

## Chapter 473

The car was his greatest asset and he was just going to give it to his friend for free?

‘Gerald, this isn’t the time to be showing off!’ Leila thought in her mind, frantically.

Though Leila had recently started to change her opinion of Gerald, she couldn’t help but feel angry at his words.

Before this turn of events, Leila had even secretly considered Gerald to be her boyfriend. Now, she didn’t even want to think about it!

From an outsider’s point of view, it was almost as though she considered the car to be hers in the first place.

“I can’t accept that! This is a relatively new car, brother! I can’t just take it off you for free! How about this, I have about a hundred thousand dollars on hand right now. I’ll buy the car at the market rate of two hundred and seventy thousand dollars. I’ll pay you the rest of the money once I sell this car off! Deal?”

“If that’s the case, you can just buy it from me for a hundred thousand dollars then!” replied Gerald

with a wry smile on his face. He knew that Xeno wasn't going to accept the car for free no matter what he did.

However, how could Gerald's Mercedes Benz G500 make up for the incident that happened back then? Gerald shook the thought off his mind for the moment.

“Seriously, don't worry about it, Xeno. I'll explain it to you later. Just buy it for a hundred thousand dollars! Now bring us the contract, buddy!” said Gerald as he patted Xeno's shoulder.

Xeno went silent and simply complied. He had made up his mind that he would just return the money to Gerald once the car was sold.

The contract didn't really matter to him.

As Gerald signed the contract, Leila looked baffled while Douglas was secretly overjoyed.

The car was now officially sold and Gerald would give Willie seventy thousand dollars for his fundraiser.

After doing so, Gerald would only have thirty thousand dollars left.

“Douglas, Leila! My cousin sister sells houses! She's just opened for business recently and she hasn't gotten off work yet at this hour! Since Gerald's

buying a house, why don't I give her a call? He can buy it from her! Do know, however, that thirty thousand dollars is barely enough for the down payment!" said one of Leila's friends who had followed them.

"Go for it!" replied Leila as she nodded slightly.

Once the down payment was made, Gerald would officially become a pauper again. Aside from his house and the mortgage he would have to pay, he would have nothing else.

To Leila, that was the equivalent of Gerald losing all his initial charisma. Any feelings she had for him, were now six feet under.

Moving back to Gerald, the only reason why he had promised to give his car up and donate to Willie in the first place, was simply because he wanted to repay the debt on behalf of his father. 2

If it wasn't because of his father, Gerald would be crazy to actually be bothered about someone as minuscule as Willie.

It turned out that the houses Leila's friend's cousin sister had to offer were in pretty good locations.

Gerald himself had been planning to buy some houses in Serene County so that he could arrange for housing and accommodation for some of his

executives.

Though his original plan was to buy an entire building so that he could use it as a staff hostel, it wouldn't be a problem for him to check out a house and book one of the units first.

After saying goodbye to Xeno, Gerald left with the group of people.

It was relatively easy to buy a house.

All Gerald had to do was choose from a selection of houses, pay the down payment, and sign a contract. Once that was done, he only needed to wait for the bank to approve his loan. 1

“Oh, cousin and handsome Douglas! Thank you so much for your support! Since it's already so late, please stay! I'll treat the four of you to supper! Your cousin sister's treating all of you today!” said the girl's cousin, happy to have made a sale.

As for Gerald, he simply stood at the side as he held onto the house purchase deed and contract. He was the one paying for the house yet the salesgirl simply left him out of the count.

Of course she would.

As soon as she saw Gerald, she could immediately tell that he was just some ignorant person who hadn't seen much of the world yet. She didn't even

bother to flatter him at all. Once the transaction was done, she had even less reason to want to even be near him.

“There’s no way we can do that! No matter what you say, I can’t allow you to treat us to supper tonight! Rather, since Gerald bought a house today, he should be the one treating us!” said Douglas as he laughed happily.

“Yes! We’ve been running around with you from seven in the evening! It’s almost eleven now! What more, we helped you secure a house for yourself. You know, if you weren’t someone familiar, you wouldn’t even be able to buy this house at this price! You should be thankful!”

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The reply had come from one of Leila's friends.

“Alright, alright, girls. Tell you what, I'll pay for whatever we're eating tonight! We can spend up to a thousand and five hundred dollars tonight!” said Douglas with a smile.

“But Douglas, why are you the one paying? Gerald's clearly the one who should be treating us!”

“Well, you may not know this, but I owe Gerald that exact sum of money! If I pay that amount for supper, the IOU will be fully paid off!”

Douglas was thinking to himself then, that Gerald shouldn't even consider reclaiming his one thousand and five hundred dollars from him!

He would rather use the money to entertain everyone rather than return the money to him.

“Alright! Let's go! It's time I got off work today anyway!” said the salesgirl happily.

At that moment, Leila's cell phone began to ring.

It was Willie.

“What's this? Hadn't we agreed that he would

donate at least a hundred and twenty thousand dollars so that I could find him a job? Why is there only seventy thousand dollars?”

“Dad, he sold the car for only a hundred thousand dollars since the buyer was his friend!”

“That idiot. I’ll just give him an award for the seventy thousand dollars then. As for the job opportunity, I’ll simply arrange it for him in the future! Pfft!” replied Willie coldly before hanging up.

“Gerald, my dad said...” 1

Leila felt a little embarrassed as she looked at Gerald. She didn’t know how to tell him that he wouldn’t be granted a job immediately.

Gerald simply smiled faintly. He had anticipated this to happen.

“It’s fine, you don’t need to worry about getting a job for me. As for supper, all of you go on ahead. I’m not coming along. Goodbye!”

As he spoke, he took Douglas’s IOU out of his pocket before ripping it in half in front of them and tossing it into a trash can.

As he walked away, he didn’t feel any rage for some reason, even though they had constantly been ridiculing him.

It took him a while, but Gerald soon realized then that it was because they weren't from the same world as he was. He didn't need to hold any grudges against ants like them.

As for the Jung family, he had already contributed enough funds to help them make a comeback. What more, he had even donated to Willie to help him raise funds. Regardless of how much his father owed Uncle Jung, this amount of money would definitely settle whatever favors Gerald's father still owed the Jung family. 1

There was no longer going to be any debts on his father's side. This was something Gerald was sure of.

Because of that, he wouldn't need to worry or even care about them anymore. A supper with them would be meaningless.

That night, Gerald went back to the hotel to sleep.

At seven the next day, his phone started ringing.

It was Xeno.

“Good morning, Gerald! You awake? If you're free, why not come over to my shop? I have a mighty delicious breakfast waiting for you here! Oh, and by the way, I've already sold your car! Come on over and let's celebrate that!” said Xeno over the phone.



After finding out that Gerald could be in urgent need of money, Xeno had spent most of the night contacting several of his friends and peers to find a buyer for Gerald's car.

Gerald himself missed Xeno too. Even if he hadn't called Gerald, Gerald would have gone over to pay him a visit either way.

After all, he had already thought of visiting Xeno long before returning to Serene County.

Once he was done washing up and putting on a fresh set of clothes, Gerald headed straight for Xeno's second-hand car shop.

Upon arriving at the familiar shop, Xeno immediately dragged Gerald into a room and locked the door behind him.

“Morning Gerald! You're one lucky b\*stard! A buddy of mine helped us contact a buyer last night! Haha! I managed to sell your car for exactly two hundred and eighty thousand dollars! And before you say anything else, you're taking a hundred and seven thousand dollars back with you, whether you like it or not. I'll still have made ten thousand dollars' worth of profit, all thanks to you!”

After finishing his sentence, he handed a cheque over to Gerald.

Naturally, Gerald was unwilling to accept it. After all, Gerald wasn't even sure if Xeno had really earned any money from the transaction.

As the two of them continued pushing the cheque back and forth, frantic knocks suddenly began banging against the locked door.

“Xeno? Xeno! Open the door now! Have you seen my fifteen thousand dollar bank savings book?!”

The voice belonged to Sienna who had just run out from the kitchen.

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“What fifteen thousand dollar bank savings book?” asked Gerald, slightly taken aback.

Before Xeno could stop him, Gerald had opened the door to see a very anxious Sienna.

“Oh, don’t worry about it! I need to use the money!” said Xeno as he smiled.

“What are you using it for? And what are you holding in your hand? Oh god, what are you doing with such a big cheque?!”

The anxiety in Sienna’s voice only seemed to grow even worse.

“The money’s for Gerald! How could we possibly purchase an almost brand new car for just a hundred thousand dollars? What more, it’s a Mercedes Benz G500!” replied Xeno.

“And why would it be impossible? What’s wrong with earning some of his money? Xeno, you can’t cheat anyone else of their cash but you can definitely cheat him! Give me the cheque!” yelled Sienna as she snatched the cheque from his hand.

“Pfft, we’ve sold the car for a grand total of two

hundred and seventy thousand dollars. We already gave Gerald one hundred thousand dollars and we also have to give your friend fifteen thousand dollars for introducing a buyer to us!”

Hearing this, Sienna looked at the cheque and gasped in horror at the amount written on it.

“One hundred and seventy thousand dollars...? Xeno, what’s the meaning of this? Are you telling me you used our own fifteen thousand dollars for Gerald? We would be losing fifteen thousand dollars in this huge transaction then! Have you gone mad?!”

Quivering, Sienna immediately picked up a wine bottle before tossing it toward Xeno. Though it didn’t hit anyone, it fell right in front of Gerald.

Xeno had grown anxious himself, looking at her actions. Both of them looked like they were getting ready to fight.

The truth was, the car had not been sold for two hundred and eighty thousand dollars. Xeno had spent his own money to look for a buyer. In the end, the transaction landed him zero profit. He did all this because he could sense that Gerald was very upset the night before. Xeno had assumed that it was due to monetary issues.

Because of that, he wanted to help Gerald get some

money as soon as possible. Xeno, for one, was more than willing to do so for his best friend.

Unfortunately, Sienna wasn't having any of that. 1

“Hand over the cheque, Sienna! I'm making sure that Gerald gets his full two hundred and seventy thousand dollars!”

“Over my dead body! Gerald owes us this much! Remember Xeno, you wouldn't have been expelled if you hadn't stabbed someone because of Gerald! I wouldn't have had to live this kind of life with you then if it wasn't because of him! You were at the top of your class back then!” replied Sienna as she started crying. 1

“What was that Sienna? What the f\*ck are you talking about?” cursed Xeno as his face turned red in anger. 1

Gerald was caught between the fight and he could only try to de-escalate it.

To be honest, Gerald had felt a pang in his heart the moment Sienna brought back the memory of that incident.

Both Gerald and Xeno had come from poor families. They had grown with the same lifestyle and minuscule fortune, leading both of them to become extremely close confidants.

While both of them used to study together, Xeno, unlike Gerald, not only excelled in academic performances, but he also liked to fight.

It wasn't uncommon for Xeno to be caught fighting others, even from a young age.

He even fought for Gerald as well. Gerald had suffered much more bullying in high school compared to his time in junior high, since Xeno was still fighting off bullies for him then. That all changed when that incident occurred. ①

Back during their junior high school days, Gerald had a close female friend. They weren't exactly in a relationship back then. The most they did was write letters to one another.

However, another student—who was a well-known gangster—took interest in the same girl. Since he knew that Gerald shared a close relationship with her, he brought along some of his gang members to beat up Gerald after school one day.

Xeno was with Gerald that time and when he saw his best friend about to get beaten up, he helped Gerald fight back.

In his state of panic, Xeno had stabbed the gangster kid with a knife.

While it was fortunate that no one was killed that

day, Xeno had to be expelled from school because of that incident.

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After Xeno was expelled, Gerald got beaten up several times.

Even that girl that the gangster was after left Gerald, opting instead to be with the bully.

The reason why Gerald became afraid and shy of girls whenever he saw them during his high school and university years, was directly linked to this event.

Once Xeno got expelled from school, he simply continued living his life out on the streets. He was rarely ever at home. What more, when Gerald entered high school, Xeno kept changing his phone number. It was difficult for Gerald just to be able to get in touch with him sometimes!

Since that day, Gerald had always kept Xeno's sacrifice and kindness deep in his heart.

This was because Xeno's possibly great future had been shattered by a single event, and it was directly caused by Gerald!

Sienna knew about all this and this was why she didn't like Gerald.

Sienna was actually a very nice girl. Her family



owned a big supermarket in town and they were very rich. However, she never despised or looked down on Xeno. After all, she had been dating Xeno from the first year of junior high school up till this point.

Therefore, Gerald had always had a really good impression of Sienna.

Hence, no matter what Sienna said or how badly she treated him, Gerald just couldn't feel angry at her at all.

After all, Xeno seemed to be doing well with her. This made Gerald feel even happier and he wasn't about to hold anything against his best friend's fiancée.

It took some time and persuasion, but he finally managed to prevent the fight from getting too wild.

Once things calmed down a little, Sienna went to the kitchen to finish preparing the breakfast that had only been half completed before she ran out.

As they ate, Xeno and Gerald chatted about various things that had happened in the past.

Gerald also took this opportunity to tell Xeno that he had actually won the Mercedes Benz G500 at an event.

Gerald was still hesitant about whether he should

tell Xeno about his true identity.

This was mainly because Gerald was afraid that if he told Xeno the truth out of the blue, then the sincere brotherhood they had shared would disappear just like that. 1

Naturally, since Gerald was now back in Serene County, he would definitely go all out to help Xeno as much as he could!

“Alright, what if we do this instead? I really don’t feel comfortable taking so much money from you, Gerald. I already have a stable life and I even have a fiancée now! You, however, haven’t settled down yet. You may find a girlfriend in the city and she may want to get married and live with you in the future. Think of this as an investment from me for your future happiness. I’ll just take back a small amount of money, and you take the rest. How’s that?”

Xeno was still insistent on giving Gerald some money.

However, Gerald continued to refuse. He even said that he would leave immediately if Xeno kept insisting on giving him the money. 2

Hearing that, Xeno scratched the back of his head before finally giving up.

“Hey Xeno, isn’t this way better? With that money,

you'll be able to expand your business! That way, Gerald can finally repay you for everything that you've done for him!"

Sienna was noticeably happier the moment she saw Xeno give up.

However, she could also tell that Xeno was slightly upset.

"By the way, Xeno, an old colleague of mine called the other day. She said that one of her best friends was in a hurry to get married and she's around the same age as we are. She told me to introduce a good person to her friend but I didn't have anyone in mind that day. Why don't we try introducing Gerald to her? They could go on a blind date and if everything goes well, Gerald may meet his future wife, just like that! You would essentially have helped Gerald find his life partner then!"

Xeno slapped his thigh before laughing aloud. "You hear that Gerald? It's time for a blind date, brother! Since she wants to get married quickly, with any luck, you two can get married this year! I'm sure she won't be like the girls you met in the city. Those have overly high standards and their families? Probably even higher standards than the girls themselves! They're just being too unrealistic!" said Xeno as he shook his head.

Gerald shook his own head, signifying that there

was no need for the blind date.

“Why not? There’s nothing for you to lose if it doesn’t work out anyway. Naturally, I’m not asking you to get married immediately. If both of you get along and are suited for each other, good for you! If you’re not, nothing wrong with that! At the very least, both of you could be regular friends then!”

Xeno was really considering everything for Gerald.

It was precisely because of that that Gerald just didn’t feel good turning down his best friend’s goodwill.

What more, Gerald couldn’t just tell Xeno that he didn’t need to worry about him just because he was actually a rich heir! ③

Their good relationship could fall into shambles there and then! ①

Seeing no other option, Gerald simply smiled in resignation as he nodded. “Alright, I’ll give it a go!” ①

He decided to at least meet the girl once and as Xeno had said, it wasn’t a big deal anyway. At the very least, just as Xeno had said, both of them could just end up being regular friends. ②

“Hahaha! It’s settled then! I’ll start making the arrangements immediately! That girl lives in Serene County too. Let’s see if we can get both of you ready for lunch together today!” said Sienna

**happily.**

**After finishing their breakfast, Sienna told Gerald to go back and change into something nicer first to prepare for his blind date.**

**Not too long after Gerald left Xeno's shop, he received a call from Zack.**

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## Chapter 477

It was about the jade pendant.

Zack had managed to contact an old, well-experienced master on a jade antique street in Serene County. He was apparently very famous in the local area.

What more, he had also been told that the old master had inherited his craftsmanship from his ancestors.

This was perfect since Gerald needed an experienced person like this to help identify and appraise such an ancient jade.

Gerald decided that he would let the old master have a go at identifying and appraising the jade pendant first. If he couldn't, Gerald would simply look for other jade masters from all over the country then.

After all, if even the dean didn't know anything about Xara Machamer's identity, how else would Gerald be able to find out anything about her?

His only clue was this jade pendant, and Gerald understood that.

Originally, Zack had wanted to accompany Gerald to

meet the master. However, Gerald's father had told him that the fewer people knew about Xara Machamer, the better.

In addition, Zack was also very busy now so Gerald declined his offer. After all, Gerald just so happened to know that street well too.

The antique street wasn't too big and there were just a few shops selling antique porcelain there.

Zack, being the professional that he was, had arranged Gerald's meeting with the old master. Because of that, the bespectacled old man with a long white beard was already there waiting for Gerald by the time Gerald got to his shop.

"Mr. Crawford, I assume? My name is Matthew Xiques!" said the old man as he smiled at Gerald.

"Hello, Mr. Xiques, a pleasure to meet you. Let's get straight to business, shall we? See, I wanted to meet you today because I need you to help me identify and appraise a jade pendant. I'd like to know how old it really is and if possible, where it originated from as well. Basically, the more details you can give me, the better," said Gerald as he presented the jade pendant to the old master carefully.

When Matthew saw the jade pendant, he was slightly surprised. Carefully picking the pendant up, he squinted his eyes as he brought it close to his

face. He looked like a seasoned expert, just as Zack had said.

“I must thank you, Mr. Crawford, for allowing me to see such a rare jade with my very own eyes. In fact, it’s one of the rarest kinds of jade! It’s top quality! Mr. Crawford, if you don’t mind me asking, how did you get your hands on this jade?” asked Matthew as he looked at Gerald with great interest.

Matthew couldn’t guess for the life of him why Gerald would have such an expensive piece of jade on him.

Earlier when Gerald was addressed by Matthew by name, he had assumed that Zack had arranged the entire meeting for him. However, Zack seemed to have left out Gerald’s true identity and Gerald was thankful for that.

Gerald replied, “How I got it isn’t important, Mr. Xiques. Have you managed to identify the origins of this jade pendant...?”

“Ah, I see. Forgive me for being nosy. Also, it’s a little difficult for me to identify the origins of the jade pendant immediately. However, I do recall reading about a jade with such fine texture in one of the notebooks left behind by my ancestors. Would it be convenient for you to leave this jade pendant behind so that I can properly analyze it? Once I get



the information you require, I'll let you know immediately," said Matthew.

Hearing that, Gerald thought about it for a moment. Since Zack had arranged for Gerald to meet the master, the master should be capable enough in Zack's eyes.

"That's fine, Mr. Xiques. I hope to hear from you soon!" said Gerald as he nodded.

The two of them chatted for a little while more before Gerald stepped out of the shop.

What was he going to do now? It was still a little too early for him to head out for his blind date.

After some thought, he decided to withdraw some money from the bank since the new house he had bought was also nearby. Gerald so happened to be carrying the house purchase agreement contract in his bag so he might as well clear the payment immediately.

After all, it wouldn't be possible for Gerald to take up a loan!

"Gerald?"

At that moment, Gerald heard a girl's voice calling out to him. It sounded surprised.

When Gerald turned around to look, he too was

pleasantly surprised.

It was Leila's good friend, Cindy.

She had just come out from the inner courtyard. Apparently she lived here.

When Gerald had gone to Leila's house the first time that day, the very beautiful Cindy had left a deep impression on Gerald. He could tell that the girl was a very kind one.

"Do you live here, Cindy?" asked Gerald with a smile.

"Yes! The one inside is my grandfather! Speaking of which, Gerald, why did you come to our shop in the first place?" asked Cindy with a smile as she walked toward Gerald.

"Cindy! That's no way to address him! Refer to him as Mr. Crawford!" shouted Matthew who had poked his head out from his shop.

Matthew didn't know much about Gerald's background. However, he knew that the person who had arranged for Gerald and him to meet was someone who could contact both the county magistrate as well as the chairman of the National Antiquities Research Association. For someone with such an extraordinary status to work under Gerald, he knew that Gerald wasn't someone to mess with.

Why else would Matthew have acted so courteously toward Gerald earlier?

That was the reason why he was so startled at Cindy's lack of manners just a while ago.

“Oh, grandpa! This is a new friend I met recently. His name is Gerald and he's also Leila's childhood friend!” replied Cindy her smile unwavering.

“That's quite alright, Mr. Xiques. Just focus on the job I gave you first!” said Gerald as he smiled.

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“Job...? Also, you still haven’t told me why you came to look for my grandpa today!” said Cindy, her curiosity growing.

“It’s nothing serious, I just came to ask him for a favor, no big deal,” replied Gerald.

“I see... Oh! Since you’re already here, why not come in? I’ll make some tea for you!”

“Maybe next time, I’ll be back soon anyway. I’m just going to head to the bank now to withdraw some money,” replied Gerald as he smiled.

“What a coincidence! I’m also going to the bank to pass my mother’s cell phone over to her. Let’s go together!” said Cindy as she walked out of the shop and stood beside Gerald.

Gerald could only nod awkwardly.

All he wanted to do was to leave quietly after leaving the pendant for Matthew to analyze and withdrawing his money. He really hadn’t anticipated running into Cindy here today.

“So, your mother forgot to bring her cell phone out with her?” asked Gerald to break the silence as they

walked to the bank.

“Well, that’s sort of correct. See, my mother has several cell phones. The bank that she works with urgently needs to attract funds and capital. Since my mother is a deputy director and she needs to meet her targets, she requires several cell phones to call different customers. She’s just really busy all the time!” replied Cindy.

Both of them arrived at the bank not too long later.

“Mom, I’ve brought your cell phone here for you!” called out Cindy to a middle-aged woman who seemed to be waiting for someone.

Hearing Cindy’s voice, she turned to look at Gerald and her daughter.

“Thank you Cindy, and who might this be?” asked Cindy’s mother.

“Just a friend. His name is Gerald. I think I’ve mentioned him to you last time! He was the one who had invited me to have French cuisine at the western restaurant. Hehe... It just so happened that we met while we were both on our way over to the bank! He’s here to withdraw some money!” replied Cindy with a smile.

“Oh? So this is the young man. Not bad, quite good looking as well! Are both of you going out together

later to play?” asked her mother.

Gerald didn't need to be a rocket scientist to tell that Cindy's mother must already have considered him to be Cindy's boyfriend at that moment.

“Oh, not at all! Once I withdraw some money to pay for my house I'll be on my way!”

“Oh? You've already bought yourself a house!” said Cindy's mother happily.

As she said that, she recalled when her daughter had told her about everything that had happened that night. The French cuisine was apparently very expensive and this was proof that this young man was at the very least, financially capable. He had even bought a house for himself.

“Who's bought a house, Deputy Director Lacy?” said a cynical voice out of the blue.

At that moment, another middle-aged woman walked up to the trio.

Gerald couldn't help but feel surprised when he finally saw who had spoken. It was Leila's mother, Leila.

Leila was also working at the bank, and she was a leader and deputy director as well. She and Cindy's mother were of similar rank.

“What are you doing here, Gerald?”

She certainly hadn't expected to see him there.

“I came over to withdraw money!” said Gerald without even bothering to address her as ‘Aunt Leia’ anymore.

“Oh, I see how it is. Can't even be bothered to greet me by my name now? Why even bother trying to show off if you're penniless now?”

“Also, you could have started working at a labor dispatch unit by this month if you had just paid according to what was agreed. You know, there were many others who donated much more than you had. Since you only donated seventy thousand dollars to your Uncle Jung, you'll have to wait a little longer before you get your job!”

Leia was taking every chance she could to widen the gap between Gerald's status and hers.

“Deputy Director Tolbert, what are you talking about? Penniless?” asked Cindy's mother, surprised.

“Oh, you didn't know? So that's why you were talking to him! I guess poor Cindy doesn't know about this either. Well, you see, Gerald here is now ...”

And with that, Leia took the opportunity to share

how Gerald's family used to be very poor. She even told them about the car he had sold to buy his new house.

Naturally, she also kept emphasizing how much of a pauper Gerald was now.

'F\*ck! I almost pushed my own daughter into a lion's den!' Cindy's mother thought to herself as she shuddered.

At that moment, the sound of tires screeching could be heard as a car stopped right outside the bank. As the four people turned to look, they could see several men in suits running into the bank.

“Mom! Your cell phone's here! Come get it!”

Leila, Douglas, and the two girls from the day before entered the bank, with Leila calling out. It seemed like the group was heading out to play again.

By some wild coincidence, they were here to pass Leila's phone to her as well.

“Gerald? What are you doing here?” asked Leila as soon as she saw him.



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“Pfft! Do you even need to ask? He’s probably here to get what little pocket money he has left in his bank account! Hahaha! All of you probably didn’t notice, but he didn’t even have any money in his wallet yesterday!” said Douglas as he laughed.

Leila didn’t say anything else. When he was still rich, she couldn’t deny that she had some feelings for him.

Now, however, she felt nothing for him after witnessing all that he had done yesterday.

“That’s right! He’s come to withdraw money and Cindy here came together with him!” said Leila as she too, laughed.

Leila’s face scrunched slightly when she heard Cindy’s name. She immediately pulled Cindy to the side and began telling her tales of how he was broke and that he may have pulled her along to cheat her of her money.

Once she heard all that, Cindy looked at Gerald with anxious eyes. “Why did you sell the car, Gerald? Also, why did you sell it for such a low price?”

She was sincerely worried about Gerald.

“I’ll tell you about it if an opportunity arises in the future. For now, I’m just going to go withdraw some money. I’ve an appointment at noon!” replied Gerald as he smiled at Cindy.

He didn’t even bother to look at anyone else as he walked to the counter.

Douglas himself brought the girls closer to the counter to observe Gerald. He wanted them to see Gerald make a fool of himself in front of the others.

“How much money would you like to withdraw, sir?” asked the clerk.

“Ninety thousand dollars, please,” replied Gerald without batting an eyelid.

“Ninety- What?” said Douglas, startled.

Leila was taken aback as well.

The same went for Leila and Cindy’s mother who were already heading back into their office. They froze and turned around in shock.

“Just a minute, sir!”

After Gerald entered his password and validated the transaction with his signature, the money counting machine came to life.

Douglas’s smug smile disappeared in an instant.

“You... you still have money? Didn't you use all of it to buy that car?” asked Douglas in surprise.

“Did I say I used all of it?” replied Gerald, coldly.

“Then... How much did you actually win?” It was Leila's turn to ask.

Cindy's mother and Leila herself had inched closer to the group by then. All of them waited anxiously.

“I won...”

Gerald made sure to keep the suspense up for as long as he could. He deserved at least that. Once he had enough, he smiled and said, “Actually, forget it. It's not that much. There's really no need to talk about it!”

“You!” Leila could only manage a single word. She was furious.

Gerald couldn't fit all the money into his small bag so he asked one of the cleaning staff there for a black garbage bag. He stuffed the money—all ninety thousand dollars—into it and nodded to Cindy with a smile before leaving the bank with the bag.

“...So... He actually still had money!” shouted Aunt Leila, devastated.

“That Gerald! How much did he actually win from

the lottery?” asked Leila anxiously.

“D\*mn it all! I think he’s just doing all this on purpose! He’s just pretending to be poor in front of us!” Douglas was beyond annoyed at that point.

After all, he had just received a huge mental slap from Gerald. All his intentions of having fun were now down the drain.

As for Gerald, he soon arrived at the sales office and the salesgirl from before definitely felt the same mental slap that Douglas received when Gerald fully paid for the house in cold, hard cash.

One hundred and five thousand dollars’ worth of cash in one go. 1

This was a big boss.

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## Chapter 480

By the time Gerald was done settling the house's payment, it was already close to noon and Xeno made sure Gerald was aware of this by constantly calling him.

After hurrying back to his hotel room to change into some better clothes, Gerald immediately headed for a restaurant called Johnsbury Bistro.

While he was on his way there, Xeno and Sienna were already at the restaurant.

Three other people were in the private room with them.

One of them was Sienna's colleague while the other two were the girl who was going to be Gerald's blind date today as well as her mother.

The girl had long, black hair, and her skin was very fair. She looked both delicate and beautiful.

However, her looks dictated her behavior as she seemed cold and her head was lowered most of the time as she constantly looked through her WeChat.

Her mother, on the other hand, was a plump middle-aged woman with tattooed eyebrows that looked similar to caterpillars. Contrasting her daughter,

she looked rather sturdy and even formidable.

“Gerald’s a very nice person, and we’re not praising him for the sake of it either. You’ll know what we mean when you meet later. What more, he graduated from a prestigious university and he’s quite handsome as well! He’s started looking for a job and I heard that he’s aiming to work for a public office. Don’t let that get your hopes down, though. He recently just bought a house in Serene County!” explained Sienna as they waited.

Though Sienna had some resentment for Gerald in recent years, she wasn’t always like that. She used to have a good relationship with him during junior high due to him constantly being around Xeno.

The slight hatred only began because of the incident that had caused Xeno to be expelled back then. However, the resentment she had for him had now dissipated after the events of this morning.

She was now sincerely worried for Gerald as well, and she wanted to do all she could to help him.

“Well, how big is the house that he bought? If it has less than three rooms, can it even be considered to be a house? There must be at least three bedrooms, two living rooms, and two bathrooms!” asked the girl as she finally raised her head.

“Well wouldn’t you know it? His new house fits

your bare minimum! Haha!” replied Xeno.

“Well, what about his car? What car is he driving now?”

This time, it was her mother who asked.

“Oh, he doesn’t have a car yet. But you know, cars aren’t worth that much money in the first place!” replied Xeno.

Her mother coughed before saying, “Well, you see, having a house or a car isn’t the most important thing to us. We just hope that he’s an honest man! I won’t accept a man who only likes to brag and talk big!”

“Oh, you can be assured that that guy’s the most honest man on the planet! We grew up together so we’re more than certain about his personality,” replied Sienna.

While everyone was chatting, Gerald finally opened the door and entered the room.

“Gerald! There you are! Come over here quickly so that I can introduce you to them!” said Xeno with a smile as he began introducing the two parties to one another.

The girl’s mother scanned Gerald from head to toe and she could sense that he really did look and feel like an honest person.

She could breathe a bit easier knowing that.

The dishes arrived soon after and both parties talked to each other as they ate their lunch.

“You know, they’re really taking their sweet time to serve the last dish! I’m going to go over and ask them about it!” said Sienna’s colleague as she stood up. She secretly winked at Sienna and Xeno.

“Yeah, I think I’ll join you,” said Sienna. Xeno excused himself to go to the bathroom as well.

Before Xeno left the room with the other two, he patted Gerald on the shoulder and gave him a secret thumbs-up. He closed the door of the private room, leaving only Gerald, the girl, and her mother inside. Seeing that everyone else had left, the middle-aged woman wiped her mouth with a paper towel.

“So, Gerald, right? We’ve heard about all the good things about you from your good friends. I personally think that you’re quite an honest person. Tell me, what do you think about my daughter?” asked the woman.

Of course he was honest. This was his first time partaking in a blind date event. What more, the woman looked extremely fierce! She also hadn’t said much since Gerald arrived.

“She’s not bad!” replied Gerald.



At that moment, the girl raised her head to look at him for a moment. After a few seconds, she pouted before lowering her head again in disdain.

‘...F\*ck! What kind of expression was that?’ Gerald thought to himself. He couldn’t help but curse in his mind. ①

The woman cleared her throat before saying, “Let me tell you this, Gerald. My daughter is working for a company under the Dream Investment Group. She’s working for the Dencouls Production and Trading Corporation. I believe you should know about the Dream Investment Group, right? Being such a large group with superb financial strength, do you know how difficult it is for someone to get into that company?”

Dencouls Production and Trading Corporation. If Gerald remembered correctly, that was just one of the companies supported by the Dream Investment Group. After all, the Dream Investment Group was supporting several local projects and companies like this.

Did she actually just claim that her daughter was working under the Dream Investment Group because of that?

Gerald could only smile at that before nodding slightly.

He was honestly thinking to himself at that moment. The woman looked quite normal. She looked decent and her personality wasn't too bad either. Why was she lowering her standards and going on blind dates then?

“My daughter's interested in you because she can tell that you're an honest man. She would love to marry an honest man. However! There are three absolute rules that you have to abide by before both of you can marry. Listen closely now!”

“I beg your pardon?”

Gerald was dumbfounded. What in f\*ck's name was going on here?

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## Chapter 481

Wasn't he just here to meet this girl and become friends?

When Gerald heard those words, he immediately felt uneasy and saw that he was in a position to be obligated to get married immediately.

Unconsciously, he started breaking out in cold sweat.

“First, you have to transfer the title of your house and your car over to my daughter before she marries you. Oh, wait. You don't have a car yet. So, you can just transfer the title of your house over to my daughter. It should be under my daughter's name and not under both of your names. This will help ensure that you are sincere, got it?” said the woman.

“Oh... yeah, alright.”

Gerald nodded, his face sullen and numb.

“The most expensive property that I own is worth 120,000,000 dollars. Even if I am willing to give it to you, would you even dare accept it? Hah!”

“Secondly, there's definitely a problem with your

parents. You have a sister, right? I'd better give you a heads up about this. If your sister gets married in the future, you cannot reject the dowry of her fiancée. Instead, you have to accept it and deposit the proceeds into my daughter's account. My daughter will also be in charge of the salary that you earn and the money earned by your parents. Will that be okay for you? Of course, your parents are not allowed to live with you either. Since your house is in the city, your parents can visit the county for a couple of days if they want. But that said, they will need to source accommodation for themselves."

The woman continued in a hostile tone. "Did you hear me?!"

Gerald nodded repeatedly. "Yes, I heard you. You may continue."

He also whipped out a small notebook and pen from his bag, jotting down everything she said.

This was his first time going on a blind date, but Gerald felt this experience was more than enough. F\*ck! He could only dread the other conditions that this woman was going to bring up. 1

If it weren't for Sienna's colleague who introduced this mother-daughter pair to him, Gerald would've really doubted if they were going all out to scam

him into this marriage.

When the woman saw how obedient and gullible Gerald was, she squealed with delight inside.

She continued rambling on.

“Thirdly, wedding arrangements. I won’t repeat to you where my daughter works, right? Heh. When the time comes, there will be many reputable figures who will be attending your wedding. Hence, your wedding car of choice cannot be your regular runabout. Daughter, what do you think of an Audi?”

The woman could not make up her mind, asking for her daughter’s opinion.

The daughter brushed her fingers through her hair, sighing, “I think a Mercedes-Benz or a BMW should be fine. But if we’re going with a BMW, then it will have to be at least a 7 Series or higher.”

“Sounds good. You can choose between the two then!”

The woman turned to Gerald and commanded.

“As for the fourth...”

“There is a fourth rule? Didn’t you say that there were three rules?”

Gerald asked in surprise, his jaw-dropping slightly.

“You!”

Both the woman and her daughter raised their heads as they stared coldly at Gerald.

“Oh! I’m sorry. The fourth point, the fourth point. Please carry on. I am listening,” Gerald swallowed and replied thoughtfully.

“The fourth point is regarding the wedding gift. We don’t expect too much, but you should be paying attention to the thousands of red and green.”

“Hang on, auntie. How much money are we looking at for thousands of red and green?” Gerald asked, smiling sheepishly.

“Pfft! You’re so stingy. It’s about twenty-two thousand dollars. We want it in cash. We don’t want anything in the form of a bank card, bank book, or anything like that.

We want it all in cash. This is our house rule! Of course, this is the dowry your family should be granting ours if you want to marry my daughter. And we’ll also need to talk about something else. We’ve already spent a ton of money to get this job for our daughter, and we still need to save up for her brother’s education fees too. As such, our family will not be returning the dowry to you. Our only hope is that you both will lead a happy life as a married couple. That’s all!”

“Oh! How could we possibly enjoy a good and

happy life?” Gerald quizzed sarcastically as the whole picture seemed too graphic.

“Huh? What did you say?”

The woman was startled.

“I said, alright. Please carry on!”

Gerald quickly flashed a smile.

It was definite that he would not be marrying her. But all those conditions mentioned had piqued his curiosity.

“Hmph. The fifth point is the most important. After marrying my daughter, you cannot lay a finger on her within the first three years. This is an important rule in our family and hometown. Once three years have passed, you must first get my daughter’s consent before you can touch her!”

The woman said.

F\*ck!

Gerald was so stunned at her statement that his pen fell to the ground.

“C’mon, you don’t have to look so shocked. Do you know how difficult it is for someone to get a wife nowadays? Plus, my daughter is so beautiful, has such a good temperament and a good career. Think you’ll be able to find anyone else better than her?”

Dream on!” scoffed the woman as she concluded. Suddenly, the girl covered her mouth as she began to gag.

“Mom, can you help me to the washroom? Ugh~!”

She continued retching as her mother propped her up all the way to the washroom. ①

Sweat trickled down Gerald’s cheeks.

To be honest, if it weren’t for Xeno, Gerald would not even have bothered to come here today.

HE simply wanted to run away, especially when put under such ridiculous circumstances.

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## Chapter 482

Gerald grabbed a paper towel as he wiped the sweat off his forehead. He felt the sudden urge to relieve himself and started pacing toward the washroom.

As he passed by the female's washroom, he unexpectedly heard the woman and her daughter's conversation as she repeatedly patted her back.

“What's wrong? Why the sudden nausea?”

The woman asked worriedly.

“Yeah... This naughty little boy is kicking me again!”

“Oh! I told you to be more careful! I've always told you to pay more attention to what you do! Why did you have to mess around with a foreigner?”

She frowned and scolded.

“Mom, don't say that about Jamison! Jamison isn't just any ordinary guy. He's a foreigner from M Country! He promised me that he would come back to look for me in three years!”

Gerald, who heard this from outside, was fuming with frustration.

He knew that these two women had really deceived

him.

It felt too good to be true, and everything was oddly in place, but the girl seemed so anxious to get married.

So, was she just looking for a temporary replacement to become the father of someone else's child?

And if he married her, there would be an additional unwanted gift—a mixed-race baby in return!

No way! He could not afford to be fooled around by them anymore, or there would be no end to this matter.

As he gritted his teeth, he wanted to look for Xeno and the rest of them so badly, but he knew that they purposely hid themselves during such a time.

Gerald returned to his seat defeatedly as he was drowned in helplessness.

Not long after that, both the mother and her daughter came back to the room.

“Alright then, Gerald. Do you understand everything that we said just now? If you do, you may go back and decide on a suitable date. It would be best if both of you can get married by this month!”

The woman exclaimed coldly.

“Hang on, auntie. I have something to say.”

Gerald said in a slow and inarticulate manner.

“Ahh? You still have something to say? Alright then, speak up!”

The woman replied impatiently.

Gerald glanced at the girl before saying, “Can you let me take a look at you first?”

“Haven’t you seen me already? What else do you want to see?” the girl rudely retorted as she frowned at Gerald.

“I am asking you to lift up your skirt so that I can have a look. I need to inspect the goods first!”

Gerald replied nonchalantly.

“What?!”

The woman and the girl’s eyes widened in shock.

