

## A Man Like None Other

### Chapter 451 Hated It When Others Threaten Me

Tristan, Franco, and everyone else didn't witness Derek's death. However, the fact remained. Jared had slapped him to his death and had done so within such a short time frame. That proved just how powerful Jared truly was.

"We'll join forces to kill that punk. We can discuss the matter regarding the jade pendant later."

Franco realized Derek had died, so he negotiated a deal with Tristan.

He planned on killing Jared with Tristan's help.

Who would've thought that Tristan would take a step back instead? He bowed to Jared and said, "I am so sorry for my previous actions. I didn't mean to scare or hurt her."

Tristan's words instantly put Franco in an awkward position. It was obvious Tristan was just trying to con Jared into killing Franco for him. If the two of them had joined forces to kill Jared, they would have to fight each other again for the jade pendant. On the other hand, if Franco were to fight Jared alone and deplete Jared's strength... Well, Tristan would benefit if he attacked afterward.

"You sly b\*stard!" Franco cursed at Tristan before waving at his subordinates. "We'll fight the guy together and get the jade pendant."

"Eddy, keep an eye on that woman. Do not let her get away."

His angry roar prompted the men to go after Jared together. They had ignored Tristan completely by then.

"Lizbeth, stay with Josephine."

The first thing Jared did was to have Lizbeth keep Josephine steady.

Eddy saw how Jared had let go of Josephine's hand, and his eyes shone slyly. He moved to the side and went after her from a blind spot.

"You are so dead."

Jared's expression turned icy as he redirected his attention.

He had already reached the Foundation Phase, so he didn't care about the Grandmasters at all.

Eddy didn't want to fight. He tilted his body to the side and tried to escape.

Jared is on his own, whereas we are a group of Grandmasters working together. All I need is to wait until he is distracted. It'll be much easier to snatch Josephine away then.

Eddy saw a flash when he was backing up. Jared was gone.

Panic flashed past Eddy's eyes immediately after. He backed away even faster, but his back knocked into something.

He was dumbstruck when he turned around and realized that the “thing” he knocked into was actually Jared. I can’t believe he’s already behind me.

Bang!

Jared swung his arm over and aimed for Eddy’s head. Brain matter spewed everywhere soon after.

Jared didn’t just stop with Eddy, though. He showed no signs of slowing down and went after Franco and his subordinates right away.

Jared was like a gust of wind. The only difference was that as he swept past Franco and the others, agonized screams would fill the air.

Franco’s men were on the floor and moaning in pain when Jared finally stopped. The men looked as though they were in excruciating pain, and their face seemed to be distorting from their struggle. It didn’t matter, though. They wouldn’t survive for much longer, anyway.

It was pin-drop silence after that. No one dared to say anything because those were powerful Grandmasters, and even they were dying.

“Run!” shouted Franco. He turned around to flee right after.

Jared was much stronger than he had anticipated.

Unfortunately, Jared’s figure blurred over as soon as Franco turned around. The former chased Franco and kicked the man’s back. Then he placed his other leg on top of Franco’s head.

“Jared, y-you can’t kill me. I am a member of the Coopers. My family will never forgive you if you kill me!”

Franco’s eyes were shining with fear, and he was threatening Jared to save his own life.

“I hate it when others threaten me.” The latter exerted more force on his foot.

Franco was scared out of his mind. He quickly shouted to the crowd, “I am a member of the Coopers in Jadeborough. If anyone rescues me, my family will surely reward them handsomely.”

Everyone knew that being in league with the Coopers would bring about abundant fame and fortune. However, no one dared to step up because Jared was too strong.

#### Chapter 452 Forcing His Hands

Franco was even more scared when he saw how no one was budging. “Oy, Tristan. Save me! If you do, the Coopers will bow down to the Baileys.”

He was begging Tristan at the time because his head was already sinking into the ground. If Jared pushed any more, Franco’s head would surely break.

Tristan’s expression shifted a little, but he didn’t do or say anything.

“Well, looks like no one will save you. I’ll just send you off to hell then,” replied Jared nonchalantly.

