

The Understated Dragon Lord

Read Chapter 251 - 300

Chapter 251 The Woman in White

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Shitstrong didn't want to tell others about the body hanging on the rope inside the room; he didn't want anyone to think he was scared by a corpse, especially since he was a forensic pathologist. Being frightened by a corpse would be an utter embarrassment for Shitstrong, and he couldn't even imagine the kind of ridicule he would face if others knew.

So, he had to act as though he saw nothing at all.

"A joke?" Ava's face darkened as she scolded Shitstrong in a very serious tone, "Shitstrong, we're investigating a crime here. Do you think it's appropriate to make such jokes at this time? What if your screaming scared Mia away? Then all our efforts in coming here would be for nothing."

Upon realizing Ava was upset, Shitstrong quickly ducked his head and apologized to Ava like a chastened dog, "Sarge, I'm sorry! Sarge, I was wrong! Sarge, I promise I'll never make the same mistake again!"

Ava ignored Shitstrong and stepped towards the room. As soon as she entered, she heard a creaking sound. The body hanging from the rope suddenly started to spin, and the combination of the twisting rope and the light fixture created an eerie noise.

Creak... creak...

"Ahh... ahh..." Overwhelmed by fear, Ava screamed and ran back towards the door. Seeing Ava's terrified face, Daniel chuckled. He cheekily asked, "Sarge, were you also joking around with us?"

"Joking? Joke about your ass!" Ava patted her chest, her perfect assets swaying. Upon calming down, she said, "There's a woman in white hanging from the light in the room; it looks like she's hanged herself."

"Were you frightened by the hanging woman in white, Sarge? Or was it because the woman looked familiar that scared you?"

Daniel's words left Ava confused. She felt there was an underlying message, so she curiously asked, "Familiar woman in white, what do you mean?"

"Sarge, when you entered the room, that woman in white must have turned around, right? Didn't you see her face? Don't you think she looked very familiar?"

"I was nearly scared to death. How could I possibly clearly see her face? Also, you suggested I should find her very familiar. What do you mean?"

"Meaning, Sarge, you should recognize her! And you have just met her not long ago."

"Can you stop speaking in riddles? Do you know who the woman in white is?"

"Jennflower."

Upon his utterance of that name, everyone present was floored. "Impossible! How could that be Jennflower? Her body has already been taken to the police department; how could it possibly be here?" Shitstrong was the first to voice his disagreement.

"Seeing is believing. Let's go have a look." Daniel led everyone back into the room.

By then, Jennflower's face had turned back around, facing the room's entrance. When Ava saw the familiar face, she was stunned into silence. It truly was Jennflower – the body hanging from the ceiling beam was indeed Jennflower?

"How could Jennflower's body be here?" Ava asked.

"If I told you Jennflower's body rose from the police department, walked over here, and hung itself up on this rope, would you believe me?"

Chapter 252 The Missing Body

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"Heh!" Shitstrong could only respond to Daniel's words with a cold sneer. "Scum, is there any scientific basis for what you're saying? How could a body move by itself? How could it possibly walk over ten miles here, then hang itself from the beam? Your story is laughable! Even kindergarten children wouldn't believe your theory!"

Daniel looked at Ava with a mischievous grin, asking, "Sarge, do you believe it?"

"I...," Ava hesitated, caught off guard, and could only growl back, "I'm not a kid!"

"So, Sarge, you don't believe me? You don't believe Jennflower's body could have left the police department on its own? You don't believe it could have come here? That her body hanged itself here?"

"Hang my ass!" Ava rolled her eyes and countered, "Even if there are ghosts in this world, and maybe there are things science can't explain, what you're saying is too illogical. How do you expect me to believe you?"

"It's simple, Sarge. You solve cases with evidence, so we should speak with evidence."

"Evidence? Do you have evidence?"

"The room where Jennflower's body was kept should have surveillance cameras, right, Sarge? You could get the footage with just one phone call."

"Of course, I can!"

Ava made a call to Scout River, who was in charge of the body storage. The phone connected.

"Sarge, what do you need?"

"Scout, go see if Jennflower's body is still there?"

"I just checked half an hour ago; there should be no issues. Sarge, you can rest assured, nothing will happen to the bodies in my care."

"I want you to check again now. See if Jennflower's body is still there?"

"Yes, yes, I'm on it!"

After a while, a panicked voice came through the phone. "Where's Jennflower? Where did her body go? Wasn't her body supposed to be in the morgue? Why is it missing?"

With his acute hearing, which was better than a dog's, Daniel could hear the conversation and he offered an insight to Ava, "Since Jennflower's body has gone missing, Handshome's body must be missing too. Both their bodies are in this building. If things went as expected, those two bodies moved here together."

After hearing Daniel's comment, Ava quickly asked over the phone, "What about Handshome's body? Is it still there?"

"Sarge, hold on, I'll check."

After a short wait, Scout reported back. "Sorry, Sarge, Handshome's body has disappeared too. Who could have snuck into the morgue and stolen their bodies? They

were suicides, weren't they? Who would steal their bodies? Unless they weren't suicides but were murdered? Could the thief of their bodies be their murderer?"

On the phone, Scout shared his deductions.

"Tell him to check the surveillance videos," Daniel suggested to Ava.

Ava rolled her eyes at Daniel and then directed Scout over the phone, "Scout, check the surveillance footage to see if you can find any clues. I need to know who stole the bodies."

Given a choice between Scout's theory and Daniel's, Ava wouldn't hesitate to believe Scout.

Chapter 253 Malevolent Spirits

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Given that neither Jennflower's nor Handshome's bodies could possibly rise and walk on their own, they must have been stolen by someone. Soon, there was a response from Scout.

"Sarge, something's off here!" he said.

"What's wrong?" Ava asked.

"Jennflower and Handshome 'came to life.' They pushed open the refrigerated morgue drawers themselves. The two bodies then climbed out, hands joined, and walked out of the morgue together..."

Watching the surveillance footage left Scout dumbfounded. After calming down and reassessing the footage, he hurriedly sent it to Ava.

Over here, after Ava and the team members watched the video, everyone was stunned. Daniel turned to Shitstrong and asked, "With your professional knowledge and your belief in science, how would you explain this video, Shitstrong?"

Shitstrong found himself at a loss for words. His mind went blank, unable to form a coherent response. The morgue was part of the police department, and high-definition cameras were used, making the video exceptionally clear. It was blatantly obvious in the video that both Jennflower and Handshome had actively lifted the lids of the drawers themselves and stepped out. They even held hands as they left, as if revived from the dead.

Regaining some composure, Ava turned to Daniel and asked, "What exactly is going on?"

"Didn't you notice in the video, the way they walked clearly wasn't normal? Their bodies had been frozen stiff, so their movements appeared very mechanical."

"What do you mean? You're not suggesting they have turned into zombies, are you?"

"Zombies? If you want to call them zombies, I suppose you could. But technically, they aren't zombies; they are just bodies, controlled by malevolent spirits."

Daniel rewound the surveillance video and pointed at the screen, "Look, Sarge, right before Jennflower and Handshome opened the kriegs themselves, the lids of the drawers moved slightly. That indicates the spirits touched the drawers, then they possessed their bodies, and the spirits brought them here."

Naturally, Daniel's explanation drew another round of mocking laughter from Shitstrong.

"Heh."

After his bout of scorn, he challenged Daniel, "According to your theory, if Mia can control malevolent spirits, could she kill whoever she wants?"

"Controlling spirits to kill at will? Mia isn't that powerful. From what she has done, it seems she is just a fledgling Demon raiser. However, if she gets ahold of personal belongings of ordinary people, she indeed could kill anyone. So, Shitstrong, be careful not to casually hand over your personal belongings to others. If a Demon raiser like Mia gets them, they can kill you at any time."

"Personal belongings? I think you're making this up, scumbag! I won't believe a word you say."

Although the facts were laid out before him, Shitstrong refused to believe. He venerated science, strictly adhering to scientific principles, and dismissed these religious notions.

Chapter 254 Seeking Help

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To Shitstrong, everything Daniel said was nonsense. His attitude irritated Ava. Although she originally didn't believe in religious concepts, the surveillance footage that showcased hard evidence forced her to confront the possibility of their validity.

"Shitstrong, you don't believe in these religious matters, so surely you have your own take on the situation. I'd like to hear your thoughts on the surveillance video Scout sent us," said Ava. She wanted Shitstrong to provide a theory; after all, he was not only a forensic pathologist but also one of the most experienced ones in the department. Among the younger generation of forensic pathologists in America, Shitstrong was top-tier. Thus Ava had complete faith in his professional abilities.

"Sarge, the reason you were deceived by this scumbag, the reason you believed this religious talk, is because of the surveillance video. What if the video is faulty? What if it's been edited? With today's technology, adding such effects to a video isn't difficult, right?"

Shitstrong's words brought a sudden realization to Ava. Yes, it's entirely possible the surveillance video had been edited! After all, the morgue wasn't exactly a high-security area. Even Ava couldn't guarantee that its security and monitoring systems were impervious to being hacked. Shitstrong's explanation provided Ava with a reason to question Daniel.

Consequently, she turned to Daniel and pressed, "Scumbag, how do you counter Shitstrong's explanation?"

"It's none of my business! If you don't believe it, then bring Jennflower's body down from there. These team members of yours are professionally trained; it shouldn't be difficult for them to do so, right?"

Daniel couldn't be bothered to explain further. Since Ava was so obstinate, he would let the facts speak for themselves.

This response caused Ava's eyebrows to furrow. She demanded, "What do you mean? Are you suggesting my team can't bring down Jennflower's body?"

"Of course!"

That statement ignited Ava's competitive spirit. She commanded her team, "Get Jennflower's body down immediately, to show this scumbag that we're not incompetent!"

"Yes, Sarge!"

Upon receiving the order, two team members found a stool, climbed up, and prepared to bring down Jennflower's body. However, as soon as one team member extended his hand – not even touching Jennflower's body yet – there was a cracking sound.

Crack!

The stool he was standing on collapsed, sending the team member tumbling down to the floor. He ended up with a gash on his calf from a nail protruding from the broken stool. Although not a deep wound, it bled profusely.

Another team member quickly pulled out bandages from a medical kit they carried and began dressing the injured man's wound.

Daniel, grinning, turned to Ava, "So, Sarge, it's not so easy to get Jennflower's body down, is it? Need my help?"

"You? It's just a matter of bringing down a body, why would I need your help? That was just a mishap, the stool broke, that's all! It's not a big deal!"

Chapter 255 Sticking to One's Convictions

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Despite Ava's uncertain tone, she was determined to stick to her convictions. Even if this incident was related to ghosts, she would definitely not ask for help from the scumbag. She was set on having her team members bring down Jennflower's body, refusing to give the scumbag the satisfaction of shaming her.

Ava glanced towards LightS, the tallest on the team, standing at six feet five inches tall. He wouldn't need a stool; he could reach Jennflower's body just by stretching his arms slightly.

"LightS, you go take down Jennflower's body."

"Yes, Sarge!"

LightS jumped into action. Yet, before he could reach out, just as he stepped near Jennflower's feet, her body, whose legs were dangling naturally, suddenly lifted one leg and kicked LightS. Caught off guard, LightS was kicked squarely in the face and sent tumbling to the ground.

Everyone saw what happened and were stunned—gleamed over, petrified by the incident.

"What just happened? Did Jennflower's body move?"

"It seemed like it kicked LightS, didn't it?"

"She's dead, right? Shitstrong declared her dead back at King's! If she's dead, why can her feet move? Why can she kick?"

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The team members discussed among themselves. The building had been strange enough to start with, and the recent incident just added an extra layer of creepiness to the atmosphere.

Ava couldn't quite believe what she had just witnessed and asked LightS, "Did you get kicked just now?"

"Uh..."

Picking himself up from the floor and rubbing his sore face, LightS couldn't be sure one way or the other. "I'm not certain, but it felt like my face was hit. It could be that I was just moving too quickly, and perhaps my face ran into Jennflower's foot."

LightS couldn't entertain the idea he had been kicked by a female corpse. Like the other officers, he was also highly educated and skeptical about the existence of spirits and demons. The possibility that he had hurried into Jennflower's foot seemed more plausible.

The explanation that he had accidentally collided with Jennflower's foot was grudgingly accepted by the other members as it seemed like the most rational one they could come up with for the situation.

"Since it was an accident, this time be more careful when you go to bring down her body. Don't run into her foot again," Ava commanded LightS.

As LightS prepared to make another attempt, Daniel offered a friendly warning, "You were kicked by Jennflower once already. If you go there again, you'll get kicked once more."

"Nonsense! Jennflower is dead; that's just a body. How could a body kick someone? I was just moving too quickly before and that's why I bumped into her foot; it's not the body kicking me!"

LightS was as unconvinced as Shitstrong. To those who didn't believe in him, Daniel had little more to say. Since LightS didn't trust Daniel's warning, there was no use in trying to convince him further. Let LightS go and get kicked again. After all, Jennflower was possessed only by the little boy, and he didn't pack a strong punch—he couldn't kill LightS. At worst, the little boy might just kick out a couple of LightS's teeth.

Daniel casually put his hands in his pockets, ready to watch what was about to unfold.

Chapter 256 Two Birds with One Stone

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Though Ava spoke with some uncertainty, it didn't affect her resolve. She wasn't going to seek help from Daniel, especially if it had something to do with ghosts. She was set on having her team members bring down Jennflower's body without giving Daniel the opportunity to ridicule her.

Ava looked at LightS, who was the tallest among them. He didn't even need a stool to reach Jennflower's body. With the height of six-foot-five, all he had to do was reach out.

"LightS, you bring down Jennflower's body."

"Yes, Sarge!"

Following the order, LightS moved into action. His first approach had resulted in a kick from Jennflower's body. Thus, he was exceptionally cautious this time, moving slowly to avoid another surprise assault. He looked up frequently with each step, but Jennflower's body just hung there, motionless, leading to LightS letting down his guard.

Once more, he reached out, planning to support Jennflower's legs to lift her body up and off the rope. But as his hands neared her, the previously still legs of Jennflower's body moved again, and she kicked LightS in the face. The poor man was sent flying a second time.

"Thump!"

He hit the ground hard, raising a cloud of dust as he landed. Holding his swelling face, LightS cried out in pain.

Daniel asked with a chuckle, "So, did you accidentally run into her foot again this time?"

With his face kicked into swelling, LightS was already fuming. Daniel's mockery sent him over the edge. "Scumbag, are you making fun of me?"

"How would I dare to mock you? I simply reminded you that there's a malevolent spirit inside Jennflower's body—that little boy I mentioned earlier who even peed on Shitstrong's neck. He can't take your life, but he can certainly cause trouble, like making that body kick you."

Daniel's explanation infuriated Ava. "What nonsense are you talking about? If you're so capable, why don't you bring down Jennflower's body?"

The intelligent woman had a strategy: she wanted to kill two birds with one stone. If all went well, she would not only chastise Daniel but also have him handle the troublesome situation.

Ava had been a captain for many years and was skilled at directing subordinates to get things done. Daniel, neither a fool nor a simp, remained unaffected by her ploy. He reminded her with a grin, "Sarge, I'm not one of your team members. You can't control me that way. If you want me to work for you, Sarge, you need to ask me sincerely."

Daniel's words left Ava feeling frustrated and angry. "Scumbag, what do you mean? You expect me to beg you? Do you really think you're that powerful?"

"Sarge, what are you saying? Why don't you let me leave? I'm just a regular citizen."

Daniel's crafty remarks fueled Ava's rage once more. "Scumbag, if you keep bullshitting me, I'll arrest you! I'm ordering you to bring down Jennflower's body now."

"Is that you asking me?"

"Ask nothing! I'm commanding you!"

"Well, I don't respond to commands; nobody can order me around!"

Chapter 257 Sarge's Words

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"You..." Ava stamped her foot in frustration, clearly at a loss about how to handle this scoundrel. After all, Daniel truly wasn't one of her subordinates, and he indeed wasn't under her jurisdiction. Though she had threatened to arrest Daniel, it was merely a threat; she would not actually follow through. She adhered to regulations and wouldn't handcuff someone without cause—being a scumbag wasn't illegal, it was a matter of morality.

