

## Chapter 71 I Can't Help Caring About Him

Rachel wiped away Jodie's tears as she tensed her lips.

"It's okay, it's okay. We don't care about him anyway! Jodie, you're cute and beautiful, plenty of men adore you!"

Jodie shook her head and sat beside Rachel, clutching to her arm as she shivered.

"No! No, I can't help liking him. It's been so many years. I've liked him for more than a decade, how can I let it go just like that..." 1

Rachel soothed Jodie on her back. "You must remember though, you're Ian's sister. I don't think your parents can accept this relationship, can they?"

Jodie smiled bitterly. "That's right, I'm his sister. He reminds me that a lot too, we're siblings. But I'm not his sister by blood! I'm the Comers' foster daughter! Why can't we be together?!" 6

Rachel covered Jodie's mouth lightly. "Jodie, stop. We're in public. The rest of the world cannot know about your relationship with the Comers, remember?"

Jodie pressed Rachel's hand lightly. She looked slightly put out. "Of course I feel put upon, Rachel. You know, I really do like Ian very much."

Rachel rubbed Jodie's head. "I know. Okay, let's not talk about this now. Let's go home, Jodie. You're drunk and you shouldn't drink anymore."

As she was helping Jodie up, several men without a partner rounded them up.

The three men looked at Rachel and Jodie with very lecherous looks.

"Pretty lady, where are you going?"

"Do you not have a partner? Do you mind if we joined you?"

"That's right. I saw the blue mask leaving with another woman."

"Right, let's have some fun. Even if we're having too much fun, we might not need to leave tonight.

There are rooms just upstairs!"

Irritated by the men, Rachel frowned. "Excuse us, my friend is not feeling well, we're not in the mood for anything fun."

Seeing as Rachel and Jodie were going to leave, the three men surrounded them.

"Don't go, since your friend is not feeling well, she should rest!"

"We've already booked a room upstairs. Let's go, we'll accompany you to rest there."

"That's right, the ball is finishing soon anyway. Why don't you rest here and leave tomorrow?"

However, seeing the crooked grin on the three men's faces made Rachel frown even harder.

With drunk Jodie in her arms, she took a few tiny steps back unhappily.

Moreover, it would be difficult for them to escape the three thugs with Jodie's state.

"Don't you dare do anything, this is Edward Bluemel's ball!"

Rachel looked at the people around them as a hint of disappointment crept onto her face.

In this time when they needed help most, the many people in the ball pretended not to notice them.

Willful ignorance might be the coldest a human heart could get.

The three men shrugged without care at Rachel's threat.

"So what if it is? Edward Bluemel is not a nosy person."

"That's right, so what if Edward Bluemel is here now? Will he save you?"

"Who do you think you are? Lady, you lack self-awareness. Do you really think Edward Bluemel will stand against us just for a woman like you?"

Rachel pressed her lips together and considered her options.

'They're right.'

'I've just mocked Edward Bluemel, so he probably would look the other way even if he saw the situation here, right?'

'After all, he had given his own wife the same treatment.'

'Let alone a stranger like me.'

As she was deep in her thoughts, Edward's cold, hard voice rang from behind them.

"Don't talk about me like you know me. You are the first batch of people who have ever caused a scene in my event!"

The three men froze. When they turned around, all

they saw were a black-masked Edward and a white-masked Nathan.

They then looked at Rachel's mask, realizing they had messed up.

"This woman is Nathan Chapman's date?!"

'Nathan Chapman and Edward Bluemel have been close friends for many years!'

'Doesn't that mean we've crossed both Nathan Chapman and Edward Bluemel at the same time?!'

Plop— The three men immediately kneeled in front of Edward and Nathan with horror on their faces.

"We're sorry, Mr. Bluemel! Mr. Chapman! It's our fault we didn't recognize your companion and made a commotion! We're at fault here!"

Nathan quickly rushed to Rachel's side with worry in his eyes. "Rachel, are you hurt?"

Rachel shook her head lightly at Nathan as her heart was filled with warmth.

Nathan Chapman might be her boss, but he had never been bossy.

Edward too looked at Rachel, who was talking with

Nathan, before he turned his attention back to the three men. ①

"Don't you know to whom you should apologize?"

After the three men exchanged looks, they finally knelt in front of Rachel.

Thud, thud, thud— they thumped their heads loudly on the ground.

Rachel took a step back as if she was afraid their blood might spill onto her.

"It's okay, that's okay, stop knocking your heads, stand up."

Even though Rachel had already spoken out, the three men acted like they did not hear her as they continued to hammer their heads on the ground.

①

Rachel slowly looked over to Edward who placed his hands in his pocket.

'These men aren't afraid of me, they are afraid of Edward.'

Noticing Rachel's gaze, Edward nodded at her. "No need to thank me."

...

Rachel rolled her eyes at Edward.

Everyone in the ball had been attracted by the ruckus.

Around them, the people were regretting their non-action. If they knew she was Nathan's date, they would have helped her.

They might even get on Nathan and, in turn, Edward's good side!

"Edward Bluemel, get them to stand up! I can't stand this!"

Fed up with the display, Rachel requested.

Edward narrowed his eyes coldly. "If someone made a mistake and doesn't pay for it, there will not be a rule of law."

Rachel looked at the slightly-bloodied floor.

"Humans were the ones who set the rule of law. Furthermore, it's enough to have enough. If they continue to do this, it would dirty the floor with blood!"

## Chapter 72 Accidental Hug

The men who were still thumping their heads halted in surprise. They thought Rachel was helping them.

'Looks like that's not what she's doing!'

'She said we might dirty the floor?!'

'What does that mean?!'

Edward squinted upon hearing Rachel's explanation. In his eyes, there was a barely detectable interest toward her.

"You're right."

To everyone's surprise, Edward agreed with Rachel.

Edward Bluemel was the man standing at the top of the world!

His coolness and ruthlessness were his signatures!

He had never cared about another person, especially a woman.

However, this night, not only did he meddle in someone else's business, but it was a woman's



business?!

When his wife was being shamed onstage, he had never even shown himself once. ①

Yet he intervened in a small issue like this.

In an instant, they regarded Rachel with curiosity.

'Just who is this woman?!' ①

'Why are both Nathan and Edward protecting her?'

Edward looked at the three men on the ground as he glared at them with a cold fury. "Roll out of my sight, now."

The men looked at each other and slowly rolled out of the ballroom. ④

Rachel nodded at Nathan with Jodie still in her arms. "Nathan, thank you. But I should go. It's late, and my friend is drunk."

