.

Nobody could tell what was going on and nobody dared to ask what was happening. It was a shocking scene, to say the least.

As the elevator doors opened, Zack stepped out before leading the small group to the printing room.

“...Hey, that’s the general manager, Zack Lyle and beside him is Michael Zeke! Both of them are the company’s right-hand men!”

“And look who’s following behind them. Isn’t that Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lay? What on earth is going on? Oh my god, the one behind them looks like Spencer Letts from HouseLand Enterprise!”

“Is the company in some kind of trouble? All the higher management people and even the boss is here!”

“Most probably. I wonder what’s gotten us into such hot water!”

Everyone who saw the group of people discussed the situation.

Mina herself was sipping a cup of tea as she watched them.

Much to her surprise, she saw a few familiar faces coming out of the lift. She immediately waved her right arm while shouting, “Xella! Over here!”

“Mina!” replied Xella as both she and Waylon walked toward her.

“What are you doing here? Do you have any idea what’s going on? Actually, hold on. Xella, is this your boyfriend?” asked Mina as she chuckled when she noticed Waylon.

“He’s not, but moving on, I was about to ask you the same thing. The headquarters called the higher management for a meeting and we have no clue what’s going on!”

“Well, guess all we can do is wait!” replied Mina as she shook her head.

Chapter 530

A knock was heard on the door and Gerald looked toward it.

His legs were still crossed when he shouted, “Come in!”

Zack and Michael then led Spencer and the rest into the room.

“...H-huh? What?” said Stuart, stunned.

Everyone in the room was involved in the matter.

Even Spencer Letts was here and the ones taking the lead were Mr. Zeke, Mr. Lyle, and Mr. Wilson!

“This...” That was the only thing the trio managed to mutter. Stuart, Nathaniel, and Ava were dumbfounded.

When they finally came to their senses, the trio shouted, “Mr. Zeke! Mr. Lyle!”

“Mr. Crawford, they’re all here!” said Zack as he ignored the three people.

“...Huh? Mr. Crawford?”

“...That’s a joke right? The f*ck? He’s Mr. Crawford?”

Everyone was shocked. This was especially so for Stuart and Ava.

“M-M-Mr. Crawford...?” Ava felt like she could hardly breathe.

“Well, since everyone is finally here now, let’s begin. So, Mr. Ferguston, tell me about the papers again. Where do I need to sign?” said Gerald as he smiled.

“...I...” Stuart’s mind had gone blank and he could only gulp.

Stuart had initially thought that he would be able to wiggle out of this mess, scot-free. His plan was perfect, after all. Now that this had happened, the amount of trouble he was in had skyrocketed.

Never could he have dreamt that he would fall right into Gerald’s trap.

Who the f*ck could have even anticipated that Gerald was the actual Mr. Crawford?

Though Stuart turned to look at Ava, she couldn’t be bothered about him this time. Instead, she shouted, “Mr. Lyle, what did you call Gerald? Is he... Is he really Mr. Crawford...?”

“Step aside and don’t be a nuisance!” sneered Zack in response.

“Mr. Crawford, should we really proceed with this here? The printing room is too small to hold a meeting!” said Michael as he took a step forward.

“That’s true. Bring them to the meeting room. We’re getting to the bottom of this, today!” said Gerald.

Zack nodded before leading the group of people out with him.

Even as she walked out the door, Ava was still peeking at Gerald. Her eyes reflected her sheer confusion. She just couldn’t believe it.

Gerald simply ignored her and headed out himself.

“Here they come!” shouted an employee and everyone went silent.

Mina and the others were shocked when they saw Gerald coming out of the room behind the group.

“Psst! Gerald! Over here!” said Mina in a soft voice as she motioned for him to come over. Ever since he had given her the ticket, she had considered him to be a friend.

As Gerald walked over, he was surprised to see that both Xella and Waylon were there too.

“Gerald? Why are you here?” asked Xella, shocked.

“Eh? You guys know each other? He’s new here and he’s also my colleague!” said Mina as she smiled.

“So this is where you’re working!”

Xella was undoubtedly surprised to see him here. Other complicated emotions were also brewing deep inside her.

Waylon, on the other hand, was exceptionally upset when he heard that.

“Well, you should treat Gerald nicely then, Mina. He’s our ex high school classmate after all, and he definitely has potential!” said Waylon though there were hints of jealousy in his voice.

“Not bad. Also, he really is very skilled! Haha!”

“Hey, hey Gerald! Do you know what’s happening? What’s wrong with Stuart and the others?” asked a group of girls who quickly surrounded Gerald.

“Also, I heard from Xella that Mr. Crawford is here today! I don’t think we’ve seen him... Which one of them is Mr. Crawford?” asked Mina next.

Everyone was curious about that as well.

“Mr. Crawford, everyone’s headed to the meeting room now. Are you coming?”

At that moment, Zack’s voice could be heard from behind Gerald.

Chapter 531

“Gerald?”

XellaJaquin and Waylon Letts were both startled.

The entire marketing department was confused.

“Alright, I’m coming!”

Gerald shouted back.

“Gerald, you...you...you are Mr. Crawford?” Xella stuttered. She was clearly in shock.

Though Cindy’s mom joked around once, saying how Gerald could actually be Mr. Crawford from Mayberry the last time they had dinner at their place.

Xella was just flabbergasted back then when she heard of the joke.

But when she gave it a second thought, she was quite close to Gerald, so how could he be the super-rich Mr. Crawford?

But then, just a moment ago, when Mr. Lyle had called out his name, Xella’s mind completely went blank.

Gosh, could Gerald be Mr. Crawford?!

Gerald turned to Xella and nodded, “Yep!”

He then left as the crowd stared at him in astonishment.

Waylon, initially brought in by Xella to visit her father, was dumbfounded as he fumbled around for a chair to sit.

“F*ck! Gerald is a rich heir, and he’s our CEO! No wonder he had so many tickets! Just like what I told you, Gerald had a sophisticated identity, but... oh my god, never would I have thought that he’s our chairman!”

The moment Gerald had left, the entire marketing department went crazy!

“Luckily, we didn’t offend the chairman!” Some girls were both relieved and scared.

In short, the entire atmosphere was just in a frenzy.

Everyone was way too overwhelmed and shocked.

Regarding Stuart’s matter, the problem was handled with ease.

At that moment, they did not only confess what they had done but also exposed several other department managers who were previously not mentioned.

Most of the culprits were residents from Serene County, Mayberry.

The outcome was simple. They were all handed over to the police.

When they were being arrested, Ava threw Gerald a pitiful gaze, pleading for his help, but he turned a blind eye.

He had already given her a chance before.

Since she played the emotion card to deceive him, Gerald was not going to fall for it again!

Eventually, the matter had come to an end.

“Mr. Crawford, your birthday is in four days; any plans? Your dad gave me a call and told me it’s your first birthday since the end of your poverty-stricken life, so let’s celebrate and have a good time, shall we!” Mr. Lyle smiled excitedly.

“What else is there to plan? I’d usually celebrate my birthday with Mr. and Mrs. Winters, and this year is no exception. I’ll still go back to my hometown, but this time around, all of you are free to tag along! With more than twenty people, it’s going to be a blast, hehe!”

Gerald returned a bright smile.

Other than Xeno, who had been a good friend to Gerald since he was a kid, Gerald did not have many close friends.

After all, if you had no money or influence, who would want to play with a poor loser like you?

Hence why Gerald did not invite that many to his birthday party.

Those that he planned on inviting were Zack Lyle and Michael Zeke, probably Aiden Baker, Elena Larson, Xeno Lane, and Sienna.

He mingled well and had fun with those people, so he figured their company would be alright.

Gerald was not willing to make it too public.

After that, Gerald packed up his things as he prepared to go to town.

Michael, on the other hand, looked pale.

Zack had already noticed it, so he asked, “Michael, is there something you haven’t told Gerald?”

Michael scratched his head, anxiously, “I kinda told everyone that Mr. Crawford’s birthday is in four days. But he said to keep it low-key?”

“What?! You leaked that information out?” Zack froze, stunned.

At five in the afternoon, Gerald took a cab and headed back to town.

Gerald could now head back freely without causing any trouble. It was not a problem for the fleet to send him off.

However, the fact that he was Mr. Crawford was still unclear to Mr. Winters and his family.

If he returned like this, it would be too much extravagance, and Gerald did not like this feeling.

The next thing on the list for Gerald was to come clean with Mr. Winters and his family regarding the hospital bill settlement and his identity. After all, there was nothing for him to hide from the old couple.

While on his way back to his hometown, Gerald felt it was better to keep a low profile.

Seeing the roads being paved along the road, Gerald knew that his town would soon undergo some significant development.

Chapter 532

“Young man, is your house in this town?”

The driver was a middle-aged man. He asked warmly and flashed a smile.

Gerald nodded.

“Well, congrats, kiddo, your town is about to undergo quite a significant development, and no piece of land here will be left unattended! Not only will they provide housing fees, but also demolition fees and many job opportunities too! You look like a college student, so when you’re back home, you should make good use of this opportunity!”

“Yeah, that would be nice!”

As they chatted along the way, they eventually arrived at Gerald’s hometown.

It was a town, but Gerald’s home was in a small village in the middle of the city—a town village.

There were many families in the village that run mills. They ran businesses like milling flour and such.

Back then, the best part about the village was the fantastic fragrance of freshly milled flour in the air.

But this trip back to his village, it was apparent that the fragrance of milled flour which Gerald missed was significantly lesser now.

“Woohoo, the college student is back!”

“Why didn’t you bring your girlfriend back?”

“Gerald, have you found a job? I’m sure such a bright college student like you can find a good job, right?”

As soon as he entered the village, the villagers flocked around him and started questioning.

“Not yet!”

Gerald smiled.

“Hmph, then you went to college for nothing? It’s no different than the others who dropped out of school early to work!” A woman taunted with disdain.

The village folks’ words were dreadful and judgemental, but Gerald did not bother much.

Instead, he turned away from their remarks and finally reached the door of his home.

When he took out his keys to unlock the door, he realized that the door lock was changed some time ago, and he could not open it.

“What’s the matter?”