“No, no!” shouted Franco. He suddenly thought of Lizbeth. “Lizbeth, Lizbeth! Save me. Please save me. We used to be a couple, and we loved each other. Please save me in honor of that love. I have loved you this entire time. I only canceled our engagement because my family forced my hand. That is why I am engaged to another woman now. Please, save me...”

Lizbeth’s entire body trembled. Her eyes were filled with tears because she truly loved him all those years ago. At the time, she thought he was her one true love and assumed he was her knight in shining armor. She never thought he’d turn out to be the man who hurt her the most?

Jared got even angrier when he heard Franco talking about that. The former already felt bad for what happened to Lizbeth, and mentioning the incident only further infuriated him.

“You worthless jerk. Die!” growled Jared.

“Wait!” shouted Lizbeth all of a sudden.

Jared turned to her and stared strangely.

She walked over and took one look at Franco in exasperation. After that, she turned to Jared and requested, “Will you spare his life?”

“But, Lizbeth, isn’t he the jerk who hurt you?”

Jared didn’t understand why she was helping Franco at all.

“Please spare his life. I loved him in the past, and this is my way of freeing myself. Now that I have saved his life, any debt and connection between us will be cleared.”

Lizbeth’s tears rolled down her cheeks. It was obvious she used to love Franco deeply.

Jared retracted his foot and sighed in annoyance. He turned to Franco and warned, “Leave. Never show up again because no one will be speaking up for you anymore.”

Franco sighed a long breath of relief before he stood up and ran away. He never turned back to even look at Lizbeth.

After Franco left, Jared shifted his gaze to Tristan. “Well, you guys were waiting for me to exhaust myself before you attack. Now that everything is done, you can make your move.”

Tristan’s heart skipped a beat when he sensed the hostility in Jared’s gaze. The former shook a little and forced a smile on. “It’s as I said earlier. Everything is just a misunderstanding. I have no qualms with you, so why would I attack?”

“Aren’t you after this jade pendant? Don’t you want to retrieve it? Also, don’t you want the recipe I have with me?”

Tristan frowned. He honestly didn’t know how Jared knew they were after the jade pendant.

Could it be... Is Jared the mysterious man who rescued Sonia?

That hypothesis cleared everything up for Tristan right away. Given Jared’s strength, he can definitely rescue Sonia from right under our noses.

“Well, the jade pendant is with you now, so by right, it belongs to you. Why would I steal it then? As for the recipe... well, I can only return disappointed since you refused to share it with me. I would never do something as barbaric as forcing your hands,” lied Tristan while forcing a smile.

Jared scoffed in distaste when he saw that stupid look on Tristan’s face. “You may be above that, but I am not. Listen to me closely. The Herb Palace is to deliver every medicine in possession to Summerbank. If they don’t, I will annihilate them.”

After saying that, Jared ignored Tristan’s scowl and turned around to leave with Josephine.

Lizbeth, Jesse, and the others followed closely behind. Other members of the audience left as well. Everything that happened was simply too much for them.

“Mr. Bailey? What do we do?” Spencer asked.

“Stall them for a few days. I have to discuss the matter with my family,” replied Tristan before he left with his subordinates too.

#### Chapter 453 Like A Movie

Jared brought Josephine and the others back to Summerbank. His expectation of spiritual energy had increased as he was entering the Foundation Phase. Nonetheless, he was thrilled that his abilities had drastically improved.

He could finish a few Grandmasters off today. He would not have achieved it if he were still stuck in the Energy Refining Phase. It also took him some time and effort to battle against Zachariah.

Jared could have easily vanquished him had he continued with the attack.

“Mr. Chance, should we send someone to monitor Herb Palace’s operation? I believe they won’t give us the herb without putting up a fight!” Phoenix came over to meet Jared when she knew he had returned.

She was stunned when Tommy told her about the incident in Tayhaven Town. After all, everyone could tell that Jared’s power was growing rapidly by the day!

“That won’t be necessary. If they refused to give it to us, I would have all the more reason to take over the entire Herb Palace!” Jared responded with a smug smirk.

If he wanted to advance to the next level, he needed a lot more spiritual medicine. The batch of medicine the Herb Palace had might have been of great help to him, but the quantity was somewhat limited. That was why he was fixated on claiming the ownership of Herb Palace so that he would have exclusive access to that spiritual medicine.

