

The Ace at the Apex

Chapter 29 The Chamber of Industry and Commerce Dinner

Jade thought that Javier was only saying those words out of anger, so she did not take him seriously. And the truth was, the man looked like he had done nothing either.

It had been one and a half days since the issue of the three manufacturers kicking their order back had cropped up, but Javier was still driving around leisurely. She even heard that he had gone into the city and bought a pot of flowers back.

Jade did not have the brainpower and was too embarrassed to care. The man had invested 1.5 million dollars and had become the biggest shareholder, as well as pulling two major business deals in. How was she supposed to boss him around? (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

Hence, the job of running around to prove their tire quality passed the mark became her task as she wished. It was one hectic job.

The next day when the workday was about to end, Jade proved not quite fruitful that day and returned to the company. Just as she entered her office, she saw Javier fiddling with a white jasmine plant.

“Ms. Odell, you’re finally back. Look at this. What do you think of this pot of jasmine I’ve brought back for you on my way back from the city? It’s Arabian jasmine. I bought it from an old man who was growing these in his yard. He was quite reluctant to sell it to me! This is a nice species. When the flowers bloom, it smells nicer than even French perfume. It’s very well -known for its fragrance...” wa Jade was speechless. Yes, she liked jasmines, but they were in a tight bind right now. How was she supposed to be in the mood to enjoy some flowers?

Wanting to snap at Javier but recalling that she had been the one asking to take care of the matter, Jade swallowed her words. (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

“Yes, yes, I quite like it. Just leave it there, thanks.”

After the cursory reply, Jade covered her face with her hands as she sat in her chair looking exhausted.

Javier merely smiled watching her, clearly seeing through her helplessness, but he did not offer her any comfort. Instead, he brought something else up.

“The Chamber of Industry and Commerce our company is in called during the afternoon to invite you to a dinner event tonight.”

Jade did join an industry and commerce chamber previously. It was a social thing, like a small enterprise alliance. Back when she had planned to expand the business, she had joined with the purpose of making more connections, but it seemed that it had not been quite effective. So she shook her head at the news.

“I’m not going. I’m in no mood to attend.” (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

“Attend it. Think of it as taking me there to expand my horizon. I haven’t been to any...”

At Javier's incessant request, Jade was unable to refuse and could only attend the dinner with him.

When they arrived at the banquet hall in the hotel, the other SME bosses were already

gathered there. As Javier raked his eyes over the place, he realized that there were plenty of people, at least over a hundred of them. He spotted a few familiar faces, Wade Farlow, the boss of Fusion Electric Cars, and Zack Dilley and Terry Hamer who were bootlicking him.

When Zack saw Jade, he went up to her with a warm smile. "Jade, you're here!"

The man's friendliness disgusted Jade. "Had fun stabbing me in the back huh?" (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

Knowing what she meant but acting like he did not, Zack asked, "What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean! And it's Ms. Odell to you from now on. You calling me Jade repulses me!"

At Jade's burst of anger, Zack was well aware of the situation now and dropped the act, staying silent with a smirk on his face. Simultaneously, Wade espied Javier and hurriedly squeezed his plump self through the crowd to get to him.

Zack plastered on a bright smile as he approached Wade. Fusion Electric Cars had turned down his family's car seat order and he was hoping he could discuss it directly with Wade. He started to greet the man obsequiously, "Hey, Mr. Farlow, you're he-"

"Mr. Kersey, you're here too?" (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

Zack had extended out both his hands to shake hands with Wade, but the latter extended his pair of hands to Javier instead. It was absolutely awkward. Zack's hands were left hanging in the air and he did not know what to do. He also did not understand why Wade was acting so polite with Javier.

Javier's brows creased slightly, which Wade noticed and was instantly reminded of the confidentiality promise. He continued to say, "How are you? How's work at the gas company recently?"

Jade chuckled when she noticed the blunder. "Mr. Farlow, this is Mr. Kersey from our company. Did you get the wrong person?"

"Huh, he's from your company? I thought he's from the gas company..."

Muttering under his breath, Wade turned away after greeting Jade and thoroughly ignored Zack. The latter was embarrassed but he thought that Javier felt it even more.

"Tch, you didn't really think that he's here to shake hands with you, did you? He's the boss of Fusion Electric Cars. And you?"

With a grumble of the word "trash", Zack stalked away haughtily.

Javier paid him no mind. Since he had asked to attend the Chamber of Industry and Commerce dinner event tonight, he was ready to give Zack a piece of his mind. (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

Suddenly, a throng of people started coming through the doors of the banquet hall as loud proclamations were heard.

“Oh, it’s our honor and the highlight of tonight’s dinner to be graced by your presence, Mr. Noe!”

“Mr. Noe is attending our dinner event tonight? What an honor!”

“Mr. Noe, have you been doing fine recently? I’ve been busy and didn’t have the time to visit.”

Javier took a look at the old man walking in. He was in his seventies with silver hair but looked robust and lively. Jade filled him in from the side.

“That’s Parker Noe, someone who used to be in charge of economic affairs in the municipality. A lot of people here got into industry and commerce thanks to him, so he’s like the father of our town’s industry and commerce development. On top of that, he’s a virtuous man. He’s not into bureaucracy and doesn’t do anything against the law. He’s one of the good politicians.”

As Jade talked about Parker, Zack had gone up to the latter and chatted with the man amicably. Listening to their conversation, it seemed that their families were close to each other as the old man and Dilley Sr. were very much friends. As the dinner commenced, Parker brought Zack around like he was taking care of a junior in his family.

“Zack, how’s your father doing? How’s your family car seat company recently?”

“Thanks for asking, Uncle Parker. My dad’s been well and is doing okay. Just a few days ago, he mentioned that he wanted to invite you out for a drink...” (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

Parker and Zack’s easy flow of conversation at the dinner table stirred envy from the people around them. Although Parker had retired, his subordinates from his earlier days had now gone up in ranks and commanded real authority within the city.

Basically, a single word from Parker would make resources lean toward a certain company from left and right. Due to this fact, there were plenty of people who went up to him for a toast despite not sharing a table with him

Jade had not wanted to go. She did not want to stoop as low as these people but Javier kept persuading her.

“No, I’m not going over there. Zack Dilley’s going to speak ill of me when I’m there. He’s closet o Mr. Noe.”

“What are you scared of? You said he’s a virtuous man. If you don’t go, it would look like you really have something to hide. Go on!”

As Javier kept up his coaxing, Jade failed in her refusal and finally went on her way.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Noe. I’m Jade Odell from Beacon Tires. I—”

“Oh, Ms. Odell, I think you shouldn’t come over. You’re currently under the scrutiny of three companies that are questioning the quality of your tires and you have the cheek to come here? If I were you, I’d hurry back to check on my tire quality and readjust my business values and product quality first!”

As expected, Zack, who had dropped his facade, began his slander before Jade could even finish her sentence. Farther away from them, Javier's gaze was tinged with a hint of a sneer. 'Go on, bluff and jump as high as you can. How else would the fall hurt badly enough?'

Chapter 30 Javier's Retaliation

Zack had already figured it out. It was his reality that he would never get his hands on Jade, so he might as well ruin her and cling to Kendrick. After all, a man had to want something. Since he was unable to lust after the woman, he would lust after the money!

His intentional sabotage made Parker, who had just picked up his wine glass, drop his glass back on the table with a thud. (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

"What's the matter with Beacon Tires? How could you be this despicable? Quality is how you gain a standing in the business world. What are you guys trying to do?"

"Tires, especially. They're so very crucial to vehicle safety. How many drivers would meet harm on the road and even lose their lives because of the problematic tires you made, have you ever thought about that?!"

Parker went on to fire off a tirade at Jade as Zack occasionally added a comment here and there, to fuel the fire and make the flames burn even brighter. Jade tried to explain herself several times but was unable to interrupt Parker's rebuke. She felt wronged and aggrieved.

"A person has to be credible, more so for a business. It should also be accountable!"

"Alright, this is all I have to say to you. Go back and reflect on yourself!"

Parker waved with a huff and dismissed Jade with a careless wave.

Being berated by the old man in front of everyone, Jade was red in the face with embarrassment and shame. She felt incredibly wronged. Beacon Tires was the one being accused, but she had not been even given a chance to defend herself. (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

When she got back to her seat, she glared at Javier and complained with a sob in her voice, "This is all your fault. I said I didn't want to go and you insisted on making me go. Are you happy now that I got embarrassed and scolded in public?" Javier nodded. "I am."

