

The Ace at the Apex

Chapter 411

The Concept of Being in the Service Line Javier furiously stormed toward Doug's office, but his angry expression instantly disappeared the moment he entered the room.

At that moment, Doug was working on his proposal. When he saw Javier, he immediately asked, "Is there something I can help you with, Mr. Kersey?"

Javier waved his hand. "No, you go ahead and focus on your work. I'm just going to sit here for a while."

Doug had no idea what was happening, but since Javier said he was alright, Doug naturally returned to his own work after pouring Javier a glass of water. Meanwhile, Javier sat on the sofa and took a look at the proposal Doug had come up with previously.

As for his issue with Oliver a moment ago... Javier had completely put it behind him.

'Would being angry over something so trivial be worth it? Of course not! If I got furious over something so small, I would've died from a heart attack long ago!'

In fact, the only reason he had thrown such a huge temper tantrum in front of Oliver was because he wanted to take that opportunity to teach everyone else in the hospital a lesson.

They were working in a hospital, so Javier needed each and every staff member to learn how to treat their patients and customers as warmly as possible rather than sit around like a boss.

Patients would visit hospitals to seek treatment for whatever disease they were suffering from. They did not pay the hospital just to look at the staff members' arrogant faces, and this was what Javier wanted everyone to understand, including Oliver. Meanwhile, Javier did not care whether his deliberate tantrum would cause Oliver to feel unhappy.

He was looking for someone to serve the hospital better, not someone to smile at him whenever he was around.

On top of that, Javier believed that he was a good judge of character and that Oliver was not someone who would be offended so easily.

Sure enough, Oliver arrived at Doug's office 10 minutes later.

"Mr. Kersey, I genuinely apologize for everything Donald's aunt has done. Not thinking about the situation carefully enough was indeed a mistake on my part." Javier felt slightly unhappy that he was making an old man who was nearing his 60s apologize to him.

However, due to his status, he needed to take the responsibility his position commanded. Javier pointed to the sofa next to him and gestured for Oliver to sit down before he told him a story...

Once upon a time, a boy who would help others cut their grass gave his main customer, Miss Joy, a phone call and said, "Would you like to hire someone to cut your grass for you?"

Miss Joy answered, "No, it's alright. I've already found someone to do that."

The boy said, "But I can help you pull out the weeds in between your flower beds too."

Miss Joy said, "The guy I've hired will get that sorted as well." The boy said, "I can also help you trim the grass around your sidewalk." Miss Joy said, "The guy I've hired has already taken care of that. Thank you very much, but I have no need for a new guy to cut my grass for me." The boy hung up the phone call, and his friend asked, "Aren't you the one cutting her grass? Why would you still make that phone call?"

The boy answered in all seriousness, "I only wanted to find out how well I was doing!" After Javier told that story, he lit a cigarette. Meanwhile, Doug had already stopped what he was doing and raised his head. Javier was not only telling that story for Oliver to listen to, but Doug as well. "That's the story. The boy's friend merely smiled after hearing the boy's answer. In fact, he even thought that the boy was

overthinking his situation. He only needed to do his job to the best of his capabilities, so why should he do something so extra? “However, by listening to his customer’s point of view, this story provides a moral lesson to be learned

“I once thought I was going to be able to restore this hospital’s former glory. I even came up with a whole list of ideas. In fact, I even thought about pasting our hospital’s image all over whatever source of advertisement we could get our hands on. But advertisements are gradually losing their effect in comparison to the past. It’s no longer a special weapon that will immediately be effective the moment we use it.

“Most importantly, other hospitals have been overusing advertisements as a way of promoting themselves, completely exhausting everyone’s trust and attention long ago.

“Right now, more and more hospitals are feeling the pressure of their outpatient volume, so they’re performing a post-mortem to identify the issue. What we need to do now is clearly see our quality through the surface of the matter so that we don’t end up only resolving the surface issues instead of the actual root of the problem.

“The pressure of outpatient volume can’t only be pinned on advertisements or how creative they are. Instead, the new focus should be on our client base. What does this mean in medical terms? It means that we’re going to be able to ensure that our customers come back to us for a second time to be treated, or even recommend us to other patients.

“These clients are going to become an endless driving force for this hospital’s long-term development. They will also be our core weapon into allowing hospitals to escape the loop of having to post advertisements. The most important way to protect our base clients is through service. Warm customer service...”

That morning, Javier said many things to Doug and Oliver, including how to protect their clients, what the market was like, and what the sort of service Javier had come to understand and acknowledge was like.

Finally, he said, “Every single staff member is part of our marketing department. Anyone who comes into contact with the hospital is our ultimate ambassador. Only by asking for our customers’ opinion and maintaining our working quality by consistently paying attention to our customers’ needs will we be able to gather ourselves the most loyal of customers and make our reputation the greatest.”

When Javier was done speaking, Oliver was still in a daze, while Doug was clapping his hands.

“I understand, Mr. Kersey. Thank you for that valuable lesson! Your point of view when it comes to customer service isn’t only suitable for hospitals, but all sorts of industries. I really have learned a lot today. Sure enough, there isn’t a single person who’s managed to become successful so easily!”

Doug was now completely in awe of Javier. He really had learned a lot and gained a much better understanding of customer service thanks to him. In fact, he had even decided that he was going to implement this customer service method to his work from that moment onward.

Meanwhile, Oliver had also learned about the importance of customer service, albeit a little too late.

“You’re right...Just take today’s incident for example. If an ordinary customer had experienced such horrible treatment from Donald’s aunt, they would have definitely returned home and told their friends and relatives about what happened, harming our hospital’s reputation. “Plus, any friends who learned about this would carry on conveying the message to their own friends as well.

“In the end, our hospital would have a very bad image purely because of a single person’s hideous attitude, and it might be something not even 100 smiles from our other staff members would be able to

remedy.

"I understand now, Mr. Kersey. Rest assured, I'm going to immediately tell everyone about the importance of customer service. We must at least make sure we're just like managers of banks and other major institutions, where every single customer is greeted with a smile..."

After saying that, Oliver returned to work, while Doug went back to working on his proposal.

Meanwhile, Javier found the information he wanted regarding his father's operation thanks to a new staff member working in the storeroom. After carefully reading through the information, Javier confirmed that his father had indeed gone through an organ transplant surgery in that hospital. Plus, he had been recovering rather well, which left Javier feeling much more at ease.

Meanwhile, to Javier's surprise, what made him feel very happy was that...his father had even left behind an address. Most importantly, the address was in the city.

Thus, Javier packed up his documents and left the hospital, immediately rushing toward the address stated in the documents.

This led Javier to a residential area with apartments that seemed more ordinary rather than extravagant.

Javier arrived at unit 102 on the 10th floor, as stated, and knocked on the door.

After he knocked for a while, the door behind Javier opened up instead.

"You can stop knocking already. The owner of this property has already been knocking on the door for three months, but nobody's opened that door. Plus, he even owes the property owner money!"

Javier felt very surprised. When was the last time you saw the people living in this unit?"

The old lady living in the unit across the hall thought for a moment. "It's been half a year, I think...Yes, that's it, half a year. The last time I saw him was when my grandson was celebrating his birthday..."

After casually chatting for a moment, Javier confirmed that the people living in unit 102 were indeed his father and stepmother, but they had now disappeared. Javier felt very depressed. After he had finally found them, they had suddenly moved away again...

When the old lady shut the door, Javier ran his hand across the top of the door's frame, just like his father's old habit. Sure enough, Javier felt something with his fingertips.

Chapter 412

Blinded by Money Javier found a key on top of the door's frame. In the past, whenever Javier's father had stayed out, he would always leave a key in between the crack of the door frame.

When Javier was still young and short, he wouldn't be able to reach the top, but this did not mean he would forget about his father's habit.

In fact, he had not. Javier had now obtained a key to get inside, so he opened the door.

The place was kept very clean, and the decorations made the place seem very warm. Similar to his father's bedroom, the entire place had been tidied up by his stepmother. There was a photobook on the desk, and Javier even found photos of his father and stepmother together. However, those photos had all been taken in the past. None of them had been taken recently, so Javier was unable to trace their whereabouts through them. Javier even saw a brown envelope on the glass coffee table in the living room. The brown envelope looked very traditional. It was something not easily obtainable in modern society. Javier opened the envelope and saw a letter inside. Judging by the handwriting, Javier could deduce that it had been written by his father.

The content of the letter stated that Javier's father and stepmother were both doing well, so Javier and Ciara did not have to worry. Also, Javier's father had instructed them both to do what the old fox told them to.