Despite being glared at hatefully by Ava, Daniel remained nonchalant. He grinned at Ava and in a taunting tone asked, "Sarge, have you made up your mind yet? Are you going to beg me to give it a try?"

"Beg you?" Ava rolled her eyes at Daniel. "Beg your ass! Just go and bring down Jennflower's body now! If you don't, I'll arrest you."

"Arrest me? On what grounds? Even though you're in uniform, and yes, you're very pretty, if you want to handcuff me, you need a reason."

"Reason? Do I need a reason to handcuff a scumbag like you? Who knows how many girls you've wronged? Just for those things you've done, I have a thousand reasons to arrest you!"

"Sarge, you can't make baseless accusations. If you say I've wronged any girls, you need evidence! If you can't provide evidence, that's slander. Of course, if you wish, you can try to seduce me! You've got nothing to lose, and you can take advantage of me. Most importantly, you'll get your evidence."

"You... you want me to seduce you? Do you hear what you're saying?"

"As attractive as you are, Sarge, I'm not sure you can snag me. But you can always try; maybe I'll find you interesting. If I'm not on my guard, I might just let you take advantage of me."

"Scumbag, I tell you to do something, and here you are spewing nonsense? Keep talking, and believe me, I will tear your mouth apart!"

Ava made a fierce motion as if she was about to rip someone's mouth open. Seeing Ava appear genuinely mad, Daniel decided not to tease her further and cheerfully said, "You want me to get Jennflower's body down, no problem. But I need Shitstrong as my assistant. Whatever I tell him to do, he must do without question or backtalk!"

If he couldn't trouble Ava directly, he'd find someone else to bother. Shitstrong realized Daniel wanted to humiliate him.

With a darkened expression, Shitstrong pointed at Daniel's nose and demanded, "Scumbag, what are you up to?"

"I'm up to nothing! I just want your assistance. Together, we can remove the body from the rope. If we don't bring down Jennflower's body, we can't proceed with the case, which would impact the squad's case resolution statistics, wouldn't it?"

As the two began to bicker, Ava simply commanded Shitstrong, "Do whatever the scumbag tells you to do. I want to see what tricks he's got up his sleeve. If he tries any funny business, I'll deal with him."

Of course, Shitstrong wasn't about to listen to Daniel, but he dared not ignore Ava's orders.

Chapter 258 A Man's Courage

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Shitstrong glared at Daniel resentfully, then, gritting his teeth, complied. "Yes, Sarge!"

Now that he had someone to boss around, Daniel didn't hesitate to take advantage of the situation. He gave Shitstrong a command. "Shitstrong, there's a willow tree outside the door. Go break off a willow branch for me—about as thick as a pinky finger and roughly forty to fifty centimeters long. And make sure it has plenty of leaves; the lush, the better."

"Why?" Shitstrong, predictably, asked.

"Didn't I say earlier? Don't ask why. No matter what I ask, just do it!"

"So you expect me to just follow orders blindly? What, am I a dog you've raised? Even a dog wouldn't be this obedient!" Shitstrong expressed his dissatisfaction.

"Just do it! It's not a big deal to get a willow branch, is it? Hurry up, don't waste time!" Ava spoke sharply, clearly curious about what Daniel, whom she thought to be scum, needed with the willow branch.

Filled with resentment, Shitstrong went outside. He returned swiftly with a branch that met Daniel's specifications and handed it over with a sneer. "Country bumpkin, you're not planning to use this branch to jab Jennflower's body down, are you?"

"You don't jab with it, you have to swing it like this!" Daniel explained as he began whipping Jennflower's hanging body with the willow branch.

"Smack!"

"Smack!"

"Smack!"

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Every time Daniel struck the body, Jennflower's mouth cracked open slightly and a puff of black smoke emerged. Gazing at the scene unfolding before her, a curious Ava asked Daniel, "Why does Jennflower's body open its mouth each time you strike? Why does it exhale black smoke? Surely a corpse doesn't feel pain, right?"

"That black smoke is ectoplasm from the spirit—the same little boy I told you about earlier who urinated on Shitstrong's neck. Once I scatter the ectoplasm, the boy will be forced out."

As Daniel spoke, a bloody head protruded from Jennflower's abdomen. It was the little boy! He emerged, baring his stark white teeth and lunging at Daniel. Daniel deftly dodged the bite and swung the willow branch squarely on the boy's head.

"Whack!"

The strike landed with force, and the boy let out a scream before vanishing. With Daniel's power, eliminating such a spirit was a piece of cake.

Once the boy was dealt with, Daniel assured LightS, "You can now bring down Jennflower's body; I promise she won't kick you again."

LightS, however, was almost psychologically scarred after being kicked twice. He looked at Daniel, his face full of distrust, "She really won't kick me again?"

"With me here, she won't kick you."

"But you were here before, and she still kicked me!"

"That was then, this is now. Are you a man or not? You got kicked twice by a woman, or rather, a female corpse, and now you're scared? Show some of that manly courage, will you?"

Chapter 259 Two Ghosts

Chapter 259 Two Ghosts

"Who says I'm afraid? I'm a man; why would I be afraid of a female corpse? If she ever dares kick me again, I'll twist her foot off!"

After making such a bold declaration, LightS tiptoed cautiously toward Jennflower's body again. When he got about half a meter away from her, he instinctively stopped, his eyes fixated on Jennflower's feet. Although LightS was a man, there was no way he could have any interest in the feet of a female corpse. His watchful gaze was driven by fear of getting kicked again. Fortunately, as he observed, Jennflower's feet did not move an inch.

LightS had also noticed that Jennflower's feet, which had been parallel to the ground before, were now naturally pointing downwards. This observation relieved LightS, and his fear of the corpse dissipated. He mustered up the courage to move forward, positioning himself beneath Jennflower's feet.

Then, he grabbed Jennflower's legs, lifted her, and successfully removed the body from the noose.

At that moment, a disturbing noise echoed from the southeast direction.

Creak...

A small door creaked open, and a little girl in a floral dress happily bounced out. She had two braids on her head, each tied with a small white flower. The girl's complexion was as white as porcelain, like a doll painted with a layer of white lacquer. Her eyes were unnervingly large and purely white, devoid of pupils. The sight was incredibly frightening.

At the sight of the little girl running out, Shitstrong, who had been a skeptic of ghosts, let out a piercing scream. After screaming, he quickly hid behind Ava. Realizing she couldn't protect him, he hurriedly took refuge behind Daniel.

"Scumbag, go get rid of her quick!" Shitstrong pleaded.

"You don't believe in ghosts, Shitstrong? Now you know fear? This little sister is so cute, should I call her over to play with you?" Daniel taunted, making no move to act.

"Scumbag, don't scare me! Just hurry up and kill her! Quick!"

The little girl, with her bloodied, decaying fingers teeming with maggots, pointed at Shitstrong and said, "You die first!" Then, with a leap, she landed on Shitstrong's shoulder.

"Giggle..."

She grinned widely, her mouth gaping open.

Scared witless, Shitstrong fell squarely on his seat, and a mysterious liquid immediately pooled on the ground, accompanied by a pungent scent. Shitstrong had been scared to the point of wetting himself.

"Giggle..."

The girl bared her sharp, pearly-white fangs and lunged for Shitstrong's neck. Just as her teeth were about to sink into Shitstrong's skin, Daniel flicked the willow branch in his hand.

"Whack!"

He struck the girl right in the forehead.

"Aah! Aaaaah!"

With a dreadful howl, the little girl disappeared. Another malevolent spirit was dispelled by Daniel.

"Who killed my two ghosts?"

A loud voice of an older woman emanated from the small door.

Chapter 260 My Love Is Angry

Chapter 260 My Love Is Angry

A stout woman wearing a red coat emerged. It was Mia, incredibly out of place in her attire considering the sizzling summer temperatures around 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Everyone present watched her as if she was a freak.

Ava asked, "Did you kill Jennflower and Handshome?"

"Jennflower is my daughter; she should stay by my side forever," Mia retorted with an eerie calmness that belied the situation.

"So, you killed them because you didn't approve of Jennflower's relationship with Handshome?" Ava probed further.

"I didn't kill them. I've given them eternal life, so they may always be by my side," Mia explained chillingly, her rationality sounding more like that of a deranged person.

Daniel chimed in, "So you killed them and turned them into evil spirits?"

"My daughter wasn't obedient, nor was her boyfriend. But spirits are obedient; spirits do as they're told," Mia rambled on.

Suddenly, Mia began chanting an incantation and making strange hand gestures. One by one, horrifically mutilated spirits clawed their way out from the small door. Some were missing limbs, others had sores on their heads or pus leaking from their feet — none were a pleasant sight.

Daniel grabbed the willow branch and charged forward, thrashing at the spirits until none of them remained.

Right after dealing with the spirits, Daniel's phone rang with a contact labeled 'My Love'. Upon seeing the caller ID, Daniel exclaimed in shock, "HOLY SHIT!" He quickly answered the call.

The voice on the other end was furious, "Daniel, where are you? I asked you to buy some barbecue, and you've been gone so long, you didn't even call or text."

"My love, don't be mad. I got caught up with something, I'll be right back! Immediately back!" Daniel tried to explain, but Ava suddenly shouted.

"Scumbag, are you deceiving another innocent girl?"

Since Ava shouted so loudly, Jessica heard her voice clear as day and hung up, seething with anger.

"Beep beep beep..."

Daniel was stunned. He quickly redialed.

"The number you have dialed is switched off."

Damn it! Jessica turned off her phone?

Fearing the worst, Daniel glared at Ava, "What are you yelling for? You made my love misunderstand! If she divorces me over this, you're to blame!"

With that, Daniel left in a rush, first stopping to buy the barbecue and then heading to the company. Finding the CEO's office empty and Jessica nowhere to be found, he hurried to The Matthews' family villa.

Jessica had intended to ignore Daniel, but growing increasingly angry, decided to wait for him in his villa. She wanted to see if he would come home that evening.

Seeing Daniel return, carrying barbecue in his hands, Jessica got up to leave without a word.

"My love, wait!" Daniel quickly wrapped his arms around her from behind.

"Get off me!" Jessica sharply twisted his hand in response.

Pointing at the durian shell on the coffee table, Jessica commanded with furrowed brows, "Put that on the ground and kneel on it. Reflect on what you've done wrong!"

Chapter 261 It Wasn't Me

Chapter 261 It Wasn't Me

Daniel stared at Jessica, disbelief etched across his face. Was she kidding? She actually wanted him to kneel on durian shells? He was a man; how could he submit to such a degrading demand from a woman? Of course, Daniel would never kneel.

"Why should I kneel if I haven't done anything wrong?"

"You haven't done anything wrong? Then why was a girl calling you a scumbag so loudly?"

"She's not just any girl; she's a total bitch!"

"Bitch? Who is she? What were you doing out with her in the middle of the night?"

"Nothing! My love, what do you think I could possibly do? I'll have you know, there were more than a dozen men with that woman and me tonight. And all of them were those burly types!"

"You scoundrel! You were with over a dozen men and a girl? That's utterly revolting!"

"It certainly was revolting, not to mention the two corpses, one male and one female, involved. The woman had jumped from a building; her brains were spattered everywhere. The man hanged himself; his tongue was sticking out, long and grotesque."

Daniel's narrative was half-truths, half-fabrication.

Jessica sensed something amiss with his story. "Are you giving me a line? Better explain yourself quickly, or you're going to be kneeling on that durian!"

"I went out to get you barbecue, didn't I? And just as I got near King's, a woman literally fell from the sky, dead on impact. I stayed to see what would happen. But then I saw something was off, so I alerted the Sarge in charge of the case—that bitch—telling her it wasn't suicide, but murder. Then, upstairs, we found another body of a man who hanged himself..."

Daniel recounted all the events succinctly, giving Jessica a summary of everything that had happened. Listening to him, she felt like she was hearing a tale from American Horror Story, especially given Daniel's encounter with a Demon raiser.

Jessica looked skeptical as she asked, "Are you telling the truth, or are you just spinning more lies?"

"Why would I lie to you? If even one word I've said is a lie, may lightning strike me down!" Daniel declared, thumping his chest in emphasis.

But as he made his oath, a streak of blue lightning cut through the cloudless sky, accompanied by the sound of thunder.

Rumble rumble!

Coincidence made Jessica laugh. She grinned at Daniel, "It's thundering."

"Thundering is good — it proves I'm not lying! Look, it's thundering, but I'm not struck down. That means the liar isn't me!"

"Stop your nonsense! From every strand of your hair to the tips of your toes, there's not one bit of you that's honest," Jessica retorted, casting a sidelong glance at Daniel. "Is this Sarge woman pretty?"

"Can a beautiful woman be a squad leader? Can a beautiful woman handle being a cop? Can a beautiful woman deal with criminals and corpses every day?"

Daniel didn't answer directly; he used a series of rhetorical questions trying to imply Ava was not attractive. He hoped this tactic would alleviate Jessica's suspicions about him.

"Why did she call you a scumbag, then?" Jessica pressed on. She had to get to the bottom of this issue and wouldn't let Daniel get off easy.

Chapter 262 My Dear

Chapter 262 My Dear

"Why she called me a scumbag is a question I can't answer; you should ask your beloved secretary, Brittany," Daniel deflected, avoiding the question.

"Ask Brittany? Why?" Jessica was puzzled.

"Remember that welcome dinner she organized the other day? Brittany plied me with drinks and then insisted that I drive, deliberately leading me toward where the cops were. Then, that Ava—the bitch—wanted to check if I was driving drunk."

"DUI? You drove drunk and got away with it?"

"Because my body is special. It's like I'm drinking water, no matter how much I drink, my body won't register a trace of alcohol. So, Ava couldn't get anything on me—not with a breathalyzer, not even with a blood test. She had no choice but to let me go."

"And what does all this have to do with her calling you a scumbag?"

"It all started when she was checking me for a DUI. Brittany made her misunderstand, and that's when the bitch started calling me a scumbag. Can you believe it? Me, an honest and kind man, being called a scumbag? Impossible! If I am a scumbag, are there any good men in the world? Would that mean all men are scumbags?"

"Hmph," Jessica grunted disdainfully. "Is the gift ready for Brittany's grandfather's 80th birthday? You're representing the company—did you prepare a gift?"

"A gift? Do I really need to prepare one?"

"Of course you do. You're representing the company. I have two bottles of vintage alcohol here; take them as the company's gesture."

Jessica presented a cloth bag containing two bottles of alcohol, although the labels were rotted away. With a closer look, it was obvious that both bottles were filled with vodka.

"This is vodka?"

"Yes! Fifty-year-old vodka, quite rare. Each bottle's worth isn't exceedingly high, but they'll set you back about a million each."

"You're this generous to Brittany?"

"What are you talking about? You can say these bottles are from you. That way, you can smooth things over with her. If she continues to target you like this and you both are colleagues, it won't be pleasant. Colleagues should get along!"

"My dear, are you asking me to suck up to her? My dear, you really are magnanimous, asking me to curry favor with another reasonably attractive woman."

"Daniel, what are you thinking? You and Brittany can only ever be colleagues. If you dare to have any other ideas, see how I'll deal with you."

"What do you mean? I haven't even tasted the delicacies in my bowl yet! How could I possibly have ideas about her? Do you think I'm stupid?"

Upon hearing this, Jessica grabbed Daniel's ear and demanded harshly, "Daniel, what are you implying? Are you saying you'd chase after her if you got me?"

"That depends on you! If my dear occasionally gives me a bite but never lets me eat my fill, then of course I'll have to look elsewhere. But if you feed me every day and keep me satisfied, even if I wanted to find something else, I couldn't eat it!"

"How dare you speak like that, Daniel? I'll kill you!"

Furious, Jessica twisted Daniel's ear with all her might.

"Ah... ouch... my dear, have mercy! Didn't you say you'd hit me? You're not hitting me; you're twisting my ear!"

Chapter 263 Make Him Comply

Chapter 263 Make Him Comply

Brittany's grandfather was due to celebrate his birthday on Saturday, so on Friday afternoon, Brittany took leave from work. Then she asked Daniel to drive her home. Since Brittany's home was in the countryside on uneven roads, Daniel opted not to drive his Porsche Panamera, choosing instead to drive a Ford Ranger Raptor. The Raptor was versatile, capable of carrying passengers, hauling cargo, and handling off-road conditions.

Upon seeing the vehicle Daniel brought, Brittany's annoyance was evident. "What kind of car is this?" She asked.