Jade was infuriated and turned to look the other way, deciding to ignore Javier. After waiting for some time, she grew even more furious when she realized that Javier was not going to offer her an explanation or an apology. Was this guy for real? He had encouraged her to go up there and caused her to get a lecture but he was not going to apologize for it? (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

Just as Jade turned back to question Javier, she realized that he was no longer in the seat next to hers. As she scanned the hall for the man, she finally found him-walking toward Parker Noe!

Jade immediately panicked. The quality issue of Beacon Tires was the biggest controversy right now. If Javier went to Parker to get even and affected the tire order from Fusion Electric Cars and Grazin' Tractors, what would she ever do?

With the worry gnawing at her, Jade got up to stop him. Despite her haste, Javier managed to reach Parker first and started to speak to the old man.

“Hello, Mr. Noe. I’m the vice general manager of Beacon Tires, Javier Kersey.”

Before Parker spoke up, Zack waved his hand impatiently.

“All right, all right. Go back and bring up your company’s product quality. Stop thinking about taking shortcuts here with Mr. Noe to cover up the fact that your product quality isn’t up to par.”

Zack sounded like he was driving Javier away from Parker but what he implied with his words was pointed. Parker nodded in agreement.

“Yes, what Zack said is the conscience and awareness that an industry and commerce company should have.”

Zack preened at the praise and arched a brow at Javier like he was both boasting and provoking him. The latter ignored him and opened his work bag to pull out some documents. (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

“Mr. Noe, Beacon Tires does not lack the conscience and awareness that an industry and commerce company should have at all. But this won’t stop slander from parties with ulterior motives. This is the evidence to prove our company’s innocence. Please, have a look.”

Javier passed the documents to Parker right after he spoke.

While Zack did not know what the documents were, he was aware of one thing, and that was not to give Javier a chance to defend himself. That was the best choice he could make, so he extended a hand to snatch the documents to toss them aside.

Unfortunately, Parker had already taken hold of the papers. Zack was not bold enough to snatch them from him. Parker had good eyesight, not having to wear glasses despite being in his seventies. He could read the documents straight away. Page after page, there were legitimate reports from the company’s own quality assurance department and quality control reports from the recipient manufacturers. The one that held the most significant was the last document-the city’s quality and technical supervision bureau! (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

“Mr. Noe, we’ve informed the city’s quality and technical supervision bureau the moment we heard that someone was slandering our product quality, and have invited them to inspect our parts production and warehouse located at our factory, as well as the tires we have produced in the past. This is the inspection report from the bureau itself. The evidence here proves that Beacon Tires have no quality issue and the matter was purely slander and defamation!

“If you and anyone present doubt this report, you can call the city’s quality and technical supervision bureau and inquire about the report’s authenticity, or go to Beacon Tires for any form of inspection. We welcome you anytime.”

Parker could recognize the authenticity of the report in one glance, so there was no need for further inspection. Wade took this opportunity to speak up as well.

“While I don’t know Mr. Kersey here, we Fusion Electric Cars have always used Beacon Tires. As a matter of fact, nothing from what Beacon Tires have supplied to us has ever been noncompliant. There aren’t any flawed products either. The feedback from the market has been great as well.

“I don’t know who’s trying to defame a brilliant company like this, but I know that it hasn’t been easy on Ms. Odell as a young woman to be hands-on in this industry and lead the company this wonderfully.

“Not only is the culprit not supporting her, but they’re also slandering her company. This person is truly despicable!” (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

Jade, who stood beside Javier, had been worried that the matter would get blown up even further and the consequent negative blowback. She had not expected Javier to have done so much behind her back. Even his trip to the city was for an inspection by the bureau’s officials.

Everything that was happening had been accomplished by Javier single-handedly. As the boss, she was both grateful and embarrassed.

Parker stood up and extended both his hands to Jade.

“Ms. Odell, I misunderstood you earlier. I must’ve hurt a brilliant entrepreneur such as yourself. Please, accept my sincerest apologies.”

Delighted and surprised, Jade assured the old man that it was fine and promptly asked him to sit back down.

Despite that, Parker refused to sit down. Not only that, he picked up from where Wade had left off.

“Yes, we ought to find this slanderous weasel. People should know about them and question them about their conscience, see if it’s still with them or had a dog mauled it!”

Zack was on pins and needles. He had not expected Javier to squash the quality controversy so fast before it could even unleash its full impact. What was more frightening was that his Uncle Parker wanted to seek him out and question his conscience. (Daily Latest update www.sweetawaz.com)

Thinking about it, however, it should not be a big issue. He had invited those people out individually. He probably would not get exposed. Hence, Zack slapped the table in indignation. “What a b*stard indeed! The culprit should be paraded in front of the public so that everyone can slap them!”

Ah, Javier’s thought exactly.

That was why he had passed a thumb drive to the banquet hall server and asked her to play its contents on the large screen. Immediately, surveillance recordings from a certain hotel, a certain club, and more, appeared on the screen.

In the clips, Zack was seen drinking, singing, and enjoying himself with a few escorts on

three separate occasions. And on each occasion, he was accompanied by one of the three people who were in charge of the companies that had complained about Beacon Tires.... 3 Seeing those clips, Zack was horrified.

Chapter 31 Never Skimp on Charity

Chapter 31 Never Skimp on Charity Everyone in the banquet hall, including Parker, shifted their gaze onto Zack.

Zack was both anxious and mortified. Just half a minute ago, he was slamming the table in indignation, claiming that they should haul the slanderer out and take turns to slap him. Half a minute later, his face was appearing on the surveillance camera recording, acting chummy with the three individuals who had complained about Beacon Tires' product quality.

Karma came so fast that he suffered a whiplash.

Feeling on pins and needles, Zack looked around as he felt his face flush. The next moment, however, he growled at Javier with a fierce expression, "What is the meaning of this? This can't be treated as evidence at all!"

Javier seemed indifferent as he replied, "Yeah, I didn't say that it was proof. But why are you panicking over it?"

*I-." Zack stammered, at a loss for words. He wanted to deny everything, say that he was not the culprit, but the truth had been laid bare.

Although it could not possibly be counted as evidence, the guests gathered here were no fools. Everyone could see his role in the incident.

When Zack saw Parker sitting down with a scowl, he quickly went up to him to explain, "Uncle Parker, I didn't..."

Parker was not having it. He pointed a finger at Zack's cutlery and waved for a nearby server.

"Here, please change these cutleries for a set of new ones."

Zack was befuddled. Parker had ordered for his cutlery to be taken away on the spot. It was apparent that the older man was keeping his distance from him. Watching his cutlery get taken away, Zack was so angry that his hands were shaking. The gaze that he gave Javier brimmed with resentment.

If it had not been for this piece of trash, he would not have embarrassed himself so much tonight! But in front of so many people, he could only keep his mouth shut. He haughtily went to another table in a corner and sat down. Zack could not leave the event either; to leave would mean that he was silently admitting that he had done it.

No matter how upsetting and mortifying it was, he had to sit there quietly until the dinner ended!

As the dinner went on, Parker invited Jade to sit next to him. The older man apologized to her repeatedly throughout the night, expressing that she could voice out any challenges she may face as it must not be easy for her as an entrepreneur.

Jade was delightfully surprised and immensely grateful for Parker's encouragement and

support. Nevertheless, she was even more thankful toward one other person-Javier. If it had not been Javier, no one would care even if she cried; forget regaining her reputation and sitting next to Parker so proudly.

Sneaking a glance at Javier who was nonchalantly helping himself to dinner whilst seated at a table nearby, Jade was secretly impressed. The guy was amazing, resolving the issue silently and even exposing Zack just as he deserved. Jade knew that she would not be able to imagine such a divine tactic even in her wildest dream, let alone see it through it.

Half an hour later when everyone was done with their meal, it was about time for the dinner to come to an end. It was at this moment that Parker stood up and followed the red carpet onto the stage.

“I see that all of you present tonight are rather young. Allow me to leverage on my seniority and be shameless for one night. I have something to share with you all.”

The self-demeaning comment attracted everyone’s attention and all the guests turned to listen attentively.

Parker then disclosed that he had visited an old friend not long ago and discovered that the mountain village he was living in was impoverished. They did not have electricity or clean water. Even the education system there was lacking. The one teacher in the village was only paid 50 dollars a month.

On top of that, the teacher had to teach Math, literature, art, physical education, and every other subject. The children in the village did not attend school as long as they could since the locals felt that farming made more sense than getting an education.

The trip stirred Parker’s worry and sympathy, thus he had decided to ask everyone at the dinner for some donations to help the poverty-stricken population.

“Don’t you all worry. I won’t ask for your money without giving anything back,” Parker announced as he retrieved a scroll, unrolling it with the help of a server.

“This is a replica of the painting *Along the River* left behind by my ancestors. I’m not too sure how much it’s worth since I never planned to sell what my ancestors have kept and passed down. But I can’t possibly let you donate out of your pocket for nothing. So...”