Gerald wondered for a moment.

“Oh, Gerald, you’re back!” A woman came out of the house next to Mr. Winters’s. She was Mr. Winters’s second daughter-in-law, Sandrilla Sutton.

She approached Gerald while munching on some peanuts.

“Sandrilla, how come the house locks were changed?”

Gerald asked as he smiled wryly.

He had met Sandrilla before back when they were at the hospital.

She was very greedy for money and would take advantage of every situation, and she did not like losses.

“Oh, I changed it; what’s wrong?”

“Then what about the keys to my house?” Gerald asked.

“Huh, what do you mean by your house? Gerald, do you even know who this house belongs to now? I know why you’re back. You heard that the house was about to be demolished, and you wanted to come back to get your fair share of the money. Let me tell you this once, don’t even think about it! This is my house and written black and white on the estate license!”

Sandrilla’s tone changed.

Gerald immediately understood what she meant.

Mr. Winters had two houses when Gerald’s parents moved here. One was for their own family, and the other one was this.

His parents paid for the house.

To be frank, there was no such thing as a real estate license in the countryside twenty years ago.

They only signed a simple contract, and it was the same contract that his dad had signed with Mr. Winters while they were drinking.

That was a long time ago, and Gerald had no idea where his father had kept the contract.

During that time, they would not even have thought that Mr. Winters' family would forcefully evict them to get the house back.

And it was because of this matter.

Sandrilla, too, heard about the demolition project and tried to get her hands on the house. She could make tens of thousands of dollars from it.

"Gerald, you're back! Don't listen to her nonsense; this house belongs to your family, and no one can take it away from you!"

Suddenly, Mr. Winters came out and exclaimed firmly.

Chapter 533

"What do you mean by that, old man? What do you mean it's theirs? I'm warning you, I've consulted with a lawyer, and if we bring this to court, the contract you signed will not be counted! The real estate certificate is ours anyway!" Sandrilla said frantically.

'Seems like they've been quarreling about the matter for quite some time now.'

Gerald thought to himself.

Earlier, when he called Mr. Winters, he sensed that Mr. Winters was in a bad mood.

It turned out that they had been quarreling.

Even if the housing estate belonged to the Crawfords, why would Gerald even fight with them for it?

“Besides, didn’t Gerald win the lottery? Why would he still care about this house anyway! And I don’t know where I lost the house key for the lock!” Sandrilla continued, fuming.

“Hmph!” Mr. Winters grunted as he picked up a large rock from the ground.

“Excuse me, what do you think you’re doing?” Sandrilla asked as she stepped back in anxiousness.

Mr. Winters then stormed towards the door and smashed the lock with the rock.

He then whipped out a new lock from his pocket.

“Gerald, with this lock, the three of them wouldn’t dare to take turns to change the lock to your house. Enough with this mess. Let’s go inside and clean-up later. Come over to my house for dinner; your aunt is cooking up a feast for you.” Mr. Winters said.

“Alright then!”

Gerald took the lock and forced a smile. Turns out, the second sister-in-law was not the first person to lock his house door. The first and third sister-in-law were also involved.

Gerald looked at how grim and hopeless the circumstances were and could only force a grin.

Sandrilla's face turned scarlet. She cried as she ran back home to make a phone call.

After Gerald had tidied up his house, he headed to Mr. Winter's for dinner.

He was greeted by a few shiny, brand new cars parked in front of Mr. Winters's house. The best looking one among the bunch was a black Passat.

They were all newly bought.

It looked like all the brothers, from the oldest to the third, were all there.

In previous years, they usually held many big feasts and occasions as such, but this year, things were different.

As Gerald stepped into the house, he heard someone banging on the table loudly.

"Why?! That was our house, and by what authority should we give it to them?"

"Yeah, mom, I heard that this time they're going to demolish several houses, and to reimburse them for the demolition, each household will be receiving tens of thousands of dollars. They're starting to repair the roads, and since our house is by the mountainside, they might even turn this place into a tourist attraction, or even a movie base! After this, our houses will be worth a lot of money! Money!" Francis Winters exclaimed excitedly.

"Yep, yep! Mom, a friend of mine, had invested in the tourism sector in her town. After her house was demolished, she was able to afford two houses!" Queeny Winters said.

“That too! Gerald’s family has taken so much advantage over us; besides, he won hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of lottery already!”

The eldest brother banged his fists angrily on the table and scowled.

“Let’s wait until tomorrow. I’ll find someone to get the house back.”

“Big brother, what makes you think that only you can do that? It’s not like I’ve got no connections at all!”

“I know, right! I’ve connections too, you know! Plus, if you get back the house, wouldn’t that mean the house would be under your name afterward?”

The entire family started falling into a chaotic squabble.

At this point, Gerald could not stand by the sidelines and eavesdrop any longer, so he walked in.

“Everyone, stop fighting! If you want this house that much, take it!” Gerald said.

“Gerald, this has nothing to do with you, so stop the nonsense. It doesn’t matter who you want to hand the house over to; the house still belongs to your family!” Mr. Winters said coldly.

Gerald, on the other hand, was fed up with the drama.

“Hmph, since Gerald said it himself, you don’t have to worry about it, old man!”

The sister-in-law chimed in haughtily.

As for Queenie, Francis, and the others...

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They threw death stares at Gerald.

Gerald had unintentionally embarrassed them previously at the hospital.

Because of that incident, any word that came out of his mouth at the moment seemed to be just infuriating.

“Okay, that’s enough. It has been a while since Gerald came back, so let’s eat first.”

The eldest brother gestured everyone to the dining table after hearing what Gerald had said.

Upon the eldest brother’s persistence, only then did the family get seated at the dinner table.

Regarding the housing matter and seeing the angered expression on their father’s face, he was afraid that he would fall sick once again from the stress and tension.

Hence, for the time being, no one touched on the topic.

“Gerald, have you finished your internship? Have you found a job already?” The third brother quizzed.

“Hah, seems like he hasn’t found any job yet, though. It’s difficult to look for a job these days, and if it wasn’t for our third bro pulling some strings, even Francis wouldn’t have found a job. But look at him

now, he works in an office for an insurance company, isn't that great?" The third sister-in-law boasted proudly.

"Queenie's job is even better! Although her job is quite laborious, it holds the infinite potential for future developments! Francis is still young for his age; being able to live so comfortably is not a good thing!" The second sister-in-law scoffed and replied.

"I'm not looking for a job," Gerald said, cutting the conversation.

"You can't afford to not get a job! Are you planning to get by your days with just your lottery money and do nothing? You'll starve to death sooner or later, and besides, without a decent job, who's going to look up to you?" The second sister-in-law sneered.

"Yeah, I'm afraid it's quite difficult for someone like Gerald to find a good job, but hey, our company is short of a toilet cleaner. I remembered last time Aunt Lacy, who cleaned the hallways, said their cleaning company was short of cleaners, so she told us to help her find one. Although the job seems pretty shabby, it is still a job nonetheless!"

Queenie spoke up; her voice was cynical.

"Hmmm, Queenie is right. Gerald, if you want to find a job, I can persuade Aunt Lacy with some gifts to get you the position!" The second sister-in-law nodded in agreement.

"Yeah, that won't be a problem!" Francis chuckled as he, too, agreed.

When they first met a while back, Francis and Queenie were still on probation.

After Gerald had embarrassed them with tens of thousands of dollars, their pride was hurt. But now, after entering the working world, their knowledge had widened. To them, Gerald was still a nobody who had just won a small lottery.

They continued to take turns to throw jabs at Gerald.

Gerald lowered his head as he ate his food.

After a while, he finally spoke up, "My birthday is in another three or four days. I've invited my friends to come over, and I'm treating them to dinner; all of you should join us too." Gerald extended the invitation in a low voice.

"Huh, okay... Well, Gerald, it's not like we like to ridicule you or anything; you may have some money, but why even bother holding a birthday celebration? It's not like you can compare with others anyway!"

"We'll see when the time comes; we'll go if we're free."

"Yeah, we're all kind of busy at the moment; we don't have time for your birthday!"

"Oh right, during my meeting today, my leader told us there will be a major event happening in just a few days. It's said that all the leaders from the province will be attending this event, so we've got many things to handle. I'm sorry, but I have no time to spare." Francis said.

Queenie, too was busy with something else.

Gerald caught on to their intentions immediately. None of them would spare even a minute for his birthday.

“Yeah, no problem, if you’re not busy, you can come over. Just saying. That’s all.” Gerald replied.

Everyone stopped talking at that instant.

“Gerald, you can ask your friends to come over. We’ll still celebrate with you, and I’ll even prepare a big feast!” Mr. and Mrs. Winters said in unison.

Upon hearing their words, Gerald’s heart warmed up, “Okay, I’ll let them have a taste of your cooking Mrs. Winters! I’ll get the groceries!”

They then continued briefing chatting.

Once dinner was over, the brothers drove home.

Everyone was ready to go to bed. Suddenly, Mr. Winters called out to Gerald.

“Gerald, wait a minute! I’ve something important that I must tell you!”

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“Hmm? What is it, Mr. Winters?”

Mr. Winters tugged at Gerald’s sleeve and sat him down.

“Of course, it’s something good! When you called earlier today, I told you about it, but I figured it’s better to tell you in person. It’s not the wisest to talk about it with my sons around.”

“Ohh, please go ahead then, Mr. Winters!”

“I used to work in the mines and befriended this guy. After all these years of moving around, when I went to town some time ago, I just happened to run into him, and we chatted for a bit, you know, to catch up. He told me that his granddaughter is almost the same age as you, around the same age group as you and Francis!”

“She graduated from college a year earlier than you, and now her family seems anxious to find her a boyfriend. Her family is well-off and rich, so there aren't any particular criteria needed. I just thought of introducing her to you, as the family has two daughters, and she's the eldest!” Mr. Winters explained excitedly.

“So, I wanted to discuss with you about arranging a date between the two of you for tomorrow! I'm not going to let Francis know about this matter, and you shouldn't tell him either!”

Gerald could see what Mr. Winters had in mind. Seeing that Gerald had difficulty looking for jobs, Mr. Winters wanted to help Gerald matchmake.