"A Ranger Raptor!"

"Ranger your ass!" Brittany scoffed at Daniel, incredulous. "Why didn't you just come on a motorcycle?"

"Because of you."

"You... You're trying to drive me mad, aren't you?" Brittany's aggravation led her to stomp her foot indignantly.

"You mean you can actually be driven to death? Tell me, what should I do to push you over the edge?"

"What do you want to do?"

"I want to drive you nuts! If you die of anger, I'll be happy, and no one will bother me anymore. Wouldn't that be great?"

"You... I..." Brittany was so exasperated that she couldn't find the words, and instead, she lashed out with a kick towards Daniel.

Seeing the high heel about to strike his shin, Daniel quickly stepped back, and Brittany missed her mark. Losing her balance, Brittany stumbled and nearly fell, but Daniel swiftly reached out and caught her by the waist, saving her from hitting the ground.

"You pervert!" Brittany felt taken advantage of and swung her hand toward Daniel's face in retaliation.

A man can't let a woman slap him around, can he? So, before Brittany's hand could make contact with his face, Daniel quickly grabbed her wrist, rendering her immobile.

"Pervert, let me go!"

"I'll release you once you promise not to hit me again."

"You... you're bullying me! Waaah..." In a surprising turn, Brittany suddenly burst into tears.

This dramatic scene unfolded on the street, and bystanders began to think Daniel had mistreated her. Several passersby cast disapproving looks, and a few women even muttered their disapproval.

"What kind of man is he? He's got such a beautiful girlfriend and doesn't know how to cherish her. He even made her cry!"

"A scumbag! Such an angelic girl should be spoiled rotten. Instead, he's making her cry tearfully; what a scumbag!"

"It's just not fair! Unfair! Such a pretty girl getting bullied by a scumbag!"

...

Hearing the remarks from the passersby, Brittany couldn't help but crack a smile amidst tears. She taunted Daniel, "Did you hear that, scumbag? They all disapprove of you! Now go and get me a cup

of coffee as an apology!"

"Why should I get you coffee?"

"Because I want to drink it!" Brittany placed her hands on her hips and looked indignant.

She had made up her mind to train Daniel to be obedient before they returned home, ensuring he'd do exactly as she said to impress her relatives. It was time for a little test to get Daniel used to taking orders from her.

Seeing Daniel remain motionless, Brittany demanded ferociously, "Are you going or not?"

"I can go! But you see, I'm not your boyfriend. So, if you want me to run an errand for you, you'll have to pay me a hundred bucks."

Chapter 264 Car Accident

Chapter 264 Car Accident

"You..." Brittany was so furious she wanted to tear this insubordinate man to shreds. But she held back her anger, dug out a hundred-dollar bill from her wallet, slapped it into Daniel's hand, and ordered him, "Get going!"

"Thank you, Britty," Daniel said, pocketing the cash.

"What did you call me?"

"Britty, right?"

"Only my dad calls me that. You can't!"

"You can call me 'Daddy' if you want. Doesn't bother me."

"You... I'll kick you to death!"

Annoyed, Brittany delivered a kick to Daniel's backside, which he didn't manage to dodge this time.

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Brittany's family home was located in River County. Although part of New York City, River County was more than three hundred kilometers from central New York, and the highways were often congested. When they finally arrived in the town, dusk was approaching.

Daniel was driving alone in the cabin, while Brittany, full from snacks, was fast asleep in the passenger seat. Suddenly, a Tesla in front of them swerved abruptly, veering into a ditch on the side of the road. The car's front end was severely damaged, and the airbags had deployed with a pop.

Seeing this, Daniel quickly stopped the Ranger Raptor by the roadside, causing the well-positioned seatbelt to dig into Brittany's chest abruptly, which was anything but pleasant.

"What are you doing? You're hurting me!" Brittany punched Daniel, annoyed by the sudden stop.

"A car accident."

"Car accident? How do you drive? Can you even drive? On such a wide road, you manage to have an accident?"

Half-awake and not fully aware of the situation, Brittany was disinclined to investigate further. She found it suitable to blame this simple-minded country boy for anything that goes wrong.

"It's not me who had the accident. It's that car in front of us."

Without wasting time on explanations, Daniel quickly got out of the car and approached the wrecked Tesla. The car contained two people, a father and daughter duo. The man was Liam Turner, the recently elected county mayor of River County, and his daughter was named Abigail Turner. The severe impact left both Liam and Abigail trapped inside the car, unable to get out.

Brittany ran over and asked, "Should we call for rescue?"

Daniel surveyed their surroundings and said, "We're on a mountain road with very few cars passing by, and it took us over an hour to get here from the county seat. Rescue might take too long. Let's try to open the door and get them out ourselves."

"The doors are deformed. How are we supposed to open them?"

Daniel grabbed the door and pulled.

"Snap!"

The door came right off.

Brittany was astounded. "So violent!" she muttered in disbelief.

Daniel ignored her comment and quickly pulled Liam, who was jammed in the driver's seat, out of the vehicle. He then went around to the passenger side and extracted Abigail as well. Abigail was okay, just a few superficial injuries. Liam, while appearing to have only suffered minor injuries, had become unconscious.

Daniel took Liam's wrist to check his pulse and soon understood what had happened. "Does your dad have a heart condition? Did he lose control of the car when his condition acted up?"

Abigail stared at Daniel incredulously, hardly believing what she heard. "How... how did you know?" she asked.

Chapter 265 Saving Your Dad

Chapter 265 Saving Your Dad

"I've just examined your dad! I'm a doctor, and I can treat his condition," Daniel insisted, preparing to administer acupuncture with his Needle of the Seven Dragons.

"What are you doing?" Abigail stopped Daniel, refusing to let him perform the procedure.

"Saving your dad!"

"Saving him? I think you're trying to harm him. What the heck are you holding? Where did you pick up that filthy needle? Did you even sterilize it? What if you infect my dad with it?"

Abigail bombarded Daniel with rapid-fire questions, her mini-tirade leaving his good intentions shattered.

"Your dad's having a heart attack! If I don't perform acupuncture right away, he might die. Then all you can do is hold him and cry."

"You call yourself a doctor? I can tell you're a fraud. Acupuncture? It's all nonsense!"

"It's infuriating that you're questioning my sincere attempt to save your father's life. My medical skills are a treasure of the United States, they've been here for thousands of years. You should know, Native Americans have been using shamanistic healing for that long!"

"Relying on shamans for thousands of years, and how high is the average lifespan of Native Americans? I haven't seen any who lived past a hundred!"

"That's because the settlers came!"

"Heh," Abigail chuckled dismissively. "I knew that would be your excuse. Scammers like you who rely on shamanistic trickery always make this claim. You can maybe deceive country housewives with that rubbish, but you can't fool me, I won't believe it!"

"So you don't care if your dad dies?"

"Who said I don't care? I graduated from the New York Medical University, and I'm a resident doctor at the hospital. I'll call my supervisor right now."

After declaring this, Abigail took out her phone and made a call.

Witnessing Daniel being overwhelmed by the young girl's defiance, Brittany couldn't help but find joy in his struggle. She taunted Daniel with a smug smile. "Country boy, weren't you often unstoppable with your tricks, and no one ever resisted you? How come your charm has failed now, in front of a young lady? Especially one graduated from New York Medical University, ranked among the top three medical schools in the country. You think you could deceive her with your lowly tricks? You're more naive than I thought. So let's just leave; it's getting late and it would be troublesome if you had an accident in the dark."

Despite witnessing Daniel's medical talents before, Brittany still believed his successes were mere flukes, not genuine competence. Besides, her primary reason to bring Daniel back was to make him pose as her boyfriend, so her mother would stop nagging about finding one. Daniel theoretically cure her grandfather's chronic ailments was nothing more than a pretext; she was acutely aware that Daniel couldn't possibly cure her grandfather's long-standing everyday illnesses.

Chapter 266 The Duty of a Doctor

Chapter 266 The Duty of a Doctor

Daniel had no intention of leaving. Even though Abigail didn't trust him, he was a doctor with the duty to save lives. He couldn't just leave a dying patient. Daniel decided to stick around and wait for the doctor Abigail had called. If the incoming doctor could save Liam, only then would Daniel feel relieved. But, if that doctor was incapable, Daniel would have to step in.

The wail of sirens heralded the arrival of an ambulance. A group of medical professionals arrived led by a middle-aged man named Gabriel Hill, the most capable doctor at the county hospital. Gabriel usually did not attend to emergency calls, but he made an exception this time due to Liam's considerate influence.

Gabriel stepped out of the ambulance, immediately attaching various devices to Liam for a thorough assessment.

"Abigail, your father's condition doesn't look good. If we wait to get him back to the hospital, it might be too late. I need to treat him right here and now to keep him alive,"

Gabriel announced, turning to a young nurse. "Give him a shot of adrenaline to maintain his heart rate."

The nurse set into action upon receiving the order. Daniel, overhearing the plan, urgently interjected, "Gabriel, if you give him adrenaline, he'll die right away."

Gabriel glared at Daniel, his tone growing icy as he demanded, "Who are you?"

"I'm just a passerby with good intentions. Also, I'm a medical practitioner."

"A medical practitioner? Which hospital are you with?"

"I don't belong to a hospital, I'm a shaman from a village."

"A shaman? So, you admit to being a charlatan, here to deceive and possibly harm Liam?"

Gabriel's accusation left Brittany momentarily speechless before she jumped into the conversation, questioning, "Wait, what? Did you say this guy is a state legislator? From which county?"

"Obviously, it's our River County!"

Gabriel's response sparked an idea in Brittany. Her family needed help with an issue she couldn't handle alone, and she didn't want to involve Jessica. However, this country boy was an entirely different matter. She felt entitled to command him to resolve the issue as her due reward.

Brittany pulled Daniel aside and asked him, "So, if that doctor administers the injection, will Liam really die?"

"Definitely," he replied.

"But you could bring him back to life afterwards?"

"I can."

"Perfect! Let the doctor proceed with his treatment. After Liam passes, you'll resuscitate him, making you his lifesaver, right?"

"What's your angle?" Daniel was suspicious.

"I need his assistance with something. If you save his life, he surely can't refuse your request, right?"

"What do you need help with?"

"It's important."

Brittany was not about to reveal her plans to this country boy just yet, so she kept quiet about what she needed to resolve.

Meanwhile, with Daniel distracted by Brittany, the young nurse followed Gabriel's instructions and injected Liam with adrenaline.

Read Chapter 267 You're a Swindler

Chapter 267 You're a Swindler

Chapter 267 You're a Swindler

As the medicine was injected into his vein, Liam's body jerked, and then he started to foam at the mouth, resembling someone who had been poisoned. Before anyone could react, his breathing halted abruptly.

Was he dead?

Had Liam died?

Gabriel was flabbergasted. "How could he be dead?" he wondered, puzzled. After all, administering adrenaline was standard practice for such a patient, the appropriate response without a doubt. The injection was supposed to revive Liam almost instantly. Instead of waking up, however, he appeared lifeless.

"Dad! Dad, wake up!" Abigail called out, shaking Liam's body, trying to rouse him. But no matter how much she shook him, there was no response from her father.

Gabriel organized his thoughts and then reluctantly stepped forward to broach the subject. "Abigail, I'm sorry! I did everything I could, but we were too late. There was nothing more we could do to save your father," he said, his demeanor regretful. Suddenly remembering Daniel's earlier warning, Gabriel spun around and pointed accusingly at him.

"Abigail, if you want someone to blame, blame him! This charlatan argued with me and delayed the emergency response. Moreover, he cursed Liam, claiming the adrenaline shot would kill him. So, Liam's misfortune is not due to a failure in my medical abilities or treatment approach, but because of this swindler! He is the one who killed Liam!"

Gabriel's baseless accusation stunned Daniel.

Stepping forward, Daniel responded calmly with a smile. "Gabriel, this is our first encounter. How can you make such accusations against me? Do you really think this is my fault?"

"Accusation? I'm merely stating the facts. Liam's death is on your hands - that's the undeniable truth."

"You're saying Liam is dead?"

Daniel's query perplexed Gabriel. "Of course, he's dead! His pulse is gone, there's no heartbeat, he's obviously dead."

"He's not dead."

Daniel's statement rekindled a glimmer of hope in Abigail, who had been wailing by her father's side. She stopped crying, her large eyes wide with anticipation as she asked Daniel, "What did you say? You're saying my dad isn't dead?"

"Um-hmm," Daniel nodded seriously. "Though it looks like your dad might be dead, he's indeed alive. However, only I can revive him."

Gabriel burst into laughter at Daniel's audacious claim. "Hahaha... You swindler, you don't even bother to make up a plausible lie. Liam is dead, all the instruments show zeroes – that signifies death. Saying he's still alive is nonsense. Besides, you're nothing more than a barefoot doctor, a swindler! You think you can bring Liam back to life? Resurrect a dead man? What joke is this? Abigail, don't believe a word from this liar – he cannot save Liam!" Gabriel sputtered with scornful disbelief.

Chapter 268 I Believe in You

Chapter 268 I Believe in You

Seeing Gabriel obstructing him from saving Liam, Daniel felt obligated to remind him of his responsibility. "Liam is in a state of suspended animation. His body may appear dead, but his consciousness is still there. He can hear everything happening right now. So if you continue to stop me, you're effectively trying to murder Liam! You don't want me to save him because it would show that you're nothing more than an incompetent doctor who can't save lives but only claim them!"

Enraged, Gabriel turned beet red. Pointing at Daniel's nose, he retorted, "You... you swindler, how dare you accuse me of being incompetent?"

"If you're not incompetent, then why is Liam, a living man, now dead by your hands?"

"What do you mean by saying I've made him dead? Liam had a pre-existing heart condition! He suffered a sudden deterioration, and unfortunately, we missed the window for the first aid. Any doctor would have chosen the treatment I did!"

"And if it wasn't for your adrenaline shot, how could Liam have died so swiftly?"

"You... you're talking nonsense!"

Gabriel was defiant, but deep down, he knew Daniel was right. He was well aware that Liam's death was indeed due to the injection he administered. Nonetheless, his choice of treatment was by no means wrong; Liam's demise was simply fate.

Tired of arguing with Gabriel, Daniel turned to Abigail. "Do you want your dad to live?"

"Of course, I do!"

"Then step aside, don't block my way."

"What are you going to do?"

"Save your dad!"

"Can you really do it?"

"A man can't say he can't. You get me? If someone says he can't, then he's not a man."

Daniel prepared his Needle of the Seven Dragons and got ready to administer it to Liam. Abigail intervened hastily, "Your needle looks dirty and grimy. Aren't you going to wash it or sterilize it first?"

Before Daniel could respond, Gabriel couldn't resist grabbing the opportunity to discredit Daniel. "It doesn't really matter since he's just fooling around for fun. He's merely defiling the corpse, not sincerely trying to revive your father."

Gabriel's comment made Daniel pause. He looked seriously at Abigail and asked earnestly, "Do you believe in me?"

"I... I'm not sure."

"You don't trust me to save your dad, but you trust this quack who killed him? Fine, then I won't interfere. It's your dad who's dead, not mine!"

With that, Daniel put away his needle. In response, Abigail panicked and hastily expressed her faith, "I believe in you! I believe in you! Please save my dad, you must bring him back!"

Even though Abigail felt cornered and had her doubts about this person being able to save her father, she had no other option but to take a gamble.

"Abigail, you've been deceived by this swindler. Your father is dead; not even God could bring him back. This man must be harboring ulterior motives; you must be careful!"

Chapter 269 Gabriel's Slander

Chapter 269 Gabriel's Slander

Daniel, keeping his cool and donning a cheeky smile, responded to Gabriel's accusation, "Gabriel, what do you mean I have ill intentions?"

"You know exactly what you're up to!" Gabriel was intent on defaming Daniel without any evidence, so his retorts were vague.

As Daniel prepared to retort, Abigail cut him off, "Stop arguing already, just treat my dad!"

"Yes, ma'am!" Daniel replied dutifully.

Hearing 'ma'am,' Brittany snapped, pointing an accusing finger at Daniel, "Ma'am? Who are you calling 'ma'am'?"

"Definitely not you, you bitch!"

"You... you country bumpkin, you dare call me a bitch? And you dare hit on another woman right in front of me?"