Before Parker finished his sentence, someone suggested that they would donate anyway without him putting up the replica of *Along the River*. The others were quick to chorus the sentiment.

They were all commerce and industry people, relatively successful compared to the usual working class of society. With just a modest donation of three to five thousand dollars each, the donation total would easily come up to 300-500 thousand dollars.

Parker, however, refused this suggestion. He insisted on auctioning *Along the River* and all the proceeds would go to the village.

Since Parker insisted, the rest of them could only agree to the auction,

Since it was not at a professional auction, there were not many rules and they started with a casual rostrum. The only rule was that the bid would start at eight thousand dollars and each increasing bid would have to be at least a thousand dollars.

The guests fought one another to bid for the painting just so they would leave a good impression on Parker. Considering it as a repayment for the favorable treatment, Jade enthusiastically joined the crowd and the price went up to 35 thousand dollars.

Javier did not say anything. He merely glanced at the painting and continued listening to the bids. He thought that a replica of *Along the River* was only worth 8 thousand dollars maximum. It was not like it was painted by a famous painter and the replica did not have its own style. There was no flair in it and it was far more inferior compared to the ancient paintings back at his home.

Nonetheless, he supported Jade in bidding for it. Most of the time, the meaning of the item was not determined by the money spent on the item itself. As he kept listening, he found that Jade had stopped bidding. It seemed like she had already given up.

Javier went close to her. "Why aren't you bidding anymore?"

"There's no point. Mr. Noe doesn't like bootlickers and that painting isn't worth much," Jade answered.

"Of course, he doesn't like bootlickers and that painting truly isn't worth much. But you have to think about the significance of the matter. When word about this auction tonight gets out, the enterprise of the person who won the bid would be publicized.

"Beacon Tires is lacking in reputation right now. Even the reputation of being a bootlicker is better than having none at all."

Javier laid everything out on the table to Jade but the latter still felt the pinch and wanted to focus on developing the company. It was understandable. She was thinking about securing the quarter deal, but what Javier considered was the future.

The man stopped persuading Jade and tuned in to the current bid-53 thousand dollars. He stood up.

"Beacon Tires, 150 thousand dollars!"

The entire hall fell silent as the guests were too stunned at the announcement. They all looked toward Jade. They were thinking that Javier could not possibly represent Beacon Tires, only Jade could do that.

Since Javier had already declared the bid, though, it was not like Jade could deny and she could only nod in compliance despite thinking, 'If it weren't for all these eyes on us, I'd have choked you to death!'

One sentence and he had spent 150 thousand dollars for her. This was not the way to indulge!

While everyone was shocked over Beacon Tire's generosity, another voice spoke up from the corner.

"I, Zack Dilley, never skimp on charity. 170 thousand dollars!" Ugh, what a nuisance! There he went again...

Chapter 32 Kindness Is Kindness

Zack had been paying attention to Jade since Parker first mentioned the bidding. He knew nothing about ancient paintings but the patriarch of the Odells at the Odello Corporation was known for loving old paintings and calligraphy. Kendrick had mentioned during their chats that Jade had a certain level of understanding for such art pieces as she had spent a lot of time with the old man during her younger years.

That was why Zack kept his eyes on Jade, wanting to judge from her reaction if the replica of Along the River was valuable or not. He assumed that it was not worth much when Jade had only made bids in small increments. He was even more convinced when she finally kept quiet

However, when Javier called out 150 thousand dollars, Zack recalled the assumption. He felt that it was a tactic that Jade was trying to pull. Everyone knew that the Odell patriarch liked ancient paintings so she must have made Javier do the bidding instead, calling out 150 thousand dollars directly to stun the rest of them and win the painting.

Zack was not letting Jade get away with her ploy. He would be happy to follow along if he could both please Parker and win an ancient painting. After some thought, he stood up to put forth his bid of 170 thousand dollars.

To be honest, he was quite anxious after placing his bid, worried that Javier would call it quits. Surprisingly enough, Javier increased the bid almost instantly.

“230 thousand dollars!”

The huge leap in increment gave Zack confidence as he shouted, “250 thousand dollars!”

After they spoke up, the merry auction had suddenly turned into an exclusive bidding war between Javier and Zack. The other guests had already expressed their sincerity, so they kept their mouths shut and silently watched the drama of Javier and Zack at loggerheads unfold.

Jade panicked a little when she saw that Javier was about to stand up again when Zack raised the bid to 250 thousand dollars, but she could not show her feelings outright. Forcing herself to stay calm, she leaned into Javier’s ear with a smile plastered on her lips.

“That’s enough, Javier. We earned enough reputation already. Let Zack be the idiot who pays. He’s gonna cry when he finds out the painting is only worth a couple of grand after this.”

Javier was speechless.

“Be more farsighted. These people here are industry bosses and so are their circles of friends. If we win the bid, the reputation of Beacon Tires will drop into these bosses’ ears like targeted missiles and business will boom soon after.

“Stop thinking of trying to trick and trap people. That’s not the way to act in the business world. Be more merciful, will you?”

Jade nearly choked from Javier’s retort. He had been putting Zack in his place just moments earlier and had even wanted to chop someone’s head previously, but now he’s talking about being merciful? Right now? He was calling her petty? Jade was about to curse at him but Javier did not give her the chance to, standing up and raising his arm.

“280 thousand dollars!”

Zack, who saw Jade and Javier whispering to each other, felt completely assured.

Hah, f*ck, luckily I’m smart or you guys would’ve gotten the jackpot!

Inwardly rejoicing over his fast thinking, Zack did not stall as he raised his bid again.

“300 thousand dollars!”

After shouting out his bid, he looked at Javier and Jade as he preened. But he winced as he realized that Jade was trying to hold Javier back from getting up and shouting out his next bid.

Their actions were unaligned with his earlier judgment. Zack felt his heart drop as dread filled him. The two of them were not working together to trick him, were they? The more he thought about it, the more holes he saw. Fear gnawed at him. That was 300 thousand dollars that he would be taking out of the factory’s funds.

If the painting was truly valuable, it would be fine. If that was not the case, his old man would skin him alive!

When Javier did not get up and leaned in to whisper to Jade, Zack felt the fear within him grow. It was only then he remembered that his old man was friends with Parker and might have seen the painting before. He quickly dialed his father’s number.

Once he asked, he nearly peed his pants. His old man said that he had secretly brought a professional to take a look and that painting was only worth 3-4.5 thousand dollars.

Spending 300 thousand dollars on a painting worth 3-4.5 thousand dollars... The image of his death flashed in Zack’s mind. It did not look good.

Seated at this chair, both his legs under the table quivered. Zack fervently prayed for Javier to make another bid. As long as he made another bid, even if it was just one dollar higher, Zack swore he would not counterbid. He was even chanting in his mind, ‘Javier Kersey, please. I promise, as long as you make another bid, I’ll never mock you ever again.’

Jade, on the other hand, was doing the complete opposite from Zack.

“Javier, please stop bidding now. Consider this me pleading with you, okay? The bid’s now at 315 thousand dollars! It could be used on something else. If you want the publicity that badly, I promise, we’ll put in an advertisement with the TV station tomorrow. We’ll put all 315 thousand dollars into advertisement fees, okay?”

Jade felt like she was nothing even though she was the boss. What could she do? 315 thousand dollars was not a small sum and Beacon Tires could not afford to just toss such a large sum down the drain.

Javier was obviously more farsighted than Jade was. It was not that TV commercials were ineffective, but infomercials depended on the product. To advertise tires on TV and hope for consumers to buy them? Come on...

Before Jade could persuade him any further, he got up and made another bid. “Beacon Tires, 315 thousand dollars!”

When he heard those words, Zack heaved a long sigh of relief, feeling beads of cold sweat roll down his forehead. Awesome, someone had finally taken over. This was wonderful! As if afraid that Javier would back out on his bid, he even stood up to clap.

“Congratulations! Congratulations, Ms. Odell, for winning the bid for Along the River.”

After Zack’s congratulations, the others continued with their own sentiments. No one else was putting forth a bid so the painting must belong to Jade. Failing to stop Javier and successfully losing 315 thousand dollars, Jade’s nerves were fraught but she was forced to crack a grin. Thanking the guests for their congratulations, she went up on stage to collect the painting from Parker.

The old man was very moved by Beacon Tires’ charity. Passing the scroll to Jade, his hands shook. “Ms. Odell, you’re a kind soul! An angel among entrepreneurs!”

Jade’s hands too were shaking as she accepted the painting. “Oh, no, not at all, Mr. Noe. You flatter me too much.”

