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The banquet officially started at 7.30 pm. Under the spotlight, a man with a silver mask walked up the stage. When he stood under the illumination, his silver mask reflected a cold light. The people in the hall subconsciously stopped talking, and the banquet hall fell into silence. "I will be announcing the future collaborators of Elitos."

Earley stood on the stage, and his deep voice emanated a profound aura.

"That's Earley Wynters, the CEO of Elitos in Cairnstan," Trent lowered his voice and said to Adina. "He's the executive who suddenly joined Elitos about three years ago. None of his background information can be found. He's very mysterious."

Eilam softly added, "All the executives of Elitos are Europeans, but Earley is from Cairnstan. Even though his background information is concealed, he puts on a mask no matter what occasion he attends. It's extremely creepy." Adina lowered her head and took a sip of the champagne.

Alden had looked into Earley's background for her before. There was no photo of this man online, and even his name was fake.

This man was an enigma and also very dangerous. "Congratulations, Xavier Corporation, for becoming the biggest chip provider for Elitos!" Right after Earley said that, a spotlight shone on Richard. Earley resumed. "Xavier Corporation has been based in technology over these years, and they're involved in the comprehensive development of smart products. The smart chip that the company launched is ahead of its time. I believe our companies will have a happy collaboration and achieve glory together

"Congratulations, Ms. Adina Daugherty, the general manager of LaStar Technology Corporation for becoming the chief designer for chip development in Elitos!" Earley suddenly raised his voice, and a spotlight shone on Adina's head. She smiled faintly and raised her champagne to the man standing on the stage. "Ms. Daugherty is an outstanding chip designer who graduated from Harfard University. She was called a chip designing genius by the professors at Harfard University."

When Earley's words echoed in the banquet hall, everyone in attendance appeared completely taken aback. Many people started discussing it.

"Wasn't the chief chip designer supposed to be Mdm. Jones from Jones Corporation? Why is it the most beautiful woman in Sea City? Since she's so pretty, you can tell that she doesn't have much skill. She just lives off the entertainment news every day. Did Ms. Daugherty get this opportunity to collaborate after she seduced Mr. Wynters?"

"Don't start rumors. Adina created the smart product launched by Xavier Corporation some time ago. She's truly capable."

"But no matter how capable she is, she can't be better than Mdm. Jones, can she? Mdm. Jones was a professor at Harfard University. Wouldn't she be better than a student like Adina?"

"I even heard that Ms. Daugherty prepared her proposal in just one day, while Mdm. Jones had prepared hers for three months."

“What? A proposal prepared in one day defeated Mdm. Jones? That’s impossible, right?” “The Operations Department of Elitos knows about this. If you don’t believe me, you can ask them.”

When Adina heard their grating comments, she did not feel embarrassed or feel anything negative.

She was someone outstanding in her field, and those voices could not affect her at all. She wore a faint smile as she calmly soaked in the attention from the crowd. At that moment, there was a disturbance at the banquet hall’s entrance. Everyone subconsciously turned around, and they saw a middle-aged lady walking inside while being surrounded by about eight people. The lady was very tall, and she had perfect skin. She appeared to be in her early thirties, while her hair had been tied into a high bun often worn by noblewomen.

She was wearing a trench coat, and the hem of her coat was not wrinkled in the slightest. There was a small frown on her face, and her every move gave off the strong aura of a businesswoman. “It’s Mdm. Jones!”

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“Mdm. Jones is still so young. She looks exactly the same as the time when she first became the CEO of Jones Corporation ten years ago. Her every move makes me envious.”

“Women like us will never be able to learn Mdm. Jones’ harsh methods. But why is she here right now?”

“Yeah, the Jones family didn’t manage to collaborate with Elitos, right?”

“Could it be…”

Everyone kept switching gazes between Zhenny and Adina.