But this century-old herb had limited quantity and would one day be depleted completely. The more powerful Jared became, the more dependent he would be on the medicine. Hence, he would also need to source other substitutes too!

It’s time to make a trip to Mount Hickoria to look for the spiritual stones. I could cultivate my power there right away using those stones!

Jared contacted Dominic and told him about the trip to Mount Hickoria. Jared was relieved that Josephine had a jade pendant that could protect her. It must be a powerful magical item as it could even keep two Grandmasters away from her!

Night fell, and everyone was asleep. Tayhaven Town had also turned into a ghost town due to the upheaval at the Martial Arts Gathering.

Yet, four elderly men with white beards were seen wandering on the quiet street. Clad in black robes, they were able to stride across the street from one end to another in a short time even though they walked very slowly. These men were none other than the four elders from the Crescent Sect!

They then headed in the arena's direction and started performing their respective duties as if they were carrying out a private investigation. Besides monitoring the footprints, they also studied the man-shaped hole that Derek had caused when he smashed into the arena.

One of the elders took out a cloth and covered his hand to retrieve the silvery powder from the hole.

The moment he flung the powder into the air, moving human figures emerged in the sky. The image was so realistic that one might easily mistake it for a character in a 3D movie.

The moving images displayed the fight between Jared and a few Grandmasters, but they disappeared seconds later. Once again, Tayhaven Town plunged into total darkness.

"What do you think of the boy?" The elder, who flung the powder into the sky, asked.

The head of the elders shook his head. "I can't tell much from these images. To defeat the other Grandmasters of internal energy, he must have been a full-fledged Grandmaster of internal energy or have at least obtained similar power. Yet, I don't feel the aura of a Grandmaster from him at all!"

"Based on the man-shaped hole caused by Derek, the boy must have attained the power of a Grandmaster. Otherwise, Derek wouldn't have suffered a miserable death." Another elder, who was studying the arena, analyzed.

#### Chapter 454 She Is Getting Married

The elder, who flung the powder in the air, chose to believe the head of the elders. "He has the sharpest nose of us all. I'm sure he would have detected the presence of a Grandmaster if there was one!"

All four elders fell into deep thoughts.

"What if he's not a martial artist? What if he's a mage like us?" The same elder's eyes brightened.

"It's impossible. Mages could not combat like that young man no matter how powerful they are. We rely on magecraft. Do you think we can fight against Grandmasters of internal energy and physically take them down?" The head of the elders dismissed his analysis.

Once again, the elders knitted their brows and kept mum, as they did not know what to do next.

The head of the elders raised his hand in the air and said, "Let's report what we saw to Mr. Quillen. Jared is not an easy person to deal with, so we have to start planning!"

The other three elders nodded and vanished into thin air. No one knew they had visited the town on that night.

Dominic arrived early the following day and waited for Jared. After reminding Josephine about a few matters, Jared began his journey with Dominic.

The trip to Mount Hickoria would only be a short one, as they merely wanted to explore the area for a couple of days. Hence, they traveled light.

But when they were about to depart, Jared's phone rang.

Upon realizing it was a call from his mother, he immediately answered, "Yes, Mom?"

He was pleased to hear her voice. In fact, he felt bad for not calling his parents in the last few days.

Hannah, too, was delighted to speak to Jared. "Are you busy? Ingrid is getting married in a couple of days. Do you have time to come home?"

"Ingrid's getting married?" Jared was taken by surprise. "But she's still so young!"

"Ingrid is not young anymore! She's already nineteen and has quit school!" Hannah said.

Her response rendered Jared speechless. That was the typical example of life in the village. Children, especially girls, who stopped schooling would be arranged to get married.

"Mom, I..." Jared did not know how to tell Hannah that he had no time to go home as he was about to leave for Mount Hickoria.

Upon noticing his hesitation, she sighed. "It's all right. I'll tell Sarah you're busy. Don't worry..."

Hannah's voice faded out. She eventually remained silent but did not end the call.

Jared could feel the disappointment in his mother's voice. Ever since he went behind bars, his father had lost his job, and his family had to eke out a living. Villagers had also started talking badly about their family members behind their back.

Hannah was a strong-headed person, who used to have a wide connection. However, things fell apart. Even their relatives shunned her.

