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Chapter 221

Chapter 221 Pry

Queenie couldn't deny that Joanna's words weren't wrong in the least.

"Fine. I will just treat this as a means to become your friend, Director Schmidt." Queenie swiftly hung up after finishing her words.

When afternoon came, Queenie arrived at the Gardner Corporation after she had packed up. With graceful steps, she first headed to Joanna's office.

As she was helping Joanna this time, Joanna actually held back on being contemptuous toward her.

Queenie proceeded to sit on the sofa. She was wearing a bodycon dress today that hugged the curves of her voluptuous body. The slits on the side of her legs were near the base of her thighs, and it gave her a flirtatious look. The pair of high heels she had on, too, only made her look taller than she was.

She raised her eyes and glanced lazily at the person in front of her. "How rare of you to not complain about me now that I am here, Director Schmidt."

Joanna didn't pay attention to Queenie's goading tone of voice. Instead, she stayed in her seat behind the desk as she looked over and stated, "Nicole is making clothes in her office. I want to know what she is up to."

Queenie smiled and let out a laugh then. "Joanna Schmidt, what are you being so cautious about? What else do you have to worry about when Mrs. Gardner has already said yes to you?"

Pushing her chair back, Joanna stood up and demanded, "I can't allow even one minor flaw in the things that I want to do!"

Seeing how serious she was, Queenie stopped joking around as she stood up as well.

"Do you want to come with me and check on what Nicole is doing?"

Joanna hesitated for a while after hearing Queenie's suggestion. She initially only wanted Queenie to come forward. After all, she didn't have the best reputation herself to not raise a flag if she were to do it herself.

Queenie looked at her hesitating, and she raised her chin with a proud look on her face. “Director Schmidt? Could it be that you want to get things done without dirtying your own hands and I am your tool to achieving your goals?”

The question made Joanna sigh. “Let’s go together, then.”

They proceeded to head to Nicole’s office after their conversation.

As soon as they opened the door, they saw Nicole sewing clothes on a model. They could tell from the outline of the garment that it was beautiful.

Nicole, who heard the sound of the door being opened, looked up slightly to see Joanna and Queenie standing there.

A curious glint flashed in her eyes, and the corners of her mouth twitched as she exclaimed with a smile. “Wow! When did you get involved with her, Director Schmidt?”

Joanna did not tell the truth after hearing the mockery from Nicole. “I just happened to see Miss Queenie when I came over.”

Naturally, Nicole didn’t believe her words. She thought that the duo must have something up their sleeves for them to huddle together. She swiftly stopped what she was doing, and placed her needle aside.

“If that is the case, is there something I can help you with, Director Schmidt and Miss Queenie?”

Listening to Nicole’s sarcastic words, Queenie took a step forward and looked directly past her to the dress. Her eyes seemed to brighten when she laughed, “Oh—sis! Mrs. Gardner and Wendy have already appointed Director Schmidt to design Wendy’s party dress for her 18th birthday. What are you still here aimlessly busying yourself for?”

“I am bored and I wanted to make the dress. Is there a problem with that?” Nicole replied casually.

Queenie’s tone turned sharp all of a sudden. “Sis, are you trying to do something underhanded because you aren’t willing to admit your defeat to Director Schmidt?”

“Underhanded?” As if she had just heard the joke of the century, Nicole sneered, her face full of contempt. “Don’t try to throw dirt on my name. Don’t tell me the two of you don’t know why Wendy chose Director Schmidt’s design.”

Joanna’s face immediately fell. She knew that Nicole was ridiculing her using unfair means herself.

She lightly clenched her fists and barely managed to not lose her temper. She only said firmly, "It really is because of Miss Queenie. I didn't expect such a coincidence."

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Chapter 222 You Actually Think You Are Worthy of It?

Seeing as how Joanna adamantly refused to come out with the truth, Nicole was no longer in the mood to continue discussing this topic with her.

She went straight to the point when she asked, "So what is the reason for this nice, surprise visit?"