On top of that, Javier's father hoped that Javier would be able to develop well. He said that they missed them very much, but they were unable to meet up due to certain matters.

'I've heard that you're about to open a hospital that provides free benefits for the poor. Not bad at all. Do your best to win a Lasker Award, but it doesn't have to be related to medical technology. Instead, it could be the Public Service Award. Who knows? We might just be able to meet when that time comes.'" Javier was very surprised. 'I've only been working on this hospital thing for less than half a month, so how did Dad find out about it?

"The old lady across the hall said that they already left three months ago. If it really has been three months, wouldn't Dad be really good at predicting what's going to happen in order to predict that I was going to be opening this hospital and write this letter beforehand?

'Of course not, it just isn't possible...' Javier pondered it and figured that his father must have secretly returned home but stayed away from the old lady living opposite him. He had then left after leaving the letter, not wanting to reunite with his son at that moment in time, Javier felt that something was very weird about this but was unable to figure out why his father would make such a choice.

He could not understand what sort of unspeakable reason his father might have, nor could he understand why he wanted him to win all kinds of awards.

'He could just say whatever he wants to say, so why is he making me win all these awards?

"I've already won the Osborne Award and the WCOTY Award, so what's up with this Lasker Award?

'Lasker, my *ss! How in the world am I supposed to win an Award I haven't even heard of before?'

Javier took a look at the letter and felt depressed when he could not find any further useful information on it.

He sat on the sofa and pondered what his father, who had gone missing for so long, was thinking about. Ultimately, Javier failed to figure out what was going on. However, he harbored some hope that his father was still going to return, perhaps even very soon.

Javier sat on the sofa and took out his cell phone. He then searched for everything he could find regarding the Lasker Award.

The Lasker Award was the most highly reputed medical industry award in Sammius and a major prize second only to the Nobel Prize.

The awards had been co-founded in 1946 by a famous advertisement manager and philanthropist from Sammius, Albert Lasker, who was also known as the father of modern advertising, and his wife, Mary Lasker. This was a prize given to recognized scientists, doctors, and public servants who had made outstanding contributions to the medical industry.

Initially, this Award had been divided into Basic Medical Research, Clinical Medical Research, and Public Service. Later on, they had added a Special Achievement Award.

The first two awards were given to scientists that would receive the Nobel Prize in the following year. Because of this, those who won this award would also be known as Sammius' Nobel winners.

Meanwhile, Javier had also looked into the Public Service Award and found out that it was related to medical health. However, this prize did not require the candidates to be workers in the medical industry to be able to win it, nor did they have to possess medical knowledge. Instead, they only had to make sufficient contributions to the medical health field.

For example, Bill Gates and his wife were the ones who had won the Public Service Award back in 2013 because they had "made historical changes to how the entire world viewed health, including improving the lives of millions of people living in poverty." Another example would be the "Médecins Sans Frontières" organization, who had been given the Public Service Award.

Previously, the Ebola outbreak West of Noah had spread rapidly and viciously. When the entire country's medical system had been on the verge of a critical meltdown, this organization had responded and formed an effective frontline team to respond to the health emergency, demonstrating bold leadership qualities.

Thus, so long as someone made some beneficial contribution to medical health, they would very likely be able to win this award.

However, this award was global, The candidates just had to work in the medical industry or possess special technology, so...

The entry level for this award was lower and easier, which was what Javier thought of the Lasker Award.

While pondering how he was going to win this award, Javier spotted another problem.

'Looks like Dad's quite powerful... He was able to stick something inside the Osborne Award after all. Plus, he was able to stick something inside the WCOTY Award too. Now, he's directing me toward the Lasker Public Service Award.

Just how many industries is Dad involved in exactly? What is he planning?!

Still unable to figure out his father's motives, Javier was also shocked by how far his father's reach extended within the various industries.

At that moment, the ringing sound of his cell phone cut off his complex thoughts.

He picked up his phone and noticed that it was a call from an unknown phone number.

After the call was connected, a rather anxious voice spoke. "Hello, Mr. Kersey. It's Mikaela. There's something I need to see you about."

'Mikaela's calling me of her own accord? She even wants to see me?'

Javier had no idea what Mikaela wanted, but he still nodded his head and gave her his current whereabouts.

After approximately 10 minutes, there was a knock on the door. Javier saw Mikaela, who was wearing a black dress that went all the way down to her knees, paired with skin-toned stockings.

Gesturing for her to enter, Javier closed the door and chuckled as he asked, "What's the matter? Have you decided that you're going to do something inappropriate with me? Something that both of us will feel happy about?"

Mikaela felt very embarrassed and hurriedly explained, "No, it's nothing like that. I came here today because I'd like to inquire about something, Mr. Kersey."

An inquiry? She sounds rather serious.'

Hence, Javier asked, "What is it? Go ahead and speak your mind!" Then, Mikaela thought about her next words and said, "I heard that you're going to improve the hospital's environment on a major scale, Mr. Kersey. Does this mean you're going to purchase a lot of medical equipment?"

Javier seemed to have more or less guessed what Mikaela wanted to say.

However, rather than stopping her, he allowed her to carry on speaking with a nod. "Yes, that's what I'm planning to do. What's the matter?"

Mikaela stood not too far away and had her head lowered as she answered, "My husband, Donald, says that he can contact suppliers and help us obtain whatever equipment it is that we want

"So, he asked me to ask you whether he can find a company and acquire whatever medical equipment it is that we want him to source.

"He's guaranteed that he will be able to obtain the equipment from legit manufacturers that will meet the required standards. He's guaranteed this over and over again!" Seeing that Mikaela was hurriedly

making guarantees, Javier smiled and asked, "Mikaela...

Have both of you gotten blinded by money? How about this? What if I were to give you 150,000 dollars each instead?"

Chapter 413 What an Incubus!

Javier's question and "excellent suggestion" ruffled Mikaela's feathers. Waving hurriedly, she explained, "No, that's not what I meant, Mr. Kersey! I was just thinking... We are going to buy the same thing, and Donald said he knows the best way to get it and knows a lot about it, so I was thinking... Why not kill two birds with one stone? So here I am."

Javier considered the unadulterated sincerity-bordering on gullibility-in her eyes and let out a snicker. He pulled out his phone and looked up an MRI model online before turning back to Mikaela. "Donald told you he knows about these things, doesn't he? Give him a call right now. Ask him how many brands of MRIs there are, how much they cost, and what each of their strengths and weaknesses are. Which one is being used by which state-of-the-art hospital?"

Mikaela hummed. Donald must really have meant it when he had said he knew about these things. She called the man at Javier's behest and repeated every question to him.

His answer was underwhelming. "Can you wait? I need to check on the Internet. Give me half an hour and I'll get back to you."

Mikaela was taken aback. "Wait. You don't know?"

"Seriously? Of course I wouldn't know anything-I'm just a black market peddler! What's the point of knowing everything? The point is, I can hook people up with the business they are looking for while I make money out of it. I don't give two sh*tts about everything else," he bit back. "That's it. Don't come bugging me when I have some information to look up!"

The call ended on that forceful note. The room had been so extraordinarily quiet during the entire conversation that Javier had heard Donald's reply even without Mikaela putting the call on loudspeaker. He studied the shock etched on Mikaela's face and grinned. "Donald, Donald, Donald. Chasing that dollar so hard he thinks he could just hoodwink me. He doesn't just think I'm a moron he thinks me a generous moron! It's the only reason he's doing his damndest to scam me, isn't it? And what about you, Mikaela? You agree with him, I guess. You came here just because he asked you too. You think I'm a generous moron, right?"

Mikaela was flustered. "N-No! It's not that at all! I just thought he-"

Javier did not give Mikaela a window to explain herself. "If you don't think I'm an idiot, then you are. You're the one who treats her brain as decoration rather than a functional organ, and honestly, is there anything else that needs to be said? How long have you been with a shyster like Donald? Long enough to know his nature by now, right? "Do you have any idea just how important every single piece of medical equipment is to a hospital? You're the head nurse! How couldn't you know? And to have Donald set up a company and make the purchases and call it 'killing two birds with one stone'! Oh yeah, who's the bird being stoned? Is he qualified to do the job just because he can Google some MRIs and tell you how much each of them costs?"