Parker was shaking because he was moved, but Jade was shaking from the blow of 315 thousand dollars!

Zack, who managed to escape his predicament, went to Javier haughtily. The silent vow he had made to himself earlier had long been forgotten.

Slinging an arm around Javier’s neck, Zack sang out, “Dumb*ss, that painting’s only worth some 3-4.5 thousand dollars. Jade will burn you to death for spending 315 thousand dollars on it.

“Don’t think that you’re invincible and oh-so-great just because you found some evidence against me. Know your place, you’re still a piece of sh*t. And you’ll always be a piece of sh*t to me. You’ll never amount to anything no matter how much you try!

“Buying an ancient painting? What do you know about art? I’m a professional at this. Watch and learn!”

Zack gloated arrogantly with a victorious look on his face.

Javier spoke up but his words were not directed at Zack. Instead, he was addressing Parker

who was on the stage, “Mr. Noe, I think what you did was unfair. Beacon Tires bought the painting, yes, but it doesn’t mean that other bosses here aren’t charitable. Mr. Dilley here, for example, is extremely charitable. We can’t possibly take that away from him just over a painting, right? 1

“Personally, I think kindness is kindness no matter the amount. Why *don’t* you pen something on the spot and gift it to Mr. Dilley so that he can also donate 300 thousand dollars and fulfill his wish of being charitable?”

Zack was stunned when he heard the words coming out of Javier’s mouth. What stunned him more was what came after that...

When Parker saw Zack standing with Javier with an arm around the latter’s neck all smiles, he thought that the young man had regained his conscience. He was rather glad about it.

“Sure. Since Zack has the intention to do a good deed, I shall fulfill his wish!” Zack was at the brink of tears. He did not want to donate anything...

Chapter 33 Keeping up Appearances Despite the Costs

Between money and dignity, there was no right choice. To all the businesspeople present tonight, money mattered as true businesspeople were always after profits.

Despite this, Zack was not a real businessman. To Javier, he was merely an idiot who was slightly better off in life.

And reality did not let Javier down either. Zack actually made an idiotic decision and accepted Parker's calligraphy with tears in his eyes.

Parker himself was very moved when he saw that Zack was close to tears and embraced the younger man. "You're a good kid. It's okay to make mistakes. You're still a good kid if you realize your mistake and correct it. You've done a good job tonight and I'll help you spread your kindness." 1

Zack actually cried but it was not tears of remorse; it was because of the ache in his heart over the money he had lost!

No matter how much it pained him, however, it did not stop him from maintaining his image. Wiping his tears away, he raised Parker's calligraphy high up. "What's this? This is an act of kindness.

"We, as businesses and corporations, must not chase after profits blindly. We have a responsibility and duty toward society.

"I've donated 300 thousand dollars tonight but it's nothing. It's only a drop in the ocean toward my responsibility and duty!"

The crowd applauded and cheered for him but no matter how Zack heard it, it sounded like they were calling him a dumb*ss. He thought of denying Javier's proposal and refusing to donate, but before this large group of guests, he could not bring himself to do it.

After all, he had been the one to shout 300 thousand dollars. How would his dignity survive the blow if he were to back down now...

As the dinner ended, Javier carefully analyzed the business potential the 315 thousand dollars would bring Jade and the forced acknowledgment she would earn. At the same time, she voiced her doubts, "How did you know that Zack would agree to empty his pockets of 300 thousand dollars?"

Javier scoffed. "I wasn't hoping for him to spend a single cent. I just want him to embarrass himself in public. Who knew that he'd insist on keeping up appearances despite the costs? His family's already struggling to find funding and he's rushing to throw 300 thousand dollars away to salvage his dignity."

Jade was curious. "You've looked into the financial background of his family's car seat factory?"

Javier shook his head. "There's no need to. That company is worth about 4-6 million dollars so the cash flow in and out has to stay within the range of a hundred thousand dollars. He has spent 125 thousand to reload the hotel card, 173 thousand to buy a car, and tonight he's forking out 300 thousand. That's almost 600 thousand dollars. The company's probably collapsing!"

Jade thought about it and it seemed like there was some truth to Javier's words. She had to give it to him. He really was slightly better than her in business dealings. He was sly like a fox

Furthermore, she had received an unknown call when she left Javier's side earlier to use the washroom. The person said that they had heard about Beacon Tires from a friend and wanted to make an appointment to visit the company and discuss a possible collaboration.

Reality had proven that Javier throwing 300 thousand dollars had indeed been effective. It delighted Jade and she was now even more impressed with him.

At the same time, Zack and Terry were confronting Javier at the parking lot.

"F*ck you! Who do you think you are? You're just a toyboy yet you dare act so presumptuous before me? I'm writing down that 300 thousand dollars as your fault. I will get you back for this, just you wait!"

Terry, who was standing to the side, spat at the ground. "Exactly, this isn't over. Even if you're a god, you'll have to get on your knees and beg for forgiveness for offending Mr. Dilley!"

"One dumb*ss and another dumb*ss."

Javier got into the car and left without even a backward glance, speeding off to pick Jade up from the entrance of the hotel.

Zack asked with a frown, "What do you think he meant earlier?"

"Two dumb*sses?" Terry answered.

It was correct and Zack slapped him.

"Do you really think that's what I'm asking you? I'm asking why is he spending 315 thousand dollars to purchase a replica painting and you're doing math? F*ck!"

Terry felt wronged. He was from the finance department. What else was his skill useful for if not math...

Javier, who was driving, asked Jade where her house was, intending to send her home but she politely rejected his offer. Javier did not comment on this as he drove the car toward the hotel he was staying. When the car stopped at the hotel, Jade felt a little awkward and could not help but recall the additional clause..

Javier chuckled when he saw how abashed Jade looked, "Don't think too much. I'm currently staying here."

This made the woman sigh in relief before she asked in surprise, "You're staying at a hotel?"

Javier nodded. "Where else am I going to stay? There isn't any unit close that's enough if I wish to rent and I won't be able to move in right away if I buy a place. The company doesn't provide accommodation, neither could I possibly put out a mattress in the office and stay there, right? It wouldn't be a good look."

That was true. Jade thought about it and offered, "All right, I'll figure out something for you. Consider it my thanks to you."

Javier raked his eyes over Jade's slender figure and said teasingly, "Jade, if you want to thank me, shouldn't you be fulfilling the additional clause?"

Embarrassed, Jade's cheeks turned pink and she rushed to open the door to get out of the car. But Javier got out before her and decided to leave the car with her.

"Take the car. I stay near the office anyway and can just walk to work tomorrow."

With that, Javier turned and left.

Watching his retreating back, Jade was unable to give a name to what she felt. After spending these days interacting with him and everything that had happened, she felt that nothing would be an issue as long as Javier was around...

As Javier parted with Jade, Zack met up with Kendrick. After relaying what had happened tonight, Kendrick called Zack a moron. "Jade spent all that time with my grandfather when she was younger. She's like a semi-professional when it comes to ancient art, maybe even a full one. Bidding against her for an ancient painting is basically signing yourself up for a suicide mission!"

Zack could not retort. After all, he had been the one who made those foolish bids and had agreed to pay. He pleaded with Kendrick for help, "Kendrick, my family has been under intense pressure recently..."

Before he even finished his plea, Kendrick waved in dismissal. That was nothing to him. "What matters now is that you've got to do something for me first!"

He hooked an arm around Zack's neck, pressed his lips to the man's ear, and whispered. Zack was immediately unsettled

"No way, Kendrick! That's a crime!"

Kendrick pat Zack's shoulder. "What are you scared of? High risks, high returns, right?"

"Besides, I'm not asking you to do it yourself. Get a scapegoat!"

"You've got to understand. To receive Odell's support, you'll need to contribute something substantial. Even the workers in your factory understand that the more they work, the more they earn. You should understand this too, yes?"

Zack hesitated but ultimately nodded in agreement..

The next day around five in the morning, Javier was sleeping in his hotel room when his phone started ringing nonstop. Thoroughly annoyed, he answered his phone. But before he could ask anything, a frantic voice came through the speaker, "Mr. Kersey, there's an emergency!"

Chapter 34 | Guarantee It With My Head

Beacon Tires' workshop had caught fire.

By the time Javier got there, Jade, with her disheveled hair haphazardly gathered into a ponytail at the back of her head, was already there.

According to the woman, it was fortunate that an employee had caught the fire early which resulted in less loss or casualties. Only some small parts and semi-completed items had been burned. The rough estimation loss was around 15 thousand dollars.

Against the threat of a fire, this loss could almost be dismissed, but they had to find out the cause of the incident.