Nathan looked at Jodie's superior height pressing onto Rachel's relatively diminutive frame. "Let me drive you home."

Rachel looked at Jodie. Even if she wanted to bring her home, they probably would not get far.

There was also the question of whether cabs would come to the venue.

"Is it okay for me to keep bothering you like this?"

Nathan smiled gently. "That's alright. I should thank you for agreeing to be my date for the ball."

Rachel shook her head with a smile. "Don't mention it."

Seeing Rachel and Nathan banter while they completely ignored him, Edward pressed his lips together.

He then grabbed onto Rachel's wrist. "Why, aren't you forgetting to thank me instead of just thanking Nathan?"

Rachel threw a sidelong glance at Edward. "Edward, please let go of me!"

"I seem to remember the person who saved you from the situation just now was me and not Nathan, am I right?"

Not letting go of Rachel's hand, Edward pulled her into his arms.

A light lavender fragrance found its way into his

nose, spreading a sense of serenity to his entire body.

However, Rachel backhand-slapped Edward's face and struggled to escape from his embrace. "Don't touch me!"

Nathan pulled Rachel behind him. "Edward, I'll thank you on her behalf. I should send her home first."

After that, Nathan led Rachel out of the ballroom by her hand.

Disgusted, Rachel dusted off the places that came in contact with Edward. Her downturned, tight lips clearly expressed her dismay. ①

Nathan helped Jodie into the Lincoln stretch limousine and added, "Edward is actually not a bad person. He's not the most charismatic, but his intent is good." ②

Rachel smiled at Nathan and took off her mask.

"Is that so? I will keep that in mind."

Despite saying that, she labeled Edward with 'perverted', 'shameless', 'heartless', 'a playboy', 'promiscuous', and others without mercy.

What kind of good man would be attracted to a woman like Rue and have a child with her?

In the lift, Edward sneezed lightly. Deep in his thoughts, he closed his eyes.

He then raised his hand and sniffed it, allowing the remnant of the lavender smell to brighten his mood.

When he arrived at the top floor, Edward tensed his face consciously and showed a strict face.

He held Josh's freezing hands and frowned.

"I've gotten you a room, why do you still come to the top floor to stand in the wind? What if you catch a cold?"

Josh lowered his head. "Father, I'm sorry."

Edward looked at Josh. In the dark of night, Josh did not notice the indulgence in Edward's eyes.

"Let's go home."

Josh nodded happily. "Okay!"

In the meantime, Nathan and Rachel hauled Jodie's considerable weight back to Rachel's apartment.

Knock knock— The door was lightly thumped.

Ziggy had just changed out of his suit. He frowned, unsure of what to do with the suit in his hands.

So he bit down on his jaw and pressed the suit into a ball, hurling it out through the window.

He casually brushed his messy hair as he ran to open the door.

"Mommy, you're home!"

The moment Ziggy saw Nathan, his smile froze again.

'Why is this strange uncle here again?!' 1

Seeing Ziggy's sudden change in mood, Nathan was unsure whether to laugh or cry.

'Why is this kid so hostile toward me?'

Nathan entered the apartment after Rachel and placed Jodie onto the sofa before he wiped the sweat off of his forehead.

"Your friend's not hurt, is she?"

Rachel shook her head. "She's fine. She's just drunk."

Ziggy twitched his lips and brought two glasses of warm water to Rachel and Nathan.

"Mommy, uncle, here's some water."

Smiling, he handed a glass to Rachel, and when he was handing the glass to Nathan, his expression turned sour.

Nathan looked at Ziggy curiously.

'Why does this child feel so much like Edward?'

'Am I hallucinating that feeling?' 1

'I might be.'

Nathan shook his head. Since Rachel and Edward did not know each other, how would they have a child together?

'They look somewhat alike, that's all.'

"Uncle, have you finished the water?"

Ziggy cocked his head and smiled at Nathan.

Nathan was still a little deep in thought, so he set down his glass of water. "Uh-huh."

Ziggy narrowed his eyes and tugged at Nathan's hand, saying softly, "You should get going, right? It's already late, and it wouldn't be safe if you got home too late, so take care and be mindful of your safety." 1

In that period, he pulled Nathan toward the door, but he employed a respectful and thoughtful attitude.

When Nathan recovered from the daze, he was already standing outside the door. 6

## Chapter 73 How Long Has It Been since We Last Made Love like This?

Ziggy waved goodbye at Nathan as his other hand was placed on the door handle.

"Since uncle has already decided to leave, be safe on the road, uncle."

Nathan halted, finally reacting. 'When did I say that I'm leaving? I did not say that!'

So he placed his foot forward in hopes of entering the apartment once more.

Rachel's voice called out, "Mr. Chapman, since you're leaving now, I shall tend to my business and wish you a safe journey."

As Nathan heard what Rachel had said, he slowly retracted his foot.

He then opened his mouth as if going to tell Rachel something.

However, in the next moment, the door closed with a thud. ①

Nathan smiled slightly and shook his head before he left.

Downstairs, Anne stood beside the stretch



limousine, waiting with a ball of child-sized suit in her hands.

Approaching Anne, Nathan asked curiously, "What is this?"

Anne shook her head. "I don't know. It just fell from the sky and hit the car."

Nathan looked at the child-sized suit and squinted.

1

Looking up, his gaze eventually stopped at the lit unit with an open window.

He squinted again. "Interesting."

Anne cocked her head, not understanding.

"President, are we to throw the suit away?"

Nathan shook his head. "No need for that. Just keep it."

Anne followed Nathan's gaze before she shook her head and kept the suit.

In the meantime, Rachel slowly unclasped the mask on Jodie's face, to which Jodie responded by clutching it tightly.

"Don't touch! He chose this mask himself!"

Rachel patted Jodie's hand patiently. "Alright, I

won't touch it."

Following that, Ziggy carried a washbasin of warm water, set it down on the side, and squeezed the face towel before handing it to Rachel.

Rachel took the towel and smiled at Ziggy. "Baby, thank you."

Slowly, she washed Jodie's face before she exhaled deeply.

"Jodie, why are you doing this to yourself? His heart is not with you, what would devoting so much to him achieve? He can't see you, and he won't feel sorry for you."

Meanwhile, Ziggy kept glancing out occasionally as if he was mindful of something.

"Mommy, I'll be throwing the rubbish downstairs."

With that, he took a bag of garbage and quickly headed downstairs.