"Damn! I never thought Googling would be a skill so remarkable it'd be considered a prized part of a particular set of skills!" he sneered. "That's the most impressive thing I've heard all week. Maybe I should start a company with my Googling skill as a selling point! I mean, I'm quite handy at typing words in an empty search bar too. Speaking of which, Mikki, are you capable of searching on the Internet for information too? If yes, then come and be my vice freaking-president! That's the kind of impeccable skill that could make you rich overnight nowadays!"

Javier taking a gibe at Mikaela had disquieted her. She opened her mouth, her reply aborted before it could even form, her entire demeanor resembling someone who had a cat get her tongue. It was humiliating to be called out like this! She had believed Donald before making an attempt to prove what he had said was true—and to come to Javier over and over again for the same guy! God, talk about embarrassment! Even Mikaela hated how overboard she had gone.

As her cheeks flushed pink, Javier leaped to his feet and approached her, looming over her smaller frame while the latter retreated, tripped, and fell on the couch.

“Be frank, Mikki. Did you come here because of him, or did you come here because of me?”

Mikaela’s beautiful eyes gazed into the uber-handsome face hovering less than 10 centimeters before her. The vortices—the swirling, cackling flames flickering within the pupils of his eyes—made her heart pound like a stampede of rabbits in heat. She could almost hear the drum in her chest from the outside.

“N-N-No! I swear, t-t-t-that’s not what’s on my mind at all, Mr. C-Chairman! You—”.

Just as Mikaela was busy trying to explain herself and deny the accusation, Javier leaned forward and killed the rest of it by closing in on her sexy, cherry-like lips. By the time he released her, Mikaela’s cheeks were as hot as though they were burning. Javier studied the cascading pink color of her blush, his tone softening into a gentle coo. “I really want you, Mikki. From the moment I first laid eyes on you, I’ve been thinking to myself, ‘God, if I could f*ck a woman as beautiful as this one, how happy would I be?!’” Mikaela was so flustered that she snapped her large, doe-like eyes shut just to avoid another glance at him. A very real fear was gripping her—the fear that she was going to lose herself in the wanton abandon of the flames in his eyes.

Javier did not plan to let her off at all. He lowered his head, his lips looming over Mikaela’s porcelain neck. He was closing in, almost an inch or so

Someone knocked on the door.

Javier was a little surprised. No one would have come to see him outside his home or residence. Could his father have just caught wind of his presence here? Could it be Ciara’s mother, who had been suddenly besieged by longing for her daughter and stepson, enough that her maternal drive had brought her here, right outside, to meet him?

Emotions overwhelmed his head. Javier’s attention bounced off Mikaela in a second as he practically lunged at the door. He then yanked it open.

A bloke in his fifties was standing there. Sprawled across his white t-shirt were the words “Bickass Realty”, betraying the man’s identity as an errand guy from a realty management company.

Javier could guess that he was there to collect the due condominium fees. The old lady living opposite this unit had mentioned that the realty company had been sending their people to collect the debt over the past three months,

The older man spoke and basically confirmed Javier’s guess. “Hallelujah! Someone’s at home at loooooong last! God, we’ve cut y’all’s water and electricity supply over this, fellas, so I don’t know how you folks held out all this time...Not that it’s important. Come on, pay up, lad. Your debt amounts to 60 bucks -”

Javier interrupted him before the man finished his sentence by shoving 80 dollars into his hand. “There, I’ve paid for it. Keep the change for the trouble I’ve caused you.”

The older man immediately smiled. He had been a little resentful of these pointless debt collecting trips for a while now, but that grudge vanished at the sight of this windfall. Well, 20 bucks was a good tip! It was better than a day’s worth of minimum wage! Tucking the money into his pocket, the older man

turned around and walked away with a spring in his step. He even promised before leaving, "Don't worry! The water and electricity will be coming back on real soon-and I mean sooner than half an hour!" Javier couldn't care less about these things even if he tried. All his mind could focus on was Mikaela Holmes, who was lying sprawled on the couch and looked oh-so-ripe for the taking. If it was not for his father or stepmother, then he would rather spend his time enjoying what Mikaela had to offer! Javier returned to the living room and found Mikaela back on her feet, hurriedly slinging her bag over her shoulders as she prepared to leave. He grabbed her as the young woman tried to slip past him and pulled her into his arms by force. "Where are you going, Mikki? You just have to be brave! Summon your courage and steel your resolve, and the two of us will enjoy bliss together right away!" Mikaela was losing the little resolve she had left. Javier was like an incubus who kept seducing her into letting him into her pants! But maybe she could indulge...once? Just this once should not be a problem, right? **Chapter 414 A Divorce**

In the end, Mikaela left without getting any action. She was this close to succumbing to their mutual lust, but she thought of her precious Renna. No, the little girl did not serve as a moral chain of any kind. The reason was stupidly pragmatic: Young Renna was napping alone at home. If she woke up and realized neither of her parents was with her, she would be terrified! And let's not discount the growing trend of tragedies that happened because kids were left at home alone and unsupervised by adults. Just the thought of it compelled her to ignore all the desire built up in her and free herself from Javier's arms. She scurried out of the door, her face flushed, and fled down the stairs. Javier did not stop her this time. He had told her before that he would never force himself on her. Besides, he had good reason to believe that he had planted a seed into the young woman's mental landscape. Soon, it would sprout, take root, and grow until it took over her heart. As he mused, Mikaela-her feet blurring as she clambered down the stairs-could feel her heart spinning like a hammer while she fled...

Donald came home a short while after Mikaela's return, his mood palpably sour. The reason was simple enough: Mikaela had told him via a phone call that his guile was getting him nowhere, and he'd better give up on the impossible.

The news embittered Donald. He had been downright gleeful while googling models from the comfort of his company this whole time! He had planned to make a profit of 80,000 dollars, which in his diligent fantasy had already been marked to be used to woo that new chick who had grown up in the 2000s. Hell, he had already imagined them being more than friends by the end of the courtship! And now, that beautiful, tasty dream aged like milk spilled from a bottle Mikaela had smashed. How could he not be mad about that? How could anyone in the world even expect him not to be f*cking pissed about this?!

He practically stormed toward Mikaela as soon as he got home. "For f*ck's sake! For f*ck's sake! Why can't you just do your goddamn job and be of actual help to me?! Are you forgetting just for whom I am working my *ss off? It's for the family! Our family! How is it so hard for you to persuade him to do business with me?!"

Mikaela smirked. "Why? Does he owe you anything? What do you even know about any of this anyway? You told me you knew, and yet when I asked you questions, you told me to wait for you to get back to me later because you needed to Google things just to answer me! Well, damn! Since when does googling constitute a particular part of a specific set of skills? As if no one else in the world knows how to use a goddamn computer!" she bit back, throwing out some of the arguments Javier had used against her. Javier's skewering had made her feel very cross, so it was Donald's time to suffer the same

humiliation.

Donald was obviously not having any of it. "So what if I looked it up on the Internet? He's a f*cking billionaire elite, isn't he? Would a rich b*stard like him search sh*t on his own? If he's got any screws loose in his head, he'll definitely stop researching prices and sh*t on us! So what's wrong with us earning a little extra money through all that effort, huh?"

"Jesus! I swear to God, you're a brain-dead broad yourself, you know that? As if you need someone to remind you who you should side with at a time like this! You should be supporting me, your goddamn husband! Hell, the husband who's worked his *ss off to make money for you and your comfort!"

Mikaela could not stop sneering and snorting at his bluster. "Really? For my comfort? Then maybe you should tell me how much you've made these days vs. how much you've spent! That car you prance around with? I had to add more than 15,000 dollars just so you could buy your damn car! Seriously, where is this 'making money for comfort' you're screaming like a baboon about? Maybe you should ponder if Renna and I had ever spent a single dime you've made! Have we ever, huh?"

Donald's ire and frustration were reaching a peak. He raked his brain to come up with the perfect counterargument, and yet he could not form an example at all. Panicked, he turned to the balcony, his eyes landing on the fresh laundry hanging from the racks. Then, a thought formed in his mind.

"Then explain the detergent gift bag I bought last time! Oh, that's right, I bought ten of them for you to use!"

It would have been better if Donald had held his tongue and not mentioned the "detergent gift bags", as those words triggered Mikaela into grabbing the heels she had just kicked off before and swinging them down on Donald's head.

"Are you for real?! You're gonna mention the gift bags you bought in bulk because they were from the elder sister of a young woman in your company?! You were just trying to please that young lady, yet you think I had no freaking idea!" she snarled. "The only reason I kept my mouth shut was because I didn't feel like exposing you!"