Good god. This was a blind date, and it wasn’t just any ordinary low-class restaurant either. This young man actually had the audacity to spew such shameless gibberish amid such an occasion?

“Are you insane?!” The girl shrieked as she stood up abruptly and threw the wine glass in one swoop.

“Damn it! If I wasn’t insane, there’s no way I would’

ve been able to continue talking to the both of you for so long! I had enough of your rubbish! You are nothing but a piece of trash with your crazy and ridiculous conditions!”

Gerald could not hold it in anymore and started cursing.

They simply took him for a fool. It was still fine at first. But after they visited the washroom, Gerald could no longer put up with their bullsh\*t. It made him furious.

He really wanted to get even with them.

“You bast\*rd!”

Slap!

The woman was even more aggressive. She was not the kind of person that anyone could mess around with. With a tight expression on her face, she immediately raised her hand to send a massive slap across Gerald’s face.

“F\*ck you!!”

Slap!

Enraged, Gerald instantly returned the slap. As he was quite strong, it completely knocked the woman down to the floor.

While this was going on, Sienna, Xeno, and the

matchmaker were chatting and laughing on the way back.

Xeno: “You have to help me put in a good word or two for Gerald in this matter!”

The matchmaker: “Don’t worry! C’mon, don’t you know how close I am to Sienna? Besides, I think the woman is pretty satisfied with Gerald!”

“Well, let’s go in and see what they’re up to!”

When Xeno and the others arrived, they stood outside for a bit and did not enter yet.

Just as they were about to head in, they suddenly heard a loud crashing sound of plates smashing onto the table.

All three of them froze, stunned. The doors swung open...

## Chapter 483

As Xeno and the rest rushed in; they were welcomed to the scene of Gerald fighting with both women.

The three of them were utterly shocked at the sight, quickly intervening and persuading them to stop fighting, which fortunately turned out a success.

Xeno knew that if Gerald had really lost his temper, he could be really ruthless and impulsive.

No. Actually, half of the woman's face had started swelling badly after getting hit by Gerald.

Xeno and the others hurriedly dragged the two women, still yelling and cursing, away from the scene.

He had been given the responsibility to send them home.

Sienna could not help but feel a little anxious. What was going on here?

Despite feeling uneasy with the whole situation, she still got into the car with Xeno and the rest.

He informed them that he would be having dinner with Gerald tonight to get some clarity on what happened.

Gerald did not suffer other injuries aside from a stinging cheek from the woman's slap.

As for why he had to vent his anger and frustrations ...

First, it was because the two of them were really extraordinarily annoying and frustrating, even planning to trick him and make a fool out of him.

Second, Gerald couldn't take the fact that the demure and pretty Weston girl had actually been taken advantage of by a foreigner. It made him very uneasy and unhappy.

With everything adding up, Gerald didn't refrain from speaking harshly. He couldn't help but retaliate immediately once the woman hit him.

After all, they were not related at all. No matter what it was, he wasn't the poor pauper he once was. How could he allow someone to just slap him that way?

Gerald stood in the lobby alone as he settled the bill. He shook his head as he saw how the table full of wine and dishes had really gone to waste.

"Eh? Gerald! Why are you here? What a coincidence!"

Gerald suddenly heard someone calling his name.

When he turned around, he saw Cindy and her mother. He did not notice their presence before this.

“Gerald, you came here for a meal too?” asked Cindy.

“I guess you could say that!” replied Gerald as he smiled awkwardly.

“Well then, have you eaten yet?”

“I guess you could say that.”

“Pfft! You’ve got a funny way of talking!”

Cindy was really tickled by how Gerald spoke.

“Since it is such a coincidence, why don’t you join us for a meal if you haven’t eaten already? My mom was just saying that she would like to buy you a meal if she ran into you. Not forgetting how you even treated me to a delicious French meal the last time!”

“Isn’t that so, mom?” asked Cindy, smiling brightly. ①

Francesca smiled as she looked at Gerald. Nodding, she said, “That’s right. Anyway, I’m also treating a young man to lunch. If you have no other plans, please do join us for lunch...”

When Francesca heard what Leia said before this,



she also thought Gerald was nothing but a pauper.

She initially did not want her daughter to spend any more time with him.

Seeing the bigger picture, Gerald withdrew 90,000 dollars from the bank at one go. 2

This really shocked them all.

The more Francesca thought about it, the more she felt something wasn't right.

She could tell that Gerald was a very calm and composed person. Even in the face of ridicule, he could still maintain his composure and maturity. No ordinary person would have been able to take it the same way.

With such comprehensive thoughts on this matter, she decided to get to know Gerald better. Hence, the reason she got Cindy to invite Gerald for a meal.

As for lunch today, Francesca finally managed to use one of her connections to get in touch with a potential client. It was the cousin of one of her female kindergarten mates whose family was very influential. 1

To further attract the client, Francesca decided she would be buying lunch. The other party was not free, but his son, also a rich heir, was. Francesca thought it would be merrier and easier for her to

connect with the other party if there was another young person around. So, she decided to ask Cindy to join her for lunch too.

And then, they bumped into Gerald. How perfectly things turned out!

Everything was fated. Hehe. In fact, the director of the bank was about to retire before the end of the year. Therefore, one of the two deputy directors would be appointed as the new director of the bank.

And so, Francesca and Leia became rivals for the position.

“Look! My mom is also asking you to join us. Come join us! Let’s have a meal together.” Cindy persuaded.

Gerald rubbed his stomach. He did start to feel a little hungry after all that squabble and muscle movement earlier on. 3

## Chapter 484

He had barely eaten anything, and his stomach grumbled with low groans.

It would also be ungracious to turn down Francesca's kind offer; hence Gerald agreed to join them for lunch.

It was then that Gerald received a call from Xeno.

"F\*ck! Gerald, I am so, so sorry for you. I totally understand now why the fight happened. Let alone you, I, too, felt like giving them a good beating. If it weren't for Sienna, I would have already given it to them just now. Isn't this simply equivalent to committing fraud?!"

Seemed as though Xeno found out the truth. He was enraged and fuming mad.

"Sienna and that colleague of hers have already gotten into a big argument. She wants me to apologize to you. She really trusted that colleague of hers! Who would have expected her to introduce such a piece of trash to you instead? That woman even vomited inside my car! Hmph!"

Xeno couldn't help but feel contrite.

His intentions were good—introduce a girl to his

buddy to give him a helping hand. On the contrary, the outcome was terrible, and such a woman was introduced to Gerald instead. Anyone else would have also felt awful and embarrassed.

“It’s okay, Xeno. So, where are the both of you now? Have you sent that woman and her mother home yet?”

“Are you kidding me? Who’d be bothered to send them home? Arghh!! Plus, that woman totally said the wrong thing in my car. She should’ve known her place! The moment she said it, I literally chased the both of them out. Sienna and I are going to walk around the supermarket now. Do come over and have a drink with me tonight!”

“Yeah, sure!”

After a quick chat, Gerald then hung up the phone.

Alas. How could Gerald possibly blame Xeno and Sienna for this?

He decided not to think about the matter anymore, following Cindy and her mother into the room.

“I wonder when Waylon and the others will arrive... hmm. Speaking of which, Waylon’s actually a pretty decent guy. The moment he heard that his aunt was the one who introduced me to them, he was very polite and respectful towards me over the phone.

He even said that he would bring a couple of friends here with him today! Regardless of whether this business deal would be successful or not, both his aunt and I would also owe him a favor today. Cindy, it would be great if you can find someone like him to become your boyfriend!”

Francesca blurted excitedly.

“Mom! What are you talking about?”

Cindy burst out as she pouted.

“Aunt Lacy?”

Suddenly, the door of the room swung wide open.

A boy walked in and greeted them with a bright smile.

There were two other young men and a woman standing behind him. They were all young people just like Gerald and Cindy.

“Yes! Are you Waylon Letts?” Francesca asked as she returned the smile.

Waylon nodded before replying, “Yes, Aunt Lacy. Sorry that we are late!”

“Haha! What are you apologizing for? We just arrived too. Your aunt often tells me how handsome you are. I had a tough time believing her as you know, there aren’t many good looking ones around

anyway. But my, you are even more handsome than her compliments!”

“Aunt Lacy, you flatter me. Please allow me to introduce you to my friends. First, this is Milo Laurent. He is a high school classmate and a buddy of mine. His family owns a factory. This girl is Xella Jaquin, also a classmate from high school. This guy is Jacky Zeni, the department’s deputy manager in Xella’s company. I would especially mention that the company Xella works at is a Dream Investment Group subsidiary! Hehe!”

Waylon proudly introduced all of them, one hand stuck in his pocket.

“Gosh! All of you are so young! How can you be so amazing and capable?”

It all took Francesca by surprise, judging how they had accomplished so much at such a young age.

She was oblivious to the fact that the other three who had come with Waylon were also dumbfounded by his introduction.

“Waylon, this is my daughter, Cindy. She’s the same age as you, but haha... well certainly not quite as promising as you are!”

“And yes, this is an ordinary friend of Cindy’s that she had recently got acquainted with...”

It seemed as though Francesca was afraid that Waylon and the others would misunderstand seeing Gerald as Cindy's boyfriend.

She wanted to justify by giving them clarity.

However, Waylon interrupted her before she could even finish speaking.

"Aunt Lacy, don't worry, there is no need for you to introduce him to us. We know who he is. He's Gerald, and he is our classmate too!" replied Waylon as he looked at Gerald with a sneer.

He had not settled the score after Gerald gave him a slap during their last high-school reunion.

Back then, Waylon was supposed to be the day's protagonist, but Gerald stole the limelight. He even got beaten up until his head was bleeding!

Those few days were basically like living hell because all Waylon could think about whenever he closed his eyes was how Gerald had given him a slap across his face. It was a nightmare.

He could not help but become very uncomfortable once he saw Gerald again.

Waylon had been continually thinking of ways of where he could find the opportunity to trample all over Gerald, then destroy him in front of everyone

else when their paths crossed again.

The moment he saw Gerald today, it definitely took him by surprise.

Gerald, oh, Gerald! It seemed as though a clash would be inevitable between both enemies!

As the introduction went on, Gerald smiled and looked at Xella.

“We meet again, Xella!”

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## Chapter 485

“Know Aunt Lacy and her family, Gerald?”

Gerald previously drove a Mercedes-Benz G500 at the hospital, and he even knew the county's leader. It really surprised Xella.

Frankly, Gerald was quite charismatic that day.

That said, regardless of circumstance, Gerald was still inferior compared to Waylon and Jacky, who were standing next to her.

Waylon's family owned a huge empire. He had also started his own company and became a boss at such a young age.

Although Waylon didn't drive a car as posh as Gerald's Mercedes Benz G500, he had higher prospects compared to Gerald.

As for Jacky, Xella suspected that he was the one who helped her the last time as the deputy manager of the personnel department.

He was a large organization manager, and he had very high standards in the public institution. He was also rewarded with a very high bonus and dividend at the end of the year.

Plus, Jacky also owned a business.

He was a handsome, eligible white-collar worker.

What about Gerald? What else did he have?

Although Gerald was one of the more capable ones from their class, Xella no longer had the kind of affection that she felt for him during high school.

“Yes, I know them! How unexpected that the guests ’ Aunt Lacy invited for lunch today are you guys! Such a coincidence!” replied Gerald as he nodded.

Although some of them weren’t fans of Gerald, they all sat at the same dinner table, eating, drinking, and chatting with each other. Gerald, who was sitting at the side, could sense that something was different this time.

It seemed as though Waylon and Xella were no longer as close as how they used to be.

To further explain, back then, Xella used to be really attached to Waylon, and Waylon had always been interested in Xella too.

But strangely, at lunch today, most of Xella’s attention was focused on Jacky.

Waylon would sometimes throw a cold stare at Gerald before stealing glances at Jacky, envy

dripping all over his face.

It was apparent that he didn't look happy, but not to the point of being too upset.

Cindy's appearance really brightened up his day.

She was as gorgeous as Xella, but with a bonus look of innocence on her—pure and delicate.

Despite his jealousy toward Jacky, Waylon had put in a conscious effort to show his affection and favor to Cindy.

Milo was also captivated by Cindy's beauty and tried to make moves too. But upon seeing the look on Waylon's face, Milo quickly held back all of his advances.

What was even more embarrassing was the fact that Cindy seemed to be interested in Gerald. The whole time, she had been using her own chopsticks, picking up the food and leaving them on Gerald's plate. **1**

Her gesture really upset Waylon and Milo.

Although this lunch seemed to be peaceful on the surface, many little internal battles were going on behind the scenes.

Waylon quickly glanced at Gerald before he winked at Milo. After that, both excused themselves, saying

that they had to go to the washroom.

“Waylon, what’s the matter? Are you interested in Cindy? She is my...”

Milo spoke up.

“Shut up. We are not going to talk about that first. I mean, look. The opportunity has finally come for me to settle things with Gerald. I want to take advantage of this opportunity to make sure that this b\*tch, Xella, and that girl, Cindy, have some respect for me!”

Waylon could not hide his sullen expression as he cringed at how awkward and embarrassing the atmosphere was at the dining table earlier.

“What? Are you serious, Waylon? You’re going to deal with Gerald, like now? I mean, how?”

Milo got a little excited at the thought.

During the last fight, besides Cameron, Milo got himself involved too. Milo had also always been tagging along with Waylon ever since their high school days.

Milo’s family ran a factory and was rich, but he fought very well.

“By the way, when we went out for drinks about two days ago, was that your brother, Warrick, who

does like underground dealings? Why don't we do this then? Perhaps you could give Big War a ring later. Tell him to come over and just give these bunch a little scare. And once the matter seems unsolvable, I will ask my godbrother, Jaxon, to give him a call then. Hah! And in Serene County, everyone knows how no one in the world wouldn't dare give face to Jaxon!"

"On second thought, tell him to not just give them a scare. It would be best if they could belittle Gerald; beat him up nicely. I want him to embarrass himself!" Waylon growled.

Milo was amazed when he heard Waylon's suggestion.

"That is a brilliant idea!"

"Yes. Jaxon had been feeling very sorry towards me because he couldn't help me with the matter the last time. All the more, I am his godbrother. He promised me that he would definitely help me take care of things if I ran into any difficulties in the future!"

Waylon exclaimed proudly.

"Okay, then! Let's do that then. Let me give Big War a call now!"

Milo then hurriedly dialed on his phone.

The both of them then returned to the room casually, but deep down, they could barely contain their excitement.

Gerald, enjoying his pork trotters at the side, could not help but wonder why both of them were laughing gleefully amongst themselves.

Not long after, there was a loud commotion outside.

“What do you think you guys are doing? You cannot go in there!”

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## Chapter 486

A waitress yelled at the top of her lungs.

“Get lost!!”

A man cursed.

The next thing everyone knew, the room door was kicked wide open.

A group of seven or eight brawny men with buzz cuts and gold necklaces around their necks rushed into the room.

Each of them had dragon-like tattoos carved over their bodies.

They definitely gave off an intimidating vibe.

Clad in short-sleeved shirts, they slowly looked around, staring deadly at the people inside the room at this moment.

The leader of the gang had on a T-shirt and a sling pouch bag.

He took a long puff before he growled in a raspy voice, “Who was the one who booked this room? I want you to move to another room now!”

“Why should we do that? Who do you guys think

you are?”

Cindy asked angrily as she stood up. She was not afraid of them at all.

“Who am I? Hah, girl. I am Warrick Yackel. If you don’t know who I am, go out on the streets and ask anyone about me!”

Warrick chuckled as he threw the cigarette butt on the ground and stepped on it.

Francesca raised her brows when she heard this.

This proved that she had heard of Warrick’s name before this.

“Mr. Yackel, we’re not done with our meals yet. So, how can we possibly move to another room then?” 3

Francesca asked politely, a tight smile pressed across her face.

“How? It’s simple. Each of you just pick up your own damn dish in your hands and move elsewhere!”

Warrick retorted and sniggered.

The atmosphere was tense and awkward. Even Francesca did not know what else to say.

If they were to take their dishes out to eat, Waylon would definitely lose face.

Francesca could only helplessly hold down her



irritated daughter as she tried to persuade Cindy to sit down.

Waylon and Milo both just calmly observed the situation unfold with delight.

But something felt amiss, and Waylon whispered worriedly, “What’s going on? Gerald’s one of those who hosted today’s luncheon too. So, why isn’t he doing anything at all? If we’re going accordingly to plan, as soon as Gerald speaks up, they would immediately start beating him up! This is f\*cking annoying!”

At the same time, Gerald thought to himself:

‘Waylon and Milo are usually the types who enjoy being in the limelight. During such situations, they would be already showing off and trying to handle the situation to prove their own strengths and capabilities. I don’t want to rob them of their opportunity to take charge. But it seems as though both of them are not going to say anything at all. What is going on?’

Gerald decided to remain seated and continued to observe further.

“Okay! Looks like none of you are going to speak up, right? Then, don’t blame me for being impolite!”

Warrick cracked his knuckles and loosened his neck.

**Boom!**

Suddenly, Jacky slammed his hands on the table.

“Let’s see how brave you guys are then! Don’t you have any respect for the law? Xella, call the police now!”

Jacky fumed as he stared coldly at the group of men, one hand in his pocket.

Xella felt her cheeks turning pink as she felt Jacky’s charm exuding out of him.

She stared wishfully at Jacky, her eyes filled with admiration.

Milo could not help but feel even more worried about Waylon.

Milo looked at Waylon, as though to say: “Look! Jacky is stealing all the limelight from you!”

Waylon simply smiled wryly as he thought to himself: ‘He wants to steal the limelight from me? Heh. Fine, I’ll let Jacky and Gerald steal the limelight from me first. My plan will not work if no one is trying to steal the limelight from me!’

Jacky, too felt a sense of accomplishment, like a hero. He turned around and looked at Xella, as though telling her not to worry, and that he had everything under control.

Xella simply nodded and quickly whipped out her cell phone to call the police.

“F\*ck! So you’re really not giving me any face at all. Brothers... beat him up!”

As soon as Warrick boomed, he picked up a stool from the side and threw it directly at Jacky.

As the fight broke out, one of the gang members snatched Xella’s phone and broke it.

Xella’s face immediately crunched in fear as she crouched defensively behind Waylon.

Jacky was pinned to the ground as the guys severely bludgeoned him up.

“Stop! Stop hitting him! Stop hitting him! What should I do now?!”

Francesca screamed in a frenzy and looked as though she was about to burst into tears.

Waylon saw that Cindy and Xella were completely helpless and almost reached their limits. But yet Gerald still remained calm and did not take any action. Waylon cursed below his breath and vowed to have someone else beat him up next time then.

Suddenly, the sound of someone slamming their hands on the table pierced through the air.

Waylon slipped his hands in his pockets, squinting

in frustration. He tilted his head as he slowly muttered in disgust.

“I want you guys to stop right now!!!”

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## Chapter 487

Waylon stood up and yelled.

Stunned, Warrick and his guys stopped immediately.

“Young man, are you asking for a death wish too?”

Warrick pranced towards Waylon, his face grim and black.

“Don’t mess around with him! Don’t you know who Waylon’s father is?”

Although Xella had tasted the harshest realities of the world in these few years, never had she come across anything like this before. When this incident broke out, the sense of security that she felt in Jacky was gone entirely.

Looking at how things turned out, it seemed as though Waylon was handling things better compared to Jacky.

Despite being clouded in fear, Xella felt the urge to reveal Waylon’s family background to scare off Warrick and his men.

“Pfft! Who is he?”

Before Xella could reply, Waylon grabbed her arm

and motioned for her to shut up.

“Xella, I told you before that I do not want to involve my father in any of my own affairs in the future. Get behind me. It’s okay. I will solve this matter!”

Waylon replied.

“Ahh? But Waylon...”

“Just stand behind me!!”

Waylon roared at Xella.

Xella nodded timidly. Despite being yelled at, she suddenly felt a strong sense of security deep down in her heart.

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She obediently stood behind him.

“Big War, my name is Waylon Letts. I started a small company of my own. I know how famous you are in the underground industry. My godbrother from Mayberry City knows who you are too.”

Waylon smiled at Warrick, trying to ease the situation.

“Oh, is that so?” Warrick raised an eyebrow, pretending to be shocked.

Francesca, who stood by the sides, started to feel a growing sense of admiration and appreciation for

Waylon when he saw him dealing with things so calmly.

“Your godbrother also knows who I am? And from Mayberry City? What is his name?”

Warrick paused for a moment before asking Waylon.

“Jaxon, Sanders. He is very powerful and influential in both Mayberry City and Serene County. Everyone calls him Jaxon the Great. Have you heard of him before, Big War?”

Waylon replied, smiling politely.

“What? Jaxon the Great is your godbrother?”

Warrick asked, as his face turned pale immediately. His act was really convincing.

“Bullsh\*t! Who is Jaxon the Great? He is from Mayberry Organization. How can you possibly know someone like him?”

Warrick immediately quizzed him.

In fact, Francesca doubted his words too. She found it fishy for someone like Waylon to be so well connected.

Plus, it was such a big claim to say that Jaxon the Great was his godbrother!

“Heh. You don’t believe me, do you? If you don’t

believe me, I can always drop my godbrother a call now and get him to speak to you in person then!”

Waylon replied calmly before calling Jaxon.

Of course, he had already told Jaxon about this matter beforehand and asked for his favor to put on an act and pass a message on his behalf.

His primary purpose was just to teach his enemy a lesson.

After all, since Jaxon did not manage to help Waylon the last time, hence he agreed to this favor today.

“Brother, are you busy? I ran into some trouble... oh, yes. I am at Johnsbury Bistro now. There is someone by the name of Warrick Yackel who is holding up my friends and me!”

“What? You’re near Johnsbury Bistro? So you’re coming over now?”

Waylon was in glee, unable to contain his delight.

When they spoke over the phone earlier, they had already planned for Jaxon to say a few words over the phone to Warrick. Unexpectedly, Jaxon was actually going to come here personally.

Waylon then hung up the phone excitedly.

“It really is Jaxon the Great!”



As he said this, Warrick pretended to be extremely shocked. He even acted as though he was too scared to even move.

One of Warrick's conditions stated before he agreed to put on an act for Waylon was so that he could befriend Jaxon the Great through Waylon. After all, Warrick knew that Waylon came from compelling family background.

Otherwise, he would not have agreed to put on this act for him for no reason at all.

“Pfft! You are finally scared now?!”

Xella scoffed.

She was still feeling furious that the group of men had broken her cell phone just now.

A short while later, the door swung open again.

A young man decked in a neat suit and leather shoes stepped into the room.

## Chapter 488

“Who is causing trouble?” questioned the young man.

When Warrick saw the young man, he was shocked. “It’s really you, Jaxon the Great! I am Warrick, and I was just hanging around the area. This is all a misunderstanding!”

Jaxon had been invited to sing at a karaoke bar next to Johnsbury Bistro. He initially thought that it would not be right for him not to help Waylon at all after receiving so many favors from Waylon’s family.

With that thought in mind, he decided to come over in person to take a look.

“So, what should I do now then? Waylon, you’re not injured, are you?”

Jaxon asked.

“I am not injured, brother! No worries.”

Waylon walked over to Jaxon and took out a cigarette before handing it over to Jaxon as he lit it up for him.

Just as Jaxon had a few drags of the cigarette, it fell

right to the ground.

“Brother, what’s wrong?”

Waylon asked curiously.

“You... you are here?”

Jaxon asked as he looked at Gerald, who was sitting down at the table in astonishment.

He was very clear about who Gerald was. As one of those directly involved in the organization, he was certain about Gerald’s true identity.

Gerald, on the other hand, had always thought that Jaxon was a sincere and upright man. He failed to fathom how he was acquainted with someone like Waylon, who only liked to loaf around.

“Yes!”

Gerald replied as he nodded.

Milo, who was standing by the side, also wanted to be able to speak to Jaxon. He then scurried towards Jaxon as he said softly, “Jaxon the Great, that is the kid that we were going to beat up today!”

“What? Are you saying that the person that you wanted to beat up...is him?” Jaxon asked in shock.

“Yes. Brother, this kid actually offended your godbrother! And that’s equivalent to offending me

too. Watch me. I am going to hit him now!”

Jaxon’s expression was difficult to read at that very moment.

Warrick started to make his way towards Gerald to beat him up.

Seeing that, Jaxon suddenly lifted his foot and tripped Warrick, who weighed more than eighty kilograms. ①

Warrick instantly fell to the ground with a loud thud.

“Damn it! You are so rude and disrespectful! I will put an end to you today!”

As a chauffeur, Jaxon could naturally fight very well.

This group of people actually wanted to beat Mr. Crawford up? Wouldn’t that mean that he was assigned to beat Mr. Crawford up too?

What a recipe for disaster!

Waylon was taken aback too. Didn’t they already agree that Jaxon would just hit Warrick lightly? Why was Jaxon really beating him up?

“Brother, why are you...”

Slap!

Jaxon raised his hand and gave Waylon a huge slap.

“D\*mn it! You reckless fool!”

Jaxon roared as he raised his leg and kicked Waylon aside too.

Xella and everyone else in the room gasped, dumbfounded by the scene.

“What’s going on? Didn’t Waylon call Jaxon over here to help him? Why is he beating up the people from both sides?”

Francesca gripped Cindy’s hand tightly. She knew that they could not afford to offend anyone who was here today.

Waylon’s face was swelling badly as he quivered and asked, “Brother, why did you hit me?”

Waylon felt so aggrieved and wronged that he started crying immediately.

Everything was supposed to be really straight forward today. He simply wanted Jaxon to cooperate with Warrick so that he could show off a little. They could beat Gerald up together then.

But the tables had turned, and both Warrick and himself got beaten up instead.

Jaxon ignored Waylon completely as he stepped on his fingers, and he walked towards everyone else.

Francesca asked in a shaky voice, “Jaxon the Great,

we have not offended you in any way. What are you going to do now?”

Xella was also so frightened that she retreated as far back as she possibly could.

Jaxon suddenly picked up a bottle of red wine.

He walked toward Gerald, smiling.

“So, you’re here too! Please allow me to explain myself. Things are not what you imagine it is.”

As he spoke, Jaxon quickly filled up Gerald’s wine glass for him.

Jaxon looked so nervous that it seemed as though he would kneel down in front of Gerald.

“Huh? What is happening?”

Everyone’s eyes were about to pop out in horror.

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## Chapter 489

Jaxon's respectful attitude toward Gerald surprised everyone.

This was especially so for Xella, who was now looking at Gerald with a completely different expression on her face.

She had used to think that Gerald only had personal connections with average statused people. To think that he knew such a powerful and reputable individual as Jaxon!

What more, Jaxon had even taught the people who were planning to beat Gerald up a lesson. He didn't give them any face at all!

“What a great coincidence! If it weren't for you, I would already have been beaten up!” said Gerald with a wry smile on his face.

He had seen through Waylon's act. If his guess was correct, then everything that had happened was orchestrated by Waylon. That was probably also the reason why both Waylon and Milo were laughing between themselves earlier.

Jaxon simply bowed slightly at Gerald's comment.

What an awkward meal today... Gerald himself

already felt full.

As for Francesca, after seeing Waylon getting beaten like that, she didn't have the mood to continue eating anymore. With that, she decided to settle the bill first.

“Ah, Mr. Sanders, are you acquainted with Gerald? I'm the deputy director of X Bank. You seem like quite the capable man! Please don't hesitate to contact me if any of your groups wish to use our bank for your funding and capital flow!”

Francesca wasn't going to let the chance to befriend Jaxon slip away that easily.

After all, she knew that Jaxon had the capability to make smaller subordinate companies use X Bank for their cash flow.

Instead of discussing the matter with Francesca, he simply looked at Gerald to see his response.

Gerald simply nodded.

If Francesca hadn't invited him to join them for lunch today, she may have been able to get through with her business negotiations with ease. Since her initial plan was disrupted because of him, Gerald thought that it would only be fair for him to help her out this time. This was the only reason why he agreed to it.



At that moment, they could hear Waylon and the group of people fighting again inside the room.

It was clear, however, that the people were beating Waylon up this time.

Though Warrick had planned to use Waylon to befriend Jaxon, he ended up unexpectedly offending him instead!

How could Warrick not be angry?

Waylon was now the group's punching bag to release all their anger and frustration.

Gerald only sneered when he heard Waylon's screams. In fact, he felt that they weren't beating him hard enough.

Xella continued looking at Gerald, a complicated expression on her face.

When she saw that Gerald was only talking to Cindy and wasn't paying her any attention, deep in her heart, Xella couldn't help but feel slightly uncomfortable

And just like that, the meal was over.

Gerald went back to his hotel with Jaxon as the driver.

“Cindy, I can finally see why your grandfather told

me that this young man's identity wasn't all that simple!" said Francesca after a while as she sighed.

While they were having dinner together last night, Cindy's grandfather had emphasized that Gerald wasn't as simple as he looked. She hadn't thought much about it back then, but she could now see what he meant.

"I hadn't expected him to be so powerful and well connected either! Actually, now that I think about it, mom! I finally understand what happened back when I was at the karaoke bar last time!" replied Cindy as she smacked her forehead with her palm.

Xella herself remained silent. She was waiting for the people inside to finish fighting before fishing Waylon out. She didn't dare to go in at the moment, nor did she dare to stay alone. She was terrified that Warrick and his men would also take their revenge on her.

Earlier, she had followed Gerald out quietly when she saw him leaving.

However, Gerald paid her no notice and simply left without saying another word.

## Chapter 490

After Gerald left, Xella re-entered the building quietly and stood close to Francesca and her daughter.

She had been listening to the mother and daughter's conversation from the moment they started talking again.

“What happened at the karaoke bar?” asked Xella nervously before Francesca could even respond.

“Oh! See, we went to a karaoke bar a little while back to have some fun. A friend of ours provoked some people there and it led to a clash with Louie from the Lourdes Mining Group in Serene County! Back then, even Douglas was frightened to death despite being such a capable person! After all, it was Louie who we had provoked. Louie had even ordered all the girls to remain in the bar and drink with him!”

“What? Cindy! Why wasn't I told about this earlier?”

All Francesca knew was that Gerald had invited her daughter over to enjoy a meal with him. She had just found out about this entire conflict today.

“Well, I was afraid that you would be worried! I’ll explain all of it now, though. At the time, I was crying together with Leila since we were so frightened. Douglas and the other guys had run away as well! But guess what happened next!”

“Go on,” Francesca replied worriedly.

“In the end, it was Gerald who had helped us settle everything! He was the one who had made Louie let all the girls go! If it hadn’t been for him, I don’t even want to start imagining what could have happened to us that night!”

As Cindy continued explaining, she took notice of how affectionate she was whenever she talked about him. She realized at that moment, that she now had budding feelings for Gerald.

“And? What happened after that? All of you just left Gerald alone with Louie? Would someone like Louie just let Gerald leave that easily?”

It was Xella’s turn to ask.

“Yeah, well here’s the thing. That was when things started getting even weirder! I was worried about Gerald so I told everyone to turn back to the karaoke bar. By the time we arrived, the building was surrounded by dozens of Maybach cars! When we entered, Louie and his friends were all getting

beaten up by some men dressed in black!”

“Though it was quite a spectacle, my main objective then was still to help Gerald get out. I was so anxious then. However, it turned out that not only was Gerald doing fine, he was having an expensive French meal for his dinner in a restaurant next to the karaoke bar! When he saw us, he invited us over to have dinner with him too! When I asked Gerald about the specifics of what had happened back in the karaoke bar, he kept his answers ambiguous... It really felt like he was hiding something from us back then. After tonight’s events, I think I finally understand what happened back then a little better ...”

Francesca took in a deep breath before exhaling.

“...Then, if that’s the case, it’s very likely that Gerald was the one who had called the group of people to beat Louie and his friends up. He wouldn’t just help you girls resolve the matter without a backup plan. What more, he was even calmly enjoying a nice meal at the time!”

“That’s what I’m thinking too!” replied Cindy as she nodded energetically.

Xella was shocked after hearing her story.

“...You know, a while back I had a class reunion with Gerald and one of my friends, Cameron, said that

Gerald seemed to have a good relationship with Louie! He even said that Gerald had kicked Louie's butt yet Louie's only response at the time was to smile without saying a word! This could mean that Gerald had already beaten him up once before this. Why else would he be that polite to Gerald?" explained Xella in detail.

Hearing her side of the story, both Francesca and Cindy couldn't help but feel that Gerald's true identity had only grown more mysterious.

"I think... I think I've got it! Cindy! If we're really, really lucky, Gerald could be the young master himself! Mr. Crawford from Mayberry City!" said Francesca aloud.

"W-what?"

Hearing those words made Xella tremble in fear. She was shaking so much that her handbag even fell to the floor.

She felt as though she had just been stabbed in the heart.

"Mom! That's... not possible, right?"

Cindy could feel her chest tighten as she pondered upon the idea.

"Pfft! I'm just pulling your leg! On a more serious note, this Gerald is definitely quite the

extraordinary individual. Even Jaxon's giving him so much face. Cindy, he's always been good and kind to you, right? Try to get as close to him as you possibly can in the near future. From what we know, both his classmates and even the Jung family despise him. You're one of the few people in Serene County who treats him well, so you better seize this opportunity!" said Francesca happily.

Xella felt miserable hearing her words.

If nothing else had happened, she would've been Gerald's best friend in Serene County! 2

Not too long ago, Gerald had still been affectionate with her. Contrastingly, he was now very cold and indifferent toward her!

At that moment, Xella realized that she felt as though she had lost something...

It was some time after noon when Francesca returned to the bank to work. She had a radiant smile on her face.

"Hehe... Deputy Director Lacy, why are you so happy? Could you already have met a noble person to complete your order for you?"

Seeing Francesca's happy face, Leia couldn't help but feel slightly bitter.

## Chapter 491

“Oh, don’t be like that, Deputy Leia. It isn’t every day that we get to see Deputy Lacy being this happy! After all, she still has to fulfill a pretty big quota that even the President may not be able to reach, and she’s just a deputy!” mocked one of the ladies closer to Leia.

Leia was pleased to hear that. “That’s right! She’s still just a deputy! As if she could have that much power!”

Lacy only smiled without saying a word.

While this was happening, a middle-aged woman suddenly burst into the office, covered head to toe in sweat.

Seeing this, the employees in the room immediately shouted in unison, “President!”

“President Khan, what’s wrong? You’re drenched in sweat!” asked Leia.

Usually, Leia would get more respect from President Khan because of her husband. This time, however, she didn’t even look at her. She simply walked over to Lacy as though she hadn’t heard a word from Leia.



“Deputy Lacy, you have accomplished a great achievement on behalf of the bank this time! I’m really not sure how to even thank you properly!” said the president excitedly.

“What happened, President Khan?” asked Lacy. She had a fair guess what this was about, but she still asked anyway.

“Haha... Well, remember the Mayberry Commercial Gro- I mean, the Dream Investment Group? The one I’ve always wanted to cooperate with? I’ve always thought that I’d never be able to work with them because of my status. I wasn’t even sure if their smallest company would even work with us!”

“However! You managed to get over thirty companies under their name. You even signed over sixty financing contracts with them and the data is still increasing! I... I’m not even sure what to do now!”

President Khan wasn’t the only one shocked. Lacy was equally shocked as well.

She thought that Gerald might only be able to get a hold of one or two companies under their name but to think that he got her over thirty companies and over sixty financing contracts?

Goodness gracious!

With this turn of events, she might not just remain a director this time, right?

“Anyway, I’m here to tell you that we will be officially signing the contracts with them tomorrow. Naturally, you’ll be coming with me. However, your current position doesn’t suit you anymore. I’ve had a talk with the higher management and you’re now the reserve vice president. Lennon will be retiring next month and when he does, you’ll be taking his position! Since the director position will also be empty, you’ll have both positions for the time being!”

“For now, just fill up the forms for both the position of director and vice president. I’ll approve the applications later!”

“I- I understand, President Khan! Thank you for placing your trust in me!”

Lacy was so excited that she was almost in tears.

Once President Khan left, Lacy didn’t know what to do. She was feeling an onslaught of emotions at that moment.

All of a sudden, the sound of shattering glass was heard.

Leia’s cup lay broken on the floor. Her face was pale and her hand remained frozen as though she was

still holding on to the cup. She was in shock.

“How... how is this possible? How is any of this possible?” mumbled Leia to herself in utter disbelief.

She couldn't believe that her competitor had finally overtaken her! Leia had been taking the lead for so long and yet, Lacy was suddenly promoted to a much higher position than her! It wasn't something that Leia could just take calmly!

“Congratulations, Director- I mean, Vice President Lacy!” said one of the workers. Everyone in the office began clapping.

Well, everyone except for Leia. Lacy looked at Leia before smiling triumphantly.

Immediately after that, she called Gerald.

“Hello? Gerald? I need to thank you face to face. Because of your friend, I'm now the vice president! I need to treat you when you're free, Gerald! You definitely have to come, alright?” Lacy said it out loud specifically so that one particular person could hear her.

“Sure, Auntie Lacy!” said Gerald as he nodded on the other end of the line.

After she hung up, she looked at Leia who was staring wide-eyed at her.

“You... who helped you? What did you say his name was?”

Leia’s face was as pale as a sheet as she asked. 2

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## Chapter 492

“Oh, you know, Gerald. Actually, now that I think about it, you should know him better than I do. After all, he’s the one who withdrew ninety thousand dollars in cash and is also my daughter’s best friend! He treats her very well, you know?”

Everyone in the office knew each other very well, which was why Lacy spoke without the slightest hesitation.

“Wow! He must be your future son-in-law!”

Everyone had slight envy in their voices.

“...What? What are you even talking about? As if he could ever have that much power! You’re joking, right?” shouted Leia.

“Haha... Oh yes, yes, I’m definitely joking!” replied Lacy sarcastically as she smiled.

Lacy’s words pierced through Leia’s heart like spears. She was so angry that she couldn’t even say anything at that moment.

How couldn’t she be? Her competitor had won everything! She had even lost to the person she looked down on the most! That Gerald!

As the cocktail of anger, hate, and jealousy filled her mind, she couldn't take the utter defeat and started weeping!

Meanwhile, Gerald had just arrived at his hotel when he received a phone call from Zack.

"I have two things to inform you about, Mr. Crawford!" said Zack.

"Go on."

"Well, the first thing is regarding the jade pendant. Mr. Xiques has updated me on his findings. Though the final results will only be available within the next two days, his current prediction of where the jade originated from is somewhere from the southwest! I've also asked a few other masters just to double confirm with his assumptions," explained Zack.

"Southwest... Alright, I got it. We'll just wait for the final appraisal before making a move. What's the other thing you mentioned about?" asked Gerald. He was pleased that there was progress on the jade pendant.

"About that... Since the investment with Serene County and Mayberry's development is a pretty big project, those from the upper management are very concerned. They'll be coming over to inspect later

so I've organized an evening cocktail party. It would be great if you could attend. It'll show how concerned we are about the upper management too!"

"Who is coming? I have time to spare later!"

"There's Mr. Harrison, Mayberry's vice president and president, and Serene County's management. All of the big names will be attending!"

"Then I'd better be there early tonight!" said Gerald.

It was already close to four and Gerald knew that he should get ready soon.

Suddenly, he remembered that he was supposed to have dinner with Xeno later.

Since he couldn't make it now, he tried giving Xeno a call to inform him about the change in plans. However, he wasn't picking up.

Strange.

Gerald then tried calling Sienna. It took him two tries before she finally picked up.

However, he could immediately tell that something was very wrong the moment she answered his call.