After checking the surveillance footage of the workshop, they found out why the place had caught fire... Half an hour ago, a burglar had sneaked into the tool storeroom at the back of the workshop and had used a lighter to light up his surroundings. Due to the prolonged burning time, the lighter burned through its own plastic casing and this caused the burglar to throw the lighter onto the floor in a panic. Coincidentally, there were tools on the floor that *were* wrapped in some grease paper and they caught on fire.

After finding out the cause of the fire, some employees suggested reporting it to the police but Jade shot down the idea.

“Let’s not report it. Who knows how it’ll affect us if the police were to intervene. Since the loss isn’t large and that burglar looked like a waste picker, there’s no need to get the police involved.”

Jade’s decision was sound. If the police opened an investigation into the fire, the workshop would have to temporarily cease production. Not only would this affect the company’s production output but the word might also get out. Coupled with untrue accusations from those with ulterior motives, the headlines could possibly become “Fire in Beacon Tires Due to Poor Safety Production Adherence.”

They had just rid themselves of the quality issue. Jade did not want the company to come under fire for similar topics again.

Javier was supportive of not reporting the fire to the police, but he was skeptical about the burglar. Why would anyone rob a tire company? To steal a wheel?

There would always be a cost-benefit analysis in doing anything. Since the burglar had decided to break in, would it not make more sense to head to the finance room where more valuables were kept?

With the assumption that something must have gone wrong, Javier saved the face of the burglar from the surveillance footage and pulled out his phone.

There were various services in the black market, including bounty hunters. As professionals in capturing criminals, they were the best to track down a person. Hence, Javier published a task to capture the burglar in the video clip and to find out from them what truly happened.

It was past seven in the morning when they left the workshop. Javier and Jade grabbed breakfast from a food truck by the side of the road and settled into a car. As they ate, Jade asked suddenly, “Do you take me for a fool?”

Javier paused, not understanding why she was suddenly asking a question like that.

The woman explained promptly, “I was thinking about what happened during the dinner after I got home last night and realized that you genuinely wanted me to get a berating from M 1. Noe when you encouraged me to go to him. You were using me to instigate Zack to attack me.”

Javier chewed as he answered, "Coming to this realization proves that you're not a fool. You're only underestimating the war that goes on in the business world.

"From how I see it, the wars that go on in the business world are harder than the ones on battlegrounds because one can forgo rules in the latter. There's a clear goal. If I want to invade your territory, I'll send a troop to attack you and you'll realize it, but that's not the case in the business world."

Over the next few minutes, Javier explained multiple business concepts to Jade. She had been a little displeased at first but she was quickly engrossed in Javier's "business tutorial."

By the time they finished breakfast, Javier's Business 101 class ended as well. Receiving a lot of input that she had never known, Jade felt like it was an informative lesson and she was more than amazed. She could not help praising, "You sound like you'd make a successful businessman!"

Javier smiled but did not say anything.

The Kerseys had been in business for many centuries. He had spent his childhood around the old sly fox and had picked up a lot from him and this was nothing to him. Despite that, what he felt was nothing was a truck full of knowledge to Jade.

Upon returning to the office, Javier and Jade parted ways and attended to their work.

Close to lunchtime around noon, Javier received a call from an unknown number that told him the burglar from last night had been captured. The bounty hunter was efficient, but it probably also had to do with the 30-thousand-dollar reward.

Javier met the bounty hunter, as well as the burglar who had caused the fire last night, in a wooden hut in the suburbs.

Due to the generous 30-thousand-dollar reward, the bounty hunter had covered all his grounds. He had even interrogated the burglar for Javier.

"He had been instructed to start a fire by purposely letting the lighter flame go on for a long time. So that it would look like the flame had burned through the plastic casing, causing him to drop the lighter in a panic, and make the whole thing look like an accident..."

It was a pretty well-thought-out plan. Arson was a serious crime, but accidental fire and attempted theft would not come up too many years behind bars.

Javier faced the burglar and presented Kendrick and Zack's photos for him to identify them, but the burglar denied knowing them. After the burglar's description, Javier then asked the company for Terry's photo from when he had worked there in the past and showed it to the burglar.

The burglar recognized him at once. "It was him! He asked me to do it!"

While Javier confronted the burglar, Kendrick was woken up by rapid knocks on his door. Lifting his leg, he kicked the woman sleeping next to him off the bed. "Go, open the door!"

Reluctantly and groggily, the woman went to do as she was told. It was Zack who entered the room.

Kendrick sat up against the headboard. "How did it go? What happened?"

Zack answered sheepishly, "Everything went quite smoothly but unfortunately, they found out right after the fire started so we did not do much damage. They didn't report it to the police either, so their production isn't affected."

"Trash!" Kendrick, who had been anticipating good news, was furious. "You scum! Can't you do anything right?!"

The cursing that followed both humiliated and enraged Zack, but he did not dare fight back.

After venting his anger, Kendrick asked again, "Did you clean up after yourself? Don't let the investigation lead back to us."

Zack quickly replied, "Don't worry, Kendrick. It won't. I've already arranged everything. The guy responsible for starting the fire has probably fled to another state by now. They didn't report the fire to the police but even if they did, the police would never catch him!"

"You guarantee this?" Kendrick asked.

Zack nodded fervently. "Don't worry. I guarantee it with my head. They will never catch him!"

Right after Zack reassured Kendrick, his phone rang. He fished out his phone to see Terry's name flashing on the screen. "See, the confirmation call arrives just as we speak. It must already be done. I'll put the call on speaker so you can listen as well!"

Zack answered the call with a flourish and swiped the loudspeaker button.

"Hello, Terry, how's="

"Mr. Dilley! Mr. Dilley, save me! The police came to the workshop and said that I'm a suspected accomplice in an arson case..."

Zack was stupefied. Just seconds earlier, he had been so confident that nothing would go wrong. And now here they were, being exposed. Kendrick fumed the moment he heard the conversation

"Didn't you say you arranged everything?"

"Didn't you guarantee it with your head?"

"Zack Dilley, you scum. You can't even do one thing right!"

Each line was accompanied by a kick from Kendrick, forcing Zack to cower in a corner as curled up and hugged his head. But I've asked Terry to send the man away. I've even given him eight thousand dollars..."

Chapter 35 A Phone Call Away

Chapter 35 A Phone Call Away Zack did pay but instead of eight thousand dollars, he had only paid four thousand. The money that went through Terry would naturally not be audited, so the man had of course kept some for himself and the amount ultimately became 1.5 thousand dollars.

The burglar had kept an eye out and saw that the fire had not done much damage and the police were not called, so he happily squandered the 1.5 thousand dollars. But before he could spend most of it, he was caught by the bounty hunter.

Terry, who was hiding in the washroom to call Zack for help, was dragged out by the police and hauled away.

The next morning, as the person who lodged the report, Javier went to the criminal investigation bureau. Upon arriving, he saw Zack being brought to the interrogation room by an officer. The officer in charge informed him that Terry had admitted that Zack was the one who instructed him to do it.

Despite that being the truth, Zack had kept a backup plan. He paid using only cash and the two had only ever talked about the fire face to face. There was no evidence left behind. Terry was aghast when Zack denied it outright.

“Mr. Dilley, you can’t do this! Mr. Dilley, I was doing it for you, you can’t frame me!”

“Bullsh*t! Terry Hamer, you were upset after being fired by Beacon Tires and went to seek revenge! I kindly took you into my company and this is how you accuse me? Have you got a conscience?”

Terry gritted his teeth in resentment. If he were released now, he would tear Zack apart. He was unable to get out as the police had told him that arson was considered a serious crime.

Even when the fire does not result in massive losses or casualties, he would still spend between three to ten years behind bars. This meant that Terry would have to wait for at least three years if he wanted to rip Zack apart.

“How f*cking blind was I to follow a b*stard like you!”

As Terry sat in a cell, filled with regret and frustration, Zack walked out of the bureau. Although they were suspicious of him, he was innocent for now since the police had not been able to find any evidence on him.

Javier met a smug Zack Dilley at the parking lot of the bureau building.

“Zack Dilley, you better be good from now on or your family factory is just one phone call away from closing down.” Javier heard that the head of the Dilley family was a rather nice man and did not wish to end the family so offhandedly. Thus, he decided to give Zack one last chance. But for his kindness, he received Zack’s mockery in exchange.

“Kersey, who do you think you are? How dare you threaten me! My family factory’s a phone call away from closing down?! My family business is huge! It’s bigger than you could ever imagine. A nobody like you will never reach this height in your entire life. If you anger me, I can just throw money and you’ll be finished, I wouldn’t even have to lift a finger!”

Javier did not reply and just got into his car with a calm expression on his face.

The man’s nonchalance infuriated Zack. The moment Zack got into his car, he slammed on the accelerator and sped past Javier.