When he was at the bottom, he looked around, but could not find the suit he had lobbed out the window.

Ziggy cocked his head curiously. "How did it disappear?"

'Could it have been cleared by the cleaners?'

With that thought, he looked at the dumpster full of trash.

'If it weren't the cleaners, who took it?'

Slowly, Ziggy's squinted.

He crouched down and touched the warm surface on the ground.

'It's still slightly warm. Does that mean that a car was stopped here?'

He looked up toward the opened window and stared.

Suddenly, the image of Nathan popped up in his mind.

Ziggy's fist tightened into a ball. 'This uncle is so troublesome!'

Meanwhile, after escorting Rue to his hotel room, Ian stared at her with a pained expression while she cried. 1

"Rue, don't cry."

Rue grabbed onto Ian tightly as tears streamed down her face. "Why did he not appear in times like this? Why?"

Ian sighed and held Rue's hand.

His brows were tightly knit as he wiped her tears away lightly.

"Stop crying, Rue. I told you, Edward doesn't love you, you two are not suitable for each other."

Rue nodded. "I know, but what can I do? Rachel left the family on her own, so the responsibility of the entire Bennet family has fallen on me! For the sake of the family, I have no choice, I have to follow whom my parents want me to marry!" 5

Ian pulled Rue into his arms with a broken heart.

His brows were filled with seriousness and upset. 'If I could be a little better and make the Comers a little stronger, I would've been able to marry the woman I love!'

"No, Rue, you have me. No matter what, I will always love you and will continue to stand by your side, protecting you!"

"Even if your enemy is the entire world, I will, without hesitation, stand on your side." 2

Rue returned Ian's hug and wailed as if she was unable to hold back any longer.

Ian hugged Rue tightly. Since his hand was preoccupied, the shredded dress that hung loosely on Rue's body immediately slipped down.

Even though there was a jacket covering her, she still had plenty of exposed skin. 1

Seeing Rue in front of him, Ian felt an urge growing inside of him. 1

"Rue, please don't cry. You know I will give anything not to hear you cry."

Rue lifted her head and allowed her tears to slide down her face while maintaining strength and perseverance.

Ian could not tolerate it anymore. So, he gently cupped her face and planted his lips onto hers.

When their lips came into contact, layers of emotion started to overflow.

Ian bore down onto Rue and pressed onto Rue's resisting wrists. Then, his lips gently suckled her red lips with care.

Rue pushed Ian ever so lightly, pulling him in closer by slightly resisting him.

Everyone would have the desire for sexual gratification, let alone Rue, who had five years of

forced abstinence.

Edward had not touched her once in five years. In a unique situation like this and under Ian's careful teasing, she no longer could hold herself back.

No longer resisting, Rue placed both her hands behind Ian's neck.

Ian stuck his tongue in between Rue's lips without any hesitation and took in all of her wonders.

His hand climbed up onto Rue's thigh, sliding past her secret garden tantalizingly.

Rue felt like she was going crazy as she returned Ian's kisses by intertwining her tongue with his, again and again.

With a smile, Ian quickly unclasped Rue's brassier, unleashing her lovely lady lumps so he could hold them. 1

"Rue, how long has it been since we last made love like this?" 2

## Chapter 74 An Inseparable Night

Ian's question jolted Rue as she stared at him and spaced out into her memory.

Ian and she have been together since college. They even had sex for the first time then.

For a long time after that, even though they were no longer physically together, their relationship was kept in this ambiguous space.

Since marrying Edward, Rue had spent all her waking hours trying to placate Edward just so she could spend one night with him.

However, five years had passed and it had exhausted her of ideas, but he was still indifferent to her.

Due to that, she had never made love with other men in those five years. 2

Experiencing the constant responses that her body made, Rue pressed her lips together. She did not expect her body to be that parched for attention...

She hooked her fingers around Ian's chin with a pitiful look. "I thought once I married someone else, you would no longer want me, so I dared not look

whereabouts, Josh stopped insisting on an answer.

Soon, the old butler brought the landline telephone to Edward. "Master Edward, it's from the Bennets."

Edward put his book down and picked up the handset. "Are you looking for something?"

Hearing Edward's voice, the other end of the phone responded quickly, "Yes, yes, Eddie. I would like to know if Rue is home?"

Edward's face darkened. "What did you call me?" 2

After a moment of silence, the other end of the phone replied with nervous laughter. "Mr. Bluemel, I would like to know if Rue has returned home." 1

Edward answered coldly, "No."

"So about the cooperation..."

Edward smirked. "About the cooperation, I have clearly laid out my terms for you. Unless you can find the person who is sabotaging you, I will not intervene."

When he finished his sentence, Edward hung up as he did not plan to listen to the Bennets any longer.



Instead, Josh and Edward sat back to back and read their books in silence.

The Bennets, on the other hand, exploded.

Mr. Bennet rambled against the phone, "This Edward Bluemel has no respect for the elders! Not only has he refused to help us time after time, but he also hung up on me! Technically, he should have called me 'father'!"

Mrs. Bennet stood beside Mr. Bennet and patted him. "Darling, don't overextend yourself. It looks like Edward really doesn't want to help us this time!"

Mr. Bennet thumped the desk furiously. "He wants us to look for the saboteur ourselves! We've called the police! Not even they were able to find anything, so how are we supposed to find anything at all? I think Edward is trying to make things difficult for us!"

Mrs. Bennet sighed. "Dear, let it go! We should focus on getting the AKK website owner's help!" 3

Mr. Bennet sighed. "Looks like that's all we can do. Rue has disappointed me! I thought she would be able to control Edward like she did Ian once she married into the Bluemel household, but she only

has a title without any ability to influence anything!" 3

Mrs. Bennet kept quiet. She wanted to defend Rue, but what Mr. Bennet said was true too. During a critical period like this, she was unable to provide any help for the Bennets. 1

Mr. Bennet turned his computer on and logged onto the AKK website before he sent multiple messages to indicate his genuine intention to cooperate.

The two waited in front of the computer anxiously.

After helping Jodie settle in bed, Rachel yawned and climbed into bed as well.

"Baby, you don't need to wash that dress. I will bring it to the dry cleaners tomorrow and return it to Nathan. It's late now, get some sleep. Jodie's not feeling well tonight, so I won't be able to sleep with you."

Ziggy nodded at Rachel. "I know, mommy. Rest well, mommy."

After Rachel closed the door to the room, Ziggy brought his laptop into his room.

He switched it on quickly after blinking a few times.