The reason she called Jared was to ask him to attend Ingrid's wedding so that she could show off his achievement to all the guests.

Though Hannah had no idea what he was doing, she knew he must be a capable man ever since he humiliated Benedict at the hotel and fired an officer.

"I'm fine, Mom. I'll be back by tonight, so don't worry," Jared promised.

Hannah was thrilled to hear that. "All right! I'll make you your favorite dish when you get back. Oh, bring Josephine back too. I want to introduce her to the other relatives as well!"

Jared grinned. He knew she wanted to show off Josephine to other relatives in the village too. He nodded and replied, "All right. I'll talk to her right now."

“Okay! I’ll see you tonight!” Hannah then ended the call.

Chapter 455 Women In The Village

“Something caught up, and I have to put the trip on hold. But I want you to buy more stones from Mount Hickoria!” Jared said to Dominic.

“Sure. I’ll go to Mount Hickoria myself and check out the stones!”

After Dominic left, Jared told Josephine about Ingrid’s wedding. She knew a trip to the village might not be pleasant, but as someone who understood Jared, she agreed right away.

They then started their journey and drove back to Jared’s hometown.

His hometown is a village in Horington that used to be a small settlement, but its landscape had drastically changed due to the development in the last few years.

Jared saw many houses were slapped with a demolition notice to make way for development projects. That was why Benedict insisted on getting his hands on the family residence!

Children were running around in the village. Jared did not know anyone of them since he had not returned for many years.

“Hey, taking a break from work?” He rolled down the car’s window and greeted the seniors who were sitting by the curb.

Jared knew who they were. After all, he grew up in the village and stayed here until middle school. He only moved out when his father was transferred to work in the city.

The elderly folks walked over to take a closer look. One of the middle-aged women instantly recognized Jared. “Aren’t you Jared? I thought you were still in jail? Since when were you released? And now you’re driving a Mercedes-Benz?”

She studied Jared from head to toe.

Jared responded with a wry smile. “I came out of jail not long ago.”

“Oh. Did you come back to attend the wedding? Ingrid’s husband is super rich, and he’s the boss of a big company! Maybe he can help you find a job. All right, all right. I’m not gonna disturb you anymore.” The woman waved her hand in the air.

Jared nodded and rolled up the window. He then looked at Josephine and said awkwardly, “That’s how blunt women in the village speak, but they don’t have any bad intentions. She used to boil eggs for me when I was a child!”

Josephine responded with a grin but kept mum. Perhaps, she was not used to the way villagers spoke.

Soon, Jared arrived at his family’s house. After parking his car in the courtyard, he took a glance at the residence that was made up of five individual buildings. My parents must have given the house a fresh coat of paint.

“Dad! Mom!” he shouted from the courtyard.

Standing in front of the house and calling his parents brought back childhood memories.

As a child, Jared used to call out to his parents when he returned from school. He would then dump his bag in the corner of the courtyard and run out to play.

"You're back!" Hannah came out of the room and greeted her son.

"Hello, Mrs. Chance." Josephine greeted her with a grin.

"Josephine! Glad to see you. Come on in!" Hannah nearly jumped with joy.

She initially thought someone as rich as Josephine would not want to step into their lowly village. Even though Jared promised to talk to her about it, Hannah did not expect her to come. That was why Hannah was overjoyed when she saw Josephine standing in front of her.

"Where's Dad?" Jared asked.

"He has gone to Sarah's to help with the wedding!"

That was how life in the village was. Villagers would always do their part to support a wedding. Family members living in the same village would contribute even more to make the event a success.

#### Chapter 456 Demolition

Hannah showed Josephine around as soon as they entered the room in an effort to make her feel more at ease. At the same time, Jared drifted in and out of the rooms drunk on nostalgia.

"Take a good, long look, son," sighed Hannah. The house is coming apart soon. I don't know where we'll go to once they evict us."

"Aren't they going to rehouse you, Mom?"

"Hah!" exclaimed Hannah scornfully. "They didn't even subsidize our rent. Some of us have been living here for decades and they are only giving us about a hundred thousand per home. That's what we're worth to them. Though we should be grateful that other villages receive much less compared to us, it's hard to feel too optimistic when our future is that uncertain. Besides, your father and I had just forked out so much for the renovation and it's going to get torn down just like that!"

