

Pregnant 751

Chapter 751: Monica and Michael's Conflict

Quinn Sanders was the very definition of an independent, new-age woman.

"By the way, why did you look for me?" Quinn Sanders asked.

She knew that Jeanne would not visit unless there was something.

"I heard that Joshua Lawrence often comes to harass you." Jeanne didn't beat around the bush.

"Not exactly harassment." Quinn smiled.

When she smiled, she looked dignified. Quinn was used to putting on her professional smile.

She replied, "He just occasionally asks about my work."

"He's not a good man," Jeanne said bluntly.

Quinn looked at Jeanne.

"Of course, he's not quite capable so he won't be a threat to you. But he's in cahoots with Eden Swan and that man is cunning and will do anything to achieve his goals. Be careful," Jeanne reminded her.

Quinn's eyes narrowed as she examined Jeanne.

Jeanne said no more.

She stood up. "I just don't want anything to happen to you while he's in Lawrence Enterprise, Director Sanders. I can't bear the responsibility."

With that, Jeanne turned to leave.

"Jeanne," Quinn said, suddenly addressing her by her first name.

Jeanne paused slightly.

"You know who you are, right?" Quinn said.

Jeanne pursed her lips.

"That means we're similar in status. So why are you being so respectful to me?"

Jeanne smiled. "We're quite different in status."

"Like I said, I know your true identity, including the fact that you're my father's..."

"That's not important," Jeanne interrupted Quinn. "To me, the Sanders and I are from two different worlds."

Quinn looked at Jeanne as if she was sizing her up.

Jeanne said, "I'll get off work first. You should head home soon."

Then she left.

Quinn watched Jeanne walk away.

This woman sure was unpredictable.

When her father asked her to come to work at Lawrence Enterprise, he told her of Jeanne's true identity and her relationship to the Sanders. He asked Quinn to help her completely takeover control for Lawrence Enterprise. Quinn had thought that her father wanted to use the opportunity to bury the hatchet with Jeanne. After all, Jeanne had been abroad for so many years so he must have felt guilty and he wanted to make it up to her.

But Jeanne didn't seem as easy to approach as they'd thought, nor was she one they could bribe.

Quinn put down her work, picked up the phone, and dialed a number.

"Dad," Quinn said affectionately.

"Yeah."

"Jeanne's out of touch with our family."

"I know," Warren Sanders agreed.

"Lawrence Enterprise is basically in Jeanne's hands now. Although the biggest shareholder is still Joshua Lawrence, it shouldn't be long before Jeanne will take it all."

"Quinn," Warren called to her.

"Yes?" Quinn replied respectfully.

"I didn't send you to Lawrence Enterprise just to help Jeanne. I did it so you could reap the benefits." Warren enunciated each word clearly.

"Please enlighten me, dad." Quinn didn't understand and she didn't want to speculate.

"You're a smart woman. You know that much of Harken's economy is now in the hands of the Swans, and that Sanders' influence is almost gone. In the long run, if the Swans threaten us, we'll have no choice but to submit to their influence. So now, we need to turn the economies we own into state-owned economies."

"You mean..." Quinn sounded surprised.

"Jeanne's with Edward Swan now, and I am not certain that I can control her completely. So once Jeanne poses a threat to us Sanders, you have to replace her. The reason why I let you enter the company when Lawrence Enterprise is basically in Jeanne's hands is because I don't want to waste too much of your time. Now, all you have to do is familiarize yourself with the company management. When the time is right, the company will be yours."

"Alright, dad. I understand."

"As someone of the Sanders family, we are destined to be different from ordinary people. You are my most trusted daughter. Don't disappoint me."

“Yes, dad.” Quinn replied respectfully.

After hanging up, Quinn sat on the sofa with a thoughtful look on her face.

So... Jeanne was merely a pawn of the Sanders.

At first, she thought that her father was sincere about Jeanne.

Now that she’s aware of the actual reason, she won’t need to be too polite with Jeanne.

...

Jeanne drove home at a steady speed. Many things weighed on her mind.

Chapter 752: Monica and Michael’s Conflict

Jeanna knew very well that the Sanders held no true feelings for her.

She had a guess as to the true reason Quinn Sanders joined Lawrence Enterprise. Kingsley Thorn had also analyzed the move previously. The reason why Jeanne reminded Quinn not to be conned by Joshua was because she did not want Quinn to cooperate with Joshua Lawrence or Eden Swan. If they colluded, it would make it even more troublesome to deal with them.

Of course, another reason was that she wanted to mislead the Sanders into thinking that though she rejected them, she was still loyal to the Sanders family.

A call suddenly rang in the car.

Jeanne glanced at it and answered. “Yes, Monica?”

“Jeannie, where are you?” Monica would usually only call her that when she needed help or if she was drunk.

When Jeanne heard her voice, she knew that Monica was drunk.

“I’m driving. Are you drinking?”

“Drink some wine...” Monica burped. “It’s boring to drink alone. Can you come and accompany me?”

“Where are you?”

“In... Hic... Charm.”