Zack swerved his car left and right in front of Javier, hitting the brakes out of the blue and pulling all sorts of dangerous stunts.

A cold smirk crept onto Javier's lips. "Sure. Since you want to play, I guess it's time to go big. I go home then!"

He parked the car by the side and pulled out his phone to make a call.

Zack, who was in front of him, stopped his car as well. Through the rearview mirror, he saw that Javier was parked by the side of the road like a loser. He was pleased.

"Scum, trying to fight me? You're nothing to me!" he shouted from inside the car.

After throwing a couple of insults and taunts, he lowered his car window, put out his left hand, and raised his middle finger at Javier. When he saw that Javier did not dare react, he happily drove off.

As Zack sped along the road, he felt incredibly pleased. He knew that Javier was nothing and would not dare fight him when he showed his true prowess. He went to get a hair wash at the salon before heading back to his family-owned car seat factory.

With his car parked, Zack whistled victoriously as he headed for his office with both hands shoved into his pants pockets. He did not get to whistle for long, though, as the manager ran up to him frantically.

"Mr. Dilley, there's an emergency at the plant. Hurry and come take a look!"

"What are you panicking about? If there's an emergency, just deal with it. Why are you losing your cool over it?"

It was after nagging with a poker face that Zack said, "With me around, nothing is too much to handle. Tell me, what happened?"

It was only then the man answered, "The Environmental Protection Agency came and said that the sponge we use for our seats doesn't meet the standards. It's contaminated.

"The labor office came too and said that they received a complaint regarding the safety of our workers at the factory. The Safety Supervision Agency came as well and said that there's an issue with our product safety.

"The fire brigade came and said that our plant's fire fighting system isn't up to code..."

There were a total of seven to eight government bodies. Basically, all those who could say anything about the factory had come. Zack's eyes grew wide.

"Why didn't you tell me right away when something so big happened? Why are you still stalling here?"

The manager felt wronged. "I wanted to tell you right away but you said that I lost my cool..."

Zack was speechless from the retort. The calm expression on his face was long gone as he ran toward the plant anxiously. He had to find out what was going on. Why were these agencies picking on him all at once?

But before he could reach the plant, he was stopped by the sales manager and purchasing chief midway.

The sales manager reported, "Mr. Dilley, I don't know what went wrong, but the few companies we're supplying called this morning to add to their order and pushed for mass production. We have to deliver the seats tomorrow but with the investigation going on, we can't do anything."

The purchasing chief then continued. "Mr. Dilley, several of our suppliers called as well to ask us to settle outstanding payments. If we can't pay up by today, they'll cease our contracts and stop supplying until we complete the payment."

Zack was at a loss. He did not know what was going on. For a moment, though, he flashed back to what Javier had said about how his family factory was only a phone call away from closing down. He immediately thought that it was impossible. How could a nobody-a toyboy -be so influential?

He dismissed the thought and hurried to figure out solutions to resolve the hurricane he was caught in. Half an afternoon later, neither he nor his father could solve their predicaments.

Without mercy, the agencies came together and sent out the notice for them to stop production and shut the plant. Zack's father tried to use his connections to find out which person of power had they offended but his digging came back with no results.

Zack then went up to the old man looking utterly confident. "Dad, watch me. I'll call Odello Corp. and ask them to help us out!"

His father's eyes shone at his son's words. Odello Corp. was one of the top three corporations in town. Surely their issues would be resolved if Odello Corp. comes to their rescue.

The old man was still worried. Since when was his prodigal son so acquainted with the Odello Corporation? It was during this moment of doubt that Zack thumped his chest.

"Don't worry, Dad. I'm best bros with Kendrick Odell of Odello Corp.!"

With a confident declaration, Zack called Kendrick and briefed him about his situation, ending it with "Odello Corp. has a wide network of connections and plenty of favors to collect. Kendrick, please take care of this!"

Zack sounded sincere, and so did Kendrick when he replied straightforwardly, "What the hell does the doom of your family have to do with me?"

Chapter 36 He'll Be Kendrick's Loyal Dog

Zack was stunned speechless at Kendrick's retort.

It took him a while before he regained his senses. He sobbed and yelled like a wronged housewife, "You can't do this to me, Kendrick!"

However, Kendrick had already hung up the phone call.

Zack hurriedly tried to redial but was greeted with a voicemail, saying that Kendrick had already turned off his cell phone.

Zack suddenly understood what Terry had felt before. All of the tricks and schemes that he had used on the latter, using him as a scapegoat and discarding him the moment he had lost his purpose... Kendrick had just done the very same thing to Zack.

Meanwhile, Zack's father became extremely furious when he saw how dejected Zack looked.

"I must've been blind to think that I could place my hopes on you... I should've known that you're just an incompetent fool who will never amount to anything!"

As much as Zack felt aggrieved and unhappy, there was nothing he could do when he was scolded by his father. Fortunately, Zack's father did not carry on scolding Zack for too long.

Instead, he asked if Zack and Kendrick had been up to no good recently. Otherwise, there was no way their car seat company would suffer from wave after wave of attacks. 'I'm sure he's offended an important person for all of this to happen!

Surprisingly, Zack came clean and told his father everything that had happened without hiding a single detail.

In fact, after being pursued to talk even further, Zack even blurted out what Javier had said about just having to make one phone call.

"You absolute fool! How could you still have the nerve to provoke him when he had already given you a warning?!"

"Wait, Dad! That's definitely a smoking gun! It's a fact that he's just some woman's little pet, plus he's even been abandoned by his ex-wife recently..."

However, because Zack's father had already been exposed to the real world for so many years, how was it possible that he would be unable to discern how a truly powerful person looked or behaved, including one who was deliberately hiding his true strength?

Paying Zack no more attention, his father immediately ordered his driver to take him to Beacon Tires.

The more he thought about what was happening, the more and more aggrieved Zack felt. The only reason he had gone all out to help Kendrick was so that he could gain the favor of a as

powerful person. Yet, now that there was huge trouble afoot, Kendrick had ended up abandoning Zack. 'What a f*cking *sshole!'

Feeling the anger rise within him, Zack got into his car and drove off to Kendrick's place.

When he arrived, he coincidentally saw Kendrick walking his dog as he held a beautiful woman in his arms.

Zack rushed out and stormed over. "You can't just leave me for dead like this! Hurry up and help my family! So long as you help us get through this hurdle, I swear *to you*, I'll forever be loyal to you, as loyal as a dog in fact!"

Zack, who had always been an egotistical man, had to be completely at his wit's end to be willing to utter such desperate words. However, Zack's desperate pleas only earned him scornful looks from Kendrick. "As loyal as a dog, eh?" Kendrick shook the leash in his hand and his Labrador immediately sat down. After that, Kendrick playfully asked, "How loyal are we talking? Like my dog here?"

Zack felt absolutely humiliated, but he did not dare to show it on his face even in the slightest since he was the one who needed Kendrick's help at that moment. Thus, he could only continue to beg for the man's help.

Kendrick then asked, "Why should I help you just because you've failed to do a clean job with whatever you do? How dare you still have the nerve to come to see me? You should be counting your lucky stars that I haven't sicced my dog on you! Now get out of my sight, you're wasting my time!" Right after Kendrick pushed Zack away, he proceeded to place his hand on the beautiful woman's waist and continued walking his dog.

At the same time, he even spoke to the Labrador. "Someone had the balls to try and compete with you, my dear boy. Don't worry, I still love you the most. Nobody will ever be able to take your place."

Kendrick's words were like a sharp needle that drove directly into Zack's ears, making its way to his heart. Zack was furious and felt as if he was being engulfed in flames of rage.

Suppressing his anger, Zack returned to his car. But the more he thought about his predicament, the angrier he got.

'I'm the son of the great Dilley family, yet I'm now being toyed around like a f*cking monkey! To make matters worse, I'm no better than a f*cking dog!!!

'I did everything I could to help you, yet you're abandoning me when my family needs you the most?! Plus, you've even had the nerve to mock me! 'Damn you, Kendrick Odell! I'm gonna kill you!!! Blinded by his rage, Zack slammed on the throttle and drove toward Kendrick at full speed, his car roaring like a crazed bull..

Meanwhile, Zack's father had just arrived at Beacon Tires and was standing before Javier's office.

However, he was not in a hurry to knock on the door. Instead, he was pondering how he was going to start the conversation, which was when Jade found him just standing there.

"Uncle Dilley, what are you doing here? Are you here to see *me*? Come, let's talk in my office."

When Zack's father saw Jade calling out to him in a very friendly manner, he hurriedly waved his hand and entered Javier's office, leaving Jade standing in the *corridor* with a dumbfounded expression, not understanding what had just happened.