Only when Ziggy completed three simple requests that he saw the several dozens of messages sent by the Bennets.

He clicked open the messages one by one and raised one of his eyebrows.

Crossing his arms slowly, he considered the messages.

"I didn't expect the Bennet old farts to have this much patience."

Ziggy punched on his keyboard. "You look like you're sincere about cooperating. Let's talk." 1

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet waited for hours before they received a reply. Immediately, they responded, "Whatever you ask for, we will agree as long as it's within our abilities!"

Ziggy's eyes narrowed with a cunning look.

He neither planned to work with the Bennet Group nor wanted to help them. 1

However, considering the Bluemels were behind the Bennets, he would lose a good deal of advantage if the Bluemels decided to help.

After all, he had singlehandedly caused this event. If he solved this for them, he could rip the Bennets

off!

With that in mind, he replied, "I can help you with planning a more flawless contract, but you have to pay me £50 million first!" 4

## Chapter 75 £50 Million

Reading the message on the screen, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's face fell.

50 million pounds?!

In their current situation, 50 million pounds was not a small amount!

The Bennet Group was not a tiny company, but they were not massive either!

Not to mention, because of their current situation, their sales were not great.

From where could they pull out such a big sum of money? 5

Mrs. Bennet tugged at Mr. Bennet's shoulder hesitantly. Should we continue to pursue this lead? It's 50 million pounds sterling!"

Mr. Bennet was also in deep thought, considering his options with difficulty.

To the Bennets, 50 million pounds sterling was not a small sum.

However, if they gave up, the loss the Bennets had sustained would not just be 50 million pounds! 1

Due to the Bennets' carelessness, their partners had all requested to cancel their cooperation with the Bennets and asked for a big amount of compensation!

Not only was the compensation a huge part of their cash flow, but their contracts were also canceled!

With the company secret leaked, everyone could have taken it for their own. This had, in turn, affected the company's reputation severely.

When thought about it in that way, it was not the most cost-effective.

If they could save their company secret and keep their cooperative partners through this transaction, then they would not have lost too badly.

Ding— A new message lit up on the computer.

"What will you do? How are you going to fix the flaws of the previous contract terms?"

Ziggy punched the keys unhurriedly. "Easy. I will take your previous contract and revise the terms that are unfavorable to you and tune up your software, as well as all the things I deem imperfect. That way, your contract will be valuable once more!"

Reading Ziggy's message, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet no longer hesitated. They clenched their jaws and agreed to the transaction.

"Alright. That's that then. We will wire you 20 million pounds first, and when the contract is done and sent to us, we will transfer the rest to you!"

Ziggy scoffed and smirked at the same time.

'Is the Bennets trying to rip me off in a time like this?'

'Don't be ridiculous!'

Ziggy quickly typed, "No way. Only after the 50 million pounds had been transferred will I begin to work on your contract. If you can't fulfill that, I will cancel the transaction."

Mr. Bennet pounded on the table.

"What a pushy fellow! If I had 50 million quids in my hands, why would I choose to delay the payment?"

Mrs. Bennet patted Mr. Bennet's shoulder. "Dear, we only have 20 million pounds in total. What can we do?"

Mr. Bennet frowned. "Rue should still have 10 million pounds in her account! Tell Rue to ask for the remaining 20 million pounds from

Mrs. Bennet nodded as she shuddered. "Yes, dear, I understand."

In one corner of the house, Mrs. Bennet continued to call Rue again and again.

Meanwhile, Rue was still engaged in her act of rolling in the deep when she finally picked up her phone. 3

She sounded impatient. "Mom, why do you keep calling me?"

Ian did not mind Rue picking up the phone as he planted his lips around her neck, one after another.

His tongue licked her lightly in a teasing way.

Rue muffled her moaning even as her face was full of pleasure.

Hearing the weird noise on Rue's end, Mrs. Bennet's heart was hanging by a thread. "Rue, where are you?! Don't forget you are Edward Bluemel's wife! Don't simply fool around!"

Rue furrowed her brows unhappily. "Mom, just why are you calling me? Tell me! If there's nothing, I want to hang up."

At the mention of Edward's name, Rue became



deeply upset.

She was embarrassed so utterly in the ball, but Edward knowingly ignored it!

Moreover, she had never experienced pleasure like this in five years!

Mrs. Bennet pressed her lips together before speaking again. "The person behind the AKK website has agreed to work with us and help the Bennet Group to tune up the contract."

Rue raised her eyebrows and kissed Ian. "Isn't that good news?"

"But they want us to pay them 50 million pounds!"

Rue's body shuddered in shock. "What?!"

"Your dad and I only have 20 million on us! We know you have ten million pounds, but we're still lacking 20 million pounds! You dad wants you to get it from Edward!"

Hearing Mrs. Bennet's words, Rachel frowned again as her lips left Ian's. 3

"This is the Bennet Group's problem and they want me to give them my personal ten million?"

'And they want me to ask Edward for 20 million

pounds?!

'Impossible!'

Edward did give her a black credit card to purchase all the clothes and bags she wanted, but it would still be difficult to explain a 20-million-pound transaction!

Even though Edward had never gotten intimate with her in the five years they had been married, it did not mean she had already given up!

She was constantly trying to get into Edward's bed!

With that in mind, she could not make him think lowly of her!

When she asked about their cooperation, Edward had already expressed his dismay, and now they wanted her to ask him for 20 million pounds sterling!

"Mom, you know how it is, Edward will never give the money to me!"

Mrs. Bennet paused for a second. "I know, but your dad said if you can't perform this time again, he will disown you!"

## Chapter 76 Bodily Recompense

At Rue's mention of Edward, Ian halted – his body stopped in mid-thrust.

Rue's palm tightened on her phone. "Mom, isn't dad just being too dramatic?! I am his daughter! I have never gone against him no matter what he asks of me, I try my best!"

"There are many things that don't work out just because I want them to, do you understand? Because of this, he's willing to disown and abandon me?!"

Rue's tears began to stream down her face.

Mrs. Bennet seemed uncomfortable on the other end of the phone line. "Rue, I know you understand, and you must know that I have no say in matters like this. I will try to think of a way to help you, but you should at least try in the meantime."

With that, Mrs. Bennet hung up.

Ian looked as Rue set down her phone and lightly flicked her tears away.

"Rue, what's wrong?"

Rue shook her head, but her eyes were full of tears.

"It's nothing."