“Alright. Wait for me.”

Jeanne hung up and headed straight to the destination.

Since her break up, Monica has been quite depressed. From time to time, she would get drunk. After getting drunk, Jeanne would send her back every time. The next day, when the hangovers were unbearable, Monica would swear that she would never drink again. Yet in less than two days, she would be drunk again.

The cycle repeated itself.

Jeanne parked the car quickly when she arrived.

When she walked into the nightclub, Monica was already lying motionless on the bar counter.

"Monica," Jeanne called out to her.

Monica opened her eyes in a daze. "Jeannie, you're here. Joining me for a drink?"

"No, it's time to go home. I'll send you back."

"I'm not going back... Ugh..."

Monica was already being dragged away by Jeanne. She was quite strong for her stature.

Monica tried to resist, but it was to no avail.

Jeanne shoved Monica into the limo and drove her back.

Monica sat in the front passenger seat and suddenly became very quiet. She looked pitiful, as if she had been abandoned.

"Don't drink so much in the future," Jeanne reminded her.

Monica said nothing.

"Every time you get drunk, you suffer. Why do you do this to yourself?"

"I miss Finn," Monica said suddenly.

Jeanne pursed her lips.

"I miss him, Jeannie." Monica's tears fell.

Jeanne felt sorry for her. She said, "Do you need me to call him for you?"

Monica shook her head. "He doesn't like me anymore."

"Since you know that the break up was final, don't think about it anymore."

"But I can't help it." Monica's tears flowed even more.

"Monica..."

"It's nothing." Monica was trying very hard to control her emotions. She wiped her tears and stared out the car window. She said, "I'll live."

Jeanne didn't know how to comfort her.

"Time will heal everything. One day, I'll forget Finn. One day, I will..." Monica said as tears streamed down her face.

After all that's said, she still loved him very, very much.

That was why she felt so miserable after they separated for good.

Jeanne walked Monica home, helped her wash up and got her into bed before leaving.

When Jeanne returned home, it was already 10 pm. Though it didn't matter if it was ten o'clock, twelve o'clock, or two o'clock in the morning.

There would be people waiting for her at home.

He sat on the sofa in the living room and was watching a variety show while waiting for Jeanne to return home.

"You're back." Edward smiled.

He never asked why she was home late.

Nor has he interfered with her work.

As long as she doesn't speak of it, he wouldn't take the initiative to ask her anything.

She changed into slippers and walked directly to Edward Swan.

Edward held her in his arms naturally.

"Have you had dinner?" Edward asked.

"I have."

"Do you want supper?"

"No, I'm fine."

"Then go back to your room and sleep."

"Edward," Jeanne called to him suddenly.

"Yes?"

"Will you stop liking me one day?" Jeanne asked.

Edward laughed. "Why do you suddenly ask?"

"Monica got drunk again today."

Edward didn't respond.

"She misses Finn so much that she can only numb herself with alcohol," Jeanne said. "I didn't know that a relationship could be so fickle. That you can just say you are no longer in love, and break up, like Finn."

Chapter 753: Monica and Michael's Conflict

Edward didn't answer. He didn't want to shoot himself in the foot.

In truth... he thought that was just reality.

A relationship could bring one to heaven, but also make one fall into hell in an instant.

As Jeanne moved to get off Edward, he said, "We're officially married. From the moment we were pronounced husband and wife, the thought never once crossed my mind that we'd be separated."

Jeanne's chest rose and fell slightly.

She was trying her best to keep her emotions in control.

Edward's affection often overwhelmed her.

Jeanne only wanted to vent about Finn and Monica's relationship.

She didn't think she'd get a passionate confession.

Edward continued, "You're bound to me for the rest of your life."

A smile appeared on her face.

Who knew what thoughts were hidden behind that smile?

She gave him a kiss.

It was better that they kept the relationship purely physical.

...

The next day, Monica opened her eyes. She felt like her head was about to explode.

How could she feel so terrible? Just how much did she drink last night? Did Jeannie send her back again?

She drank until she blacked out, so naturally she did not remember that she cried her heart out last night and said she missed Finn.

She tussled her messy hair and got up.

Someone was knocking on the door.

Other than Michael and Jeannie, no one else knew about this place, not even her parents.

She opened the door.

Reese Witherspoon was standing outside her door. That surprised her.

What does Michael's mother want?

She tried to calm herself down and smiled politely. "What brings you here?"

"I've come to see you." Reese said with a regal bearing.

In the past month or so, Michael's career in politics was taking off. The Rosses' glory had gradually begun to recover. Reese was much less anxious and she looked much better.

"I've been fine." Monica smiled shakily.

In fact, her relationship with Reese had not been very good. Ever since Reese rejected Monica from being with Michael a few years ago, she was traumatized by the woman. Though she's shown Monica

some vulnerabilities, some deep-rooted impressions were still difficult to change. Monica did not want to deal with her.

“So I came all the way here and you’re leaving me standing at the door?” Reese raised her eyebrows.

