

PARTY **CRASHERS**



zohan subhash

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Well not purely, but you know...

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A *party crasher* is defined as a person who attends a party they aren't invited to. They usually tend to wreck the whole party.



THE FIRST FEW MOMENTS WERE SPENT IN SILENCE. THEN ZOEY SPOKE UP. “IF WE ARE GOING TO DO IT, THEN WE MIGHT AS WELL GET ON WITH IT.”

“YEAH...” TAKING EXTRA CARE TO STEP ONLY IN THE SHADOWS, THEY CROUCHED AND STARTED MOVING. CRAWLING WAS BETTER, BUT IT WOULD COST THEM PRECIOUS TIME. 200M, 100M, 50M, 25M. THEY WERE GOING TO MAKE IT!!

“**PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR, YOU’RE SURROUNDED.**” A MEGAPHONE BLARED. A BLINDING FLOODLIGHT FELL ON TO THE TWOSOME. A DEEP PANG OF REGRET FLOWED THROUGH THEIR MINDS. THE GAME WAS UP!



PROLOGUE

“Hey mom, is breakfast ready?” Desmond asked, as he walked into their kitchen. He was a tall boy, with olive green eyes.

“No, give me a few more minutes.” His mom replied while whisking the eggs. She had copper colored hair and she was a very genial person, always seen with a smile. There was something about her that made you feel welcome in her house.

“Hey Desmond, up so early?” His dad asked as he walked into the family kitchen. He usually had breakfast by himself and Desmond was surprised that he came to eat with them that day. Mr. Nicholas was a large man, whether it was muscles or fat, nobody knew. He had a height of around six feet and though he was generally pleasant, he could get really furious at times. Desmond was quite afraid of what would happen to him if he made his dad angry. Luckily, it hadn’t happened until then.

“Oh, hey dad! What’s up?” He asked, uncertainly. He and his father weren’t very close, and Desmond was always uncomfortable to be with him. Mr. Nicholas was always so busy at work that it never really occurred to him that he ought to spend time with his son.

“Be sure to be on your best behavior tonight, ok?”

“Why, what’s special tonight?” Desmond asked, almost dreading the answer.

“It’s his company’s 25th anniversary. He’s hosting a New Year’s Eve party.” His mom commented proudly.

“Oh, nice. Good job Dad!” Although he spoke in a pleasant tone, his face showed that this was clearly against his will. Though he was proud of his father, Desmond couldn’t help dreading the party up ahead. He would have to put up with his dad’s colleagues for the entire evening.

“Desmond. This is a very special evening for your father. I don’t want this to be like last time.” His mom’s ever-present smile had now vanished and she was frowning.

“What happened last time, mom?” Desmond asked innocently.

“You had a water gun fight with Zoey right in the banquet hall.” Mrs. Nicholas sighed deeply.

“Oh that! She started it mom.” Desmond suddenly realized that Zoey would be there that evening! His heart sank at the thought of her taunts and pranks.

“I don’t care! If you give us any trouble this time, I’m gonna take away your laptop for a week!”

“And I want you to be nice to your father’s colleagues.”

“I’d rather eat broccoli straight for a week,” he whispered to himself.

“What was that?”

“Nothing.”

He knew better than to argue with his dad, but Desmond was clearly unhappy. Here's to his New Year's Eve plans with his friends. That evening was going to be pure torture. He would have to laugh at the terrible jokes his dad's colleagues make, and be nice to that cheeky girl. He made a silent prayer to himself, hoping he would be able to survive the party...



CHAPTER 1



“Huh...Huh...” Try as he could, Desmond couldn’t will himself to breathe any quieter. He slightly shifted himself and moved a flipper out of its way to scratch his nose. It was itching like hell in there. It didn’t matter that his parents were billionaires or that they owned an immense mansion; the cupboard was musty and smelled horrible, just like all other cupboards. He was wishing he had gotten out of the cupboard when he had the chance, but the man’s voice brought him out of his senses.

“What is it? It better be good, for rushing me out like that.” His voice was very steely, almost like a robot’s. It sounded like something scratching against metal, and Desmond got the willies just listening to it. The man was standing with his back to the cupboard and Desmond could see that he was wearing a brown coat with green formal pants, but that wasn’t much use to him. Almost all the men attending the party were wearing the exact same clothes. It was like an unofficial dress code.