He did all these for Gerald, and his intentions were pure and honest.

It was just like the last time with Xeno.

But Gerald already had Mila Smith, and the previous dates that were matchmade to him did not go well at all. Gerald was traumatized by the girls, so he really repulsed the idea of it.

“Mr. Winters, there's no need for that, but thank you for your kind consideration! Now, if you'll excuse me...”

“What's there to be afraid of? You can mind your own business later, but I think you should meet up with her! It doesn't matter if it will work out, at least get to know her!” Mr. Winters wondered in bewilderment.

This scenario felt almost identical to the last time with Xeno.

Under this particular circumstance, Gerald could not tell Mr. Winters that he was actually well-off, and there was no need to help him find a partner.

He could neither accept nor reject that offer, and neither could he upset Mr. Winters.

“Alright, fine, I’ll meet up with her tomorrow.” Gerald nodded.

“Great, I’ll give her a call then!”

Mr. Winters eagerly grabbed his phone to make the call. He then returned minutes later in high spirits.

“Okay, luckily, my friend’s daughter is available tomorrow! I told him that both of you will be meeting and none of us will be tagging along. This is her number, give her a call tomorrow. Wherever you guys are going to meet, that’s up to you. Try to sweet-talk her, okay? Her name is Michelle Waxham, just call her Elle. Her mom is a teacher, so she is a sweet one with good manners.” Mr. Winters said excitedly.

“Alright then, I’ll give her a call later!”

After chatting with Mr. Winters, Gerald went home.

He pondered for a bit before he decided to make the phone call.

“Hello, who are you looking for?”

A lady's voice was heard from the other end.

"Hi, I'm Gerald; you must be Elle? It was Mr. Winters who suggested that I should give you a call!"

It was Gerald's first time to call someone this way. He tried to act a little cheerful and generous, but he still sounded a little restrained.

"Oh, oh, yes, I know," Elle replied politely. She then waited for Gerald to continue speaking.

"Are you busy?" Gerald asked.

"I'm good, no worries, you may continue!"

"Which middle school did you attend before? Was it the First, middle school or Second middle school?" Gerald tried to create conversations with random topics.

"I attended Second middle school; what about you?"

"I attended the First! So, are you free tomorrow? There's a new Domino's that just opened in town; why don't we meet there and hang out?"

Gerald did not know what else to talk about anymore, so he went straight to the point.

"Sure!"

"Well, you get some rest early!"

“Mmhmm, you too!”

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The both of them then hung up the phone.

Gerald felt a slight pang of guilt. He felt sorry for Mila.

But on second thought, he knew that this was not for real. They were just going to meet each other for a while, and that was not a big deal.

On the other hand, in the room.

Michelle hung up the phone and began removing her makeup.

Her younger sister, Xabrina was eavesdropping on their conversation while lying on the bed.

She then chuckled. “Sister, so you’re going to meet each other tomorrow. By the way, what’s his name? Do you know him?”

“He’s Gerald Crawford. He studied in First Middle School before. Hmm... but why do I feel that his name is so strangely familiar? Seems like I’ve heard it somewhere before.” Michelle said as she continued removing her makeup.

Both sisters had quite a charm to themselves.

Xabrina scoffed and laughed, “Geez, how much dumber can you get? Sister, he’s one year younger than you, and he studied in First Middle School. You can simply just get somebody to inquire about him from your juniors in the school. Then you’ll know more about him, right?”

“You’re right. I’ll inquire about it then!” Michelle jumped up and immediately started making phone calls.

She called a few female juniors to inquire about Gerald.

The moment she was done, her face turned pale.

“D*mn it! How dare grandpa introduce such a person to me?” Michelle voiced out anxiously.

“Eh? Sister, what’s wrong?”

“Sister, you don’t know about this. Gerald is an infamous poor student back in First Middle School. His family is so poor, so much so that his parents and elder sister are out there doing manual labor. Besides, when he was studying in middle school, he was always bullied by the others. No wonder he couldn’t find a job even after he graduated from university. His family is so poor. Certainly he couldn’t find a good job!”

Michelle cried out.

“D*mn! What are you gonna do then? You’ve promised him. Besides, it’s not like you’re able to bypass grandpa either!”

Her sister replied, feeling equally exasperated.

“I don’t care. Even if I can’t find myself a boyfriend, I’ll definitely never get together with someone as such. Oh my goodness! If my classmates or best friends knew that I’m dating this infamous poor student, we would definitely be a laughing stock in no time!”

Michelle said in a worried tone.

Since she was just a girl, she would certainly care about what the others' opinions were.

Everyone wanted to find themselves the kind of boyfriend who would be the talk of the town, in a good way. The more people praised their boyfriends, the happier the girls would feel.

“But Gerald turned out to be like this... Ahh! I don't want to think about it anymore! I need to go and tell mother all about it.”

Desperate and lost, Michelle called her mother.

She then told her mother all about Gerald.

Her mother was being put in a difficult position too.

“Oh dear, that won't do. Dating him is as good as telling the rest that my daughter couldn't find herself a boyfriend and just picked some random guy. How could this be?! No way! It's better to reject him firmly!” Her mother said.

“But mom, you do know how grandpa's temper is. He likes to keep his reputation. If he's being humiliated in front of his friends, he might not be able to eat or sleep well. Then Dad will be angry with you too, right?”

Xabrina asked worriedly.

Her mother let out a loud sigh. “Then what should we do? Okay, how about this. Elle, just go and meet him tomorrow. Immediately reject him and come home!”

Her mother suggested.

“But I’m afraid that I’ll bump into my classmates!” Michelle said.

The thought never occurred to Michelle previously. But now, Michelle cared about that a lot.

“What if my friends or classmates see us?” She cried out.

Her mother felt anxious too. “What can we do now, though? It seems like you don’t want to go!”

“Hey, mom, I have a solution. Why not, let’s ask our little sister to go then. She’s two years younger than him. Besides, she’s quite cheerful. It’ll be easier for her to reject him!”

Her mother said, “That’ll do too. Xabrina, just go there on behalf of your sister. After all, you’re more eloquent than I am!”

Xabrina nodded slowly and replied, “I can do that. But sister, after the university term reopens and I become a junior, please give me more pocket money!”

“No problem!”

The entire family smiled as they were happy with their decision.

Xabrina sneered. She then thought to herself:

'How could a man like him ever dream of marrying a pretty girl? I'll humiliate him to the core tomorrow. Otherwise, I'm not ever Xabrina!'

Chapter 537

The next day arrived.

It was the day of the blind date, which was arranged by Mr. Winters.

Although Gerald did not know what to expect of the outcome, he still took the effort to do some preparations since he had given his promise to Mr. Winters. He decided to head to Domino's earlier.

But something happened unexpectedly.

He spotted a girl sitting alone and drinking coke. There were chicken wings and French fries on her table. At that moment, she was swinging her fair legs, and it seemed like she was waiting for someone.

'Could it be her?'

Gerald thought to himself.

The girl then put down her fries. She was munching while typing on the phone.

Just at that moment, Gerald received a text message too. It was from Michelle.

"Are you here yet?"

Again, Gerald thought to himself: 'As expected, it is that girl.'

On first impressions, she was quite pretty.

So Gerald went ahead and slid into the seat opposite her.

“What... are you doing?” That girl was clearly shocked.

She looked at Gerald in a daze.

“Are you here for a blind date?” Gerald asked her.

“What blind date? Are you out of your mind?” The girl stared at Gerald, her eyes frozen with fear.

“Eh? Wait, you’re not Michelle? But didn’t you send a text message to me just now?” Gerald was stupefied.

“I don’t know who Michelle is. I was sending a Line message to my boyfriend. Do you understand?”
The girl replied in a shrill tone.

“Oh, I’m so sorry. I made a mistake!”

Gerald stood up in awkwardness.

‘D*mn it! If I knew earlier, I would have called first.’ He cringed.

As he was about to call Michelle, suddenly someone tapped him on his shoulders lightly.

He turned around and was stunned to see another gorgeous girl in front of him.

She blinked her large eyes and looked right into Gerald's.

"Are you Gerald? Are you here to meet someone?" The girl carefully asked.

"Yes, I am. And you are...?"

"Xabrina!"

"Eh?"

"I'm Xabrina's elder sister—Michelle!" Xabrina quickly concealed the blunder.

She then sneered. "Did you mistake someone else as me just now?" Xabrina asked him in a slight contemptuous tone.

Well, that was the plain truth.

The moment she entered Domino's, she was just in time to witness the whole scene unfold.

It was too awkward.

Hence, Xabrina just stood aside and watched from afar. She did not go over to greet him as she felt extremely awkward.

She even concluded to herself that Gerald was indeed strange.

But Xabrina decided to hurry up since she needed only less than five minutes to send him away and wrap up this issue for her sister.

Gerald sat across from Xabrina.

Gerald only needed to take a few glances at Xabrina to know that she was probably an empty flower pot—pretty on the outside, but nothing more than that.

On the other hand, Xabrina locked her gaze on Gerald and sized him up.

She had some inner thoughts as she stared at him:

‘Gerald is actually quite good-looking, to be honest. If only his family background were better, it would have been excellent for him to be my brother-in-law.’

‘But unfortunately, he’s so poor. How would my sister ever fall in love with him?’

‘In fact, if it weren’t for grandpa forcing my sister to get married so soon, certainly my sister would not be so anxious about looking for a boyfriend.’

‘Plus, there are indeed so many bees trying to gain my sister’s attention, just that she doesn’t fancy any of them!’

“So, I’ve heard about your condition. You still haven’t found a job, right? That means that you don’t have any salary. Besides, I heard that you’d bought a house in Serene County. But I’ve been

transferred to work in Mayberry, so it means that I'll be working in Mayberry soon. What are your plans in terms of living arrangements?"

Xabrina asked him.

She thought that it would be better to get straight to the point.

"Is that so? If you're talking about Mayberry, I do have a house there."

"What? You own a house in Mayberry? How large is it?"

Xabrina asked curiously.

"I'm not too sure about the details. Besides, I never stay there!" Gerald chuckled.

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Gerald realized after a while that her intention of the meet up wasn't for the blind date.