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The man on the stage, Earley, was the host who had organized the banquet. He walked down the stage and calmly said, “Mdm. Jones, it’s an honor for Elitos Corporation to have you take some time out of your day to attend this banquet. Someone, please get some wine for Mdm. Jones.”

Zhenny’s gaze was unfriendly, and she responded indifferently. “Don’t beat around the bush. I came today because I wanted to ask you something, Mr. WynTERS. Did Elitos really decide to hire Ms. Daugherty as the chief chip designer for the project?” Earley’s voice was cold. “Elitos has made the announcement, so it’s official.”

“Good! Great!”

Zhenny did not get angry. Instead, she laughed and showed a contemptuous expression. Everyone in the hall seemed lost. They did not know what her aim was. “Ms. Daugherty, she’s come here to deal with you,” Trent moved close to Adina’s ear and softly said. It looked like he was watching a show. Adina took a sip of champagne without a care. “I don’t think I have anything to do with this.”

She relied on her own abilities to submit the bid and win it.

Mdm. Jones came to look for trouble in a public place after everything had been finalized. That would only lower her corporation’s image.

Adina took a step backward toward the crowd. She was not interested in Mdm. Jones' visit.

But Zhenny cast a glance at Adina's face in a seemingly casual fashion.

She had checked Adina's information out yesterday. Adina looked ravishing in the pictures, but she was, unexpectedly, more stunning in person.

If Adina were ugly, Zhenny could have still forced herself to believe that Adina had completed the proposal. However, Adina was so pretty. She looked like a beautiful but lousy woman, so Zhenny could not help but feel suspicious...

Zhenny sneered and said, "Mr. Wynters, you have no idea that my proposal went missing three days ago, right?"

Earley frowned. "So?"

"I've been revising the proposal for three months. Right after I finalized and saved the document, it went missing." Zhenny firmly and slowly said, "At the same time, Ms. Daugherty became Elitos Corporation's chief chip designer."

As soon as she said that, the hall burst into a ruckus.

"Oh, gosh! No wonder Adina was able to submit her proposal in one day."

"So this is what happened. She actually stole Mdm. Jones' three months of hard work."

"A person like that is akin to a parasite in the industry. How could Elitos Corporation collaborate with such a person?"

"Who knew there would be such an ugly heart hidden under that gorgeous face? We need to make this incident known so that everyone in Sea City can see who the most beautiful woman is!"

"Poor Mdm. Jones. She worked hard on the proposal for three months, and it was stolen!" "It isn't too late to expose Adina's pretentious side now, is it?"

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Everyone looked at Adina.

She was breathtaking, and the pink gown made her even more dazzling among the crowd.

She held her champagne glass and raised her eyebrows nonchalantly. "Mdm. Jones, what does losing your proposal have anything to do with me?" "Ms. Daugherty, are you trying to shirk responsibility?" Zhenny curled her lips into a sneer. "Why don't you share with us how you completed this high-difficulty chip design proposal in one day?" "High difficulty?" Adina frowned. "What do you mean? Is the chip design proposal very difficult for you?"

Zhenny's complexion instantly turned pale.

She had lived for forty years, but nobody had ever dared to speak to her like that.

This b*tch did not just steal her proposal, but she even had the audacity to insult her in public. Did this b*tch think she was easy to deal with?

She scoffed and said, "Ms. Daugherty, you just copied and pasted your proposal, so it's naturally not difficult for you."

She just made an assumption in one sentence.

Adina chuckled. "Mdm. Jones, you accuse me of plagiarism without having any evidence. I can sue you for defamation."

Zhenny's expression turned cold. "Any inexperienced person can see what happened. Why? Do you still want to settle this in court?"

The people in the banquet hall cast accusatory looks at Adina. "Ms. Daugherty, this is your fault. If you file a lawsuit, what advantage do you think you'll have?"

"Do you truly believe that whatever you stole will last long? You better apologize to Mdm. Jones now. If your apology is sincere, she won't look into this any further."

"How can she not look into the matter? A person like that is an industry black sheep. We should let the police educate her!"