"Why can't I call other ladies 'ma'am'? Who do you think you are?"

"Who am I? Please clarify your own status here!"

"What status do I have? I'm just your fake boyfriend, nothing real about that. There are no relatives of yours here; do you have the right to stop me from chatting up other pretty ladies?"

"Chatting up, eh? You're only hitting on Abigail because she's Liam's daughter. You're just a male gold-digger!"

After berating Daniel, Brittany turned to Abigail to offer her 'friendly' advice, "Abigail, this country boy is not a good man, be careful not to get deceived by him."

"He's not a good man? Then why are you hanging out with him? Why do you have him pretend to be your boyfriend?" Abigail was bewildered.

"Maybe she's just trying to seduce me! But I'm an upright wolf, I won't fall for her tricks."

While bantering back and forth, Daniel administered acupuncture to Liam. When the Needle of the Seven Dragons went in, Liam's legs kicked powerfully like those of a frog.

This movement amused Gabriel, who couldn't help but joke, "A frog?"

His comment angered Abigail, and she lashed out at him, "You're the frog!"

To divert from the awkward moment and recoup some dignity, Gabriel tried to distract everyone by exclaiming, "I get it now! I understand this charlatan's plan. He's a shaman and insists on using acupuncture, which needs to be practiced on corpses. So, under the guise of reviving Liam, he's actually using Liam's body to practice his acupuncture! Liam's movement is just a reflex triggered by the charlatan hitting a specific point that stimulated a nerve, it's not a sign of him coming back to life."

After finishing his monologue, Gabriel felt quite proud of himself, thinking he had cleverly seen through the charlatan's plans.

Having had her reservations about Daniel from the beginning, Abigail found Gabriel's analysis quite plausible after listening to him. She eyed Daniel warily and asked, "Is what Gabriel said true? Are you using my dad's body to practice acupuncture?"

Instead of answering directly, Daniel countered, "What do you think?"

Chapter 270 Try His Best

Chapter 270 Try His Best

"When it comes to treating illnesses, I'll do my best. But whether I succeed or not, that's up to God. If God doesn't want your father to live, even if I manage to bring him back, a thunderbolt might just strike him down," Daniel explained.

"You'll be the one struck by lightning! If you keep talking nonsense instead of treating my dad properly, I'll pray for a thunderbolt to turn you into ash!" Abigail threatened, exasperated by Daniel's attitude.

Without another word, Daniel inserted the second needle, and Liam's eyes fluttered open.

Gabriel was dumbfounded. "He... he became a zombie?" he asked fearfully.

"Zombie? You're the zombie!" Daniel retorted, then turned to Liam. "Do you feel better?"

"How could a dead man speak?" Gabriel still refused to believe that someone who'd been pronounced dead could be revived, so even with Liam's eyes open, Gabriel remained convinced Liam was still dead.

"Thank you! Doctor, thank you for saving my life!" Liam spoke, shocking Gabriel into silence.

Abigail rushed over and embraced Liam happily, "Dad, you're alive? You're really alive?"

"It's all thanks to this doctor; he brought me back." Liam's words were a testament to Daniel's successful treatment, and Gabriel, unable to accept this, quickly tried to claim credit for himself.

"Liam, it wasn't this charlatan who saved you, it was me. I used adrenaline to pull you back from the brink of death. This charlatan... he did nothing to save you; he was just defiling your body with those weird needles."

Abigail furrowed her brows at Gabriel's words. "What did you say? A body? Are you saying my dad was dead?"

"No, no! I meant the body, not the corpse!" Gabriel backpedaled, but then shamelessly continued, "You saw the situation yourself, Abigail. You should know the person who saved Liam wasn't this fraud, but me."

"You? I recall you just said my dad was dead. How can you now claim you revived him? Gabriel, for the top doctor of the county hospital, isn't this a bit too shameless?" Abigail challenged Gabriel, clearly not supporting his narrative.

Seeing Abigail wasn't siding with him, Gabriel turned his plea to Liam. "Liam, you must believe me. It was truly me who saved you. If I hadn't arrived in time with that adrenaline shot, by now you'd probably be checking in with the Grim Reaper. I'm not saying this to claim credit, but to restore the truth. Most importantly, I want you to understand." Gabriel's desperation was clear as he tried to maintain his integrity and authority in the eyes of both Liam and Abigail.

Chapter 271 Who Saved Me?

Chapter 271 Who Saved Me?

Liam let out a cold chuckle and said plainly, "I know very well what's going on."

Gabriel thought his plan had worked when he heard Liam. "Liam, since you know what's up, you better call for help and nab this con artist. He dared to deceive you, Liam. If you don't arrest him, it won't calm the public rage! Not catching him would tarnish your dignity, Liam. He should be locked up! No, jail's too kind for him; you should at least have him shot!"

Gabriel's words made Liam frown with puzzlement. He looked at him, questioning, "Gabriel, what did this guy do to you? Why do you want him dead?"

"I didn't even know the dude before all this. There's no beef between us. But, Liam, he fooled you, so he's gotta go. You have to have him shot!"

Abigail couldn't stand to listen anymore. She jumped in with a frosty voice, "If lying to my dad were a shooting offense, Gabriel, you would have faced a firing squad hundreds of times over!"

"Abigail, what's that supposed to mean?" asked Gabriel.

"What does it mean? Don't you know, Gabriel? I honestly didn't realize you were such a shameless character before. It's you who's been fooling my dad, yet here you are, accusing this doctor of deception! Gabriel, your medical skills may be lacking, but you surely excel in turning black into white!"

Abigail's scolding left Gabriel red-faced and speechless. "Abigail, you... you've got it all wrong!"

Seeing that he couldn't fool her, Gabriel quickly turned to Liam. This daughter was too smart, but he could still try to trick her dad! After all, Liam had been unconscious and clueless about what really happened.

"Liam, I'm the one who saved your life, not this charlatan. If you don't believe me, you can ask them."

To prove his point, Gabriel quickly asked the other doctors for backup. "Am I telling the truth? Did I save Liam or did this con artist?"

Those doctors weren't fools, and they knew that truth and facts didn't matter at that moment—it was all about choosing sides. So, they chimed in one after another.

"It was Gabriel who saved Liam, not this fraud. He nearly killed Liam."

"Yes, that's right! It was Gabriel who saved him! He's the best doctor in our county hospital."

"This guy's just a scam artist. He doesn't even have a college degree; how could he possibly save Liam?"

...

Listening to these doctors' flattery and false praise made Liam's skin crawl. He looked at the crowd and asked, "The things you just said, did you really mean them? Are you guys speaking the truth?"

His question silenced the doctors instantly; some even hung their heads in shame.

Facing this situation, Liam brought out his authoritative side as a legislator and sternly questioned the doctors, "I want you all to listen and tell me the truth. Who really saved me? Was it Gabriel or was it this young miracle doctor? I want nothing but honest answers!"

Chapter 272 A Woman Not to Be Trifled With

Chapter 272 A Woman Not to Be Trifled With

The doctors were looking at each other, not one stepping forward to answer. If they told the truth, they'd surely offend Gabriel. If they kept up the lies and upset Liam, they would face consequences they couldn't bear. So, the best choice for the doctors right now seemed to be to keep their mouths shut and say nothing.

Seeing that not a soul among the doctors was willing to come forward with the truth, Liam's face showed his disappointment, and he shook his head, letting out a sigh. "Ah..."

Just as Liam was at the height of his disappointment, a young man wearing glasses stepped forward. His name was Owen Foster, a graduate of New York Medical University assigned to the county hospital. Although his performance was outstanding, he was still an intern after three years and had not become a full-time doctor. His contemporaries, even those less qualified and skilled, had secured their positions long ago. The sole reason Owen hadn't made it? He didn't flatter his superiors.

"Liam," began Owen, "right after Gabriel gave you an injection, it looked like you were gone for good. In fact, Gabriel had already declared you dead. Indeed, it was that man with what seemed to be a grimy, dirty needle who saved your life."

Owen's words shocked everyone. Gabriel jumped up like a stepped-on tail, pointing at Owen and demanding loudly, "Who are you? How did you worm your way into the county hospital? What are you babbling about here?"

Owen just laughed coldly in the face of Gabriel's interrogation. "Ha," was all he let out. Then, with an indifferent air, he said, "Of course you don't know who I am, Gabriel. After all, I never gave you a bribe. So naturally, my name never appears on the list of promoted interns. No surprise that you don't recognize me."

"What bribery? Stop slandering me with your wild claims!" Gabriel snapped back sharply.

"I get it now! You're in cahoots with this fraudster, trying to frame me in front of Liam?" Gabriel said, trying to turn the tables.

It was then that Liam stood up and spoke, "Whether what this intern doctor says is true will be clear after an investigation. Gabriel, if you are innocent, the investigation will prove that. And if you're not, you'll receive the punishment you deserve."

After addressing Gabriel, Liam turned to Daniel and said sincerely, "Thank you, Doctor."

"No need to call me 'Doctor.' My name is Daniel Perkins. Just 'Daniel' will do."

At that moment, Brittany stepped forward, questioning Liam directly, "Are you a good legislator?"

"Miss, what do you mean by that?" Liam asked, puzzled.

"I mean nothing by it. If you're not a good legislator, then consider it as if my country bumpkin just saved a dog's life. But if you are, then you might want to take a trip to Greenfield," Brittany said firmly, her tone not in the least subservient.

After all, Greenfield was part of River County, and the sorry state it was in had been ignored for many years. Even if the problems of Greenfield were not Liam's fault directly, it was his negligence nonetheless.

Chapter 273 Confession

Chapter 273 Confession

"Greenfield?" Liam looked puzzled. "What happened there?"

"Just go and see for yourself. You can't rely solely on hearsay; seeing is believing. Of course, if you go with the attitude of a legislator, you might not see things as they truly are."

"Alright! I'll definitely go!" Liam promised. But he didn't say when he would go. Since he planned to investigate quietly, he needed to keep it low-key. If he announced when he'll be going, those responsible for any wrongdoing might prepare ahead of time and make his investigation futile.

With Liam in good health again, Daniel got back on the road. Greenfield was just over ten miles away, but since the roads were mostly through the mountains and often poorly maintained, it could easily take an hour to drive those ten miles.

"What happened in your town?" Daniel asked Brittany curiously.

"Just take a look when you get there, okay? You country folk couldn't fix it even if you tried. It's out of your hands anyway; it's something for Liam to address since he's the legislator!"

As they talked, Brittany suddenly remembered something and stared directly at Daniel. "Is Abigail pretty?"

"Prettier than you," Daniel replied without missing a beat.

His answer sent Brittany into a fury. "Prettier than me? You country bumpkin, have you taken a shine to her or what? Before you entertain any such thoughts, you'd better take a long look in the mirror and see if you're even in her league."

"What?"

"Abigail is the legislator's daughter. And what are you? Just some village boy from the sticks! You're nowhere near her status, you're way out of her league—no, there is no freaking league for you; you're worlds apart from her!"

"So, I am just a country boy from the village, and Abigail is out of my league. But since you're from the village too, does that mean you're on my level?" Daniel joked shamelessly.

"Drop dead! I got out of the mountains on my own merits. Now I'm a city girl, a New Yorker, and I even have my own place in New York! What about you? What are you? A grown man without even a college diploma, let alone a house. How dare you confess your feelings to me? You're not even worthy to lick my boots."

"Confess? When did I confess anything to you? Even if you were the last woman on earth, I wouldn't confess to you. Know this—you're being a real bitch!"

"You jerk! You piece of crap! You dare call me a bitch? I'll clobber you!"

In a rage, Brittany's fists came down like raindrops all over Daniel...

Their playful banter made the time fly by quickly. The Ranger Raptor finally arrived in Greenfield and stopped in an open space.

Just as they stepped out of the car, a beam of light shone on them. A BMW X1 pulled up behind them. It was Brittany's cousin Emily Carter's car; her husband, Mason Carter, worked in the construction industry in New York.

Emily, dressed to the nines, stepped out of the car. She approached Brittany with a self-satisfied air and called out brightly, "Brittany, you're just getting here too? What's this, a pick-up truck? Oh my, didn't this little truck cost you a pretty penny?"

Chapter 274 Mutual Disdain

Chapter 274 Mutual Disdain

Emily only acknowledged luxury cars like BMW, Audi, and Mercedes, dismissing everything else as cheap. So even a Ranger Raptor, worth over a hundred thousand dollars—enough to buy several BMW X1s—still looked like a bargain-bin item in her eyes.

Brittany and Emily had been rivals since childhood, exchanging barbs whenever they met. Each looked down on the other, each wanting to outdo the other.

When Emily mocked Brittany's "cheap" pickup truck, Brittany couldn't let it slide. "Yes, this is a Ranger Raptor. It's worth over a hundred thousand dollars, enough to buy several of your BMW X1s."

"What? A broken-down pickup truck, a village vehicle for hauling pigs, costing over a hundred thousand dollars? That nonsense might fool the unworldly villagers, but not me. Try harder. And besides, no matter whether it's looks, performance, or brand, your truck can't compare to my BMW."

Emily then turned to her husband, Mason, and asked, "Honey, could this broken-down pickup be worth a hundred thousand? Can it even compare to our BMW?"

Mason, a minor executive in his company, of course knew this wasn't just an ordinary pickup; it was the high-priced Ranger Raptor. But as a man, he couldn't lose face. So, for the sake of his ego, he gritted his teeth and said, "That pickup isn't worth much! We use it for hauling bricks on the major city project I'm working on."

Emily was pleased with his answer and boasted to Brittany, "Did you hear that? My husband is working on major projects, key city projects."

Then Emily turned to Daniel and asked mockingly, "Is this provincial little mutt your husband?"

"What husband? He's just a country boy who follows me around, trying to win my affection. Although he's really sweet to me and does whatever I ask, I haven't accepted his pursuit."

"Oh! So, he's a simp?" Emily regarded Daniel with amusement and advised, "Here's a tip: this is not going anywhere. You'll end up with nothing! You see, my cousin isn't some foolish girl. She's been chased by many guys, always bringing different simps back when she visits home. But you, country boy, are the most pathetic of all the simps she's brought home!"

Daniel examined Emily's face closely, catching her attention. "What are you looking at?" she demanded.

"Looking at your face," Daniel replied, causing Brittany to want to kick him into orbit.

"Country boy, who said you could look at her face? Do that again, and I'll gouge out your eyes."

"It's just a professional habit," he excused himself.

"A professional habit? Hah!" Emily laughed derisively. "What profession could a country rube like you possibly have? A thug?"

"I'm a doctor, a healer, and I was just diagnosing you. And indeed, you do have an illness."

"What did you say? You think I'm sick?"

"Of course! And not just any illness—you have an STD!"

While Daniel was serious and not trying to mock Emily, his words ignited her rage. "You're the one with an STD! Your whole family has STDs! Brittany, you wench, you're riddled with STDs!!"

After hurling her insults, Emily stormed off with Mason in tow.

Chapter 275 The Plan

Chapter 275 The Plan

"If you don't treat your STD soon, by noon tomorrow, you'll suddenly have an outbreak. Your face will be covered with a lot of red spots, and it will be unbearably itchy. If it's not handled properly, those red spots will fester, and then your whole face will be like a country boy's skin, full of bumps that will never go away," Daniel called after Emily to warn her, but Emily didn't pay him any attention.

Seeing Emily walk away, Brittany quickly dragged Daniel into a corner. "What are you doing? Trying to seduce me this late at night?" Daniel asked.

"Seduce? Cut the nonsense! Do I need to seduce you? One look from me, and you'd follow me like a dog."

"Brittany, don't be so full of yourself. Even Jessica isn't as confident as you."

"Ha! It's you who's overconfident, country boy. You're so full of yourself that you've forgotten who you are! Now you're eyeing Jessica too? Do you really think you're worthy of her?"

"If you're not trying to seduce me, then what's this corner chat about?"

"I'm asking you if it's true about Emily having an STD?"

"Of course it's true."

"She actually has an STD? So tell me, did she get it herself from fooling around, or did Mason get it and pass it on to her?"

"How should I know? If you want to know, go ask her. Ask if she's slept around, and if she hasn't, then it must've been her husband fooling around and giving it to her."

"She's really going to get sick by tomorrow at noon?"

"Of course! Don't you trust my medical skills?"