She looked completely different from when she had begged Monica to help Michael two months ago.

Now Reese was back to her high and mighty self again.

Monica didn’t retort.

Monica figured that people like Reese, who were used to a high status, would have a hard time changing her habit of doing things.

She smiled. “Please come in.”

Reese stood in the doorway but didn’t move.

Monica frowned. “Yes?”

“Aren’t you going to hand me my slippers?” Reese looked matter-of-factly.

Monica’s expression changed slightly.

She was also pampered from a young age. When has she ever been ordered around?

But Monica didn’t want to complicate matters. She was already at the end of her relationship with Michael. There was no need for her to have any conflict with Reese.

She opened the shoe cabinet, bent down, and placed a pair of slippers at Reese’s feet.

Only then did Reese take off her shoes, put on the slippers, and walked in.

She sat on Monica’s sofa and crossed her legs elegantly. She looked very high and mighty.

“Aren’t you going to pour me a glass of water?” Reese asked.

Monica bit her lip.

She turned and went to the kitchen, then poured water.

Monica was very much hungover last night and her head was about to explode. To top it off, she was being ordered by this old woman.

The more she thought about it, the angrier she became.

Therefore, when Monica handed the water to Reese, she was a little irritable. Monica spilled some of the water in the glass on Reese’s haute couture clothes. Reese’s expression immediately changed, and she lectured in a stern tone, “What are you doing? How are you going to be the young madam of the Rosses in the future?”

“I don’t want to be the young madam of the Rosses.” Monica snapped back. She couldn’t take it anymore.

Reese’s expression darkened. “Don’t tell me you think Michael isn’t good enough for you.”

“That’s not the point. I don’t like Michael.”

“Don’t be ungrateful.” Reese’s tone was cold.

“Mrs. Ross.” Monica did not want to waste time with Reese any longer. “You know very well that I’m only with Michael to help him salvage his image. Now that his career is going well, we’ll break up. That’s why you don’t have to waste time on me. I believe there will be many girls who catch your eye for the position of Michael’s wife.”

Chapter 754: Monica and Michael’s Conflict

“Monica, don’t be so shameless.” Reese did not want to play along with Monica either. At this moment, their fallout was confirmed.

Monica sneered.

She said, “Mrs. Ross, I’ve sacrificed so much to help your son climb to glory. It’s fine if you don’t thank me, but you dare belittle me? Is this how high-ranking officials show their thanks? I’ve sure seen enough.”

The sarcasm in her tone angered Reese. “What sacrifice? You only did it because you wanted to curry favor with Michael and us. If anything happens in the future, Michael will definitely not sit back and do nothing! You only want the power and influence of the Rosses! Otherwise, who would be stupid enough to get a divorce just to help a man they don’t even love? I can see through your thoughts, Monica. I didn’t say this out loud back then because I didn’t want to embarrass you.”

Monica had to restrain herself from slapping Reese across the face.

It was the first time she had been tangled in such a scene.

Monica said coldly, “You’re right. I was stupid to help your son and your family to regain it’s former glory. I’m no longer that stupid, so I’ll break up with your son immediately. I would advise you not to appear in front of me again, Mrs. Ross. I’m afraid I’ll vomit from disgust.”

“Monica!” Reese’s expression changed completely. “I didn’t come here to ask you to break up with my son. Don’t threaten me. I won’t be threatened by the likes of you! With how Michael’s faring in his career, it won’t affect him much even if you broke up now. If it weren’t for the fact that my son really likes you, I wouldn’t have considered allowing you to be part of the Rosses. I’m only here today to ask you to watch yourself. As the future young madam of the Rosses, you mustn’t go to those sort of filthy places again!”

Monica stared at Reese.

What filthy place? Where did she go to warrant that judgment?

Reese didn’t want to waste time with Monica any longer. She took out her phone and flipped open the news. She found a news site with the headline. It said—“Michael’s first love and the girlfriend he loves heads to the nightclub night after night.”

Monica rolled her eyes and scoffed.

“Do you know how much you’re affecting my son’s image?” Reese said fiercely. “If it wasn’t because my son used his connections to deal with the news, it would have gone viral all over by now! Do you want to embarrass my son by telling the world that he fell in love with a woman who only knows how to indulge in nightclubs? You’re trampling on his dignity!”

“That’s enough.” Monica really didn’t want to tangle with Reese anymore.

She never had a good impression of that woman. It was only when Reese suddenly softened her attitude that Monica changed her opinion slightly. But old habits die hard. Now that Monica knew Reese disliked her, there was no need for Monica to be nice.

Monica said, “Rest assured, I’m going to break up with Michael today.”

“Monica, are you threatening me?!”

“I don’t care what you think, please leave my house immediately!”

“How could you?!”

Monica had never been a pushover. She yanked Reese roughly, who was sitting on the sofa, to her feet.

Reese lost her balance and was almost thrown to the ground.

“Let go of me. How rude of you to treat your elders like this!”

“Monica, I told you to let go of me, you uneducated thing...”

Monica pushed Reese out of her door.