"Come to Horington with Dad," Jared suggested. "The place in Dragon Bay is still vacant anyway. I haven't had the time to drop by and sort things out over there."

Hannah glared at her son. "Though Josephine's family is rich enough to let you live in a huge house like that, you can't be sitting on your hands all day, you hear me? You can't be spending all of her money for the rest of your life. Be a man!"

"You are mistaken, Mrs. Chance. Actually--"

"I know what to do, Mom," Jared cut across Josephine. "I'm working on it!"

"It's sweet of her to not look down on us, you know." Hannah gazed fondly at Josephine. "You must treat her well, son. If I hear that you do anything to hurt her, I will disown you."

How rare it is to find a nice, polite girl from a rich family who does not mind our poverty!



Josephine smiled reassuringly. "Jared has been good to me, Mrs. Chance. I'll twist his ear off if he hurts me!"

"Yes, yank it right off!" Hannah reciprocated the smile. "Inform me when you do. I'd like to get in on that."

"I'm your son, Mom!" Jared protested despite being secretly delighted at how quickly the two most important women to him bonded. "Are you ganging up with Josephine on me?"

Josephine burst out laughing at Jared's expression.

"Jared! Jared!" A young female voice suddenly came from outside the house.

Jared recognized his cousin's voice at once and dashed out to meet her.

Ingrid was several years younger than him. From as early as she could remember, she had been inseparable from Jared, who had gotten into more fights than he could remember to protect her from her own mischief. Despite being cousins, they were closer than most siblings.

It's been years. I wonder how my favorite cousin is doing?

A tall girl, five foot nine at the very least, greeted him when he arrived outside the room. Her ponytail bounced excitedly at his appearance, revealing two deep dimples on either side of her cheeks when she beamed.

"Ingrid?" Jared asked in disbelief.

Ingrid laughed. "Don't you recognize me, Jared?"

"I don't," he murmured in a daze. "You were half this height when I last saw you. Look at you! You're as tall as I am now!"

Jared walked around Ingrid and stood back to back with her to measure his height against hers.

It's been around five years. She was only fourteen the last time I'd seen her. How quickly has she grown!

"You grew slowly, that's all," she teased in return. "Watch out, I'll be even taller than you in another two years! By the way, I'd heard word that you were back. Is that your Mercedes parked out front?"

Jared smiled mysteriously. "It's a friend's!"

#### Chapter 457 Wedding Gift

The car actually belonged to Josephine. Jared did not buy a car as there were plenty to borrow from between the garages of Josephine and Tommy. As a result, Jared always had an arsenal of vehicles at his disposal.

Ingrid nodded impatiently. "There was also talk that you came with a very pretty girl. Is she your girlfriend?"

Jared nodded with a helpless smile. The gossip of village women travels faster than scandals on the Internet!

“Where is she?” Ingrid demanded as she dragged him indoors. “Bring me to her!”

Upon pushing open the front door, they found Hannah and Josephine on the other end ready to receive them.

“Aunt Hannah!” Ingrid called cheerily.

“You’re about to get married in a couple of days, Ingrid. Why are you still out and about?”

“It’s too crowded and noisy at home! I had to come out for a breather.”

Ingrid’s gaze fell onto Josephine, who was standing beside Hannah. “You must be Jared’s girlfriend,” she gasped. “Oh, my. You’re so pretty!”

Despite blushing deeply, Josephine’s heart swelled with warmth at the sincere compliment.

“My name’s Josephine, nice to meet you.” She extended her hand to the younger woman.

“Ingrid.” She offered hers as she took Josephine’s hand. “Nice to meet you, Josephine!”

“Step out of the sun, you kids. Take this conversation indoors,” Hannah said as she stepped through the door. “I’m going over to Ingrid’s.”

The group marched back into the house as Ingrid stared at Josephine with such intent that it made the latter feel uncomfortable.

“Why are you staring at her like that for, Ingrid?” Jared asked, nonplussed.

“Josephine is dressed in luxury brands from head to toe,” Ingrid whispered admiringly. “Those are Cartier earrings! Do you know how expensive they are?”