Queenie took a step forward and walked ahead to sit down on the sofa. The corners of her mouth then slightly curled upward. "I am your little sister, after all. Why are you not pouring your dear sister a cup of tea now that I have dropped by your office?"

Nicole glanced at Queenie, then looked back at Joanna before she quietly laughed, "Don't address me as you please. I feel like throwing up every time you do that."

Queenie's expression changed ever so slightly. She knew that Nicole had a smart mouth, but she didn't think Nicole wouldn't even pretend to be close with her for appearances' sake now.

The good thing was that Queenie was thick-skinned enough to stay unbothered. "Even though Dad has cut ties with you, you still have the blood of the Anderson Family flowing in your veins. I don't think it is wrong for me to call you my sister, no?"

Nicole jolted to a pause when she heard Queenie's words. She clicked when she found her tongue again. "Does this make every Anderson there is on earth your sister? Weird, but I didn't know my mother had given birth to someone as evil as you."

Queenie's face gradually flushed red after Nicole had blocked her off with her retort. She stood up with a huff, her dark eyes staring at Nicole unmovingly.

"I am speaking to you nicely, Nicole. Stop getting in my face. Is this how a Chief Designer should behave?"

With an excited look on her face, Joanna was watching the two of them as the fight got more intense by the second. It was like she was watching a lion and a tiger going at each other. It would be wonderful if they both lost—she would be the hunter who harvested the wounded beasts' hides then.

"I am also telling you nicely to not try to use your connections with me or call me your sister. It is too much for me to take!" Nicole exclaimed.

Fortunately, Queenie was still conscious enough to remember the reason she had come here. After suppressing her emotions, she quietly hinted at Joanna.

Joanna wasn't planning to get involved and wanted to let the two of them continue arguing with each other, but seeing how they were gradually cooling down, she quickly stepped forward and played the part of a mediator. "Come on, Miss Lisa. You are siblings no matter what. Don't let something this small hurt your relationship." A smile began to appear on her face then. "Miss Queenie only came here to congratulate you after she heard that you have become the founder of 'Ann'."

Looking at Joanna putting on an act, Nicole didn't hold back on exposing her the next moment.

"Oh? Is that so?" A hint of mockery could be seen in her gaze as she looked at Joanna from head to toe. "Are you here to congratulate me as well, Director Schmidt? Even though I am the one who designed most of the main products, you have also put in a lot of hard work. Don't you feel angry that I am the only one whose efforts were recognized?"

Even though a storm was starting to brew within Joanna when she heard Nicole's question, she put on a generous and nonchalant face as she said lightly, "I have nothing to be angry about. After all, you are the one who has worked the hardest."

Nicole only snickered without saying another word.

After Queenie calmed down, she suddenly recalled the purpose of her visit this time. She then looked up at the clothes Nicole was designing.

She had come here with the intention of upsetting Nicole by reminding her of her defeat, but she didn't want Nicole to start doubting the reason she and Joanna were here.

"Sis, let's stop embarrassing ourselves since Wendy has chosen Director Schmidt's design. What is the point of you rushing to make it when you know that Wendy isn't going to wear it? Don't you think it is a waste of time?" Queenie suddenly remembered something else after she said that. "If you really have too much free time on your hands, you can design a set for me. I promise to wear it. I will even wear it during Wendy's birthday party."

Knowing that Queenie was mocking her, Nicole couldn't help sneering, "You actually think you are worthy of it?" She then slowly closed her eyes. Not wanting to continue with this meaningless game of tug-of-war with them, she waved them off. "Say what you came here to say. We are not close enough to be asking about each other's lives."

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Chapter 223

Chapter 223 One Step Ahead

Joanna finally stopped beating around the bush when she noticed the look of impatience on Nicole's face.

"I am just curious, Miss Lisa. What did Mrs. Gardner tell you when she told you to stay behind after I left the other day?"

Nicole finally understood the reason the two came to put on a show was not to ridicule her, but to probe for information.

Finding the situation hilarious, she answered Joanna's question with another one of her own. "Why did you come to me instead of going to ask Mrs. Gardner directly?"