Richard and Ethan walked out of the crowd and shielded Adina.

"Mdm. Jones, you came over with great fanfare just to convict my niece?" Richard said with a steely expression.

"You don't have any witnesses and evidence. Mdm. Jones, aren't you making a rash statement?" Ethan said coldly. "My cousin is an intelligent chip designer. Plagiarism is impossible, and she despises copying other people's work." Trent chuckled as well. "Mdm. Jones, are you sure you're not just dragging someone down with you because you missed the opportunity to collaborate with Elitos Corporation?"

Zhenny's eyes were hostile and angry. "It's very easy to obtain proof, isn't it? Mr. Wynters, as long as you make both our proposals public, everyone will learn the truth from a glance."

Earley looked at Adina indifferently before he pursed his lips and said, "A proposal is a designer's intellectual property. Before I obtain the designer's permission, it won't be convenient to make it public."

Zhenny became even more furious. "So, you're defending a person who has plagiarized?"

Adina looked at the several people who defended her, and her heart was filled with warmth.

She was used to being alone over the years and used to solving anything by herself. However, many people stood up for her today.

She smiled at Richard and Ethan before she pushed Trent aside. She walked over and calmly said, "Mr. Wynters, I agree to make my proposal public."

Earley glanced at her.

Adina looked him in the eyes. His gaze was extremely dark and profound, as though he had been asleep in the dark for many years. When she saw his gaze, many dark scenes seemed to play in her mind, and she felt as if her soul was being dragged into the abyss. She immediately looked away and lowered her head to take a sip of champagne. Earley waved, and his assistant immediately walked over from the back. After he uttered a few sentences, his assistant turned around and went to prepare.

Those in the banquet hall had lost interest in the banquet. Everyone was waiting for the two proposals to be made public. At that time, they would be able to punish the most beautiful woman in Sea City openly. That sounded like an exciting prospect.

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Zhenny glanced at Adina coldly. "Ms. Daugherty, you don't think that you can prove you didn't plagiarize just because two proposals look different, do you?"

Adina shrugged. "Since you've found me guilty of plagiarism, whatever I say means nothing." Zhenny scoffed. Just as she was about to look away, she noticed Adina's carefree look and found it quite familiar.

It was as if she had met someone who looked just as carefree and despised everything.

Zhenny was not a big fan of that expression. She curled her lips coldly and turned away with disdain. There was a large electronic screen behind the stage in the ballroom. After the staff connected the power supply, they placed the two design proposals on the table.

Then, they clicked on Jones Corporation and LaStar Technology Corporation's bid proposals at the same time. The documents were displayed side by side on the screen.

Everyone in the banquet hall raised their heads and looked over. However, these were professional chip design plans. Those not in the industry could not understand a single word. Nevertheless, many programmers were in attendance. They read the proposals while they discussed in a low voice.

"Mdm. Jones' proposal is detailed and complete. It's the most standard chip design draft. Meanwhile, Ms. Daugherty's design looks a little rough. There are no details. I don't know why Elitos would give up on Mdm. Jones and choose Ms. Daugherty."

"Besides, Mdm. Jones implemented a new formula for building modules. If the integrated chips are made in this way, it will save a lot of manpower and resources in future management and operations."

"I think no matter how you look at it, Mdm. Jones' proposal is perfect!"

Listening to the surrounding discussions, Zhenny slowly curled her lips, seemingly confident about her victory.

She looked at Adina and steadily asked, "What else do you have to say?"

Adina put down her champagne glass and smiled in a blase manner. "You claimed that I plagiarized you. Shouldn't you be the one to list out the parts that I copied?"

Zhenny sneered.

This woman was stubborn. Would she be willing to admit it only after solid evidence was found?

Zhenny raised her head and observed the big screen.

It had taken her a month to build the first module. There were a total of fifteen pages that contained detailed explanations of how to build a perfect smart system.

The longer she looked at her design, the better she found it.