“We’ve got a problem.” The other man replied. Though the first man was blocking his view, he could see that the other man was in his late-forties, with wispy gray hair. He was wearing a brown suit and he looked very tired, like he wasn’t getting enough sleep.

“What is it?” The first man replied, though his voice wasn’t as harsh as before. He sounded like he was dreading whatever was coming up.

“The kitchen has top-notch security. I don’t think we can get in”

“What do they think we’ll do? Poison the food?” The man grumbled.

“I- I think so?” The other man replied feebly.

“Look, here’s what you should do,” The man replied in an exasperated tone.

“Find out where they order their groceries from. Then hijack one of their grocery vans and hide inside.”

“It’s a stroke of genius!” He amended, almost as if he was proud of himself for having thought of that.

“Won’t that take time?”

“We’ll see. But don’t make Nick suspicious, no matter what happens. That clear?”

“Hey man, we’re cool.”

“I hope so.”

“Listen,” he continued, “I’ll tell you something. Five years ago, I was pulling out an intense job. The FBI were involved, but our team was cool. It was big loot, and we would’ve gotten it too, if Nick hadn’t tried to interfere. We were down to the last level when the feds started pouring in. But Nick tried to stop me, by activating an extra layer of defense. And I’m here to take revenge. To buy justice for what he did that

day. So you better do everything as we planned while Nick is still enjoying his party, or you guys in big trouble boi. You got me?”

“Yeah.” The other man muttered, almost in a forced manner.



Water splashed from the pool and nearly drowned Mrs. Nicholas as she quickly leapt aside to prevent her drink from getting spoiled.

“Oh, drat those kids. Now my dress is all ruined!” Mrs. Miller remarked.

“You’re gonna have a hard time cleaning this place up, I bet.” Somebody remarked, chuckling slightly.

Everybody laughed at that comment.

“Not really though.” Mrs. Nicholas replied. “The cleaners do a pretty good job if you pay them well.” She winked at the others.

“Hey Oliver! Don’t eat without changing your clothes!” Mrs. Ross suddenly yelled out. Then she turned to the other women.

“How do you girls manage your kids? Mine drives me crazy all the time.”

“Haha. Desmond won’t even go swimming if I don’t give him some reward.”

“What? Really?”

“Yeah. He’s always sitting at home with his XBox.”

“I remember a time when Desmond used to look forward to these little parties.” Somebody observed.

“Yeah, now he’s just on his phone the entire time.” Mrs. Nicholas agreed.

“I know right? Zoey’s not any better. I literally had to drag her here tonight!” Mrs. Miller replied. She turned around to look at the scene. The huge pool in the middle was filled with kids playing water polo. There was a buffet table kept on one side of the pool while there was a dance floor on the other, complete with DJ lights and stereo speakers. There were tiny café tables placed around the pool, but most of them were empty. Around the table furthest from the pool sat Zoey, Desmond and Logan. Logan was attacking the roast turkey as if trying to avenge it for some past crime. The mashed potatoes flew everywhere as he attacked the plate greedily. Next came the salads. He gobbled up the whole bowl without a grain of thought for others. He didn’t care what he was eating as long as there was plenty to go around. From the other side of the pool, Mrs. Nicholas was watching him out of the corner of her eye, slightly amused. She was glad that he was enjoying himself, but couldn’t refrain from the thought that he’d end up sick. Weird as it sounds, Logan’s physical form did not match the amount of food he ate. People often

say that being obsessed with food makes you fat. Obviously, that can't be true or else Logan will be as fat as an elephant. He was actually rather tall and fit for his age, with a round cheery face mostly filled with light freckles. He exercised often and took good care of his body. His body was as important to him as food was. Meanwhile, Desmond and Zoey were completely ignoring him, pretending as if he wasn't going to choke himself any second now. Desmond was sitting on the other side of the table bored, browsing on his phone. Zoey was just staring at the distance, annoyed for some reason. She was a tall, slim girl with long wavy black hair.

“Will you ever stop eating?” She suddenly snapped at Logan.

“Yust cus u cunt ennoy is patty usnt aen I cunt, alrit!” Logan swallowed.

“Sorry! Just because you can't enjoy this party doesn't mean I can't, alright!”

“My god Logan! You think I don't want to enjoy the party? Desmond's ruining the whole thing for me!” She flared up.

She looked around the table, but Desmond didn't seem to notice or care.

“See? He's completely ignoring me!”

“Isn't that what you want?” Logan asked her in confusion.