It was very noisy on Xeno's side. He could hear someone cursing in the background and Xeno was

cursing as well.

When Sienna finally spoke, her voice was extremely anxious.

“Gerald!”

“What’s going on, Sienna? What’s all the noise about?”

Sienna stopped speaking for a brief moment before continuing, “It’s Xeno! Some people were destroying our shop! They’re inside now and Xeno wants to fight them! ”

“What?!” Gerald immediately hopped off the couch.

“Wait for me, I’m coming over immediately!”

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## Chapter 493

By the time Gerald reached Xeno's second-hand car shop, several cars were already parked outside. Even from afar, he could hear a group of people quarreling from within the shop.

When Gerald got closer, he could see that the glass door had been shattered. The familiar backs of two people could also be seen in front of the shop.

It was the mother and daughter from the blind date event!

Gerald instantly put two and two together.

No wonder she kept telling him not to come over through the phone. The people there were after him!

“F\*ck! That's him! He's the one who beat us up!” shouted the angry woman when she saw Gerald.

As she pointed toward him, several people who looked like gangsters wielding wooden bats exited the shop. They had dragon tattoos all over their arms and they each bore fierce expressions on their faces.

Xeno himself ran out, holding a kitchen knife in

each hand. Even though he was clearly outnumbered, Xeno wasn't afraid.

All of them were outside now, and since Xeno was holding the knives, none of the gangsters dared to move forward.

Both parties were simply waiting for the other to make the first move.

"Ignore him! The b\*stard who beat both of us up is over here! Beat him to death!" shouted the enraged mother.

"Lay a finger on my brother and I'll have your head!" shouted Xeno as he jabbed his knife in the air. The gangsters were equally unwilling to move any closer to him.

As the tensions continued to rise, a clap was heard from behind the gangsters. All of them made way for a tough-looking guy. He was wearing a pair of sunglasses and as soon as he waved his hand, the men immediately stepped back. He seemed to be their leader.

"Come now, Xeno! We've known each other for years, and we're both in the same industry! I know what you're like. Honestly, if it were somebody else, I couldn't care any less! However, my cousin and her mom were involved this time. They were both beaten up and I can't take that lightly!

Someone needs to give me a proper explanation!” shouted the man as he cracked his neck intimidatingly. This man meant business.

“This b\*tch is your cousin? Quazzie, I didn’t even know you had an aunt!” scorned Xeno.

Gerald could tell that the woman was a player. He could also guess that she probably had several men ready to help her!

“Oh, you don’t need to worry about that, Xeno! Look, I know we used to have problems business-wise and that you usually received all the support from the others. I’m setting that aside for today. We have another big problem at hand now!” as Quazzie said that, he pointed at Gerald, glaring daggers at him before looking back at Xeno.

“Know that this isn’t over yet! Let’s go, guys!” yelled Quazzie as he waved his hand again. The gangsters followed behind him, occasionally looking back with intimidating glares.

“Quazzie? You’re letting them off so easily?!” said the girl, upset.

“Oh, I have other plans! They’ll play out in a bit but for now, just sit back and enjoy the show!” replied Quazzie with a smirk.

Once the group of people left, Gerald started feeling

extremely guilty.

They were here for Gerald, yet Xeno had to pay the price!

“I’m so sorry, Xeno! Sienna!” said Gerald.

“Say sorry only when you’ve done wrong, Gerald! Nobody’s blaming you! That b\*stard Quazzie has been quarreling with me for a while now, even before you came back to the county! We’ve always had an excuse to fight!” growled Xeno as he entered his shop again.

Once inside, he put the knives to the side before sitting on a chair and lighting a cigarette.

Sienna, on the other hand, got a broom and dustpan to clear up the shattered glass pieces.

After calming down a bit, Xeno explained to Gerald how the situation earlier came to be.

Xeno and Sienna had gone to the hypermarket to get some ingredients for dinner. When they got back, they found Quazzie, the mother, and her daughter waiting for him outside his shop.

They had obviously wanted to get their revenge on Gerald, but since they couldn’t find him, they went to Xeno. However, Xeno had refused to tell them how to contact or find Gerald.

## Chapter 494

Being the hot-headed person that he was, Xeno eventually scolded the mother and daughter, saying they were extremely thick-skinned!

Eventually, Quazzie called in some reinforcements—the gangsters—and all hell broke loose when Xeno's door was shattered. It was at that moment when Xeno ran into his kitchen to get his two kitchen knives.

That was also the reason why Xeno wasn't picking his phone up when Gerald called earlier. He didn't want Gerald to get involved with them.

“So, who is this Quazzie guy?” asked Gerald.

Xeno had taken the hit on behalf of Gerald and Gerald was angry about that. No matter what happened, Gerald would definitely teach Quazzie a lesson.

“Well, he's a gangster who also owns a second-hand car shop. Last month, he accused Xeno of snatching his customers away and not following the rules! He came looking for trouble but luckily, the bosses around here stood by Xeno's back and after some words, Quazzie left. Quazzie's been

depending on his brother-in-law for a very long time now and I've heard that he's quite a powerful man!" said Sienna as she swept the floor.

"Got it," said Gerald as he nodded. He would have a talk with Michael tonight and let him handle the rest.

For now, he had more important things to tell Xeno.

"Anyway, Xeno, you should know that the people from the Dream Investment Group are here in Serene County, right? Why don't you arrange for a huge car carnival? I could help you out!" said Gerald.

Gerald didn't mind forking out the funds needed for that idea. After all, he wasn't just doing this for anyone. It was Xeno!

Sienna sighed at his proposal. "Why would anyone even invest in us?"

Xeno agreed. "Bro, you probably don't know this, but I'm confident that they won't invest in us, simply because we aren't even qualified. In fact, any small and honest company in Serene County won't be able to get into the Dream Investment Group!"

"...Huh? Why not?" Gerald was honestly confused. He really didn't know much about the selection process.

"Well, you'll first have to bribe the company's

employees to get them to invest. After bribing the marketing department, you'll next have to bribe the manager. Every person involved has to be bribed, so how could the smaller companies get in with their low-profit margins? The only people who would have enough money to do so, are the rich and powerful living in Serene County! It's not as simple as you think it is, Gerald," said Xeno as he finally finished smoking. ①

Gerald finally understood why people like Waylon and his father could still get investments.

So this was the reason why.

Gerald had only started doing investments because he wanted to help the smaller and proper businesses get better. However, it would seem that things weren't going as he had planned.

The company seemed to have some serious issues, the biggest being the quality of its management and its employees.

Even Zack hadn't detected these issues and he could tell from people like Talon! ①

While Gerald was already formulating plans in his head, he still insisted that Xeno send in a proposal. Gerald would approve it himself as soon as he could.

At that moment, the tires of three cars screeched to

a halt outside. Immediately after, several people wearing black suits got out and entered the shop.

“Who are you people?” asked Sienna.

“We received a call about a fight here. Was it you guys? Are you Xeno?” asked the leader as he looked at Xeno.

“I am. But if you’re cuffing me, then Quazzie should be in this too! He was the one who started it!” said Xeno.

“Cut the cr\*p! Bring them all back for investigation!”

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## Chapter 495

All three of them were then blindfolded before being driven off to somewhere. They were eventually led into a building and their phones were taken away from them too, before their blindfolds were removed.

Xeno was absolutely positive that the person who had planned for all this was none other than Quazzie's cousin, Grover.

This was definitely part of Quazzie's plan for revenge.

After all, they were here but not Quazzie and his literal gang members. It didn't require a lot of brain cells for Gerald to figure out that they were doing perfectly fine.

The trio had been locked up in a small room for a while now and none of them had been taken in for questioning.

"D\*mn it all! I'll make sure I break that b\*stard's back if it's the last thing I do! Just you wait!" cursed Xeno.

All Gerald could do was try to calm him down. He couldn't really call for backup without his phone.

Zack would probably have solved the matter by now if Gerald still had his cell phone with him.

“What are we going to do now? What’s going to happen to our shop? We’ve been here for more than two hours and it’s probably already six in the evening! Ahhh, this is making me so anxious!”

Gerald could tell how much she loved Xeno. After all, she hadn’t caused a scene even during such a stressful situation and she was still thinking about their shop!

...Wait, it was six already?

Gerald thought for a moment. Zack would probably be anxiously trying to contact him now since he still wasn’t there. If Zack still couldn’t contact him after several tries, a search party for Gerald would probably ensue.

“Xeno, Sienna, there’s no use wasting your energy by being angry or worried. That’s exactly what they want. Let’s just wait for a little while longer. I think we should be able to leave in an hour or so!” said Gerald.

“An hour? That’s too quick and specific, Gerald! Pretty sure we’ll be in here much longer... Those b\*stards are definitely up to something nasty...” replied Xeno, still glaring at the door.

Gerald simply remained quiet and calm.

While this was happening, Quazzie was handing a cigarette over to Grover in another building.

“Ahh, Grover! That guy’s been getting on my nerves for a while now so this time, I’m teaching him a real nice lesson that he’ll remember for life!”

“Don’t worry about it. And you! Stop causing so much trouble!” said Grover.

“Mr. Grover! One of the phones keeps ringing!” said one of Grover’s men as he held Gerald’s phone in his hand.

In fact, that someone had been trying to call for over fifty times now.

“Oh my, the owner’s using a pretty good phone! That model should cost at least a few thousand dollars, right?”

The mother and daughter were also at the scene. The angry mother was glaring at Gerald’s phone.

“Yeah, it costs about three thousand dollars. It’s high-quality stuff!” said the girl, feeling slightly weirded out.

The couple being locked up didn’t look like people who would buy such expensive things. Could it be Gerald’s? Could he secretly be a wealthy person?

She held herself back from laughing at the thought.

That was simply impossible!

Whoever the phone belonged to, they were probably just trying to fake being rich. Poor people usually used high quality things to try to fake being rich after all.

“If it’s really that expensive, let’s just take it! We have to get something back in return after getting beaten up after all!” said the woman angrily.

“Leave it be. I’ll help you claim your medical fees!” replied Grover.

It was truly a good phone. If anyone were to take it, it was going to be him!

“So... Mr. Grover, do we pick up the call or not? It seems urgent!” said the same man from before.

“Pick it up my ass! Just turn it off and put it aside!” scolded Grover.

“You’re getting better at this, bro! Also, I heard that you’re getting a promotion soon!” said Quazzie respectfully.

“That I am! Let me tell you something, Quazzie. The most important thing to have these days, is resources. Nothing can stop me or the people that I know! A good example would be our leader and the Merchant’s office deputy. Those are all resources you know!”

As Grover and Quazzie continued to chat, Zack looked at his phone anxiously.

“How is it, Zack? Still not picking up?”

The party had already started and all the important guests had arrived. All but one. Gerald still wasn't there yet and he couldn't even be contacted anymore. Everyone was getting anxious.

“Worse. Nobody was picking up earlier but now, I can't even get the call through anymore!” said Zack as he frowned.

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## Chapter 496

“Could something bad have happened to him?” said Michael Zeke warily.

“Normally, Mr. Crawford immediately hangs up my calls if he’s busy. However, he’s neither picking nor hanging up on me even though I’ve called dozens of times! If something was up, Mr. Crawford would definitely let me know beforehand!”

“Exactly, and if his phone isn’t with him, who was the one who had hung up on that last call before turning the phone off?”

Both Michael and Zack had a feeling that something wasn’t right.

At that moment, Leopold White—Michael’s subordinate—walked in with a group of people.

Leopold walked to their side before saying, “Mr. Zeke, I went to Mr. Crawford’s hotel and the hotel manager told us that he was last seen leaving the hotel this afternoon!”

“He went out?”

Michael and Zack looked at each other.

Several high-ranking VIPs at the banquet started

gathering around the two of them.

The venue was divided into several large lounges, making the place quite huge. Those in the inner venue mostly consisted of VIPs. It was also where Michael and Zack currently were.

“Mr. Zeke, Mr. Lyle, is something wrong? Why isn't Mr. Crawford here?” asked Mr. Harrison.

The VIPs had overheard them discussing the situation which led to them enquiring the two of them about the matter.

“We can't seem to get in contact with him at the moment.”

“Mr. Lyle, I found him!” shouted Jaxon as he rushed over. He was panting and gasping for air when he finally got close.

He then went close to Zack's side and whispered in his ear.

“...What?” Zack's eyes widened.

Those who were aware of the situation immediately quieted down.

“Mr. Harrison, Mr. Zebriel, and Mr. Le! Mr. Crawford has been kidnapped and he was most likely set-up!” said Zack.

“Impossible!” said Mr. Le, shocked.

“Bring the witness over, Jaxon! Hurry!” ordered Zack.

Jaxon nodded and ordered one of his own men to bring her in.

Once she stood before them, she started telling them everything that she knew. About how the situation began with Xeno’s store being wrecked up to the point where Gerald and the others were ‘arrested’ by some shady looking men. She also explained the relationship between Quazzie and Grover.

Naturally, she wasn’t sharing all this information for free. Jaxon had paid her a lot of money to tell the truth during his interrogation.

Several of the VIPs there felt embarrassed.

After a brief silence, the chief slammed both his hands on a table.

“Investigate the matter immediately! I want answers and results!”

“Yes sir!”

“We’ll be going over as well to see if Mr. Crawford had really committed the crime!”

With that, the chief and his men immediately rushed out of the venue.



The people outside who were chatting among themselves were stunned to see such a big scene.

“What? What’s happening?” asked a middle-aged man to a driver.

“Oh, Mr. Jung! Something bad has apparently happened. From what I’ve heard, it seems that Grover has kidnapped Mr. Crawford! I’m not sure why either, but now the chief is personally going over to investigate the matter. Please don’t tell others about this!”

“Huh? Mr. Crawford was kidnapped? Grover?”

The Jung in person was Willie and he was startled by what he had heard.

After contemplating on the matter for a little while, he sent out a text message.

Grover and Quazzie were still chatting between themselves when Grover received a message on his phone.

After reading it, his face immediately turned pale.

“What’s wrong, cousin?”

“Oh god, I think I may be in big trouble!” shouted Grover as he rushed toward the building where the three were locked up in.

## Chapter 497

Before they entered the room, both of them straightened their clothes and put on a calm façade.

“So, what’s it going to be, Xeno? My bros have their eyes on your store. Besides, you’re the one who messed with my brother’s cousin anyway. Why don’t you just sign the d\*mn paperwork already?” said Grover as he entered before pointing at the papers on the table.

Quazzie entered next and he immediately slapped Xeno’s face.

He was lucky that Xeno’s arms had been tied together, otherwise, he would have received a swift punch to the gut!

“F\*ck off you sons of b\*tches! Have you no balls? Fight me one-to-one like real men, cowards!”

Xeno’s eyes were bloodshot.

This time, it was Grover’s turn to slap him. He was going to make sure that all three of them suffered for putting him in such a situation. Though to get caught, the police would still need evidence! There was no way they’d be able to find such an obscure building, right?

Quazzie himself hadn't received any explanation on why Grover thought they were in trouble. Thus, he simply shrugged it off before thinking of calling his brothers over to gang up on Xeno.

The angry woman, on the other hand, walked toward Gerald and stared down at him with icy-cold glares. She was going to enjoy beating Gerald up.

Before she could land her first slap, however, one of Grover's men burst into the room.

"Grover! Quazzie! This is bad, we're in big trouble!"

The man was in such a panic that he fell after taking a few steps forward.

"Oh god... what is it?" asked Grover as he turned to face his fallen subordinate. He hoped what he was thinking of wasn't true.

"Armed... police... and several luxury cars... They've surrounded the entire god d\*mn building!"

Grover knew that it was all over for him. He had been arrested before this. This time, however, he was aware that he was clearly in much hotter water.

Not only had he kidnapped three people, he had also posed as a fake cop. He thought these were nobodies!

Quazzie began panicking as well. He just wanted to

teach Xeno a lesson and push him out of the second-hand car market! He didn't expect so many big shots to be involved!

Shaking his head, Grover rushed to the nearest window to peek out. Surely enough, there was a sea of people surrounding the building.

The headlights outside shone through the initially dark, night sky.

“F\*cking! Not many people know about this rotten building! How the hell did they sniff us out so quickly?!”

By this point, Quazzie's face was probably the palest it had ever been in his entire life.

“We're done for... There's nothing we can do to clear our names off this!”

The mother and daughter were terrified as well.

The man who had fallen earlier gulped as he got up, his legs quivering.

“Grover? Quazzie? What are we to do?”

“Hell if I know!” yelled Grover as his heart thumped rapidly.

At that moment, all of them in the room could hear people barging into the building.

Several armed police were swiftly ascending the

stairs.

As soon as the police saw them, they immediately raised their guns.

“Freeze! Don’t move!”

By the time Gerald and the others were free from their restraints, Grover, Quazzie, and their men were already pinned on the ground.

When they got outside, Michael, Zack, and a few other VIPs rushed toward Gerald.

“Mr. Crawford, you must be terrified! Thank god we managed to track you down!”

“I’m fine! Don’t worry!” replied Gerald.  
What a huge commotion this had become.

As Grover and Quazzie stared wide-eyed at the scene before them, both of them began sweating profusely, their wrists now in cuffs.

All those present were big shots that could usually only be seen on television... And why were they calling Gerald Mr. Crawford?

He couldn’t really be that Mr. Crawford, right? He couldn’t be Mr. Crawford of Mayberry... Right?

Both of them gulped down hard at the realization of how big a mess they were in. Now that they knew

better, they could safely say that their entire operation had been a suicide mission!

However, the mother and daughter were even more shocked.

“Gerald...? What the hell is going on here?” asked Xeno, confused as to why so many big shots were comforting Gerald.

“I’ll... explain it to you once we get back!”

He might as well use this opportunity to tell his good brother who he really was. There was no need to hide his true identity from Xeno anymore. 1

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## Chapter 498

Due to the chaotic chain of events, there was no way that they could continue with the banquet tonight.

Gerald and Xeno both had to go make a statement. As Mr. Le had said, the matter would be investigated strictly.

Quazzie and Grover may even have to face a maximum of twenty years' worth of jail time.

“This incident has caused too big an impact on Serene County! It could affect the future of the county negatively! As a demolisher, how dare you do this to us, Grover? The only way he'll be able to atone for this is through harsh punishment!” shouted Mr. Le furiously.

He was in his office with a large stack of documents on his table. The other employees present were thoroughly startled.

“Mr. Le, Grover is an outlaw. He's done similar things before and he's managed to wiggle himself out every time! Not this time though! We have sufficient evidence to convict him of kidnapping three people!”

“It's time for him to pay for his crimes. Also, did

anyone back him up? Is there anyone particularly close to him?” asked Mr. Le.

“We haven’t found anyone directly aiding Grover in this particular event, but we do know that he’s quite close to Mr. Jung from the Investment Promotion Bureau. Both of them have had dinner together several times!”

“Mr. Jung? Willie Jung?” replied Mr. Le, his eyebrows raised.

“That’s the one. However, from what we can tell, he’s clean. He’s probably dealt with these kinds of people just because of the nature of his job”

“Hmph, that won’t do. Even if Willie wasn’t directly aiding Grover, Grover still knows him and works for the Investment Promotion Bureau. Now that Grover’s stirred up such chaos, Willie Jung has to be held responsible for this disaster. Transfer him out of this department! Which department is still vacant?” huffed Mr. Le.

“The publication department seems to be lacking a deputy section chief to write materials... But, this is Willie Jung...”

“Just let him be a clerk! Didn’t they say that he’s good at writing articles? Might as well put that ability to good use!”

His decision was final and he left the office with his



hands behind his back.

Moving back to Gerald's side, the matter could only be resolved after an entire night had passed.

It was close to dawn when Gerald fumbled tiredly behind Xeno to his second-hand car shop.

Both Xeno and Sienna were left bemused after learning of Gerald's true identity.

They began an onslaught of questions and Gerald replied each of them honestly.

"So... it's actually true? Gerald, you're Mr. Crawford from Mayberry?" asked Xeno, rightfully surprised. Sienna was in shock as well.

"Yep, that's me!"

"And you're also the one handling the Dream Investment Group?"

Xeno was pleasantly surprised by this turn of events.

"I meant every word I said earlier, when I told you that I was going to help you expand your business. Once things have calmed down, I'll have my people come over to help you with the handover procedures!" said Gerald, smiling.

"Really?" replied Sienna, her eyes wide open in shock and joy.

"What, you want me to lie and say I won't?" said

Gerald with a grin.

Gerald had already made the arrangements with Zack the night before. It wasn't too difficult for him to handle.

This was also the reason why Gerald followed Xeno back to his shop.

After both of them chatted for a while, Gerald finally got up and returned to the hotel.

Since it was so early in the morning, there weren't any taxis around yet. He didn't have a car anymore either, so he simply got on an Ofo bicycle.

Xeno stood by the entrance as he watched Gerald leave. "Hey, buddy! You're really too humble, you know? If I had as much money as you, I'd have a fleet of Maybach cars clearing the road for me, followed by at least a dozen chicks and bodyguards wherever I went!"

"Also, while you're still here, I'm going to vow right here and right now. I'm going to make sure Quazzie's entire family regrets ever being born!" growled Xeno with resentment.

"...Hmm? What was that?" said Sienna as she raised a slight brow.

"I said I'm going to make Quazzie and his family regret ever being born!"

“No, no, a little before that.”

“I think I said that I’d have at least a dozen chicks and bodyg- ah. Sienna, wait! I can expl-”

Before he could finish his sentence, Sienna was already pinching Xeno’s shoulder!

Gerald simply smiled while shaking his head as he headed back for his hotel.

Upon arriving, he was just about to park his bicycle when he saw a girl limping out of a taxi that had stopped right in front of the hotel.

Gerald sighed before covering his face with his hand in an attempt to avoid looking at her. However, before he could go past the automatic doors, she called out to him.

“Gerald?”

Gerald froze and sighed before lowering his hand. Of course she had spotted him...

## Chapter 499

The girl in question was Leila Jung.

Gerald honestly didn't hate her, nor was he as irritated toward her compared to her parents.

However, he really hoped that she hadn't seen him right now.

At that moment, he recalled his time as a seven or eight-year-old kid. His father had brought him out, and it was then that he had met Leila for the first time.

Back then, he thought that she was really beautiful and that he would definitely have her as his wife when he grew up.

Gerald couldn't blame his younger self for thinking that either. After all, young Leila was always clean and pretty. She wore nice clothes all the time as well.

However, the thing that hadn't changed was her arrogance. She didn't like the fact that Gerald wasn't a city dweller.

Young Gerald had tried getting closer to her on multiple occasions, but she would always turn him down.


Gerald remembered how optimistic he was to make her his wife, even though he was still a little afraid of her back then.

Fortunately, his feelings for her faded once Gerald entered middle school.

Now that they had met again, however, Gerald knew that if he ever exposed his true identity to her, Leila would be head over heels for him.

He shook his head before looking back at her.

But things were much different now.

Rather than wanting to chase after her, he was trying his hardest to avoid her. Sadly, as the saying goes, you attract what you fear!  updates!

“Were you trying to ignore me? Didn’t you clearly see me earlier? I even got off the taxi because I just so happened to see you cycling down the road!” asked Leila in an angry tone. She seemed to have broken her foot.

“Oh, Leila! Sorry, didn’t manage to see you there!” replied Gerald awkwardly.

“Well, now that you have, I was planning to take a bus to Mayberry today. Unfortunately, I broke my foot so I won’t be able to go alone!”

As she said that, she limped closer toward Gerald.

“Ah, that’s a pity! I hope your foot heals soon! I’ll be taking my leave now!” said Gerald hurriedly before trying to get past the automatic doors again.

“Hey! I’m injured here! Why are you trying so hard to leave? You aren’t showing any concern at all!” grumbled Leila. His indifference toward her situation was somewhat disappointing.

She considered the fact that Gerald could just be afraid of her at that moment. Thinking back, however, she remembered when she had first met Gerald at her home. Back then, he would obey everything that she ordered him to do, just like a dog.

She also recalled how she never used to take his words and actions seriously. That all changed when she found out that Gerald was rich.

Leila herself was now caring about the way Gerald thought of her. She was also finally willing to take his words and actions seriously.

Yet what was Gerald doing? Why was he showing indifference to her now?!

She wouldn’t have batted an eye if he treated her this way in the past but not now!

Everything about their relationship was going topsy-turvy and that made Leila really displeased!

“Ah. Oh no, your foot looks hurt. Are you okay?” asked Gerald reluctantly.

“Humph! It’s fine!” shouted Leila angrily.

She could remember that event clearly. That day, Gerald had withdrawn ninety thousand dollars before her very eyes. What more, Gerald had helped Auntie Lacy achieve her work target. She was even made the vice president! Leila knew about this because her mother had cried a lot over the incident. Leila was still deeply upset about the matter.

Leila herself was shocked after hearing that. She felt as though she was losing control of everything!

“Glad to hear! Well, I’ll be returning to my room now. Need to get some beauty sleep after such a busy night!” Gerald replied with a yawn.

He wasn’t kidding either. He really just wanted to get some rest now.

“So, this is where you’ve been staying?” asked Leila, startled again.

“Yep,” he replied before finally making it past the automatic doors.

“Gerald you’re being so cold! I’ve injured my foot and I just want to go home! Can’t you at least give

me a ride back?” yelled Leila, her eyes growing slightly red. ①

This person who had been pampering her all this time was now treating her like she was nothing!

“With what? A car? A car that I sold so that your dad could get some ‘donations’?”

“That... Well, I saw you park that Ofo bike! You can give me a ride on a bicycle! Also! My mom fell sick with anger last night because of what you did! This will be a prime opportunity for you to visit her!” replied Leila, frustrated.

“F\*ck you and you mom! Glad that she is! Now leave me alone, both of you are none of my business!” cursed Gerald who had already lost his patience. ⑦



## Chapter 500

“Fine! Alright, I’m the one wrong here! Just relax already!” shouted Leila who was so aggrieved that she was already on the brink of tears.

No one had ever scolded her like this and when she heard Gerald cursing at her, she felt as though she had done something terribly wrong. She immediately started blaming herself for it.

It didn’t take much longer for her tears to start flowing down her cheeks.

She just wasn’t used to so much self-reproach coupled with the shame of being scolded.

When Gerald saw her crying, he felt a slight pang of guilt in his heart. Maybe he had been a bit too rough on her.

After all, the main reason why he had shouted profanities at her was because Willie and Leia’s names struck a nerve in him.

He softened his tone a little before saying, “I really need some rest, I’ve been up all night. I can hail a taxi for you if you want!”

“I’m not leaving!” said Leia as she tried to stomp

her hurt foot. Now it was her turn to start losing her temper.

She then slowly limped toward the Ofo bike that Gerald had parked before standing there with her arms crossed. 1

This girl...

Gerald wasn't going to get any sleep at this rate! And it was too awkward for him to scold her a second time! Gerald sighed as he considered her earlier suggestion to send her back on the bicycle.

"...Alright, fine. If you really don't mind, I'll give you a lift home with the bicycle," said Gerald as he nodded in resignation.

"Yes!" shouted Leila victoriously

She sat on the bicycle's back seat and held on to Gerald's clothes with one hand.

"I never knew that you knew how to ride a bicycle, Gerald! I still don't know how to cycle yet!" said Leila.

"Heh, weren't you the one who mocked me back then? Saying that only hillbillies rode bicycles?" said Gerald with a laugh.

"I..."

Leila blushed, remembering how Gerald used to

ride a bicycle to her house when they were still kids.

Back then. It was Uncle Dylan who had brought Gerald to her house with his bicycle.

Now, it was her turn.

The funniest thing was, it was more comfortable than sitting in Douglas' Sedan. She felt so perplexed!

Seeing her reactions from the side mirrors, Gerald was reminded of a saying.

It was better to cry in a BMW than to laugh on a bicycle.

To Gerald, the vehicle itself didn't matter much. The important thing was who maneuvered it.

After chatting while cycling for a while, both of them eventually arrived at their destination.

Upon entering, Gerald was surprised that Willie Jung's house was already very crowded even though it was just nine in the morning.

Willie himself was sitting on one of the couches, his palms placed against his forehead. Something was definitely worrying him.

The expression that Leia was making only solidified Gerald's assumption.

Sitting opposite of Willie were a few middle-aged

people, whom Gerald assumed were his colleagues. They seemed to be trying to advise him on something.

Even that b\*stard Douglas was there. Beside him, sat a middle-aged man that resembled Douglas a lot.

When he turned to look at Leila, she looked arguably more confused than he was.

After sticking around for a little while more, Gerald heard enough to somewhat make sense of what was happening.

Apparently, Willie had gotten himself into trouble again, and he didn't even know what he had done wrong! However, the more pressing issue was that he had been transferred to another department as a clerical section chief! He was devastated.

“Um... Mom, dad, look who's here!” said Leila at that moment.

Gerald was a different person now, so she held him in high regard.

“Heh, hey dad, look over there. That's Gerald, the one I told you about before. Look how close he is to Leila! And don't let his appearance fool you, I saw him withdrawing ninety thousand dollars from the bank in cold hard cash the other day! Guess there's no reason for us to stay any longer! Not that we're

able to help Mr. Jung anyway. Let's go!" said Douglas as he glared at Gerald coldly while tugging his father's sleeve.

"Alright, we'll be taking our leave. You should be able to figure all of this out on your own, Mr. Jung," said Douglas's father before getting up with a nod.

"Please don't leave, Mr. Lindt! He's no guest of ours, you are!"

Willie then turned to look at his daughter, his eyes fierce as a tiger's. He glared at her like she was a total disappointment before shouting angrily, "What were you thinking, Leila?! Why did you bring this son of a b\*tch home?!"

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## 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 Leila 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 Leila 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. 1

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!”

## Chapter 502

“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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## Chapter 503

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. ❶

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. ①

“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. ①

## 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.

## Chapter 505

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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## Chapter 506

“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. 1

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?



## Chapter 507

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 Xeno. 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 Yanken 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. ①

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. ①

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## Chapter 508

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!" 1

"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. 1

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. ①

“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!”

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## Chapter 510

“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...

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## 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. ①

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!"

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## 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.

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## 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. 1

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. 1

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.

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## 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. ①

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. 1

“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. 1

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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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?

## Chapter 526

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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## Chapter 527

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!

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## 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. 1

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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## Chapter 529

“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. ①

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?”

Xella Jaquin 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. ①

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. ①

Gosh, could Gerald be Mr. Crawford?! ②

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. 2

“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!” 1

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? ①

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?” ①

“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.

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## 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.**

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## 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... 1

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## Chapter 534

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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## Chapter 535

“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. 1

“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. 1

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. ①

“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!”

## Chapter 536

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. 1

"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?" 1

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!'

1



## 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. ①

'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. 1

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. ①

## Chapter 538

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.

## Chapter 539

“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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## Chapter 540

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'



“I 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. ①

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. ①

“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?”

## Chapter 541

“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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## Chapter 542

“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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## Chapter 543

“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.” 1

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!”

Queeny 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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## Chapter 544

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." 2

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. ①

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. ❶

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!”

## Chapter 545

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? 1

“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?” ①

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!”

## Chapter 546

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. ①

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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## Chapter 547

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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## Chapter 548

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. 1

“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. 1

“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? 1

“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.

## Chapter 549

“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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## Chapter 550

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.

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## Chapter 551

Gerald had intervened because he couldn't stand watching Jarvis and Yolanda continue to abuse his power. Besides, Gerald finally remembered who Blake Wadford was. He was the one who had organized a birthday party for Elena Larson.

Gerald had been occupied with Lilian during the party, so he was only able to have a short talk with Blake back then. They were acquainted at most.

However, Jarvis and Yolanda were clearly crossing the line, all because he wanted to keep a low profile.

If they were his close friends, he would've just let it slide. However, these two were complete nobodies.

'Why should I remain quiet and let these idiots have their way with my men?' Gerald thought to himself.

"M-Mr. Crawford? You were here this entire time?" Blake knew that he was screwed the moment he saw Gerald. It was as though his heart had just dropped all the way down into his stomach.

He had been angry after hearing that his beloved daughter had been hurt. Since all his attention had been focused on Yolanda and Jarvis, Blake hadn't really paid much attention to anyone else. However,

seeing Gerald before him now, he instantly knew that there was a major misunderstanding.

‘F\*ck, everything makes sense now!’ Blake thought.

Blake had been very confused as he had never heard of Thomas Fish before. So it turned out that the VIP in question was Gerald after all. Since Mr. Lyle hadn’t wanted to expose Gerald’s true identity, he didn’t explain much to the managers, which led to this misunderstanding.

“Yeah, I’m just here to take a break!” said Gerald with a smile as he nodded. Michelle and the others were stunned.

What was happening? This man knew Gerald?

“Hey! Are you done talking? Come back here and let me slap you!”

Yolanda was clearly still very angry.

As she lunged toward him, Blake simply slapped Yolanda with full force, sending her falling to the ground.

“Beat these brats up!” ordered Blake without hesitation. With Gerald around, he knew that he had nothing to be worried about anymore. Blake turned to look at Gerald’s expression, but Gerald simply avoided his gaze. This meant that he wouldn’t intervene with whatever Blake was going to do to

the two.

The employees were all panicking at the sight of this. Blake, however, simply approached Gerald respectfully before saying, “Mr. Crawford, if I had known that you were coming, I would’ve gladly escorted you! You didn’t have to waste such effort and ask Mr. Lyle for help!”

“That’s quite alright, it was just an impulsive decision. This group didn’t seem to be giving up and I didn’t want to stand under the sun for any longer. I just pulled a few strings here and there and that’s how we got in,” explained Gerald. Now everyone knew what the true story was.

“...What? Gerald, you were the one who got us in?” asked Queeny in disbelief. Michelle couldn’t believe it either. There was just no way that was true!

However, just from his conversation with Blake, everyone there was now sure that Gerald had his fair share of connections as well. After all, the barbarian of a man had bowed down to Gerald and was even talking to him respectfully.

At that moment, all the girls’ opinions on Gerald changed instantly. Though nobody had acknowledged his presence previously, he was the actual person who had gotten all of them in.

It was a plausible explanation as well. After all,



Jarvis had only contacted Mr. Edward. How on earth could he have made the managers rush in to welcome their arrival?

“Mr. Crawford...” Gerald noticed that Blake had something to say.

“Ah, can we talk about this in the office? I’ll be there in a bit, Mr. Wadford,” interrupted Gerald with a nod.

“Of course, Mr. Crawford!” said Blake as he led his bodyguards out of the restaurant.

Gerald had an idea of what Blake wanted to talk to him about. He finally understood why Sunny Springs seemed much grander than usual.

A big event tomorrow?

There was a high possibility that Zack had ordered Blake to organize a party for his birthday. ②

Gerald had wanted to clear his doubts by questioning Blake. However, it was a private matter, he didn’t want Queeny and the others to know about this.

After glaring at Jarvis, who was still a total mess, Gerald left the restaurant.

## Chapter 552

“Hold it Gerald! Explain yourself!” said Queeny as she rushed toward him. Her face was deathly pale and she seemed very shaken up.

Just like all the others, she didn't know how Gerald had been able to turn the tables so easily. She had always looked down on him. The moment Gerald had successfully intervened, Queeny felt as though she had just been crushed by a boulder. In her mind, she was continually wishing that it was someone else who was holding on to that much power. Anyone would do. Anyone but Gerald.

‘Why did he refer to Gerald as Mr. Crawford?’

‘Wasn't he merely some lowlife? Why, oh why...’

These were the thoughts flooding Queeny's mind. She felt extremely upset.

“What do you want?” asked Gerald dismissively.

‘If it wasn't for Mr. Winters, I wouldn't even be wasting my time fooling around with you people,’ Gerald thought to himself.

“Explain yourself right this instant! Why was that guy so respectful toward you? He even seemed

scared of you! What's your relation with him?" asked Queenie.

"Don't ask things you're not supposed to. Have fun with the rest of your trip. Don't worry, I'll be sure to tell them to leave you guys alone," replied Gerald before exiting the restaurant.

As he walked past Michelle, she stared at him with mixed emotions. She hadn't expected him to be such a powerful individual. She wasn't able to tell at all.

With her cheeks burning up, Michelle was feeling no different from Queeny. In fact, she was arguably more upset than Queenie was.

At that moment, her only concern was Gerald's actual background. Who was this man?

"No... There's just no way! It couldn't have been that lowlife who got us in! It was Jarvis! It must have been!" yelled Yolanda in denial.

Jarvis simply clenched his teeth as he gave his father a call. It turned out that Mr. Edward hadn't even given them a proper response!

"What the f\*ck! Who is Gerald, really?" Queeny was now immensely curious. She wasn't interested in talking to anyone else but Gerald now. She immediately rushed out of the restaurant, hoping

to catch up to Gerald.

Meanwhile, Blake handed Gerald a cup of water before saying, “Mr. Crawford, don’t you remember? Tomorrow’s your birthday! And Mr. Lyle told us to organize something for you!”

‘So they were going to throw me a party’ Gerald thought.

Gerald knew Zack very well. He must have just wanted to give Gerald a nice birthday. However, Gerald would very much have preferred simply inviting a few people over to dinner. That alone would still be as meaningful to him. Still, the decorating process had already begun, so Gerald didn’t plan to interfere since all that effort had already been done.

As both of them entered Blake’s office, Gerald felt instantly relieved. The inside of the room was cold, and Gerald was finally able to take a rest. He breathed a sigh of relief the moment he sat down on a chair.

Blake, on the other hand, stood next to him politely. He didn’t dare utter a single word unless Gerald questioned him about anything.

All of a sudden, the office door slammed open.

“Gerald! I need to hear the truth! Please tell me

what happened back there!”

A girl had burst into the office, and it wasn't just any girl. It was Queeny Winters. She had been observing them from the window.

She could see that Gerald was sitting on the chair at the desk while the big man from before simply stood beside him politely. Queeny felt like she was going insane.

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## Chapter 553

“Holy! Queeny? I already gave you an answer!” shouted Gerald with a jump. He definitely hadn’t expected her to chase after him.

“What is with you? I’m just... concerned! Look, you may have won the lottery or something, and though I’m not sure how much you won, aren’t you acting a little too naively? Society’s going to eat you up! No matter how much you’ve won, be careful and don’t get tricked or you’ll end up in the streets later on!”

‘Yeah... That made much more sense. Gerald must have invested in the attraction with the lottery money.’ This was the only reasonable conclusion that she could come up with at that moment. Her emotions were in disarray and she was feeling extremely upset by the sudden change in power dynamic. After saying what she needed to to calm herself down, Queenie immediately left the office, her cheeks puffed up.

“Hah. This girl... If she ever found out about my true identity, I’d never hear the end of it!” said Gerald before chuckling.

As Blake went off to run his errands, Gerald decided

to get some shut-eye before leaving the attraction and getting some proper rest.

He definitely didn't want to join Queenie and her friends. Queenie didn't want him around anymore either. After some time passed, knocking could be heard on the door.

"Mr. Edward? I've brought the newcomer over to report to you!" It was a soft female voice and Gerald was slightly taken aback when he heard it.

"Come in!" said Gerald.

The door then slowly opened and a girl in a uniform entered the office. She had long hair and a nice figure. In her hands was a document and behind her was another beautiful girl.

"Mr. Edward, I'm..." The girl's voice slowly trailed off. She was about to introduce herself, but her words just wouldn't form the moment she saw who was sitting in the office.

Gerald was speechless as well. He simply stared at the two girls as the awkwardness in the office grew.