“Bang!”

The door slammed shut.

Reese was extremely furious. She had come today to put Monica in her place.

She knew very well that sooner or later his son would marry Monica, but she couldn’t let Monica be full of herself. Reese only humbled herself to help her son. If Monica had actually married into the family, Reese had no intention of letting her live a peaceful life.

Now that she saw Monica’s attitude, a headache was developing.

She turned to leave when the door suddenly opened.

Monica threw out Reese’s haute couture shoes. “Don’t ever show up in front of me again!”

Chapter 755: Monica and Michael’s Conflict

“Monica!” Reese screamed at her.

Monica pretended not to hear.

Even after chasing Reese away, Monica did not feel much better.

Her head was hurting from being hungover. Now, her brain felt like it was about to explode.

She picked up the phone and called Michael.

“Hi Monica, it’s rare for you to call me-”

“Let’s break up.” Monica ignored Michael’s gentleness and spoke bluntly.

Michael was silent for a few seconds.

“Now that your career’s going well, I don’t think there’s a need for us to continue this charade.”

“Didn’t you say three months? There’s still a month left.” Michael said softly.

“That’s because I didn’t expect you to be so capable. It only took such a short time for you to stabilize your career. I underestimated your abilities.” Monica said, trying her best to appear calm.

“For the first time ever, I want to be in denial about my capabilities.” Michael smiled bitterly.

Monica pursed her lips.

She had no regrets about Michael.

Monica felt that he was a good person, thus she sincerely helped him to this extent.

“Let’s find a time to announce it to the public,” Monica said coldly.

“Now’s not the time yet,” Michael advised.

Monica was obviously torn.

“We haven’t been together for long. At that time, everyone knew that our relationship was a serious one. If we break up now, it would stir up a lot of public opinion. They would think that we treated our relationship lightly.”

“So be it. That’s how relationships are anyway.” Monica said nonchalantly.

“Monica, can you please give me more time?” Michael did not agree to breaking up now.

“Why?” Monica was annoyed. She felt a little disgusted.

“The congress is about to be held, and it’s now time for candidates to be shortlisted. I’m currently a candidate. If there’s any negative news about me now, it’ll affect my chances at being chosen,” Michael said. “And the congress meeting will be where the most worthy talent would be at. Only by attending such a meeting can my career truly take off.”

Monica bit her lip and said nothing.

Michael felt extremely guilty. He said, “I’m sorry for putting this on you, Monica.”

“But Michael, a peaceful breakup shouldn’t have a negative impact on you, no? It’s just public opinion. With your current abilities, it shouldn’t be difficult to suppress the news! Besides, is it a requirement that political candidates can’t go through a break up or a divorce?”

“I’m just worried about doing this at a crucial moment...”

“We’ll have to face it sooner rather than later. Our break up is inevitable. Your career will always be growing. Does that mean I have to keep playing along with this?!”

“That’s not what I meant,” Michael quickly explained. “I’m only saying that we have too little time. If we suddenly announce our breakup, it will garner negative public sentiments. But if we dated a little longer and our relationship became old news, no one would take much interest in our break up. That’s all I meant.”

“If I say that I don’t like you anymore and that I like someone else, will that not affect you?” Monica suddenly asked.

Michael winced.

His expression darkened and his eyes turned cold.

“If I’m the cause of the break up—if I abandon you for another—will that be better for you?”

“Monica, don’t overthink this-”

“Let’s do this,” Monica said. “If everyone knew that I was unfaithful to you and I was the one to dump you, there won’t be any negative news for you. In fact, there will be a lot of support and understanding from the public.”

“Monica, I don’t want you to sacrifice yourself for me. If you want to break up, we’ll break up. I’ll discuss this with my public relations team immediately on how we can minimize the damage to us.” Michael said agitatedly.

He only thought about her.

“I’ll give you one day, Michael. I hope you’ll get back to me tomorrow.”

“Alright,” Michael agreed.

Monica hung up immediately.

She really didn’t want to be entangled with Michael anymore.

In fact, she had been wanting to tell Michael this idea ever since he was on the right track, but every time she picked up her phone, she stopped herself.

They agreed for the relationship to last three months. Fine, just three months.

Chapter 756: Monica and Michael’s Conflict

However, Reese’s appearance today made Monica lose all her patience.

It wasn’t just Reese’s attitude toward her. It was also the fact that Reese thought that she and Michael would end up together no matter what. Does that mean the rest of the world had the same opinion too?

The longer this dragged on, the easier it would be for others to misunderstand.

Might as well end it quickly.

It was what she's set out to achieve anyway.

Monica headed to bed and went back to sleep.

In any case, she was never serious about working. She didn't want her father to grow hopeful either.

Just let her be a worm for a little while longer.

She would think about it once she's dealt with her messy feelings.

Monica covered herself with the blanket and tried to sleep, but sleep evaded her.

She kept thinking if Finn would be moved if she and Michael broke up completely.

Even if it was no longer possible for a future with Finn, Monica wanted to prove that she had made the right choice back then.

...