Turning to the subject of her scrutiny, she asked, “What does your family do, Josephine?”

Josephine was impressed by Ingrid’s sharp observation skills.

“Oh, we just run a small business,” she responded modestly before taking off her earrings. “We didn’t get to bring you a wedding gift, Ingrid. I would like you to have these earrings if you like them!”

Ingrid staggered backward in horror. “I can’t accept them, Josephine,” she cried, waving her hands frantically. “They’re too expensive!”

“Not at all,” said Josephine earnestly. “Think of it as a gift from us!” As she spoke, she forced Ingrid around to put the earrings on for her. “They look so pretty on you! Imagine how they’ll complement your wedding dress.”

At the mention of her wedding, the joy in Ingrid’s face seemed to fade a little as if something weighed heavily on her.

“You’re only nineteen, Ingrid,” Jared added, failing to notice the change in her expression. “Why are you in a rush to get married instead of completing your education first? It’ll be increasingly difficult to establish yourself in the modern society without a university education.”

Jared had struck a chord. In an instant, tears welled up in Ingrid’s eyes as she began to weep.

He gaped in horror, not expecting a passing remark to make her cry.

Josephine hastened to comfort the girl. "Jared didn't mean it, Ingrid. Ignore him."

Ingrid's sobs intensified at that. She threw herself onto Josephine's shoulder and howled.

Eventually, her sobs subsided before she drew a great shuddering breath to calm herself. "I know Jared didn't mean it, Josephine," she said with a sniffle. "I don't actually want to get married. I do want to go to university, but I... I can't get out of this!"

Ingrid's wide and fearful eyes reminded Jared forcefully of the days when they were children. It made his heart twinged with guilt to see her as helpless as she was.

The couple exchanged startled glances. How are there still forced marriages in the world?

"What is going on, Ingrid?" Jared asked with a frown.

Chapter 458 Dog

"Forget it, Jared." Ingrid waved her hand before wiping her tears and forcing a smile. "It's no use talking about it. Besides, I've already accepted my fate."

"Tell me, Ingrid," he insisted. "I will help you."

"Yes, Ingrid," added Josephine. "We'll both do."

Ingrid gazed at Josephine for several moments before deciding to trust them. "Jared, do you remember Dog?"

Jared nodded. "Of course I do. He's the dropout who used to collect protection fees from his victims outside the school gates, isn't he? He even gave me a kick that I haven't forgotten."

"That's the man I'm marrying," Ingrid murmured in a small voice. her head hung dejectedly.

"What?" Jared shouted, his eyes widening with rage. "He's a degenerate who did not even graduate middle school! How did Aunt Sarah allow you to marry him?"

Though Josephine did not know Dog, she already had a negative impression of him painted in her mind's eye from the way the others were talking about him. This girl is beautiful and vivacious. She deserves to marry somebody better than that unsavory-sounding fellow.

Ingrid began crying again as she recounted to Jared her tale of woe.

When she was done, Jared turned blue with rage and slammed a fist down on the table, crushing it instantly into powder.

"How dare he!" Josephine shouted.

As it turned out, Dog did not explore different career opportunities after his expulsion. As the rate of industrialization in Horington exploded in recent years, inhabitants of the numerous villages around the area had required a nudge to cooperate given the large investments dumped into Avenport for property development. Due to a combination of high stakes, impatient investors. and tight project deadlines,

Dog, who had secured a contracting apprenticeship and worked his way to make a name for himself in Avenport, had put his bullying skills to good use in a secondary aspect of his job.

Aside from his actual contracting engagements, Dog had negotiated agreements with the developers who were anxious to expedite the demolition. As soon as construction for the day ended, Dog would bring the very same men to the occasional stubborn residents who rebelled against the developers' terms and beat them into submission, often succeeding in coercing them into agreeing to a lower rate than what was originally offered. As his reputation spread, residents of Avenport began to steer clear of Dog.

Taking a fancy to his schoolmate, Ingrid, he came to the school one day and blackmailed the principal to expel her. Then, he threatened Ingrid with her parents in exchange for her promise to marry him, albeit out of fear.

