

When Life Takes a Turn – Chapter 0068

Zayn had no choice but to spend the night on the couch as he was ordered.

The next day, he had lunch with Gordon at The Graceful Gourmand. They had reserved the most ostentatious private dining suite in the restaurant just for him.

Gordon Hayes was a man in his sixties, but he was so well-groomed that he could have passed for a fifty-year-old. He was a hard worker who left his hometown and came to the city looking for a job at the age of fifteen. For over a decade, he had worked a plethora of jobs, each of them honest labor. That changed the night his boss slept with his wife. In a crime of passion, he attacked the man with an ax and was sentenced to a few years in prison.

When he was released, Gordon was a changed man. Gone were his scruples and values of honesty and fairness. He became a practitioner of duplicity and intrigue. His wiles quickly brought him the success that he had never had before and his business grew rapidly. He soon opened a casino and a nightclub.

He might not have been the kingpin of Waltz City, but he was still very much one of its ruling dukes. Zayn remembered hearing about how one of the Carters offended Gordon in some way, and the family was mortified. To ensure the incident ended peacefully, their patriarch himself treated Gordon to a sumptuous apology feast and gave some monetary compensation.

Who would have thought a figure powerful enough to be feared by the Carters would act so subserviently to Zayn? Gordon was practically humbling himself with as much servility as Sean always did when around Zayn. He even took to addressing the latter with his most adulating “sir”, just like Sean.

It was one of Zayn’s most pleasurable meals for a while. Gordon had mastered flattery. He had a variety of ways and tricks to stroke an ego and not make it so obvious as to raise Zayn’s ire. Perhaps having such skills was why the man had managed to get to his position.

In the days preceding, Howard Carter had been living the good life. The three million dollar stimulus was just the right tonic to repair the company’s cash flow. Many other companies and corporations were flooding back to them for new partnerships.

Everything was going back to how it used to be. Within a short period of time, the Carters' company was seeing growing interest again, and Howard himself benefited from it through a fat sum of dividends. After being in a prolonged slump, getting that much money so quickly was a reason to indulge. One of the first things he did was squander a few thousand dollars at a pub, spending it all to ensure a stranger—a female university student—would give him a good time.

The best part was the windfall he made with his friends in Gordon's casino over the past two days, winning a whopping twenty grand or so. Lady Luck had blessed him so much that he felt as though he could get by just on chance alone. The wide grin on his face never faded.

The day before, while he was eating with his family, he watched them pack all the leftover food home into doggie bags. Howard could not stop himself from lampooning Faye for it.

Now, in the company's meeting room, Howard was reporting their recent sales with a massive grin on his face. "I'm oh—so—lucky to be the bearer of good news. Our family's business is back on track! That's not all. Just a few days ago, two of our biggest competitors suffered losses even more tremendous than our own because of gross incompetence in management. Because of that, both of them have declared bankruptcy! In other words, here in Waltz City, we are effectively without competition!

"From now on, our profits will continue to break records. I have every reason to believe that we'll be able to build new factories and expand our company next year!"

His stirring speech earned him the shareholders' thunderous cheers. Faye, being one of the shareholders, was among those who broke out into an earnest applause. The Carters' rescue from their financial plight was largely her doing after all. Had she not borrowed that timely sum of three million dollars, the Carters would have already been finished.

She waited eagerly for her grandfather's praise, her face beaming.

George rose to his feet and began his commendation speech, but it was painfully obvious that he had skirted around mentioning her name. Instead, he lauded Howard for what was actually her contribution.

“Howard is right through and through. We should all thank him. It was his wits and courage that stopped our family from going to ruin. It was he who stood up at the critical juncture, our time of need, and handled our creditors. Then, over the past few days, he has been the one who devoted himself to raking in as many demands for our goods as possible. Everyone, we should all give Howard the plaudits he deserves!”

Just like that, George led the crowd into showering the man with yet another round of ovations.

Faye’s furrowed brows betrayed the nagging grudge emerging in her mind. She knew her grandfather played favorites all the time, but he did not expect the man to be so blatantly biased. Still, she held her tongue and waited, hoping that her grandfather would mention her by name even once.

Her patience was not rewarded. There was no acknowledgment. No mention. Even the way George looked at her was frigid and steely.

How could that be? How was that fair?

She could not accept being snubbed like this, yet her quiet disposition prevented her from voicing out the rancor building inside of her.

They had shafted her and her contribution, but it was still far from the worst. It was what George said next that finally broke her.

“Now, as I’ve mentioned, the overarching hero who saved the family was Howard. Hence, I think it’s apropos to rethink the distribution of our shares.” George continued after a pause, “Waine and his family hold too much in their hands. Them owning fifteen percent is unfair to the rest of the family. So, I’ve decided to cut ten percent of what Waine owns and transfer it to Howard.”

“What?!” Faye blurted out with uncontainable shock. She leaped to her feet and cried, “Why are you cutting into what is ours, Grandpa?!”

“Watch your attitude, Faye Carter!” Hector snarled. Sitting nearby, he slammed his fist on the table to emphasize his words. “Who taught you to shout at your grandfather like that, you uppity brat?!”