Seeing as Rue continued to cry, Ian hugged her on her head. "It's alright, whatever problem you're facing, tell me. I will help you." 2

Rue glanced at Ian and immediately hugged him tightly. "Ian! My dad is too much! He wants me to acquire 30 million pounds for him! How would I have so much money? He wants me to ask Edward for it!"

"If I can't get it, he will disown me! How can he do that? Since young, I have done everything they wanted me to do. I would never do anything that displeases them, but why do they still treat me like this?" 2

Gently, Ian stroked Rue's head. "Don't worry, I'm here."

Rue shook her head but wailed even louder. "They want me to ask Edward for money! How would Edward give me 30 million pounds?! Everyone could see how he treated me tonight! Aside from the title, there's nothing between us!"

Ian cupped Rue's face and kissed her. "It'll be alright, Rue. Don't worry. I have 30 million pounds. As the vice president of my company, I can handle 30 million for you!"

Rue halted her crying and looked at Ian, clearly moved, before she shook her head again.

"No, no! Ian, I've given you so much trouble, I can't burden you anymore. I will look for a way myself. If I can't find anything, I'll sell my organ or something. It should be quick..." 3

Ian hugged Rue tightly. "You idiot, what are you talking about? I will not let you risk that for yourself! Even if you sold every single organ in your body, you won't be able to gather 30 million pounds sterling!" 3

Rue lowered her manipulative gaze and allowed her tears to drop onto the back of Ian's hand.

"Ian. You know, the person I want to bother least is you. I've already owed you too much."

Ian pinned Rue under him as he kissed her hungrily, resurrecting the meat shaft in her body once more.

"If that's the case, you must recompense me in the future."

Rue wrapped herself around Ian's waist with her legs.

Her lips moved toward Ian's ear, blowing hot breaths on it.

"I will recompense you this way in the future."

...

The next day, Ziggy woke up early.

He moved the stool into the kitchen and climbed on top.

"What shall we eat today? Aunt Jodie was drunk, so maybe I'll make egg drop soup."

Ziggy took some eggs and dumplings from the fridge and climbed up on the stool again.

He cracked the eggs and beat the eggs with the eggbeater once they were all in a bowl.

When the water in the pot bubbled, he poured oil into the pot and after waiting for it to heat up, he poured some seasoning into the pot.

Ziggy held the bowl in the air and slowly streamed the egg into the pot while stirring.

Next, he added soy sauce into the pot and threw a handful of spring onions in it.

Seeing the golden egg drop soup, he smiled.

Ziggy sampled a taste of the soup and nodded satisfactorily.

He divided the soup into three bowls and left a little

in the pot, then dumped dumplings into the pot.

1

He scooped the dumplings after they were cooked, and poured the remaining egg drop soup on the dumplings.

The fragrant dumpling-soup wafted through the entire unit.

After Ziggy placed the bowls of soup on the dinner table, he took the clothes out from the washing machine and started to hang them on the balcony.

Shrill shrieks came out from the bedroom.

"Gah! Rachel! Why am I sleeping here with you!"

"Jodie! Where are you touching?!"

"What! My hand is resting on this big expanse of flatland!"

"Say that again, and I will pummel you to oblivion!"

"Tsk tsK tsK, can you even beat me?"

"... Don't forget I have my son."

"Fine, you win." 1

...

Ziggy caught himself with a hand on the wall. The shriek from just now almost threw him off the stool.

He put his head in his hands when he saw Rachel and Jodie making faces at each other.

"Mommy, Aunt Jodie, it's going to be late. Quick, get up and wash up before breakfast."

Jodie ran to the dinner table happily. "Wow! The egg drop soup looks pretty! Why do the dumplings look different from those sold outside? They look yummy!"

Ziggy put his tiny hand below Jodie's chin. "Aunt Jodie, don't drip your saliva in it. I spent a lot of time making it."

Jodie wiped her lips and sat down immediately. "This is a rare breakfast, I haven't even had anything like that outside, I'm not going to brush my teeth or wash my face! I'm going to eat now!" ①

Jodie picked up the spoon and grinned.

In the next second, Rachel and Ziggy pulled Jodie from the dinner table simultaneously with fury in their eyes.



"No! You must brush your teeth and wash your face!"

However, Jodie was still trying to speed toward the table, her attention completely dominated by the food.

"Are you trying to starve me to death?!" 3

## Chapter 77 I Don't Mind Pulling You Down with Me

At last, Jodie complied with Rachel's and Ziggy's insistence and went to brush her teeth before returning to the dinner table.

The second Jodie sat down, she began to slurp the egg drop soup without waiting. In mere seconds, she had downed all the soup.

Her gaze snapped onto Rachel's bowl of egg drop soup.

However, Rachel pulled her bowl toward her. "Jodie, if you plan to take my breakfast from me, I will pulverize you!"

Ziggy held out his bowl of egg drop soup to Jodie. "Aunt Jodie, do you feel better after eating the soup?"

The sharp glimmer in Jodie's eyes softened immediately.

She nodded, looking touched.

'Ziggy-boy made soup for me!'

"I'm much better, thanks."

She replaced Ziggy's soup in front of him. "I'm alright. Ziggy-boy should eat more so you can

protect your mom when you grow up."

Ziggy nodded. "I can protect her just fine right now!"

Jodie nodded back. "Alright alright, you're the best."

She looked over to Rachel. "Rachel, sorry I troubled you last night."

Rachel patted Jodie's head in feigned anger. "What are you talking about, you idiot? I'm not blaming you!"

"Heh, I know you love me, Rachel!"

Jodie then pounced onto Rachel.

Rachel pushed Jodie aside and made a serious face. "Honestly though, Jodie, your obsession with Ian has been going on for so many years, you should let it go."

Jodie shut up almost immediately. "I... just can't. Having a crush is easy, getting out of one is difficult."

"Rachel, you'll understand when you find your true love. Your entire being hinges upon him, you'll like what he likes, and worry about what he worries about."

Rachel muttered, repeating Jodie's words, "Like what he likes, and worry about what he worries about..."

With a frown, Ziggy waved his hand in front of Rachel. "Mommy, don't listen to Aunt Jodie's rambles. The only person you need to like me and you'll need no other man!"

Rachel nodded quickly. "That's right! I will give all my attention to my baby because no other people are worth the time!"

Jodie shook her head while eating the dumplings in the bowl. "It's easy to say that, but you'll know it's not that simple when it happens to you."

Ziggy quickly stuffed another dumpling into Jodie's mouth in annoyance. "Aunt Jodie, have some more dumplings! Don't chatter at the dinner table!"