"M-Mr. Crawford! It's you! I... I didn't know you'd be here!" said the girl as she immediately lowered her head in embarrassment. She didn't dare to make eye contact.

"...Xella? Sharon? What are you two doing here in

Fuenti? Aren't you supposed to be in Serene County?" asked Gerald as he continued staring at the two.

When Gerald was investigating his company, Xella had learned of his true identity. As for Sharon, she knew too since she was present during the incident at the real estate center. This was why the situation felt so awkward for all three of them.

Though he remembered what Xella and Sharon had done to him in recent memory, he was still good friends with the two girls back in high school. Xella had even fought against Waylon for bullying Gerald. He didn't exactly have the time of his life in high school, but with the two girls around, his high school days still ended up being pretty nice. Even back then, a lot of people looked down on him but not these two. They really treated him like a good friend.

This was the sole reason why Gerald still felt reserved when it came to the two of them. Even though their friendship was no longer the same, Gerald still felt obligated to treat them kindly.

"Mr. Crawford, I'll be going to the human resources department now. Sharon's just joined the company. Oh, and since tomorrow is your birthday, the company's assigned a few good looking girls to be



escorts.”

‘Ah, so they still remember my birthday. Well this is a little weird...’ He thought to himself.

“Ah, I see... Well, Blake’s now busy decorating the place!” said Gerald as he stood up. The situation was still extremely awkward.

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## Chapter 554

“...Oh yeah. So Sharon, why are you looking for a job now? What about Hayward?” asked Gerald. Though he used to have a crush on her, he no longer had any feelings for her.

“Ah, well, after Hayward found out that you’re Mr. Crawford, he was so shocked that he refused to leave his house for days. Besides, he knew about our past relationship, so...”

Sharon stopped there and simply left her sentence hanging.

‘...Ah, so Sharon’s looking for a job partially because of me!’ Gerald thought to himself.

Gerald then flashed an awkward smile before saying, “But you know, I’m still truly flattered, haha! Remember back in high school? The best birthday I’ve ever had then was in the canteen!”

Hearing that, both Sharon and Xella began reminiscing. During high school, almost everyone refused to hang out with Gerald, and his birthday didn’t change that fact.

His birthday that year had been on result day, and everyone had to go back to high school during the

holidays to get their certificates. It was Xella and Sharon who had suggested that they celebrate Gerald's birthday in the canteen. They wanted to celebrate it with him before he joined the military. 2

The two girls, along with Lilian, had bought a large cake for Gerald back then. Lilian was there since she was close to Sharon and though she was slightly hesitant at first, she still ended up celebrating his birthday with him anyway.

That was the first time Gerald ever had cake, and he felt extremely touched. That was the moment when he decided to stay friends with them for eternity.

Now, however, he realized how one-sided that decision had been

When university started, he continued staying in touch with both Xella and Sharon. Eventually, however, both of them started ghosting him. They didn't bother to even reply to any of his texts.

Two years later, Gerald was excited when he bumped into Sharon in Mayberry. Sharon had to admit that since he was still so friendly and talkative, he clearly valued their friendship very much even after so much time had passed.

However, Sharon had felt embarrassed being around him, so she avoided him at all costs. She even insulted him multiple times! There were times

when she went overboard as well, resulting in him getting physically hurt.

Despite all that, Gerald continued to help her on multiple occasions and he didn't even hold any grudges against her. She had taken advantage of that, which led to Gerald getting hurt even more. This was why Gerald eventually started giving her the cold shoulder.

As for Xella, she had looked down on him from the moment they bumped into each other again after so many years. She had been slightly embarrassed when they met, so she only had a polite conversation with him, even cracking a few light jokes here and there. <sup>1</sup>

However, Gerald still thought that she valued their friendship just as much as he did back then. They were even supposed to go to the class reunion together! However, she went with Waylon instead which resulted in her feeling uncomfortable for most of that day.

Waylon had bullied Gerald a lot back in high school. Gerald simply never stood up for himself. There was even a time when Waylon threw a chair at Gerald which sent him flying to the back of the class. He was without a doubt, Gerald's arch enemy.

Despite being aware of that, Xella still ended up

getting close to him. Gerald had been incredibly hurt after finding out about that.

Now that the two girls realized that Gerald was the actual Mr. Crawford from Mayberry, they couldn't help but regret their actions. Both of them thought that he was no longer the Gerald they knew, when in reality, Gerald had never changed. They were the ones who had changed. 1

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## Chapter 555

“I’m sorry, Gerald...” said both of them simultaneously. The two girls bore expressions filled with embarrassment and regret.

“That’s quite alright!” replied Gerald as he gave a gentle smile. Though he was still being nice to them, all three of them knew that their friendship could never truly properly be mended. What’s done was done, and they could never go back to the way things had originally been. Gerald would only treat them as acquaintances now. Nothing more.

Both Sharon and Xella understood what Gerald was implying. The two knew that they couldn’t just rewind time to fix all their mistakes, and simply understanding that made them feel like their hearts were being pierced by thousands of needles. If only they were still friends, this reunion could have gone so much better.

Not wanting to prolong the awkwardness any further, Gerald decided to head back since it was getting late anyway. For all he knew, that psycho Queenie had probably gone home. Gerald really didn’t have the energy to walk all the way back, so he simply used one of the company’s Audi A6 cars to

drive home.

Just as he got to the entrance, Gerald bumped into yet another acquaintance. She was holding on to her purse and it seemed like she was waiting for a cab.

It was Michelle. Since Gerald hadn't bothered to wind the car's window up, Michelle managed to catch a glimpse of him as he was about to drive out.

"Gerald?" called Michelle out to him.

Gerald didn't like ignoring people, but he really wished he could just leave at that moment.

He wasn't really fond of this person. After all, she had openly expressed her dislike toward him. She even had her own sister substitute her for her blind date with him! He treated this as a direct insult, which was why Gerald didn't intend to speak to her this entire time.

"What do you want?" asked Gerald coldly as Michelle came closer to the car.

"Ah, well, I just wanted to thank you for today! If it wasn't for you, we may not have gotten out of that situation unharmed! The other girls that came with me were my colleagues and some of them have already gone home," replied Michelle. Gerald noticed another shorter girl standing beside her as she said that.

“There’s no need to thank me. If I were to have any say in this, I wouldn’t have let any of you in in the first place. It was Jarvis who did!” said Gerald coldly again.

‘It’s unnecessary at this point to show her any kindness.’ Gerald thought to himself.

His words were so blunt that her face instantly turned red with embarrassment.

She knew that the blind date incident had ruined their relationship before it even had a chance to start. She understood very well that she had crossed the line, but she wasn’t willing to just leave it at that.

Michelle had initially not wanted to go through this embarrassment.

After all, it was fine to just remain as strangers and never speak to each other again. Wasn’t that what she had preferred all along?

However, after that incident in the restaurant, she couldn’t just leave it at that. Just like everyone else, she just couldn’t bear seeing him make such an immense comeback.

‘You’re nothing more but of the many guys that I’ve rejected.’ This was what she thought. ①

If Gerald had remained the way she had initially



thought of him, she wouldn't have had such a big reaction. To think that this 'optional' man turned out to be this powerful! This made her extremely upset, especially when he didn't even seem to want to talk to her. He just went straight for the entrance with his Audi!

"I'd... I'd like to apologize for... You know.... Alright, I know I was wrong for flaking on you!" said Michelle as she bit down hard on her lower lip.

"There's no need for an apology. To be frank, I only see you as an acquaintance, so if there's nothing else, I'll be heading off now!" said Gerald dismissively as he immediately drove off.

Michelle was now terribly upset and angry. This was the first time she had ever been ignored by a guy. She felt her eyes start to water. Not only did he turn out to be extremely powerful, but he barely batted an eyelid when he ignored her and just drove away. 1

It wasn't long before Gerald passed both Toiun and Fuenti.

## Chapter 556

As he drove on, Gerald noticed something weird. There seemed to be a sudden increase in luxury cars in town. Most of them were parked outside hotels.

Though it was rather strange, Gerald didn't think too much about it.

At that moment, Gerald's phone began to ring. He saw that it was a call from Mrs. Winters.

"What's the matter, Mrs. Winters?" asked Gerald with a smile after picking the call up.

"Gerald? Where are you? I saw that Queeny had driven home by herself earlier. She looked slightly upset. Did both of you get into some kind of argument? Did she leave you there alone?" asked Mrs. Winters, her voice filled with concern.

"Don't worry, I'm driving back now in a friend's car!" Gerald had no choice but to say that so that Mrs. Winters wouldn't overthink the situation.

"I see! That's good to hear... By the way Gerald, could you get a bag of rice in town on your way back? That way your uncle won't have to go out anymore!"

"No problem!"

Gerald then found a supermarket nearby and bought two bags of rice, a bottle of peanut oil, and a few other items.

As Gerald moved the items into the car, he remembered that back when he had just returned to Serene County, Mr. Winters had refused to take any money from Gerald. Gerald had promised himself then, that since they wouldn't accept his money, he would just use the money to get necessities for them.

Realizing that he had almost forgotten his own promise to himself, he rushed back into the supermarket. After a few trips in and out to make sure he could carry everything, Gerald ended up buying a few boxes of milk, good wine, and an array of herbs and spices as well.

As he opened his almost filled to the brim car trunk again, he heard a surprised voice call out to him.

“Gerald?”

Gerald was holding a pressure cooker in his arms when he turned to see who had called him. It was a girl standing at the entrance of a hotel that was right next to the supermarket.

“F\*ck! Leila? What are you doing in this town?”

The girl standing at the hotel's entrance was

definitely Leila, and that left Gerald equally as surprised as she was. After all, he had never thought he would see anyone from the Jung family again after that incident.

Gerald had just been too disappointed and heartbroken with them. Even after Willie encountered further problems, Gerald completely ignored them despite his father's constant reminders to look after them on his behalf.

He hadn't answered any of Leila's calls either. This made their current situation more awkward than it should have been.

"Well, we've just arrived and I was about to go buy something from the supermarket. I really hadn't expected to see you here!"

Leila was still very kind and polite toward Gerald. She then began walking over to him. It was obvious that she wanted to continue chatting.

"We? Who else did you come with?" asked Gerald.

"My parents and my dad's colleagues... They're here to enjoy themselves!" replied Leila in a soft tone.

"I see!" said Gerald as he nodded.

Was there anything interesting in Touin? Why had so many people specifically come here to have fun?

However, Gerald didn't really want to continue talking to Leila anymore. Therefore, he didn't bother to ask her for further details.

"Speaking of which, Gerald, are you still living in your house?" asked Leila.

"Of course. Where else would I be living at?"

"I see! I don't think I've ever been to your house before... After all, you were the one who always came to mine when we were still kids!" replied Leila as she smiled.

"Well alright then, if there isn't anything else, I'll be taking my leave first! I have to hurry back home to cook!" said Gerald, immediately changing the topic.

Leila was aware that Gerald didn't want to talk to her. However, the more Gerald ignored her, the more she wanted to chat with him! 2

After all, she was Leila Jung! Was she really that undeserving of his time and attention? 1

"By the way, Gerald, you only bought one cable for your pressure cooker. Don't you plan on getting a spare one? After all, the voltage in villages can get pretty unstable and cables are prone to get burnt out easily!"

"Ah. I didn't really think of that. Thank you!"

replied Gerald with a slight smile. If she had only been this kind toward him in the past, things could have been perfect. ①

After placing the pressure cooker into his car, he turned to re-enter the supermarket again to get another spare cable.

“Hehe... You know, since I’m going in anyway, you can just leave that to me!”

Before he could stop her, Leila had already ran into the supermarket. Shortly after, she returned with a spare cable in hand. Just as she handed it over to Gerald, a middle-aged man’s voice could be heard from the entrance of the hotel.

“Leila, what are you doing?”

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## Chapter 557

At that moment, two couples and a young man exited the hotel. All of them happened to see Leila talking to Gerald.

The middle-aged man who had called out to them coldly just seconds ago, was now walking toward the two. He seemed to be the leader of the group, and he was naturally none other than Willie himself

“What are you doing here, dad? I was just helping Gerald buy something!” grumbled Leila.

“What? You’re still buying things for him? Humph! I’ll never give anything to him! Even if I have to throw it away!”

Immediately after he said that, he snatched the cable from Gerald’s hand before throwing it onto the ground.

Before this, Willie had been very dissatisfied as he was prepared to beg Gerald to use his connections to help him. However, in the end, Gerald had simply ignored him.

That made Willie extremely angry and frustrated.

“Didn’t I tell you not to have anything to do with

him anymore, Leila? Why can't you remember such a simple thing?"

Leila, who had previously been walking over, now stood beside Willie. She simply looked at Gerald with eyes filled with contempt.

"Uncle Jung, who is this person?" asked the young man from before who had also walked over.

"He's just the son of someone I used to know in the past. He lives in Touin!"

"Why does it seem as though you have some kind of misunderstanding with this young man?" This time, the other middle-aged man was the one asking.

The reason why this group of people had gathered wasn't just to have fun together. Their secondary purpose, at least for the two couples, was to get their children to meet.

Leila currently seemed to have a pretty good relationship with the young man. Since his son was also concerned about the matter, the other middle-aged man couldn't help but pose his own question.

"Heh. Mr. Westwick, it's not just a simple misunderstanding! This person right here isn't well-mannered in the least! When Willie went to look for him last time, we couldn't find him anywhere!



We couldn't even get a hold of him! The entire trip there was a complete waste of time!" replied Leia angrily.

"Humph! Let's go, Leila. If I ever catch you talking to this kind of lowly person again, don't blame me for teaching you a lesson!" yelled Willie coldly before stepping on the cable that Leila had bought earlier.

"Mr. Jung!" shouted Gerald. Naturally, Gerald wasn't going to refer to the man as his uncle anymore.

"Pfft. What do you want?" asked Willie coldly.

"No matter what you say, I donated seventy thousand dollars to you last time. You could even say that I've done you a huge favor back then. If you continue talking to me like this, I'm afraid it'll be no good for your own face if word about this matter gets out to the public."

"Also, Aunt Leia talked about a wasted trip because you couldn't find me last time. Could you perhaps have forgotten that time when I was in high school? When my father and I waited for you outside your house for up to four hours just to meet you? I remember clearly that when we finally got to meet, you immediately sent us off, saying you weren't free. So I suppose I'm still the wrong one just because you made a wasted trip?" said Gerald.

“Pfft. What do you even mean? Willie’s a very busy man. Why would we ever have the time to entertain someone like you or your father? Thinking about it now, he did the absolute right thing by ignoring both of you back then! After all, you’re useless to us!” replied Leia angrily.

“Ah, I see there really is a pretty big misunderstanding. I had initially thought that we could ask this country boy to take us around this place. He could’ve been our tour guide or something. Looks like we’ll have to scratch that idea!” said the young man with a contemptuous smile.

“A tour guide? Consider our status! If we need a tour guide, we should look for one with at least a good reputation and relationship with us!”

The other woman was now chiming in as well. Leia and Willie’s hatred toward Gerald made her feel equally disgusted with him.

However, Gerald wasn’t angry. He simply smiled faintly at their retorts.

“Fine then. We’ll cross the bridge when we get there, Mr. Jung. See you again in the future!” said Gerald before getting into his car and driving off immediately.

After finding out that the Audi A6 belonged to

Gerald, the young man was dumbfounded.

“D\*mn! He’s actually driving such a good car?”

He hadn’t expected that. He had backed his uncle up by insulting Gerald earlier, but even he couldn’t afford to buy himself an Audi.

“What’s so great about that? It’s obviously a second-hand car. He probably can’t even afford to buy a new car anyway! Seeing him really ruined our good mood!” grumbled Leia.

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## Chapter 558

“Humph! Don’t even talk about him anymore!” snorted Willie coldly.

Meanwhile, Gerald had already arrived back home. His anger toward Willie had made the trip feel much shorter.

There seemed to be several cars parked in front of Mr. Winters’s house. Squinting his eyes, Gerald realized that they belonged to the eldest, second, and third son.

With that, Gerald pressed on his car horn with the intention of getting some help to move some of the groceries.

A few people were standing in the courtyard at that time. When they heard and saw the Audi parked in front of the house, they couldn’t help but curiously come out to have a look. Mr. and Mrs. Winters followed them out as well.

When Gerald opened the car door and stepped out, everyone present was surprised.

“Gerald? You’re driving an Audi?” asked the eldest son’s wife, clearly taken aback. If this was the car Gerald was driving, then he was much more capable

compared to her own son!

“Humph! Don’t be fooled. This Audi clearly looks like a second-hand car!” replied Francis.

Francis bore an ugly expression as he said that. After all, he was driving a car that only cost thirty thousand dollars. Since Gerald’s Audi A6 probably cost much more, it was inevitable that his inferiority complex would fire up.

With a depressed look, Francis then walked over to the Audi and kicked its tires lightly. “There’s no need to make such a big fuss over this. Second-hand refurbished cars like these are commonplace. If the seller was an acquaintance, he could probably get it for about fifteen thousand dollars. You know, my friend once tried to persuade me to get a second-hand Audi as well. I refused his offer, though. Heh. After all, the poorer you are, the more you want to drive a good car to show off!”

“He’s right. Only rich bosses should drive Audi cars!” replied another young man.

The young man in question was Jasper Winters. It seemed that he had come home this time.

“All of you seem to be misunderstanding something. This isn’t my car. The car belongs to someone else. I’m just lending it for a few days!” said Gerald with a faint smile. 2

“Oh! And here I thought you suddenly got rich and bought yourself a car! It turns out it’s not even yours in the first place!”

The few sisters-in-law present felt a wave of relief wash over them before they continued smiling contemptuously toward Gerald.

Looking around, Gerald couldn’t see Queeny anywhere. It felt odd that she wasn’t here, but he didn’t question anyone about it.

Turning to look at Mr. Winters, he said, “Mr. Winters, I bought some things for you! Let’s move them into the house first!”

“Oh! Young kid, why are you spending so much money again? You bought so many things!” replied Mrs. Winters in mock anger. She just didn’t want Gerald to spend so much on them.

“It’s fine. After all, all of these are basic necessities anyway. They didn’t cost too much either. I got you a pressure cooker, so if you buy some bones and ribs, you can make some soup! That’ll be great for your health!” said Gerald as he smiled.

His goal was to get the items to Mr. and Mrs. Winters so Gerald simply ignored the ridicules from the other people.

“Oh my, this pressure cooker is actually branded!

How much did it cost you?" asked the second sister-in-law, jealousy reflected in her eyes.

"It wasn't that expensive. Just a little over seventy-five dollars!" replied Gerald.

"Heh. Then this pressure cooker can't be compared to the one given to us for free by Francis's unit. You get free stuff like this occasionally when you work for a public institution, and you know what they say, free things are always the best to use!" bragged the third sister-in-law. 1

"Queeny isn't doing too bad herself. She usually gets some peanut oil, canned tuna, and other canned food from her company once every two months! We can't even finish all of it so the cans are just piling at home! We barely have to spend any money on food at all!" 1

Not wanting to be outdone, the second sister-in-law continued saying, "Oh, and did you know? One of Queeny's colleagues asked her out for dinner tonight. She gets invited out for dinner almost every night, so there's barely a need for me to cook dinner for her at all. We really have so much free food..." 1

As the group continued bragging among themselves, none of them even considered to help Gerald move the things inside at all.

In the end, it was Mr. and Mrs. Winters who helped him move everything inside.

After everyone entered the house again, Gerald suddenly remembered that he had something to tell them. “Oh, that’s right...”

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## Chapter 559

“You know, tomorrow’s my birthday and I won’t be celebrating it at home this time. I’ve already booked a hotel for it. Will any of you have the time to attend?” asked Gerald.

In the previous years, Mr. and Mrs. Winters had always been the ones celebrating Gerald’s birthday with him. This year would be no exception.

However, since everyone was already here, Gerald naturally felt obligated to invite all of them over to his birthday banquet as well.

The third sister-in-law coughed before saying, “As if we’d have the time to go there. Francis and the rest will be working tomorrow. We don’t have time to celebrate your birthday with you.”

“That’s right. What more, if you’re celebrating your birthday, shouldn’t you just be eating at home? Why did you have to book a hotel? Have you forgotten your roots just because you have some money now?” said the second sister-in-law coldly.

Since Gerald was initially very poor, everyone was used to looking down on him. The fact that he suddenly became rich from winning the lottery

caused the power dynamic to flip, resulting in their increased dissatisfaction. This was the main reason why they were speaking to him even more coldly compared to how they used to.

“Well, it seems that we’re all busy. Looks like you’ll have to celebrate your birthday alone!” said the eldest son next.

Just as his sentence ended, his phone began ringing.

“Hello? Mr. Walts! How are you? What’s that? Congratulations! Oh, I’ll definitely be coming with my family the day after tomorrow! No, no, I’m free! I’ll definitely be free once I’m done with everything that I need to finish tomorrow! Haha!”

After that, the eldest son hung up. He looked somewhat excited.

“What’s the matter?” asked the eldest sister-in-law.

“It’s Mr. Walts’s son’s eighth birthday the day after tomorrow. We’ve been invited to attend his birthday celebration so of course I agreed!”

“Hmm? Didn’t you say that you had an important chamber of commerce meeting to attend on that day?”

“Humph! Mr. Walts’s son’s birthday has a higher priority! I’ll just cancel my participation in the

chamber of commerce meeting!” lamented the eldest Son.

“Uncle, second uncle, I think we should start eating now. I still have a lot of important things to do tomorrow. I need to get back and rest as soon as possible! Actually no, I still have to make some plans once I get home since I’ll be meeting up with Mr. Jung tomorrow!” said Francis.

Naturally, he too would be busy tomorrow.

“Isn’t Mr. Jung already here? I said that I’d treat him to dinner tonight. Just ignore the fact that he’s only a department chief now. After all, since he was a pretty reputable figure in the past, he still has several relationships and connections in Serene County!” replied the third son in a prideful tone. ①

“It’s really a pity that he wasn’t free tonight. It seems that his schedule is already fully packed!”

As everyone began to chime in one after another, Gerald simply listened. He could only conclude that the Mr. Jung they were talking about was most definitely Willie.

However, he remained silent.

Since everyone said that they wouldn’t be free tomorrow, Gerald didn’t try to insist for them to attend his birthday celebration anymore.

Not that it mattered to him. Everyone had their own things to do.

After eating a simple meal at Mr. Winters's house, Gerald went back home.

Not too long after, he received a call from Mila.

“Happy birthday, Gerald!” shouted Mila.

“It's not my birthday yet, why are you wishing me happy birthday so soon?!” said Gerald before laughing as he lay on his bed.

“What's stopping me from wishing you twice? I'll wish you happy birthday again at midnight! Not like I can take back my earlier wish anyway. By the way, Gerald, could you come over to look for me in two days' time? Once you're done settling your own matters of course. I'm at the television station now. I've just transferred to become an intern reporter today. I can finally do something that I've always wanted to do now!” said Mila happily. ①

Mila had told Gerald about this some time ago. She would take an examination to apply to become an intern reporter.

She managed to pass and she was now officially an intern reporter. Gerald was equally happy for her.

“Sure thing! I'll come look for you in two days’

time. We'll have a big celebration together for you then!" replied Gerald as he smiled.

"Alright! Ah, do note that that date may not be fixed. I may have a short holiday in a few days' time so we may need to discuss it again then. Speaking of celebrations, how do you plan to celebrate your birthday tomorrow?"

After the two talked about his birthday plans for a short while, Mila eventually said that she needed to take a bath, so they both ended the call.

Just as Gerald was about to put his phone down, his phone started ringing again.

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## Chapter 560

This time, it was a call from Giya.

“It’s your birthday tomorrow right, Gerald?” asked Giya as soon as he picked up.

“Hmm...”

“Humph! Why didn’t you invite me over to celebrate with you then? I was waiting all day for you to call me today! It’s already this late yet you still haven’t invited me... Could it be that you’ve already forgotten about me?”

“Not at all. It’s just that since I’m back in my hometown, I was just planning to have a simple birthday celebration!” explained Gerald.

To be completely honest, Gerald really hadn’t planned to invite Giya at all.

Though she was very nice to him, Gerald simply wanted to be together with Mila now. He didn’t want to get too close to other girls. Therefore, he summarized that continuing to have such a complicated relationship with Giya just wouldn’t do.

What more, Giya had gotten into trouble when she was here with him the last time. Gerald felt

embarrassed to even invite her to come over again.

“Whether you’re inviting me or not, I’m coming over to your house to look for you tomorrow. Unless ... you don’t regard me as your friend at all...?”

Giya leaned her head against the bed’s headboard as she spoke through the landline. She was currently in a room in a villa.

Over the line, Gerald could only agree helplessly as he nodded. Immediately after that, he came up with an excuse saying that he was busy and ended the call.

“Humph! You b\*stard! You’re really heartless toward me!” said Giya with a desolate expression on her face before hanging up as well. 🍷

She had initially expected Gerald to take the initiative to invite her over to celebrate his birthday with him. On the contrary, she now felt that if she hadn’t called him, he definitely wouldn’t have invited her over at all.

What more, since that major incident, whenever she tried looking for Gerald just to have a simple chat with him, he’d always reply indifferently. At most, it was common for him to reply with just a few words.

This made Giya slightly uncomfortable. The more

uncomfortable she felt, the more she couldn't help but overthink the matter.

At that moment, knocking could be heard on her bedroom door.

“Giya? Are you asleep? Your father and I have some things to discuss with you!” said Giya's mother from behind the door.

“Dad, mom, I'm not asleep yet! You can come in!”

Both her parents then entered her bedroom. Giya could see that her father had a very sad expression on his face.

“Giya, I know that you don't want to hear this, but the Quarrington family in Yanken is giving us the orders this time. They want you to get engaged with the third young master from the Long family in Yanken. There's really nothing else that we can do about the matter.”

“Mr. Crawford has already helped us settle our family's economic problems last time. However, the Quarrington family is still pressuring us even now. We really can't do anything about it and we can't always rely on Mr. Crawford to help us. So tell us Giya, what do you think about a marriage contract with the Long family?” asked Giya's father.

Giya's mother sighed before saying, “Though we'



ve already ended our relationship with the Quarrington family, the influence and power they hold over us is simply too great. Please don't blame your father, he's done everything he's could. You have to consider how this is putting the company's interests at stake here. In extension, it's also going to affect your uncles and all the other employees working for our family as well!"

"Is there really no other way? You know, we can still beg Gerald to help us! He'll definitely help me!" replied Giya, her eyes tearing up.

"Giya, though Mr. Crawford is very capable, the Mayberry Commercial Group is only influential in Mayberry City. The Quarrington and Long family, on the other hand, have even bigger groups and corporations in Yanken!" said her father with a sigh.

"What more, the third young master of the Long family may even come over to pay us a visit tomorrow. You'll have to stay home and prepare to meet up with him. If he leaves a really bad impression on you, we may still have some time to think of a solution then!" added Giya's father.

"No! I'm not free tomorrow! It's Gerald's birthday and I'm going to celebrate it with him!" replied Giya angrily.

"You are not to go anywhere tomorrow. You

shouldn't bother Mr. Crawford about our issues anymore. You're just a young girl who doesn't understand anything at all!"

As soon as he finished his sentence, Giya's father pulled her mother out of her bedroom immediately.

Giya was so anxious about the whole thing that she was ready to burst into tears.

Moving back to Gerald, he woke up at six in the morning the next day.

Gerald had a call with Zack last night. He wanted to welcome his 22nd birthday.

Since the guests could arrive early, Gerald decided to tidy up the place a little first.

At that moment, a girl suddenly entered through the front door.

"Gerald! I heard from my mother that you had come back, but I've tried looking for you a few times and you were never home!" 1

## Chapter 561

“Lolita?” said Gerald as he couldn’t help but smile.

He treated the girl like a younger sister. Lolita grew up with both Gerald and Xeno. She was also somewhat related to Xeno’s family.

Unlike Gerald and Xeno, Lolita had a pretty good family background. Her family owned a shop in town, specializing in making cakes and snacks. Because of that, she usually lived in town, rarely ever coming home.

Since Gerald and Xeno were still paupers who couldn’t even afford any good clothes back then, Lolita rarely played with both of them.

She didn’t talk to them much either, even though they were all classmates from the same elementary school. In short, there wasn’t much interaction between the two boys and her at all. One could say that it was similar to Gerald’s relationship with Queeny.

Unlike Queeny, however, they started interacting and forming a friendship late in junior high school.

In their first and second grade, Lolita coincidentally continued to share the same class with Gerald and

Xeno. Even then, both parties still rarely interacted.

Things changed, however, when they were in their third grade.

Lolita had gotten into a fight with another girl then, and it was a huge one.

After school that day, Lolita's way home was blocked by several ruffians from the same grade. The girl had ordered them to give Lolita some trouble to teach her a lesson.

However, Gerald and Xeno had seen what they were up to, and they led Lolita away from them.

Though Gerald was still a nobody back then, Xeno was famous for his fights at school.

When the group of ruffians saw him, they didn't dare to do anything to the trio. In short, they had saved Lolita from a world of trouble that day.

From that day onwards, Lolita treated both Gerald and Xeno nicely, and they became friends just like that.

She would always secretly buy cigarettes for Xeno. As for Gerald, she would bring him cakes and pastries.

When they reached the age of high school, Lolita found that she had been admitted into the Third

High School. It was considered to be the worst high school in the county.

Since none of them had cell phones when they were in high school, they couldn't keep in constant contact with each other. They would only get a chance to get together and chat during New Year.

“When did you get back? Why didn't you send me a text message or something?” complained Lolita.

“I've just been back for a few days! I've been wandering around town and the county. To be honest, I was just about to ask Xeno for your phone number!” replied Gerald as he smiled.

He wasn't lying about that either. After all, he was planning to invite her over to celebrate his birthday with him too.

“Humph! Well at least you haven't forgotten about me yet! By the way, aren't you up to date with the messages in our junior high school class group chat? ...Actually, wait. I don't think you're in it. But either way, today's Chase's birthday! He's said that he wanted all our old classmates to get together since we haven't met each other in such a long time.”

“Since he was going to host a birthday celebration anyway, he decided to make it a class gathering as well to kill two birds with one stone! Even our

junior high school class teacher and English teacher will be attending today. Will you join us?" asked Lolita.

"Mr. Weiss will be attending as well? Hasn't he already retired this year?" asked Gerald as he tried to recall who Chase was.

Though he had trouble remembering who the classmate was, Gerald could easily remember his class teacher, Mr. Carson Weiss. In fact, the memory of his teacher was very clear.

Mr. Weiss had been a particularly kind teacher who taught him the Weston dialect.

Back then, Gerald had a very difficult time at home and he couldn't even afford to pay for his own textbooks. Mr. Weiss had always been there to help him, even going so far as to pay for Gerald's textbook with his own money.

Gerald could still remember those scenes clearly in his mind.

In his first two years of university, Gerald would live a frugal lifestyle just so that he could save up some money. When he returned to his hometown for the New Year's, regardless of how expensive it was, he would always bring some gifts with him whenever he visited Mr. Weiss. In the past two years, however, Gerald found it hard to even afford

to pay for his own tuition fees. He was in such a destitute state back then that he couldn't even visit Mr. Weiss at all.

"I heard that Mr. Weiss fell critically ill last year... Is he doing alright now?" asked Gerald.

"He's recovered from that a long time ago. How else could he possibly have agreed to attend Chase's birthday celebration today?"

"Actually, stop asking so many questions! You'll be able to ask him personally when you meet him face to face later! He's always thought very highly of you and Xenon, even from back then! He'll definitely be very pleased to see you today. Though we've arranged to meet up at eight, you can bet that Mr. Weiss will definitely come earlier than that just so that he can chat more with us!"

"That's great to hear! However, I don't think I'll be able to participate in the gathering," said Gerald somewhat embarrassedly.

## Chapter 562

“Oh? Are you busy or something? Oh! Don’t worry, it’ll be Chase’s treat today! Even if we have to settle our own bills, I’ll back you up, alright?” said Lolita as she assumed Gerald’s worries.

Naturally, it wasn’t about monetary issues. It was just that Gerald still had to celebrate his own birthday today!

Even if Gerald turned her invitation down, it wouldn’t matter much to Lolita. However, since he now knew that Mr. Weiss would be attending as well, he couldn’t help but feel like he would be letting his ex-teacher down if he didn’t join the gathering.

“No, it’s not about the money... In all honesty, I was originally planning to invite you to celebrate my birthday with me today! But since you’ve mentioned Mr. Weiss, how about this? I’ll just go along with you to have a brief chat with him. After that, I’ll return and get back to my own celebration!” replied Gerald.

“...Oh? It’s your birthday today? Well this is embarrassing! Alright, I think your plan sounds good. We’ll go there, have a chat with Mr. Weiss and the rest of our classmates, then we’ll leave together



and celebrate your birthday! What about Xeno? Have you already invited him?" asked Lolita.

"I have, but he's told me that he can only come over at noon. His business is still new after all, and he hasn't had the time to hire more employees yet. He has to deal with so many things!"

"Alright! And yeah, he's really impressive now! Though my dad used to look down on his family, he personally brought some gifts over to them yesterday!" replied Lolita, slightly enviously.

Gerald simply nodded without adding anything to that.

By the time their plans were finalized, it was nearing eight o'clock.

Both of them then rushed to the designated restaurant in town. Since Gerald lived in the main village, the main street in town was within walking distance.

Meanwhile, several of their former junior high classmates were already at the restaurant's entrance.

They were all gathered together as they chatted among themselves. After all, wasn't this the purpose of all class reunions? Meetings like these would always be very cordial.

The contents of their conversations mostly regarded their current status quos as well as ample reminiscing of their shared pasts.

“Look there! Lolita’s here!” said a few classmates as they pointed toward her and Gerald.

“...Huh? That’s Gerald right? Well d\*mn! I didn’t think that he’d be here today!”

“Hahaha! I know right? I thought he had already disappeared off the face of the earth. Nobody would have expected to see him here today!”

“You know, I heard some news that Gerald lived a miserable life in university. He was even struggling to pay for his own tuition fees! Another friend of mine told me that when he was having a meal with his own friend in Mayberry City, he saw Gerald washing the dishes in the kitchen! It was too embarrassing for him to even go up to Gerald and say hello!”

“Heh, he’s always been poor after all. He doesn’t really have a choice but to take on any jobs he can find!”

When everyone saw Gerald, he immediately became the main topic of their conversations and they simply laughed.

Within the group, one of the girls clearly stood out

among her other classmates due to her outstanding temperament. She was just chatting with her friends when she heard Gerald's name being mentioned.

She immediately felt goosebumps on her skin as she blushed and turned to look at Gerald who was still walking over.

“Hehe... You used to be in a relationship with Gerald, right Sherry? Don't even try to deny that both of you used to date!” said one of the girls as she covered her mouth with a hand, trying not to laugh.

“Don't go spouting nonsense! When were we ever in a relationship?” replied Sherry as her cheeks became as red as tomatoes.

“Both of you were definitely in a relationship at one point. I can still remember you exchanging letters with him! You used to be very close to Gerald!” added the same girl from before.

“That's not true...!” replied Sherry in a softer tone.

“Sherry, don't you remember why Xeno beat someone up...? Hehe... Anyway, let's forget about that. Let's just talk about something else!”

Realizing that she had almost stepped on a landmine, the girl quickly tried to change the topic

as she stuck her tongue out rather awkwardly.

“By the way, are you still seeing the guy who tried to beat Gerald up back then?” asked another girl.

“We’ve stopped seeing each other a long time ago ...” replied Sherry as she blushed.

After saying that, she turned to look at Gerald again. She hadn’t met him for the past six years.

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## Chapter 563

When Gerald was finally close enough, he started greeting the classmates who came over to say hello to him.

He also saw Sherry, and Gerald couldn't help but feel slightly embarrassed as well.

After all, both of them had dated before in the past. Though they technically hadn't truly dated, the relationship they shared back then was similar enough to dating.

In short, it had been quite an ambiguous relationship.

Sherry had also been the reason why Yale, the school bully, set his eyes on Gerald in the first place.

Everyone knew what happened next. In the end, Sherry got together with Yale.

Gerald had earlier wondered whether she would be here at the gathering as well.

It would be extremely awkward and embarrassing to meet her today. After all, he hated her. He hated her a lot.

Though Xeno and Gerald had done everything

because of her, she still decided to be with their rival instead.

Xeno lost his opportunity to continue studying. And it was all because of her.

How couldn't it be awkward for Gerald? He wasn't even sure what kind of attitude he should show toward her at this point!

Even though they had been quite close to each other before that incident, both of them completely stopped talking to each other after it happened.

Should Gerald strive to take revenge on her?

After giving it some thought, he realized that it was her own choice to be with him in the end. That had nothing to do with Gerald.

If he really wanted to settle the score, he should look for Yale.

Making his mind up, he simply decided to ignore her.

“Hehe... He's quite ruthless. Gerald didn't even bother to come over and say hello to you at all! By the way, Sherry, doesn't Gerald seem to have a pretty good temperament now? What more, he's dressed so well now! He's actually quite handsome!” said one of the girls as she laughed.

Sherry found herself fixing her own hair. She couldn

't help but feel slightly uncomfortable when she heard someone else praising Gerald. It felt as though someone had just landed a mental slap to her face.

After all, she had been the one who had dumped him. If he was truly living a better life now, of course she would feel uncomfortable! ❶

“Yeah, he is pretty handsome!” replied Sherry casually.

“Hey! Our class teacher and Miss Yahn are here!” shouted a voice.

At that moment, a car stopped by the restaurant's entrance. As the back door opened, an old man in his sixties stepped out. It was Mr. Weiss in the flesh.

The one driving was a rather young lady who looked to be around the age of twenty-seven. She was equally mature, sexy, and beautiful. Bearing a very good temperament herself, the woman in question was Kristen Yang, their old English teacher from third grade.

Back when she taught them, she had just graduated from university at the age of twenty-two. She was a replacement teacher for Gerald's class. ❶

Due to her beauty and youth, she got along easily with her students.

However, Gerald simply gave a simple glance toward her. He didn't have any intentions of greeting her.

When he saw Mr. Weiss however, he immediately ran over to help him out of the car.

“Gerald? It's you! Why didn't you come visit me in the past two years?”

When Mr. Weiss saw Gerald, his wrinkled face was immediately filled with joy. As he spoke, he held on to Gerald's hand excitedly.

Mr. Weiss had taken really good care of both Gerald and Xeno in the past, and Gerald had never forgotten all the kindness he had received.

Gerald then quickly explained why he hadn't been visiting.

“Pfft. Why are you here, Gerald? Just look at you. What are you even working as now? Why're you dressed so pretentiously?” said Kirsten as she skimmed a glance at Gerald. She had a satirical expression on her face. ①

Xeno once had a conflict with Kristen in the past. Ever since that day, she had hated both him and Gerald. Though Gerald hadn't been directly involved with it, the friend of her enemy was also her enemy. ①



It was his own fault for being such good friends with Xeno.

Back then, she would consistently make things difficult for both Xeno and Gerald who were simply paupers in her class. How dare they go against her? 1

This was also the reason why Gerald hadn't planned to greet her earlier. After hearing her remark, he simply looked at her without saying another word.

Mr. Weiss broke the silence by saying, "Gerald, you're an adult now so you can drink alcohol! Why don't we use this opportunity? Accompany me and let's have a drink!" 1

"Mr. Weiss, wait..."