Besides, Gerald himself was unwilling to attend the blind date too.

So he decided to tease her, thinking that he might be able to get it over and done with.

"What are you pretending here? If you really have a house there, why don't you go and stay there?"

Xabrina sneered.

"I do own a house there. It's just that I don't have the luxury of time to go and stay. Besides, it's on top of the mountain. I can't get used to it if I stay there alone. That's a place for my future wife and me!"

Gerald smiled and replied.

“Oh, gosh! It’s on top of the mountain. Are you guarding the forest for anybody? Did they buy you a small house there?”

Xabrina chuckled cynically, her voice dripping with contempt.

“Then do you own a car? Let me tell you if I go to work in Mayberry, I won’t ride any car which costs less than forty-five thousand dollars.” She continued haughtily.

“I have a car too, but I park it at the foot of the mountain.”

“At the foot of the mountain. What kind of car is that?”

“A Lamborghini!” Gerald replied.

Xabrina scoffed. “D*mn it, oh my god. Are you out of your mind?! Gerald!”

She could not put up with it anymore.

At first, she thought that Gerald might have owned a house and a car in Mayberry.

It turns out that he seemed to be only boasting about himself.

‘I’m afraid that he doesn’t know that my sister and I’m rather aware of his family background and condition.’ She thought to herself.

“I’m telling the truth. It’s not a lie at all. I can’t do anything anyways if you choose not to believe me.”

Gerald shrugged his shoulders in resignation.

He felt that he took the blind date quite seriously. At least if Mr. Winters asked him about it in the future, he would be able to give him a proper answer.

“Look, let me just get straight to the point. My family won’t ever be in the liking of people like you. You know, I gave you the benefit of the doubt and thought that you might be an honest man since you’re poor. So I thought it’ll be fine to give you a chance to prove yourself. But now, let’s just forget about it. You s*umbag!”

Xabrina spat.

At that moment, she wanted to get up and leave immediately.

But she froze and suddenly thought:

‘F*ck! I came here early, and I even put my makeup on. But if I don’t even get to drink anything and just leave like that just because I got annoyed by him, that’s a real loss.’

‘The most important thing is that I need to carry out this task for my sister correctly.

‘If Grandpa knows that I left early after listening to him only for such a short while, he’ll certainly be extremely angry. Besides, Grandpa still doesn’t know that I replaced my sister for her.’

She was afraid that Gerald would make irresponsible remarks with Mr. Winters once he returned home.

Hence, she decided to let Gerald retreat on his account in the face of such difficult circumstances.

“Aren’t you leaving?” Seeing that she sat down again, Gerald asked her in shock.

“Who said that I’m leaving? I haven’t eaten anything yet since early morning. I want to have a meal. Besides, we met each other for the first time today. Shouldn’t you be giving me a treat?”

Xabrina crossed her arms around her chest and said.

“Oh! Yeah, sure, no problem!”

Gerald lowered his head and began thinking: ‘Why is she such a pain to deal with?’

“I want a hamburger, French fries, chicken wings, some fried chicken, and a pizza. I want to eat all of these!” Xabrina pressed her lips proudly and ordered.

“Can you eat that much?” Gerald was shocked.

“Hey, look, just say it whether you’re giving me a treat or not.”

“Fine! Yes, it’s my treat!”

Gerald then went over to the counter to order the food and brought them in a tray.

He just stared at her as she ate her food.

Gerald was thinking of a way to make her hate him so that she would just leave immediately.

In that case, he would be able to explain himself.

Both Gerald and Xabrina had their thoughts and plans in mind.

At that very moment.

“Hey! It’s really you! We were looking for the outside just now. It really seems to be you!”

Two men and two women entered the restaurant. They tapped on Xabrina’s shoulders as she was gobbling down the hamburger.

It startled Xabrina.

“You... Why are you here?”

Xabrina blushed as she quickly responded.

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“It’s just a coincidence that we decided to come here for our meals too. Bree, who is this?”

Suddenly, one of the men looked at Gerald and asked.

“Oh! He’s my friend. No worries, if you’re busy, just go ahead and get your meals first!”

Hearing that they had addressed her with her actual name, she grew too nervous.

They were not just any strangers but her classmates from her middle school. Besides, they were currently studying at the same university. It was beyond her expectations that she would have bumped into them today since she was quite afraid of a situation like that might happen.

“C’mon, don’t be like this, Bree. Hurry up and introduce him to us. What kind of a friend is this? Besides, he ordered so much delicious food for you. We must know who he is!”

They pleaded excitedly.

“Bree? Isn’t your name Michelle?” Gerald asked in confusion.

“Michelle? That’s Bree’s elder sister. Eh? What’s happening? Wait, you don’t know Xabrina? Then what are you doing here?”

They asked, looking astounded.

“Gerald, just shut up!” Xabrina quickly stood up nervously.

She then dragged the others aside.

It seemed like she wanted to explain the situation to them.

But, Gerald seemed to realize something afterward.

He vaguely remembered how Mr. Winters had mentioned that Michelle had a younger sister who was around three years younger.

Could it be that she's Michelle's younger sister—Xabrina?

'So does it mean that Michelle didn't come for the blind date today? But instead, she asked her sister to take her place?'

'D*mn it! No wonder she didn't even show the slightest bit of sincerity in today's blind date. She even dared to ask me tricky questions about houses and cars rudely.'

A moment later, Xabrina returned with the others. Her facial expression looked tight and worsened.

"Yes, that's right. I'm Xabrina. Michelle is my elder sister. But do you know why my sister asked me to come? She told me to be here to sound you out. My sister took this matter seriously when Grandpa told her about this, but what you did today is indeed very disappointing. I even told my friends about what you just told me, and even they could prove that you're just indeed boasting white lies about yourself!"

"Besides, your family's situation is even worse than we imagine. Am I right, you tell me." Xabrina rambled on and blamed Gerald.

"That's true. It turns out to be a blind date. Hey, bro, do you know how beautiful Michelle is? How could you even afford to want to be with Michelle, given the kind of person you are?"

A man taunted coldly.

Someone else sneered. "Michelle was the beauty of our school back when we were studying in Second Middle School. How about you? You're just a laughing stock from First Middle School. Hah,

how well you planned it out, eh! You sucked up to the older generation and got them to be the matchmakers for you. But have you ever thought about it? If Michelle gets together with you, how are you going to support her?”

Another woman said something else too, “Let’s not forget about this too. Just look at the bag I’m carrying now. It’s worth a few hundred dollars. Certainly, Michelle wants something better. How can you ever afford that?”

The women started to condemn him.

“Darling, I like the watch you wear better. This type of watch costs more than a thousand dollars. You’ll feel quite dignified if you wear that when you go out!”

A woman locked her arms in another man’s arm intimately.

She then purposely revealed the watch around his wrist.

After that, she looked at Gerald and said, “Gerald, don’t you wear a watch when you go out? Don’t you know that wearing a watch is a sign of maturity for men? Even though you’re unable to afford a good watch like this, I’m sure you’re able to buy a watch which costs only a couple of dollars, right?”

“That’s true! How dare you come out for a blind date with Michelle like this?”

It seemed as though they had discussed well amongst themselves on how to ridicule Gerald. He was their primary target.

Everything that they said sounded overwhelmingly vain and materialistic.

They were just a bunch of rich, young people who were ignorant and mischievous. Gerald had seen much of such show-offs and empty talks when the others showed off their wealth.

Despite knowing that, he still chose not to humiliate them and kept silent.

Whatever had happened was precisely what he wanted since they did not want him to be dating Michelle anyway.

Gerald just wanted to get away and forget about the entire ordeal.

But at that moment.

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As they were mocking Gerald, they suddenly stopped talking. They then looked outside in shock.

Two Yamaha motorcycles were parked at the restaurant. There were three men and a woman who got down from the motorcycles.

It seemed like they were going to have their meals in Domino's too.

"D*mn! Xabrina, look! It's that b*tch, Lily!"

"F*ck! When we were studying in middle school, you had a bad relationship with her. And what a coincidence that the both of you even went to the same university after. You even beat her up a while back. What are you going to do if she sees you later?"

"Oh, god. That tall dude is her boyfriend, and he's a thug. He has quite the influence around here. Bree, hurry up and hide from her!"

Their state of arrogance immediately changed to anxiousness.

Xabrina sneered. “Why should I hide from her? I don’t have to be afraid of her. I don’t think that she’ll dare to do anything to me!”

At that moment, Xabrina did not have the time to bother about Gerald anymore. She crossed her arms around her chest, arrogantly, and glared at Lily, who had just entered the place.

“Does Xabrina bear some grudges against that girl?”

‘Ooh... it looks like they’re about to get into a fight. What am I even doing lingering here... this feels so awkward.’ Gerald wanted to leave.

“D*mn! Well, well. It seems like enemies are surely bound to bump into each other. Xabrina, fancy seeing you here too!”

At first glance, Lily immediately spotted Sabrina and called out smugly.

“Franklin, this is the girl I told you about. Wanna know what happened in the university? Just because there was a man who liked her and was on her side, she slapped me when I got into a fight with her!”

Lily blurted the details of that past incident on the spot.

Xabrina did not give in either. The moment she saw Lily, her fury just grew.

It wasn’t long before they were already at each other’s throats.

Gerald merely listened to their quarrel from the sides.

He gathered from the rough observation that they had quite a good relationship with each other in middle school. However, they fell in love with the same guy at the same time, who was their classmate back then.

It all happened during their middle school, and everyone was in the phase of rebellion. If they were to compete for a boyfriend, the girls were much fiercer.

Xabrina was the teacher's daughter. Hence she was quite famous at that time. She was not the typical miss goody two shoes, so she redeemed herself by having many friends she treated like her own brothers and sisters.

At the same time, Lily also knew a lot of senior girls from the society.

So the best friends ultimately turned against each other, and they even made an appointment to fight live on a broadcast platform on the internet.

Since then, they held deep resentment toward each other.

It lasted until they went to university. There was a rather powerful and influential rich heir who was trying to gain Xabrina's affections at that time.

Xabrina started finding fault with Lily and beat her up. She always bullied Lily.