Jodie grinned deviously and opened her mouth.

"Ziggy-boy, I want you to feed me!"

Ziggy shuddered uncontrollably as he looked at her with a disgusted expression. "Why do I have a godmother like you?"

Although Ziggy complained, he still picked up another piece of dumpling and sent it into Jodie's mouth. 1

Enjoying the treatment, Jodie shook her head. "Oh, I'm so happy! Even I want to have a child now!"

Hearing Jodie's proclamation, Ziggy quickly retracted his hand. "Aunt Jodie, don't look at me, I refuse to have monkey-children with you."

...

Jodie looked at Ziggy incredulously. "I said having a child, what do you mean monkey-children?!"

Rachel wiped her mouth with a tissue and changed the topic. "Jodie, aren't you going to the office?"

After a short pause, Jodie immediately shot up from her seat. "Oh! I need to go to the office!"

With that, Jodie quickly rushed Ziggy to the Minnow Nursery School before driving away with Rachel. 2

Ziggy tightened his fist. 'Mommy didn't get to kiss me before she left. Aunt Jodie is an idiot!'

After leaving Rachel at the Chapman office, Jodie drove away hurriedly. "Rachel, I'm going to the office now. If anything happens, you must call me!"

Rachel nodded then shook her head as she

witnessed Jodie's speedy behavior.

She was not sure what the Comers was thinking when they appointed Jodie to lead the finance department.

However, the Comers would not want outsiders to handle such an important department as well, would they? ①

The moment she entered the office, many people surrounded Rachel.

The team leader handed her a cup of coffee.

"Rachel, it must be tiring to travel all the way here. Have a sip of the warm coffee?"

Rachel flinched and refused to receive the cup of coffee. "Thank you, but I'm not thirsty."

The other women joined in the commotion.

"Rachel! You went to the ball yesterday, didn't you? How was it?"

"I hear that's Edward Bluemel's ball, it must be very extravagant, right?"

"Was it fun?"

"Are there many socialites there?"

"President Chapman must be extraordinarily

handsome!"

...

Standing behind them, Melissa huffed sarcastically. "What's the meaning of surrounding her? Edward Bluemel's ball has a really strict dress code, disheveled people and dogs aren't allowed in, so I think she probably didn't go last night!" 3

Melissa's clique immediately laughed as she said that.

"Isn't it? Look at her and her poor \*ss, can she even afford an evening gown?"

"That's right! I'm guessing she wore her cheap dress and canvas shoes to the ball. What a joke!"

"Isn't it embarrassing for President Chapman to bring her along to the ball?"

...

Rachel slowly squinted at Melissa.

She then walked toward Melissa with a cold gaze.

She approached Melissa and whispered beside her, "Melissa, I initially wanted to give it a rest about my design draft, but if you insist on making a fuss about me, I don't mind pulling you down with

me."

Immediately stunned, Melissa stood there in shock.

"You!"

Rachel raised her eyebrow and smiled. "What's wrong?"

Melissa pointed at her and turned around crossly. "I don't want to talk to you!"

Imitating Melissa, Rachel turned around but she smiled coldly. "That would be best." ①

Under everyone's surprised stare, Rachel walked slowly to the lift.

Following her were Anne and Nathan, at whom everyone immediately bowed.

"Good morning, President."

Nathan replied with a nod and a gentle smile on his face. "Good morning."

Anne was right behind Nathan, but her gaze was entirely focused on Rachel. ①

Seeing that Rachel was surrounded, Nathan wanted to intervene, but he did not expect Rachel to be more resilient than she looked and countered it in



her own way.

## Chapter 78 Career Path

Nathan and Anne stopped beside Rachel.

His face was adorned with a sweet smile. "Rachel, good morning."

Rachel nodded at the unanticipated greeting. "Good morning, Mr. Chapman."

When the lift arrived, Rachel, Nathan, and Anne all walked in.

As soon as the three entered the lift, the ladies on the first floor began to gossip fawningly. ①

"Oh, President Chapman is so handsome!"

"He's gentle too, what a man!"

"Exactly! The higher-ups of other companies are cold and distant most of the time. They don't care about their employees!"

"Didn't the president say hi to Rachel just now..." ①

Promptly, the discussions and chatters died down. ①

Even though no one was speaking, everyone was talking about Rachel tacitly.

For a moment, all of the women in the company thought of Rachel as their arch-nemesis.

Melissa stood where she was, holding her fist as tightly as she could.

'Rachel is such a witch! She's new, and she dares to threaten me?'

'I have worked in the Chapman Group for several years!'

Melissa sat down with a huff. 'Hmph! Rachel, do you think your life will get easier now that you've been promoted?'

'That is impossible!'

'Almost all of the Chapman Group's female employees are infatuated with the president. The closer you are with him, the more chances you'll have to meet him!'

'Therefore, the employees get even more fanatical at higher positions!'

'The news of him being so close with you should have reached other ladies.'

'Moreover, the president brought you to Edward Bluemel's ball.'

'You are officially the romantic rival of everyone in

the company!

'How will your days ahead be smooth-sailing?'

At the thought, Melissa's mood made a change for the better.

The lift stopped on the sixth floor.

Rachel gave a slight bow at Nathan. "Mr. Chapman, this is my floor. I've already sent the gown for dry-cleaning, I'll bring it to you tomorrow."

Nathan shook his head. "No need for that, just keep it. You saved me from a certain embarrassment yesterday, so think of the gown as a present."

Rachel tilted her head in uncertainty. "Saved you?"

"As my date. Besides, you managed to snap back at Edward to that degree, I see that as an act of revenge for bullying me since we were kids."

Nathan nodded genuinely, but the thought of Edward gave him a headache.

Rachel burst out laughing.

"If you say so, Mr. Chapman, I'll keep it."

Rachel's frankness about the present made Nathan satisfied instead of making him think she was

materialistic. 1

Many people would refuse such gifts at first.

Although they would keep the presents eventually, a lot of time would be wasted in the process.

Rachel's frankness and tact made him feel comfortable when interacting with her.

As Rachel stepped out of the lift, Nathan spoke up, "If there's anything you find difficult to handle in the company, feel free to look for me."

Rachel did not respond to his offer immediately, but instead, she waved at him in front of the lift and smiled.

As the door to the lift slowly closed, Rachel's smile was shut out of his sight.

He did not know why, but not being able to see Rachel's bright smile made him feel a little empty inside. 1

"Anne, what do you think of Rachel?"

Anne nodded objectively. "Not bad, she has the capability and none of the politics of the others."