Javier was going through some company documents and felt confused when someone barged into his office out of the blue.

After Zack's father introduced himself, Javier understood who he was and guessed what he was doing there. IN

"Mr. Kersey, on behalf of my son, I'd like to apologize to you for what he's done.

“I understand how much trouble he’s brought you and that a single apology won’t mean anything to you. But...please take pity on this old man and forgive him. Please don’t come after our company!

“As useless as that boy is, at the end of the day, he’s still my only son. The only reason he’s grown into this arrogant and troublemaking fool’s because I was busy with work and his mother had passed away early, so we’ve both failed to teach him how to behave properly.

“As I said, he’s still my only son, no matter how foolish of a son he is. I know that he’s incapable and incompetent, so the only thing I can do now is to work as hard as I can to leave him some inheritance. All I hope for him is that he’s able to live well, I don’t mind if he’s unable to become a wealthy man.

“So please... I’ll do anything you want so long as you forgive him and our company! I’ll even get down on my knees and beg you if you’d like!”

Zack’s father was serious about what he had just said as he had already begun to bend his knees, ready to kneel.

The only reason the man, who was reaching 60, would get down on his knees before a man much younger than him was because of his incompetent son. Seeing this, Javier immediately rushed forward to stop Zack’s father from doing so.

However, Zack’s father was adamant about getting down on his knees so that his son’s future would be saved. “I won’t get up unless you agree to let him go!”

Out of options, Javier had no choice but to nod his head. “All right, all right... I’ll drop this matter and let him go.”

Zack’s father was extremely grateful upon receiving Javier’s assurance. He thanked Javier continuously for his kindness.

However, Javier added in two more conditions for his forgiveness. The first was that the matter was to be kept confidential, and the second was for Zack to live his life as a changed man.

Both of those conditions were things that should’ve been done in the first place, so Zack’s father did not think of them as conditions and readily agreed.

However, at that very moment, Zack’s father’s cell phone rang. He took out his cell phone and realized that it was Zack calling him.

Feeling excited, Zack’s father answered the phone call and was just about to have his son apologize to Javier. But before he could even say anything, Zack began sobbing profusely on the other end... “Dad... I’ve committed a crime... I ran over Kendrick and he’s dead now... What should I do...”

Chapter 37 That Might Have Been Rash of Me...

By the time his father and Javier arrived at the scene, Zack had already been apprehended by police who were patrolling the area.

Zack’s father almost fainted when he saw Kendrick, lying on the ground in a pool of blood. The only thought that ran through his mind at the time was that his son had killed someone out of revenge

Fortunately, when the ambulance arrived, upon examination, the paramedics declared that Kendrick was merely severely wounded and unconscious. The pool of blood that Kendrick was lying in was his Labrador's, his so-called "dear boy", which had been rammed over.

Thus, Zack was taken away in a police car while Kendrick was taken away in an ambulance. Meanwhile, the Labrador's corpse and the beautiful woman that Kendrick had been with were both taken away as well since they were evidence and witness to the crime. After photos of the crime scene had been taken, the management of the building nearby very quickly cleaned up the mess.

Javier had not expected such a thing to happen, nor had he expected Zack to be such a rash person

After thinking it through, Javier apologized to Zack's father who was beside himself. Javier could not help but think that he was somehow responsible for everything that had happened

However, Zack's father was an understanding person, so he did not blame Javier for anything. "You haven't done anything wrong, Mr. Kersey. This is all my son's fault for being rash and foolish and being used in the first place. I only blame Kendrick for tricking my son into doing all those nonsense, that b*stard... You're a genuinely good person, so this really isn't your fault."

Zack's father had indeed been able to tell that Javier was a good person from the moment the latter was willing to let go of both Zack and his family's company.

'Although Javier has everything he needs to come after us, he wasn't the one who made the first move against Zack and had only retaliated after he was agitated. In fact, I'm willing to admit that it's my own son's fault that he's in his current situation... It's his own fault...'

The next day, a conclusive result about the matter was drawn up in the afternoon. Kendrick's injuries were so severe that his spine had been affected. Although he was not in critical condition after emergency treatment, he would remain a cripple and would have to be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. 1

Meanwhile, Zack was charged with wounding or causing grievous bodily harm with intent by the prosecutor. Although his sentence had yet to be served, Zack's father had found out from their lawyers that Zack was going to be sentenced to jail for at least seven years. Although Zack's sentence could be reduced after he compensated for harming Kendrick and received

the Odells' forgiveness, Zack's father knew very well that the latter was never going to forgive Zack 1

On the other hand, Javier had pulled the plug on the continuous attacks against Zack's father's car seat company, so everything had returned to normal.

Jade sat in her office and heaved a sigh when she heard all of this news. "They deserve everything that happened to them. I hope they both learn their lesson after this!"

Javier also hoped for the same thing, but he also understood that it was going to be a tall order for that hope to become a reality.

The old fox once mentioned that nobody in this world is willing to admit their mistakes and accept their just punishments. When the time does come and they do get punished, they'll somehow find all sorts of

excuses to get out of the situation. In fact, they might even find some other means to vent their frustrations should they be forced to accept their punishments...'

These were words that Javier had come to understand at a much deeper level.

Thus, he said to Jade, "Now that Kendrick has become a cripple, Matthew will definitely vent his anger out on you since there's no way he'll be able to have his revenge against Zack."

Just as Jade was about to say something, she was suddenly caught by surprise. "Did you look into my background?"

"The Odells are very famous in this city, yet Kendrick was hellbent on coming after you. Did you think it would be very difficult to link everything together?"

Jade was stunned speechless...

Half an hour later, she continued their previous conversation. "I doubt Matthew will do anything to me since I wasn't the one who provoked his son. On the contrary, it was Kendrick who aggravated me and forced me to play dirty, so he had everything coming. What's it got to do with me?"

Javier chuckled. "How wonderful would it be if everything in this world could be resolved through common sense!"

Jade was once again speechless at that remark, but she still doubted Matthew was going to do anything to her.

It was not until around two in the afternoon when Jade received a phone call from the bank. The account manager requested an early return of Beacon Tires' loans on the pretense that the company's financial status had become unstable due to poor sales performance.

"It's been a long time since the company has suffered from poor sales performance. Plus we received their investment even when our financial status wasn't ideal, so that's just a nonsensical excuse! Also, the account manager even told me that they're going to sue us if we don't saddle up the money by the newly fixed date..."

Jade was furiously telling Javier everything that the account manager had just told her. She even expressed that she was going to talk with the finance director once more.

Javier very curiously asked, "Why would you want to meet the finance director if it's the bank that's pushing for us to return their money?"

"That's because he's got good connections with the people there. Take Terry for example. Although he might be a jerk, he's always maintained good relations with the bank. So I'm sure something like this wouldn't be happening if he was around."

Javier could not find the words to say when he saw how confident Jade was.

"Ms. Odell, have you ever seen someone naturally born with good relations? All we have to do is rebuild the relations we want if we're lacking in them!"

“You don’t understand, this isn’t a mere walk in the park as you may imagine. The waters you’re thinking of treading are very deep. On top of that, you’ve never socialized with anyone from a bank before!”

Javier was instantly rendered speechless.

It was true that he had never socialized with anyone from within a bank before, but he still did not think that their current conundrum would not be unresolvable without the finance manager.

*I’ll handle this. I refuse to believe that the bank will not acknowledge Beacon Tires’ financial capabilities without the finance director!”

Jade thought that Javier was being very stubborn, so she came up with all sorts of ways to dissuade him and to make him understand how difficult the journey he was about to embark on would be.

As much as Javier thought that Jade’s words made sense, he was even more confident in himself that he was fully capable of resolving the situation.

Thus, Jade finally gave up after trying to push her points across for a few minutes. “Fine, go ahead and do whatever you want, Mr. Do-It-All!”

Just as Javier picked up his car keys and was about to head out, he suddenly recalled something and asked, “Dona Odell, didn’t you say you were going to help me resolve and make arrangements in regards to my accommodations?”

Jade was obviously annoyed by that nickname because it was obviously a retort at her for calling Javier “Mr. Do-It-All”.

‘Why the heck is he addressing me like I’m an old mafia leader when I’m just 27 years old?! Suppressing her rage, Jade said with puffed cheeks. “Just focus on the thing that you said you’re going to do. If you’re able to resolve this issue, I’ll arrange a place for you to stay by tonight!”

Javier then asked with a serious expression, “Where would that be then? I’m just going to put it out there right now that I dislike living in hotels.”

Frustrated, Jade immediately replied, “I’ve got a lot of empty rooms in my house. Would you be satisfied with that?”

Javier was obviously much more satisfied with this answer, so he readily agreed and walked out.