They then returned home during the summer break. Lily wanted to take revenge on Xabrina.

“Don’t worry, Lily. Is she the girl you’ve been talking about right? Go ahead and slap her now. I just want to see who dares to make a move! I’m Franklin Lockwood. I’m sure you’ve heard of me. Don’t you?”

Franklin flashed a smile filled with menace.

The three gangsters were around three years younger than Gerald. Besides, their hairstyles and the way they dressed stood out quite a bit. To put it simply, they looked as though they weren’t part of the societal norms.

But they were so slim.

Gerald did not bother meddling in such affairs which concerned those bunch of ignorant youth.

So he was about to leave soon.

“Let me tell you. I’ll definitely call Jimmy over if you dare to beat me up!”

Xabrina shrieked.

She noticed that Gerald was about to leave and cursed again.

“D*mn it, Gerald. You never fail to impress me. I’m not afraid even though I’m a girl. What are you afraid of? They want to beat me up, not you. What a coward!” She scowled and mocked him.

“I’ve got some other business to deal with. I don’t have time to play along with you. Who’s the coward here? I just choose not to bother about this.” He retorted and continued walking away.

“Fine! Go ahead and call him over so that I can take a good look at him. Let me tell you, my elder brother is a big gangster in Mayberry too. His name is Yale. Come at us if you dare. I’m not afraid of you! Besides, if it doesn’t concern the lot of you, get the hell out of here!” Franklin smiled coldly and replied.

Gerald had now reached the door. The moment he heard the name, he stopped right in his tracks and froze, stunned.

He then put one of his hands in his pocket and walked back over to them.

He tapped Franklin’s shoulders slightly. “Bro, you mentioned just now. Who’s your elder brother?”

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“My elder brother is Yale Lockwood, and he studied at First Middle School before. What’s wrong? Are you afraid? Hah. If you are, hurry up and get lost from my sight. Or you’re all dead meat when he has returned!”

Franklin stretched his neck and replied, his voice booming with dominance.

“Well, go f*ck yourself!”

Gerald’s eyes became bloodshot. He then raised his leg and threw a powerful kick right at Franklin’s stomach. He immediately fell to the floor at the blow, wailing in pain.

Although Gerald might seem frail on the outside, he was actually quite strong. Back then, he used to be quite a good fighter when he fought the others with Xeno.

Xeno got into more fights than him. Gerald only fought once for Xeno’s sake.

Basically, both his arms and legs were really quite strong.

When he heard that Franklin's brother was Yale, he became instantly infuriated.

Besides, Gerald was not afraid of anything now.

He then picked up a tool, stormed over toward the other two, and smashed them with it.

The three others were extremely skinny, and it was inevitable that they would have been beaten into a pulp by Gerald.

Xabrina was stunned when the scene unfolded before her eyes.

At that spur of the moment, witnessing how masculine and heroic Gerald was, she found him to be rather charming.

"Gerald, help me give them a good beating!" Xabrina shouted.

On the other hand, when Lily saw them getting into a fight, she took her chance, grabbed a vase beside her, and threw it at Xabrina.

Both girls started getting into a fight too.

Gerald totally transformed into someone violent and fierce.

His eyes turned bloodshot.

Who was Yale?

He was as good as a demon in Gerald's heart. Because of him, Gerald was unable to get rid of self-reproach feeling after all those years.

That was true. Yale was the culprit who got a gang of people to block off Gerald by surrounding him before beating him up into a pulp back in middle school. Yale went to such drastic measures all for a girl he liked.

He acted recklessly just because his family was wealthy and influential. Besides, his family had a lot of subordinates too.

It was after school when they bashed Gerald up. But luckily, that afternoon, Xeno came to his rescue as the both of them took on a dozen men.

That group of men was holding stools during the entire fight. They cornered Gerald and started beating him up, and Xeno appeared at that very instance with a knife in his hand.

Gerald would not be filled with so much hatred if that incident ended there and then.

Not long after, Xeno's family was destroyed by Yale's father and his subordinates. Xeno's father was a truck driver, but he acted rashly during that incident when his family was being trashed. Yale's men broke his legs, and just like that, as the breadwinner of the family, his life was completely ruined.

After the dust had settled, Xeno went to a vocational school. Despite being in a different school, Yale and his subordinates still found a way to drag Xeno out regularly to wallop him.

Fortunately, Xeno knew a friend from a society he treated as his brother, and he learnt how to repair cars through him. It was how Xeno got past his days and that was how things turned out in the end.

This unfortunate event on Xeno's family was also one reason why Gerald became extremely wrathful.

'Hah, so this guy even claims that he's going to call up Yale to come and beat us up. Well bring it on, I want to meet this motherf*cker too!'

Gerald growled below his breath as an unfamiliar sense of fury boiled within him. He did not bother about anything else anymore.

"Oh! My leg!" Suddenly, Xabrina screamed in pain.

It turned out that she had accidentally kicked the damaged vase, which fell on the floor, and her calf was cut.

The entire ruckus had become quite a huge mess, and the manager of Domino's had immediately reported the incident to the police.

Upon realizing that, Lily did not dare to do anything anymore.

She quickly dragged Franklin, who was still clutching his stomach in pain, and dashed out of the restaurant in a blink of an eye.

On the other hand, Xabrina's classmates, who were there previously, had long disappeared, clearing themselves out of trouble.

"Gerald, come and give me a hand. Bring me to the hospital to bandage my wound. If there's a scar, it'll be over for me!" Xabrina winced but could only ask for help from Gerald.

After all, she still had lingering thoughts that Gerald might have fought on her behalf just now.

‘You’re indeed such a handful!’ Gerald cursed, leaving the thought to himself.

Despite his reluctance, he helped Xabrina up and gently took her to the clinic just beside to get her wound bandaged.

Luckily, her wound was not too serious, and it was just a minor cut.

Xabrina was propped up against the hospital bed. She leaned backward as she smiled and looked at Gerald curiously.

She suddenly let out a soft chuckle.

“What are you laughing at?” Gerald asked frowning.

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“I really got a wrong impression of you today. I looked into you before coming here today. You seemed to be always bullied back when you were in middle school. Besides, when I first met you, I felt as though you were the type of person who was honest but just ignorant and gullible. Did you know that?”

“But it never occurred to me, the extent of your strength when you get triggered. The three of them didn’t even have the chance to counterattack. You don’t even know how fierce you were just now. You were so manly!”

Xabrina used her leg to nudge Gerald gingerly.

It was true. Xabrina indeed saw Gerald in a different light now. She even felt slightly touched too.

Generally, girls liked masculine men, especially those who exuded that to protect their girls.

Gerald indeed had just that vibe.

“Nah, you don’t know anything. I’m not usually like this.” Gerald said, shaking his head.

“I know that. I can see that too!”

Xabrina pursed her lips slightly.

“That’s enough. If you’re okay, you can go home on your own. I still need to return to that place.”

Gerald turned around and was about to leave.

“Why are you going back there?” Xabrina immediately questioned.

“I ruined too much furniture there. It’s only the right that I should compensate for that!” Gerald replied.

“Hey, wait a moment, Gerald. I still have something I want to say.”

“Is there anything else?”

“I just wanted to say that you’re quite a good person, Gerald.” Xabrina tone was low and serious for once.

Gerald chuckled at the remark.

He bitterly laughed it off and quickly left.

'When I first met him, I didn't feel such a thing. But now, why do I feel like he's quite a catch?'

Xabrina muttered to herself as she observed his strong, well-developed back.

But as soon as she thought about how Gerald fought the others for her sake just now, she smiled sweetly again.

It was almost noon when Xabrina reached home. Luckily, her parents were not at home. Only her sister was there.

"What took you so long? I called you, but your phone was switched off. Didn't you tell me that you would resolve it in twenty minutes?"

Michelle asked impatiently.

Suddenly, Michelle realized that her sister was limping and her calf was bandaged. She immediately gaped, stunned.

"Sister, what happened to you?! Did you get into a fight with someone?"

"Yes, sister. I fought with Lily. She brought the others to get back at me!" Xabrina whimpered.

Michelle spat and rolled her eyes in disbelief.

“That b*tch! What she has to be so smug about? How about that extremely poor loser? Have you met him?”

Michelle’s thoughts immediately went back to Gerald.

“Sister, why address him that way? You haven’t even gotten to meet him in person yet. Why do you talk about him in such a mean way?” Xabrina felt quite uneasy listening to her sister ridicule such harsh words.

She felt quite upset if anyone, even including her sister, condemned him since she discovered how nice Gerald was.

“D*mn! What’s wrong with you? Have you met him? What does he look like? Is he handsome? Is he vulgar? Don’t tell me that he’s ugly.” Michelle quizzed.

“I don’t know. I’m tired, and I want to go and rest in my bedroom now. Besides, I’m no longer helping you with this issue in the future.”

Xabrina was feeling down and limped away to her bedroom quietly.

‘What’s wrong with her, man?’

Seeing her sister’s attitude, Michelle felt confused.

On the other hand, Gerald had returned to Domino’s to settle the mess.

At that moment, he received a call from Mr. Winters, asking him about the blind date.

Gerald claimed that he would tell him all about it when he returned home. After sorting things out at the restaurant, he immediately headed back to Mr. Winter's place.

But when he reached the porch, he saw Queenie standing by the door. It seemed as though she was waiting for someone.

The moment she saw Gerald, she quickly walked toward him.

"Oh my god! I've been waiting for you for sooo long!! And you're finally back now. Come here. I need to tell you something..."

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"What's wrong?" Gerald asked her, taken aback.

Queenie said, "Are you free tomorrow?"

"Why? I may have to go and buy some ingredients tomorrow."

The day after tomorrow was his birthday. Mrs. Winters was going to cook a meal, so he could not afford to let her go out there by herself and use her own money to buy the ingredients. He wanted to make sure that he bought the ingredients himself.

Queenie sneered.

"You've been eating what my grandpa and grandma have been eating for these past few days. Why the sudden need to go and buy the ingredients? By the way, your birthday is the day after tomorrow,

isn't it? So anyways, buying ingredients shouldn't be that much of a hassle. Now, I have something good awaiting you. Just put all other things aside."