"Trust your ass! What medical skills do you have, country boy? You've just been lucky, getting it right by chance. I hope you don't disappoint me this time. I really hope your luck holds out!"

Brittany was filled with anticipation. Tomorrow at noon was her grandfather's 80th birthday party, where everyone would be present, including many guests. If Emily's STD flared up then, and her face suddenly broke out in red bumps, it would be a scene to behold.

On the other hand, after storming off, Emily felt uneasy. Indeed, she'd had an indiscretion after a recent drunken encounter with an old crush from her youth. They had reconnected at a reunion, and under the influence of alcohol, something happened. Moreover, they were so carried away they didn't take any precautions.

But, of course, Emily would never admit it.

"Mason, stop!" She yelled at her husband, then aggressively questioned him, "Have you been fooling around?"

Mason broke out in a cold sweat at the shout. He worked in the construction industry, with plenty of socializing outside, and such incidents were almost inevitable. But he couldn't admit it.

"How could I betray you? With a beautiful wife like you, why would I go fool around?"

"If you haven't been messing around, how could I get an STD?"

"What STD? That country bumpkin was talking nonsense; don't believe him! He's trying to slander you, tarnish your reputation. You'd be foolish to believe his lies."

Mason hurried to explain, desperately trying to deflect the accusation.

Chapter 276 The Gift

Chapter 276 The Gift

"You'd better not have been fooling around outside! If you dare, I'll divorce you and kick you out of my house!" Emily threatened Mason, needing to pin everything on him first to cover up her own actions.

After the reunion, she hadn't slept with Mason. But lately, she indeed felt something was off with her body...

The next day, at noon, Brittany's grandfather, Oliver Cunningham's 80th birthday party, was held at his residence. They weren't a distinguished family, so most of the attendees were relatives, friends, and neighbors.

As the celebration began, Mason promptly presented his gift, a ceramic vase. "Grandpa, wishing you health and longevity! This vase, a 500-year-old antique, is worth a million dollars."

Daniel caught one glimpse and knew it was a fake. But Mason trying to pass off a counterfeit as genuine to Oliver was none of his concern, so he stayed quiet. He was here with Brittany just to fill his stomach and saw no need to stir up any trouble.

Daniel was enjoying his shrimp, trying to avoid any drama, when Emily decided to pick on him. "Country boy, you're Brittany's boyfriend, aren't you? Even if you're not officially together yet, surely you shouldn't come empty-handed to her grandpa's celebration!"

Daniel quickly took out the two bottles of fifty-year-old vodka he had brought and handed them to Oliver. "Happy Birthday! I hope you enjoy these humble bottles of spirits."

He didn't brag that it was vodka or that it was aged for fifty years.

Seeing this, Emily loudly mocked him, "Brittany, don't you think this is a bit much? It's your grandpa's 80th birthday, look at what your boyfriend brought. Two bottles of booze without even a

label, looking all grimy. Are they even drinkable? What if it's poison? Are you actually trying to get rid of your grandpa on his 80th birthday by poisoning him?"

Brittany, unaware that Daniel had brought a gift, was even less aware that the unassuming bottles were fifty-year-old vodka, each worth a million dollars. So she became infuriated.

Pointing at Daniel's nose, she scolded, "Country boy, what in the world are you doing? It's my grandpa's 80th birthday. It was fine if you didn't bring a gift, I didn't expect you to. But what's with bringing these two bottles? Are you trying to embarrass me on purpose?"

"The gift isn't for you, so why are you the one getting upset? It's for your grandpa," Daniel responded, then turned to Oliver with a warm smile. "Grandpa, do you accept my gift?"

"Of course! I'm from the country. We don't chase the value of gifts. What matters is the thought, not the price."

Oliver cheerfully accepted the bottles from Daniel, then turned to both Emily and Brittany with a lesson. "You two have been at each other's throats since you were kids. It's fine for you to argue amongst yourselves, but nobody gets to speak ill of Daniel. Him coming all this way to wish me a happy birthday shows respect to this old man, he's my honored guest."

Chapter 277 An Ungrateful Woman

Chapter 277 An Ungrateful Woman

Despite Oliver's chiding, Emily wasn't done yet. "Brittany, it's Grandpa's 80th birthday, and my husband brought an antique worth a million dollars. And your boyfriend only brought two bottles of booze that I doubt are even worth ten dollars. Even if they're not poisoned, it's just too shabby, isn't it?"

Emily's remarks brought Daniel to a stop right in the middle of his meal. He decided it was time to shut this ungrateful woman up for good. "My gift is aged liquor. It's fifty-year-old vodka, and each bottle is worth over a million dollars."

His blunt honesty sparked howls of laughter from everyone around. "Ha ha ha ha..."

After the laughter subsided, the whispers began. "What? Two dirty bottles of vodka from fifty years ago, each worth a million dollars?"

"A million-dollar bottle of alcohol wrapped in a dirty plastic bag?"

"Fifty-year-old vodka? Does he really think we're that gullible?"

"This kind of 'aged' liquor is all over the internet. A well-done vintage replica sells for two or three hundred. But if it looks like this, we can tell it's fake at a glance. I bet it doesn't cost more than a few tens of dollars!"

The relatives scoffed at Daniel, but Oliver had had enough. "Enough! Shut your mouths!" He bellowed, silencing the crowd. "Daniel, you gave me two bottles of liquor. Whether they're valuable or cheap, I appreciate your thoughtfulness. But you can't lie, son."

Oliver wasn't the type to scorn the poor and fawn over the rich. He was an honest farmer who enjoyed lively company. It didn't matter who came to celebrate his birthday; he was happy just to be remembered. He didn't care about the value of the gifts.

"Old sir, I did not lie to you. The bottles I brought are indeed fifty-year-old vodkas, each really worth one million dollars."

Daniel's words seemed to spark some realization in Emily. "Don't pretend I don't know what you're planning, country boy!" she accused.

"And what plan is that?" Daniel asked.

"You bring two worthless bottles of liquor and claim they're worth a million dollars each, totaling two million dollars. With a gift so expensive, what could my family possibly give you in return? The only explanation is that you want something special—you want my family to marry Brittany off to you! But I'm telling you, you haven't got a chance of

marrying Brittany! You're not worthy! You're a poor country boy who can only afford a broken pickup truck and tells nothing but lies. Brittany is meant to marry someone rich!

Although she's not as beautiful as me, she won't marry someone as successful as my husband, who manages major city projects. But with Brittany's looks, marrying a small business owner or a white-collar worker shouldn't be a problem."

Emily managed to achieve three things with her tirade: she affirmed the notion of Daniel, the country boy, wanting to marry Brittany; she praised herself, painting her husband as an extraordinary catch; and she didn't forget to demean Brittany in the process.

Chapter 278 Brittany's Plan

Chapter 278 Brittany's Plan

"Emily, what are you implying? Your husband is a big boss, handling major city projects? What are you talking about? Don't think I don't know he's just a small team leader with a bit of clout at City Hall who's got a contract to patch up a public restroom wall," Brittany retorted.

Being from the same city, how could Brittany be unaware of Emily's real situation?

Once the truth was out, Emily was, of course, livid. "So what if he repairs public restrooms? Public restroom projects are also significant works, costing millions to build. A single restroom remodeling contract can earn him tens of millions. Yes, my husband repairs public restrooms, correct. But he's capable of presenting a grandpa with a centuries-old vase worth a million dollars as a birthday gift! And what about your boyfriend? What does he do? Is he in the business of selling fake liquor? Otherwise, why would he bring two bottles of fake liquor as a birthday gift?"

Brittany knew Daniel's bottles weren't valuable, but she was also certain that Mason's vase was a fake. Could a guy who only drove a BMW X1 and took on a small contract for tiling a public restroom's outer walls, leading a few laborers, afford an antique worth a million dollars? What was that, a joke?

Then it clicked for Brittany—this country boy was savvy about antiques, even more so than Nicholas.

So, she decided to use Daniel to expose Mason's pretense. Pointing at the vase, she asked, "Country boy, this is a vase from five hundred years ago, supposedly used by Chinese emperors, and valued at one million dollars?"

"If that's true and each piece is indeed a million dollars, I'll take however many you have without haggling. Even if it's not an emperor's personal item, any official Chinese vase from five hundred years ago would be worth at least five million each. If it was used by a Chinese emperor, it would be

worth at least fifty million dollars. After all, anything utilized by an emperor, even a chamber pot, would be meticulously chosen and the best of the best."

Daniel's words sent Emily spiraling into fury. "What are you saying, country boy? Are you saying my husband's vase is worth fifty million dollars?"

"I said if it was used by a Chinese emperor, it would be worth fifty million dollars. But this one you have clearly isn't an imperial relic from China. Imperial items would bear their mark, I mean, they would be stamped with their seal. Why don't you see if this vase has any markings or seals of a Chinese emperor?"

Emily picked up the vase and scrutinized it thoroughly, but she couldn't find any trace of a seal. There weren't any at all. Emily was well aware of Mason's character and more so of their financial situation. She hadn't even finished paying last month's credit card bill and was negotiating installments with the bank, so she knew the vase wasn't worth a million dollars. She was unaware of how much Mason had paid for it and hadn't asked—as far as she was concerned, it wasn't necessary for an item costing a few tens or hundreds of dollars.

Even knowing it was fake, Emily couldn't admit it. So, she lied confidently, "Even if it's not used by an emperor, it's still an antique from five hundred years ago."

Chapter 279 Purchase from Auctiq

Chapter 279 Purchase from Auctiq

Brittany knew Emily was lying, and she felt compelled to expose and humiliate her. So she coldly said, "Emily, just because you say the vase is five hundred years old doesn't make it so. You'll need to provide evidence to convince anyone to buy that story. If you can't, then that vase is nothing but a fake, worth at most a hundred dollars. Using a cheap knockoff to impersonate a million-dollar antique as a gift... Emily, good for you. Deceiving your own family like this—I wonder if you have a conscience."

Brittany's words left Emily speechless. While Emily struggled to think of a response, Mason stepped forward with what he claimed was evidence.

"I've got proof, right here!" Mason presented a receipt, slapping it down on the table. "This vase was purchased from Auctiq. This is an invoice from them. As you know, Auctiq is the largest and most prestigious antique store in New York. Every antique

there is a luxury item, top-grade, and worth a fortune. This vase may not be much compared to Auctiq's other items, but it's definitely a genuine antique."

"Auctiq? Are you talking about the Auctiq owned by Nicholas?" Brittany inquired.

"Of course! There's only one Auctiq in New York, and that's Nicholas's Auctiq!"

Mason was unaware that Brittany knew Nicholas, let alone that Daniel was Nicholas's master. Thus, he felt confident enough to lie so brazenly with a fake receipt in hand. After all, neither of them could contact Nicholas, nor could anyone present there reach someone of his stature. Hence, he thought the fake receipt would be enough to prove the vase's antiquity and value.

Brittany picked up the receipt and instantly recognized it as a counterfeit, mercilessly exposing Mason's lie.

Emily immediately flared up in anger. "On what basis do you say the receipt is fake? It's issued by Nicholas himself; how could it be fake? You do know that Auctiq is the biggest antique store in New York. Could they really issue a fake receipt? What kind of joke is this?"

"This receipt is most definitely fake. If you don't believe me, I can verify it right now," Brittany said as she pulled out her phone and accessed the app to check the authenticity of the receipt by inputting its number.

The screen returned with a bright red message: Invalid Number!

"See? I told you the receipt is fake, didn't I?"

Faced with undeniable evidence, Emily found herself at a loss for words once again. Of course, she knew the receipt was fake. She could only turn to Mason and ask, "What's going on?"

"It's like this. Because I'm quite close to Nicholas, he gave me a discount when I bought the vase. It was supposed to be two million, but he sold it to me for one million. So, yeah, the receipt is indeed fake. But just because the receipt is, doesn't mean the vase isn't genuine."

"Heh," Brittany scoffed suspiciously. "How could the vase be real if even the receipt is fake?"

"The authenticity of the receipt isn't important. In the world of antiques, nobody cares about receipts."

Chapter 280 Mason's Trap

Chapter 280 Mason's Trap

Brittany's mocking laugh rang out again in response to Mason's weak attempt at justification. "Heh. So, Mason, just a moment ago, you yourself produced an invoice to demonstrate the authenticity and the supposed million-dollar value of this vase. Now you're saying the truth of the invoice doesn't matter. Do you hear yourself? Your statements basically imply you haven't said a single true thing; I don't even know what to say to that. Don't you have any sense of shame?"

With a slap of his hand, Mason produced an appraisal certificate. "This vase has an appraisal certificate, certified by the American Antiquities Appraisal Center. It's the most official certification body there is! Anything they verify as authentic is the real deal!"

Of course, Mason's certificate was as fake as it gets, acquired for thirty bucks from a counterfeit specialist. Such dealings were his forte. The ability to land a contract for tiling a public restroom was due to his fake engineering qualification, which was costlier—at three thousand dollars—because it involved more intricacies.

Brittany glanced at the certificate and burst into laughter, immediately mocking Mason for his low-quality fake. "Mason, faking documents might be your expertise, but this fake certificate isn't very impressive. Look at the fuzzy edges on this seal."

"Who says my certificate is fake? It's genuine! See, it even has a QR code issued by the American Antiquities Appraisal Center. Don't believe me? Just scan it."

After scanning the QR code with her phone, Brittany was directed to the center's webpage. Following the verification code input, the result appeared. Shockingly, the certificate seemed legitimate. However, the image of the vase on the certificate was too blurry for a direct comparison, yet, at a glance, it didn't seem far off from the actual item. Despite only spending thirty dollars, Mason's counterfeit guy was quite the professional, even supporting online verification.

The certificate was actually a switched license—a deceptive practice where the QR code leads to the certificate for a different vase.

Emily, her pride swelling, waved the certificate triumphantly at Brittany. "See? The certificate can be verified on the official website. Now you can't keep questioning its authenticity, can you? So, can you finally admit that my husband's vase is worth a million?"

Brittany was lost for words and could only turn to Daniel for support. "Country boy, you said this vase was fake, didn't you? Since you claimed it's fake, go ahead and bring forth the evidence to prove it!"

"The vase is indeed fake; it's artificially aged and done rather poorly at that. The method to prove it's fake is quite simple, just remove the outer layer that's been aged and you'll see its true nature. However, the vase isn't mine; it's a gift from Mason to the old man. Therefore, I can't damage it!"

Mason sensed an opportunity and swiftly set a trap for Daniel. "Country boy, if you're so sure it's artificially aged, go ahead and show us. But if you fail to prove it's a counterfeit, you owe me a million!"

Chapter 281 Winning the Bet

Chapter 281 Winning the Bet

Mason was sure that his artificially aged vase would not be detected, believing the country boy would never find proof to the contrary.

"Fine!" Daniel agreed to Mason's challenge, then turned to Brittany and said, "Bring me a sharp knife, something really sharp."

Brittany was stunned and looked at Daniel incredulously, hands on her hips. "Country boy, are you ordering me around?"

"You're the one who wanted me to prove that this vase is a fake! So obviously, you need to assist me. If you don't want me to expose this thing, then forget it. It's not my vase anyway, and whether it's real or fake doesn't concern me one bit."

Daniel appeared utterly indifferent, which was only fair. It was Brittany who wanted to embarrass Emily, not him. She was the one in a hurry, not him.

Brittany, fuming with anger, glared at Daniel and barked, "You just wait!"

She soon returned with a sharp knife and brandished it in front of Daniel with a menacing threat: "If you screw this up, I will cut you!" Her eyes briefly darted to Daniel's crotch as she said "cut," scaring him into a shiver.

Brittany's target was unsettling, to say the least. Daniel dared not provoke her further; if she carried out her threat, his life would be ruined.

"Mason, are you sure you want me to examine this vase? If it turns out to be a fake, especially a worthless fake, it's going to expose your lies."

Mason was taken aback by Daniel's words, reacting as if his tail had been stepped on. "What lies? I haven't lied about anything! My vase is a genuine antique from five hundred years ago, worth a

million. I have the appraisal certificate as proof. Are you saying that's also fake? No matter how you check it, my vase is real, not a fake.

But let me remind you, this vase is a valuable antique, a million-dollar item. If you damage it with that knife, you won't be able to afford it!"