She looked to the side at Adina's design. There were only two pages for the first module, and she had just written down a few formulas. Was Adina trying to fool everyone?

But...

Zhenny had never seen those formulas.

No textbook, no market, and no research topic had ever come up with such bizarre formulas.

Following what Adina said, everyone in the hall compared the two proposals as well. The programmers' expressions slowly turned serious. "Adina's design draft is very short and precise, but it's completely different from Mdm. Jones' design. Even the punctuations aren't the same."

"Besides, I suddenly find Ms. Daugherty's proposal to be remarkable. I've never seen these formulas, but if they're accurate, modeling chips in this way will maximize the smart properties of a product..."

"Mdm. Jones' design is too conservative like a standard textbook, but Ms. Daugherty's design is more pragmatic. No wonder Elitos chose to collaborate with Ms. Daugherty."

"I've never really seen Ms. Daugherty's formulas. I hope I have the opportunity to learn from her."

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Zhenny's ears suddenly buzzed.

When she looked at Adina's design proposal, her mind instantly went blank. She had been in the industry for twenty years. The longer she read Adina's proposal, the more impressed she felt.

Right then, she finally understood why Earley would rather risk offending Jones Corporation by choosing a small and unknown new company. Adina raised her gorgeous face indifferently. "Mdm. Jones, please explain which part I plagiarized."

Zhenny's expression darkened to the maximum level.

Those who defended Zhenny and criticized Adina were instantly speechless. Zhenny clenched her fists before she took a deep breath and said, "Today's incident has been a misunderstanding."

"Misunderstanding?" Trent scoffed. "Mdm. Jones, even if it's a misunderstanding, shouldn't you still apologize to Ms. Daugherty?" Zhenny appeared sullen, She had never lowered her head and apologized to anyone in her life before. She really could not lower her status and apologize to a young lady who was just in her early twenties. At this time, her secretary moved forward from the back and respectfully said, "Jones Corporation was negligent, and we made unfounded accusations against Ms. Daugherty without

discovering what truly happened. This is our fault. I apologize to you on behalf of Jones Corporation and Mdm. Jones, Ms. Daugherty.” Adina twirled her champagne glass. “Isn’t Mdm. Jones here? Why do you have to apologize on behalf of her?”

Right after she said that, everyone in the hall gasped.

The Jones family was considered one of the top families in Sea City. When Zhenny was sixteen, Harford University had accepted her based on special circumstances, and she graduated from Harford University with a PhD at twenty-two. Then, she taught at Harford for about six years before she returned to join Jones Corporation and work as an executive

In just three years, she defeated the original heir of the Jones family and became the person in charge of Jones Corporation in this generation.

This woman had become the matriarch of her family when she was 30. She worked like a man, and she was harsh like a man. However, due to her beautiful face, people would often forget that she was no weaker than a man.

The biggest corporation in Sea City was Winters Corporation, and Duke was the man whom everyone admired.

Meanwhile, Zhenny was the woman whom everyone admired in Sea City.

But Adina was actually forcing Zhenny to apologize to her now.

The people in the hall did not know why Adina had the courage to stand up to Zhenny. At the same time, they were very curious about what choice Zhenny would make.

The man with the silver mask turned over a little and stared at Adina’s face.

His dark and cold gaze was filled with some curiosity as he smiled with interest.

“Ms. Daugherty,” Zhenny said coldly, “you are still a huge suspect until the matter is investigated.” Adina nearly laughed out of anger. “So, even if you can’t find any similarities, you still think I stole your design?”

“What else could it be?” Zhenny asked in return. “If I lose my design draft, you’ll benefit easily. It’s only reasonable for me to suspect you of having something to do with this.”

Adina chuckled.

She took another step forward, and her gaze turned slightly menacing. “Mdm. Jones, you have a long-standing reputation in the industry. As a junior, I didn’t want to make things too embarrassing for you at first. But since you insist on slandering me, I can only return the favor.”