Joanna's face tightened as she balled her hands into fists. "Wendy and Mrs. Gardner have both chosen my design, Miss Lisa. I am afraid it will be bad for your reputation if you insist on intervening."

Upon hearing that, Nicole crossed her arms across her chest and walked back to her chair. As she leaned against the backrest of the chair, she asked casually, "Wendy said she liked my design, didn't she?"

There's no way Wendy changed her mind! Joanna thought as she felt her heart skip a beat.

"At any rate, Mrs. Gardner decided on my design. You can't just come and steal my opportunity away from me, Miss Lisa!"

Looking at Joanna bickering like an immature child, Queenie scolded impatiently, "Don't bother replying to her nonsense. We are the ones with the jewelry from Triton Studio. None of the clothes she designed will be worthy of it anyway!"

Instead of getting angry, Nicole leisurely crossed her legs. "You shouldn't have to worry about anything if this is what you think."

Joanna didn't speak anymore after Queenie said that. Nicole would still work in the Gardner Corporation for a few more months, and since Joanna was the design director

for Gardner Apparel, she wasn't in a place where she could make their relationship go sour just yet.

After a moment, she nodded and laughed. "I didn't come here for anything in particular. I only came to congratulate you when I saw that you are the founder of 'Ann', Miss Nicole."

She continued when Nicole didn't show any intention of answering her. "Now that I have given you my best wishes, I shall take my leave now."

She swiftly turned around and left after she said that.

With only Nicole and Queenie in the office, the air in the room instantly felt more awkward than it was before.

Feeling irritated when she looked at the uninvited visitor, she started chasing Queenie off. "What? Can't walk? Or are you still not done picking a fight?"

Queenie only made a move to stand up after hearing Nicole's sarcastic words. She then looked at Nicole thoughtfully and smiled. "Tell you what, Nicole—it doesn't matter that you are the Chief Designer of F&M Apparel. You can never beat me!"

Nicole wasn't intimidated by the threat at all. She only chuckled before she spat, "You overestimate yourself."

Queenie didn't utter another word as she left after slamming the door shut.

Nicole's nerves only calmed down slightly after the women left. Propping her head against her palms, she pinched the bridge of her nose with two fingers.

She was sure that Joanna and Queenie were working together because they were worried that she would be one step ahead of them in presenting Wendy's dress at the birthday party.

They must have come over to her office in panic after seeing her designing a dress.

What they didn't know was that their guess was right. She was going to show up with the dress before Joanna did!

Wendy's birthday party was in less than a week's time. The invitations had already been printed and sent out, and reporters had also been notified.

Anna was also busy with the planning of the birthday party. Now that they were at such a crucial time, Joanna naturally didn't want any more accidents to happen.

The Gardner Corporation was the largest company in network technology. One could only imagine how grand the birthday celebration for the esteemed daughter of the Gardner Family would be.

This was also precisely why Joanna had to win. Nicole could tell that Joanna truly cared about this when she had managed to hold back even when Colton announced that Nicole was the sole founder for 'Ann'.

Thinking of this, Nicole smiled as she tapped her fingers against the surface of the table. The more important this was to Joanna, the more Nicole wanted to play the bad guy. She wanted Joanna to watch as she was robbed of what she had in the palm of her hands!

After all, Joanna had secretly been an instigator to what was about to happen.

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Chapter 224

Chapter 224 To See Colton

Queenie did not go home directly after she came out of Nicole's office. Instead, she got on the elevator and went upstairs.

In fact, she didn't only agree to Joanna's request for her to come over to give Nicole a hard time. She was also here to see Colton.

After the video of her and Joseph, it had been a long time since Queenie was with Colton.

Even though they would see each other occasionally, Colton always looked like he didn't have any intention of getting close to her with the indifferent attitude he had toward her.

Queenie knew that they couldn't go on like this. Since he wasn't going to come to her, she would have to go to him instead. She was the master of her fate, after all.

Even though Colton had always been indifferent about her, he had never gone out of his way to reject her whenever she approached him. But ever since Nicole appeared in their lives...

The thought immediately made the light in Queenie's eyes dim. It seemed that she and Colton had started drifting apart because of Nicole!