Suddenly, Mason had an idea. "Country boy, since you likely can't come up with a million dollars— even selling you would not fetch that price—I'll make it easy for you, since you're Brittany's boyfriend. If you damage my vase, you can just hand over that wreck of a pickup truck to me. I can use it to haul bricks."

Emily immediately raised her hands in agreement. "Yes! If you damage our vase, your old truck will be compensation. We can use it to haul bricks!" While she didn't think the pickup was worth much, she estimated it at thirty to fifty thousand dollars. She wasn't about to turn down basically free money.

"So what happens if the vase is proven to be a fake? Are you going to give me that BMW X1? Brittany doesn't have a car, so you can give it to her."

Daniel had no interest in the BMW X1, so he figured he might as well offer it to Brittany instead.

"Deal! I accept!" Mason was confident that the country boy couldn't prove the vase was a fake. In his mind, this bet was a sure win.

Chapter 282 Backing Out

Chapter 282 Backing Out

The wager was set, and as the challenge commenced, everyone geared up to witness what they expected to be an unveiling of the truth. Daniel took the knife to the vase, making a cut across its body. With a simple twist, he broke the vase in half—it was a fake containing another newer vase inside.

He pulled out the inner vase, turned it over and found an inscription on the bottom. "New York, 2018!" Everyone was shocked at the brazen date marking on what was supposed to be an antique.

Mason was dumbfounded, and even Emily was baffled. However, neither of them was the type to be embarrassed easily. Determined to save face, Emily tried to divert attention by questioning Daniel about the vodka.

"Country boy, you claim these bottles are fifty-year-old vodka and each is worth a million dollars. How will you prove it?"

"That's easy!" Daniel replied. "With Mason's vast connections in New York, surely he knows many vodka collectors, right? Let him find someone willing to buy my vodka for a million dollars a bottle. That should be proof enough. And since the vase you provided turned out to be a fraud, the BMW X1 now belongs to Brittany."

"Who agreed to that? I wasn't aware," said Emily slyly, as if never part of the bet.

Heh, the typical Emily. But I never had any interest in that old BMW of yours anyway; even if you offered it to me, I wouldn't take it!"

Brittany knew Emily was unlikely to give her the car. She never expected it and only wanted to shame Emily. Brittany aimed to make Emily think twice before opposing her again.

Without responding directly, Emily told Mason, "You're good friends with Nathan Brooks from the county, who collects fine liquor, right? Why don't you call him to come over and appraise these bottles to see if they're really fifty-year-old vodka worth a million dollars each?"

Mason was indeed close to Nathan, so he confidently made the call, certain that with Nathan's evaluation, the bottles would not be identified as aged vodka worth a million dollars.

"Fine, I'm calling Nathan now."

Soon after he made the call, Mason wore a self-satisfied look. "Nathan is a busy man—he's currently delivering vodka to a legislator. He's bringing eighty cases! As soon as he's done serving the legislator, he'll come right over."

"You see? Only Mason has such clout. Nathan, serving a legislator, will come straight over at his call."

Emily's words prompted a scoff from Brittany. "Heh! What did you say? You're saying legislators drink vodka?"

"Of course they drink vodka! The legislator's liquor of choice is premium vodka. What, do you think they drink cheap spirits worth a few tens of bucks per bottle?"

Brittany turned to Daniel and asked, "Can legislators drink vodka?"

"Absolutely not, unless they're looking for trouble! I can't speak for what the legislator did in the past, but for the last three years, he's definitely been abstinent."

Suddenly, the room went silent, and the certainty of victory Mason and Emily had felt began to waver under the weight of their own hubris and deceit.

Chapter 283 Nathan Arrives

Chapter 283 Nathan Arrives

Daniel's comments about Liam not drinking for three years were not baseless. He had given Liam medical examinations and even administered injections, so he was very familiar with Liam's health condition.

Emily couldn't resist a sneer at Daniel's confidence. "Country boy, I didn't realize you were this good at bluffing. Don't tell me you're claiming to know the legislator? Otherwise, how would you know he hasn't drunk in three years?"

Instead of directly answering her question, Daniel countered, "The legislator you're talking about, is it Liam?"

"Wow, country boy, you did your homework! Or did you just look it up on your phone? You actually managed to figure out the River County legislator's name. You really are quite something, using your phone to show off!"

...

It wasn't long before Nathan arrived. Mason greeted him warmly with a drink and they exchanged pleasantries. After some chit-chat, Mason pointed at the two bottles of vodka and asked Nathan, "These two bottles of booze, take a look and tell us if they really are fifty-year-old vodka and if each is worth a million dollars."

Nathan examined one bottle and then shook his head. "Judging by these bottles, they look like the fake vodka that's sold online. They're cheap. This one might be worth a few tens, but their cost is probably only a few bucks each. After all, the contents are likely substandard industrial vodka, or even just industrial alcohol—it's not distilled from grain."

Nathan's comments filled Emily with smug satisfaction as she quickly ridiculed Daniel. "Country boy, did you hear that? Nathan's been in the vodka business for decades. He's experienced and an

expert in tasting vodka. You tried to pass off two bottles of cheap knock-offs as fifty-year-old vodka, each supposedly worth a million dollars. I think you've lost your mind to come up with such a lie."

Daniel ignored Emily and turned to Nathan, asking with a cheerful grin, "Nathan, you've been in the vodka business for decades? Are you an expert at tasting vodka?"

"Absolutely! When it comes to vodka appraisal in River County, if I say I'm second, no one would dare to claim they are first."

"If Nathan is the best vodka expert in River County and can't recognize fifty-year-old vodka, that would be quite a letdown, wouldn't it? If word gets out, I'm afraid Nathan's appraisal skills will be widely questioned. That would mean no more vodka appraisals for you and no more dealing in vintage spirits. Vodka is the bread and butter of your line of work, isn't it? If you can't identify vodka, Nathan, you might want to look for a new job."

Nathan responded to Daniel's words with a scoff and retorted, "Do you think talking like that will fool me? I've seen plenty of people who buy fake antique liquor online and try to pass it off as real to me. Do you think I'll fall for your trick? Since you claim your bottles are fifty-year-old vodka, then prove it. If you can prove it's fifty-year-old vodka, I'll buy it from you for two million a bottle."

Chapter 284 Switching Sides

Chapter 284 Switching Sides

Nathan issued that challenge, skeptical about the truth behind Daniel's claim that the bottles held fifty-year-old vodka. However, he also knew that, if it was true, purchasing the bottles at two million each could be a worthwhile investment since such aged vodka was incredibly rare. Properly marketed, it could sell for at least three million per bottle.

Daniel turned to Brittany with a grin and requested, "Get me a glass!"

"Are you ordering me around again?"

"I'm trying to help you here. If you don't need my help, let's forget about it. After all, this is your grandpa's house, not mine. You're the one getting humiliated, not me."

Infuriated, Brittany pinched Daniel hard on the waist. "Jerk!" After cursing him, she stomped off to fetch a glass.

"Get a clean glass, as transparent as possible. Better yet, wash it so we can see right through it and examine the color of this fifty-year-old vodka properly."

"What a hassle!" Despite her complaint, Brittany did as instructed, knowing that the nature of the vodka was pivotal to whether or not she'd be ridiculed — this was her battle with Emily, not Daniel's.

Slamming a sparkling clean glass on the table, Brittany then glared at Daniel threateningly. "I've got your glass. If you can't prove that this vodka is fifty years old, I'm going to mess you up."

"Daytime or nighttime?" Daniel replied with a mischievous grin.

Flushed with anger and embarrassment, Brittany turned away. She decided to ignore the country boy, as there was never any reasonable talk from him.

Daniel reached for the bottle, about to open it, when Nathan interjected.

"Buddy, if you open that bottle and it actually is fifty-year-old vodka, I won't be able to buy it for two million. The value comes from it being unopened. Once you open it, it loses value. Nobody will pay for opened alcohol even if it's genuine because of the suspicion that it might have been adulterated. So, if you want to prove it's fifty-year-old vodka, my advice is to not open it and find another way to demonstrate its authenticity."

"Nathan, these two bottles of fifty-year-old vodka weren't meant for selling; they are meant as a birthday gift for her grandpa to enjoy, not to be sold."

With that said, Daniel twisted off the cap with a pop. Just cracking it slightly unleashed a rich aroma that instantly filled the air. Merely catching a whiff of the scent seemed to make everyone feel light-headed.

Having dealt with vodka for decades, Nathan recognized its character better than anyone. As the scent hit him, he knew right away what it was. "This is actually vodka? And it really does seem like aged liquor."

That immediate conclusion from just a scent set alarm bells ringing for Emily. Nathan was her husband's pick, why was he suddenly backing the country boy? She had to remind Nathan whose side he was supposed to be on.

"Just because it's vodka doesn't mean it's fifty years old! Besides, you haven't even poured any out yet. You're deciding it's vodka just based on its smell?" Emily asserted.

She knew she had to somehow guide Nathan back to supporting her and Mason's side of the bet.

Chapter 285 Selling It for Two Million

Chapter 285 Selling It for Two Million

Nathan was up to the challenge, confidently applying his expertise in response to Emily's doubt. "Vodka is distinct from other spirits; its scent is unique. I've been in the spirits business for decades, and vodka is what I deal with the most, it's what I know best. So I can tell from just the smell when the cap is opened – I don't need to see it, and I don't need to taste it!"

"You can tell from the smell that it's fifty-year-old vodka worth a million dollars a bottle?" Emily pressed with two pointed questions.

"I can't do that," Nathan admitted. "To identify whether it is fifty-year-old vodka, I need to observe its color and would be better off tasting a drop to accurately verify its authenticity."

Daniel had already poured the vodka. Usually, vodka appears clear, but those with some age – over ten years old – acquire a pale yellow color. Daniel's vodka poured out a rich golden hue, resembling amber, and looked absolutely stunning. Beyond its impressive color, the aroma was also intoxicating, making people feel almost dizzy from just a whiff. The sensation was marvelous.

Upon seeing the vodka in the glass, Nathan's eyes lit up like a cat that had spotted a tiny fish, full of eager anticipation. He asked Daniel with a mix of excitement and anxiety, "May... may I smell it?"

"Sure," agreed Daniel.

Nathan leaned in greedily to savor the aroma, deeply inhaling the fragrant scent. "Is this truly fifty-year-old vodka?"

His question caused Emily to misunderstand, assuming there was a problem with the vodka. She immediately piped up, excited, "How could this possibly be fifty-year-old vodka? Look at the color; it's yellow like pee. Only God knows what's been added to it. Maybe it's mixed with wild dog urine! Fifty-year-old vodka? I think it's just dog urine water; it's worthless! You wouldn't find anyone foolish enough to buy it for a hundred million, much less a hundred."

Though Emily wasn't knowledgeable about spirits, she knew vodka should be clear when poured. This yellowish liquor looked more akin to beer, which is also yellow. And she was well aware of the price of beer – merely a few bucks per bottle, at most ten dollars.

"Vodka is different from other spirits. With time, good vodka turns a light yellow color. The longer it's stored, and the better the quality, the yellower it becomes. From the look and scent of this drink, this isn't just fifty-year-old vodka; it is top-quality vodka."

Pointing to the unopened bottle left on the table, Nathan turned his inquiry to Daniel. "Buddy, since this bottle's been opened, I'll pass on it, but the unopened one, could you sell it to me for two million?"

His words left Emily's jaw hanging. She stared at Nathan in disbelief, "Nathan, have you gone mad? Are you really paying two million for this low-quality liquor, for a bottle of beer?"

"It's not beer; it's vodka. The value of fifty-year-old vodka is roughly around two million dollars."

"Nathan, I've presented this vodka as a gift to Brittany's grandpa. If you're interested in buying, you shouldn't be asking me; you should be asking him if he's willing to sell?"

Chapter 286 The Dylan

Chapter 286 The Dylan

Daniel's words left Nathan stunned. Two fifty-year-old vodkas, given away as gifts? His generosity knew no limits, considering each bottle could fetch over two million dollars!

Turning to Oliver with a grin plastered on his face, Nathan asked, "Hey Oliver, would you sell me that bottle of fifty-year vodka?"

"Not for sale! That's a gift from my granddaughter's boyfriend—I'm saving it. I'll crack it open on the day she gets married. As for the one we've opened, let's enjoy it today. Nathan, you've come all this way; I can spare you a glass. But just one—this drink is too precious for more."

Oliver had Brittany fetch the glasses. One for each person, he poured out the vodka, then took the unopened bottle to store away.

Suddenly, a group barged into Oliver's home. The ringleader was Dylan Hayes, also known as The Dylan, the boss of DeepOre Ventures and the kingpin of River County. Everyone knew when The Dylan stomped his foot, River County shook with an earthquake—that was the measure of his power.

"Trash this place!" With Dylan's command, his cronies flipped tables and scattered the feast across the floor.

The party had been going on for over an hour, and most guests had their fill, so no one was left hungry amidst the chaos.

Daniel stood frozen, trying to grasp what was happening. Had Brittany offended some mob boss who dared to disrupt her grandfather's birthday bash?

Oliver, furious, demanded, "Dylan, what's the meaning of this?"

"What? Oh, so you, you old fool, led the townsfolk to my coal mine, blocking operations, right? And you dared to report me for environmental pollution of Greenfield? After ruining my business, you have the gall to celebrate your eightieth birthday with no respect for me?"

Emily stepped forward. She had lost a squabble to Brittany earlier and now sought to prove her mettle to everyone.

Poking Mason, she asked, "Honey, can you smooth this over?"

Smooth this over? Mason had heard of The Dylan's reputation and knew it wouldn't be easy. Why did her grandfather have to provoke The Dylan, who viewed the coal mine as his golden goose? Disrupting The Dylan was like declaring war.

Resolving such a matter wasn't simple, but faced with expectations, Mason couldn't admit defeat, especially not in front of family and friends, as a big shot from New York.

With reluctance, Mason stood up, fished a cigar from his pocket, and offered it to Dylan.

"Dylan, there's been a misunderstanding! I'm really sorry if my grandfather has impacted your mining business. Let me apologize on his behalf!"

Chapter 287 No Relation to Our Family

Chapter 287 No Relation to Our Family

Dylan didn't take the cigar Mason offered him; instead, he delivered a loud slap across Mason's face. "Slap!" Stunned by the impact, Mason listened as Dylan spoke coldly, "Apologize? You call this an apology? If you want to apologize, you need to kneel!"

Without hesitation, at the drop of Dylan's words, Mason dropped to his knees. "I'm sorry, The Dylan!"

This was Mason's way of dealing with problems. Lacking Dylan's strength, he had to grovel like a dog, letting Dylan vent until he was appeased—a skill that had gotten Mason to where he was today. Mason could be haughty before those weaker than him, but a groveling dog before the powerful.

Another slap from Dylan sent Mason tumbling to the ground. "What good does your kneeling do? If you're going to apologize, you need to show some real sincerity! Whoever led the ruckus at my mine should be the one kneeling and apologizing!"

Dylan's gaze turned icily to Oliver. "You old fool, thought you were so tough? Let's see if your bones are still as hard today."

"You expect me to kneel and apologize? The enemy shot and crippled my legs on the battlefield, and I never knelt. You think I'd kneel to a bastard like you?" Oliver's rage flared. He was a retired veteran who had served in Vietnam. He maintained good health when he returned and chose not to take any government support, instead living as a farmer in his hometown.

But Oliver never expected to face someone like Dylan in his twilight years—the tyrant who almost single-handedly turned Greenfield into his kingdom. Dylan had opened a coal mine upstream, dumping waste into the river and leaving slag in the village. In less than five years, he turned the beautiful Greenfield into a barren wasteland where not even weeds could survive. The recent surge

in cancer deaths in Greenfield was, Oliver believed, due to the pollution from Dylan's mining activities.

"You dare call me a bastard? I'll smash your damn mouth!" Dylan swung his hand toward Oliver's face.

But Oliver was a seasoned soldier and a hero who defended his country—Daniel couldn't let him be humiliated by a thug like Dylan. So, Daniel intervened, swiftly grabbing Dylan's wrist and freezing the slap mid-air.

Acting on the principle of an eye for an eye, Daniel smacked Dylan across the face. Caught off-guard, Dylan's fleshy cheek absorbed the blow.

"Slap!" The satisfying sound accompanied Dylan as he fell to the ground, his cheek swollen, the corner of his mouth bleeding.