Back at the Lawrence Enterprise, Jeanne was working on the papers in her hands.

Amy knocked and entered.

"Director Lawrence, here's an invitation." Amy placed a delicate looking invitation in front of Jeanne.

"The world's most famous antique tycoon, Mr. William Gates, has announced his official return to Harken. He's going to set up the largest antique trading appreciation club in South Hampton City. All the upper-class dignitaries in South Hampton City have been invited to his private banquet tonight at seven o'clock."

Jeanne picked up the invitation and glanced at it.

The world's largest antique collector, William Gates.

It was said that as long as you could name the appropriate price, he would be able to help you get the antique and guarantee the authenticity.

Such a legendary figure hailed from Harken. But as he had been overseas in recent years, he did not have much interaction with people from Harken. Now that he's returned, he invited all the upper-class society to the banquet, which means that he's looking to achieve something huge in Harken.

Jeanne set the invitation aside.

Amy asked, "Is Director Lawrence going?"

"I will," Jeanne said.

How could she miss out on attending such a banquet?

Moreover, William Gates was a big shot. This was the first time he had invited her, so she could not turn it down. That would be rude.

“Shall I prepare a gown for you, director?”

“No need. I’ll settle that myself. Just make an appointment in advance.”

“Sure, director,” Amy said respectfully and left.

Jeanne glanced at the invitation again. She thought for a moment before picking up her phone and sending a text.

[Jeannie: Did you receive William Gates’s invitation?]

[Ed: Yes, I did. Did you get it too?]

[Jeannie: Yeap, let’s go pick our outfits later.]

[Ed: My pleasure.]

A smile tugged at the corners of Jeanne’s mouth.

Just as she was about to put down her phone, Kingsley called.

She pursed her lips.

For some reason, every time she received a call from Kingsley Thorn, she felt terrified.

It always felt like something major would happen in the next second.

“Hey.”

“Is there a banquet going on in South Hampton City tonight?” Kingsley asked straightforwardly.

They’ve always been brief on the phone. It was as if he could not waste a second.

“Yes, there’s one.”

“William Gates?”

“Yeah. Is something wrong with him?” Jeanne frowned.

“He’s a big shot and the Sanders wants him.”

“They want me to rope him in?”

The Sanders probably thought she was omnipotent.

“No, they’re sending their precious princess.”

“If I remember correctly, William Gates is almost 40 years old. Would the Sanders let their precious daughter seduce him? She’s only in her early twenties.”

“Nothing’s impossible. The Sanders would do anything to rope someone in.”

“What do you need me to do?”

“I’m just letting you know so you’re in the loop.”

“Alright.”

“Did you find anyone suspicious around Edward Swan?”

“No,” Jeanne replied. “Did you find any clues on your end?”

“The Sanders had their people watching Dr. Finn. And Dr. Finn must’ve found out about that, so he hasn’t gone anywhere suspicious. Most of the time, he’s at home. Occasionally, he goes out for meals, and to the hospital. So there’s nothing for the past month.”

“Where exactly did the Swans hide that person?!” Jeanne said, confused.

“I’m baffled too.” Kingsley said, “This is the first time in a while that I have such poor control over something. I suspect even I might not be able to locate this person.”

Even Kingsley was rendered helpless. What had the Swans done?

Logically speaking, there would definitely be clues if this person existed.

To be able to hide so well...

How did they do it?

“Let’s not worry about it for now. The Sanders have their arrangements. We only have to do as they say.” Kingsley didn’t want to make things difficult for Jeanne.

After all, he did not expect it would be so difficult to investigate that person.

Initially, he’d thought that it would be more troublesome if that person did not return to South Hampton City.

Unexpectedly, when that person returned, there’s still any clues that he could find.

It was out of his control now.

Shall he just wait it out the fight between the two families and swoop in for the kill?

Chapter 757: The Upper-Class Banquet, the Conspiracy

At night, in South Hampton City, Watsons Bay was a high-end area and a prime location

When Jeanne was at the entrance of the banquet hall, she felt as if it was daytime. The hall was so bright and filled with people.

Jeanne held Edward’s hand and walked in with the crowd.

It was the first time the two of them attended a banquet together since they got married.

She was wearing a black mermaid-tail evening gown, and the diamonds on the skirt were dazzling. Edward, on the other hand, was wearing a black tuxedo.

The broken diamonds on his collar and her mermaid tail complemented each other.

The moment they appeared, it caused a sensation. Everyone's eyes could not help but fall on the handsome man and beautiful woman.

It was difficult to find the words to describe their good looks. In short, they were way out of anyone's league.

In the past, they had always felt that Jeanne's looks were gaudy and not worthy of Fourth Master Swan's magnificence and elegance. However, when the two of them stood together, they were an extraordinary match. It was as if they would be overshadowed if no one else was around.

Under everyone's gaze, the couple stopped in front of a man.

It was rumored that the man in front of them was 39 years old this year, but he looked surprisingly young and did not look more than 30 years old.