Dog was also in charge of recommending the valuation of properties for approval. In an attempt to curry favor with his future in-laws, he valued Ingrid's family's house for a million, and their entire village to be slightly higher than the market rate. As a result, their village viewed Dog with an impression of benevolence that would have stood starkly at odds with any allegations Ingrid might make. As a result, Ingrid could only suffer in silence.

"D\*mn it!" Jared muttered through gritted teeth, his eyes flashing dangerously.

He would not have cared if Dog was going to marry any other girl, as incidents of local thugs collaborating with developers occurred wherever urbanization occurred. I can't intervene every time that happens. I'm not a missionary! But when it comes to Ingrid, there is no way in hell I'll allow Dog to do as he pleases with her!

"Please don't act rashly, Jared!" begged Ingrid. "I've already made my peace with it. Dog has a group of men under his command, you know. I'd heard that he even has ties to the underground king of Horington. Those people commit murders without batting an eye! I can't let you bear that kind of risk for me."

"Are you referring to Tommy Lewis?" Jared asked.

Ingrid thought hard for a moment. "That sounds about right. I just heard Dog mention that name once in passing."

"Leave it to me, Ingrid. I'll get you out of this marriage and sign you up for university in Horington. You need a diploma, at the very least."

"Jared, I-" Ingrid began.

Chapter 459 Join Me

"Trust him, Ingrid. He's going to handle it." Josephine interrupted Ingrid and took her by the hand.

Ingrid fell silent without attempting to press her point, having already given up.

The sky was beginning to turn dark when Hannah returned.

"I hope you're hungry, Jared," she announced. "We're heading over to Aunt Sarah's. Ingrid's fiancé is buying dinner!"

"Dog?" Jared asked, perking up at once.

Hannah was taken aback by her son's audacity but recovered quickly. "Doug's not the same boy as he used to be," she warned. "He's a big shot now. Don't call him that when you see him, it's rude."

"What else am I supposed to call him? When I see him, I'm going to-"

"Aunt Hannah," Ingrid interrupted. "Please tell my mother that we will be right over."

"See you all over there. Hurry, please. We mustn't keep him waiting."

Without another word, Hannah turned on the spot and left.

As soon as her aunt disappeared around the bend further down the road, Ingrid turned around to face Jared. "All of them know nothing about this, especially my parents. I told them that it was voluntary so that they wouldn't worry."

Jared marveled at his cousin's maturity as he gazed at her with pity. "Don't worry, Ingrid," he consoled whilst stroking her hair. "Nobody will force you to do anything against your wishes anymore with me back here."

When everybody was at last ready, Jared drove the party over to Ingrid's house. A Toyota was hogging the middle of the road in an obnoxious fashion when they arrived. Leaning on the bonnet was a man with a gold necklace around his neck and gold rings on his fingers. A cigarette dangled from his lips as he was engaged in lively conversation with Jared's and Ingrid's parents.

Despite the years since they had been in school together, Jared recognized Dog at a glance. His eyes flashed menacingly.

"Please, Jared," whispered Ingrid, accurately deducing his grim expression. "Don't do anything rash."

Jared gazed at Ingrid's fearful face for a long time before nodding resolutely.

Dog turned to look as the party descended the Mercedes and smirked at the sight of Jared. "You look pretty frail for somebody who has spent the last three years in prison! Join me. Imagine the fearsome reputation you can establish with your tenure in prison!"

Jared glared coldly at Dog. "No thanks."

Dog's cheek twitched with annoyance at Jared's attitude, but when he caught a glimpse of Josephine walking behind Jared, his scowl dissolved into a lewd smile as his eyes swept up and down her body to her immense disgust.

"I'm Doug Chance, miss. Pleased to meet you!" With the supposed air of a gentleman, Dog extended a hand adorned with golden rings.

Josephine glared at him but did not say a word.

“This is Josephine, Jared’s girlfriend.” Afraid of incurring his wrath, Ingrid hurriedly filled the awkward silence by making the introduction.

Dog was not offended. Rather, he let out a chuckle as he clapped a hand on Jared’s shoulder. “Not bad for managing to land this rich hottie as soon as you got out of prison!”

Dog did not bother to keep his voice down. As a result, pedestrians gazed curiously at Jared when they passed.