Jade finally regained her senses at that moment. “That might have been rash of me... I think I’ve just promised him something I shouldn’t have...”

‘Javier’s not going to be able to resolve this issue, is he?’

Jade was feeling very conflicted. She was both worried that Javier might not be able to resolve their current issue, and also worried that he might succeed...

Meanwhile, Javier arrived at the bank and immediately headed toward Justin Black’s office

Beacon Tires’ account manager-after he had parked his car.

Justin was obviously very unhappy when Javier questioned him about the reason Beacon Tires was being forced to return their loan earlier than scheduled.

“Did you have to come all the way here just to ask about this? Haven’t I already explained it over the phone?”

After complaining coldly, Justin repeated the reason once more, which was still about Beacon Tires’ unstable financial status and poor sales performance.

However, immediately after he said this, Javier placed the investment agreement his company had received along with confirmed orders from both Fusion and Grazin’ on Justin’s desk.

“That’s 1.5 million dollars worth of investment in total, so my company’s financial status is perfectly stable. At the same time, those two purchase orders you see there show that we’ve got ideal sales performance. Would you like to check this yourself?”

Justin immediately pushed the documents to the side without so much as taking a look at them.

“We’ve got our own standard operating procedures here, which is completely unrelated to your current situation. Either you prepare the money to return to us now, or prepare to be sued. Stop coming up with all this nonsense and leave. I’m a very busy man!”

However, Javier did not get up from his seat. Instead, he asked, “Are you busy trying to gain Odello Corporation’s favor?”

Justin’s expression instantly changed. “I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Javier then took back all three agreements and said to Justin with a bright smile on his face,

You’ll know what I’m talking about very soon... I only hope that you don’t cry when the time comes.”

Chapter 38 I Told You Not to Cry, but You Wouldn’t listen...

“Such arrogance! I’ve never seen anyone with such arrogance before!!!”

Justin furiously yelled out after Javier had left. Justin was an account manager, so he had no choice but to keep a smile on his face and make sure that Javier was well served.

However, Javier’s actions completely pushed Justin off the edge, leaving him feeling very unhappy

Then again, as unhappy as he was, Justin still had to remain professional.

After calming down, the smile on Justin’s face returned before he took out his cell phone. “Hello, is this Matthew Odell of Odello Corp.? This is Justin from the bank. I’ve done as you’ve asked. An idiot from Beacon Tires’ finance department just dropped by, but I’ve already sent him away. Don’t worry, I’ll make sure that they will no longer be a hindrance to

While Justin was on the phone with Matthew, Javier had already put up a few tasks on the black market. After that, Javier pushed back his car seat, laid down, and listened to some music as he relaxed. He did not seem to be worried about the fact that the bank was pushing his company to return their loan earlier than scheduled.

I'll just sit back and relax for now... It's just under a million dollars anyway. I'll be able to get the money easily and throw it at that guy's face if I want to.

"Then again... I shouldn't go about revealing some things, so I should probably come up with another solution.

'Just the fact that he's the account manager and is in charge of approving loans is proof enough that he isn't without any dirt on him...

'Otherwise, there's no way these commercial banks would end up with so much bad debt every year. Just last year, the number of bad debts they accumulated went all the way up to a whopping 237 million dollars!!!'

Sure enough, half an hour later, Javier received a lot of documents and evidence. He brought this newfound evidence with him to meet the bank manager once again. Javier had a very simple objective. He had two copies of the evidence he had collected, one was for the bank manager, the other for Justin.

'Someone's going to end up getting involved and that person will be investigated. As for who it's going to be... I'm sure the manager will be able to make the right decision.'

20 minutes later, Javier left the bank manager's office. Just as he was passing the main hall, he saw the bank's internal investigators grabbing Justin by the arm.

Justin seemed very distraught. Tears and snot covered his entire face as he expressed that he only did what he did because he had been blinded by greed.

When Justin passed by Javier, the latter said, "I told you not to cry, but you wouldn't listen to me. So, do you understand what I meant earlier?"

Justin finally realized what had just happened and was instantly filled with regret. 'I should never have offended this guy?'

However, if only regret were something that could turn back time... Justin was now facing his just desserts after everything he had done.

At the same time, Matthew was calling Justin again. Matthew was too busy worrying about how he should take care of Kendrick, so he had no time to be bothered with Beacon Tires'

matters. Thus, he wanted Justin to deal with the company for him.

Alas, that was a phone call that was never going to be answered.

Left with no other choice, Matthew dialed another person's number from within the same bank with whom he was also close.

After being asked about what was happening, the other person from the bank took approximately ten minutes to look into the matter before he replied to Matthew. "Justin's been nabbed by our internal investigation team..."

Of course, he was taken away because someone had dug up dirt on him. However, what left Matthew befuddled was why he would suddenly be taken away when he was showing off his achievements just moments ago...

However, Matthew did not have time to ponder over this. Instead, he hurriedly ordered the person he was now in contact with to take over Justin's job and push Beacon Tires into returning their loan.

"Forget it, Mr. Odell. I wasn't your first choice to handle this case, but you now want me to help when something's gone south?"

"You can get anyone you want to look into this case, but I won't do it. Plus, the bank manager has already re-approved their loan because they've provided new evidence that they've got sales agreements and purchase orders. This entire issue has been put on hold now. I suggest you drop this."

With that, the phone call ended, leaving Matthew completely dumbfounded.

'This is too much of a coincidence! Justin's only just begun taking action, yet the company's managed to submit new documents to prove their financial stability? This can't be right..

'Yes, this can't be right. Jade shouldn't be powerful enough to be able to influence the bank manager. That's it, this is all just a coincidence... It must be!

'Heh! Looks like you've gotten pretty lucky, Jade. However, don't you think that this is the end of it! It's all your fault that Kendrick's still lying in the hospital right now! None of this would've happened if you'd just gotten married to the Dunhams like a good girl!

'I'm going to make sure that you pay for all of this... I swear!!!'

Meanwhile, Javier had already returned to Beacon Tires. When he walked past Jade's office, she called him inside.

"How did it go, Mr. Do-It-All? Is it done? Are you going to be moving into my house tonight?"

Seeing how Jade seemed to be pretty cheeky by challenging him, Javier said, "Hmm? Someone sounds like she's looking forward to me moving in."

'Heh! There's absolutely nothing for me to be afraid of since I'm sure you've failed to resolve the issue!' Odell thought to herself.

"You're right, I'm looking forward to it very much! I can't wait to bring you home with me tonight. Just think about it, we'll be coming to work and going back at the same time. It would be so wonderful for us to be able to see each other all the time! But... It's such a pity... Tsk tsk..."

After being addressed as "Dona", Jade did not hold anything back. Javier merely rolled his eyes.

However, just as Jade was feeling excited that Javier seemed to have lost the bet, she received a phone. Jade answered the phone and her exquisite-looking face fell. Her red and full lips formed a very clear "O" shape, which seemed quite sexy, and also quite misleading at the same time...

When she hung up the call, it took her a good moment before she regained her senses and said, "How did you manage to get the bank to change their mind so quickly?! Are you a god?!"

Javier merely leaned against the sofa and was all smiles as he looked at Jade.

“Now then, Dona Odel... Who was it that said she couldn’t wait to bring me home with her tonight and that it would be so wonderful for us to be able to see each other all the time?”

“Err... Um...” Jade mumbled as her face instantly flushed red in embarrassment.

Before Javier had left earlier, she was wondering if her rashness was going to end up costing her when in fact...she had not even resolved the price she had to pay for her previous rashness. And now she has ended up owing Javier once more!

Javier said, “Well then, let’s just have you pay all your debt you’ve incurred by having me in your bedroom tonight.”

Jade felt nothing but embarrassment at that moment. She desperately wished that there was a hole for her to hide in and that she would never have to come out...

After having dinner together, Javier once again drove to a hotel with Jade in the car.

Jade once again thought that Javier was about to fulfill the additional clause in their agreement. But once again, Javier left the car key with her again, which left her feeling both embarrassed and guilty at the same time.

She was usually someone who would make good on her promises and would always request for her subordinates to do the same as well. Yet she had ended up breaking her promise twice in a row.

After thinking about it over and over again, she finally decided to call out to Javier

“I’m a woman of my word! Come stay at my house from now on

Just as he was about to enter the hotel’s reception area Javier was slightly startled when he heard Jade’s voice coming from behind him

“I know you only made that bet on a whim, so I didn’t intend on having you fulfill it in the first place. Don’t worry about it.”

However, Jade only felt even more guilty at that point

“No, I said I was going to let you stay at my place, so hurry up and get in the car?” Left without a choice, Javier ended up being forced back into the car.