He had a sprightly buzz cut, a hairstyle that was difficult for anyone to pull off, but it made him look inexplicably manly.

The rumored Gates family was not one of the 12 big families in South Hampton City, but the 12 big families would still give in to the Gates. Instead of saying that the Gates was one of the richest antique collectors in the world, it would be better to say that the Gates knew a wide network of people.

The Gates relied on their antique trade to gain their network and win over various forces. Not only did they have connections with both the government and the triads, but they also knew people from all over the world and from all walks of life. As long as one had a relationship with the Gates, people would avoid them, no matter who they were.

It was probably because of the Gates' networking ability that the Sanders were targeting William Gates.

When Jeanne first saw William Gates, he looked different from what she had imagined.

William kept a low profile and rarely showed his face in public, so Jeanne had never seen his true appearance before. She thought he was a typical middle-aged man or that he would look more mature than others. However, she did not expect the man to be so much more charming than she had imagined.

His facial features were not incredibly handsome, but it was perhaps his naturally-inherent noble aura that made people unconsciously attracted to him.

Her eyes moved slightly as she saw William reach out his hand and took the initiative to shake Edward's hand. "Fourth Master Swan, it's an honor to meet you."

"Mr. Gates, it's an honor to meet you." Edward extended his hand.

The two of them greeted each other politely.

"And is this Mrs. Swan?" After a simple greeting, Zhong Yurong looked at Jeanne.

Jeanne was shocked.

She had attended countless banquets and had seen many high officials and noble people, but being looked at by William still made her a little nervous.

However, she could feel that his gaze was different from others.

She smiled. "Hello, Mr. Gates."

"Mrs. Swan is indeed more beautiful in person than I thought."

"Mr. Gates, you flatter me. You, too, look different from what I thought."

"Is that so?" William seemed intrigued. Then, he asked with a smile, "What kind of person would you imagine me to be, Mrs. Swan?"

"Someone with glasses, slightly longer but short hair, and a beard." Jeanne concluded, "Someone with the temperament of an artist."

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, Mrs. Swan." William smiled.

"No, you're much more handsome than I thought, Mr. Gates."

"Mrs. Swan, you're complimenting me so much in front of Fourth Master Swan. Won't he get jealous?" William looked at Edward.

Edward laughed. "In terms of looks, I'm very confident in myself."

Jeanne could not help but laugh as she felt that Fourth Master Swan was getting more and more shameless.

The three of them were talking, and the vibe was quite good until the Sanders suddenly showed up.

William, however, became a lot more cautious with the Sanders' presence. He tidied his clothes slightly and stood up to greet the family.

It was the Sanders' eldest young master, Chester Sanders, and the person beside him was not his wife but his youngest sister, Stacey Sanders, the fifth Princess of the Sanders.

Edward led Jeanne to the pastry area and carefully picked out the food for her.

In the meantime, Jeanne sized up Stacey nonchalantly and saw how shy the latter was when she was talking to William.

"Is he very handsome?" She heard a familiar male voice say.

Jeanne retracted her gaze and took the pastry from Edward's hand. She took a bite and found it to be very sweet.

Chapter 758: The Upper-Class Banquet, the Conspiracy

"Is he very handsome?" A certain someone did not seem to want to give up on that topic.

"Aren't you very confident in your own looks?"

"That means I don't mind my wife looking at other men."

“You’re so petty,” Jeanne grumbled. Then, she finished a pastry and frowned. “I want something chocolate flavored.”

They were all pure cream, which he found too greasy.

“I’m allergic,” Edward said.

“But I’m not allergic,” Jeanne told him seriously.

“No, if you eat it, I’ll have an allergic reaction,” Edward retorted.

That man was too much of a bully. Why could she not eat what he could not?

“If you don’t believe me, try it.” Edward raised his eyebrows.

Of course, Jeanne did not believe him.

Could it be that he was possessed? He was allergic to the things she had eaten.

She called the waiter who was walking around her. “Please get me a chocolate cake. The kind with a lot of chocolate.”

“Alright,” the waiter said respectfully.

After a while, Jeanne was served a chocolate cake.

She took a spoonful and liked the taste. Happiness was written all over her face.

Hence, she scooped another spoonful and put it in her mouth.

“Oh!” Jeanne’s eyes widened.

On top of the rich chocolate, there was also the strong scent of Edward between her lips. He had even licked everything in her mouth.

She finally understood why he would be allergic to her eating chocolate.

Oh, that slutty man...

That happened under everyone’s gazes.

Although they were standing in a relatively hidden place, there were still many people around them.

“What is this?” Suddenly, a familiar voice suddenly sounded in her ears.

Jeanne was stunned.

She hurriedly pushed Edward away, with her face red, especially since they had been discovered.

She really wanted to dig a hole in the ground and hide.

They turned around to see Nox, who had just arrived at the banquet hall and was very unhappy. “What is this public display for affection as soon as I walk in?”

Jeanne was speechless.

Edward, however, ignored him. He was still unhappy that Nox interrupted their moment.

Nox pretended not to see Edward's expression. In fact, he looked carefree and at ease.