She composed herself the moment she heard the clear ringing of the elevator bell as the doors opened. She now had a gentle smile on her face.

She proceeded to take dignified steps forward but before she even got to Colton's office, Tony, who noticed her, swiftly went over and blocked her way.

"Miss Queenie, President Gardner is in the middle of something now. Please wait a moment," Tony informed in a respectful tone.

Queenie knew that he was saying all this to stop her, which was why she didn't stop walking. "I am only here to see Colton. I won't disturb him."

Seeing as how she had no intention of stopping, Tony turned his body sideways and continued to stand in front of her.

Even though he looked apologetic, his words that came out next were firm. "It is inconvenient for President Gardner to meet you now, Miss Queenie. Please don't make things difficult for me."

Hearing this, Queenie raised her chin slightly to look at Tony. The man might only be Colton's assistant, but he held a lot of power in his hands.

His eyes were squinted at this moment, but even though he had a small smile on his face, the smile didn't touch his eyes at all. It looked like only his skin was moving to accommodate the slight curve at the corners of his mouth.

She finally stood still to look him straight in the eyes and asked, "I am Colton's fiancée and I happen to be here now. I am just taking a detour to see Colton. Certainly there is nothing wrong with that?"

"I didn't say that you can't see President Gardner, Miss Queenie." Tony let out a small smile when he heard her eloquent words. "It is just that the president is busy right now. I am afraid it may be unseemly for you to go in at this moment."

A smile appeared on Queenie's face as she lifted her gaze to look at him, and she asked in return, "Why would you think that it is unseemly, Mr. Larson? Could it be that there is another woman in the president's office?"

Tony didn't flinch from her provocation, and only deadpanned, "You sure tell funny jokes, Miss Queenie."

Not wanting to continue this dead conversation with him, Queenie remained standing in the same spot for a while before she finally compromised. "In this case, can you please inform Colton that I am here, Mr. Larson? I won't go in if he really has his hands full."

"Alright." Tony's tone became softer too, now that Queenie was taking a step backward. It didn't feel right to continue acting stubborn with the woman. "Please wait here for a while, Miss Queenie. I will head in and let the president know."

She quietly nodded at that.

He only turned around and went into Colton's office after seeing that she no longer had the intention to push her way through.

Just like Tony said, Colton was indeed overloaded with work in his office. With a pen in his hand, he had his head lowered as he scribbled something across a piece of paper. He only glanced at Tony briefly when he saw him enter the room before he looked away. He then asked rather emotionlessly, "Yes?"

Looking at his superior working so diligently, Tony smiled and informed, "Queenie Anderson is here. I have her waiting outside your door."

Colton had instructed Tony before that the latter had to immediately stop Queenie from entering if she were to come.

Colton pulled his eyebrows together the instant he heard her name. "Why is she here?" he asked .

Seeing him being impatient, Tony chuckled and said, "I will tell her to leave, then. Should I say that you are busy?"

Colton let out a hum in acknowledgement. Just as Tony was about to head out, Colton suddenly remembered something, and he lifted his head to call out to his assistant. "Actually, let her in."

Needless to say, Tony was surprised to hear that. He didn't think there would come a day when Colton would willingly let Queenie into his office. Still, he was just an assistant. Instead of voicing out his puzzlement, he briefly nodded before he headed out.

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Chapter 225 The Engagement Annulment

Colton was still working when Queenie came into his office.

The lighting in the enormous office was perfect because of the floor-to-ceiling windows he had in place of a wall. On top of that, the rays from the sun hanging high gave the room a spacious and warm feeling. The weather on this day happened to be pleasant as well.

As soon as he heard the sound coming from the door, Colton stopped doing his work and raised his head to glance at Queenie with an indifferent and emotionless look.

She walked toward him slowly and was about to get closer to coyly say something when Tony suddenly pushed the door open and came in.

Queenie froze and stopped moving.

Tony brought in a tea set and placed it on the sofa table beside before he skillfully poured water into a tea cup. "Miss Queenie, I am not sure what you would like to drink, so I prepared plain water for you. Is this alright?"