“Yeah, but... My mom wants me to be friends with him. Imagine that.”

“I’m friends with him,” he said indignantly.

He wondered how Zoey could be really smart at most things and yet be so pig-headed when it came to Desmond.

“Hey guys!! Come on, join us!” Benjamin shouted from the pool. Zoey scoffed at him. Sensing their mood, he continued with the game.

“You know what,” Zoey said to Logan, “I know how we can have some fun.”

Logan pretended like he didn’t hear her. He didn’t want to get involved in any of her crazy schemes.

“Hey Desmond,” He said. “Couldn’t you have at least ordered some fries to go with this pizza? It’s so boring to eat it by itself.”

Desmond looked up. “I know right?” He said, somewhat distracted.

Mrs. Miller turned to check on Zoey when she noticed something brewing between the kids. Zoey suddenly stood up to face Desmond with a fork and knife, though it was clear she wasn’t going to eat anything with it. The next thing she knew Desmond and Zoey were involved in a full-fledged fight. “Quick Lindsey. Let’s stop them before it gets out of hand.” As the two mothers rushed to intervene, the other guests just stood there watching, mildly amused. This was a

regular occurrence whenever there was a party and Zoey was invited.

“Kids, kids.” Mrs. Nicholas interrupted.

“This is a party, remember? Please don’t fight.”

“I can’t enjoy it with this idiot sitting here.” Zoey remarked.

“She threw my iPhone into the pool. Talk about idiots.” Desmond smirked.

“And he said that my dog is dumb.”

“She is dumb! She’s a dog!!” Desmond retorted.

“Come on now. Don’t start again.” Mrs. Miller intervened.

“Desmond, why don’t you take Zoey to your game-room. You guys can do something there if you’re feeling bored.”

He looked at Zoey with an annoyed expression. He couldn’t stand the thought of letting Zoey into his game-room. But he didn’t want to seem silly in front of the other guests, so he didn’t argue. “Come, let’s go.”

“You planned the entire thing, didn’t you?” Desmond asked, once they were out of earshot.

Showing him a wide grin, Zoey gestured for him to follow her into the huge game-room. Having nothing better to do, Logan followed them, still eating his chicken wings.

The game-room was huge and there were couches placed all around one wall. There was a 4k-widescreen TV on the

opposite wall, adjacent to the doorway. The walls on the other side were completely covered with full length glass windows that overlooked the green hills and the beach beyond. From their position on top of a hill, the kids could see as far as the border of their town, which was situated on the coastline. All the buildings looked like tiny specs in the vast distance. In fact, the entire town looked like a smudge in the greenness that surrounded it. The overall view gave the room a very joyful feel on the whole. The La-Z-Boy recliners blended in with the carpeted wooden floor to give the whole room a posh look. Along with the various game tables, there were a few cupboards to store their board games. Today however, none of them were in the mood to play.

Desmond lived in a small town a few miles south of Miami. Desmond and his family had come to live here because his parents had wanted to get away from the usual hustle and bustle of the city and to live in the countryside, along with its wonderful scenery. His father had built the headquarters of SecureU in a desolate plot a short distance from their town for the same reason. Because of this, many of his colleagues often came by to visit him after work and after a few months, they even bought villas nearby. This was how Desmond became acquainted with the other kids. Of course, living in such a remote location meant that there weren't any facilities that were really good. This led to the fact that Mr. Nicholas had to provide his son with everything starting from a good education to his own bowling alley. Desmond didn't mind this at all, as long as he lived near his friends.

Zoey, Desmond, Logan propped down on the couch and stared blankly at the wall. Logan, of course, was eating a packet of crisps that he had discovered in the game-room.

Then Zoey spoke up.

“What do we do?”

“I don’t know. You brought us here.” Desmond replied indignantly.

“How about a prank battle?” She asked, as though it was the most natural thing in the world.

“No! Are you crazy?”

“Wait. Are you scared that I’ll trash you?”

“No. It’s not- Fine! We’ll play.”

“You take Logan. I’ll go solo.”

“Okay.”



Diane was in a horrible mood today. Most people would think that being a chef would mean that you can escape the stress associated with a normal job. Diane laughed at the thought. She had once had that viewpoint too. But she has matured since then. She has gained experience in the field of culinary. No. The art of cooking was not as simple as one imagines. At least, not when you’re doing it for a living. It was full of complications. Take her situation for example. Her day had not started so badly at first. In fact, she was in a pleasant mood as she walked into the kitchen to start the work for that evening.