"You received an invitation too." Edward casually picked up a glass of champagne and asked Nox.

Nox nodded. "I heard the so-called Mr. Gates invited almost all the upper class of South Hampton City. However, the important thing is that it seems like everyone is here and no one rejected his invitation. Look! Even the Sanders are here."

Jeanne's gaze turned in that direction again.

She watched William and Chester talking and Stacey standing beside them like a small lily with a faint and elegant smile on her face.

"It seems the Sanders and William Gates have a good relationship." Nox could not help but sigh. Her tone was a little pensive.

Edward did not agree, and neither did Jeanne.

In the banquet hall, more and more people came in.

More and more people started to gather.

By then, Jeanne also saw many familiar faces in the hall. For example, Quinn from the Sanders had also come along with her fiancé.

It was also Jeanne's first time meeting Quinn's fiancé, who was considered a very popular diplomat in Harken.

Other than Quinn, Eden also came. However, he did not bring Jasmine. In fact, he was with his father, socializing with people.

Joshua also came with Jenifer.

It was obvious that Joshua was very nervous as it was his first time attending a banquet alone, and Jenifer seemed to be giving him pointers throughout.

Halfway through the banquet, Monica arrived.

Her father must have called her over.

Ruby did not come, so Monica held Gary's arm and forced a smile as she accompanied her father.

Before Monica arrived, Michael arrived at the scene with his mother, Reese.

He talked to everyone, and many people tried to curry favor with him. He was neither arrogant nor impatient. He was humble and polite while socializing. Most of the time, he was by the side of the Sanders, as if he was deliberately hiding his brilliance.

The banquet hall was really packed with people.

It had been a long time since South Hampton City had been so lively. It was likely that William had invited the entire upper-class circle, including those politicians who were not very influential.

When the banquet came to an end, Monica could not stand it anymore.

She was so drunk last night that her head was about to explode.

She had planned to rest at home today, but in the afternoon, she had received a crazy bombardment of phone calls from her father, who asked her to attend a business dinner with him tonight.

Chapter 759: The Upper-Class Banquet, the Conspiracy

It was not easy for her to get up. Yet, she still had to dress herself up and choose an evening gown.

If she did not know that Jeannie was there, she would die.

Her father had something to do at work, so they were late to the banquet. If they were not late and she had to keep her fake smile with her father the whole night, she would go crazy.

She used the excuse of going to the toilet and left her father's side. Then, without a second thought, she went to Jeanne.

At that moment, Jeanne was accompanying Edward in his social activities.

Edward's reputation in South Harken City was very high. Even in a gathering of so many upper-class people, Edward was an existence that could not be ignored. Therefore, people kept approaching him to propose a toast, and Jeanne was a little bored from entertaining them.

Seeing Monica coming over, she found an excuse to leave Edward and went to the back garden with Monica to get some fresh air.

As soon as they arrived at the back garden, Monica sat on the swing, took off her high heels, and threw them on the ground without any care for her image.

Jeanne was also somewhat helpless against Monica as she sat next to the latter, looking much more dignified than her.

"Jeanne, can you stop looking so good?" Monica complained.

'What's wrong with this girl?' Jeanne thought.

"Every time I attend a banquet, I think you're much more beautiful than before. Is it Fourth Master Swan's presence that makes you shine?" Monica blurted out.

Jeanne was speechless.

"You may not know, but at least 80 percent of the people at the banquet are talking about your godly looks. You're making me look like a peasant by your side." Monica was unhappy.

Jeanne smiled.

Had Monica not been dying of sadness recently? How could she still have the energy to compare her looks? It seemed that this girl was much stronger than Jeanne had thought.

“Although I’m not happy that my best friend is much prettier than me, I’m secretly happy because Eden’s face has been dark from the beginning to the end. After all, everyone’s praise for you and Fourth Master Swan is a form of hurt to him. He cheated on you back then, and he was the one who was stupid enough to lose you. I’m sure you saw he didn’t bring Jasmine with him today. Well, I think it’s because he’s disgusted with Jasmine. Speaking of which, I haven’t seen Jasmine act up in a long time. Has she turned over a new leaf?”

Jeanne admired Monica’s quick thinking.

She would always be led astray by Monica when she spoke to her.

Before Jeanne could say anything, Monica concluded, “Maybe Eden is tired of Jasmine. A disgusting man like Eden must have wanted to get rid of Jasmine a long time ago when he saw how beautiful you were and how useless Jasmine was compared to you.”

Jeanne believed that if Monica focused more on her work, she might be able to make some groundbreaking achievements.

After all, when it came to gossip, Monica had never been wrong.

“Oh, right. Do you know William’s background?” Monica suddenly mentioned the host of the day.

“Do you?”

“When I was on the way to the banquet just now, I heard my dad talking about him in the car. Apparently, this person is very powerful. On the surface, he’s an antique collector, but he has a very strong and secret network of connections not just in Harken.”

“I’ve heard of it.” Jeanne nodded.