It was an embarrassing exposé. Donald had thought Mikaela knew nothing. Still, the blow his head suffered could only add to his already intensifying spleen, and in a fit of rage, he lunged at Mikaela, shrieking, "You b*tch! How dare you raise your f*cking hand against me! How dare you!" He pressed against the woman's kicking feet and balled another hand into a fist, too eager and ready to land it on his prey.

That was when a series of pounding sounds thundered from the direction of the door.

Donald was stifled to a stop.

The neighbor's jeremiad scratched against the air like a blaring siren. "Shut. Those. Boombboxes! You two wanna waste your day away? Be my guest! But my kid needs his goddamn nap to take his exam, you louts. If he fails and jeopardizes his future college admission, are the two of you gonna be held responsible for his failure, huh?!...F*ck!"

The neighbor in question was an ex-convict who had just been released. He had a fiery, almost uninhibited temper, which was why Donald immediately hung his head. He did not even want to greet that man. He could not summon the courage to make a pip, not even as his neighbor pounded his fists against their poor door. Mikaela seized this chance, she pushed the man away, bolted into the bedroom, and shut the door from the inside,

Donald wanted to slam his fists against her door in a rage, but his fear for the ex-convict opposite their unit was very persuasive. It reduced Donald into sulking to himself in the living room quietly.

Mikaela strode into the safety of her bedroom and realized that Renna had woken up some time ago. Fresh tears were hanging from her eyelashes as she hugged her blanket and sobbed. Mikaela felt a pang in her chest. She pulled the girl into her embrace, comforting her. It was only after a long while that Renna finally told her mother, "I don't like dad. I really, really, really don't like him. Can we just pretend he's not with us, Mom? Can we?"

Mikaela had always been bitter about the life she was being forced to live, but she wanted Renna to enjoy a family and have parents who were still partners even more. She had only been able to hold out for so long because of her daughter. But now? Renna herself had rejected her father.

The rest of the late afternoon passed in frigid silence. Her head was torn between choices. By the time night fell, though, Mikaela had her answer: If neither she nor Renna wanted to live like this, then what was the point of continuing this false union with a piece of sh*t?

Mikaela opened the door and declared as she faced the beer-indulging Donald, "I want a divorce." Donald was so drunk from the booze that his eyes could hardly stay peeled, but Mikaela's proclamation made him sober up a little.

"Oh yeah? Well, f*ck you too. We can get a divorce if you want. You go get yourself screwed by any stallion who finds you even remotely interesting, while I'll go f*ck my sweet baby doll!" he jeered. "One thing's for sure, though. This house is mine! Your old man might have bought this home, but he did buy it after we got married, which makes this shared property between a husband and wife! "You're the one having an affair, aren't you? Seducing men and begging them to f*ck you? Well, I demand this home as compensation, or I'll see you in court!" Mikaela threw her hands in the air with an exasperated wave before carrying Renna in her arms. She marched toward the door, even sparing a modicum of attention as she looked at the keys, "Spare me that crap. You can have everything if it means I won't have to see that disgusting face of yours for the rest of my life!" | Donald chortled. "That's right, b*tch! Get that b*stard child out of the house along with that immoral woman! God knows who's her real father anyway! Better get out of my sight as soon as y'all can!"

Mikaela's blood boiled. How blind had she been back then to find an *sshat like this...and f*cking marry him! **Chapter 415**

Ain't That a Misunderstanding! With Renna in her arms, Mikaela left the house she used to call home, her silhouette moving in the streets outside. The breeze tonight was warm, and yet she felt only a tomb of ice in her chest,

Ten years' worth of youth-all spent on a piece of top-shelf sh*t! It was so infuriating that she was wondering if she should just gouge out her eyes if she was going to live like a blind person anyway! As she was simmering in fury, Renna suddenly murmured, "Mom? I'm hungry. I haven't eaten in a long time now..."

Mikaela snapped out of her anger. Belatedly, she realized it was now a few minutes past eight, and Renna had not eaten anything since lunch about seven or eight hours ago. She looked around to locate her handbag, where her wallet and phone were, so she could treat the girl to a meal in a restaurant nearby.

That was when it hit her. She had barged out of the door at the peak of her lividity and forgotten to bring her handbag and phone along. She was literally penniless, and without her phone, she was in no position to buy the two of them dinner.

She could not beg for a meal either. Being a thirty-year-old begging for a free meal was beneath her. An alternative was getting help from her father, but Oliver would probably erupt in a burst of concern and rage. This possibility was enough to put her off the idea.

Her desperation led her to her friends, but it quickly proved unfeasible since she didn't have a single penny on her. The closest one had to be at least four or five kilometers away! It would have been fine if she could call her friends and borrow some money, but her phone was not on her, and she could not remember any of their numbers.

Renna suddenly muttered in an undertone, "Mom, I'm...Um, I'm telling the truth. I'm not playing a trick or throwing a tantrum. I really am hungry."

The girl had misinterpreted her mother's inaction for a test. She thought Mikaela was trying to see if Renna was just throwing a tantrum like last time, when she had wanted to get a Barbie.

Mikaela understood her and felt a pang of sorrow in her heart.

The only person who lived nearby-and the only one whose address she knew-was Javier.

Mikaela remembered the...salacious near-accident during the day, but her maternal drive over her daughter overwhelmed any sense of embarrassment she could feel. Steeling herself, Mikaela led Renna in the direction of Javier's house.

The man himself was enjoying a bath in his father's place. The longer he stayed there, the more attractive staying became, Staying there came with at least one advantage: He might have a shot at seeing his pops come back. Javier wiped himself clean with a towel and exited the bathroom in his birthday suit, He was living alone for the time being anyway, so why bother covering his bits for no one else? He was just about to light a cigarette when he heard a series of knocks.

Who could it be at this hour?

Javier would not dare think it was his father now. If he expected disappointment, he would never be disappointed.

Except he could not stop himself from springing toward the door. What if a miracle had happened? What if?!

He peered through the spyhole and, to his dismay, saw Mikaela and Renna. God, how obedient was this woman to be at her husband's every beck and call? She had come back to him just because her husband had ordered her to-and what's worse, she had brought a talisman to keep what had happened between them at bay this time. She had brought Renna! After giving the woman the signal to wait, Javier put on his clothes and opened the door.

It was the presence of the kid. Had the kid not been there, he would have opened the door without all this extra effort and treated Mikaela to a sight only a person with a penis could.

After ushering the two of them into the house, Javier beckoned to them to take their seats.

Looking bashful, Mikaela began to speak. "I... don't think we'll be here for long, sir. C-Could you please kindly lend me 30 dollars or so? Renna...Uh, she hasn't had dinner..."

It was difficult for Mikaela to even let the words out of her mouth. Imagine that! An adult woman in her thirties borrowing 30 bucks from someone! And yet, she could not afford not to ask. Her daughter was hungry now, but soon enough, she would need a place to sleep-and Mikaela had no idea where they would crash tonight.

Javier froze. He had thought she was here on Donald's mission, but it turned out that she was here to borrow some money. But 30 dollars? Did she have to borrow it?

Something must have happened, huh? Javier voiced his curiosity, and Mikaela responded with a whole lot of ums and uhs, as though her tongue was tripping over itself. Renna, though, recognized Javier as the good guy from last time, the one who had bought her a doll and some sweets. It was enough to make her talk on her mother's behalf. "Mom and dad got a divorce, and Mom forgot to bring her wallet and phone."

Mikaela slapped her hand over the young girl's lips, but it was too late. The truth was out. Damn it. She should have kept it a secret from Renna. Javier was beyond bewildered. "Is this true?" Mikaela nodded sheepishly, not knowing how else to answer him.

He leaped to his feet and began putting on his shoes, his arm scooping up Renna with one swing before beckoning for Mikaela to move to the door and go downstairs. "Come on, I'm treating y'all to dinner!" Mikaela was embarrassed. "Please, Mr. Kersey, this isn't necessary! Just 30 bucks is all we need. We can get something on our own..." "Okay!" he answered glibly without slowing down while descending the stairs, Mikaela watched him, feeling helpless, He was just being annoying now, right? What else was she supposed to do other than tail him, regardless of her intention, when he had her daughter in his arms? She knew Javier had done this on purpose, but she had very little choice Shutting the door behind her, she quickly followed him. There was a Starbucks downstairs. With Renna in his arms, Javier strode straight inside. Mikaela was quick to stop him, protesting. "God, no! This place is way too expensive! We really don't need -"

"Renna's so hungry that I can see a dent in her stomach, ma'am. I can't believe your mom is trying to stop you from filling your tummy! She's a meanie, isn't she?" Javier quipped, looking at the little girl in his arms, who happily played along by chirping, "Mommy's a meanie, but you're the best!"