Upon hearing Anne's analysis, Nathan smiled. "I think so too."

Anne glanced at Nathan. "Sir, are you only trying to get me to speak your heart? Next time, don't beat around the bush, just tell me straight."

Nathan paused a little before he looked at Anne with an embarrassed face.

He coughed and murmured, "Will do."

Anne smiled looking at her boss. She had always felt Nathan was adorable; it was no wonder Edward Bluemel had been friends with him for such a long time.

The space on the sixth floor was ample as only eight designers were using it.

Every single cubicle was large enough to contain seven to eight people's workspace.

Rachel strode into her office and nodded at the roomful of made-up, fashionable women.

"Good morning, I'm Rachel Bennet. I was recently promoted here, and I look forward to working with all of you." 3

Even though Rachel behaved very courteously, everyone in this new office was emotionless. 1

All they did was look up at Rachel before they continued with their work without so much as a

response.

Rachel smiled awkwardly and walked to her workspace.

With one look, the desk was messy and had evidently been tampered with. Rachel's eyebrows raised in response.

She pulled out her drawer and noticed the drawer was full of trash.

So, Rachel opened the drawers one by one, noting the variety of rubbish in them.

There were even banana peels and other fruit residues.

A few of the ladies observed Rachel through the glass door.

Disappointingly, Rachel did not behave as enraged as they had thought she should.

On the contrary, Rachel was pretty calm about it.

She cleared out the rubbish into the bin and placed the bin on the side.

Facing the calm Rachel, the eight other women felt a deep defeat.

They each huffed in their displeasure toward Rachel.

Rachel lowered her gaze. She thought she would be treated better after leaving the toxic first floor.

She did not expect the people on this floor to not only have similar levels of hostility but subtler measures too.

'Looks like I won't get any friends in this line of work. I need to be careful and tread lightly.'

Jodie, meanwhile, arrived at her office and sat down as Ian entered.

Immediately, Jodie poured him a cup of warm tea curiously.

"Ian, is there anything you need me for?"

Ian removed a bracelet from his pocket and gave it to Jodie apologetically. "I'm sorry for leaving you all alone yesterday. I can't help it. Rue needed me, I hope you understand." 1

Jodie replied as she suppressed herself, "I do..."

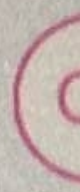
Ian clasped the bracelet around Jodie's wrist and smiled. "You look nice with the bracelet."

Jodie looked down at the bracelet and smiled. She thought it was familiar but could not remember



where she had seen it.

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## Chapter 79 Rue's Plan

Ian looked at Jodie as she stared at the bracelet, his face gradually showing some guilty conscience.

"Jodie, do you like it? It's okay if you don't like it. I don't know what you like, but I wanted to get you something as an apology.

Jodie put down her hand and grinned. "No, Ian, I like it."

Ian nodded, but he still stood in the office with no intent to leave.

After a pregnant silence, Jodie asked, "Is there anything else, Ian?"

Ian considered for a long time before nodding.

"Yes."

Jodie smiled. "Ian, you can just tell me."

Ian waited a while more before he told Jodie, "I transferred 30 million pounds from the finance department."

Jodie's smile froze immediately.

She jumped up from her seat in a shock. "What! Ian, you took 30 million from the company?!"

Chapter 10: Rue & Ian

Ian nodded without any expression of worry or guilt. "Don't worry, it's just 30 million pounds, right? When I have the money, I will return it to the company. Please don't tell dad or mom."

Supporting herself with her hands on the table, Jodie said, "Ian, 30 million is not a small amount! What do you need that much money for? Are you in trouble? Why didn't you tell me?"

Ian frowned. "What would it look like if I take money from my sister?" 1

Jodie grabbed Ian's sleeve anxiously. "Why do you need so much money then? You have to tell me before I know how I can help you!"

Ian pursed his lips and looked at Jodie, finally telling her. "The Bennets got into trouble, they need 30 million pounds."

"Ian, how does the Bennets' trouble affect us? Our families have already severed our relationship, we can't help them!"

Perplexity was written all over Jodie's face.

Ian shook his head. "No! If the Bennets are in trouble, Rue is in trouble. If Rue's in trouble, I cannot leave her to the dogs! Jodie, you understand that, right?" 1

Jodie's hand slid down Ian's sleeve as a bitter smile appeared on her face.

'Rue, it's Rue again...'

"Ian, I understand, but you can't use our company money to help her! If mom and dad found out..."

Before Jodie could even finish, Ian had left the office. 1

"Don't worry, if you and I don't tell them, they wouldn't know. Don't worry, I will return the money as soon as I can."

Click— The office door closed slowly.

Jodie leaned back against her seat with her head in her hands, her face turning pale.

'How can you not care about your family and the company for Rue's sake?'

Jodie held her fists tightly and slammed on the desk.

Even though she knew Rue was just using Ian, there was nothing she could do! 1

With that, Jodie pressed her lips tightly, picked up her phone, and sent Rue a short message.

"Rue, now that you've become Mrs. Bluemel, can

you stop pestering my brother?"

In her bed, Rue saw the message and smirked with contempt.

'Don't overestimate yourself.'

Rue knew exactly what Jodie was getting at.

"Jodie, you aren't so naive to think that you have a chance with Ian after I've married Edward, do you?"

Then, Rue shook her head and called Mrs. Bennet.

"Mom, don't worry, Edward has agreed to give me 30 million pounds."

Mrs. Bennet exclaimed happily, "Really?! Did Edward really agree?"

Rue looked at the cheque in her hand and narrowed her eyes. "Yes, Edward told me himself that he will give it to me."

At that moment, Mrs. Bennet's grin could be felt through the phone. "Rue, you've been capable since young. I knew you can do it! Looks like Edward still cares about you!"

Rue smiled. "Mom, that's an overstatement, really."

Mr. Bennet took over the call. "Rue, you didn't let

me down! Edward does care for you, or he wouldn't have given you a cheque worth 30 million pounds."

Rue halted for a split second as her hand tightened her hold on the phone. "I'm happy to have done something for the Bennets."

"Alright! Come back for a meal soon! I will ask the servants to cook something nice for you."

Mr. Bennet hung up the moment he finished the sentence.

Staring at Ian's cheque, Rue did not feel any remorse at all.

She knew it was from Ian, but if she had told the truth, it would not have helped her situation.

Quite the contrary, the Bennets would think she was unable to capture Edward's heart. As long as Edward did not care about her, her value to the Bennets would continue to fall.