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## Chapter 564

Just as Gerald was about to say something, he was promptly cut off by another person talking loudly. It was Chase.

“Wow! So many of our classmates are here today! All of you are really giving me a lot of face for attending! I’ve already made all the necessary arrangements today so why not enter first before continuing to chat?”

As he scanned through the crowd, he saw Mr. Weiss and Kristen. With a smile on his face, he walked over to both of them before saying, “Mr. Weiss! Miss Yahn! Welcome, let’s go in and have a seat first! Eh? You’re here too Gerald? Well Alright then! Let’s go in together!”

Chase was slightly surprised to see Gerald so he simply greeted him casually.

“Hey Sherry, come over here. Can’t you see that our class teacher is already here?” called out Chase when he saw her.

As soon as she stood beside him, Chase immediately interlocked his fingers with hers.

Most of their classmates were taken aback when

they saw this, and this included Gerald. 1

Sherry was apparently in a relationship with Chase!

Gerald immediately knew that it was only going to get more awkward the longer he stayed at the gathering.

However, he couldn't just leave now because Mr. Weiss was still holding on to his hand.

'I can tell Mr. Weiss about it then,' Gerald thought to himself.

Once everyone had entered the room, the classmates continued chatting among themselves. The common topic shared by most of the conversations, was regarding the classmates' current situations.

Chase naturally seemed to be the one who was doing best.

After all, he had started working even before he finished high school. He had learned about the ins and outs of big trucks from his uncle.

Chase had used his family's wealth to buy himself two big trucks. Now, he's started his own small-scale logistics company.

Compared to the rest of his peers in the county, he was definitely doing very well. It was no wonder

why Sherry chose to be with Chase.

“Heh, what a blessing for Sherry to be able to be together with Chase now. She must be enjoying the life of a lady boss now! Hahaha!”

“I know right? She’s so beautiful. I guess that’s why she’s so lucky!”

Several of the classmates were talking about her enviously.

“By the way, Gerald, what are you doing now?” asked Chase out of the blue.

Though both Chase and Gerald didn’t have many notable interactions back in junior high, Chase was well aware of Gerald’s past with Sherry.

It was natural for a boyfriend to express hate toward his girlfriend’s ex, and this was exactly what Chase was feeling at that moment.

What more, Gerald was dressed even better than he was! Seeing how well dressed Gerald was made Chase ask his tentative question.

Mr. Weiss was looking at Gerald as well.

“I’m just doing my own business!” replied Gerald.

“Hahaha! Oh god, Gerald’s actually started his own business?”

At that moment, a few female classmates

immediately burst out laughing.

“What kind of business are you running? Are you selling socks at the night market?”

“Hahaha! Really now, are you just starting a business because everyone else is doing the same? Gerald, it’s not like we’re trying to put you down, but you should be more self-aware of yourself! Wouldn’t it be easier for someone like you to just look for a job somewhere?” 1

Kristen had been the one who asked that question. She then sneered before adding, “I’m not trying to pick a bone with you or Xeno, but even though both of you have really good grades, the two of you are at the bottom of society! Do you know why? It’s because both of you have no connections. You even lack a proper family background! I heard that Xeno’s fixing cars for people right now, right? What future is there in doing something like that?!”

She ended her sentence as she smiled contemptuously.

“That’s not right, Miss Yahn. On the contrary, Xeno’s doing very well now. He’s opened his own large automobile trading company, or at least that’s what I heard!”

“Yeah, I heard the same thing. He was really lucky since the Dream Investment Group decided to

invest in his company!”

When Kristen heard this, she couldn't help but feel slightly disappointed.

“So what? It won't be long before those people will decide to withdraw their capital and investment! When that time comes, Xeno will just have to go back to repairing cars then!” 1

“Alright, alright, that's enough. Speaking of which, Chase, didn't you inform Xeno about the gathering today?” asked Mr. Weiss quickly to change the subject, sensing the awkwardness in the atmosphere.

“Oh! No I didn't! I don't really keep in touch with him,” replied Chase as he put his teacup down before sneering.

“I actually contacted him! Also, while I have all your attention now, Chase! You're actually not the only one celebrating your birthday today! You share the same birthday with another of our classmates!” said one of the girls out of the blue.

## Chapter 565

“Oh? Another classmate is celebrating their birthday today too?” asked Chase as he smiled with a slightly raised brow.

“That’s right! Today is Kirk’s birthday as well! Going back to Xeno, when I told him about the celebration, Xeno told me that he wasn’t free to attend today!”

Kirk was another of their junior high classmates. Though he was a pretty honest and straightforward person, academic-wise, he was always at the bottom of the class.

His family owned a cement factory and since he realized he wasn’t cut out for studying, he immediately started working for his family after graduating from junior high school.

Everyone was now looking at Kirk.

“Well d\*mn! Why didn’t you tell us it was your birthday today too, Kirk? Well this is embarrassing! Hahaha!” said Chase.

“So it’s your birthday today too! Everyone, let’s add Kirk on WeChat so that we can each give him a red envelope for his birthday!”

Hearing the suggestion from one of their classmates, the crowd cheered in agreement.

Mr. Weiss simply smiled before saying, “Why don’t you young people give gifts as birthday presents anymore? When I was your age, I had to prepare my own gifts to give to other people! Now that we have WeChat, things have become much more convenient!”

“They really have, Mr. Weiss! We can just send red envelopes to settle everything! From birthdays, to wedding celebrations!” replied the girls as they laughed.

“I’ve already added you on WeChat, Kirk! Remember to accept the red envelope!”

“Alright, alright! Thank you so much, everyone! I really hadn’t expected my birthday to be on the same day as Chase’s!”

Seeing how well he was being treated by all his classmates, Kirk was feeling extremely flattered. He kept thanking them over and over again.

“What a coincidence! While Kirk and Chase share the same birth date, someone else does as well! Have you all already forgotten who else used to celebrate his birthday on the same day as Chase back in junior high?” said Lolita hurriedly when she



saw everyone sending money over to Kirk for his birthday.

“Who? Nobody really comes to mind!”

Several of the classmates seemed very puzzled.

“Humph! If you really can’t guess, it’s Gerald! His birthday is today too! He’s always celebrated his birthday on the same day as Chase. Three of our classmates are celebrating their birthdays today!” said Lolita.

“Oh, so it’s Gerald!”

The classmates then nodded to acknowledge that they now knew. However, nobody said anything else.

“Speaking of which, Chase, I heard that there’s going to be some activities in Fuenti later in the afternoon. Let’s go over there and have some fun! My dad said that it’s really lively over there!” said one of the girls cheerfully to break the silence.

“Yeah, that’s what I heard too! Why don’t we all go there to enjoy ourselves later?”

Everyone there seemed to agree with the suggestion.

“I’m fine with that. How many cars do we have here? Oh, and Miss Yahn! You should come with us

later in the afternoon too! Now let's see if we have enough space to carpool everyone to save on cab fares!" suggested Chase.

After he said that, a headcount was done and there were just enough cars to accommodate everyone.

However, upon doing a second headcount, they found that one extra person wouldn't be able to join the carpool.

"Well this is awkward! There's one person left and it really isn't worth renting a cab just for a single person!" said one of the girls.

One of the guys coughed before saying, "If that's the case, then Gerald shouldn't join us. He has his business to attend to anyway, so if he comes along, we'll only be stopping him from doing his work!" He then laughed. ①

"That's right. I think Gerald shouldn't come along either! Hahaha!"

"I won't be going anyway. All of you go have your fun. Mr. Weiss, the only reason why I came here today was to meet you. I was originally planning to invite you over to my own birthday banquet today, but it seems that that idea would be inconvenient now. I'll come meet you in the next two days. I'll be taking my leave first to attend to some things!" said Gerald as he explained his plans to Mr. Weiss.

“That’s fine then, Gerald. Go on now if you’re busy!” said Mr. Weiss who knew that everyone was ridiculing and making fun of Gerald. He was aware that it would only continue to become more difficult for Gerald the longer he stayed here.

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## Chapter 566

After that, Gerald looked at Lolita and she nodded before bidding farewell to Mr. Weiss as well.

“What? They’re actually leaving? Did they really just come here to visit Mr. Weiss? What a load of bullshit! What about us? Don’t we exist?” exclaimed a few of the girls, visibly upset.

“Right? Are you holding a grudge against us just because we didn’t wish you a happy birthday?”

“Gerald, I’ll be frank. It’s not that I don’t want to wish you a happy birthday through Line, but I really don’t want your number on my phone in the first place! Hahaha!”

“D\*mn! Roasted!”

Immediately after that, everyone began laughing. Laughing at him seemed to be their favorite form of amusement after all.

Gerald simply remained silent. He knew that it wouldn’t be difficult to make them eat their own words. However, he decided to be the bigger person and just left with Lolita. Having a major reaction to his classmates’ mockery would be pretty petty of him after all.

Sherry on the other hand, shook her head as she watched them leave. Throughout the gathering, she had been watching Gerald the entire time. She felt that Gerald was nothing compared to Chase and she was glad that she didn't end up with him.

“Well that was infuriating! Did you hear what they said? Even Miss Yahn is still on to you! If I wasn't this close to them I would've started a fight for you!” huffed Lolita.

“Don't waste your energy on them!” said Gerald as he continued pulling Lolita's hand.

Around twenty minutes later, both of them reached their hometown.

“So Gerald, are you celebrating your birthday at home? Do you want me to cook for you? Just so you know, I'm pretty good at making noodles!” said Lolita.

She seemed to be worried that Gerald's self-esteem was now in shambles. She took the blame personally since she was the one who had invited him to the gathering. She then continued, “Let's just forget about them. Actually, since Xeno's doing pretty well now, we could work under him and stick together! Just like in the old days!”

“Just like the old days indeed!” replied Gerald with

a smile. “However, I won’t be celebrating my birthday at home. We’ll be celebrating it in Fuenti instead. I booked a spot at Sunny Springs.”

“...Huh? Sunny Springs? Real funny, Gerald. Someone’s already reserved the entire place! And I don’t just mean just the hotel!” said Lolita in a slight panic just thinking about it. “How could you even have managed to make a reservation there?”

Honestly, Gerald didn’t understand why Zack reserved the entire place either. From what Gerald had expected, there wouldn’t be any more than thirty people attending his birthday celebration. However, Zack could have added some of his own plans, thus Gerald didn’t question him about it.

Gerald then gave a gentle smile before replying, “You’ll understand later. Now let’s go, it’s already eight! We have to hurry since there are others I have to pick up!”

“Wait, you’re being serious? But how will we get there? Fuenti’s quite far away from here!” asked Lolita as she tilted her head. Gerald was acting quite strange and this made Lolita increasingly confused.

“By car. Our ride’s in that alley over there. I’ll drive it out and then we can go pick up the Winters!” said Gerald as he shook his car keys before her to see.

When they arrived at the alley, Lolita was left

utterly shocked when she saw their ride.

“A-An Audi A6? Is this your car, Gerald?” asked Lolita, frozen in place.

“Nope. It’s a company car. You’ll be able to see mine in the hotel when we get there!” replied Gerald with a smile. He then turned to look at the shocked-frozen girl before saying, “Come on now. Get in while I give Mr. Winters a call...”

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## Chapter 567

After picking everyone up, there were four people in the car as they headed for Fuenti. It took roughly around twenty minutes for them to arrive at Sunny Springs.

Gerald really hadn't expected to see such a huge crowd. Luxury cars continued to enter, one after another, and several hawkers had congregated at Sunny Springs's entrance. After all, this was their prime opportunity to make a profit off the ever-growing crowd. Rather than a birthday celebration, it looked like an entire festival.

'How lively!' Gerald thought to himself.

A red carpet had been laid out from the entrance all the way to the hotel, and dozens of employees were rushing around, busy welcoming any honored guests they could see.

If it weren't for Zack, Gerald really wouldn't have thought of hosting something on such a grand scale. It didn't even feel like the event was to celebrate his birthday anymore.

"Christ, there's so many people here! How did you even manage to make a reservation, Gerald? It's



impossible for me to even imagine!” asked Lolita, still very puzzled.

“She’s right, sonny! Let’s just find a nice little diner to celebrate. Better yet, your momma could cook for us! It’s just so crowded here and the food is so expensive!” exclaimed Mr. Winters.

“Don’t worry about any of that, we’ll still be celebrating here!” said Gerald with a chuckle.

Gerald knew that there was nothing to hide anymore. The celebration was made for him, and him alone. Just as Gerald was about to explain himself, Francis and a few of his friends approached them. ❶

“Grandpa? Grandma? What are you doing here?” asked Francis when he saw them.

“Ah, Francis! You didn’t tell us that your grandparents were coming! We could’ve told the employees to let them in. We only got in because of our leader too!” said one of his friends. ❶

Francis coughed before saying, “Just as you said, we’re only here because of our leader. It’s not like we’re here for work, but could we even ask for something like that? Since my parents weren’t invited either, even they can only hang out around this area!”

“Well, we’re here to celebrate Gerald’s birthday.

Speaking of which, where are your parents now?” asked Mr. Winters as he explained.

“Pfft! Gerald’s birthday? Then why are all of you even here? This entire place is reserved!” said Francis as he glared at Gerald.

Francis knew how good-tempered his grandparents were. To him, Gerald had brought the two of them—who were both obviously clueless—over despite knowing full well that the place had been fully reserved. It was as though Gerald only wanted to embarrass him in front of his colleagues.

“Dad? Mom? What brings you two here?” asked Boss, his annoyance reflected in his tone. All of a sudden, the entire family seemed to have gathered over to talk to them.

The other Winters had attended the event, knowing that it was a celebration for some powerful figure. Not only was the celebration being hosted in the exquisite Sunny Springs, several celebrities had also been invited over. This was a prime chance for them to have some fun.

Aside from that, it was also the perfect opportunity for them to expand their network. This was the gist of why the entire family was here.

“Humph, why else? Gerald brought them here!” huffed Francis as he explained the situation to the

rest of his family.

“Hah! What a joke! Have a good look around you! As if someone like you could ever celebrate your birthday here!” said Sandrilla as she chuckled, her arms crossed.

She thought that it was impossible for Gerald to reserve a table here. After all, if he had indeed managed to do so, that would mean that he was even more powerful than her own daughter! There was just no way that that could ever be true!

“Indeed! I thought that you’d just find some diner downtown to celebrate! Who would’ve thought that you would instead come over to Fuenti? If we knew your plans, we would’ve brought mom and dad over ourselves! Who do you even think you are?” added the third sister in law.

## Chapter 568

“Settle down now, today’s Gerald’s birthday and he said that he’d treat us to dinner. Since all of you don’t seem to have anything better to do, let’s just celebrate his birthday together! Show us to the restaurant, Gerald!” suggested Mr. Winters.

“What? We’re busy dad. You know, we’re going to have dinner with some of Boss’s friends. Why don’t you come with us instead?” asked the first sister in law.

She then turned to look at Francis before saying, “Fran, Jazz, both of you can run along now. You don’t have to waste any more time here, and remember to be on your best behavior when your leader arrives!”

Francis and his colleagues nodded immediately. They knew how important the event was. After glaring at Gerald one final time, Francis left with his colleagues.

As for Queeny, she had been quietly observing Gerald the entire time.

Just a while ago, everyone was making fun of Gerald. Some were even openly insulting him.

However, Queeny knew better since she was already aware that Gerald had quite a bit of influence in the attraction. Back in the day, Gerald would've just lowered his head in embarrassment. Now, however, he was smiling. He had been smiling the entire time.

'How is he so confident now? Where did all this confidence even come from?'

'Could Gerald really be a powerful figure now?'

These were the thoughts swimming in Queeny's mind. Queeny had been very uneasy since the day she last met Gerald. She just couldn't put her finger on why. She was simply afraid of hearing any more about Gerald, thus she hadn't told her parents anything regarding the incident.

However, after hearing Gerald say that he was celebrating his birthday here, she was now growing more and more worried by the second.

"Hmm? Mr. Winters? It really is you!" called out an old, husky voice from behind them. Gerald turned to see who had spoken, and he saw an old man. Behind him, followed a family of four.

"Waxham! I didn't expect to see you here!" exclaimed Mr. Winters excitedly.

Waxham's family members greeted them politely as well. As Gerald scanned through the family, he

froze when he saw the two girls standing behind the middle-aged couple. They were Michelle and Xabrina Waxham.

“So, how did the blind date go? I tried asking Elle, but she just wouldn’t tell me anything! I just want to know how it went. Oh Gerald, is our darling Elle really not to your liking?”

“Dad, stop talking about him! Maybe he just backed off because he knew he was too poor to be able to date our dear little Elle!” said Michelle’s mother.

They hadn’t expected the old man to ask about the blind date right off the bat.

Though honestly, what else was there to ask about? She had rejected him before they even met. Did the old man really think that no one would marry his granddaughter?

Mr. Winters then coughed before saying, “Well, Waxham, this here is Gerald. I’m equally as confused as to what happened that day as well!”

“What? He’s Gerald?” blurted Michelle’s mother. She was now too embarrassed to speak another word. She simply gave a few more peeks at Gerald.

Xabrina on the other hand, immediately started jumping for joy. “Gerald! We meet again!”

Gerald simply gave a gentle smile at her. Michelle

on the other hand, awkwardly took a few steps backward. It was clear that Gerald favored her sister much more than her.

“Mom! Dad! Look there, isn’t that Gerald?” shouted a feminine voice. A girl had pointed at Gerald and she was now approaching them.

“Humph! He’s probably just here to check out what the deal is with this crowd. Who cares if it even is Gerald?” scoffed a middle-aged man.

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## Chapter 569

It was the Jungs.

Willie had been very excited about the event. However, as soon as he saw Gerald, his expression immediately darkened.

Gerald himself dreaded seeing them as well. In the past, he would've still greeted them out of politeness. Now, however, such courtesy was no longer necessary.

“Oh my god, look! There are so many luxury cars!”

“Really? Where? Oh god, you're right!”

Scream after scream could be heard from within the crowd as the cars made their way through. The crowd made sure to split accordingly to allow the cars to pass. As they did so, the employees readied themselves to welcome their new guests.

A middle-aged couple stepped out of the first vehicle, hand in hand.

“A warm welcome to Mr. Samuel Edwards and Mrs. Jennifer Edwards!” As soon as the employees saw the couple, all of them immediately bowed.

“Oh my god, it's the Edwards! Mr. Edward is the top



philanthropist in Sunnydale! He used to be the richest man there too! I didn't expect him to come here! ”

“I know right? The Edwards retired early and have been traveling around the world since! I can't believe they're actually here right now!”

“Even television crews have trouble catching them on tape!”

Everyone was either gossiping or taking photos of Mr. Edward and his wife using their phones.

“Dad, gramps, this is exciting, isn't it? Mr. Edward used to be the richest man in Sunnydale!” explained Francis and Jasper smugly as they approached Gerald and his group of three.

This was the first time Mr. Winters had ever seen such a famous figure so close up. He could barely hide his shock and excitement, and the same went for the Waxhams as well.

From the next vehicle, another middle-aged couple stepped out and behind them, their son followed.

“My, my! It's Mr. Novelzada! He owns quite a few film companies both in Hong Kong and in Mayberry!”

“What brings them here?”

“Oh! This is so exciting! Could they perhaps be

planning to build a film company here in Fuenti?”

“Humph! You know, they really are planning on building a film company here! They were planning this when I was in office!” said Francis cockily as he heard the chattering from the speculating crowd.

At that moment, the crowd began cheering wildly again. Everyone was looking at the new guest that had just made his entrance.

“Holy! That’s Mr. Steven Russell! He’s the richest man in Mondale!”

The people in the crowd all stared at him in awe as he walked past.

“What are all these famous people doing here, dad? What’s the occasion?” asked Leila, still in shock.

Since Francis was working with the company, he had an idea of what was actually going on.

“Heh, who else would be this powerful to invite all these people? It’s definitely an event for Mr. Crawford! Though the specifics of how powerful he really is in this area is currently unknown, it’s safe to say that he definitely has quite the network!” explained Francis again with an extremely smug look on his face.

“What? Mr. Crawford? So he’s the one celebrating his birthday?” asked Leila.

The information caught on quickly and began spreading like wildfire among those in the crowd.

Everyone was exclaiming, “Oh, so that’s why! It’s Mr. Crawford’s birthday! Who else would come to a small town like Fuenti?”

“Speaking of which, why hasn’t there been any news about Mr. Crawford on the internet?” asked a curious person in the crowd.

“Why else? Mr. Crawford just likes keeping a low profile!”

“That’s right! Only a select few in the world know what Mr. Crawford actually looks like!”

A loud discussion had now begun among the people in the crowd.

“So it really is Mr. Crawford’s birthday today! I was right!”

## Chapter 570

It was then that the rest of the Winters realized that the celebration was being held for such a powerful figure.

Gerald, on the other hand, was being squeezed within the crowd, feeling slightly stunned. He hadn't expected Zack to go all out with the celebration, nor had he imagined that so many famous celebrities would be invited over.

He had estimated for only thirty people to participate at most, and this was clearly way more than that!

“Wait! Guys, look! Isn't that Mr. Zebriel from Sunnydale?”

“Oh f\*ck, it is! Even Mr. Zebriel's here!”

The crowd had been continuously shocked by the main guests of the event.

“Say mom, I'm going to go take some photos, could you guys take care of my stuff? Okay guys, let's go!” said Francis in a serious tone as he rushed off while holding his camera.

With celebrities arriving at the scene one after

another, nothing could make the crowd shut up.

Mr. Winters himself was delighted. After all, he had only been able to see all these people on television before. Many famous actors and actresses were present for the celebration as well.

At that moment, several luxury sports cars arrived at the entrance and out stepped the many rich heirs of Mayberry.

“Oh god, there are so many cute guys! And they’re all rich heirs too!” squealed several girls.

“That’s Yoel Holden, Mr. Crawford’s godbrother! I’ve seen photos of him online! Though he’s a little on the chubbier side, he still manages to pull the look off! He’s so cute, I love him so much!”

“And that’s Aiden Baker! He’s the best looking one among them all! He’s so tall and handsome! You know, I heard that he looks pretty similar to Mr. Crawford! I’d be able to die without regrets if he just gave me a tiny kiss!”

“Oh! Oh! And that guy there is...”

As the list went on, many of the girls gathered upfront, making sure to capture as many photos as they possibly could.

“Gosh, these boys are just so good looking, and they’re filthy rich as well! Now, I don’t really hope for

too much from you girls, but if you find someone even half as good as they are, I'd be so much prouder of you!" exclaimed Michelle's mother.

She had high hopes for her daughters. If they could someday successfully marry one of those rich heirs, her life would become so much better.

With hands in their pockets, Yoel and Aiden slowly walked toward the entrance. Since they had sunglasses on, the constant flashes from the cameras didn't bother them at all. They had been told by the organizers that they would be taking a group photo in the plaza.

As he continued watching the employees greet the famous figures, Willie only grew more and more envious. His cheeks were a bright red due to all his pent up anger.

"See that guy? If it weren't for him, I'd be the one welcoming the guests!" huffed Willie, green with envy.

Only experienced employees were allowed to enter the building to greet the famous people. Since Willie was only able to watch from the crowd, it was obvious why he was feeling so upset.

"Look at that. The attraction's employees brought their families and relatives along with them! Why don't we have someone with such benefits?" said

Sandrilla before sighing, her words filled with jealousy.

She then turned to Queeny before saying, “Darling, do your best and work harder, alright? Next time you’ll definitely be able to bring me along during similar large events!”

Though Queeny nodded, her eyes were staring into space. Her mind was completely blank. She wasn’t even sure what to feel about such a big event.

‘Of course any sane person would want to walk on that red carpet. Who would ever settle for simply being part of the audience?’ Queeny thought to herself.

“Excuse me, passing through!”

Gerald had decided at that moment that it was high time for him to enter the building himself. After all, almost everyone had arrived.

There was no way they could start the party without him. While he was thinking about this, he ended up being pushed back by the crowd.

“F\*ck off! Stop pushing us, you freak!”

“Yeah, why are you rushing over? Ugh!” ①

The many girls gathered in the front row took turns rolling their eyes at Gerald, visibly disgusted.

## Chapter 571

“Humph! Just look at you. Trying to squeeze in front like that!” scoffed Sandrilla as she watched Gerald get pushed to the back again.

‘D\*mn it all!’ Gerald thought to himself. He couldn’t progress forward at all!

“Hey Gerald? Maybe you should just watch from here. I mean look at all the celebrities!” suggested Lolita.

As she said that, the last guest arrived at the celebration.

In the conference hall, Zack himself was already on the stage, giving thanks to all the present guests. All of a sudden, Zack’s phone began to ring and everyone went silent.

Despite the fact that there were so many people in the outdoor conference hall, it was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop.

“It’s been hours... Which one of them is Mr. Crawford? Why haven’t we seen him yet?”

“Maybe he didn’t come? But that’s impossible, right?”



“Or maybe he’s already inside! Perhaps he just didn’t want to expose what he looks like?”

“Huh? Does that mean we won’t be able to meet him?” said a few of the girls in disappointment.

The girls had been eager to see what the billionaire looked like, much more so than simply seeing Aiden and Yoel. Knowing what Mr. Crawford looked like had been their main objective from the moment they knew who the celebration was being hosted for.

“Damn it, why isn’t Mr. Crawford showing himself yet?” asked Leia rather impatiently.

“Maybe he just doesn’t want to be seen!” responded Willie.

Meanwhile in the conference hall, the atmosphere was getting gloomier by the minute. Zack had picked up on the clear change in mood, but even he was slightly confused.

It was almost eleven and according to what was promised, Gerald should have already arrived after picking the Winters up.

Zack then smiled before saying, “Apologies, everyone! I’ll give Mr. Crawford a call immediately. He might be held up by something!”

After saying that, he pulled his phone out from his

pocket and dialed Gerald's number.

"Oh, did you hear that? He really is coming! Mr. Crawford's just a little late!"

"Yeah! That means we'll get to eventually see him, right?" cheered the girls.

At that moment, Gerald's phone began to ring. Since the crowd was already so silent, the source of the ringing was extremely apparent.

Everyone was now looking at Gerald in shock. After all, after Zack dialed that number, Gerald's phone immediately started ringing. It was just some coincidence, right?

"Hahaha! If we didn't know any better, we'd have mistaken him for Mr. Crawford!" said someone in the crowd before laughing.

"Hey, Mr. Lyle. I'm already here but I'm being held up by the huge crowd. I'll be over in a minute," said Gerald after answering the call.

"My god, that person must be out of his mind! As if he could ever be Mr. Crawford! What a good actor!"

"I know right? What a funny guy!" Everyone then started making fun of Gerald.

After hanging up, Gerald began walking to the front. This time, none of the girls tried to stop him.

Instead, they simply stared at him in shock.

“Gerald? What are you doing? Come back!” called out Lolita. She thought that Gerald was clearly out of his mind as well.

As Gerald walked to the middle of the red carpet, everyone just continued staring at him with puzzled expressions on their faces. When they saw him, all the honored guests walked out of the building, led by none other than Zack.

“Cr\*p, cr\*p, cr\*p, cr\*p! He’s caught their attention!” said Lolita under her breath in a panic.

At that moment, all the honored guests simultaneously greeted, “Mr. Crawford!” Their voices were so in sync, that the greeting echoed through the hall like an avalanche.

“M-Mr. Crawford? What?”

Chills were sent down everyone’s spines when they heard the intense, loud greeting.

Willie and Leia’s eyes widened, clearly in shock.

‘He’s Mr. Crawford...? How could that even be possible?’

## Chapter 572

Willie had always thought that Gerald was nothing more than a mere acquaintance. He had never thought that Gerald would ever make it this far. Due to that, he had always looked down upon him. In the past, Willie had even tried his best to avoid him, just to prevent Gerald from asking him for help.

Now however, all these famous figures were calling him Mr. Crawford. The mysterious Mr. Crawford of Mayberry turned out to be Gerald this entire time!

This fact was...

Willie gulped hard. His mind was blank and the realization of the situation was akin to a massive slap to his face. He was so shocked that the corner of his mouth was even twitching.

Leila herself was covering her mouth with both her hands, equally as shocked as her father.

It wasn't any different for the Winters who all looked shocked to their cores.

However, it was Waxham's two daughters who had it the worst. It had never occurred to them that Gerald would ever be the actual Mr. Crawford.

No wonder he was so rich! What was the meaning of

all this?!

“A-ah! Mr. Crawford! You’re so good looking!” yelled a few girls toward him.

Gerald simply ignored the shouts of flattery before turning to Lolita, Mr., and Mrs. Winters who were still stunned at the revelation. With a smile on his face, he then said, “I told you I had a table reserved for us. Now let’s go!”

After that, he pulled Lolita by the hand and slowly guided the two Winters forward with his other arm. The four of them then walked out of the crowd together. Lolita found herself gulping once again, still within her state of utter shock.

When they got closer, Yoel, Aiden, and several other rich heirs came forward to welcome them.

“I’ll lead the way, mister!” said Aiden with a smile as he held Mr. Winters by the arm. Gerald simply followed behind them.

As Michelle watched Gerald walk past her, she was instantly reminded of the blind date event just a few days ago.

“Sis, I don’t want to meet up with that poor freak! Could you go in my place and reject him?” said Michelle.

“Yeah, my baby wouldn’t marry him even if he was

the last man alive! Who does he think he is? Does he really think he can provide for my little Elle? Think again, freak!”

This time it was Michelle’s mother who spoke, for she too was reminded of the blind date.

Despite saying that, the truth was that the two were now engulfed by both regret and embarrassment.

The same applied for the rest of the Winters, who were equally as embarrassed.

“Hey guys, tomorrow’s my birthday! If you’re free, would you like to have dinner with me? There won’t be a lot of people!” At that moment, all of the Winters were replaying Gerald’s invitation to them in their minds. He had even invited them with a welcoming smile the day before. But what had they said?

“We’re busy. Who has the time to celebrate your birthday?”

“I know right? Don’t go copying others and hosting birthday parties! Just look at you, can you even afford a birthday celebration?”

“We don’t have the time and energy to go to your pity party. Fran has work to do too!”

“...”

Gerald had tried to invite them twice, and now, all

of them had mixed emotions brewing within them. 1

At that moment, Queeny's phone dropped to the ground. She had constantly been worried that Gerald would eventually become better than her. Now, her worst nightmare had come to life before her very eyes.

No wonder Gerald was able to have everyone here cling to him. Even that Wadford guy from the day before had treated him with utmost respect! And it was now clear why Gerald had invited her grandparents to specifically celebrate his birthday here. Gerald was Mr. Crawford this entire time!

Willie himself was staring at him with hope in his eyes as Gerald walked past. Maybe there would still be a chance that Gerald would acknowledge his presence. Maybe Gerald would even wave at him.

All these years, both the Winters and Gerald had been the nicest to him. He had always wondered why the Dream Investment Group funded him when his project was facing difficulties. As it turned out, Gerald had always been looking out for him.

He had used to call him Uncle Jung as well, back when they were still a bit closer. Willie knew that it was his own fault for slowly distancing himself from Gerald. He was now regretting everything that he had done, and he wished that he could rewind

time to start fresh with Gerald. However, he knew that that wasn't going to happen, so all he could do was look toward the floor, filled with embarrassment.

“Holy! Look over there! What car is that?”

At that moment, a number of girls screamed as they pointed toward the entrance. They were secretly hoping that their voices would catch Gerald's attention as well.

As Gerald turned to see what they were pointing at, everyone was already in total shock. An extremely luxurious looking sports car was slowly heading toward the entrance!

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## Chapter 573

“Holy cr\*p! That’s a Lamborghini Reventón! That thing costs more than 200 million!”

Everyone was exclaiming in awe.

At that moment, Sienna and Xeno stepped out of the car. Xeno then tossed the car keys over to Gerald before saying, “Here you go, brother! I brought it here, just like you told me to!”

Gerald had asked Xeno for a favor two days ago. Since he didn’t have a car in this area and he still needed some form of transportation, he had told Xeno to bring his car over.

Gerald smiled as he patted Xeno on the shoulder. They then entered the conference hall together.

“So that car belongs to Mr. Crawford!” said everyone with envy in their voices.

After taking loads of pictures, the birthday celebration finally started. According to Zack, this celebration was way less grand compared to what Gerald’s sister had hosted back then.

Gerald didn’t have any trouble accepting that fact. After all, his sister had rented an entire island for

her birthday party! That was just way too over the top, even if it was for her birthday!

The party continued till about three in the afternoon.

Though Giya had promised that she would come to the party, in the end, she didn't. After Gerald tried calling her several times, she finally picked up. Her excuse was that she wasn't feeling well so she couldn't make it.

Slightly worried, Gerald asked her if she was okay, but she immediately hung up on him.

He decided not to question her any further after that. After all, it wasn't obligatory for her to attend his birthday party. After drinking a few shots, Gerald decided to rest in one of the waiting rooms.

"Hey, who are you people? No outsiders allowed in here!" said a bodyguard outside.

"I'm Mr. Crawford's relative! I'm Mr. Jung!" replied the voice of a middle-aged man.

Of course it was Willie Jung. He had begged his colleagues to let him in, and after entering the hall, he immediately headed over to see Gerald.

He had two reasons to be this desperate.

Firstly, he knew that the rumors of him insulting

Gerald would spread as quickly as a disease would. Due to that, he may end up losing even his current position. He was well aware that he had crossed the line back then.

Secondly, if he tossed his ego aside and begged for Gerald's forgiveness, he may even have the chance to get promoted back to his original position! For Willie, now was the time to go all out.

It was terribly upsetting for him after finding out that Gerald had such a massive network. He cursed himself for insulting Gerald. If he hadn't, his life could have been so much better now.

He had several questions about the Crawford family swimming in his mind. One of them was how he became so powerful in such a short amount of time. However, Willie knew better to keep those thoughts to himself at least for now. All that mattered at that moment, was for him to meet Gerald.

"Please, I'd like to see Mr. Crawford! Could you please tell him that his Uncle Jung is here?" pleaded Willie as Leila and Leia waited behind him.

The bodyguard was rightfully unsure. He knew better than to mess with anyone related to Gerald. Hence, he entered the room and informed Gerald about Mr. Jung immediately.

After a while, the guard came out again, shooting

Willie a dirty look as he said, “Mr. Crawford is resting now. If you’d like to meet him, you’ll have to wait!”

“Yes, of course!” replied Willie as he nodded profusely.

With that, half an hour passed...

Another hour soon followed after.

After five long hours of waiting, night had already crept in. However, Willie was still waiting outside the room, his legs sore from standing for so long.

“Mr. Crawford is currently having his dinner. He told you to come back another day, and he’ll consider meeting you then,” said the bodyguard after he came out of the room again.

The corner of Willie’s mouth couldn’t help but twitch again when he heard that.

## Chapter 574

Willie knew that Gerald had purposely made him wait for that long. After all, he had made Gerald go through a similarly long wait in the past.

While this was happening, a Rolls-Royce Phantom was speeding down the roads of Yanken. It seemed to be heading toward Mayberry.

Sitting at the back of the car was a stylish and young, rich woman. To be frank, 'woman' would be an overstatement since she looked more like a young lady who had freshly graduated from university.

"Are we there yet?" asked the lady as she opened her eyes slowly. She was focused on the scenery outside the car's window.

"We're almost in Mayberry City, miss!" replied the chauffeur.

"Tell the cars behind us to catch up!" ordered the lady after hearing that.

The chauffeur then did as she ordered by relaying the order through a walkie-talkie. Behind the Phantom, around twenty Maybach cars followed closely. Any other cars on the road had to make way

for this group of expensive-looking cars.

“Mayberry City and its Mayberry University... These were the two forsaken places where I had to endure all those insults and humiliation... Heh, I’m finally back,” said the lady as she reminisced while clenching her fists. 1

She clenched so hard that her long nails almost dug into her skin.

“Miss, your sister is going to be studying at that university, isn’t she? Heh, if that’s the case, she’s going to be your junior!” said the chauffeur. “I’ve also heard that the seniors are going to organize a debate competition. Will you be participating in that?”

“Just shut up!” scolded the lady as she closed her eyes again.

The only sound left after that, was the revving of the car’s engine and it wasn’t long before they arrived at Mayberry.

Moving back to Gerald, he woke up fairly early the next morning. Since he was done with most of the projects at hand, he decided that it was high time for him to return to university.

The three months of summer holiday had passed by extremely quickly. In just two days, the debate

competition would be held. Hence, Gerald had decided to return to Mayberry and it was also why he had told Xeno to transfer his car over. 1

After bidding farewell to the Winters, Gerald was sent off by his sisters-in-law. They held onto his hands right up to the moment he got to his car. They even went so far as to chase after the car till they reached the town's entrance. Only after seeing his car disappear on the horizon, did they return with reluctant looks on their faces.

“Look at Gerald now. He’s doing so well! Like I’ve always said even from when he was still a child, I always knew that he’d become someone whom everyone would look up to, right guys?” said Sandrilla every time she saw a friend.

While he was driving, Gerald received a phone call. It was from Harper Sullivan, the head of their dorm.

“When are you coming back to Mayberry, Gerald?”

“I’m actually on my way right now!” replied Gerald.

“Haha! Well, Benjamin and I are already here in the dorms!”

“D\*mn! Are you guys pumped for the exams or something? Won’t your girlfriend nag you to spend more time with her?” asked Gerald with a chuckle.

“My baby’s gone back to her own university to

prepare for her exams as well! Besides, our university's debate competition is earlier than theirs! What more, my cousin's going to start studying in our university, so I just came along with her! Funnily enough, Benji's cousin is also studying here so he's already here as well!" explained Harper.

"Alright, alright, I'll be at the university by today, so we'll talk then!" said Gerald before hanging up and stepping slightly harder on the car's pedal.

After their third year, some of the fourth year students had gone for their internships while the others chose to remain in the university for their post-graduation. Those from a select few majors however, still had three months left in their semesters.

During the holidays, Gerald barely had any time to revise at all. He had also missed seeing Harper and Benjamin after being separated for so long.

It was past nine when Gerald finally arrived at the campus. Just as he had anticipated, it would seem that it was the first day for many of the new students, which explained the hordes of unfamiliar faces.

"Oh wow, though I've heard rumors that Mayberry University was filled with rich heirs, just look at that! What kind of sports car even is that?"



**gossiped several girls as soon as Gerald's car arrived at the entrance. 2**

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## Chapter 575

“Could that be Uriah’s car?” By then, quite a large crowd had gathered at the entrance.

Even though Gerald had decided not to keep his identity a secret anymore, he still felt embarrassed to have so many eyes on him. It was difficult, to say the least, for Gerald to adapt to all the sudden attention he was receiving. After giving the situation some thought, he decided not to drive into the campus.

Instead, he turned the car around and parked it in a little forest nearby, just as he had back then. He then began walking over to his campus.

“Gerald?”

At that moment, Gerald heard his name being called out and he was shocked when he noticed the petite uniformed girl who had called out to him.

The girl was equally as shocked when she saw Gerald as well.

After a moment, she smirked before saying, “Heh, what a coincidence that we bumped into each other here!”

“You were able to pass the Mayberry University

entrance exams?” asked Gerald in return. He really hadn't expected to meet her here.

“Of course I did! What, you thought someone with grades like me can't get into this university? Haha!” joked the girl as she continued looking at Gerald.

The girl was none other than Xavia's sister, Natasha Yorke. Since he was Xavia's ex-boyfriend, he had been acquainted with Natasha in the past.