Everyone was dumbfounded. This country boy had the nerve to slap The Dylan— sending the man sprawling?

Emily quickly stepped forward, eager to disassociate with Daniel. "The Dylan, this country kid has nothing to do with our family. His slap has nothing to do with us—it's between you two!"

Chapter 288 Take Him Down

Chapter 288 Take Him Down

Dylan scrambled up from the ground, his cheek burning from the slap, and glared at Daniel, bellowing, "You have the guts to slap me?"

"Slap!" Daniel didn't bother with a verbal response; instead, he answered with another sharp slap across Dylan's face.

Dylan was a mix of shock and rage, scarcely believing what was happening as he glared at Daniel and barked, "You dare slap me again?"

"Slap!" Daniel's hand met Dylan's face once more without any explanation.

Rage flooded Dylan after the third slap. "FUCK!" He cursed loudly, then shouted commands to his crew. "Take him down, beat this reckless country boy to a pulp!"

At Dylan's bidding, his pack of roughnecks charged toward Daniel like rabid dogs. These hoodlums, though not professionally trained, were no strangers to brawls on the streets. They were brutal to themselves and their foes alike, and they weren't unarmed. Armed with steel pipes, daggers, and even machetes, they attacked.

Daniel stood emotionless as they lunged toward him. Fists and feet flying, he floored the gang of attackers in under a minute. Walking up to Dylan, he said in no uncertain terms, "Kneel before the old hero, apologize, promise never to cross him again, and shut down your lousy mine!"

It wasn't a negotiation; it was an order from Daniel to Dylan.

"You country boy! After injuring my men and slapping me around, you want me to kneel and apologize? I've been The Dylan in River County for decades; I've never been insulted like this! You have no idea who you're dealing with!"

With those words, Dylan pulled out a handgun and aimed it at Daniel's chest. To ensure his safety, he stepped back, widening the distance between them. Even if Daniel acted quickly, he couldn't outspeed the bullet from Dylan's gun.

"Kneel down now, or I'll shoot you on the spot!"

Gun in hand, Dylan was cool and confident. He didn't rise to a position where a single stamp could shake River County with his fists—it was the gun. Dylan could kill without trial.

Anyone in River County who dared mess with Dylan would meet their end by his bullet. All his past adversaries who'd offended him were taken out, leaving him without rivals.

Daniel, hands in his pockets, faced the gun pointed at his chest without a trace of fear, even poking fun with a laugh. "Wow, The Dylan lives up to his reputation! I thought you just had a gang of thugs at your command, but who would've thought you'd actually carry a gun? That old pistol and the way you hold it looks pretty professional; you must've killed before, huh?"

"I've taken lives with this gun, over a hundred," Dylan boasted. "If you don't do as I say, you're next!"

Chapter 289 Kneel Before Me

Chapter 289 Kneel Before Me

Dylan's eyes were wide with fury as he stared down Daniel, his voice commanding with malice. "Country boy, are you not kneeling before me? I'm going to count to three, and if you don't kneel, I'll shoot your knees out from under you and make you kneel!"

As he spoke, Dylan pointed the gun downward, aiming at Daniel's knees, and started counting backwards.

"Three!"

"Two!"

"One!"

He finished counting, but Daniel remained upright before him, seemingly fearless.

"You actually dare not to kneel? You think I won't shoot?"

Dylan roared in anger and pulled the trigger. But just as the bullet was about to exit the barrel, Daniel stepped forward swiftly, grabbed the gun, and with a gentle twist, warped the metal barrel into a knot.

"Bang!"

The deformed barrel caused the gun to backfire. The explosion mangled Dylan's hand, shredding flesh and severing several fingers.

"Ah... AHHH..."

Dylan howled in agony, clutching his mangled hand.

"Country bastard, you dare to blow up my hand! I'm going to make sure you're dead today! Do you know who my big brother is? My big brother is Good Hayes, the boss of the county police! I'm calling him right now to come get you. He'll lock up every single person here; I'm going to make sure you all end up behind bars!"

Dylan had been able to wreak havoc in River County for so long without consequence because he had a powerful older brother. Good was in charge of River County's safety and one of the most influential figures in the area. Thanks to his brother, Dylan could kill without fear of arrest.

The brothers were like gods in River County.

Emily panicked as she heard this. The last thing she wanted was to go to jail for this country punk. With Good being the police boss and Dylan's brother, Daniel was definitely going to get arrested, and if she didn't clear her involvement quickly, she might end up in trouble too.

"The Dylan, this country boy has nothing to do with us! He's the one who offended you, not our family. My husband even knelt and apologized to you just now! The country boy here, he's not related to our family; he's not even a friend. So, his actions can't be tied to us!"

"This country punk was helping Oliver – is he also not part of your family?" Dylan questioned.

His wound was hastily bandaged, and while the painkillers helped somewhat, pain still contorted his face. He had already called Good, who was on his way. Dylan chose to stay and witness his brother arresting Daniel and Oliver, instead of going to the hospital.

He planned to deal with the rest later, but in the meantime, his gaze shifted to Brittany. "That dame looks pretty good. Bring her along too when my guys get here; I'm gonna have a good time with her."

Chapter 290 Good Arrives

Chapter 290 Good Arrives

Brittany slapped Dylan across the face with swift retribution.

"Slap!"

Dylan was staggered. "What the hell! How dare you, a woman, slap me?"

Though one hand was ruined, Dylan's legs were still strong. He lashed out with a kick at Brittany. But before his foot could connect, Daniel intercepted with a kick of his own to Dylan's lower leg.

"Crack!"

Dylan's leg snapped under the force, sending him tumbling to the ground in agony.

"Ahh... AHHH..."

Dylan, with his one intact arm, clutched at his broken leg and rolled on the ground, screaming louder than a wild boar caught in a trap.

Just then, Good arrived with a squad of uniformed officers. Three SUVs pulled up, carrying more than a dozen armed and equipped men.

"Everyone, get down on your knees! Hands on your heads!"

Years of authority in the police force lent Good a commanding voice that compelled everyone present to comply, kneeling down and clasping their heads. Everyone except for three individuals: Daniel, Brittany, and Oliver.

In River County, Good was regarded almost as a deity—he didn't even need to speak, just a glance was enough to intimidate most people. However, now that he had issued an order and three people dared to defy him, Good felt his authority was challenged, and he burned with anger.

He glared at the three standing defiantly and demanded, "Are you deaf? I told you to kneel and put your hands on your heads, didn't you hear me?"

"And why should we kneel just because you said so?" challenged Daniel, hands in his pockets as he faced Good. "Men's knees are precious. I certainly won't kneel for you,

unless you're dead. After all, I'd give a dead man respect—as is the custom here in America. So, Good, if you want me to kneel, you'd better keel over dead first. If not, you won't see me kneel."

"Big brother, it's this country punk! He blew up my hand, broke my leg, and laid out all my guys. I told him who you were, head of the county police, but he said you're an ass. He claimed even if you showed up, he would beat the crap out of you and threatened to kill you and our whole family!" Dylan exaggerated the turmoil.

Good was instantly enraged upon hearing his brother's words. Pointing a finger at Daniel, he roared, "You're threatening to kill our whole family?"

"Why would I bother killing your whole family? But if anyone from the Hayes family steps out of line, commits crimes, I'll deal with the culprits. And Good, your position as police chief doesn't change a thing. If you arrest this thug brother of yours and uphold the law, I'll let you off the hook—I won't lay a hand on you. Otherwise, I might have to teach you a little lesson myself."

Chapter 291 You Don't Want to Live

Chapter 291 You Don't Want to Live

Daniel's brazen words sent Good into uproarious laughter. "Ha ha ha ha... Country punk, what did you say? You want me to arrest my little brother and bring him to justice? And if I don't, you're going to teach me a lesson? Did a door hit your head or something? Do you even realize who you're speaking to?"

Good waved his hand, signaling his men. "Since this country boy won't kneel, you two teach him how it's done."

At Good's command, a burly officer and a lean one approached Daniel from behind. Each grabbed one of Daniel's shoulders and pressed down hard, trying to force him to kneel. But Daniel stood firm as a mountain, unmoved even as they exerted their full strength.

The burly officer then aimed a vicious kick at Daniel's knees, intending to break his legs. However, before his foot could connect, Daniel grabbed his arm and executed a perfect judo throw.

With a thud, the burly man hit the ground like a slab of meat falling off the butcher's table.

"Ouch... Ouch... Damn you! Ouch!"

Wailing in pain and rolling on the ground, the burly officer was nearly knocked unconscious. Seeing his partner in disarray, the lean officer drew his pistol and aimed it at Daniel's head.

"Don't move!"

He yelled, reaching for his handcuffs to restrain Daniel. But before he could bring them out, Daniel delivered a kick that sent the officer flying. The gun from his hand now in Daniel's grip.

Without skipping a beat, Daniel pointed the gun at Good, who was in total shock. "Country boy, you're pointing that gun at my head; do you have a death wish? Do you know who I am?"

"Of course, I know who you are! You're the bully's umbrella here in River County! Today, I'm eliminating a public menace!" With that, Daniel kicked Good to the ground and kept the gun trained on him.

With their leader's head under the gun, the uniformed men didn't dare move.

"You... you better put the gun down and surrender now! Otherwise, I swear I'll kill you!" Good was still trying to act tough.

After saying this, he attempted to get up, but before he could steady himself...

"Slap!"

Another slap from Daniel sent him spinning and tumbling back to the ground. "You dare to slap me?"

"It's not me slapping you—it's for all those ordinary people in River County who have suffered under your thumb! If it weren't for you, how could Dylan have caused so much trouble?"

Good tried to get up again.

"Slap!"

And Daniel delivered another mighty slap, flipping him back to the ground once more.

Suddenly, a loud voice bellowed, "What's going on here?"

The voice was familiar, and Daniel looked up to see someone he knew.

Liam had arrived!

Only then did Daniel remember that Brittany had mentioned to Liam the day before about coming to Greenfield. To his surprise, Liam had actually shown up today.

Chapter 292 Goodbye, Liam

Chapter 292 Goodbye, Liam

Liam, who had transferred to River County only last month, had already gotten the lay of the land on the Hayes brothers. After Brittany asked him to check out Greenfield, he discovered the havoc the upstream coal mine had wreaked on the village, causing deadly environmental pollution and numerous fatalities. There had also been a mining accident that was hushed up, with no compensation for the victims. These injustices demanded Liam's attention.

As a member of the county legislature, he had a duty to ensure that the citizens of River County could live their lives peacefully and safely.

Seeing Liam arrive, Daniel immediately put away his gun. Good, spotting Liam, seemed to see a savior and rushed to him, sobbing and sniffing as he reported the incident. "Liam! This country boy, he puffed up my face and stole the gun from my officer, he pointed it at me!"

Liam glanced over at Daniel and asked, "Did you swell up Good's face?"

Daniel nodded unapologetically and answered, "Yes, I did."

"Why did you slap him?"

"I didn't slap him out of personal spite. I did it on behalf of the ordinary folk of River County! The Hayes have troubled this place for too long, and a few slaps are just a minor reprimand. As for the crimes they have committed, I trust the law will decide their punishment. Now, I'm handing the Hayes brothers over to you, Liam. Don't let the people of River County down. I hope you give justice to those they've tormented."

Good erupted at Daniel's words. "Liam, don't listen to this country punk's nonsense—he's slandering me! He assaulted me and stole my gun. These are crimes! We have to arrest him; we have to put him in jail! If we don't get rid of such bad elements, there will be more of them, and the county will be harder to manage!"

"Bad elements? Daniel? In my eyes, Daniel is ridding the county of a menace. He's done well! And don't think I'm unaware of the misdeeds you and your brother have committed. I've already had my people gather evidence of your crimes!"

With firm resolve, Liam issued his orders to the uniformed officers. "Take the Hayes brothers and any accomplices into custody. Now!"

As a legislator, Liam's commands were absolute, and the officers complied. Thus, the Hayes brothers were handcuffed and taken away.

With Liam's departure, everyone on site was left bewildered. What on earth just happened? Was this real life or some sort of dramatic TV plot?

Brittany turned to Emily, "You knelt so quickly—doesn't your knee hurt? Kneeling to a bully like that, isn't it a disgrace?"

"A disgrace? The real disgrace is that country punk! Do you know who he's offended? He's crossed the Hayes brothers! Good and Dylan won't easily fall. Even if Liam took them in, they'll be released soon enough. And once the Hayes are free, judging by that country punk's actions, he's as good as dead. Our family might get dragged down too!" Emily retorted.

Chapter 293 He's a Good Man?

Chapter 293 He's a Good Man?

"Emily, are you saying you want the Hayes brothers to be released so they can continue plaguing our family? So Greenfield can keep suffering under that coal mine? So the villagers can keep getting cancer?" Brittany challenged.

Emily responded with a cold, mocking laugh. "Heh!" After her laugh, she added, "I'm stating facts. The Hayes brothers will definitely be set free! And do you think Liam is a good person? Haven't these things happened before?"

Their argument irked Oliver, especially on his eightieth birthday. "Today's my birthday, and you two can't stop bickering? Look at this mess. If you're energetic enough to argue, why don't you help clean up instead?" After scolding his granddaughters, Oliver got up with his cane and limped towards another room.

Suddenly, Brittany remembered something. "Grandpa, wait!"

Stopped by his granddaughter, Oliver asked impatiently, "What now?"

"How's your leg feeling?"

"Can't you see for yourself?"

"Well, the country boy knows a bit of medicine; how about letting him take a look? I brought him back this time to help with your leg."

Hearing Brittany trying to impress their grandfather again, Emily scoffed mockingly, "Heh!" Then, with a dismissive tone, she said, "That country boy knows medicine? I don't think so. If city hospitals couldn't fix it, what could a country kid possibly do? Grandpa can still walk a few steps with a cane; if you let this country boy treat him, I fear he won't be able to walk at all and will end up in a wheelchair."

"Emily, what are you implying? Don't you want Grandpa's foot to heal? Do you prefer seeing him struggle with a cane?" Brittany confronted her.

"Don't you dare slander me, Brittany! Does that country boy know medicine? Not a chance! And what was he saying last night? He accused me of having an STD, said I'd have pimples on my face by lunchtime. Well? Look at me now, I'm fine. Where are those pimples?"

The moment Emily finished speaking, her face started to itch terribly. One by one, red bumps erupted across her skin. She frantically scratched at them.

"Don't do that! If you keep scratching, you'll leave permanent scars, and they'll never heal! If you want to relieve the itching, you can get some cow dung from the barn and smear it on your face," Daniel advised. He wasn't trying to mess with Emily; the remedy he suggested actually worked. Of course, she didn't have to use cow dung; she could mix a few common herbs into a powder, blend with water, and apply it to her face. But Daniel couldn't stand Emily's attitude, so he figured cow dung might be the most appropriate treatment for her.

"Cow dung? Are you pranking me?" Emily asked incredulously.

"Why don't you try it and see if I'm pranking you?" Daniel retorted.

Desperate to relieve the itch, Emily shouted at Mason, "This is all your fault! Get me some cow dung now!"

"Okay!" Mason rushed off to fetch the dung.

Once Mason returned with the cow dung, Emily tentatively applied a dab to her face. The itching subsided with a cooling sensation, so, ignoring the odor, she quickly covered her face with it.

Chapter 294 Regrets

Chapter 294 Regrets

With the itching stopped, Emily glared at Mason and demanded loudly, "What's going on? Have you been messing around with others behind my back? How else could I have caught an STD?"

Emily wanted to keep her own infidelity a secret.

"I... I haven't," Mason replied, his guilt making his voice falter. After all, he had indeed been unfaithful often, sometimes not using protection for the thrill of it.

"Are you feeling guilty?" Emily had an iron grip on Mason; she knew very well he had indulged with other women. She planned to use this opportunity to keep him in line, ensuring her own affairs would be easier in the future. She figured, since Mason was cheating, she was entitled to her infidelities as well.

Emily had married Mason not for love, but because he was the wealthiest of her suitors. Her marriage was for financial security, while her affair was for love—pure and unadulterated.

Mason, oblivious to Emily's plans and her affair, was defensive due to his own infidelity and could only deny it.

"I... I haven't cheated on you!"

"You're stuttering. What's the matter?"

