

### Never Say 463

Before the clock struck nine, Hannah was already at Cafe 92, the place Gwendolyn had arranged to meet her.

She sent her location over to Bryson, who texted back promptly, [I'm close by. Wrapping up a business talk at 9:30, then we can grab dinner. ]

A smile touched Hannah's lips as she read Bryson's message.

"Ah, Miss Moore, you're quite early, aren't you?"

Gwendolyn, gripping her purse, slid into the seat across from Hannah and told the waiter, "Two glasses of milk, please."

Catching the waiter's eye, Gwendolyn's gaze wavered for a moment.

Hannah noticed the bruise on Gwendolyn's face and narrowed her eyes.

"What happened to your face?"

Lightly touching her cheek, Gwendolyn offered a forced grin.

"Oh, it's nothing. I just ran into something, that's all."

It was obviously the result of someone striking her.

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Hannah was skeptical of Gwendolyn's evasion and pressed on, "Are you in some sort of bind? Financial troubles, maybe? Or have they caught up to you again?"

"Absolutely not! Really!"

Gwendolyn's reaction was intense, just as the waiter set down two cups of milk on their table.

"Miss Moore, let's have a drink and talk things over."

With shaky hands, Gwendolyn lifted her milk cup, took a small sip, and nodded towards Hannah.

"Have a taste, Miss Moore."

Hannah picked up her own cup, and as she raised it to her lips, she saw the nervous look on Gwendolyn's face.

A dark suspicion formed in her mind. Pretending to drink, she watched as Gwendolyn averted her eyes guiltily. Taking advantage of the moment, Hannah discreetly spat the milk into a napkin.

"Miss Moore, I know you're generous. The truth is, I invited you here because I need your assistance with something else."

"What is it?" Hannah's voice was detached.

Gwendolyn slowly touched her bruised face.

“In fact, someone did hit me. I had no option but to turn to you for aid again.”

Hannah let out a mocking laugh.