His initial impression of her was that she was quite the party animal. During her high school years, she would frequently skip her classes to go to pubs. She even got herself a tattoo on her arm and picked up smoking. She was basically a rebel and her grades back then weren't the prettiest either.

Back when she had first come to visit Xavia in Mayberry, both Xavia and Gerald didn't have much money. To ensure that Natasha would have a good time, both of them had applied for part-time jobs. It came to a point where Xavia even asked Gerald to help Natasha with her homework.

However, the first thing that Natasha said when she first met Gerald was, ‘Hey sis, why did you find yourself such a poor boyfriend? He's not rich, nor does he have a strong network. What an utter joke!’

Gerald had decided not to go against her that time

since he wanted to be the bigger person.

From that day on, Natasha had constantly looked down on Gerald. Since she would usually visit Xavia during the holidays, both Natasha and Gerald were fairly acquainted due to them occasionally bumping into each other during such occasions.

Gerald hadn't expected to see her as a freshman in the university!

"Yeah, it truly is a coincidence," said Gerald with a soft chuckle.

"Hey Nattie, who's this?" asked a feminine voice. A group of girls who seemed to be her friend was now standing close to Natasha.

"Heh, he's my sister's ex! He's an utter joke!"

responded Natasha. 1

It was quite obvious that Xavia hadn't told Natasha much about Gerald. Gerald himself didn't want to prolong the conversation with Natasha any longer than he needed to. As he turned around to leave, he suddenly stopped in his tracks.

Raising his head slightly, he asked, "Your sister... Xavia. How's she been?"

Back then, Xavia wasn't able to bear the humiliation and she ended up dropping out of university. In all honesty, however, she was the one who had asked

for it. After all, she had crossed Gerald's boundaries multiple times.

Despite that, Gerald still felt slightly guilty for ruining her future. What he had done seemed to be too harsh of a punishment, now when he looked back at it.

Still, everyone had a choice. Who was he to force her to choose him? This was the main reason why Gerald still felt guilty for what he did to her.

"Well listen here, you jerk! My sister's doing very, very well! Just you wait and see, you'll definitely be hit by karma for dumping my sister!" said Natasha as she raised a fist toward him. She seemed to be even feistier than she used to be. 1

"Ah, alright then!" said Gerald before smiling softly and leaving.

As she watched him walk away, Natasha's smile grew even cockier than it had initially been.

"Say Nattie, is that the Gerald you were talking about?" whispered one of her friends into her ear.

"He is, though I'm not the one looking for him. My sister is. I have no idea how much he hurt her, but he's definitely done for this time!" said Natasha with a cold smirk on her face. 1

She then took her phone out and began dialing a

number. 3

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## Chapter 576

By then, Gerald had already returned to the dormitory.

When Harper and Benjamin saw him, they immediately rushed over to give him a big hug.

“Welcome back, Gerald!”

He was very pleased to see them as well. In no time at all, the three of them started chatting and catching up with one another.

Gerald had returned to the campus first just to see Harper and Benjamin. He would later still have to head to his company.

As the trio continued chatting with one another, the dormitory door suddenly creaked open.

Gerald was startled when he saw an unfamiliar girl standing at the door.

“Brother!” shouted the girl happily as she looked at Harper.

“Hello, Benjamin! And you must be Gerald, right?”

“That I am. Nice to meet you! Are you Harper’s younger sister?” asked Gerald.

“I am! My name’s Roseanne! You’re so handsome, Gerald!” replied Roseanne with a smile.

“Speaking of which, my brother told me that he’s bringing me out for lunch with my new roommates later. Are you coming along with us too, Gerald?” asked Roseanne this time.

It seemed to Gerald that Harper had mentioned him quite often to his sister.

“I’d love to have lunch together, but I don’t think I’ll have the time to, since I still have to return to the office for a short while. How about this, you guys can go have lunch together first and I’ll make some other arrangements for us later in the evening. I’ll treat you all to a nice meal later!” suggested Gerald as he smiled.

“I see! That’s not good... Alright, Gerald! You should attend to your things first...” said Roseanne, her voice slightly upset. Her eyes reflected her slight disappointment as well.

However, they quickly lit up again as she asked, “Actually, what time will you be done, Gerald? You’ll still have to have lunch, right? If you’re only going to your office for a short while, you can still join us! We’ll just have our lunch a little later than usual!”

“That’s true. If I have nothing else going on later, I’



“I’ll definitely join all of you for lunch! Well, I better get going now so that I can finish up what I need to do faster!”

Gerald felt like he couldn’t turn her down a second time.

“Alright, let’s go down together! My brother’s going to be bringing me around anyway and my friends are already waiting for me downstairs!” suggested Roseanne.

The four of them then headed downstairs together and after exiting, they saw a few girls standing right outside the dormitory.

It was only the first day of orientation but almost everyone’s faces looked a little bored. Despite that, having bored expressions didn’t change the fact that a few of the girls still looked very beautiful.

After greeting them, Gerald accompanied the group and walked with them for a while before leaving the university and returning to the company.

“Hey, hey! That senior’s really handsome!”

The moment Gerald left, a few of the girls immediately started talking about him.

It was natural since the common topic of discussion for female freshmen was usually about guys. They’d talk about which guy in class was most and least

handsome, which senior they walked past looked the most flawless and so forth.

This was usually the case for the boys too though in the reverse gender.

“I know right? He’s kind of gentle and he has quite a good temperament as well!”

Several other girls were now chiming in as well.

“Does Gerald have a girlfriend, Harper?” asked one of the girls.

He simply smiled before replying, “Of course he does. Actually, do you girls know who he really is? I don’t think I’ve even told Roseanne about his true identity yet.”

“Oh? Who is he really?” asked Roseanne curiously.

“Well, have you girls heard about the mysterious Mr. Crawford from Mayberry City?” asked Harper in a suspenseful tone.

“What? Isn’t he that amazingly rich heir from Mayberry City? Aside from him being wealthy, I’ve also read a post on some forum stating that more than half of the big and reputable figures in the Sunnydale Province attended Mr. Crawford’s birthday banquet!”

The girls were surprised to hear Mr. Crawford being

brought up. They obviously knew who he was.

“Well, that’s him! Gerald’s Mr. Crawford in the flesh!”

The girls all immediately began either screaming or squealing.

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## Chapter 577

“Oh my god! That was him? We were actually walking together with Mr. Crawford of Mayberry City?!”

“Harper, you’re not pulling our legs, are you?” asked several of the girls in unison.

“What would I gain from lying to you? Gerald’s always been low-key and we honestly just found out about his real identity quite recently!” replied Harper as he smiled.

“No wonder I kept feeling that Gerald was a little too attractive while we were walking together earlier! So he really is the one and only Mr. Crawford!”

Everyone continued laughing and chatting about Gerald after that. He was now their main topic of conversation.

Harper had planned to take his sister and the other girls around campus to show them where places like the library and swimming pool were. After that, they would be taken to the campus’s cultural exhibition center.

It wasn’t long before a few of the girls couldn’t

walk any further. After all, Mayberry University was quite enormous.

“Stop! I can’t go on anymore! I need to take a short rest and I’m thirsty!”

One after another, the girls cried out.

“You should’ve mentioned it earlier if you were thirsty! I’ll go get you girls some drinks!” replied Harper.

“I’m coming along as well!” said Benjamin. He figured that it would be awkward for him to stay with the group of girls by himself so he decided to follow Harper.

The nearest supermarket was about eight minutes away and once they got there, Harper bought six bottles of black tea.

As the duo left the building, they saw two Maybach cars parked at the entrance of the supermarket.

Eight young men wearing sunglasses were standing attentively in front of the two cars. All of them were staring at Harper and Benjamin.

When both of them tried to leave, all eight men stepped forward to block their path.

“What are you trying to do?” asked Harper.

“Follow us!” said the person who seemed to be the

leader as he pointed at the fence behind the supermarket. His tone was frigidly cold and he had long hair. Though he looked like a woman, his cold temperament would make anyone shudder in fear.

“Why should we when we don’t even know who you are?” asked Benjamin in return.

Immediately after he spoke, he tried to leave with Harper. However, his attempt was thwarted when the leader instantly grabbed Benjamin’s shoulder.

The rest of the young men acted swiftly as well, and they all grabbed both Benjamin and Harper. The duo was then forced toward the fence behind the supermarket.

By then, several people in the supermarket had noticed the scene and they were all equally stunned.

After all, there were two Maybach cars parked at the entrance and it was obvious that the eight young men weren’t ordinary people.

About ten minutes later, the group of people returned, cracking their necks and wrists as they left the fenced area.

The leader wiped what seemed to be blood off his hands with a piece of tissue before tossing it to the side.

They were now walking toward the supermarket.

A girl was waiting for them there and she giggled as she licked her ice-cream.

“Miss Natasha, it’s done!” replied the long-haired leader.

His voice was apparently cold no matter who he was talking to.

“Haha... Thanks for the hard work, Dante. It’s such a pity that my informant came back to report early. That’s why you didn’t get to capture Gerald too. D\*mn it! This is so unsatisfying!”

Though Natasha had just arrived at the university for a day, she already had many followers of her own.

She was also acting rampantly so nobody dared to provoke her. ①

What more, she had arrived at the university in a very-high-profile convoy on the very first day of school. This made everyone afraid of her.

“It wasn’t hard work at all. I’m always honored to do anything for Miss Natasha and Miss Xavia!”

“Alright then, you can return for now. Be ready for my next call as it could be at any time!” said Natasha as she waved her hand to send the men away before licking her ice-cream again.

Meanwhile, the girls back at campus couldn't help but feel like something was off.

"It's been quite long... Why aren't Harper and Benjamin back yet?"

"It's been about twenty minutes already... Why don't we go over instead to try looking for them?"

"Let's go!"

Before they could leave, a girl who seemed to be their classmate from the neighboring dormitory suddenly ran toward Roseanne and the others.

"R-Roseanne! Something bad has happened! When I went to the supermarket earlier, I saw your brother getting stopped by several men before getting beaten up!"



## Chapter 578

“W-what? Where is he now?” replied Roseanne as she trembled in shock.

“Follow me!”

The group of girls then ran after her immediately. When they arrived at the scene, Roseanne saw both Harper and Benjamin bleeding profusely on the ground.

“Brother!”

“Roseanne! I’m fine but those people... They were ruthless!”

Though Harper was used to fighting, he couldn’t help but feel a lingering fear as he replayed the scene from earlier in his mind.

When the group of men started beating them up, the duo had naturally tried to fight back. However, Dante was able to lift them with just one hand.

After receiving a swift kick from Dante, Harper felt his world turn black. The same went for Benjamin. Neither of them ever stood a fighting chance, and both of them ended up being beaten up badly.

“Who’s responsible for this? I’m calling the police

right now!” cried out Roseanne.

Before she could do so, Harper grabbed her hand first. “Call Gerald, I think those people were after him instead!”

“I- I will!” replied Roseanne.

Meanwhile, a conversation was happening in the underground parking lot of a restaurant.

“Jane- wait, no, I believe I should be calling you Miss Zara now! Haha! Congratulations, you’re now the boss of the newly developed bar at Yorknorth Mountain!”

The comment had come from Flynn who had just exited a restaurant together with Jane after sharing a meal.

Jane’s status had been rapidly rising due to her relationship with Gerald. One could say that her status was equal to Flynn’s now. After all, she was now a boss herself!

There had been several great changes in Mayberry City for the past two months. Some of the shops in Yorknorth Mountain had even already been booked in advance.

“Miss Zara? Come on Mr. Flynn, you can just call me Jane!” replied Jane as she smiled.

“Larry, go get the car so that you can send Miss

Zara back!” instructed Flynn as he looked toward the six bodyguards dressed in black following closely behind them.

Larry complied as soon as he heard Flynn’s orders.

However, even after waiting for up to six minutes, Larry hadn’t returned with the car.

“What on earth is happening?” asked Flynn.

As two of the bodyguards walked over to the corner to investigate, one of them immediately let out a sharp scream.

This caught Flynn’s attention and he immediately rushed over.

At that moment, several Maybach cars started moving quickly. Both the entrance and exit of the underground parking were now blocked.

Flynn and Jane found themselves being sandwiched between several men wearing sunglasses. Of the many men who had stepped out of the Maybach cars, one of them had long hair and his face was as pale as a corpse. He seemed to be the leader of the group.

“Well this is f\*cking interesting! Nobody in Mayberry City would dare to treat me like this. I can see that all of you are new faces. Where do you come from?” said Flynn calmly as he lit a cigarette.

He was, after all, Zack's top thug and bodyguard. Situations like these weren't alien to Flynn.

The long-haired man simply pointed at Jane before asking, "You're Jane, correct? Come with us!"

Flynn could see that the young man was being awfully cocky, even choosing to completely disregard Flynn's question. As a result, he immediately gestured at his own two men.

The two guards immediately rushed forward but before they could even get in front of the leader, the men standing behind Dante had already rushed forward and kicked them to the ground.

Startled for a second, Flynn then threw his cigarette to the ground.

"You're pretty skillful. However, if it's Jane you want, then you'll have to go through me first!" said Flynn as he immediately began rushing forward.

His aim was Dante's face.

At that moment, a loud sound was heard.

Flynn had stopped moving forward and after a brief moment, Jane saw Flynn's legs go weak as he slowly started kneeling.

As Flynn's body lowered, Dante's fist was revealed.

Everything was now a blur before Flynn, and he

could already feel blood flowing out of his mouth. He was in utter disbelief.

Despite that, he mustered up all his strength to grab Dante by the collar.

His action caused Dante's shirt button to open, and it revealed a tattooed word on his chest.

'Dragon.'

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## Chapter 579

While this was happening, Gerald had just found out about Harper and Benjamin's situation from Roseanne. After hearing the news, he immediately rushed to the hospital.

"What happened?" asked Gerald anxiously as soon as he saw the duo. Both of them had been severely beaten up.

"We don't know much either! We were beaten up by a group of men that we've never met before. They seem to be coming for you, so be careful!" replied Harper.

Gerald was surprised to hear that. Coming for him?

"Who could possibly want to beat me up?"

"Brother Gerald, one of our classmates informed us that the one who had instructed the men to beat Harper and Benjamin up was a girl from our department! Her name is apparently Natasha and she's very domineering!"

"What?! Natasha?!" Gerald was now even more surprised.

Based on what Harper and Benjamin had told him,

the group of men wasn't ordinary gangsters or thugs. Not only were they skillful in fighting, they had also arrived in Maybach cars! All this hinted at them being very well-trained bodyguards working for a wealthy and prestigious family.

But... Natasha?

How could that possibly be? Gerald knew Xavia's family background like the back of his hand. There was no way they would be able to hire such powerful bodyguards, right?

Though there was confusion, one thing was for certain. Natasha was definitely targeting him.

At that moment, he recalled the triumphant look that Natasha had on her face the last time they had met on campus. So she had already been planning to get her revenge on him even from then.

Then again, it wasn't Natasha who was holding grudges against him. She didn't even have any feud with him.

No, the person who wanted to exact her revenge on him, was none other than Xavia.

After all, Felicity had already told Gerald about this back then. That when she went to Yanken, she had met up with Xavia and she seemed to be a completely different person from who she used to

be.

What more, before Xavia left the university because she couldn't stand all the humiliation, she had specifically warned Gerald that she would one day return to exact her revenge on him!

In all honesty, Gerald had always felt ashamed of himself for causing Xavia to drop out of school due to his poor handling of that particular matter. However, he was her target. Why would she retaliate against Harper and Benjamin as well?

Gerald's phone started ringing at that moment. It was a call from Zack.

“...What?!” Gerald was taken aback once again as soon as he heard the news from Zack.

After ending the call, he looked at both Harper and Benjamin before saying, “I'll come back to visit you guys later. Jane and Mr. Flynn have also met with an accident. I'll go there immediately to see what on earth is going on!”

After saying that, Gerald rushed to another hospital. When Gerald got there, Zack and Michael were already present.

Flynn wasn't looking too good. His nose was broken.

Jane on the other hand, was also injured.



Thankfully, it wasn't anything as severe as Flynn's injuries. Only her cheeks were hurt though both sides were terribly swollen.

Gerald was now certain that the mastermind behind all this was definitely Xavia. 1

If he recalled correctly, Jane had slapped Xavia on her face before in the past. It was clear that that specific grudge had caused Jane's injuries today. What on earth had Xavia gone through?

When they saw him, Zack and Michael immediately went over to greet him. "Mr. Crawford!"

Gerald was still in shock as they said that. After all, he was now staring at an extremely haggard-looking Flynn.

How couldn't he be?

Flynn was an exceptionally good fighter and he had several men under him. The fact that he was actually beaten up to the point of hospitalization was bewildering.

Since it was inconvenient for Flynn to explain himself, Zack took the liberty of doing so, detailing everything that had happened while Gerald listened.

"Mr. Crawford, I'm almost certain that this was done by the Long family from Yanken!" said Zack.

"The Long family?"

Gerald had heard of them before. If he remembered correctly, Giya had told him that the person who had forced her to get betrothed was from that exact family.

However, how was the Long family related to Xavia and her sister?

“Have you sent anyone over to ask them what they want?” asked Gerald.

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## Chapter 580

“We’ve already approached them about the matter. However, they refused to admit to having any part of this!” replied Zack.

Whatever the case was, Gerald knew that the top priority now was for him to personally meet up with Xavia so that they could talk things over clearly.

“Take good care of them and keep an eye on my two buddies as well. I’ll handle the rest immediately!” replied Gerald. Since all this was happening because of him, he needed to deal with it personally.

He wasn’t really afraid of the Long family.

To be honest, if the matter was truly urgent, he could just mobilize and use his family’s biggest weapon. Even if the Long family from Yanken was very powerful, Gerald would be able to take them down indiscriminately.

However, no matter what the case was, Gerald had already summarized that Xavia only became this heartless and distorted since he had treated her the same way in the past.

There was no use crying over spilled milk.

In order to proceed, he would first have to look for her!

As Gerald descended the stairs, he called Felicity to ask her for Xavia's phone number.

"What? I don't have her phone number. Why are you asking for it anyway? I thought-"

Before she could finish her sentence, Gerald had already hung up. If she didn't have her phone number, only one other person would.

Gerald would have to confront Natasha.

He immediately drove back to the university. After asking the auntie in charge of the girls' dormitory, he easily found out which room Natasha was staying in and he rushed up to the third floor.

Though the auntie had initially thought of stopping him, she knew that Gerald was a person with an extraordinary background as soon as she saw the car that he was driving. She didn't even dare to try to stop him from ascending the stairs after that.

A loud sound was heard as Gerald kicked the girls' dormitory room door open.

"What- Ahh!"

A girl who was standing in the corridor screamed as several of Natasha's roommates did the same while

covering their chests. They were all terrified.

“F\*cking pervert! Get out of here!” shouted the scared girls as they gathered together.

Natasha was smoking on the balcony at that moment, and when she saw Gerald approaching her angrily, she had a fair guess as to why he was here.

She simply continued smoking as she stared at Gerald.

“Where is your sister?” he asked.

“And why should I tell you?”

“I want to see her if she’s back!”

“Why would she even want to meet you? My sister’s told me that she doesn’t want to see you at all!”

replied Natasha.

“Then stop pushing me into a dead-end! Were you the one who had sent those men to beat my friends up?” asked Gerald as he grabbed Natasha’s wrists.

The sudden pain made her grimace in pain.

“You- You listen to me first!” shouted Natasha as she tried desperately to get away from him. ①

She then shook her head before saying, “I know that you must be feeling quite puzzled about a lot of things now. You must surely be wondering when

my sister and I gained this much influence and power right?”

“Alright then, since you’re already this furious to the point where you even rushed into the girls’ dormitory, there is one thing that I can tell you. Come with me and we’ll talk downstairs!” replied Natasha.

She then led him to a small park nearby. After arriving there, they simply stopped walking and stood there.

“So Gerald, or should I call you Mr. Crawford? I just learned of your true identity yesterday. It’s amazing to think that you’re actually Mr. Crawford from Mayberry City in the flesh. It’s no wonder why you hurt my sister so deeply. However, don’t you think you were way crueler toward her compared to how I treated your friends? You’re already this upset after we taught your friends a lesson. But do you realize what you did to my sister?” ①

“Do you even know that you nearly killed her and left me sister-less?” ①

“Me? I nearly killed her?” responded Gerald who was both taken aback and in disbelief at her statement.

## Chapter 581

Though Gerald was aware that the incident had a huge impact on Xavia, he never once thought that it would almost end her life.

“That was the worst and darkest day in my sister’s entire life. And it’s all because of you, the infamous peasant! You’re well aware, I’m sure, that everyone looked down on you and nobody would even talk to you back then. Nobody except for my sister. She would hold your hand in school, go shopping together, and even dine out with you! But did you ever consider that doing all that with you would affect how everyone looked at her?”

“Hey, hey! Everyone, look! It’s Xavia Yorke! The girlfriend of our school’s biggest peasant!”

“That was what everyone was calling her back then. Despite that, she persevered and ignored the mockery just because she wanted to be with you. However, every girl has their self-esteem and one day my sister just couldn’t take it anymore. She felt that she was being treated unjustly and yes, it was the day she broke up with you!”

“But look at you now, still daring to claim that my sister is at fault!”

Gerald remained silent. He knew very well that Xavia wasn't at fault since everyone had their own right to choose their own partner. Even so, the way Xavia ended up becoming after that event was a surprise even to Gerald.

“Do you remember how my sister begged you that day?” asked Natasha, her eyes baleful. 1

“Do you remember how you ignored her? As a result, she became so overwhelmingly embarrassed to face you and her classmates that she quit studying completely! That's the reason why she dropped out! There were only a few more months to go before you guys would graduate but you ruined her at that very last stretch. Ten whole years of studying, gone, just like that!” 2

“After she left, she made up her mind to avoid you as much as possible which led her to move to Yanken since nobody knew you there. She was going to try to find a job there.”

“However, upon arriving there, her purse was stolen! Nobody can survive in Yanken without money so what could she do? Thankfully, she found a bar looking to hire which allowed her to finally settle down. Not that she had much of a choice at that moment since she was already penniless.”

“Her luck, however, eventually turned to



misfortune since one of the bosses there had molested her due to her being so pretty. She slapped him out of anger and because of that, she almost lost her life! The one she had slapped was a very powerful person!”

“After getting on his bad side, it became even harder for her to find a proper job there. The boss wasn’t allowing her to leave Yanken either. She couldn’t even get train tickets to go home, and they continued to force my sister to obey every word they said!”

“Do you even remotely understand how scary it is for a girl to live in fear like that every day?” 2

“In the end, she ended up washing plates in a regular restaurant. She wasn’t paid in cash, but instead with meals and a place to stay in. All was not well though, since the lady boss kept bullying and even hitting her!” 1

“At her lowest when she was about to end herself, a miracle presented itself before her. The Long family’s butler coincidentally saw her and since they were short of maids to serve their second young master, Fred, he approached her asking if she would like to work for them. It was a blessing and she instantly agreed. What more, the second young master ended up falling in love with my sister and they’re now engaged!”

“Can you believe it, Gerald? The first half of my sister’s life was as terrible as what an arse like you would probably have wanted her to experience. I’m sure you would never have imagined that she would finally have her time to shine! Let me tell you this, my now brother-in-law is very obedient to my sister! Everyone that used to bully her is now bankrupt and the same goes for the boss that had made my sister’s life a living nightmare. He’s living in complete misery now, though that’s beside the point. What I’m getting at here, is that her biggest enemy is still you!” said Natasha with a cold-blooded face. ①

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Gerald would never have imagined that so much had happened to Xavia after she left, nor would he have thought that she almost died because of him. However, the more surprising thing now, was that Xavia was now engaged to Fred. So that’s how Xavia and her sister got so powerful. The puzzle pieces were starting to fit together.

“I see. So why don’t you tell me where she is now?” asked Gerald.

“Not a problem. Come with me if you would like to see her!” said Natasha as she motioned a finger before turning around and walking off.

Frowning slightly, Gerald simply followed her. ①

Eventually, both of them reached a bar and the duo entered a room. Gerald could clearly see that nobody was in there.

“Where is Xavia?” asked Gerald again.

“You really wish to see her, don’t you? Sure thing, I’ll let you meet her right this instant!” said Natasha as she clapped her hands.

At that moment, the sound of several footsteps could be heard outside. The second the door opened, at least ten security guards dressed in black rushed in before immediately surrounding Gerald.

“Hahaha! Did you really think that I’d bring you to her, Gerald? She despises you! Why would she ever want to see you, idiot! You knew I was going to hurt you eventually, yet you came along anyway!” 2

## Chapter 582

“Humph! That’s enough talk, get him!” ordered Natasha.

As soon as they received the order, the men in black immediately obeyed and held on tightly to both of Gerald’s arms.

“When will the revenge end?” asked Gerald calmly.

“Honestly, I don’t even know when we’ll ever stop but that’s beside the point. Don’t even dream of leaving this room tonight!” sneered Natasha.

“Is that so? Actually, Natasha, did your sister ever tell you that this street used to be called Mayberry Commercial Street? And that the bosses of these shops all know who I am?”

“Of course she has! But did you know that my sister’s bought this bar? The bar’s boss is just my little b\*tch now! Bet you didn’t think that far ahead, did you?” replied Natasha proudly before walking toward him and giving him a tight slap on the face.

“That’s for my sister. You’ve made her suffer for far too long. Today, I’m letting you have a taste of what she experienced after all this time!” Natasha was going to look for him even if he hadn’t come on

his own accord today. ①

“Unfortunately, I’m afraid you won’t be able to torture me today,” Gerald replied.

“What do you mean by that, you little rascal?” asked one of the security guards in return.

Just as his question ended, however, he immediately let out a scream before falling to the floor. His hands were pressed against his neck and his whole body trembled.

“What’s the meaning of this?” asked Natasha, visibly shocked.

She didn’t know what was happening! She could only feel—but not see—the presence of a shadowy figure in the room.

As she continued trying to make sense of the situation, her neck was suddenly locked by two firm arms.

At that moment, she realized that two men had entered the room without her realizing.

The other man was holding on to a long, silver needles. A second later, it was gone from his hand and the remaining man holding on to Gerald dropped to the ground. The other fallen guard was already foaming by then.

“Apologies for being late, Mr. Crawford!” said both

men respectfully as they stood before Gerald. They were none other than Drake and Tyson.

Gerald simply responded with a nod.

He had been well aware that he needed to be cautious around Natasha. Both she and her sister were no longer the same people he used to know.

Gerald would never have allowed himself to follow her without some kind of backup plan. Thus, before he came here, he had contacted Drake and Tyson through his family's specially made communication device so that they would know Gerald's location at all times from that moment.

Since Natasha was being held hostage, the rest of her underlings didn't dare to move an inch.

“Now tell me where Xavia is... Or do you want to end up foaming on the ground like that guard over there?” said Gerald as he looked at her, his eyes deadly serious. 2

## Chapter 583

“I-I don’t know where she is! She only came to the school to visit me once. Other than that, we’ve only communicated through the phone!” cried out Natasha.

“Call her then!” ordered Gerald.

He had to meet up and deal with Xavia as soon as he could. Gerald couldn’t have her troubling him all the time.

‘If I’ve done anything wrong to you, take your revenge on me! Your mistake was hurting those close to me,’ Gerald thought to himself. He just couldn’t stand people like that.

As Natasha reached for her phone, she kept signaling to her subordinates—using her eyes—to take down Gerald and the duo. However, none of the guards even dared to move. They all knew how strong Gerald’s people were so they didn’t do anything. Only people like Scorpion would be able to deal with Tyson and Drake.

Understanding that they weren’t going to act, Natasha could only hand over her phone to Gerald in defeat.

Gerald quickly found Xavia's number and called her. He soon found out, however, that Xavia's phone had been turned off.

"Why is her phone turned off?"

"H-how should I know?"

"If you aren't going to be honest with me, maybe this will make you more willing to comply. Tyson!"

"Yes, Mr. Crawford!" He then pulled out another silver needle and brought it close to her neck.

"W-wait!" At that moment, Natasha began crying before she said, "I-I'm telling the truth! That really is my sister's number!" replied Natasha between wails.

No matter how much Tyson threatened to bring the needle closer to her, she kept repeating the same thing.

Tyson looked at Gerald. Gerald frowned before waving his hand. Tyson then immediately let go of her after seeing the gesture.

Gerald was just trying to scare her into telling the truth, but apparently she hadn't lied in the first place. Even if he really wanted to beat Natasha up, he knew he could never bring himself to actually do it.



After all, he was the reason why Xavia dropped out. It was the only reason why he had taken the slap earlier. He saw it as returning a favor to Xavia.

Knowing that it was no use staying here, Gerald continued to frown as he walked out of the room.

“Mr. Crawford, what should we do with these people?” asked Drake as he pointed at the bodies lying on the ground.

Gerald simply nodded before leaving.

A second later, horrible shrieks could be heard coming from inside the room. Those guards had no right to be begging for their lives. 1

Walking over to the bar, Gerald ordered a beer. He was deep in thought, wondering how he should deal with Xavia.

When Gerald turned to look to his side, he was surprised. Sitting beside him was a girl, sipping on her champagne.

He considered talking to her, but eventually chose not to.

However, his curiosity got the better of him and he ended up looking at her again, just to check if she was really the person he thought she was. Much to her annoyance, the girl noticed his second glance

and turned to look at him as well.

This resulted in both of them staring at each other in shock.

“....Gerald?”

“Maia?”

At that moment, both of them simultaneously called out each other's names.

“Why are you here?” asked Maia.

“I just came for a drink. What a coincidence!” replied Gerald, still feeling surprised.

Maia was Gerald's acquaintance from high school. However, the two of them never shared the same class, so how did they end up getting to know each other? **2**

Well, since Gerald's grades had always been extraordinary during his high school days, he had often gone for competitions with a team representing the school.

Back then, Gerald was always happy when he got a chance to participate in competitions since he would be able to somewhat gain a sense of honor. Aside from that, he would also be able to eat good food and stay in fancy places.

The team consisted of 24 people, with twelve being

male and the other twelve female. Maia was on the team as well, and her main role was the team captain.

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## Chapter 584

Back then, Gerald knew little about Maia aside from the fact that she was the team captain.

The only other things he knew was that she was very close to her grandfather and her parents were in politics. This resulted in her growing up in a rather lavish environment.

He also knew that while she and her family were locals, after the final examination, all of them moved to Mayberry.

Though Gerald was excellent in his studies, he was never good enough for Maia. She would only talk to him as the captain whenever they were representing the school in a competition. Outside that, they weren't close at all.

Gerald on the other hand, had a very good impression of her since she was both hardworking and capable. To top it off, she was also very pretty and she had good tastes too.

In short, she was a goddess to his past self.

Many guys had tried to befriend her but she would only befriend those who had their own 'specialties'. Such 'specialties' included either being rich or

having a powerful family with a great background.

Normal people would never get the chance to even get close to her. This caused the past Gerald to be satisfied to just be able to momentarily talk with her.

Gerald hadn't forgotten that feeling, so he was rather nervous now that she was in front of him again.

"It's been pretty long, hasn't it? I heard you went to police school. Are you still practicing?" asked Gerald.

Maia simply nodded and continued looking at him for a while before saying, "So, why are you at this bar? Shouldn't you be working?"

Though she was the one who had initiated the conversation, she wasn't really paying attention to him. Her eyes were clearly looking elsewhere.

"I haven't found a job yet. Also, what are you looking at?" asked Gerald as he turned to look where her eyes were gazing at.

"Don't look. I see, so you have time to talk to me then!" commanded Maia in a strict tone, just like she used to back in high school.

Gerald had no idea what was going on so he simply nodded.

She then took another sip of her champagne before looking at Gerald with a smile, immediately causing him to blush. At that moment, something caught Maia's eye and she instantly grabbed her walkie-talkie before shouting, "Action!"

Maia then rushed out of the bar, running toward a young man. Gerald saw a few other young people running over as well, and in no time at all, the young man had been surrounded. It looked just like a movie scene.

The young man who had been drinking was stunned as he was pressed against the ground by a few people. A few bystanders witnessing the scene screamed as one of the young people shouted, "Don't move! Police!" The person on the ground was then cuffed up.

Well d\*mn! So she already was a cop and she was even on duty!

So that's why she was talking to Gerald. She had even smiled at him! It was all just for show, and Gerald smiled bitterly as he came to realize that.

At that moment, Gerald remembered that Drake and Tyson were still inside beating up the guards from before. They wouldn't let themselves be caught by Maia, right? If it somehow came to that, then things would become extremely awkward.

“We’ve finally caught the little rascal after so many days! Good work, Maia. Let’s go for a drink later!” said a tall, good-looking guy as he smiled at Maia.

As the suspect was taken away, a few other female cops came over and said, “Wow, Warren, we want drinks too! Why don’t we get invited over for drinks?” asked the girls rather enviously.

“I’ll get drinks for all of you! Let’s head to another bar right now!” replied Warren.

“Oh, by the way, Maia, did you know that guy? I saw you talking to him earlier!” said one of the girls as she pointed toward Gerald who was still sitting in the bar.

“Yeah, he’s one of my high school acquaintances. Back then, I was the competition team captain while he was one of the members!”

“I see! I thought your relationship would be something like that! Haha! Why not ask him to join us? He’s quite good looking! Also, what does he do?” asked the other girls.

“I’m not too sure about that and I was just about to ask him if he’d like to come along!” said Maia as she shook her head with a smile.

She then looked toward Gerald before saying, “Hey Gerald, come over here!”

## Chapter 585

She gestured with a finger for him to come closer.

Gerald really didn't want to go over to them after being ordered like that. After all, he was no longer the same person he used to be. He didn't need to listen to her orders anymore.

He remembered snippets where she would order him to do things like this in the past.

“Gerald, have you moved those boxes of mineral water?”

“Gerald, go help everyone else with their luggage!”

...Maybe that was why Maia was so used to ordering him around.

Eventually, though he was left speechless, he found himself walking toward the group.

“Haha! So it really is true! Gerald really listens to you!”

“As if he would dare not to! Not only was she his team captain in high school, she's now a cop too! He has to listen or he'll be locked up!” joked another girl.

“Anyway, say Gerald, I heard that you're still pretty



poor. How did you afford to drink at this bar? Did you get rich or something?" asked Maia. She had been curious about this from the moment they met.

"Huh? Gerald's poor?" The girls looked surprised when they heard that.

"Yeah. You know, back in high school, Gerald was well known for being broke. He used to only eat one meal a day and sometimes, he couldn't even pay for his school fees! He was exceptionally poor!" replied Maia.

Though she said that, she hadn't meant to be mean about it. It was just the personality she had grown up with. Regardless of how Gerald would feel, she was just the kind of straightforward person to say anything that was on her mind.

It was the same in high school as well. No matter how embarrassing it would cause others to feel, Maia would always speak her mind without filtering any words.

Though being poor may not have been a big deal for Maia, the other girls were now looking at Gerald differently. They were all sympathizing with him since they had initially thought that he was some rich heir.

"I see... Well, you should definitely start putting more thought into both, furthering your studies

and finding a better job!”

“Yep! You know, I had a middle school classmate who suffered from some brain injuries due to a high fever. Though he ended up dropping out of school, he started working and he now owns a shop! With a little more effort, you can definitely be like him, Gerald!”

Before Gerald could even reply, the girls were already talking non-stop, so he just remained silent while nodding, a bitter smile on his face. 1

“Alright, I think that’s quite enough, Maia. Now let’s go get those drinks!” said Warren as he took a cigarette out of his pocket. He was far too arrogant to talk to Gerald.

“Alright! Are you coming along, Gerald?” asked the girls.

“What could he even do if he followed? He won’t understand most of what we’ll be talking about!” said Maia.

She knew that her colleagues were just being nice, but if Gerald ended up taking it seriously, it could spell trouble for her. What more, she didn’t really feel comfortable with the idea of Gerald following them around.

With a smile on her face, she then waved at Gerald

one final time before leaving together with the others.

When Gerald turned to look at the bar again, he saw Drake and Tyson leaning against the bar's wall while smoking. It was clear that they had been watching over him for a while. 1

“Is it done? Where's Natasha?” asked Gerald.

“She's still crying inside!” said Drake with a chuckle.

Gerald simply shook his head with a smile. The three of them then left the area.

“Were those your classmates, Mr. Crawford?” asked Drake as they walked further away.

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## Chapter 586

“One of them definitely seemed to be his high school classmate. Why?” asked Tyson.

“Well, from the looks of it, they either graduated from the police academy or they’ve undergone some military training,” said Drake as he took a few puffs of his cigarette.

“Both of you are really something... It’s amazing how much you can find out about a person just by looking at them. Her name is Maia and she graduated from the police academy. She’s now part of the police force’s criminal department and she’s pretty good at her job!”

“Well, since she’s your classmate, we’ll just say this, Gerald. This friend of yours, along with her colleagues. They may be in for some trouble tonight!” replied Tyson after getting the clarification that he needed.

“...Huh?” Gerald was stunned.

“When they rushed out earlier, I saw two people following them. Both of them had a weapon strapped to their sides, and they exuded equal amounts of murderous auras. I’m pretty sure that

the duo following your classmate has undergone military training before. Worst come to worst, there's a possibility that they're both experienced killers well!" said Tyson.

Gerald wouldn't have believed such a claim if it wasn't Tyson telling him about it.

Earlier, Gerald himself had watched Maia and the others rush out but he hadn't noticed anything out of the ordinary. .

'Still, who am I to compare myself to Tyson regarding such things' Gerald thought to himself.

Either way, Gerald was at least sure that the two people mentioned weren't here to play any games. 1

It was true that Gerald wasn't really all that close to Maia. After all, they were barely friends back in high school. However, no matter what the case was, they were still ex-classmates.

How could he rest easy if he didn't save her after knowing that something bad would happen to her? 1

However, Gerald was certain at that moment that he didn't want to expose his identity yet. After all, keeping it a secret would allow him to do a lot more things in the future! 1

He now had a plan in mind. After discussing the plan with Tyson and Drake, Gerald immediately

rushed toward the bar where Maia had gone to.

By the time he arrived, Maia and the others had already started drinking. They were now seated in front of a poker table.

“Maia, look! Why is Gerald here?” said one of the girls as she spat out a mouthful of wine in surprise while pointing at him. 1

The moment he spotted the group, he instantly started approaching their table.

“Why are you here?” asked Maia with a frown on her face.

Earlier, she had only invited him to join them for a drink as a mere gesture of friendliness. She hadn't expected him to actually join them.

“I only came here to warn you. Don't stay out too late! It's dangerous! I saw someone spying on you earlier!” said Gerald.

For now, this was all he could say to give Maia a heads up of what was to come.

“Huh? Someone's watching us? Who the hell could be doing that? I didn't notice anything at all! Actually, who are you to say that someone is spying on us? If anything, you're the only one doing that!”

If it was the leader who was warning them, Maia

and the others would definitely take the warning seriously.

If it was a warning from a close friend, she'd definitely feel grateful.

However, since the warning was coming from Gerald, Maia felt like it was a direct insult to her career. It was similar to prey telling a predator what to do even though the predator would naturally know better. ①

It was infuriating to say the least.

However, Gerald had been prepared for such a response before he even entered the bar. After hearing her reply, he simply nodded before leaving. "God, I hate him so much! Who does he even think he is? What a show-off!"

"I know right? Was he the most hated guy in high school, Maia?"

The other girls didn't like Gerald either since he was being so nosy.