She nodded in reply. She couldn't possibly do anything overly intimate to Colton now that Tony was here. Left with no choice, Queenie could only walk to the sofa and slowly take a sip from the teacup.

She wanted to wait for Tony to leave before she talked to Colton.

However, the man showed no signs of leaving even when she was almost done with her drink.

She put down the teacup, and when the ceramic teacup made a clear sound as it touched the table, she had a slightly dissatisfied look on her face.

Still, Tony pretended to not notice anything as he continued to stay where he was.

In the end, Colton was the one who kindly spoke up in his low voice. "You can go out for now, Tony."

The assistant glanced at him strangely but after seeing his boss' stern face, he decided not to say anything as he made a move.

A slight smile only appeared on Queenie's face after Tony left. She stood up and wanted to walk over to Colton, but was stopped before she could do anything.

"Just speak from there. Don't come here."

Her face froze as soon as she heard those words, and she obediently stood there. She didn't dare make any sudden moves because of Colton.

She quickly regained her composure as she replaced the surprised look on her face with a smile, and she said gently, "We haven't had a good conversation in a long while, Colton. I came here to congratulate my sister after I heard that she has become the founder of 'Ann', and I made a trip here to see you as well."

Not only did she not sound dissatisfied, her words even sounded fairly reasonable.

He raised his gaze and threw her a glance, his dark eyes an empty void that held no emotion. Queenie couldn't tell what Colton was thinking as he looked at her.

He then gave a curt response in a low voice as he spun the pen he held between his slender fingers.

After a while, he drawled, "I heard from my mother and Wendy that you successfully borrowed jewelry from Triton Studio."

Listening to his unconcerned tone, Queenie did not take credit for herself as she said, "It's something I should do. It is Wendy's 18th birthday, after all. I will do the best I can as long as it is within my capability."

Hearing that, Colton looked at her face with a hint of surprise in his eyes.

It seemed like her temperament had changed after the days he had spent not seeing her.

The old Queenie would have loved to have all the attention on her.

Knowing to back off after she had taken a few steps forward, the woman then said with a smile, "Go ahead and get busy, Colton. I will get out of your hair right this instant. I will come again another day when you are not busy."

"Hold on," he suddenly called out to her when he saw her leaving.

She immediately stopped walking then. With her back to him, she gradually let out a small smile to herself as she mused, Mom is right. I shouldn't hold the leash too tight. There are times when I have to go easy.

She swiftly turned around after she had wiped off the smile on her face. "Is there anything else, Colton?" she asked as she looked at him with calm eyes.

Colton was still standing there when he uttered coolly, "I want to annul our engagement."

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Chapter 226 I Can't Not Have You

Queenie's whole body began to stiffen when she heard these words. She stayed frozen in the same spot for a long time. Right at this moment, it was as if someone had poured a basin of cold water on her, soaking her in ice water from head to toe.

Her eyes were wide as her outstretched hands shook. Even her voice was trembling when she asked with some difficulty, "Is there something I am lacking, Colton?"

Her eyes were already covered with a layer of tears when she spoke. But even though she looked pitiful, the man was not moved in the least.

He remained impassive as he said, "I have been repaying you what I owe you for more than five years now. It is about time this ends."

All Queenie could feel now was the tightening of her throat. She didn't think that he would tell her such a thing today. With her fists clenched, she forced herself to smile.

"You know that was my first time, Colton. I have never had another man beside me ever since I got together with you," she muttered pitifully while sniffing.

His gaze fell then. As he listened to her words, he couldn't help but recall the bright red color on white sheets.

Indeed, that had been Queenie's first time. It was also precisely because of this that he had allowed her to stay by his side for five years.

He closed his eyes slightly and said in a hoarse voice, "You might have been my fiancée for 5 years, but there is nothing between us."

Hearing this, Queenie quickly walked straight ahead until she was in front of his desk. "But you are all I have during all these years. Colton, I... I can't leave you!"

The Andersons would be a powerless and weak family without the Gardners. Queenie would lose everything she had.