“We should get going,” Ingrid said urgently as she clung to Jared’s arm, anxious to avoid the possibility of the two men starting a brawl in the middle of the street. “The restaurant will run out of tables if we’re late!”

“Impossible! There will always be a table at any restaurant in Avenport when I want to dine.”

Grabbing hold of Ingrid’s hand, Dog dragged her toward his car. Despite being forcefully parted from her cousin, Ingrid did not cease her furious signals at Jared with her eyes as if to beg him not to lose his temper.

The party soon arrived downtown, barely recognizable from the developments over the past couple of years. Compared to before, there were many new restaurants on both sides of the road. Dog led the party to one of the biggest restaurants on the block which contained five stories.

#### Chapter 460 The Limits Of Arrogance

Dog pointed smugly at the building when all of them had gathered at the entrance. “This is the biggest restaurant in Avenport. Co-owned by yours truly!”

Josephine took one look at the building and covered her lips to conceal her smile. “The one owned by my family is bigger,” she whispered to Jared. “Is he actually proud of his pathetic square footage?”

Jared almost failed to stifle a laugh. I want to witness the true limits of his arrogance.

A waiter hurried forward at the sight of Dog’s arrival. “Welcome, Dog!”

“Have the biggest suite prepared for me,” Dog commanded importantly. “As you can see, I’m hosting tonight.”

The waiter hesitated. “That suite is occupied, Dog. If you had called ahead, we would not have-”

Smack!

Dog slapped the waiter across the face and stared fiercely at him. “Do I look like I need to make reservations? Kick whoever it is out of that suite! If you’re not up for the task, get out of my way and find me somebody else who is!”

The waiter clutched his cheek as he sobbed, gazing up at Dog with eyes wide with terror.

“Let’s take another suite instead, Doug,” Ingrid suggested, feeling sorry for the waiter.

“That wouldn’t do. I’m buying dinner for my in-laws today. We will be having the biggest suite!” I don’t really care about that, to be honest. I just want to rub it in.

“We can’t, Dog!” the waiter whispered in alarm. “We can’t kick the occupants out!”

“Who the hell are they?” Dog shouted at the waiter, raising his hand to strike the latter again. “Do I need to show up and kick them out myself?”

Ingrid caught his arm before the blow struck.

The waiter recoiled backward in terror. “Mr. Larold Charleston and his company are currently the ones occupying that suite,” he said in a trembling voice.

Dog shuddered at the news. His demeanor changed abruptly.

“Mr. Charleston is having his dinner here, you say? Why didn’t you mention that earlier? Send me the bill for their suite. And while you’re at it, get the next largest suite ready for me and my party!”

It became evident to his party that Dog was frightened of Larold.

The waiter nodded and sent another waiter to get rid of the diners in the second-largest suite.

Soon, the cursing voices of the expelled patrons drifted down to the lobby from up the stairs. As they appeared at the landing, they were revealed to be a group of large, round-bellied men.

“What kind of d\*mn service is this?” yelled one. “How dare they kick us out before we’re done with our dinner!”

“You’re right,” seethed another. “I have half a mind to bring my men and demolish this place!”

“I wonder who the idiot thinks he is to have us displaced,” a third wondered aloud.

The men marched down the stairs, escorted by a simpering waiter. Their faces were red from their furious discourse.

When they arrived at the lobby, the men turned deathly pale as they recognized the figure in the middle. “Dog!” they cried, scurrying forward in greeting.

“I am the idiot who had you displaced!” Dog roared as he aimed a kick at each of the men who passed, mumbling apologies as they did so. “Nothing else to say, eh? I’d thought so!”

After yelling himself hoarse at them, he waved an arm dismissively. “Get out of my sight.”

Looking immensely relieved, the large men scampered away like mice.

As soon as their suite was ready, Dog and his party were led upstairs by one of the waiters.

After taking their seats, Dog shoved the menus toward his guests carelessly. “My treat today. Order whatever you want!”

“Jared, Josephine,” added Ingrid, “please feel free to order anything you might like.”

Unlike her fiancé, she placed the menus carefully before Jared and Josephine.

“That’s right.” Dog nodded approvingly as he waved a hand with the heavy golden watch. “They must have starved you in prison, Jared. Eat up! You need some meat back on your bones.”