To maximize her benefits, she only had one choice.

Furthermore, Ian was completely willing to help her, she did not force him.

'Since one was willing to give and the other was

willing to take, why not?' 3

Rue put on a simple makeup and took her BB cream. When she was preparing to dab it on her neck to cover up the love bite, she paused.

Her arms fell to her side as she smiled lightly.

Instead, Rue covered her neck with a scarf, changed into her dress, and put on her shades before she left the hotel and headed for the Bennet villa.

At the Bennet villa, both her parents stood outside to receive Rue.

It was rare even for her to get a reception like that.

Rue narrowed her eyes, took off her scarf and shades, then handed the cheque to her father. "Dad, this cheque is worth 30 million pounds. Whatever difficulties you might have in the future, tell me. I'm your daughter, after all!" 2

Mr. Bennet took the cheque with a wide grin. He was silently regretting not telling her to get 50 million pounds sterling earlier. 2

However, Mrs. Bennet saw the love bites on Rue's neck and was a little stunned. "Rue! What are those on your neck! Did you even go home to the Bluemels' yesterday? You and that man..."

When Mr. Bennet heard that, he looked over with furrowed brows. "Rue, explain this."

Rue stomped the ground, pretending to be upset. "Mom, dad, what are you talking about! Of course I went home to the Bluemels! How else would Edward give me the cheque!" 2



## Chapter 80 The Legend of Minnow Nursery School Is Going to Change

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet spaced out at Rue's claim before they started to grin.

While Mrs. Bennet tugged at Rue's arm, Mr. Bennet became a busybody.

"So Rue, did you and Edward do it yesterday?"

Having heard Mrs. Bennet's question, Rue blushed with redness coloring her face quickly.

"Mm, why would I pinch these out myself?" 1

Mrs. Bennet held Rue's hands proudly. "That's great! Rue, I knew you can do it! You are indeed the daughter that we raised! There's probably nothing you can't do!"

Mr. Bennet coughed a little. In the heat of the moment, he had threatened to disown Rue, so he felt a little awkward now.

"Rue, whatever I said yesterday, don't take it personally. As you know, our company is in trouble, so I was a little emotional. If you must know, I didn't mean it."

Rue held Mr. Bennet's hand understandingly. "Dad, don't worry, I understand. I'm not holding you

against that."

Mrs. Bennet sighed in relief. "We won't have to be so humble around him anymore when we see him next. Previously, we had to because we were kind of at fault, but now that Rue has slept with him, he's officially our son-in-law even if he doesn't want it to be true!"

Mr. Bennet nodded. Fantasizing about Edward groveling in front of him did make him feel better.

Yet seeing Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's responses, Rue felt a little uneasy.

Everything she had said was a lie. If her parents became obnoxiously prideful in the future, the whole lie would immediately burst like a bubble.

2

Edward had never been too fond of her. Not only that, but he was also a little impatient with her.

If Mr. and Mrs. Bennet stirred up trouble at this time, she could visualize how things would turn out.

"Mom, dad, let's not publicize this. As you know, Edward doesn't like to be high-profile. If we soured his impression on the Bennets, I can't guarantee he will intervene in the future if we ran into any

problems again."

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet shared a look before they nodded at Rue.

"Don't worry. We know how to handle this."

After compiling the 50 million pounds sterling, Mr. Bennet transferred it all into Ziggy's account while he continually messaged him.

Mr. Bennet spent a long time waiting before he frowned hard. 'Could I have been scammed?' 2

'The AKK website is such a huge website with millions of daily clicks. Even if he only took three jobs a day, it'd still be a pretty good income.'

'No matter what, it doesn't make sense for him to scam us.'

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet would not have thought that the person they were waiting for would be completing sets after sets of test papers calmly.

Bored, Ziggy set the test papers aside one after another while checking the stock market on his phone.

Making half-hearted attempts at everything was an accurate description of his current state.

Even so, he was able to complete everything perfectly.

"Ms. Jane, which stock do you think will never drop?"

Jane's mouth twitched feebly. "Ziggy, aren't you supposed to do your exam? Is it a good idea to look at stock markets at your age?"

Ziggy slowly set down his pencil.

"It's fine, what's not good about it?"

Seeing the test paper stacked neatly on the side, Jane's eyeballs almost jumped out of their sockets.

She looked through the sets one after another with a look that expressed her helplessness.

"Ziggy, I only wanted you to do a few pages of them, why have you finished them all? This is your test for a whole month!"

Ziggy shrugged. "I didn't pay attention, so I finished it."

So, Jane looked at the answers on the paper and when she realized that her test answer sheet looked identical to Ziggy's answers, she sighed.

"Looks like these tests are too easy for you."

Ziggy answered without humility, "That's right."

Jane continued while looking into Ziggy's bored gaze, "You know, Ziggy, you're not the only child who's super-talented in this school."

Jane's words had managed to pique Ziggy's interest. With that, he set down his phone and squinted his lively eyes.

"Oh? Who else is there?" 2

Jane looked up and continued, "A year ago, he was enrolled in this school and was taken back. However, his account is still here. To hide his identity, his family always lets him attend exams with a half-mask."

"At the time, he was the legend of Minnow Nursery School, getting full marks for all the subjects. And so, he claimed the crown of the best student in this school's history!"

An immediate surge of challenges filled Ziggy's mind.

Even though he thought comparing grades with other students was pointless, it sounded interesting to him. 1

"Oh really? If he's no longer studying here, why is his account still here?" 1

Jane shook her head. "It's really a simple explanation. He's no longer physically studying here, but he will attend the exams. That is why the number one place has never shifted since his enrollment."

Ziggy interlocked his fingers and placed them under his chin. "Looks like the legend of Minnow Nursery School is going to change soon."

Noticing Ziggy's confidence, Jane got excited on his behalf. "Ziggy, aren't you interested in learning the other boy's name?"

Ziggy huffed uncaringly.

"What's the difference between knowing and not knowing a loser's name?"

He looked up confidently. "As long as I know he's falling off his altar, that would be enough."

Jane patted Ziggy's shoulder. "I look forward to your performance. The exam is tomorrow, and the results will be out in the afternoon. I hope I'll see your name at the top of the scoreboard."

Ziggy slid a book about the International Mathematical Olympiad out of the drawer and

started reading it with a focus that deterred anyone from wanting to disturb him.

"Don't worry, I will be."

Jane nodded satisfactorily and left the classroom to give Ziggy a calm, quiet space.