"Wow, you've actually got something good in store for me?" Gerald chuckled bitterly and sarcastically.

Although he grew up with Queenie, she had always been unfriendly toward Gerald since they were kids, even until now as grown-ups. Her siblings always bullied him.

Gerald greatly resented them when he was young. But as years passed, he just took it with a pinch of salt and would only be slightly angry if Queeny condemned him.

Usually, he would not bear grudges against her. It was all for the sake of Mr. and Mrs. Winters.

Queenie smirked.

"What do you mean by that? You don't even know how nice I'm to you. We're going to the hot springs in Fuenti tomorrow to enjoy ourselves. We want to bring you along. We haven't even gotten a chance to bring you out for any fun ever since you got back. Now Fuenti has been developed for tourism. That place is rather nice now!"

"Wow, you're actually being so nice and taking me out to have fun?" Gerald raised his eyebrows.

Fuenti was the town where Bianca was at. That quaint little town was beside mountains and rivers.

Those were some of the reasons for the development.

Gerald wanted to go there too to just take some time to have fun.

But he was rather puzzled as he was being invited by Queenie all of a sudden.

“Nonsense! So are you coming or what? I’ll even treat you to a meal.”

Queenie hugged her shoulders and exclaimed smugly.

Gerald shook his head. “Forget it. Thank you! I’m not going!”

“Huh? What?” It did not occur to Queenie that Gerald would reject her.

‘Shouldn’t he feel scared but honored, given his personality?’ She wondered, her brows crunched up in displeasure.

“Queenie, is Gerald here? Eh? Why are you guys standing outside when you’re home? Hurry up! Lunch is ready. Come in and have lunch now. We can talk about the progress of that incident too.”

At that same time, Mr. Winters had walked out of the house and beckoned for both Gerald and Queeny to enter.

But Queenie looked cold, and she did not budge.

“What’s wrong, Queenie? Who offended you again, since you’re such an arrogant and young woman?” Mr. Winters smiled bitterly.

She sneered. “Who else could it be? It’s Gerald!”

“Nonsense! Why would Gerald offend you?”

“But it’s true! I tried to be nice to him; I invited him to have some fun in Fuentin. But looks like he’s unwilling to accept my kind offer. He said that he wouldn’t go!”

Queenie replied.

“Gerald, if that’s true, why not just go and have some fun with Queenie. She may just want to have a good time with you. The scenery at the hot springs is rather nice. If you’re not occupied or busy, just go.”

Mr. Winters did not think that there was anything wrong with that. He felt that his granddaughter had finally come to her senses.

Seeing how Gerald and Queenie were getting along with each other well, Mr. Winters was undoubtedly more than happy.

“Ahh... fine. I’ll go tomorrow then.”

Hearing how Mr. Winters had put it, Gerald did not say anything more and simply agreed.

“Hmph!”

Queenie rolled her eyes at Gerald before entering the house.

He might not be able to go and get the ingredients the next day since he was to go out with Queenie, so Gerald went to the local supermarket that afternoon itself to buy them instead.

The next day.

It was early in the morning, and Queenie took Gerald along to their said destination.

She drove a Passat, and it was his father's car.

She then took Gerald along and started their journey toward Fuentin.

Gerald definitely did not want to take the seat beside the driver.

He felt that it was rather stuffy in the car.

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Hence, he rolled down the window since he wanted to get some fresh air.

But much to his surprise, the window was rolled up again the moment he rolled it down.

He then turned to look at it and realized that it was Queenie who rolled the window up.

'D*mn! That b*tch!'

Gerald cursed under his breath. He tried to only roll down the window slightly, but Queenie immediately rolled it up again.

"What are you doing?"

Gerald asked exasperatedly, feeling frustrated.

“Huh! I’m about to ask you that. I’ve already rolled down the car windows in front. Why did you have to open all of them? What if there’s dust coming into the car? Have you ever even sat in a car before?”

Queenie scoffed back, her tone full of contempt.

Right at that moment, her phone rang.

“Okay fine, Yolanda. I’ll go and pick you up right away. Just wait for me. Yes. Didn’t I tell you about it last night? I’ve got someone with me. Later, we’ll let him help us carry our bags when we climb up the mountain later. You can just focus your entire attention on trying to gain Jarvis’s affection. You totally forget about your friends when it comes to somebody you like!

“Sure! We’ll meet each other later. My boyfriend? He has his car. He’s driving his car and going there now. Don’t worry, we’ll certainly help the two of you get together, okay? See you later! Love you!”
Queeny then hung up.

Gerald finally understood what was up with Queenie.

“You said that you wanted to bring me out for some fun. And by that, you’re making me carry bags for you? D*mn you, Queenie!”

Gerald yelled in anger.

“Hey, hey, chill man. Why are you so angry? So what if you carry our bags for us? It’s not a big deal. Besides, I’m going to buy you meals today. What are you afraid of? My best friend is trying to do her best to impress her crush today. You better behave yourself. We’re not the important ones today. Both my best friend and Jarvis.”

Queenie warned.

If it was not for the fact that he had already gotten into the car, and Mr. Winters was the one who saw them off, Gerald really wanted just to get off there and then.

But since he had given his promise, it would not look good if he did not uphold his promise.

So he remained silent.

Queenie peeked at Gerald from the rearview mirror and smiled smugly to herself.

She then said, "Gerald, you seem to be angry. Back then you wouldn't get angry no matter how many things I've asked you to carry for me. I know why you feel angry and anxious now. Since primary school, I've told you that it's impossible between the two of us. You'd better not be thinking about that!"

During primary school, both Francis and Queenie went to school in their hometown.

They only went to the county during middle school.

They were quite young at that moment. As such, Gerald too went to school with Xeno and Queenie.

Queenie was a beauty back then, and all the boys idolized her. Whenever they placed 'house,' all of them competed with each other just to be Queenie's husband.

For that matter, Xeno had always fought with Gerald because of Queenie.

But all of those things happened when they were very young. They were just immature kids who didn't know anything at all.

It was evident that Queenie still thought that Gerald had always been in love with her.

She assumed he was feeling quite upset, given that she claimed that she had found herself a boyfriend now.

She thought that she understood Gerald's temperament, given what a loser he was.

But much to her surprise, Gerald had turned away, looking out of the window. He did not even bother talking to her anymore.

Queenie soon went to pick up her best friend—Yolanda.

Yolanda was quite pretty herself too.

He seemed to have met her before when they were in primary school.

It did not occur to him that she would become so beautiful after not meeting her for such a long time.

She was tall and slim, and she had a good body figure.

The minute she got into the car, she glanced at Gerald. She found him to be really familiar looking.

But instead, she did not greet him and just handed her bag to Gerald.

“Hey you, I’ve got sunscreen, my makeup, and some other things in there. I need them all the time. Please carry the bag for me properly later when we’re having fun!”

“Alright!” Gerald nodded impatiently.

He listened quietly as Queenie and Yolanda chatted chirpily with each other throughout the ride.

They discussed in excitement about how Yolanda was trying to gain Jarvis’s affections.

Soon, they reached the entrance of the hot springs.

There were already two handsome guys waiting for them there.

“Queenie, Yolanda, over here!”

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Two men greeted them.

Both Queenie and Yolanda then led Gerald there, who was carrying a large and small bag.

“Why did you arrive so late? Oh, hey, you indeed found someone. That’s good. It seems like we can enjoy ourselves fully today. Bro, thank you for your help.”

A man walked over and held Queenie’s waist. He looked at Gerald, smiled, and thanked him.

Another man then took out a pack of Marlboro’s and attempted to offer a stick to Gerald.

“Jarvis, are you seriously giving him a cigarette? He’s not a smoker. Besides, even if he is, it’s not like he can afford such a good one!” Queenie scoffed.

“His name is Gerald, and he’s the guy I’ve told you about. He’s going to help us to carry our bags today. We’ll only need to buy him a meal this afternoon.”

Queenie then held the man’s hand and said, “Gerald, this person who just offered you a cigarette is called Jarvis Fish. His parents are working in Water Utilities in the county. This is my boyfriend—Hugo Wayman. His family owns factories.”

As Queenie introduced Hugo to Gerald, she carefully observed Gerald’s facial expression and reaction.

She was eager to see what kind of response he would have given that she had found herself such a capable boyfriend.

But much to her dismay, Gerald just nodded nonchalantly, unfazed.

Both Hugo and Jarvis were only pretending to be nice to Gerald. In actual fact, they were quite arrogant men who loved extravagance.

How could one tell?

It was because they just handed Gerald a backpack before they went to buy drinks.

In the end, they only bought four bottles of drinks. They did not bother about Gerald.

But after thinking about it, Gerald decided just to let it go. He would just treat it like he was there having fun by himself. He would act as if they did not exist.

Besides, Queenie was there. What more could he do?

“Eh? Hugo, why are there so many people here in the hot springs? There are lanterns and lights everywhere. What are they going to do?”

Queenie asked curiously.

“I was discussing this with Jarvis just now. There are a lot of people here today. The staff looks really busy too. From the way things look, it seems like they will hold a big event, probably at the Hot Spring Hotel. I asked the security guard about it just now. I heard that the hotel has been reserved by a few influential bosses from Mayberry, and they’re going to have a huge, important function here tomorrow! A lot of big shots will be there! Why? Didn’t you hear about it since Touin is so close to Fuentin?”

Hugo said.

“No, we didn’t hear about it. Hmm, but let’s not be bothered. Come! Let’s go and have fun now!”

“Yes, sounds good! Let’s go!”

They then went ahead to buy the tickets.

The price of the tickets in a village town as such was not that expensive. It was only around seven dollars per ticket.

When they reached the ticketing booth, they saw a few people arguing there.

It seemed as though they were quarreling with the ticket seller.

“Why aren’t you selling the tickets today? The five of us purposely came all the way here today! Why can’t you sell us the tickets?”

A girl who seemed to be the leader of the gang asked coldly.

There were three women and two men in that group.

“Yeah! You’ve only posted the news on your official website now. But we’ve already come all the way here!”

“I’m so sorry. We also received a last-minute notice just fifteen minutes ago. Our tourism spot won’t be opened to any tourists. It’s because we need to decorate the venues for many important functions.”