"I don't really want to talk about him... Why are we even talking about him in the first place? Anyway, Maddy, Tina, follow me to the toilet will you!" said Maia.

## Chapter 587

The trio then headed for the ladies.

As Maia was washing her hands, through the mirror, her eyes caught sight of two women with long, curly hair walking toward her. Their eyes were equally cold and stern.

As she continued looking at them through the mirror, she immediately felt that something was wrong.

“What are you guys doing?” asked Maia and the other two girls in unison.

It took her a moment, but Tina suddenly exclaimed, “Huh? Aren’t both of you men dressed up as women? Maia, look! They have Adam’s apples on their throats!”

“Heh, you’re pretty smart! It’s too late for that though! We’re here to kill you!” sneered the two men as they each pulled out a pistol with silencers attached to them.

They were both aiming at Maia.

“Ahh!”

Since the other two girls were only newly-recruited



police officers, both of them were scared witless in this life-and-death situation.

Maia herself was drenched in cold sweat.

It was at that moment when she remembered Gerald warning her earlier about her being spied on. If only she had been more aware of her surroundings, this turn of events wouldn't have happened!

“Humph! This is for arresting so many of our brothers! Let's kill them now!”

Both men then immediately pulled their triggers and Maia shut her eyes to brace for impact.

Two bangs were then heard.

All of a sudden, the two men started holding on to their necks. Their bodies took turns convulsing and stiffening before eventually, both of them dropped to the ground, motionless.

“...Huh? What the hell just happened?”

The two terrified girls from before were both delighted and surprised simultaneously.

Maia then nervously looked outside to see if anyone was there. As soon as she poked her head outside, she found that there was quite a commotion going on.

Rapid footsteps echoed outside the bathroom and soon, Warren and a few dozen police officers were standing in the toilet.

“Maia, are you guys alright? D\*mn it, that poor kid was right! Something was definitely wrong! I’ve just received a call from the Alpha Squad. They informed us that international hitmen are lurking around us and their sole mission is to kill us!”

As he looked down, he instantly noticed the two guys lying on the ground. He was utterly shocked.

The captain and his squad arrived at that moment and he, too, saw the two hitmen lying motionless on the ground.

After inspecting the two bodies, the captain said, “It’s them! Both of them are Class-A International Most Wanted Criminals!”

“Who was the one who subdued them, Maia?” asked the captain, curious.

“I... I have no idea either. Earlier, the two were about to shoot us, but they suddenly held on to their necks, froze in place, and eventually collapsed to the ground!”

Maia’s mind was blank. The way the two men had been taken down was simply too comical to register.

“Amazing! This is the Silver Needle Vessel

Technique, thought to have been lost in the mists of time!” said the captain who was surprised after further inspecting the two hitmen covering their necks.

“Silver Needle Vessel Technique? Was it an expert who had saved Maia and the others?” asked Warren.

“When I was in the army as a special forces soldier, I once heard an instructor say that the Weston military had produced two superior fighters who eventually became well-known in the west. The duo was best known for their Silver Needle Vessel Technique!”

“In the west, they were known as the Drake and Tyson Duo,” said the captain, his admiration apparent in his eyes.

“After the war, the Drake and Tyson Duo disappeared somewhere in the West, or so I’ve heard. It wasn’t until two years ago when news broke out that they were—and currently still are—serving a mysterious family. By the looks of how the two criminals were apprehended, I can safely say that it feels very much like their techniques! God, I wonder why they’re both here in Mayberry?” said the captain.

After hearing what he had to say, the rest of the team were left in disbelief. **3**

## Chapter 588

When Maia heard Drake and Tyson's name, her face instantly beamed with excitement.

"Maia, have you come across anyone that could hold that much power to help you? We were initially surprised when we received the 911 call, but it seems that someone knew that this event was going to happen ahead of time. They had stepped in to save you!" said the captain.

"Huh? I... don't think I've contacted anyone that would fit that bill... I've only contacted Gerald...?"  
But that wasn't possible, right? Why would Gerald even know such powerful people?

Thinking back, however, Gerald had been aware of the threat. After all, he had even warned her about them in advance!

'Gerald must know something!' Maia thought to herself.

Moving back to Gerald...

While Tyson had subdued the two criminals, Gerald himself wasn't present at the rescue scene.

After all, this was just a minor incident. He wouldn't

t just meet Maia again by chance, would he? For now, he would focus more on worrying about Xavia Yorke.

By noon, Gerald reached the university and just as he arrived at the entrance, he saw someone familiar.

It was Giya Quarrington. Unlike her usual self however, she looked both pale and dispirited. However, when she walked past Gerald and noticed that he was there, she immediately tried to compose herself.

“Gerald? When did you come back?” asked Giya with a surprised look on her face.

“I just got back today!” replied Gerald as he laughed.

“I’m very sorry, Gerald. Though I had promised to attend your birthday celebration, something came up so I couldn’t make it there!”

Giya still treated Gerald the same as always. After all, she knew that he was a good person. She also seemed like she had a lot of things to tell him at that moment.

Gerald could sense that, so he readied himself to avoid her.

Though he wanted to just walk away, after giving it some thought, he felt that it would be a bit too cold-

hearted for him to do so which led him to ask, “Is there something wrong?”

“I’m fine. Also, Gerald, could you take a walk with me? If that’s alright with you,” replied Giya as she looked at him.

“Sure,” said Gerald.

While this was happening, a rich young man dressed in expensive clothing was seated at the back of a Maybach car parked on the other side of the road from where the two were standing.

As Gerald and Giya started walking side-by-side, he glared at the two, anger and resentment flashing in his eyes.

“Mr. Long, that’s the person Giya previously escaped with! She had even hidden in his house! His name is Gerald, and he’s the actual Mr. Crawford of Mayberry!” said the driver.

“That’s the Gerald my sister-in-law had to deal with, right? What a b\*stard. Not only did he mess with my sister-in-law, he even laid hands on my girl! I’m much more ruthless than she is, so let’s see how I’m going to deal with this kid,” replied Mr. Long.

Mr. Long wasn’t a fool, and he had already thoroughly investigated everything there was to

know about Giya's case.

“Apologies Mr. Long, but though the Long family is powerful, Gerald and his sister are the tyrants of Mayberry! We can't go overboard this time, can we?” said the driver, slightly hesitantly. ①

“F\*ck you, I don't care if he's the ruler of Mayberry! In the eyes of the Long family, they're all scum!” said Mr. Long as he smacked his driver.

“Worry not, Mr. Long. I'll take care of him for you right this instant!”

The icy cold voice came from a man with long hair and a deathly pale face who was seated next to the driver.

“There's no need for that, Scorpion. You don't have to do anything for now. Mr. Lennon's right. His sister, Jessica Crawford, is way too powerful in Mayberry. It would be foolish to get him out in the open. Fear not, however, for I have a plan!” sneered Mr. Long. ①

## Chapter 589

While Gerald was walking next to Giya, his phone started to ring. It was a call from Zack.

“Gerald, there’s a celebrity banquet tonight and I hope that you’ll attend. Since a master treasure appraiser from the South will be attending, you can have him appraise the jade pendant when you meet him. A few other celebrities from Mayberry will be attending as well.”

Zack was still helping Gerald track down Xavia.

He had brought up the celebrity banquet a few days ago as well. The celebrity banquet was a yearly event and celebrities from all walks of life usually turned up. Since it wouldn’t look good on Gerald’s part if he refused to attend, Gerald simply agreed to go.

When evening came, Gerald arrived—together with Yoel and Aiden—at the banquet which was being held at Mountainview Manor. As was expected, the venue was packed.

The large manor was usually used for gathering events, second only to Wayfair Mountain Entertainment.



The owner of Mountainview Manor, was Wallace Quinnens, a middle-aged man in his forties whom Gerald had met on several occasions. Due to Wallace's slick personality, Gerald didn't really have a good impression of him.

"Well look who's here? It's Mr. Crawford!" said Wallace as he hurriedly trotted over when he saw Gerald, Yoel, and the rest.

Many other wealthy businessmen began approaching Gerald's group as well, and the parties all greeted each other.

"Hello, Mr. Quinnens!" greeted Gerald as he forced a smile. A greeting was good enough.

Yoel then headed to a familiar round table in the manor and took a seat. The moment he sat down, Wallace immediately jogged over and said, "Hey, Yoel, Aiden! You can't sit here today!"

"Huh? What do you mean by that, Wallace?" asked Yoel, dumbfounded.

He had attended similar celebrity banquets like this in the past. This seat in particular was always taken by his godsister, Jessica Crawford. As Jessica's godbrother, he naturally sat together with her.

Now that Gerald—his godbrother—was the richest man in Mayberry, Jessica's seat was Gerald's to

take. This of course, meant that both Aiden and Yoel should continue to sit where they usually did.

“There’s nothing inherently wrong, but though you’ve sat here in the past, this year, some things have changed so you can’t sit here anymore,” sneered Wallace.

The attendees for this year’s banquet were celebrities from all over the city. Seeing what had just happened, the big bosses and rich businessmen surrounding Gerald began walking over.

“Humph, if we can’t sit here, then we won’t! It’s not like we want to see your face anyway. Let’s find another seat, Aiden. You stay here, Gerald!”

Naturally, Yoel had to think about his godbrother first. Just as Gerald was about to sit down, Wallace shouted again. “Hold it!”

“What now?” By then, even Zack and Michael had come over to see what the commotion was about.

“I’m afraid that Mr. Crawford can’t sit here this year either,” said Wallace with a laugh.

“Are you out of your mind, Wallace? What did you say? Say it again if you dare!” shouted Yoel as he grabbed Wallace by his collar.

This son of a b\*tch was seriously getting on his nerves.

“No need to be so aggressive, Yoel! I’ll just repeat the statement one final time, this seat isn’t for Mr. Crawford this year!” said Wallace with a smirk.

“Explain yourself,” ordered the rich men standing by Gerald’s side.

“We just have an even more important guest coming today, and this seat is reserved for him!” explained Wallace as he shook Yoel’s hands off him.

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## Chapter 590

By then, several celebrities had already noticed that the main seat was still empty, and hearing Wallace's words shocked them even further.

“What's going on?”

“Well, Mr. Crawford was about to take the main seat, but Wallace didn't allow him to!”

“What? How dare he do that? That seat had always belonged to Ms. Crawford in the previous years since she was the CEO. As her younger brother, Mr. Crawford should rightfully inherit her estates. Why the hell is Wallace acting so boldly?”

“Humph, who knows? Mr. Crawford must be feeling embarrassed by now!”

As the crowd continued gossiping, something else was happening outside.

Eight Rolls-Royce Phantoms had arrived at the manor's entrance, and immediately after they stopped, more than a dozen bodyguards wearing black suits got out of the cars before quickly forming two rows.

The grand entrance soon attracted the attention of

the crowd, and even Gerald was compelled to look out the manor. The main car's driver got out and respectfully opened the Rolls-Royce Phantom's door.

Out stepped a rich, young man dressed in a suit with both hands in his pockets. When they saw him, his bodyguards instantly bowed.

“Who is he? This is such a grand entrance!”

Most of the crowd was astonished by the scene.

Wallace on the other hand, quickly rushed toward the young man to greet him. “Mr. Long, thank you for attending! Your presence here makes Mountainview Manor shine!” said Wallace excitedly before bowing as well.

“What? Mr. Long? He's the rich heir of the Long family! Their family has centuries' worth of history!”

“F\*ck! No wonder Wallace was being so bold today!”

“So it was Mr. Long who was giving him this much confidence!”

The crowd continued whispering among themselves until eventually, all of them looked at Mr. Long before simultaneously saying, “It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Long!”

“Greetings, uncles, and elders! Hahaha! You’re all being way too formal toward me! This is my first time officially being here in Mayberry. With that said, it’s also my first time attending a celebrity banquet here! I’d never have imagined that all you people would be so nice to me!” said Mr. Long with a smile.

“It’s an honor to have you here, Mr. Long. Please, have a seat!”

“Indeed, Mr. Long. You’re more than worthy to take the main seat!”

By then, most of the wealthy businessmen and higher-ups—including the ones from Mayberry—had started showing their true colors as they shared their sentiments.

Though there were some families in Mayberry who had big names and long histories comparable to the Lourdes and Walt family, none of them could hold a candle to the Long family.

After all, it was said that the Long family had a very strong position in America since they were one of the first few people to settle there. Their power and influence had only grown stronger since then.

“Ah, everyone’s being so nice to me, but today, I’m not the main star of the banquet. I’m just here to

accompany my sister-in-law and have a good time! Hahaha!” replied Mr. Long as he laughed.

“Sister-in-law? Could you possibly mean Fred Long’s fiancée? I heard some time ago that Fred Long found himself a fiancée and they’re already set to marry!” said Wallace as he rushed forward with a smile on his face.

“You’re absolutely right, Mr. Quinnens!” responded Mr. Long with a wry smile as Mr. Quinnens moved out of the way.

From the car behind him, its driver got out and opened the door to the passenger’s seat.

A noblewoman dressed in an expensive-looking dress then stepped out. In her arms, was a cute little dog and her two maids immediately stood next to her.

“Sister-in-law, join us, please!” said Mr. Long, his face beaming.

The woman then walked toward the main street as the crowd stared in awe. Aiden and the other simply stared at her, their eyes widened, before looking back at Gerald.

Gerald himself couldn’t believe who he was seeing before him.

The girl with the dog in hand was none other than

**Xavia Yorke, the person he had been searching for all this time.**

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## Chapter 591

Gerald had been searching for her for two whole days now. During that time, he had constantly thought about what Xavia had become.

While Gerald was angry that she did all those excessive and terrible things to him, he just couldn't bring himself to hate her.

To counter that, he kept reminding himself that the current Xavia was no longer the same girl that he used to know during his freshman and sophomore years. She was a completely changed person.

He also told himself that with all the power and wealth he had now, it would be easy for him to retaliate against the two sisters. He knew that if he had really wanted to teach Natasha a lesson earlier, he could've just ordered for her to be crippled on the spot.

Gerald knew very well that he didn't need to hold back or even be polite to Xavia any longer.

Despite all that, whenever he tried to be cruel toward her, he just couldn't. His mind would wander back to the times when they were both still together. After all, Xavia hadn't hated him at all

back then, even though he was so poor.

When Xavia saw Gerald, she simply sneered before looking away. Led by Wallace, she slowly walked toward the main seat.

“Why do all of you seem to be in a daze? Your seats are over here! Oh, and of course, if you wish to sit there, Mr. Crawford, it’s not like I can stop you! Haha!” sneered Wallace as he looked at Gerald while pointing toward the seat right next to the main seat.

While it would be a great honor for anyone else to be able to sit there, Wallace’s proposal carried a different meaning for Gerald.

It clearly meant that Wallace no longer saw Gerald as an important person. This made everyone who came here with Gerald very eager to get into action.

The other wealthy businessmen and reputable figures simply sneered as they watched the scene unfold.

Gerald, for one, wasn’t stupid. It was now clear why everything had happened the way they did today.

Many of the people there had clearly chosen to go against him, opting instead to seek refuge under the Longs.

As it turned out, the people who had greeted him warmly and with respect earlier were simply setting

up the scene for this exact moment!

By then, both Xavia and Yunus had already taken their seats. Xavia was smiling the entire time as she stared at Gerald. Pairing the expression on her face with the look in her eyes, it seemed almost as though she was asking whether it felt good being humiliated.

“You better watch it, Wallace Quinnens!” said Yoel angrily. He was so mad that his face had turned pale. He was prepared to fight at any moment.

However, Gerald stopped him. He didn't want to deal with today's affairs too rashly. Instead, he started making his way toward the side table.

“Pfft! You're still thinking of hitting me? Some people can be so thick-skinned!” sneered Wallace.

However, this person really was very thick-skinned.

Looking toward Gerald, he said, “Come this way, Mr. Crawford! I'll accompany you over!”

Once they got to the side table, Gerald was just about to take his seat before Wallace shouted, “Oh, apologies Mr. Crawford! That seat is reserved for another wealthy businessman! You can't sit there!”

Hearing that, some of the wealthier businessmen burst into laughter.

Gerald simply took in a deep breath before moving

to sit on the chair next to that seat. Before he could, however, Wallace simply said, “Sorry, Mr. Crawford! That seat’s for yet another businessman!”

Gerald then glared at Wallace with a fierce expression before proceeding to move to yet another seat.

“Oh sorry Mr. Crawford, but-”

Wallace’s sentence was cut short.

Gerald had just given him a tight slap to the face. He used so much of his strength in that slap that Gerald could feel a burning sensation on his palm.

Wallace cupped his hurt cheek as he sat on the ground. This was proof of how hard Gerald had slapped him. Naturally, the slapping sound drew everyone’s attention.

“You... You dare hit me?”

## Chapter 592

Wallace had an incredulous look on his face as he held on to his now swollen cheek. After all, he was someone who had Mr. Long to back him up!

“Oh, sorry Mr. Quinnens! My hands felt a little itchy today so I couldn’t help myself from hitting you!” sneered Gerald.

As soon as Wallace heard this, he immediately stood up again. The nerve of this person! Wallace got into position, seemingly ready to hit Gerald back.

However, Gerald simply continued glaring at Wallace with one hand in his pocket. He didn’t move an inch.

It was at that moment when Wallace suddenly came to his senses.

He realized that regardless of who was backing him up, he was still dealing with Gerald right now, the richest man in Mayberry City! And his sister was even more amazing than he was! Putting their family background aside, the Crawford family wasn’t too far off in terms of wealth and power compared to the Longs.

If Wallace actually hit Gerald now, the Long family would probably be unable, or rather, unwilling to protect him! After all, why would the Longs start a war with the Crawfords just for his sake?

Wallace shuddered as he thought about it.

Today, he had already assumed some unwarranted authority to embarrass Gerald. Since he had already done that, he knew he shouldn't push his luck.

Wallace was now well aware that he shouldn't provoke Gerald any further.

"I'll sit here then, Mr. Quinnes, or is there going to be another problem?" sneered Gerald as he slowly shook his slightly swollen hand. Before Wallace could reply, Gerald had already sat on one of the previous seats he had earlier been denied.

"That won't be a problem at all, Mr. Crawford. Feel free to sit there!" said Wallace, his tone much more decent now.

As for Xavia, she could only stare at Gerald in surprise. She had initially thought that Gerald would still be as conscientious and low-profile as before, but he had changed! He was now completely different from how he used to be in the past.

The slap he gave Wallace really surprised her earlier.

Regardless of her slight shock, it still wouldn't

affect anything!

After that scene, the banquet simply resumed. It was as if nothing had ever happened. Many of the guests—who had most probably been bribed by Yunus—gathered around the man to give toasts to him. All of them neglected Gerald on purpose.

“Say, Yoel, Aiden, I’m going to the gents. Accompany me, will you?” said Gerald with a wry smile on his face.

The three of them then headed to the gents together.

“For f\*ck’s sake! I’m so angry right now! Everyone’s trying their hardest to flatter that Long family guy! Mr. Crawford, I think Yunus and your ex, Xavia, are deliberately trying their hardest to go against you!” said Aiden angrily as he punched the wall.

“He’s right! I can still remember when my godsister was here in the past. As long as she was present, nobody would even dare to breathe loudly. In one of the past celebrity banquets, Wallace accidentally knocked over a cup in front of her. You should have seen him! He was so frightened that he immediately knelt and kowtowed in front of her! You’re simply too nice toward everyone, Mr. Crawford!” said Yoel.

Both Yoel and Aiden were aware of how kind-hearted Gerald was. It was the reason why they were always worried and concerned about him wherever he went. After all, Gerald treated both of them very well.

Although he grew up with his sister, the two siblings had completely different personalities.

“Just forget about it. We’ll talk about this later, I just want to-”

Gerald was wiping his hands with a tissue paper as he spoke. However, his sentence ended prematurely when he saw the girl standing near the gent’s entrance. Her arms were crossed and she was leaning against the wall.

All three of them had no idea how long she had been watching and listening in to them.

The girl simply sneered at them as she stared at Gerald.

Gerald had initially wanted to say that he wanted to settle the matter regarding Xavia first.

To his surprise, Xavia was already waiting for him outside the bathroom.

Seeing Xavia, Yoel and Aiden looked at Gerald before saying, “We’ll wait for you outside, Mr.



Crawford.”

After saying that, both of them left.

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## Chapter 593

“Well this is perfect! I’ve been looking for an opportunity to have a good chat with you!” said Gerald as he felt himself blush slightly. Gerald was feeling an onslaught of complicated emotions at that moment.

“Oh? What exactly do you want to talk about?” asked Xavia with a smug and arrogant look on her face.

She then started walking toward him before saying, “You know, I’m curious about something. I’m sure you’re well aware that I’m no longer the same Xavia you used to know. Before this, I could only ever dream about living a life as luxurious as you wealthy people do. To think that that dream would one day become true! I’m now part of a wealthy and influential family, Gerald. You may have humiliated me in the past, but I’m on equal footing with you now. Tell me, Gerald! How do you feel about that?”

“I don’t mind it at all. I simply want to make things clear to you. If you think that I’ve let you down and you hold grudges against me, attack me, and only me! Don’t take your revenge out on the people around me!” replied Gerald.

“Hahaha! ‘If I think’? So you aren’t even certain if you’ve completely let me down? Don’t you think that the way you treated me before this was a bit too much?” said Xavia, her eyes growing red.

Xavia herself had reflected on her own behavior in the past. It was true that she too had mistreated Gerald a bit too much when she got together with Yuri back then. However, she had only done so to relieve herself from all the grief, poverty, and humiliation she had to suffer for being in a relationship with Gerald for those two years.

At the time, the more Xavia thought about it, the more she felt that life was extremely unfair to her. It made her feel very useless.

She knew she was quite beautiful, so why couldn’t she have the things that other girls had? The other girls had boys who took them out and bought them bags, branded cosmetics, and even iPhones! They would get to eat good food and experience a wide array of entertainment!

But not her. On the contrary, she was the one who had been spending money on him for two entire years. Where did she go wrong?

She simply didn’t want to continue living like this anymore. In the past, she would willingly endure all this out of love.

Eventually, however, was it really that wrong of her to want to be a bit more realistic?

Was it wrong of her to want to relieve herself from all her suffering? To satisfy her own vanity?

What she never anticipated, however, was that Gerald would suddenly become rich the moment they broke up.

And not just rich. He was filthy rich.

How couldn't she have regretted her actions back then? Justice had finally been served and she was finally able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. However both of them had already parted ways.

It was impossible for her not to regret it.

After that, she waited. She waited for Gerald to come look for her so that both of them could reconcile. In fact, as long as Gerald mentioned it, she would definitely return to his side and commit herself to him wholeheartedly.

But he never did that. Instead, he started flirting with other girls.

Xavia was filled with hatred when she came to know about that! This resulted in her taking even more drastic and extreme actions.

In the end, his true identity was exposed. Gerald

was actually Mayberry City's reputable Mr. Crawford!

On that day, she was faced with feelings of great joy, but also agony.

She felt as though she had suffered a great disadvantage. After being together with him for almost three years, she could have finally gotten a chance to experience riches, honor, and glory! Alas, he had already fallen in love with another girl!

That day, she completely disregarded her own self-esteem and dignity as she pleaded Gerald to give her another chance. All she got, however, was a view of his back leaving her.

After that, she could only leave Wayfair Mountain Entertainment like a dog that had been cast aside. She didn't even have the face to continue staying in the university anymore.

Who could understand and guide her through all the confusion that she had to face for the future? And all the hardships that she had to endure in society after leaving university?

She hated it. She hated all of it!

All this happened because of Gerald. Her sole motivation was to make him suffer as much as she had.

She wanted him to regret everything he had done to her. To be filled with remorse when he saw how well she was doing now.

However, even now, he hadn't even bothered to apologize to her.

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## Chapter 594

To think that he had even waited for her to come to him instead of the other way around!

At that moment, Xavia raised her hand and gave Gerald a tight slap.

Gerald didn't retaliate. Instead, he simply said, "If this can help you vent and release all that pent up anger, then go ahead and continue hitting me! Once you're done, I hope that both of us can call it quits and have nothing to owe each other anymore!"

"Fine by me!" shouted Xavia as she raised her hand again.

However, before she could slap him, she paused. She then slowly put her hand down again.

"You think I'll let you call it quits that easily? Don't even dream about it. Do you really think that a few slaps to the face can resolve everything when you've hurt me so badly in the past?" said Xavia as she took a deep breath before returning to her cold and indifferent expression.

"What do you want then?" asked Gerald.

"Oh, nothing much. Speaking of which, Gerald, I

heard that you've gotten quite a number of female friends since we broke up. One of them is called Queta, right?" sneered Xavia as she crossed her arms.

Gerald immediately raised his head and said, "What do you plan on doing to her? If you lay a finger on her, Xavia, I won't let you off that easily!"

In response, she took in a deep breath before frowning and saying, "Hahaha! The truth is, Gerald, I don't care about anything anymore!"

After saying that, she took her cell phone out and began playing a video for Gerald to see.

He could see Queta sending some children home from kindergarten. Someone was constantly keeping tabs on her and Queta didn't even seem to realize that she was being observed.

"You no longer have to try to scare me! I'm not afraid of you. I can afford to do anything I want to, and I don't even mind losing everything now. Gerald, do you believe that I can end Queta's life in just ten seconds? Do you believe that I have the ability to do so?" asked Xavia maliciously.

"And don't even think about going there to save her or informing her about this! Doing that will only push me to want to fight you to the death even sooner!"



“Then what exactly do you want? As long as you promise not to harm any of those around me, I’ll definitely agree to most of your conditions!”

As soon as he said that, Xavia immediately gave him another slap.

“Well that’s just perfect! You’re being extremely sentimental and affectionate now! So why in god’s name were you so heartless and ruthless to me in the past?!” said Xavia, trying very hard to hold back her emotions.

“There’s a way for you to get me to stop harming those people! It’s simple, really. You just need to do a few things for me. Once you’re done with them, both of us can call it quits! Worry not, I won’t be asking you to murder someone or commit arson!”

“Deal!”

“Very well! Then the first thing I want you to do, is to give me a toast in front of everyone else later!”

Gerald simply nodded before saying, “That won’t be an issue.”

“We’ll do that first then!” said Xavia rather smugly as she took a step out of the washroom.

However, she immediately turned around again.

“I know that you’re probably thinking that I’m just

some filthy woman who would casually sleep around with others for money. However, you should know that from the very beginning, I was never the woman you imagined me to be. Even though I'm already engaged to someone, I can proudly say that I'm still a virgin!"

After saying that, she left the bathroom.

Gerald was startled by her statement. He really hadn't expected her to say that at all.

Complicated emotions brewed in his heart. He didn't really know whether he should be feeling grateful or touched.

To think that Xavia was actually still a virgin. The thought made Gerald feel slightly guilty now about how he had treated her in the past.

Despite that, there was nothing he could do about that now. Xavia was no longer the same person she used to be. While a person should refrain from hurting others, they should also remain vigilant so that they themselves won't get harmed!

As Gerald left the washroom, he pondered about Xavia's request. What exactly was her goal of asking him to propose a toast to her in front of everyone else?

## Chapter 595

Gerald soon arrived at his seat. Even as he sat down, a few of the wealthy businessmen were still not done proposing their toasts to Yunus.

At that moment, Xavia looked at Gerald, hinting with her eyes for him to take action.

“Just look at what they’re doing! Just wait till my godsister comes back!” said Yoel, dissatisfied.

Gerald simply took in a deep breath before picking his wine glass up and walking toward Xavia.

“...Bother? What are you doing?” asked Yoel.

“Don’t interfere. Mr. Crawford definitely knows what he’s doing!” said Zack though he too was quite surprised when he saw Gerald heading toward her. However, he knew Gerald well enough to know that he wouldn’t be doing this without a purpose.

“Ah, Mr. Crawford, you came here to propose a toast as well?”

As soon as the businessmen there saw him, they immediately made way for him.

They were all the same as Wallace. Regardless of whether they had the Long family backing them up

or not, they couldn't afford to offend Gerald.

After they hurriedly stood to the side, Gerald stood in front of Xavia.

Yunus was also there, and he sneered at Gerald while staring at him, his hand in his pocket.

"I'd like to propose a toast to you, Xavia!" said Gerald as he raised his wine glass.

While Xavia should have stood up to accept the toast, she simply remained seated while slowly shaking the red wine in her own glass.

Without the slightest warning, she then splashed the red wine all over his face!

"I accept! This glass of red wine is to repay you for how much you hurt me in the past!" sneered Xavia.

"Also, don't you dare call me Xavia anymore! You don't have the right to use my name! Pay more attention to that in the future!"

"...What?"

Seeing her splash the wine all over Gerald's face left many, if not all, of the businessmen stunned.

F\*ck! This wasn't as simple a slap to the face anymore!

"Presumptuous!" shouted Zack as he and a few

others immediately stood up. A conflict was imminent.

However, Gerald simply wiped the wine off his face as he signaled for the others to leave it be.

“Very well then, Miss Yorke. It should be fine for it to be done now, right?” asked Gerald as he raised his wine glass again.

“Indeed!” replied Xavia as she laughed slightly. However, after raising her second glass of red wine, she poured its contents all over Gerald’s head!

“This one’s for my personal revenge!”

Everyone was simply dumbfounded by the scene. She finally drank a glass of red wine after Gerald’s third toast to her.

So it turned out that Xavia had personally been waiting to deal with him there and then. Gerald couldn’t help but feel a slight bitterness in his heart as he returned to his seat.

In all honesty, he wasn’t afraid of her at all. However, he was already at wit’s end. He just didn’t know how else to deal with her anymore.

Knowing that she was still a virgin made it even harder for him. The whole situation just made Gerald feel very confused and conflicted.

After the banquet ended, Zack went to look for Zayden, the master appraiser who had come all the way from Northbay.

Gerald on the other hand, went to look for Xavia.

She knew that he would definitely come looking for her, so she was already waiting for him outside the manor.

“I’ve done as you asked, Miss Yorke. I hope that you’ll order your men to leave Queta alone now! You’ve already achieved your goal of humiliating me today anyway!” said Gerald.

“Haha! Rest assured, I only hold a grudge against you. I don’t have a reason to hurt her. However, do remember that you still have to do two things for me!” replied Xavia.

Gerald sighed before saying, “Go on.”

“These two things are actually relatively simple for you to accomplish. Firstly, you’ll have to let me live in your Mountain Top Villa for a few days! And don’t worry, I won’t blackmail you into giving the entire building to me! You just have to let me live in it for a few days. That shouldn’t be too difficult, right?” asked Xavia.

“Not a problem!” replied Gerald as he nodded.

## Chapter 596

“As for my final request, it too, is quite simple. All you need to do is to teach a certain person a good lesson by forcing him to close down his shop permanently. Besides, he’s quite a terrible person so you’re not exactly being placed in a difficult situation either!” said Xavia.

“And who exactly is this person?” asked Gerald.

“He goes by the name of Hugh Lynch. He’s from the same village as my parents and he used to be my father’s best friend in the past. However, to start a business in Mayberry, he borrowed tens of thousands of dollars from my family. After eventually becoming successful, Hugh never once considered paying off the debts he owed us. And that’s not the worst thing about him either! Do you remember when I told you about what happened after I took a leave to go home during sophomore year? It turns out that it was Hugh who had hired the people to beat my father up!” replied Xavia as she slowly quieted down after explaining the situation.

She was talking about their past after all. That would naturally make her feel uneasy.

“I remember, but why are you asking me for help? You clearly have the means of teaching him a lesson yourself now!” said Gerald, genuinely confused.

Xavia simply sneered as she replied, “If I were the one who did it, he may not remember about the incident in the years to come. Besides, it would be inconvenient for me to use the Long’s people but that’s beside the point. The main reason I’m asking for your help, is because you’re famous in Mayberry. Having you do it instead of me will definitely leave a lasting impact on him!”

“Well, that person is definitely wicked enough for me to deal with. I remember when he even ordered someone to ambush you at the university. Is he the same person who founded the bar?” asked Gerald as he recalled their past together.

“That’s him alright! You know, he’s even abducted a few young girls from my village and all of them are ruined now. Even my younger sister almost suffered the same fate... Don’t you think he deserves the worst of punishments?”

“Fine. I’ll help you deal with him, on one condition. Don’t ever target my friends again!”

“Agreed! I’ll order my subordinates to leave, right this instant!”

After saying that, Xavia immediately turned around



and re-entered her car. The driver then drove her away.

Upon seeing the car leave, both Aiden and Yoel rushed toward Gerald.

“Mr. Crawford, what did you say to that woman? Don’t you think you showed her a little too much respect today?”

“That’s right!” said Aiden, angry for Gerald’s sake when he heard Yoel’s comment.

“I get where you’re coming from, but just know that I’m not exactly afraid of her. I just don’t want anything more to do with her. With any luck, once all her anger has been vented, she won’t create further messes for me to deal with and we won’t have anything to do with each other after that!”  
replied Gerald calmly. ①

“Also, I need to go back and get a change of clothes. After that, both of you will have to follow me somewhere. In the meantime, get our men ready! We’re going to go do something together!” ordered Gerald to both Aiden and Yoel.

“Will do, Mr. Crawford! We’ll start preparing immediately!”

Though they didn’t exactly know what the incident was about, they swiftly began to make a few phone

calls without questioning Gerald any further.

Gerald himself returned to Mountain Top Villa to change his clothes.

Once all three of them were done, Aiden drove them straight to a small bar in Mayberry under Gerald's orders.

"Mr. Crawford, what exactly are we going to do here?" asked Yoel after the three of them got out of the car.

Puffing his freshly lit cigarette, Aiden smiled as he said, "I heard that this place is quite unsanctioned."

"You heard right. We're here because some illegal things are happening in this tiny bar," replied Gerald with a bitter laugh.

"For real? Don't tell me you came here to have some s\*x?" asked Yoel, shocked.

"Nonsense! Today, we're here to..."

Gerald then started whispering to both Yoel and Aiden. By the end of his explanation, both of their eyes sparkled with excitement. With the plan made clear, all three of them then strode into the bar.

Upon entering the large hall, they chose a random booth and sat in it. Immediately after, Gerald began scanning the place.

It wasn't long before a bald, middle-aged man with tiger tattoos all over his body caught Gerald's attention. The man was talking to a few people from the community near the bar, with his hands in his pockets.

Gerald definitely knew who the man was. He was the one who owed Xavia's father money.

When that man had tried giving trouble to Xavia in the past, Gerald had also been beaten up by his subordinates. If it wasn't for Xavia bringing up the incident again, Gerald wouldn't have remembered that it happened in the first place.

However, rather than to have personal revenge, Gerald was only here to settle the score for Xavia since he had promised to help her. Otherwise, he wouldn't even have bothered coming here in the first place.

"Can I take your order, sirs?" asked a young woman who was dressed up gorgeously as she stood in front of them.

Gerald, who was now lying on the sofa with both of his legs on the table, simply closed his eyes as he said, "I'm not interested in ordering anything."

"Is... Is that so? But sirs, we offer all sorts of—"

"F\*ck off! Don't you understand English? He said

**he isn't interested in ordering anything!" shouted Aiden as he stood up and kicked the table to the side.**

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## Chapter 597

Aiden's action caused quite a racket, and several of the present people turned to look at Gerald's booth. This included the middle-aged man from earlier, though he didn't say anything.

Bosses who founded both regular or karaoke bars here, usually had some sort of background or great influence backing them up. It wasn't uncommon for people to try creating messes in these places, which explained why the middle-aged man wasn't too bothered about the trio.

While all this was happening, a girl sitting in a booth on the other side of the bar asked, "Eh, isn't that the guy from before?"

Having heard the commotion that had just taken place, the girl had peeked to see what was going on, and she was shocked when she saw Gerald.

"Huh? You know one of those people, Tina?" asked another girl sharing the booth.

There were nine other young men and women sitting in the same booth, and the group had come to the bar to have some fun.

"I do!" replied Tina as she nodded.

One of the males in the group coughed before rather jealously saying, “Since Tina is now working in the police force, she’s definitely in touch with a much wider range of people. Tell us Tina, what exactly is that group’s leader’s background? He seems rather full of himself!”

His jealousy was warranted since everyone in the bar had gone there to have fun. In a place filled with handsome men and beautiful women like this, literally everyone wanted to be the center of attention and be able to act smugly in front of the others. Despite that being the case, not many people could actually pull that off properly.

Now however, a rare reckless individual had appeared, so all the attention was naturally on him. The male who had spoken before was socially obliged to ask about him.

“I’m not actually that close to him... I only came to know about him this morning while I was handling a case. He’s a high school classmate of one of my colleagues,” replied Tina.

The colleague in question was of course, Maia. Tina even remembered teasing Gerald that morning, asking whether he had a girlfriend. Naturally, she had been just fooling around then.

However, their meeting this morning seemed so

distant now.

There were a lot of mysteries surrounding Gerald, and both Tina and Maia were curious about his actual background.

After all, Gerald had been the one who had warned them about the hitmen, even though they didn't take him seriously at all at the time.

Eventually however, they came to learn that the threat he had warned about was the real deal.

Though they faced a life-or-death situation for not taking his words seriously, all three girls present in the bathroom made it out unscathed that morning. They had been saved by an exceptionally powerful person.

However, they had no clue who had saved them. Hence, Maia and Tina were keen on cracking the mystery behind the mysterious, powerful individual.

Their best guess was that Gerald's warning had been entrusted to him by the exceptional individual. From what Maia could assume, Gerald was just doing the powerful person a favor.

Tina on the other hand, wasn't scratching off the possibility that Gerald was secretly the powerful person in question. After all, he was Maia's high school classmate and he even knew about the

hitmen before they even showed themselves! He was definitely the most suspicious person.

Maia didn't buy that theory at all. She claimed that it was impossible since she was sure that Gerald didn't have such great capabilities.

Though she had initially wanted to call Gerald over to talk about the case, her superiors had transferred the case to another party, so both of them weren't allowed to investigate any further into the case.

As for the celebration party that had been interrupted that morning, it was agreed upon that it would be resumed the next day. During both her trips to the bar, Tina hadn't been able to have a great time. Since her other friends invited her out to a bar tonight, she had taken the opportunity to finally be able to get a quiet drink.

Meeting Gerald here was quite unexpected. What more, he seemed like he was about to create a messy scene here. Seeing all this unfold before her eyes made Tina even more curious than she was before.

“But then why is he acting so smugly? There are only three of them yet they seem like they want to cause trouble here! Didn't you ask your colleague about his background?” asked another girl.

“I know about his background. In high school, he



was apparently extremely poor and it doesn't seem like anything's changed since then. When I met him today, he was drinking alone in the bar. To think that he would come again at night! I initially thought that he was quite an honest man, but upon closer inspection, he seems to just be some kind of ruffian! Humph! He doesn't have any good prospects, that's for sure!" replied Tina. ①

"Well d\*mn! How bold of him to come here and act all arrogant despite being such a poor guy. The boss, Hugh, is definitely going to ruin him! He's quite powerful and influential along this entire street!" said one of the men in the booth.

"He's right. Someone else came to the bar about three months ago to cause a big mess. He was then promptly ruined terribly by Hugh," added another man.

## Chapter 598

It was clear that they enjoyed watching the misfortune of others.

Tina herself was thinking that both parties involved weren't nice men. She didn't need to directly involve herself with them since they were just fighting among their own kind. However, she was ready to call the police if things got too messy.