“It’s no wonder the Sanders are so friendly to him. All three of them came to attend his banquet.”

Jeanne did not say much to Monica, who was just purely gossiping and nothing would come out of that.

However, the same Jeanne was not. She had many things to consider, and the walls had ears. The more she said, the more something could be used against her.

The two of them casually chatted for a while before Edward came out to look for Jeanne. He said he was going to socialize with the Sanders.

Jeanne pursed her lips.

To be honest, she did not want to go.

Throughout the entire banquet, many people were surrounding Edward and the Sanders, so they did not have time to socialize. However, Jeanne had expected it too, and there was no way she could miss it.

In the eyes of outsiders, the Sanders and the Swans were now the two giants of Harken — one managed the political scene, while the other controlled the economy.

The outside world was also abuzz with rumors that the two families had a deep conflict.

After all, Harken was under the Swans' regime, but the Swans had their fair share of power in the country.

Even so, only one of them could hold the power in the country, and there would be a day when the two families would kill each other.

However, before killing each other, they still had to pretend to be friendly.

Chapter 760: The Upper-Class Banquet, the Conspiracy

However... that was society. If one was not careful, they could without a trace.

It was a cruel society.

Jeanne followed Edward to Chester Sanders, the most popular heir of the Sanders. He was 35 years old and exuded a righteous aura.

"Mr. Sanders." Edward stepped forward.

Chester looked at Edward, neither enthusiastic nor rejecting him. "Fourth Master Swan."

"Just call me Edward."

After all, the title 'Fourth Master' was just a form of flattery.

"You're the elder, so I should call you Fourth Master." Chester was very humble. In front of Edward, he did not put on any airs.

Edward was naturally very polite.

The two of them conversed.

"Is this your wife, Jeanne?" Chester's gaze landed on Jeanne.

"Hello, Mr. Sanders." Jeanne extended her hand.

Chester also extended his hand, and the two of them shook hands out of courtesy.

"I've only seen Mrs. Swan on the news," Chester said. "You're even prettier in person."

"Thank you," Jeanne said and smiled generously and politely.

"It's no wonder Fourth Master didn't choose Melody back then. In comparison, Mrs. Swan is indeed more outstanding." Chester's tone was neither cold nor indifferent, but there was no emotion in it.

"Mr. Sanders, you flatter me. When the leader attended our wedding, I answered him that I wasn't outstanding. It was Edward who wasn't worthy of Ms. Sanders."

"Mrs. Swan, you're really good with words. It's a pity. Melody was still so young..." Chester was clearly still a little upset about it.

"My condolences,"

"I won't talk about such a sad topic today." Chester brushed off Melody's matter and took the initiative to bring up Quinn in the conversation. "How's my second sister doing at the Lawrence Enterprise? Has she caused you any trouble?"

"Mr. Sanders, you're too kind. Ms. Sanders is very outstanding and has won many projects for our company. I'm very glad that so many companies in Harken rejected Ms. Sander from joining their company and have, in turn, allowed her to join Lawrence Enterprise. She has really surprised us." Jeanne did not hide her approval of Quinn.

Chester was happy to hear his sister being acknowledged by others.

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he turned to Stacey and said, "When it's your time to step into society, you have to learn from your second sister."

"Yes." Stacey was exceptionally well-behaved.

Both parties chatted, and they seemed friendly with each other. However, it was probably just an act for others to see.

At least on the surface, no one could see through the current situation between the Sanders and the Swans.

In the back garden, Monica waited for Jeanne for a long time, but Jeanne did not return.

She really admired Jeanne's ability to tolerate so many business banquets because she really did not want to be at that banquet for a second longer. It was so boring.

She wondered if she should sneak away first.

Her father had a chauffeur to pick him up anyway.

While thinking, she suddenly saw Michael standing in front of her, looking down at her.

Monica's eyes moved slightly.

They both had not seen each other for a month.

In fact, she had seen Michael in the banquet hall today, but every time Michael looked over, she would look away. Even when she had just left her father's side, she also saw Michael walking over to them. She really did not want to be entangled with Michael anymore, and she felt inexplicably annoyed.

"Are you tired?" Michael said gently.

Every time Michael opened his mouth, Monica felt that her rejection of him was somewhat evil.

Hence, she forced herself to smile. "I'm not made for this kind of banquet."

"Do you want me to send you off early?"

"No need. There are so many dignitaries tonight. It's inconvenient for you to leave."

"It's fine."

"Michael, you don't have to be so nice to me," Monica said bluntly.

Michael was stunned.

However, he smiled naturally. "I'm nice to you because you're nice to me."

"I did it to help you. After all, helping others is an excellent virtue. However, you being nice to me is a burden to me."

The smile on Michael's lips looked a little lonely.

He said, "I'm sorry. I just wanted to thank you."

Monica did not know what to say.

She did not know when it had started, but she felt a strong sense of rejection toward Michael. It was not because she deliberately kept her distance from Michael, but deep down in her heart, she really did not want Michael to get close to her.

Was it because Reese came to her house and caused a scene?