“Evening Jack!”

“Evening.”

“Hey there. Why do you look like you swallowed a dead rat?”

“Didn’t you hear? Kellermen and Drysdale are both on leave.”

It took a moment for the fact to settle in. Her face turned pale.

“Both of them?”

Shelly winced.

“Yeah.” She muttered, as if it was the last thing she wanted to happen.

Two people on leave may not sound so bad, but consider that along with the fact that there were only a total of eight working for the entire party. These were not ordinary chefs. No way. Mr. Nicholas’s curated set of culinary artists certainly knew how to get the job done. Which was why, when an ordinary person in their situation would have just marched up to their boss with a letter of resignation, Diane, Jack and the others set out to attempt the arduous task of cooking for 50, Logan’s appetite excluded. Which brings us back to Diane’s odd predicament.

“Hey Dharmik! Did the groceries van come in yet? I badly need some onions.” She asked, although it was clear from her tone that she was not in a good mood.

“Yeah. I put them in the pantry.”

Diane proceeded in the general direction of the pantry. Though it was still called a pantry, there was one factor that put this on a whole new level from ordinary pantries. It's size. This was more like a mini supermarket than a pantry. But nevertheless, it was easy to find an item due to the fact that these chefs had spent weeks organizing everything neatly. The pantry was fitted with dim blue lights and super high-tech shelves. Whenever an item was picked up and put back, they would track the amount used, and add that item to the shopping cart. There wasn't a supermarket in their town, so an order was automatically placed to a Walmart store in Miami whenever the shopping cart grew full. Diane opened the pantry door and the sensors turned the light on. She walked up seven aisles and picked up a bag of onions. She walked back and was about to close the door when something caught her eye. A bag of chips on the first shelf that wasn't supposed to be there. She walked up slowly and picked it up. It felt heavier than it should have been. Something was amiss. Though she knew better than to open random packets of chips, she was curious. So carefully, she ripped the bag open. It exploded, spraying her with a pound of rainbow glitter.



Desmond and Logan were running along a corridor, panting.

“Do we have to do this? I mean, I could be enjoying a hot, sweet baklava right ‘bout now.”

Desmond stopped running and turned to face him.

“Listen, think about it this way. We defeat Zoey and I take you out for dinner at Black Angus.”

Logan’s face lit up.

“Dude... But that’s way uptown. And their prices... Oh my, god.” He shook his head.

“Exactly.”

In his eagerness to win the game, Logan could have knocked Desmond down if he hadn’t leapt aside in time. After running for 200m, he stopped and turned around.

“Where are we going?”

“I told you. To get my paintball guns.”

“And then?”

“We hide near the pool until Zoey shows up. She’s bound to, at some point.”

“Great! Let’s go.”

Having found a destination to run to, Logan quickly started sprinting towards Desmond’s room.



Diane gritted her teeth in fury. This was obviously a prank. And not a very funny one too. She liked jokes, just not when they involved wrecking her kitchen. She brushed off the glitter from her hair and tried her best to wipe her face clean,

but that just made things worse. The glitter got into her eyes and rubbing them was to no avail. When her eyes finally started to clear, she caught a blurry image of the pantry shelf, and climbing out of it was a girl. She was barely 13, with sleek black hair. She wore ripped jeans and a loose navy blue t-shirt, which fluttered lightly. She displayed an expression halfway between empathy and embarrassment. Diane wanted to yell at her, to tell her off for messing in her kitchen. But what came out of her mouth was something entirely different.

“How did you get in here?”

Zoey hesitated, then thought better of it.

“I sneaked in through the doors.”

“Nobody saw you?” Diane asked quizzically.

“I- I wore this.” She held up something in white. It took a moment for Diane to understand what it was. A chef’s uniform. Though she was mad at this girl, she couldn’t help admiring her. And besides, she had been like this in her childhood too. Thinking of everything as a joke and a prank, carefree of all troubles.

“Go. Don’t let me catch you in here again.” She added, afraid she was being too easy on the kid.

Zoey rushed past Diane before she could change her mind, and ran into the kitchen. She dodged a chef carrying a pan of fried calamari and almost upset another chef who was tossing noodles. She crawled under a counter and was gone out of the kitchen before Diane could even realize what she

had done. Laughing at her experience she brushed her hair once more and stepped into the kitchen ready to continue with the BBQ Chicken Pizza like nothing had happened.