The staff explained the situation patiently.

“But how about the tourists who entered the place just now? I didn’t see you asking them to leave. I don’t care. It was just fifteen minutes ago. You have to let us in!”

“We’re truly sorry...”

That fueled their impatience and anger.

“D*mn! The tourism spot just got closed! F*ck! If I knew earlier, I would’ve bought the tickets with Jarvis just now!”

“Then, Hugo, what should we do now?”

Queenie asked in disappointment.

“How about this? Let me call my dad and ask him to use his connections and give it a try!”

Hugo then whipped out his phone.

Jarvis also said, “I’ll call up my dad too. He knows the vice manager here!”

“Alright. Jarvis, I believe in you!”

The guys proceeded to make the phone calls.

Queenie then took some tissue paper and helped to dab away the sweat on Hugo’s forehead.

“Hey you, come here, give me my bag!”

Seeing Queenie, Yolanda quickly rushed Gerald over to get her bag.

“D*mn! Hurry up! How could you be so slow?”

Gerald then put the big bag down and started looking for her small bag.

Yolanda immediately scolded him.

“Hurry up and give it to me! You’re so slow!”

“Found it!”

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Just as Gerald took the tissues out, Yolanda snatched them out of his hands before rushing toward Jarvis. She wanted to help wipe the sweat off Jarvis’s forehead too.

‘The audacity of some people!’ Gerald thought to himself, irritated.

Yolanda seemed to be quite fond of Jarvis, which was why she had invited Queeny along. Queeny would act as her wingwoman so that she could get closer to Jarvis.

Yolanda knew what she wanted. It was as though anyone other than Jarvis didn’t deserve her attention. Even though Gerald had just met her, he was already fairly annoyed with her attitude.

“So, what did your dad say, Hugo?” The question came from Queeny.

“Well, he said that he can’t help us... He said he wasn’t able to contact anyone here. What about you, Jarvis?” asked Hugo.

As Hugo turned to look at him, Jarvis seemed to have just ended his phone call as well.

“Any luck?” asked Queeny. She was now willing to pay for a ticket since they were no longer for sale. After all, getting a ticket would still be a great honor.

“My dad told me to wait for a bit... He’s going to contact the vice manager!” replied Jarvis.

Gerald had been standing at the side and he was beginning to panic as well. Though the springs had been built by his company, he didn’t know anyone here. It would appear that they only hired locals, along with the older employees back in Wayfair Mountain.

If it wasn’t for the strong security system that had been implemented, Gerald wouldn’t be just standing in place doing nothing. However, the sun was blazing and he was carrying a lot of things as well.

Annoyed, Gerald said, “Hey! Are we going in or aren’t we? I’ve been standing under this heat for hours!”

“F*ck you! Jarvis is already contacting some people so just be useful and shut up!” replied Queeny, slightly embarrassed.

Ten more minutes passed and Gerald was beginning to feel extremely dehydrated. There wasn’t any shade nearby and Queeny had refused to let him wait in the car as well.

What a pain! Now at his wits’ end, Gerald resorted to texting a message to Zack. He told him to have someone escort them. Waiting any longer would just be a waste of time and energy.

Zack replied immediately. “Yes sir! I’ll have someone escort you right away!”

Jarvis on the other hand, had just hung up on yet another call.

“So what did he say?” asked Hugo.

“My dad’s contacted Mr. Dean, the vice manager here. Both managers are out of town now, so everything depends on Mr. Dean! If he can’t help us, nobody can!” replied Jarvis.

The other group was now staring at Jarvis as well. The employee then said, “You guys should just come back next time. The weather’s been really hot so getting a heat stroke isn’t out of the question if you continue waiting. I can assure you that you won’t be able to-”

At that moment, the phone in the ticket counter began to ring, interrupting the employee. “Hello? Ah, I see. Understood!”

After ending the call, she turned to look at the group with a polite smile before saying, “Dear sirs, the manager just called and informed us that you’re all welcome inside. All your fees for today will also be covered!”

The employee had honestly not expected this herself. Did their calls really get them in? That Jarvis and Hugo did say that they were going to contact someone in power. She hadn’t anticipated their so-called ‘connections’ to be real. After all, it was the manager himself who had told her to let them in!

“Wow! You actually managed to get the manager to let us in!” exclaimed Queeny and Yolanda excitedly.

Yolanda was especially excited. It was as if her admiration for Jarvis was never-ending.

At that moment, the leader of the other group approached Jarvis. “Hey there handsome, think you could let us in too? We’d gladly pay for the tickets!” said the leader, her admiration for Jarvis clearly reflected in her eyes

“Sure darling! Go right on ahead!” Jarvis was overjoyed. He never knew that his father held so much power. He was able to contact the vice manager and the manager as well! His ego immediately inflated immensely. The two groups then walked into the building cheerily.

Once they were gone, a female escort approached the employee before asking, “What happened? Did the manager really speak up for them?”

“Well, the manager said that one of our VIPs had arrived and we weren’t giving them access. He also told us to be on our best behavior! It would be unwise to disappoint this VIP after all!”

“Understood!”

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Gerald was speechless as he followed behind them. Someone else had taken the credit for what he had done. He had thought that scenarios like these wouldn’t happen to him again.

Jarvis himself looked like he was clearly out of his mind. It was as though he had lost all his common sense. Why would the manager speak up for him when the one he had contacted was only the vice manager?

Then again, Gerald knew that this was partly his fault for acting so low-key with everything he did. However, he didn’t really want to expose his true identity now, especially not in front of these pricks. The entire experience was just slightly disappointing.

As they entered further into the building, the two groups slowly merged into a single, large one. After Jarvis’s ‘help’, the girls from the other group were feeling grateful toward him. Some of them even started idolizing him, and this made Yolanda green with envy, birthing a strong sense of rivalry in her soul.

The girls flirting with him were very pretty as well. Naturally, this only served to further fuel Yolanda’s jealousy and annoyance at the girls. However, all she could do was roll her eyes at them.

“Put my bag away for me!” said Yolanda as she tossed her bag at Gerald before walking toward Jarvis, visibly unhappy.

“Say Jarvis, where are we going later? Didn’t you say that you’d take me to the springs and treat me to some good food?” asked Yolanda as she pouted her lips and clung to Jarvis’s arm.

She was going on the attack now. If she didn’t act fast, her man might get stolen away by one of these girls! Both Hugo and Queeny had been helping her get closer to him these days. Adding that to Yolanda’s good looks, Jarvis and her were now at the stage where they could openly flirt with each other. She was already so close.

“Of course I will!” said Jarvis as he smiled.

“Oh? Is she your girlfriend, Jarvis?” asked one of the girls.

“She’s so pretty!” complemented another as she smiled.

Yolanda simply remained silent as her ears perked, waiting for Jarvis’s response.

Jarvis then put on a fake smile as he said, “Nah, she’s just a really close friend!”

“Speaking of which, miss, I haven’t had the pleasure of knowing your name,” continued Jarvis. The girl he was speaking to was indeed, very beautiful and elegant.

“Michelle Waxham, but you can call me Elle. Thanks for today. Do you want to be friends?” asked Michelle as she smiled sweetly.

“Of course!” replied Jarvis as he fished his phone out. While the two exchanged numbers, Yolanda’s pouting only worsened.

Gerald on the other hand, had been quietly observing the entire incident. He realized earlier that the girl looked somewhat like Xabrina. Once he heard her name, he immediately understood why. Queeny herself seemed to be stunned. She then asked rather hesitantly, “Um... Are you by any chance related to Brook Waxham?”

“Oh? He’s my grandpa!” replied Michelle.

“Well then! What a coincidence! My grandpa is Theodore Winters! Does that name ring a bell?” exclaimed Queeny.

Michelle simply chuckled. How could she not know who that was? After all, he was the one who had set her up with that weirdo, Gerald Crawford.

“Of course I do! Actually, you’re Queeny Winters, aren’t you? Mr. Winters’s granddaughter! I remember meeting you a few times when we were young!” said Michelle. She seemed to be warming up to them.

Gerald felt slightly awkward with this turn of events. It was just way too coincidental. However, he was lucky that Mr. Winters had not mentioned anything about the blind date when they had their lunch together yesterday.

Queeny was already on the way home when Mr. Winters asked Gerald out for lunch. It was clear that he wanted to ask about the blind date, but it was inconvenient to do so since Queeny was around. Gerald himself didn’t want to talk about it. He had wanted to wait till lunch before bringing it up with Mr. Winters.

Besides, it was best that Queeny didn't know about the blind date. She would definitely tell Francis about it, which in turn would only cause more conflict between them. The best thing to do was to keep it to themselves.

D*mn it. Gerald's original blind date was here and she was Xabrina's sister! However, she was truly very elegant and even Gerald couldn't help but sneak a few stares at her.

Michelle, on the other hand, was very curious about Jarvis. Her curiosity began when she saw him do what he did at the ticket counter just a while ago. When she realized that she was already acquainted with Queeny, the two of them immediately clicked and kept their conversation going.

As for Yolanda, she was fuming with jealousy. She even made a few passive-aggressive remarks whenever she could.

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Since Jarvis didn't try to stop her, Yolanda continued making rude remarks from time to time. Gerald on the other hand, was being treated as though he didn't exist.

After two long hours of shopping without stopping to rest, it was already close to eleven at night. Since there were several restaurants in the building, Jarvis suggested for them to find a place to have supper. They would be able to talk more while seated anyway.

Naturally, Michelle and her friends accepted the offer and they soon found a nearby restaurant. Finally able to take a seat, Gerald put their bags down and sat at one of the tables as well.

"And who said that you could sit here?!" screamed a voice just as Gerald sat down.

"Aren't we eating? Is it wrong for me to take a seat?" asked Gerald, clearly annoyed.

The voice had belonged to Yolanda and she was at her limit. Her jealousy had overpowered her rationality since she had to watch Michelle talk to Jarvis this entire time. Since she wasn't being noticed enough, she decided to cause a scene and simply yelled at Gerald.