"I'm worried about you. I don't want anything to happen to you."

"If you hadn't cheated, why would I get an STD?"

"Who said you have an STD? You believe that country boy's nonsense? I say the pimples on your face are because you're not used to the environment here. Maybe something you ate at lunch caused an allergic reaction."

Then, something dawned on Mason. "Right! We had wild mushrooms in one of the dishes, and you ate a lot of those. I suspect it's those mushrooms; you've been poisoned!"

"Heh!" Brittany laughed coldly before chiming in. "It's just an STD; no big deal! Just admit it, and let the country boy treat you. Otherwise, if it gets worse and becomes untreatable, you could even die. Don't come to regret it later!"

"Brittany, stop spouting nonsense here! STD? You're the one with an STD! I've been poisoned by wild mushrooms; it's not an STD!"

"Emily, not just you ate those wild mushrooms, I also had plenty. But look at my face—clear and pimple-free. Unlike you, face full of pimples, covered in cow dung. Disgusting."

"Enough, both of you! Stop it!" Oliver interrupted the quarrel, turning to Daniel. "Can you really practice medicine?"

"I learned from the village doctor, so I know a bit."

Daniel was nothing if not modest, perhaps too modest. If his life-saving medical skills were considered "a bit," then all of America's doctors wouldn't qualify as physicians.

"Will you examine me then?"

"Sure!"

Daniel rolled up Oliver's trouser leg and began pressing around the area with his hands.

Chapter 295 Now

Chapter 295 Now

After examining the leg, Daniel knew what to do. "Sir, did you get these injuries on the battlefield?"

"Cut the crap!" Emily rolled her eyes and retorted, "Country boy, isn't that obvious? Everyone knows Grandpa was hit by shrapnel in the war. Who doesn't know that?"

Daniel ignored Emily and continued. "Were you shot three times? At these spots? Here, here, and here?"

Daniel pointed to three locations on Oliver's leg. Decades had passed since the injuries, and the scars had healed completely, leaving no visible marks. Except for Oliver, no one knew exactly where the shots had hit, but Daniel pinpointed them precisely, each spot exact.

This detail took Oliver by surprise. Still, as a seasoned veteran, he remained composed and simply nodded in acknowledgment. "Yes, those are the spots."

"After you were injured, the bullets were removed, but due to medical limitations at the time, the nerves were damaged during the procedure. That's why your right leg suffered muscle atrophy and ended up like this."

"That's correct, the doctors at the city hospital said as much. They also told me it's irreversible; that's why my leg has been deemed untreatable."

"By modern methods, your leg indeed wouldn't be treatable. Modern medicine tends to remove the damaged parts and then proclaim the problem solved. But witch doctors don't work that way; they believe every part of the body is important. Not just flesh and blood—even hair shouldn't be cast aside lightly."

Daniel was in the midst of advocating for witch doctor techniques when Emily interrupted with a sneer.

"Heh!" she laughed, then immediately mockingly said to Daniel, "Where did you pick up these lines, country boy? Don't you think they're a bit overdone? Without modern medicine, even C-sections wouldn't exist. Witch doctors can't even handle a difficult childbirth, so what nonsense are you spouting?"

"Don't worry, I speak with actions, not just words," Daniel responded.

"And what actions might those be?"

"Modern medicine can't treat the old man's leg? Well, I can heal it! A few needles, using witch doctor acupuncture, I guarantee I'll have him walking without a cane. Like, now!"

"Now? You mean to tell us that after a few needle pricks, grandpa can walk a few steps on his own, without a cane?"

"Exactly! Not just a few steps, he could walk a mile without stopping if he wanted, though he'd need to recover gradually. After acupuncture, he'll need herbal therapy to repair his body. His leg's been injured for decades, and the muscles are nearly necrotic. If he wants a complete recovery, it will take at least a hundred days."

Oliver was utterly taken aback by Daniel's words.

"Daniel, are you saying my leg can be healed in a hundred days?"

"Yes."

"Even if it's not a complete recovery, even if it's just twenty or thirty percent better, I would be truly grateful to you!"

Chapter 296 You Can Heal It

Chapter 296 You Can Heal It

"There's no need for thanks. Just sit tight; I'll do the acupuncture now," Daniel told Oliver as he had him sit back in a recliner. Then, Daniel pulled out his Needle of Seven Dragons.

Seeing the needle Daniel had taken out, Emily immediately scoffed. "Did you pick that needle from a trash can? It's dingy and dirty. How can that thing treat anything? Are you joking? In my opinion, if you stick that into Grandpa's body, it'll definitely lead to a bacterial infection."

Daniel looked at Emily and advised her kindly. "After contracting an STD, you should keep your mouth shut. Your breath reeks of cow dung. It's somewhat bearable when you don't speak, but once you open your mouth, it's unbearable."

"Who has an STD? You're the one with an STD!" Emily lashed out at Daniel.

"Whether you have an STD or not, you know best! You know what you've done. Sure, cow dung can relieve the itching, but it won't cure your STD. Also, the red spots, although they're only on your face for now, they'll soon spread all over your body. Then, you'll need to smear cow dung all over. Right now, the dung can relieve your symptoms for about two hours. In three days, its effect will only last for one hour. After that, the itch-relief won't even last an hour, maybe just half an hour."

"Country boy, stop your nonsense! You think I believe your ghost stories? You think I'm as gullible as Brittany, easily fooled by your tricks? These lies of yours would only fool idiots; you can't fool me!"

Daniel didn't bother with Emily and instead turned to Oliver with a cheerful smile. "Oliver, your granddaughter is calling me a swindler, saying that I'm fooling idiots. If you let me treat you, wouldn't you be the fool, then?"

When Oliver heard this, he immediately grew angry. He pointed at Emily and scolded her loudly. "Shut your mouth! If you cause any more trouble and disturb Daniel from treating me, get out!"

"But Grandpa, he's a swindler!"

"Get out!"

Of course, Emily didn't leave; she glared at Daniel with anger and said, "Country boy, I want to see what you're going to do. Grandpa's leg is so bad not even the doctors at big hospitals could heal it. You think you can? I don't believe it!"

"Whether I can heal it is not for me to say—facts speak louder than words. Just you watch."

Daniel picked up the Needle of Seven Dragons and inserted it into Oliver's leg. As soon as the needle penetrated, Oliver felt a cool sensation rushing into his leg as if some blockage in his veins had cleared. He suddenly felt lighter.

Daniel's hands moved swiftly, one needle following the next, inserting a total of nine needles into Oliver's leg.

Chapter 297 The Final Moment

Chapter 297 The Final Moment

After the last needle was in place, Daniel asked Oliver, "How do you feel? Can you try standing up and walking a few steps?"

"How would he feel? His leg's probably been numbed by your needle! Walking? Be thankful if he hasn't been paralyzed! He could still walk with a cane before this. Now, thanks to your needling, he probably can't even walk with a cane and will be stuck in a wheelchair," Emily sneered again.

She couldn't believe this country kid could cure Oliver's leg—wounded in battle and untreatable for decades—with just a few needle pricks. Was this some kind of joke? When even the city's big hospitals couldn't cure Oliver's leg, how could a country boy do it?

Ignoring the woman, Daniel turned back to Oliver, "Try standing up, see if you can take a couple of steps?"

"Can I really stand up?" Oliver sounded incredulous; after all, he couldn't feel his feet at this moment. But it seemed that the persistent dull pain in his leg had vanished after Daniel's treatment.

"Give it a shot! I'm confident you can stand," Daniel encouraged.

With some effort, Oliver tried to stand up from the couch— and he did! His legs no longer felt weak, and he was free from pain. Everyone was shocked.

For decades, Oliver needed a cane to stand, yet now he was standing without one? Brittany immediately lit up with excitement, "Grandpa, did you really just get up? Did the country boy actually heal your leg?"

"Healed? You must be joking! Heh!" Emily sarcastically laughed. "You call this recovery? I'd say it's his final moment!"

Final moment?

Her words infuriated Oliver. "What are you talking about, Emily? If you don't know what to say, keep your mouth shut! Final moment? Are you suggesting I'm about to die?"

Seeing Oliver's anger, Emily quickly backtracked, "Grandpa, you've got it all wrong! I didn't mean it like that! By 'final moment,' I didn't mean you were going to die. I meant your leg certainly isn't healed."

She paused, her mind racing. "I got it! That country boy used a special needle! Perhaps it was soaked in some anesthetic, and when he injected it into your leg, you lost sensation."

"I lost sensation? Then why can I still stand up?" asked Oliver.

"Not like that! Anyway, there's no way this country boy could have healed your leg. Soon enough, it's going to feel much worse."

At this point, Emily wished for nothing more than for Oliver's leg not to be healed—if it were, it would just serve to prove the country boy's competence. How could an unassuming country kid be so capable? It was impossible for his leg to be cured by this boy.

Daniel still didn't respond to Emily, focusing his attention back on Oliver. "Why don't you try walking a couple of steps?" he suggested.

Chapter 298 Physical Examination

Chapter 298 Physical Examination

"Alright! I'll walk a bit!" Oliver agreed, then took cautious steps forward. His first few steps were hesitant, but soon he noticed his leg wasn't just free of pain—it felt lighter. Curiosity propelled him to jump. And to his astonishment, he jumped! He was not just standing, he was hopping up and down! Overjoyed, he warmly grasped Daniel's hands.

"Thank you, Daniel! Thank you for giving me a new lease on life! Thank you for healing my leg! I've used a cane for decades, and today I can finally throw it away. This feeling is incredible!"

Emily watched in disbelief, shaking her head and muttering, "This can't be! Impossible! How could his leg be healed just like that, especially by some country kid? The best doctors in the city couldn't fix it; how could he?"

Despite the tangible proof before her eyes, Emily chose disbelief. "Grandpa, your leg can't be recovered! You better keep using the cane, or you might fall."

"Emily, do you really wish for me to lean on a cane forever? Does it make you uncomfortable to see me walking like a normal person?" Oliver retorted.

"Grandpa, that's not what I meant at all. I just think this country boy certainly couldn't have healed you; he must be deceiving you!"

"He hasn't healed me? He's deceived me? How exactly has he deceived me?" Oliver asked and proceeded to walk and hop some more. "Open your eyes and look properly. Isn't my leg healed by Daniel?"

"It's an illusion! It must be an illusion! Grandpa, your leg will soon fail you again! It has to!"

Emily refused to believe it. Daniel turned to Mason and asked cheerily, "Mason, would you like me to give you a physical?"

"A physical? What for?"

"What can I do? Just offering a friendly check to make sure you don't have the same STD as your wife. After all, if she's infected and you're not, doesn't that mean there might be secrets between the two of you that you're unaware of?"

With that invitation, Mason extended his arm, "Fine! Go ahead, I'm curious what you'll find."

Daniel already knew Mason was free of STDs without a checkup but proceeded with it to keep up appearances and make things seem more official.

He placed his fingers on Mason's wrist to check his pulse and noticed something. "You don't have an STD! But you've been overindulging yourself, and now your kidneys have started showing problems. If I'm not mistaken, you can't even lift a dumbbell weighing twenty pounds can you?"

Mason hurriedly denied it. "Country boy, stop talking nonsense! When did I ever overindulge? Since when do I have kidney issues? Don't talk about twenty-pound weights; I can lift a hundred pounds with ease!"

Read Chapter 299 The Weakened Mason

Chapter 299 The Weakened Mason

Chapter 299 The Weakened Mason

His body's condition and whether or not he had been overindulgent, Mason knew well. But he couldn't admit it. There are things a man can do but must never concede. Once admitted, it's all over.

"A hundred-pound barbell you can lift with ease? Do you believe that yourself?" Daniel asked with a chuckle.

"What I said is true. Whether you believe it or not, it is the truth," Mason insisted, clearly unwilling to admit he had been deceitful. If he did, it would be akin to admitting there was a problem with his kidneys, something a man could never acknowledge because it's linked to virility.

Daniel only laughed coldly in response to Mason's evasions. "Heh!" Then, pointing at a wooden chair, he said, "That chair can't weigh more than twenty or thirty pounds at most. Since Mason claims he can easily lift a hundred pounds, carrying that chair a few steps should be no problem, right?"

Looking at the chair, Mason let out an equally cold laugh. "Heh!" Then he addressed Daniel disdainfully, "Country boy, you think so little of me? If I can't even lift that chair, wouldn't I be a complete invalid?"

"If you think you can lift that chair, Mason, go ahead and try. But I must warn you, your kidneys are extremely weak right now, so be careful not to injure yourself lifting it!"

"A twenty or thirty-pound chair is going to injure me? Are you joking? Am I really that fragile?" After speaking, Mason, in an attempt to prove his strength, approached the chair intending to pick it up with ease. He tried with all his might and broke into a sweat, but the chair didn't budge, as if it were glued to the floor. No matter what Mason did, he could not lift it.

Seeing Mason sweating profusely, Daniel asked with a smile, "How's it going, Mason? Do you feel like your back is giving out? Can't lift the chair?"

"Who says my back is giving out? My back is fine!" Mason continued to insist through gritted teeth, but it was apparent to everyone that he was struggling.

"If you say there's nothing wrong with your back, then hurry up and lift the chair! If you can't even lift a chair, you're so weak, I doubt you can satisfy your wife in bed." Daniel then turned to Emily: "Did you know there's an issue with your husband's back?"

"It's your back that has a problem! There must be something wrong with that chair!"

"The chair belongs to your family; what could possibly be wrong with it? If you think there's a problem with the chair, why don't you try lifting it yourself?"

Spurred by Daniel's words, Emily approached the chair with a hint of curiosity, reached out, and gave it a light pull. To everyone's surprise, she easily lifted the chair.

Chapter 300 The Frowning Jessica

Chapter 300 The Frowning Jessica

The chair indeed had no issue—it was Mason who had the problem. Emily glared at Mason as if she was looking at someone completely worthless. "Are you so weak now that you can't even lift a chair?"

Mason needed an excuse, any excuse, no matter how illogical. "Who says I can't? I just don't want to. Why should I do it just because some country boy tells me to? What is he to me?"

Emily extended her hand impatiently. "Give me your hand!"

With a show of reluctance and disbelief, Mason asked, "For what?"

"Just do it!" Emily commanded. "Squeeze my hand with all your might!"

"Why would I want to do that? You're a woman; your strength is so limited compared to mine. If I really squeeze, I might just crush your hand."

"Just do it! Why all the talk?"

Emily gave her ultimatum, and Mason could hardly refuse. He squeezed with all his strength, but Emily felt nothing.

"Is that all the strength you have? This is how you are as a man? Let's go to the hospital; I want a doctor to give you a thorough checkup," Emily insisted and dragged Mason away.

Not only did Mason need to visit the hospital, but Emily did too. After all, smearing cow dung on her face as a temporary fix for the itching was disgusting and not a long-term solution.

With Mason and Emily gone, it was time for Brittany and Daniel to leave too. They headed back to New York, to the Matthews' villa. It was Sunday, so Jessica should have

been resting at home, but she was nowhere to be found in the villa. Where had she run off to?

Wondering if Jessica had sneaked off to meet another man while he was away, Daniel decided to pay an unexpected visit to her office. He stormed into The Matthews Organization's president's office, not empty-handed, though. He brought a big bunch of roses and a box of ice cream with him.

Pushing open the office door, Daniel spotted Jessica dressed in an office lady's suit, sitting in her chair. Jessica hadn't met anyone else, which brought a wave of joy to Daniel's heart. He greeted her with overflowing enthusiasm, "Darling, did you miss me?"

"Miss your ass! I'm annoyed right now! Leave me alone!"

"These are for you! And here's some ice cream—take a bite, and it will make you sweet enough to smile with eight dimples." Daniel scooped up some ice cream, her favorite chocolate and blueberry flavor, and brought it to her lips.

After tasting Daniel's ice cream, Jessica's mood instantly brightened. "You're the one with eight dimples! What kind of person has that? Anyway, when I saw you looking so worried when I came in, what happened? You're not concerned about me fooling around with other girls, are you?"

"If you dare do that, I'll cripple you!" Jessica glared at Daniel and changed the subject, "Do you remember Prospera Group?"

The Prospera Group? How could Daniel possibly forget? Isabella Evans was also engaged to him, and what was most important was that her mother had The Grass of Tamed Dragon in her possession.