“What is it?” Logan asked, in a loud whisper.

His voice startled Desmond, who was peeking out of the keyhole in a cupboard near the pool. It was otherwise completely silent in there, save for Logan’s chewing. There was barely enough space for both of them to fit in along with the kick-boards, surf-boards, flippers, face masks, and other swimming gear. Desmond turned to face Logan, or at least, as much as he could do in the confined space of the cupboard.

“What did I tell you about yelling in here?” He hissed.

“Not to do it?” Logan guessed.

“I’m sorry. Anyway, I loaded the gun.”

“Great!”

“So now what?”

“Just sit back and relax. I’ve added a microprocessor to the gun so that it’ll target Zoey’s face model and automatically shoot and reload.”

“All I heard was ‘I’ve added blah blah blah to the gun- it can whoop Zoey’s ass.’”

“Hahaha!” Desmond laughed out loud. Then suddenly, he stopped. He’d seen Zoey walking into the pool area. She went and sat down at a table opposite the buffet table. It was

so well hidden that the children could only guess she was sitting there.

“Oh shit!”

“What?” Logan asked, in worry.

“There’s no way we can get a clean shot now.”

“No way?” Logan asked in aghast.

“Well, we can get her from behind the dance floor, but there’s no cover there. My mom will kill me if she sees me holding a gun during the party.”

“Unless-” Logan muttered.

“What?”

“We can get a clear range from under the buffet table right?”

“I guess, but-”

“I know the chefs. They’ll let me crawl in for a few minutes.”

“Dude, wait-”

“What?”

“Be careful.”

Logan grinned.

“I’m always careful.”



Zoey was starting to grow worried. Her original idea had backfired in the kitchen, but that doesn't mean that she has to give up, does it? She had predicted that Desmond would try to scout for her at the poolside, so she was ready with her defenses. But where was he? It was almost half an hour and there was no sight of Desmond or Logan, anywhere. Then suddenly, she heard a blast out of nowhere. She didn't understand what it meant until it was too late. A balloon came flying towards her, and hit her right in the chest. It exploded, spraying her with paint. If you looked close enough, beneath the blue and red of her face, you could see a furious smile. And that could mean only one thing. Revenge



Desmond laughed so hard that partygoers paused to stare at the cupboard. He laughed for five minutes straight, enjoying every last bit of humor he had inside him. Since the moment they had met, Zoey had pranked him left and right. He had tried to prank her back, but that failed every single time. Not anymore. This was his first successful prank at Zoey and he was going to enjoy this moment as best as he could. After what seemed an eternity, he stopped laughing. Wiping his tears, he proceeded to climb out of the pile of surf-boards into which he had fallen. He put his hand on the door and was about to pull it open when he stopped. Two men were standing right in front of the cupboard. It wouldn't do for him to get out while they were watching. He would have to wait until they walked away. He wasn't paying attention to them, but a snippet of their conversation caught his attention.

“-have to-before the feds-notice they’re gone-”

The FBI? Why were two businessmen attending a party talking about the FBI? He knew that it was not polite to eavesdrop on a private conversation, but curiosity got the better of him and he proceeded to move as near to the door as he could. His heart was hammering so loud that he was afraid they'd hear it, but he reminded himself that that was impossible. Trying to calm himself down, he put his ear to the keyhole and started listening.



Desmond's ears pricked up. He knew that they were talking about something illegal, but never had he imagined something as wild as his dad being involved. He had just assumed that Nick was short for Nicholas, but it didn't occur to him that his dad's name was Nicholas! But so far, his dad seemed to be the good guy. But why hadn't his dad told them about this then? His mind was in turmoil. He tried to sort things out as best as he could, but it was still really difficult.

The cupboard door suddenly swung open and Logan put his head inside.

“What's taking you so long?”

“Sshh! I've got a lot to tell you.”

“What?” Logan asked quizzically. “Let's get outta here first.”

Desmond stood up and stretched his legs. He closed the cupboard door and started walking towards the dance floor, where his parents stood.

“We need to find Zoey.” Logan looked at him with a quizzical expression.

“Zoey??”

“Yeah, Zoey.”

“Well, that won’t be hard.” He replied. As if on cue, a water balloon came flying towards them and hit Desmond on the back of his head. Being unprepared, he stumbled to catch his balance. With a final leap, he tumbled straight into the swimming pool, head first.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



A high school student trying to get somewhere...