Mikaela was speechless. Despite all her love and care, her precious gal had changed her tune and jumped ship with eye-twitching ease!

Javier and Renna strode into Starbucks without another word, leaving Mikaela nothing to say other than follow them. Once they were inside, Javier asked Renna if she had any particular cravings, and the latter answered that she had nothing in mind.

Javier had no idea what to get either. He was no fan of Starbucks food, which made his cluelessness completely different from Renna's innocent ignorance.

"You recommend some food to us," he told the waitress. "Anything is okay. Money is no problem as long as the kid feels satisfied."

The waitress immediately gave them a list that Javier completely approved and agreed to without a moment's hesitation. When it was time for him to pay, the food cost him 95 dollars.

Renna's attention wandered to a bouncy castle nearby, and she made a dash toward it, leaving her mom and Javier behind.

Mikaela immediately tugged on the latter's shirt. She said nothing, but her actions spoke louder than words. She wanted Javier to cancel all orders and replace them with just pizza or something simple.

"Oh, stop pulling! You're gonna make my pants zipper go down," he replied glibly. "I know, I know. I'm a sex god, and you're horny and wet for me! But we're not in the right place to enjoy it, okay? You're gonna have to hold it in, dear. Hold it in like delayed gratification, and I promise you I'm gonna treat you so right tonight. You'll be in heaven really soon!"

Mikaela's cheeks flushed red. "I -what!? That wasn't what I meant!"

Javier nodded enthusiastically. "Of course! Of course. Of course...You're too coy to admit it, so I'll allow it. Whatever you say, darling!"

Mikaela had run out of words to respond. She had never seen anyone as shameless as this b* stard!

This b*stard was lovable, she had to add to herself, because try as she might, she could not genuinely hate him, Javier was not grating at all. Unlike Donald, that sh*t eating son of ab*tch who could not hold a candle against a mote of Javier's brilliance!

nen me food was finally served, Renna lost herself in the food in abandon. Mikaela had to tell her to be modest, for this was too late to have dinner

Javier shrugged. "She's just a kid, Mikki. Let her indulge. Kids will stop as soon as they're full anyway." He was coddling her!

Mikaela rolled her eyes despite the unfurling ball of warmth in her chest. Compared to the sh*thead who should be Renna's biological father, Javier was superior in every aspect of fatherhood!

There was one problem, though.

She lowered her voice to an undertone so only Javier could hear and apologized. "I'm really sorry, Mr. Kersey. I know how you feel about me, and I know you're an amazing guy, b-b-but I'm not romantically interested in you. I'm so, so, so sorry!"

Oof. Someone seemed to have misunderstood!

Chapter 416 Pants Off, Shame Gone

Mikaela was not even sure how to describe how she felt. Was Javier a nice guy? Yes.

Did she like him? Yes. A little. Somewhat. Maybe. But the idea of them being together-rings in each other's fingers and bells tolling for a life shared-she never once felt the compulsion for it. Of course, she meant the compulsion to build a life based on a serious union. Not the more... carnal variety.

It was the reason she had said what she said. She would sooner be mocked for overstating how much he was attracted to her than to risk Javier investing emotionally in an impossibility. It would make her feel guilty. It would make her feel like she was playing Javier.

Fortunately for her, Javier harbored no such desire either. He studied Mikaela's bashful expression before replying, "Just because I'm attracted to you doesn't mean we have to get married. That's some stuffy, old-school thing only the squarest people do. I like you, and I want to sleep with you. But marry you? No offense, but we're not compatible, I'm afraid.

"It's been a while since the sexual liberation in the 60s, you know. When you separate sex and love, you're giving your life a source of pleasure and joy. When you're alone, and life is making you long for some warm body...And if I'm just the same, we can cuddle together and be warmed with one another. But I've found my partner, and when you do too...We just can't be together anymore. Do you see what I mean? Let's abandon those conservative shackles to anyone who's into that kind of stuff. We deserve happiness. You...deserve happiness."

Javier was back to being the devil on her shoulder, seducing his victim to the path of evil. His antics rendered Mikaela speechless. By this point, she was unsure of what to say.

Honestly, she could see some semblance of merits in his arguments upon giving some thoughts to it. At the very least, she was not exactly opposed to the suggestion.

Javier seized on the moment she hesitated and stole a kiss from her cherry-red lips. "Eat. You're gonna need all the strength you have for tonight." He let his lascivious eyes linger too long before dashing toward the bouncy castle to play with Renna.

Mikaela was burning in embarrassment. How the hell did she end up where she was today? She had just gotten kissed in public and then was so publicly teased!

Mikaela would have leaped to her feet and left right away in the past. The Mikaela in the present, though... Lord forgive her. She had zero desire to leave at all. She just wanted to stay!

Goddamn it, this good girl really had gone bad. In a desperate bid to salvage her goodie-two-shoes personality, Mikaela had been trying to borrow actual cash from Javier since they left Starbucks. She only needed 25 dollars for Renna and herself to find somewhere to crash.

Javier's answer was annoyingly gleeful. "Sure, I'll Venmo you."

Mikaela was nonplussed. "I don't have my phone with me, sir. I wouldn't even need to borrow anyone's money if I had."

Javier grinned, "Well, well, well. Ain't that a problem? I haven't brought any cash with me, so maybe you two should follow me home. I'm gonna have to get some money." Without giving her a chance to rebuff him, he scooped Renna up in his arms and sprinted forward.

Mikaela was hapless against his shenanigans. Everything Javier did felt so engineered and choke-full of deliberation. And he had the galls to put on that "I didn't plan any of this" innocent front when he had purposefully made things go his way! "Unbelievable! What the hell could this meanie be planning?" As soon as they returned to Javier's residence, Mikaela quickly found her answer. As soon as they entered the door, he beckoned at Renna. "Time for a shower, you sweetie. I bet a smart girl like you knows how to take a bath on her own."

The little girl actually listened to him. "Okay!" she chirped before sprinting toward the bathroom. Her mother would have stopped her journey short if Javier had not stopped Mikaela first.

"Haven't you heard? There are many spy cameras hidden all over shady motels nowadays. Urgh, it's just so dangerous! And a lot of perverts hang out in places like that, too. You wouldn't wanna see Renna's pictures all over the Internet, right? Come on, Mikki. Have some heart. She's just a kid. You're her mom, and you gotta think things through!" Javier's self-serious criticism came out of the left field and stunned Mikaela into confusion. Sure, she had come across news like this before, but the possibility of that happening to herself was just...well, too low to warrant that much anxiety, right? But then again, Mikaela could not let herself ignore this all-too-real possibility. She was again in the throes of yet another fence-sitting, so her hesitance gave Javier an opening to stride into the bathroom to draw Renna's bath.

After ensuring the temperature was right, Javier left and closed the door behind him. She called out to the young girl to remember hanging her clothes on the rake to prevent her clothes from getting wet when she started splashing water about. He struck Mikaela as a very considerate man who held respect to kids, to boot. It made the idea of letting Renna stay here a much safer one than when she first conceived it... That was until she saw the man marching toward her, and her alarms went wild. Her intuition quickly warned her to get up and leave, Unfortunately, Javier shoved her back into the couch and sank his weight against her. **Chapter 417**

Am I Making Sense to You? Javier swore the night was almost too impossible to get through. As it turned out, his success was merely on how he managed to make Mikaela and Renna stay the woman had her own devious wiles against him. She had told Javier she needed to check on her daughter in her room to make sure she was okay and promptly shut herself inside Renna's room, declaring she was "going to sleep". It had been an excuse! This had to be a crime against humanity, right? It got to be! He lay on his bed, maidenless and powerless. All that teasing had gone nowhere-he had to give that woman props for withstanding his almost unbeatable advances. How on Earth did she do it? He spent way too much time tossing, turning, and rolling on his sides to finally fall asleep. God, to go to sleep hungry like that!

Javier was not even given a chance to oversleep in the morning. Renna had to go to school, so Mikaela woke him up by knocking on his door, asking, "Is it me, or is there nothing to eat here in this unit?" Javier yawned. "Please, you have food for both me and Renna hanging right there on your chest, ma'am. Left side for her, right side for me. Thanks!" Mikaela's face flushed, and she wished she could just knock this b*stard out cold with one punch. But her eyes drifted around him until they rested on his morning wood, and that compulsion dissipated.