"Just look at you! Who do you even think you are to sit with us? As if you could ever be at our level! Save yourself the embarrassment and stay in your own lane!" screamed Yolanda again. She was clearly referring to someone else at the same time.

"Now what do you even mean by that?" snapped Gerald.

"Gerald Crawford, why are you even fighting her? Just leave her be, plus, she's telling the truth anyway! Seriously, fighting with a girl. What kind of man are you?" said Queeny. She knew Yolanda was upset so she ended up scolding Gerald as well.

"Gerald Crawford?" At that moment, Michelle turned to look at Gerald. Wasn't that the name of her blind date? Was this person before her really her supposed blind date?

"Oh, you probably have no idea who he is. He's my grandpa's neighbor and he's rented our unit. I invited him over so that he could carry our bags! I'll treat him to lunch later on as thanks," said Queeny. She was afraid that Yolanda would end up fighting with Michelle, so she quickly tried to change the topic.

"Ah, I see!" replied Michelle as her cheeks flushed in slight embarrassment. She took another glance at Gerald and felt extremely awkward.

She had imagined what Gerald looked like before, and she thought that he'd at least look decent and have a great personality even though he came from a humble background. However, here he was, carrying bags for a mere meal. He looked rather decent, but didn't his actions mean that he was just some lowly pushover?

She then turned to look at Queeny who didn't seem to know anything about the blind date. If neither Queeny nor Gerald brought the topic up, Michelle preferred taking that knowledge with her to her grave.

"Excuse me, miss! This is quite hot!"

The voice came from a waitress whose path was being blocked by Yolanda. As Yolanda turned around, her arm hit the corner of the tray and the waitress almost lost her grip. Thankfully, she was able to hold on to it. However, a bit of soup ended up getting spilled onto Yolanda's elbow.

"I'm terribly sorry, miss! Are you alright?" apologized the waitress immediately.

Her apology, however, was only replied with a tight slap on the cheek from Yolanda.

"Why don't you watch where you're f*cking going? How dare you spill soup onto me!" Yolanda's rationality had long set sail, and only anger resided within her now. She had been humiliated in front of Jarvis for far too long, thus she directed all her anger toward the waitress.

The waitress herself seemed quite young. She bore the look of someone who had just finished high school. The slap stunned her, and she was now only staring at Yolanda in disbelief. Gerald and the others were stunned as well. Nobody had expected Yolanda to actually hit someone.

"Natalie? Natalie, what happened? Who hurt you?"

At that moment, the manager of the restaurant ran out to help. Following him were a few other waiters and waitresses. As they helped her up, the few who followed the manager out and even the manager himself looked terrified.

“She did!” shouted Natalie as she pointed at Yolanda. Her other hand was cupping her now swollen cheek.

“How dare you! Do you even know who she is?” scowled the manager as he glared at Yolanda.

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“As if I care! She’s the one who spilled soup on me! I’ve done nothing wrong! She’s a mere waitress anyway, big deal!” huffed Yolanda. She wasn’t afraid of the consequences since she knew that Jarvis was definitely the most powerful man in the room at that moment. Nobody would dare to defy him and in extension, her.

Besides, her spotlight had been stolen by Michelle and she was already having a pretty bad day. Not only did they not apologize for the soup on her clothes, but the manager was here scolding her! This was ridiculous...

The more she thought about it, the more Yolanda looked as though she would explode in anger.

“Don’t cry, Nat... I’ll have someone call Mr. Wadford for you. Your dad will definitely be able to handle this!” comforted the manager.

Natalie Wadford was the daughter of Blake Wadford, the manager of this entire tourist attraction. Her father was also one of the main organizers of the new projects around the area. Blake had been assigned from the main branch in Mayberry, and he had absolute power within this area.

Since Natalie was bored during her summer holidays, she came here since she wanted to gain some experience doing a part-time job. However, it was just her first day of work and she had already received a slap to her face! Though she had begged her father for the longest time to allow her to take the job and have some fun, her efforts ended up being the worst experience she had had throughout her time here.

“Humph! Call whoever you want to! We have Jarvis here! As if we’d be afraid of you guys!” scoffed Yolanda as she clung to Jarvis’s arm. Everyone then turned to look at Jarvis. Being the egoistic man he was, he knew that Yolanda was using his power to do as she pleased, and this stoked his ego to new heights.

He then stood up before coldly saying, “How amusing. Fine, let’s see who you’re calling over! Don’t worry Yolanda, I have my connections!”

As Yolanda continued yelling hysterically, the manager made a phone call. A few seconds after his call ended, three Audi A6 cars screeched to a halt at the restaurant’s entrance.

“Who the f*ck dared to slap my daughter? Do you have a death wish?!”

The furious voice came from a middle-aged man donning a suit. As he got out of his car, eight other bodyguards followed closely behind. Nobody dared to mess with them since they were clearly men with power.

Yolanda now looked slightly terrified and she turned to Jarvis for help.

“Mr. Wadford! She did it! She’s the one who slapped Natalie on the face!” exclaimed the manager as he pointed toward Yolanda.

“Oh? This b*tch? You sure have some guts, I’ll give you that much. Grab her!” shouted Blake as he signaled his bodyguards to do so.

Jarvis immediately stood in front of Yolanda as if he knew what he was doing. “Heh, Mr. Wadford, was it? There must be some kind of misunderstanding! Should I give a call to Mr. Dean? Since it was the manager who had let us in, starting a fight here won’t be any good now, would it?”

It was clear that Jarvis thought that he held the most power in the room. After bringing up his superior connections, all he needed to do now, was to wait for Blake to back down.

“For real? Those nobodies? Are you seriously trying to threaten me with them? You need a reality check, brat! F*ck off!” yelled Blake as he slapped Jarvis on the face. Blake’s had swung his hand hard, and Jarvis was almost knocked down from that one slap alone.

“J-Jarvis!” Both Michelle and Yolanda rushed toward him after seeing that happen.

“Humph! And here I was wondering why this brat was being so stubborn! Listen, kid, do you really think Mr. Dean and Mr. Will rule this area? Hah! Both of them still have to take orders from Mr. Wadford!” scoffed the restaurant manager.

“...What?” Upon hearing that, Jarvis immediately froze. He had wanted to fight back but after finding out that Blake was even more powerful than Mr. Dean, he didn’t dare to move another muscle.

Yolanda’s screams suddenly echoed through the restaurant. Two of Blake’s bodyguards were pulling her hair and another was slapping her face. Chaos had befallen the group.

“Listen up, brats! You hurt my daughter so each and every one of you will pay for this! Don’t even think about escaping!” roared Blake, his eyes red. He seemed to love his daughter very much.

None of them had expected their supper to end this way. Queeny and the others were struck with fear the moment they heard what he said.

“M-Mr. Wadford, please! We didn’t even do anything!” pleaded Hugo immediately.

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The bodyguards showed no mercy. Though Michelle was slightly older than the others, she too was terrified as she watched the chaos unfold before her eyes.

Gerald on the other hand, simply sat there quietly. He was no saint and he wasn't obligated to help everyone with everything. He knew that Blake Wadford sounded familiar and if he wanted to, he could even talk him out of it. But Gerald didn't want to. He had no obligations to help Yolanda and Jarvis. Both of them were mere strangers to him.

Besides, Yolanda had constantly looked down on him. She deserved to be beaten up like this for always being so stubborn and reckless. It would seem that Queeny and the others were going to be involved in this as well.

All of a sudden, a team of employees rushed into the restaurant.

"M-Mr. Wadford! Stop! Please stop!" pleaded what seemed to be the team's leader. More employees rushed in behind her.

The leader of the team was the girl at the ticket counter earlier. She was apparently also responsible for this area.

"Huh? Oh, it's you Becky. What's wrong? Why shouldn't I beat them up?" scowled Blake.

Becky immediately stood beside him before whispering into his ear. In an instant, Blake's face turned pale.

'...What? They were let in by Mr. Lyle?' Blake thought to himself.

"The security team informed me that they had caused a fight here so I came running as soon as I could, Mr. Wadford!" explained Becky.

Blake went silent for a moment before he took in a deep breath. He now knew who these people were. They weren't even supposed to be here in the first place. However, it would seem that this Jarvis guy gave his father a call which eventually got them in.

Becky hadn't wanted to grant them access, but the manager had told her to let them in and treat them like VIPs. Mr. Lyle had been the one to authorize their entrance. One of his relatives gave Mr. Will a call, which led to the current situation. Even the two managers—who were supposed to be purchasing stocks—were now rushing back here.

Blake was now sweating bullets. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. He immediately turned to look at Jarvis—who was still lying on the ground— with apologetic eyes.

“Ah, good sir, why didn't you mention that you were let in by Mr. Lyle? Indeed, this really was a misunderstanding!” said Blake in cold sweat. The difference in power between Mr. Dean and Mr. Lyle was colossal. Of course Blake would feel terrified!

The bodyguards understood the situation immediately and each of them nervously took a step back. It was as though they had just undergone a one-eighty degree flip, attitude-wise. This only made Michelle even more impressed.

“D*mn! Honestly, who is he? How can one person hold that much power?” said Michelle as she stared at Jarvis, her eyes filled with admiration.

Yolanda on the other hand, was glaring at them. She then laughed hysterically before shouting, “Hahaha! You dumba*ses! I'll make sure all of you are dead by dawn for slapping me!”

More slaps echoed through the restaurant as Yolanda continued to slap each bodyguard several times. Though she was being beaten up just seconds ago, her ego had reached new heights now that she could fight back without any repercussions. She knew that Jarvis wouldn't let her down.

“Mr. Jarvis... May I know who your father is?” asked Blake timidly.

“Heh, my dad is Thomas Fish. Both my parents are in Serene Org, and even Mr. Edward here knows them!” said Jarvis smugly.

‘Thomas Fish...? I know several of Mr. Lyle’s connections but not him... Mr. Lyle intervened for him? That... doesn’t sound quite right...?’ Blake thought to himself.

“Humph! Know your place, old man! I’ll slap you twice as much as your bodyguards did to me!” said Yolanda as she walked up to Blake, cockily.

“Blake! Long time no see, huh!” said Gerald with a smile out of the blue. He then got up from his seat and stood there, hands in his pockets.