At that moment, a loud crash was heard. Gerald had apparently knocked down a vase.

The shrill sound of shattering glass further attracted the attention of everyone in the bar.

“Good sirs, you’ve clearly done it now! Not only did you refuse to order anything, you even smashed one of the vases here!” sneered the woman as she crossed her arms. She knew that the trio before her didn't mean well.

“F\*cking hell! It's just a vase! We'll just compensate for it!” shouted Yoel in return.

“I'm glad you're willing to do so! But I first need to ask my boss regarding the exact price you'll have to compensate!” replied the woman as she looked toward the spot where Hugh was standing earlier.

Hugh however, had already started walking toward the group.

“What’s the meaning of all this?”

“Boss! These three refused to order anything and they even broke one of our vases! They’re definitely here to create trouble! They have agreed on compensating for the vase, though,” explained the woman.

As he took a cigarette out, Hugh simply sneered before saying, “It’s good that you’re at least willing to compensate! Acting all bold and audacious before me, how dare you even offend me! However, I’m a nice person, so you’ll only need to give me five hundred thousand dollars!”

He then puffed his cigarette as he continued glaring at Gerald’s group.

Everyone’s eyes were glued on the scene happening before them now. After all, who wouldn’t want to watch others get hit by misfortune? Even the DJ had turned off the stereo system.

At that moment, a few men who had their hair dyed in multiple different colors began surrounding Gerald’s group. They seemed to be people who frequented the bar to have fun.

“What’s wrong, Hugh?” asked one of the men.

“Oh, it’s nothing much. He just broke a vase so I told him to compensate for it,” replied Hugh with a smile.

“See these people? If you fail to pay up the five hundred thousand dollars, I’m afraid you won’t be able to leave this place tonight!”

After Hugh said that, the ruffians started cracking their necks intimidatingly. They seemed to be ready to attack at any moment.

However, Gerald only smiled faintly before saying, “Hugh, Hugh, Hugh... I really didn’t expect you to still be this reckless and arrogant. Five hundred thousand dollars for a mere vase? You dare say that to my face? Do you even remember who I am?”

“Huh? Have we met before?” asked Hugh, slightly stunned by Gerald’s retort.

Squinting his eyes slightly, Hugh finally realized who Gerald was.

“So that’s why you looked so familiar! You’re the boyfriend of that Yorkes lady! F\*ck! And here I was thinking who you were! You audacious, b\*stard! Didn’t I teach you a lesson before? It seems like I wasn’t harsh enough!”

“Tell you what, if you’re able to compensate for that five hundred thousand dollar vase, then the

issue will be resolved. If you aren't, then you'd better start thinking about the consequences!"

As Gerald gave a subtle smile, Aiden stood up and said, "I'll go get the money then! Wait for my return!"

"Boss, he could be trying to call someone over!" said one of Hugh's subordinates.

"Leave him be. I want to see who he'll even be able to call over!" replied Hugh as he smiled contemptuously.

"Hot d\*mn! What a great mess this has become! That guy actually dared to challenge Hugh! Doesn't he know that Tiago owns Hugh's bar too? Do these guys even want to continue staying in Mayberry?" asked a few of the guys sitting at Tina's booth excitedly.

"Say Tina, didn't you say that he's your colleague's ex-classmate? Don't you want to help him out?" asked a girl from the same booth.

"Humph! And why should I? He's already so weak but he doesn't even have any self-awareness! Hugh may be bad news, but Gerald should already know that he can't afford to offend people like him!" said Tina as she crossed her arms again.

A short while later, someone in the bar suddenly

shouted, “Hey, look! Isn’t that Tiago? Tiago’s here!”

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## Chapter 599

“...Wait, someone’s walking in front of Tiago... Holy cr\*p! Isn’t that the guy who went out earlier?”

“He is! He went out to call someone, but to think that the person he had in mind was Tiago! Actually, is that really the case?”

Some of the people present inside the bar began discussing the situation through whispers. Others simply stared at the scene, wide-eyed. The only constant was that everyone was currently filled with disbelief.

Not long after, a loud rumble could be heard and several loud footsteps soon followed. A large group of bodyguards dressed in black suits entered the bar. Among them, there were also several young men dressed like rich heirs.

It was nothing short of an impressive scene.

Hugh himself was feeling stunned. The men in black had different dispositions compared to the ones he was used to seeing. Even the group of rich youths seemed like people he would never dare to offend.

“Mr. Crawford, the guy I’ve brought here goes by

the name of Tiago. He's Hugh's backer!" said Aiden as he walked forward before sitting beside Gerald again.

"M-Mr. Crawford! I'm not a sensible and insightful person so please forgive me for trusting the wrong guy! I cooperated with the wrong person so please, please accept my apology!"

Tiago looked like he was more than forty years old, yet at the time, he was sweating profusely in between hasty bows while he continued to repeat his apologies anxiously.

He clearly seemed to know what was at stake here. "Tiago? Why are you being so cordial toward this guy?" asked Hugh in confusion.

As soon as Tiago heard those words, he immediately slapped Hugh. "You f\*cker! Do you realize what you've done?! If you dare to offend Mr. Crawford you'll suffer terribly! I'll personally ruin you later!"

"What's happening? Did anyone else see that? Tiago seems to be bowing to Gerald!" said a man standing beside Tina.

"Yeah, what's happening? Also, did anyone hear what Tiago called Gerald earlier? It's too noisy, I can't hear a lot of things clearly!" said another girl.



“I couldn’t catch that either. What on earth is going on?!”

Tina herself was having trouble listening in to the conversation. However, she was able to see Gerald smacking the back of Hugh’s head who was now lying on the floor. Hugh didn’t try to fight back, clearly confused as to what was happening. He seemed frightened to death. After that, Gerald slipped a hand into his pocket and immediately left the bar, leading the large group of people out with him.

Even Tiago ran after Gerald, just to see him off.

Seeing this, many of the customers then got on their feet and began rushing out the bar’s entrance. All of them wanted to observe how the rest of the situation would play out. After all, nobody could have ever anticipated the plot twist that had just taken place before their very eyes.

They all needed to know who the influential and powerful boss actually was.

“Tina, why don’t we go have a look ourselves? Can you hear the uproar outside? I wonder what’s even happening!”

The girls were so eager that they just couldn’t hold themselves back any longer. After a short pause,

Tina agreed to join them. The scene from earlier had made her jaw drop and she was now immensely curious as well.

Her first impression of Gerald had been that of a poor loser who she would never be able to take seriously.

She was now, however, aware that he was actually an extremely powerful and influential person! Any girl would be shocked after finding out about that! This was especially true for Tina since she was now able to tie this situation to the previous one. It was impossible for her to hold herself back now.

With that, Tina and her group ran out of the bar as well.

Upon exiting the building, they finally understood why the others were screaming outside. Before she was even able to cover her mouth, Tina found herself screaming as well.

There were several dazzling Ferrari sports cars and even more Maybach luxury cars parked right outside the bar.

There were just so many expensive cars! Not many people could resist the temptation to awe at them.

Being graced by so many of them at the same time made for an absolutely magnificent scene.

## Chapter 600

Tina's face was flushed in astonishment. When she came to her senses again, she immediately started looking for Gerald within the huge crowd.

The most luxurious car at the scene was a Lamborghini, and Tina saw Gerald standing right beside it. After a bodyguard opened the door for him, Gerald entered the car and left the scene in it.

"...Tina, did you lie to us? What on earth did we just witness? Didn't you say that he was just some poor loser? What we all saw was the complete opposite of that!" said a few of her friends as they gulped, still astonished at what they had just experienced.

"I... I didn't lie to you... He really is..."

Tina was unable to finish her sentence. At that moment, she was equally nervous and didn't know what to say anymore.

She then tried to recall what her real first impression of Gerald really was on the day she first met him.

'...I... think I first thought that he was quite handsome and classy the first time I met him... I even asked if he had a girlfriend...'

‘Wasn’t I thinking about getting to know him better since I don’t have a boyfriend and knowing a handsome man would be a treat...?’

‘When exactly did my impression of him change so drastically?’

‘Oh, right. It was when Maia introduced him to us. I started feeling slightly disgusted by him then since I became aware that he was poor and incapable. Even so, he still went to the bar...’

At that moment, Tina’s train of thought stopped. She now had one specific detail about Gerald on her mind.

From the very beginning, Gerald didn’t seem to say much at all. The only exception to this, was when he found out that they were in danger. Gerald had gone over to the other bar just to tell them about it. Despite that, they only ridiculed him so he left after that.

After they got attacked and saved however, the captain mentioned something about how powerful people had been involved in their rescue. It wouldn’t be a stretch now to imagine Gerald ordering those people to save them back then.

There was no need to question it anymore. She knew that her assumptions were definitely true.

Gerald wasn't how Maia had pictured him to be. In fact, it was quite the opposite. He was definitely extremely powerful and influential.

"Who are you exactly, Gerald...?" asked Tina anxiously to herself.

At that moment, she was ready to tell Maia all about her great discovery.

Before she hit the call button however, she stopped and put her cell phone down again. It was better if Maia didn't know about it. After all, a person's sense of maturity was dependent on their ability to keep some secrets to themselves.

Why did she have to reveal everything that she knew to Maia?

Moving back to Gerald, he was now standing before Xavia.

"Here's the key to Mountain Top Villa. You can stay there for a month. I've helped you deal with Hugh so once I give you the key, let bygones be bygones. I hope that you understand that if I ever choose to be serious, you won't be able to threaten me," said Gerald as he threw the key to her. He then immediately turned around to leave.

"Humph! And what do you mean by that! Do you really hate me that much? You aren't even the

slightest interested in speaking with me, are you?" replied Xavia, her tone anxious.

"I'm not!"

"I'm aware that you have a new girlfriend now. I've heard about the incident between you and Giya as well! You seem to be quite close to her, but since I'm your ex, I can't help but want to advise you about one thing. For your own good, don't meddle further into any affairs regarding Giya!"

"Let me tell you Gerald, you don't know the full story about the Long's background. You don't even know what kind of person Yunus really is. Though your Mayberry Organization is powerful, if the Longs wanted to destroy you, they could do so extremely easily. Do you understand?" said Xavia as she took the key. ①

"I don't plan to meddle any further into any affairs regarding Giya anyway. However, do know that even though that is so, I'm not afraid of the Longs either. You don't have to try to scare me!" replied Gerald. ①

"Humph! I was simply trying to be kind to you! How ungrateful! Just stay away from Giya in the future or you'll come to regret it!" said Xavia as she peeked at Gerald one final time before leaving.

It was true that Gerald didn't want to meddle with

Giya's affairs anymore. He wasn't her boyfriend, so he wasn't obligated to help her that much. What more, the affair involving both the Longs and Giya was a proper one.

What more could he even do?

At that moment, his phone started to ring.

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## Chapter 601

It was a call from Zack.

“Mr. Crawford, we have some leads regarding the jade pendant!” said Zack the moment Gerald picked the phone up.

“Oh? Where are you right now?” asked Gerald in return.

The expert treasure appraiser from Northway went by the name of Mr. Zayden Weyham. Gerald had met him before during the celebrity party, and they even toasted each other on that day.

Since he had some issues to deal with back then, Gerald had told Zack to bring Mr. Xiques along to meet Mr. Weyham. Mr. Xiques himself could only discern that the jade pendant was produced southwest of the Salford Province.

However, details about its origins had still been vague up to this point. Zack’s call was a sign that they were finally able to find something.

“I’m in Mr. Weyham’s manor with Mr. Xiques now. Would you like to come over now, Mr. Crawford?”

“I’ll be there soon!”



After hanging up, he told Yoel and the others about his plan before heading straight for Mr. Weyham's manor.

Mr. Weyham and his family had a lot of influence as well as a good reputation. While they were well known for their business in Northbay, Mr. Weyham's business actually began in Mayberry. Since Mr. Weyham's hometown was also in Mayberry, it only made sense for him to return to his homeland now that he was much older.

During the celebrity party, the Weyhams were seen as a considerably famous and influential family.

Gerald would definitely refrain from treating such a family coldly.

In no time at all, Gerald arrived at Weyham's manor. He found Mr. Weyham having tea with both Zack and Mr. Xiques.

"Mr. Crawford!" said both Zack and Mr. Xiques respectfully as they stood up.

After nodding toward them, he turned to look at Mr. Weyham before saying, "Thank you so much for this, Mr. Weyham."

"No need to be so cordial, Mr. Crawford. Please, have a seat."

After a brief greeting, Mr. Weyham immediately cut

to the chase.

“Mr. Crawford, this pendant comes from a family from Wendall City in the Salford Province. Though this kind of jade is extremely rare, I was lucky enough to go to Wendall City with my master about fifty years ago. Back when I first saw it, a young man local to that city was wearing it. It should be the symbol of their family!” explained Mr. Weyham.

“And what family is that?” asked Gerald rather anxiously.

In all honesty, Gerald wasn't really interested in helping his father look for that Xara woman.

However, Queta was almost the same as Xara, the woman his father had been looking for all this time. This was what made Gerald curious.

‘Is Queta my stepsister who shares the same father with me but has a different mother...?’

‘Why do I feel so close to Queta every time I meet her?’

Something was definitely fishy with the incident. Since his father wouldn't tell him the truth no matter how much Gerald asked him, Gerald would investigate the matter himself.

Weyham shook his head slightly as he said, “I was just discussing this with both Mr. Xiques and Mr.

Lyle earlier. I was still pretty young then, and I only managed to glance at the young man who wore that pendant once. Make no mistake, I distinctly remember seeing that pendant then, but I really don't know which family in Wendall City he belongs to. I was even looking through a few large families in Wendal City with Mr. Lyle just now, but none of those large families have this kind of tradition!" said Mr. Weyham.

"I see... Well, since we know it comes from Wendall City, I'm sure it won't be too difficult to investigate into it!" replied Gerald as he smiled faintly.

As they began talking about other things, Mr. Xiques suddenly stood up and walked over to a pendulum clock. Staring at it curiously, he asked, "If I'm not mistaken, this pendulum clock is from the 1900s... Am I correct, Mr. Weyham?"

Mr. Weyham nodded before replying, "Indeed, it is! It was made in M country and back then, it was even placed in the president's office!" 1

"How did you even manage to get your hands on such a thing?" asked Mr. Xiques, astonished.

"It was a birthday gift from the Longs of Yanken!" replied Mr. Weyham with a chuckle.

Since Mr. Weyham mentioned the Long family so casually, it was obvious that Mr. Weyham wasn't

aware of the conflict between Gerald and the Longs.

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## Chapter 602

Gerald only smiled faintly as he took a sip of tea.

“It’s rather late now, grandpa... There are so many guests today...”

At that moment, a girl wearing pajamas slowly descended the stairs as she stared at Gerald and the others curiously.

“Ah, Lissa. Come over here and greet Mr. Crawford. Weren’t you quite curious about him before this?” said Mr. Weyham as he smiled.

“He’s Mr. Gerald Crawford?” asked Lissa as she made it to the final step.

When she got to him, she scanned him from head to toe before frowning slightly. Immediately after, she chuckled before saying, “It’s nice to meet you, Mr. Crawford. I’m Melissa Weyham but you can just call me Lissa.”

“A pleasure to meet you too, Lissa. You can just call me Gerald!” replied Gerald as he extended his hand out to shake her hand.

Lissa was considerably beautiful and after talking to her for a while, he found that she was quite

generous to others as well.

Gerald's first impression of her wasn't bad, to say the least.

What more, she was a pretty nice talker too. She talked about all kinds of things with Gerald.

“So you're Mr. Crawford, huh. What kind of entertainment do you usually partake in?” asked Melissa.

“I don't usually attend many activities, to be quite honest,” replied Gerald as he shook his head.

“Humph! I refuse to believe that! I'm sure you always enjoy yourself to your heart's content!” As she said that, Lissa laughed heartily.

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After a while, she seemed to remember something. This prompted her to ask, “Speaking of which, I got to know a few friends here in Mayberry. We're going to have a gathering tomorrow afternoon and I'll be treating them to a meal! If you're free, would you like to come along, Gerald?”

Gerald remained silent at her proposal.

“How rude, Lissa! Why on earth would Mr. Crawford want to fool around with you and your mischievous friends?” replied Mr. Weyham with a bitter smile.

“Well fine then!” said Melissa as she pouted

slightly.

Since Mr. Weyham had done him a favor, Gerald knew that rejecting his granddaughter would eventually make him feel awkward for doing so. In the end, Gerald nodded slightly with a smile before saying, "It's fine. Tomorrow was it? I'll be there."

"He said it, not me!" said Melissa with a smile.

A short while later, Gerald left the manor together with Zack and Mr. Xiques.

Though he initially wanted to return to Mountain Top Villa to have a rest, he suddenly recalled that he had lent the villa to Xavia.

Due to that, he told Zack to arrange a room in a hotel that he owned. He would stay there for the moment.

When Gerald arrived at the hotel's entrance, he saw and heard a few security guards shouting, "Lousy beggar! Get lost already!"

They were busy trying to push away a dirt-covered old man who had extremely messy hair.

"What beggar? I'm no beggar! I just need to borrow a shower!" said the old man.

"To hell with that! Do you even know what place this is?" sneered the security guard.

“Humph! Let me tell you, I’m not any mere person! I’m Mr. Crawford’s grandfather! Your boss is my grandson! Now hurry up and let me in!”

“This old b\*stard! How bold!”

By then, the guards were ready to beat him up.

Gerald didn’t really want to get involved in the mess. He didn’t care about what the old man said and the guards were there to take care of him anyway.

However, when Gerald took a closer look at the beggar, he was stunned.

“Stop,” said Gerald.

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## Chapter 603

Gerald realized that the old man was the same one who had blackmailed him when he was still looking for Giya back then. Gerald would never have dreamed that the old man would actually come looking for him again.

“How come it’s you again,” said Gerald as he frowned slightly.

“Ah! My grandson! It’s wonderful that you’re here now! Humph! These guards won’t let me in! Tell them to let me in!” said the old man with his hands on his waist.

“Why do you want to go in there? What do you need this time? I’ve already helped you before and I even cured your injured leg! Stop pestering me, do you really think that I’m a nice man without any temper?” replied Gerald rather impatiently.

Gerald didn’t really mind helping people if they looked as pitiful as the beggar did. However, he had already helped him once. If the old man continued to abuse Gerald’s pity, he would definitely be crossing the line.

“Why would you say that, grandson? What do you

mean I'm pestering you? You just resemble my lost grandson a lot! If he isn't dead, he should be around the same age as you are this year!" said the old man, his tone suddenly grievous as he lowered his head.

"What nonsense are you spouting? That's it, I'm beating you up!"

Just as they were about to hit him, Gerald took pity after hearing the old man's tale and he raised his hand slightly.

"Yes, Mr. Crawford!" shouted both guards as soon as they saw his gesture. Both of them then returned to their initial positions.

Seeing that, the old man sat on the porch with a sad expression on his face.

Gerald just couldn't bear looking at the beggar's poor state so he fished out a hundred dollar note from his wallet.

"I get it, you want money too, right? But I warn you, this is the last time I'm giving any to you. Now leave!"

He was aware that it would become a bad habit of the old man to depend on him if Gerald kept giving him money.

Still, it wasn't like Gerald could stop himself from

doing it. The old man was rather old and he couldn't just turn a blind eye and let others beat him up.

“It's not money that I want, my grandson! I just want to go in and have a bath! Just look at how shabby my clothes are!” said the old man with a chuckle.

Gerald then pointed at the old man before saying, “I'm warning you now. Don't address me as your grandson ever again! If it's just a bath you need, there's a bathroom nearby. Go ahead and take your shower there!”

After saying that, Gerald handed some money to the guards before turning away to leave.

The guards instantly understood what he meant, and said, “D\*mn old man! Mr. Crawford is so kind! He's allowing you to take your bath there, so come along already!”

He then began dragging the old man away.

“Thank you, my grandson!”

“I told you to stop f\*cking calling me that!”

The incident wasn't really a big issue for Gerald so he simply headed to his hotel room to take a shower and retire for the night.

Not long after his shower however, he heard a

knock on the door. Upon opening it, he was shocked beyond words.

It was the old man again!

“D\*mn it, what are you doing here? Actually, how did you get in here?” asked Gerald, slightly stupefied.

In order to use the elevator in this hotel, one would first need to have a hotel room access card. What more, Gerald was staying on the VIP floor. To get to this specific floor, the person would also have to pass through a security door.

Not only did the old man get past all that, he was also able to find the exact room Gerald was staying in!

The old man simply chuckled before saying, “I came to look for you, my grandson. Could you arrange a place for me to stay?”

“Also, I hope you haven’t forgotten that I’ve helped you before. I was the one who had given you the clues to look for that girl back then,” added the old man as he chuckled again.

“Now I just want to know how you got here,” replied Gerald as he scratched the back of his head in resignation.

While the old man certainly did look cleaner now,

whenever he grinned, Gerald could sense that he was no nice man.

“If you’re talking about those glass doors, they were easy to get past. I just gently poked them with my finger. All of those machines out there are out of order as well, so that’s how I got up here!”

As soon as the old man was done with his explanation, a loud noise was heard.

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## Chapter 604

The door swung open and in rushed ten security guards, each armed with an electric baton. They had finally managed to track down the old man with the help of the surveillance footage.

“You old b\*stard! There you are!”

The guards then immediately surrounded him.

“Apologies Mr. Crawford! This old man sneaked into the lobby after his bath when we weren’t paying attention to him! He apparently heard your room number from the female receptionist then he ruined all the machines needed to get up here! Apologies again, Mr. Crawford! We’ll beat him up then kick him out, right this instant!” ①

Gerald didn’t know how to respond at that moment. Everything about that old man just made him feel uneasy.

At that moment, Gerald’s phone began to ring. It was a call from Queta.

Gerald had earlier sent a Line message to her regarding all the new things he had discovered. She must have just read it.

Glancing at the old man again, Gerald then

answered the call.

“I assume you’ve read the message, Queta?”

“I have... What should I do now, Gerald? Will I... Will I really be able to find my mother?” asked Queta anxiously.

“Yes, and don’t worry. I’m looking for her too. Just wait for a few more days for me to resolve all the things I currently have on hand. Once I’m done, I’ll go there with you! I’d honestly be worried if you went to the Salford Province alone!” replied Gerald with a faint smile.

“Sounds good! I’m feeling much more assured now!”

After a brief chat, Gerald hung up. Seeing that he had ended his call, the guards were just about to drag the old man out when the old man suddenly began shouting, “Salford Province? My grandson, I want to go there too! That’s my hometown! Bring me along, my grandson!”

With a little struggling, the old man managed to break himself free from the grasps of the security guards. He then rushed toward Gerald before begging again.

“That’s my hometown! My grandson, could you take me home?”

Gerald scanned the man from head to toe after hearing his pleas. The old man looked like he was quite eager to go there. He seemed to be quite agitated as well.

As Gerald thought about it, he realized that he didn't really have too bad an impression of that old man. He was just annoyed by how shameful and dastardly he was.

“Fine, I'll get someone to send you there!”

“I heard what you said through the phone earlier. It seems like you and another young girl want to look for someone in the Salford Province! I'm quite familiar with the place, so I can definitely help you find that person! You've already helped me so much so I'll definitely lend a hand in this!” said the old man.

Hearing this, Gerald felt as though the old man had finally said something sensible for once.

“As if Mr. Crawford would ever need your help! Get lost!” roared one of the security guards.

“Humph! Just ask him about my information reliability! If I didn't tell him where that young lass was, do you think he would be able to find her that soon?”

“You!-”



“That’s enough. Just take him away... Get a room and some food for him. And find someone to send him back to the Salford Province tomorrow!” said Gerald as he shook his head in resignation.

Though the old man had claimed that he wanted to help Gerald, Gerald couldn’t help but laugh bitterly at the thought.

After that, he retired for the night.

A quiet and peaceful sleep later, Gerald received another call when morning came. It was Mr. Weyham’s granddaughter, Melissa.

It was then when Gerald remembered Melissa’s invitation to the gathering that she had organized. Since he wasn’t that close with Melissa, he immediately tried thinking up an excuse to reject her.

“Hello, Gerald! From the moment you agreed to attend my gathering, my grandpa’s been quite happy! He’s even told me to serve you well!” said Melissa through the phone.

It was now getting increasingly awkward for Gerald. Mr. Weyham had been there when he agreed so of course he knew about it. What more, Melissa was quite a sincere girl which made it even harder for him to reject her.

He eventually gave up and said that he would come soon.

Not too long after, he arrived at the gathering place in his car. He had made up his mind that he would leave after staying for just a short while.

The venue in question was the Mayberry Grand Hotel.

When he got to the door, Melissa was already there waiting for him.

Beside her stood a mature and rather sexy lady who seemed to be in her thirties. Her hair reached all the way down to her waist and she seemed to be quite slim as well. Overall, she looked like a woman with a good disposition.

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## Chapter 605

Her skin was quite fair as well.

When he saw her, Gerald simply nodded with a smile.

Melissa chuckled when she saw him do that. She then said, “She’s my cousin, Gerald. She’s a looker, isn’t she? She came over to have some fun with me.”

Gerald replied with a simple nod.

“But just so you know, she’s already married! She was a beauty even during her school years and though so many years have passed since then, she’s still as gorgeous as ever!” said Melissa in a teasing tone as she laughed.

“From her reaction, I’m now sure that you’re Mr. Crawford. It’s a pleasure to meet you! I’m Rosalie Owens but since I’m older than both of you, you can just call me Sister Owens!” said Rosalie with a smile.

“By the way, Mr. Crawford, I’m sure you already know that my cousin’s family is quite powerful in Northbay! She’s even teaching in a university there too!” added Melissa.

Gerald nodded again as he greeted, “It’s a pleasure

to meet you as well, Sister Owens!”

The three of them then entered.

Not long after, a luxury car that looked to be at least a hundred and fifty thousand dollars arrived at the entrance of the hotel.

The car's driver got out and respectfully opened the door of the passenger seat right next to the driver's. Out stepped a rich young man in a suit holding an expensive looking pocket watch.

“Mr. Long!” said the driver respectfully.

The person who had stepped out was Yunus Long, and he had a wicked smile on his face as he looked at the hotel.

He then moved to open the backseat door before saying, “We're here now Giya. Come on out now.”

Giya simply got out without saying a word. She had only put on some light makeup, but she still looked very beautiful.

When Yunus saw her, his eyes immediately brightened.

The first time he met her, he felt that she was different from the other women. He could safely say this since he had indeed met a lot of different women.

Giya was in another league since she was the first woman he had met with such a good disposition. Because of that, he tried to woo her numerous times.

Since he was the third young master of the Long family in Yanken, as long as he approved of it, an endless number of girls would happily throw themselves onto him. At the time, he was even the one making a move on her. It was only logical for her to fall for him, or at least that's what he thought.

Giya however, hadn't even paid him any attention. After some investigating, he came to learn that she had fallen for someone else. That was the moment when Mr. Long started pressuring the Quarringtons.

Eventually, he was able to force Giya to have a meal with him.

“Oh, don't be so unhappy, Giya! Though I'm a bit of a dandy, I'm still a rather good guy! You know, there are many people out there who appear nice but they're honestly just hiding their true colors! There aren't many people out there as straightforward and honest as I am!”

“Thank you but I'll be the judge of that!” said Giya coldly.

“Whatever you say. Now come on, let’s go!” replied Yunus with a smile.

After saying that, he stretched his hand out and tried to hug Giya’s waist but she immediately dodged away before glaring at him.

“Can’t I even slightly touch you? You’re my fiancée!” said Yunus.

“And who made that decision? I didn’t agree to be engaged with you. Behave yourself, Mr. Long!” Giya said that rather tensely.

Aside from disgust, she had no other feelings for him.

Since her family was facing a crisis, her parents had advised her to be with him for their sake. She had honestly tried compromising with the Longs so that she could slowly, but eventually come to accept Yunus.

In the end, however, she knew she had failed. She only felt disgust toward him, and there was zero chance for any other feelings to develop.

## Chapter 606

She was so disgusted by him that she had already begun filling her head with rather extreme ideas.

Giya had only attended the meal because her father had persuaded her to go that day. Thinking back, she wasn't even sure if she should have taken that first step.

“Well, it doesn't really matter. The engagement will happen sooner or later! Let's not talk about that now. Come, let's just go in already!” said Yunus as he brought her into the hotel.

Meanwhile, Gerald had just entered a private room. Melissa had invited quite a lot of people that day and aside from her cousin, Rosalie, most of the others were young people who looked to be around the same age.

Some of them seemed to be from Mayberry while the others came from elsewhere. The only constant was that they all treated Gerald extremely respectfully and cordially.

This was especially so for Melissa who had constantly been serving him food as she sat beside him.

Melissa had even invited Gerald to have fun with them that night, since there was another group of friends who would be attending then.

Though Gerald had initially planned to leave after sitting there for just a while, not long after they entered the room, Melissa ordered for the food to be served. As a result, he couldn't help but stay and continue having a few more drinks with them.

The group of people was rather good at drinking. 1

As everyone drank and chatted with one another, at some point, one of the guests started getting a little drunk.

It was Melissa's cousin, Rosalie.

"I don't think I can take anymore... I'm getting a bit dizzy so I'll just retreat to the car for now and get a nap. You guys go on ahead and continue drinking," said Rosalie.

"Huh? I thought you were a good drinker! Also why the car? There are rooms in this hotel. Let me just get one for you to take a rest in. Ah, I also have a bottle of soda with me. Here, drink some of it to make yourself more comfortable!" said Melissa as she opened the bottle and handed it over to Rosalie.

Rosalie simply nodded slightly. She really looked like she couldn't take anymore.



As Melissa told a waiter to prepare a room, Rosalie could barely stand properly. It was apparent that she was really bad at drinking.

“Hey Melissa, let me help you get Sister Owens upstairs!” volunteered one of the young men in the room.

While Melissa was beautiful, Rosalie’s looks surpassed even hers. Despite the fact that she was much older, she exuded a special charm.

Adding that to her good disposition, it was almost certain for every man who locked their eyes on her to eventually be charmed.

“Oh, get lost! Don’t assume I don’t know what you’re thinking! Let me tell you, my sister is an Owens and she comes from Northbay! She’s not someone you can simply take advantage of!” said Melissa, in an annoyed tone.

Though she said that, she definitely looked like she needed help. It would be both difficult and tiring for her to get Rosalie upstairs all by herself.

She then looked at Gerald before saying, “I trust you, Mr. Crawford. Could you help me get my cousin upstairs?”

“Sure thing,” said Gerald while nodding slightly.

Though it was rather inconvenient for him to do so,

he couldn't just reject Melissa's plea. He wasn't thinking of any wicked thoughts either so he simply obliged.

Eventually, both of them managed to get Rosalie into a room on the seventh floor.

With the back of her hand placed against her forehead, Rosalie quickly fell asleep as soon as she got to her bed.

Melissa sighed before saying, "Let her take a rest for now... I didn't think she was this bad at drinking. On the contrary, you're quite good at that, aren't you Mr. Crawford?"

"I'm not too bad at it."

As he said that, the sound of retching could be heard. Rosalie was vomiting terribly and she looked extremely unwell.

"Oh god, are you alright cousin? I'll go get some medicine to help you sober up. Could I trouble you to help look after my cousin for a while, Mr. Crawford? I'll be right back!" said Melissa as she rushed out of the room.

Gerald however, didn't know how to look after her.

After vomiting for a while, Rosalie eventually fell asleep again in a daze.

Feeling it would be imprudent of him to remain in

the room, he took the room's access card and stood by the door. Gerald would wait for Melissa to come back there.

Not long after, he heard Rosalie's voice from inside the room. However, her voice suggested that she was struggling. It was almost like she was being constricted by something.

Gerald didn't pay much attention to the sounds at first. He thought that it was just her being drunk.

However, the more he listened, the stranger the noises got. There seemed to be other noises coming from within the room as well.

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## Chapter 607

The more he pondered about the noises, the stranger the situation felt. Eventually, he decided to open the door to see what was going on. What he saw made his eyes widen in astonishment.

A strange man was trying to undress Rosalie in the room! Rosalie seemed to have been struggling for quite a while and tears were already in her eyes.

When the man saw Gerald, he simply smiled coldly before jumping off the bed and diving out the window.

But this was the seventh floor.

Gerald immediately rushed toward the window and looked down. However, there was no trace of the man at all.

‘Where the hell did he go?’ Gerald thought to himself, stunned.

Turning around to check on Rosalie, Gerald found himself blushing deeply. As he was just about to cover her up with some blankets, he heard footsteps coming from outside.

“For heaven’s sake, why are you so annoying?”

Gerald's already looking after my cousin, there's no need for you to come along! You aren't getting anything by doing this!" said Melissa's voice a little down the hallway.

It would appear that the group he had been drinking with earlier had followed Melissa as well. From her tone, it was clear that they had insisted on coming along, possibly because they saw her leaving to get medicine earlier.

'D\*mn it! What should I even do now?'

Gerald was stupefied. What kind of misunderstandings would arise if they saw him in a room with a half-undressed Rosalie?

What more, when he attempted to help put her clothes on, Rosalie simply looked at him with teary eyes and told him not to come any closer. To make matters worse, she started calling for help with a faint voice!

'D\*mn it all!'

At that moment, knocking could be heard at the door.

"Gerald? Are you in there? Could you open the door - ...Wait, cousin? Is that you? What's wrong?" shouted Melissa from behind the door. She had clearly heard her cousin's voice calling for help by

now.

“Gerald? Mr. Crawford? Are you in there?” asked Melissa in her shocked state.

“Yes, I’m still in here!” replied Gerald as he immediately went to open the door.

“What took you so long to open the door? Could you have been- Ah!”

Though she had initially meant to tease him, when she saw the scene before her, she immediately let out a scream.

Hearing that, the other people who came with Melissa peeked in and some of them began screaming as well.

Everyone there was now looking at Gerald in disbelief. Though Mr. Crawford looked like a gentleman, to think that he was actually such a cunning and dirty person!

“What... What did you do to my cousin, Mr. Crawford?!” shouted Melissa.

“I... You’re misunderstanding the situation! I didn’t do anything!”

“If it wasn’t you, then why would my cousin do something like that to herself?” retorted Melissa.

“Someone else was in here! When he saw me after I

came back in to check on her, he leaped out the room's window!"

Gerald was definitely having a hard time defending himself and explaining the situation properly.

"We're on the seventh floor!"

A few of the men rushed toward the window before shouting, "Holy, it's so high up here! If anyone jumps from this height, they'll be crippled for life if they don't die!"

As Melissa covered Rosalie with some blankets, she said, "I trusted you, Mr. Crawford... To think that you were so dirty and wicked... I can't believe my grandpa actually praised you for having good conduct! You're as disgusting as they come!"

"She's right! It never once occurred to me that Mr. Crawford was actually someone like this! He hid his true colors so well! At least the other rich heirs act straightforwardly!" said a girl disdainfully.

"I swear to god, I wasn't involved in this! It's all a huge misunderstanding! Go look at the surveillance footage! I was standing outside this entire time!" replied Gerald.

Someone then immediately went off to notify the manager. It wasn't long before the manager arrived.

"Fetch me the surveillance footage for this floor

right this instant!” ordered Gerald.

“Surveillance footage? Apologies, Mr. Crawford, but our surveillance system went out of order yesterday! I’m rather anxious about it since we still haven’t managed to repair it yet!” replied the manager.

“How do you know who I am?”

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## Chapter 608

This was the question Gerald posed as he looked at the manager.

The manager simply smiled apologetically before saying, "I've met you once at the chamber of commerce, Mr. Crawford. Also, your elder sister, CEO Jessica Crawford, has given me a lot of attention in the past! It would be impossible for me not to know who you are!"

"Humph! Stop trying to put up a show here, Gerald! Literally everyone in Mayberry involved in the business field needs to pay at least some respect to you! We know both of you are on the same side! Why's the surveillance system broken now? Don't you think it's a bit too coincidental?" said Melissa rather angrily in a loud voice.

By then, several other people who were staying the night had walked out of their rooms to see what the commotion was about. It wasn't long before the floor's hallways became crowded. Soon after, the gossiping started as well.

"What's going on?"

"It appears that some rich heir saw a drunk girl and

dragged her into a room. Thankfully the girl's cousin managed to stop him before he could r\*pe her! But really though, what a wicked b\*stard he is!”

“Oh lord, and here I thought I'd only be able to witness such things on television! I can't believe it happened in real life too! Disgusting!”

As the discussions went on, some nosy person even contacted the news hotline.

While all that was happening, Yunus was having a meal with Giya on the hotel's third floor. Mayberry Grand Hotel was a hotel that prided itself in its entertainment, leisure, and dining experiences.

The two were currently seated in a very grand looking restaurant. Despite that, Giya had only taken a few bites of her food.

At that moment, a group of customers entered the restaurant. After sitting down on the table beside the duo, they began discussing what had happened upstairs.

“Hey, have you heard? Something big is happening on the seventh floor!”

After listening in to snippets of what they had to say, Yunus sipped his red wine before saying, “Why are there so many wicked and dirty people in the world...” He then proceeded to smile subtly.

Giya on the other hand, frowned slightly.

“So what happened after that? Are they still arguing about that? Actually hold on, who’s the rich man in question?”

“I heard that he’s someone extremely influential and powerful! I’m not too sure, but some have said that it’s Mr. Crawford himself!” said one of the seated people.

“What? Mr. Crawford? That’s impossible, isn’t it?”

“Well of course it is! Why would he even do such a thing?” shouted Giya out of the blue as she looked at the people sitting next to them.

“...Huh? Why are you being angry with us? We’re just talking about what we heard. If you want to be sure, just go upstairs and check for yourself!” replied another man.

“Anyway, what does Mr. Crawford look like? Is he handsome? He’s particularly mysterious, isn’t he?”

“He’s rather handsome, but still, he did something so imprudent! I heard a few of them addressing him as Gerald or something. I say he’s definitely Mr. Crawford!”

When she heard Gerald’s name, Giya’s body trembled slightly.

“What... What did you say? What was his name?” asked Giya as she stood up.

“G-Gerald!” replied the person beside her, slightly intimidated.

“...That’s impossible. It’s definitely impossible!” said Giya in utter disbelief.

When she saw a few people heading upstairs, presumably to catch a glimpse of the scene, Giya ran to the seventh floor as well.

Yunus only smiled bitterly as he watched her leave. As he took another sip of red wine, he took his phone out and made a call. “You can come upstairs now!”

After that, he too began ascending the building.

“Move aside, please! We’re reporters!”

At that moment, the seventh floor was getting increasingly noisy.

The ones who had shouted were reporters from Mayberry News, and they were currently rushing toward the scene. With any luck, the incident would be the headline for the following day’s newspaper.

Gerald himself was surrounded by several people. He had neither the means to defend himself nor any logical way to explain the situation.

Giya on the other hand, had just arrived at the scene and she took a step back in disbelief the moment she saw Gerald.

“That’s... That’s impossible! It’s preposterous! Gerald isn’t someone like that!” murmured Giya softly to herself.

“Impossible? He’s right there! Caught red-handed! He had tried to do something improper to a drunk girl and even the victim is saying that he’s the perpetrator!” retorted one of the guests who had heard Giya’s comment.

“Lissa? Why are you here? What happened?”

The voice had come from Yunus who saw Melissa as he approached the scene. Behind him, was a group of bodyguards.

“...Eh? Yunus? I’m so glad that you’re here! It’s Sister Owens! Something has happened to her!”