The previous night had been tough for her too. Sleep had been fitful. Her hunger had tormented her enough that there were moments when her fingers curled at the itch of opening that door and throwing

herself at him.

She ultimately did not succumb to it, but seeing Javier's current state had summoned that desire back into her with even more punch. She looked away pointedly and turned around to walk away.

It was then that Javier spoke up, "Clean up a little, and we'll get breakfast outside. Take her to her nursery school, and then I'll drive you to the hospital."

"Oh," She paused, "I've taken a leave for the day. I have to visit the Civil Bureau before noon."

Javier reeled back in belated realization. He fished out his wallet and gave her 160 dollars." Then go ahead and have breakfast without me. I'm gonna go back to sleep for a while longer. The key's in the shoe rack. Remember to buy me some breakfast too when you're back. I haven't eaten anything." He gazed at her while yawning and turned away. "Tata."

He turned back inside his bedroom and went back to bed. To begin with, Mikaela never needed that much money, but the man had shut his door, and there was little room for her to say anything.

When Javier finally stirred and opened his eyes, it was close to eleven in the morning. He rubbed his groggy eyes and rose from his bed. When he walked out of his room, he was greeted by breakfast and notes that added up to 110 dollars. Then, he noticed a message on a piece of napkin. "I've borrowed 50 bucks from you, Mr. Kersey will pay the debt tomorrow after I return to work."

Her handwriting was pleasant, its corners and curves graceful. Somehow, reading the words could lift the reader's mood.

Javier balled the napkin and flicked it straight into the bin. He could tell Mikaela was not coming back tonight-she would not have needed to take 50 dollars if she even planned to return. That money was for their expenses staying outside.

Not that it mattered. Javier was going to see her in the hospital tomorrow anyway. Besides, who said only the beds at home were allowed for a fun time? There were beds in hospitals too! In fact, anything that resembled beds was fair game if one's partner was right. Hell, he could even do it on the autopsy table in the morgue with the right woman.

While he was outside having his lunch, Oliver called. According to him, the agent for their latest equipment was coming in the late afternoon to discuss with the hospital's administration.

Javier had not planned to care, but he had nothing much to do for the day. Thus, he agreed to attend the talk and drove to the hospital after having lunch. There was no rush. The meeting was scheduled for 2:00 p.m., and it was only a few minutes after 1:00 p.m. at this point. Noncommittal, Javier sauntered into Oliver's office in the hospital at a languid pace, arriving just in time when the clock struck two. He looked at it and pointed out, "Well, it looks like our supplier isn't that punctual." Oliver smiled. "Well, we're dealing with their general agent, who oversees the company's agents all over the nation. You know how they feel about clients who are buying in small quantities..."

He let his sentence hang on that note rather than finishing, but it was enough for Javier to understand. Lower quantities made smaller sales, and smaller sales attracted little respect. Now, Javier thought that mindset was somewhat understandable.

But this terrible sense of punctuality? This left much to be desired.

They waited, waited, and waited. The clock ticked, and two in the afternoon soon turned into three. No matter how well Oliver dissembled patience, his growing irritation began to slip through the cracks into complaints about the agent's tardiness.

He even called the man three times, and each of them was met with similar, simple answers." Almost there!"

Well, f*ck “almost there”! How was “almost there” going to explain an hour’s delay?

Javier left the office to take a smoke and made a call. Oliver was already on his fourth call by the time he was back. “How long are we supposed to wait!?”

“Goddamnit, calm down. Stop pressing me! I’m on the way, okay? five minutes! Give me five minutes.”

At least, he finally gave an exact estimated time of arrival this time...except the fact that he was still nowhere in sight after half an hour. Oliver was enraged. “This is pure malarkey! Absurd! They’ve always been a little hoity-toity in the past, but like this? Come on!”

Javier smiled. “It’s alright, Have it his way. I’ve already contacted the supplier for the new equipment myself.”

Oliver stiffened a little. “Should I call this meeting off, then?”

Javier waved and declined. “Nah. We’ll be too kind to him. Calling someone still adds to my phone bill, man. Gotta equalize that with his gas expenses.”

Oliver nodded in assent. He liked the idea-one just had to give ba*tards like these some medicines!

Javier listened to the old man’s remark and smiled again wordlessly. Hearing how much he liked the idea implied that Oliver had no special, illegal rebates from the supplier. He would have been a lot more upset or defensive otherwise.

It was a testament to Oliver’s upstanding character. At the very least, he was an honest man when it came to the money side of the business.

The agent finally arrived 20 minutes later. It was a chubby man who spotted a belly with more fat than the amount of hair he had on his half-bald head.

Javier’s lips curled into a grin as he listened to the fat man’s relentless volley of excuses. “I swear to God, business has been super busy lately, Holmes. Would you believe that? Ha! I didn’t plan to be late. It’s just...the previous client I was talking to! He was a big one and not the kind any businessman would wanna offend, even if accidentally! Wouldn’t make any purchase that was less than 3 million dollars! 3 million, Holmes! I can’t piss someone like that off, right? So, unfortunately, I had to use up your time for that.

“Now, don’t get mad over this, okay? The equipment you want is like, what, around 470 thousand, right? Well, you and I go way back, don’t we, Holmes? That’s how you know I’m not gonna just sit your meeting out! Look, I’m here, aren’t i? Hahaha!”

The fat man laughed as he fell onto a nearby couch. He looked at Javier and asked, “Who’s this?”

Before Oliver could speak, Javier answered with an unrelated remark, “So...You’re saying it’s already a huuuge honor for us to be graced by your presence. Did I get that right? And we’re expected to be grateful for that too!”

The fat man’s expression fell a little. His smile managed to cling onto his face, but there were flashes of steel in it. “Listen, rookie. You don’t say the quiet part out loud, okay? Keep it to yourself. Holmes hasn’t said anything about it because he’s a very smart guy. He knows that if he says whatever he has in mind and makes this awkward for us, there won’t be any business for us. You’re going to lose the equipment you need, right? “Let me be very frank with you. No offense, but I can do without making any sale from your side. Seriously, it doesn’t cost me any sleep at all. But that’s not the way it is from your side, isn’t it? You get it now, rookie? Am I making sense to you?” Javier took a sip of his coffee and grinned at the fat man. “Oh, miss me with that bullsh*t.” His grinning barb stunned the unexpected man into perplexity.

Chapter 418

Let's Talk Business, Shall We? Javier never fancied himself a man of decorum. Again, it was never his fault. He wanted to be tactful as much as the next person did, but it had to be dependable on who he was talking to. Flexing decorum with a man? Cultured. Flexing decorum with a mutt? Crackhead. This lard bucket, along with his haughty, everyone's-below-me attitude was just a stupid nobody slung with the title of sales agent. Who the hell in their right mind would even care enough to show him "decorum"? He should be grateful for how no one was punching him in the face already. Finally, the fat man recovered from his shock and immediately cast an ugly scowl at Oliver. "The hell was that, Holmes!? I demand an explanation!" However, the older man seemed to have caught whatever bug Javier had. He wanted to feel that gratification, too.

"Please, miss me with that bullsh*t."

The fat man was infuriated. What the f*ck was going on? A rebellion!? Oliver would always greet his arrival with nothing less than obsequious smiles, so why was he this savage today? The hell was their problem?

"Hello, smart*sses, do you even remember I'm the only one you can get this equipment from!?" he thundered.

Javier and Oliver replied in tandem, "Oh, miss me with that bullsh*t!"

The fat man could feel his lungs threatening to burst in ballooning rage. The stupid geezer and the young idiot were testing his patience!

He slapped the table in front of him and leaped to his feet, his finger trained at them. "Oh, so that's how you morons like to play it, huh? You want this business to blow, don't you? Fine! I guess you people think you're way too good for Yuzuean's state-of-the-art products. Your fat loss, not mine. I'm leaving, and don't try to beg me to come back!" He turned away and started toward the door.

Not wanting to lose the chance, Javier chirped, "Beg my *ss."

The fat man's blood boiled. No one had ever dared talk to him like this before-no-f*cking – one!

"What the f*ckd? What's with that low IQ mouth, huh? Are you begging me to hang you?"

"Hang my *86. That was Jayler's cavalier reply,

This was the way he was going to answer this bipedal pig today. He was egging his opponent. How was this proud little man going to settle this with him? A verbal spar? A duel of will no, wealth power? Youtube-styled boxing match? Who cared? Who's scared!?

At the very least, the fat man was not in the mood for flinging words like a gentleman. He threw his bag aside and began marching toward Javier,

Before he could reach him, though, someone else barged in and interrupted the match, his face a little flushed from effort and exhaustion.

"Oh God, oh my God! I'm so sorry, Mr. Kersey! I'm late, I know, I'm super late and...Uh, excuse me... Which one of you is Mr. Kersey?"

Before Javier could answer, though, the fat man piped up in glee, "Mr. Coulson? Mr. Coulson! What a pleasant surprise!" Dylan Coulson was the sales agent of Heinfensmirt, a Hildegarden company from whom the fat man had made several purchases. Of course, the fat man did not ring any of Dylan's bells. A man of such inferiority could not possibly cut any figure in Dylan's mind. Honestly, Dylan always dispatched his underlings to deal with nobodies. Dylan stepped back into a sprightly, eager march toward Javier, exclaiming, "Everyone in the business says the chairman of the amazing Reivaj Group is a young but uber-promising man. In other words, you must be Mr. Kersey himself!" The inference was not hard to make at all. There were only three people in the room. And one of them was covered with an entire mop of lustrous white hair, and the other literally looked like he was in his forties. That meant the

only one who could be Javier Kersey was the young man.

The young man was currently enjoying his coffee while crossing his foot over the other. Dylan was effusive. When he shook Javier's hand, he did so with both hands. Javier rose to meet him, smiling as he held the former's hands in his own. "Ah, Mr. Coulson! Come on. There is hardly anything to fault you for. I didn't expect you to come to us personally. It's just a 31 million dollar deal. I certainly didn't think you'd regard it this highly."

Dylan dared not agree. A 31-million-dollar purchase was an enormous deal, no matter how one cut it! Even the fat man, who had always just been a regular sales agent, was stunned into baffled shock. 31 million!? A business worth 31 million!? He could not even rake in enough orders to reach this astronomical amount in a year!

As he gawked, Dylan looked at him and asked, "Sorry, who's this?"

Javier shot a noncommittal glance at the fat man. "I don't know him, actually. I think he's from that Yuzuean competitor? One of their sales agents, maybe? This hospital has always been his loyal client, so as usual, the director brought the man in for his next purchase. But... Well, as it turns out, he's a very busy man. So busy, in fact, that he's delayed the 2:00 p.m. meeting to 4:00 p.m. We had been waiting for his most honorable arrival for two straight hours,"

Dylan could not stop himself from laughing aloud. He slapped the fat man on his shoulder, exclaiming in mocking glee, "Bro, you really outdid yourself right there, you madman! No one alive would be insane enough to put the chairman of Reivaj Group on the backburner, especially not when there's a 31-million-dollar deal attached to him! Sweet Lord Jesus, you are insane! "Hold up. An act so superb and ballsy should always be reported to one's superior so that you can get proper acclaim from your own boss. Ooh, boy! That's what we should do!" The fat man grew agitated. "W-Wait, Mr. Coulson! You can't do that! You're gonna get me killed!"

How could any boss even contain themselves after learning about how one of their employees managed to dash a business deal worth 31 million dollars? How could anyone feel anything less than a furor in the worst possible way? Dylan had little compassion for his competitor, though, as evident in his reply.

"Nah. I've made up my mind about this. I'm gonna tell your boss about your peerless achievement and sing your praises the way you deserve. A ballsy move like yours is so audacious it becomes certified performance art, and your boss needs to know about it!"

Oliver suddenly chimed in from his seat behind the director's desk, "Why wait? We can tell him right now. Better early than late, as they say. Let's just give him a call right now!"

Dylan was less nodding and more bobbing his head in assent. "Damn right you are, sir!"

The fat man began to plead, but Dylan simply did not care. As Javier watched, he called the number belonging to the Chinese branch general agent and began straight away with a gibe. "Yo, Conway! Just calling to praise you for hiring one of the best sales agents ever. Yeah, I mean it! He basically handed me a 31-million-dollar deal out of the kindness of his heart! I have to ask, man. Are all of your salespeople so generous and kind?"

"Oh, and unless you forgot, we've got a year-end bet, remember? And that's why I thought your employee was being kind. He must have been scared that I would lose, so he passed up a 31-million-dollar deal and let me have it!"

The fat man's face turned as white as a sheet. The truth behind his tardiness was nothing remotely good enough to act as an excuse. He had been playing with an escort while on his way to the meeting. He had

been enjoying himself so much that he even wondered if he could just null the whole deal with Oliver. Losing Holmes as a customer simply hurt less than a fly. A loss of 470 thousand dollars? He would not lose sleep over it, even if he had to let that commission go.

Unfortunately, it was the gravest mistake he had ever made. It was more than just losing an exorbitant deal. It also meant he had just contributed to the odds of his boss losing the bet!

He was not even sure if he wished he was dead right now or if his boss was. Anything to not suffer his boss' blowback!

Soon, the worst happened. His phone rang, and it was a call from his boss. "M-Mr. Conway! I'm sorry! I'm sorry, I didn't know! I wasn't deliberately sabotaging— No, I was stuck in a jam!"

"Oh, miss me with that bullsh*t! That city you're in doesn't even see traffic so congested it'll take you hours to reach someone!"

Javier was disinterested in listening to the fat man's boss skewering his employee, so he gave the fat man a boot all the way out of the office. It was also the moment when he finally understood why Dylan insisted on calling the man's boss. It was both for his own glee...and to gain Javier's favor,

"Alright, Mr. Coulson. Let us talk business, shall we?"

Dylan's smile turned into eager solemnness, "Please, Mr. Kersey, Anything you need, I'll remember all of them without fail!"

Javier smiled and said, "How should I know? I'm afraid you're gonna have to do that fieldwork yourself, Mr. Coulson." He then turned toward Oliver and added, "Mr. Director, I'll leave the arrangement of details in your capable hands. Get someone to show Mr. Coulson around the hospital because I want every piece of equipment changed into Heifensmirtz's product. I want only the most expensive and most advanced ones."

Oliver was stunned, and even Dylan froze. "Um, Mr. Kersey? That's gonna cost you a bit more than 31 million, I'm afraid—"

Javier waved. "31 mil can't cut it? Then double it to 62 mil. Not enough? 124 mil. Still not enough? 248 mil is yours!" he replied. "I don't care about the amount. I care about changing everything in this hospital into the very best. That's what I want to do with this hospital. I want to turn it into the nation's leading medical institution! I'm gonna make everyone think of Sacred Virtues Hospital whenever the thought of the nation's best hospital comes to mind!"

Oliver was stupefied. A long beat later, he exclaimed quietly in his mind, 'Now this... This is a real superhero!'

Chapter 419

The Crowd Went Wild! Javier's initial plan was to upgrade some of the equipment into its more hi-tech counterpart, but he changed his mind after a while. How much could he save, anyway? It would be better if he changed everything anew.

If one was going to do something, they should do it right or shouldn't bother at all. Hence, he wanted only "the best equipment" and "the best doctors." Sacred Virtue Hospital had to be the very best, state-of-the-art hospital in the nation—no, the world!

It had to be this good for Reivaj Group to make a name in the medical industry.

Naturally, the name of the hospital needed to change. "Sacred Virtues" was not too bad a name, but Reivaj Group only ever named its subsidiaries with the same name, and that was... Well, Reivaj itself. Nothing more was needed.

Be that as it may, the naming of the hospital was hardly Javier's priority. He could always change its name after everything else was settled. By the time the clock struck six in the evening, Dylan had finally finished tallying up the amount of equipment to be replaced for the hospital's makeover. "Mr. Kersey, we're gonna need CT machines, NMRs, oxygen concentrator machines—"

Medical jargon was as good as incomprehensible to him, so Javier waved him off and replied, "Just tell me the exact amount of money."

Dylan shut his notebook. "Sorry, but I can't do that. Not now," he said, "Before you misunderstand me, sir, let me explain. Our Chinese HQ had caught wind of your clientele, sir, and so they sent me a directive and a reward of 780 thousand dollars while taking away my privilege to quote prices for you. HQ has already decided to mail the grand price of the equipment to Reivaj Group's HQ. Let's put it this way. It saves a lot more money than purchasing these from me, maybe up to 7.8 million dollars. Of course, all that money saved won't end up with me. All I could make out of this is 780k, after all. The money's saved from the profit the company made as well as cheaper tax on goods being transported in large quantities."

Javier understood that. Transporting goods through the customs in bulk would reap benefits in terms of taxes. On the flip side, buying from a sales agent in small or even individual quantities meant no rebates in tax.

"Okay, I get it. Thanks, Mr. Coulson. You really did all of this for nothing, though. At least let me treat you to dinner." Javier was lowering his status for him! Dylan quickly responded, "No, no! I wouldn't dare dream of something like that. You're like, my God of Fortune or something! In fact, I should be the one treating you all tonight! That's how I could repay you!"

Dylan was equal parts persistent and sincere. It did not matter how hard Javier tried to turn it down. In the end, he relented. Oliver Holmes and James Carrillo, the director and vice-director of the hospital, were invited as Javier's companions too. There were no cafes or high-end restaurants in this area, so Dylan had to make do for less, and he did not mean a full course meal alone. This also meant a dessert that a man would probably enjoy very much.

Oliver and James could scarcely move a muscle that night. The young women had drained them of their strength enough, with Oliver's beard seemingly coming off from the frenzy. Still, it did not hide the joy on his face, which he described the next day.

*Damn it. It's always these 19-year-old ladies who give you the happiest time.

It sounded like they had a lot of fun, but Javier had sat this one out. The girls were university students who worked on this part-time job for their expenses, and Javier was disinterested. Anyone who would so willingly let him ride on her just because he paid was automatically boring to Javier. In the end, Javier's girl spent the hour fiddling with her phone while he went to sleep

At first, the young woman had thought it was Javier's ploy. That he was either faking it or impotent. But a while later, she studied how stable his sleep was and began to doubt her own conjecture. He did not look like he was faking it. She even began poking him and tried grinding herself against him, and the result was.. When she broke out a jaw-splitting yawn the next morning, her friends were shocked. Did they last for the entire night!? "My *ss! I was just...yawn...playing virtual aquarium with my friends...Kinda used up all the money, including my rent, though. Oops."

Now, owning a virtual aquarium was a legitimate form of entertainment, but most mobile games were free-to-play in name only. Sooner or later, people found things that could only be locked behind a paywall. Even a normal farming simulation or city-planning game had its moments.

Her sisters-in-trade found her lack of sex during “work” intriguing, so they began to guess whether Javier was simply not the type to last long.

The young woman shook her head. “Look, I wouldn’t even feel that bad if he finished too fast. I mean, I’d get an early rest, right? But man, I felt him while he was asleep, and I have to tell you...It’s almost unbelievable just how much of a beast he is! Why else do you think I didn’t sleep a wink the whole night? It’s because I had to distract myself with my mind-numbing game!”

“Then why didn’t he just f*ck you?”

The young woman shook her head. “Who knows? Maybe he’s a puritan. Maybe he thinks I’m unclean or whatever,”

It did not sound right to say it aloud, but she said it anyway. Her sisters did not laugh or mock her, either. Why would they? They were all in the same boat.

“Well, that sums it up, then. We should just find ourselves some rich bachelor with a boring desk job and marry him. Or! We could try our luck at becoming the CEO’s mistress.”

“Hey, I thought you said you wanted to go back to your hometown and find a nice, square boy as your husband.

“Over my f*cking body, sistah! You really think there’s gonna be a single nice, square boy from my backwater place who deserves my seductive figure and my gorgeous looks? As it!”

And, so they proved it again. ‘It is a world where it was more shameful to be poor than to be an escort. Javier returned to the hospital the next day and immediately started a meeting with the higher-ups. The motion was one and only one. “I want the most advanced medical equipment! I want the best doctors for each field! I want the most badass, most GOAT medical researchers, scientists, and development experts! I want our hospital to become the nation’s very best like no one ever was! I want our hospital to trump the world’s best-ranking institutions! “Whether I have the money to do it depends on me. But whether the administration can make it a reality depends on all of you.” The meeting stunned the entire hospital. They would have passed it off as Javier pulling their legs in the past. But now, they thought differently-they thought this young chairman had invested 110 million dollars into purchasing new equipment while hiring some of their technicians into their ranks. Maybe all that money had gone to sending people abroad to study how to operate these machines.

Of course, some of their current human resources were no longer optimal in using the latest system and equipment, so Javier arranged for his people to scout for talented people and prodigies in famous medical institutions and universities worldwide. Any of them who could sign a contract with Sacred Virtues Hospital would be sent abroad for training after a few months.

And how could such a contract seem seductive? Well, the contract guaranteed high pay, absurdly good benefits, and a long period of employment. Naturally, if these people ended up ghosting the company or acted like a sloth at work in the wake of being fired, they would be in for a surprise.

A lot expressed concerns. These people were veterans who had graduated from specific medical institutions in the past. There was a wide gap between themselves and a workforce with a Master’s degree. Javier reassured them that they would be fine purely on the merit of their practical experience. The old could lead the new. With their years-long wisdom and expertise combined with new doctors’ breadth in knowledge and skills, they could both bring a breakthrough in medicine,

The hospital was launched into a new bustling frenzy, leaving Javier alone as the relaxed one. It was just how being a boss worked-everyone else was already free when you were busy, and vice versa.

A good leader knew all they had to do was to find the right direction for their mission.

While Javier was ready to take a gulp of the fresh air outside, he accidentally bumped into Mikaela, who shouted at him in an undertone, “Mr. Kersey! Yoo-hoo? Over here!”

Look at those vulpine eyes! What could she be planning? Was she going to offer him physical proof of her love right here in the office!?

Chapter 420

You’re All I Think About with Mikaela’s summon, Javier entered a medical storage room with her. “What mistake did you make that you went from the head nurse to a warehouse keeper?” Mikaela heard Javier’s surprised question once she went into the medical storage room. She was rendered speechless. “Warehouse keeper? It’s warehouse manager, mind you. Besides, I wasn’t demoted. I’m subbing for someone. I’m now on duty today by the warehouse manager, Cindy, is my friend. She has an emergency today so she’s asked me to replace her.

“But don’t overthink it. The storeroom is being integrated, so what we do isn’t against the rules. Don’t penalize Cindy for this.”

Javier looked at Mikaela with a beam. “Why? Who are you to say what I can or cannot do?”

Mikaela froze. She did not think much about it, treating Javier as a friend, thus blurting what she did and not feeling anything wrong about it. It was until what Javier said that she realized... they seemed to be less than friends –and she had always addressed him as Mr. Kersey

Seeing that Mikaela went mute, Javier told her with a grin, “Forget it, I was joking with you!” Mikaela heaved an internal sigh of relief. If Cindy got punished because of this, her conscience would not be clear. Thinking that the chairman was like the king-and it was a risk to stay by the king’s side, Mikaela dared not stall. She hurriedly pulled out 150 dollars from her pocket and passed it to Javier. “I took 50 dollars and there’s the dinner at Starbucks and staying with you that night, so I’m assuming it all to be 150 dollars.”

With the money being thrust to Javier’s hand, he held it and asked, “Do you have to be so serious?” Mikaela answered, “I should. It’s better to be clear. It’s a horse of a different color. Thank you for your help back then.”

Javier made an “oh” sound and kept the money. Leaning against the office table, he scrutinized Mikaela. The woman wore a pink nurse robe today with a pair of thin white pants. It was not at all sexy but she looked beautiful, like a soothing portrait. Noticing Javier’s passionate and unabashed gaze, Mikaela found it a little overwhelming. “Mr. Kersey, I still have to work now and you seem quite busy too. Why don’t you go back to work first?”

Javier shook his head, “No hurry. I’m not busy, not at all. And I remember you said that the storage is being integrated, so it means you’re not quite occupied as well. I’d better stay and keep you company lest you miss me secretly.” Blushing, Mikaela waved her hands. “I don’t. Mr. Kersey, stop saying things that are not true. I really don’t-” Javier waved with a smile to dismiss the topic and asked Mikaela about her divorce.

“It’s done. I divorced him without taking anything, left everything to him. There’s no reason for him to not say yes. The only thing he doesn’t want so happens to be what I need the most, so I took Renna.”

Javier could guess that it was their child and asked, “You’re working. Oliver’s working too. What’s the plan for Renna?”

“Daycare. I’ll pick her up after work. If I can’t make it, my dad will do it. Right, he doesn’t know about my divorce yet. Keep the secret for me, please.” Javier could more or less guess the reason Mikaela was reluctant to tell Oliver about her divorce. It was none other than issues like why the house they bought

was left to Donald or what about the child when they had divorced. Therefore, he did not ask about it. It was a personal choice. He was not asking about it or dipping his toes in it, nor take the initiative to. The only thing he wanted to do right now was to have Mikaela by surprise when she was not at all on guard-like what he did next. Mikaela was still speaking when Javier acted suddenly and pounced at the alluring body...