She could never let that happen!

Colton lifted his eyes to look at the person in front of him who had become fragile and pitiful because of his words, but his heart remained unchanging.

Still, she was the one who had saved him back then, and had spent five years of her life with him. He didn't intend to be too cruel toward her. Hence, he simply said, "I will break off the engagement through the media, but I can help with paying off all the debts your family has. The Gardner Corporation can also collaborate with your family's company for certain projects."

Queenie only kept looking at him. She could tell that he was determined to break up with her. Holding back the tears in her eyes, she quickly began to think of a way to salvage the situation.

After a while, she lifted her gaze and pleaded, "Colton, I know that you don't like me, but I'm used to having you around... This is too sudden for me. Can you give me a buffer?"

He lowered his eyes and thought for a while before he nodded. "Alright," he agreed. "I will give you time. I want you to come to terms with it before Wendy's birthday banquet, though."

Queenie was somewhat staggered, but there was nothing she could do at this point.

With a nod and a soft hum, she turned around and left the room.

After he looked at her retreating back, Colton directly turned away without a hint of lingering emotion in his eyes.

He knew full well what kind of person Queenie was. He knew that all she wanted was to hold onto the financial power of the Gardner Family. He had endured the things she had done behind his back during the five years because he had always felt like he owed her.

But now, he couldn't continue with this anymore. Even though nothing had happened throughout the years she was his fiancée and that they could keep on with this meaningless relationship forever, the current him didn't want just anyone to occupy the position as his fiancée.

Just as he finished musing to himself and was about to collect himself to continue working, Tony suddenly came in through the door.

After he glanced at Colton, he walked to the desk and started cleaning up the mess as he spoke. "Gosh, what did you say to her, President Gardner? She was so happy when she came in, but she left in tears. Poor Queenie!"

Listening to Tony babble, Colton looked at him and snapped, "I can let her marry you if you sympathize with her so much."

Tony's soul almost left his body from the shock, and he quickly shook his head. "Please don't joke about this!" he cried.

Tony was greeted by the sight of his boss' straight face as soon as he looked up. He was so frightened that he quickly finished up his task at hand.

"Please continue with your work. I'll leave you to it." He proceeded to scurry off to the door after he blurted that out.

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Chapter 227

Chapter 227 Glad to Work With You

Nicole came up shortly after Queenie left.

Walking by her side, Tony led her into the office and just as he was about to leave her with Colton, he heard Colton say something.

"There's no need to bring refreshments in."

Geez, what blatant partiality! It is so obvious you don't want to be disturbed!

Even though Tony was silently grumbling to himself, he still nodded and left.

Nicole wasn't aware that Queenie had just left, and neither did she care as she went straight to the point.

"President Gardner, it seems rather improper to me that the announcement states I am the sole founder of 'Ann'."

Colton didn't think that this was what Nicole would come to talk to him about today, so he stopped doing his work and raised his brows slightly as a little smile appeared on his face.

"What's wrong? What about it is inappropriate?"

With a solemn face, she looked straight at him and said, "I may be the one who made the main products of the brand, but Director Schmidt has also contributed a lot. I am afraid it is inappropriate that my name is the only one mentioned."

“You want to add Joanna Schmidt’s name, you mean?” he asked.

Nicole nodded and exclaimed generously, “After all, it couldn’t have been completed with just me alone. I represent F&M Apparel, and Joanna represents the Gardner Corporation.”

Hearing that, Colton smilingly stood up and walked over slowly as he stated, “The brand is only popular because of Lisa. There is no need to add anything else. It will only make it more cumbersome.”

Nicole stiffened for a moment before she looked up, just in time to see the half-smile on his face.

Seeing that she wasn’t replying, he continued, “Chief Designer Lisa from F&M Apparel has a certain position in the design industry. But all Lisa does is produce couture and occasionally design something for F&M Apparel. She does not have her own brand.”

Nicole quickly understood what Colton was saying then. With a glint in her eyes, she asked, “Are you thinking of making ‘Ann’ my brand, President Gardner?”

“You can think of it that way,” he replied with a nod.

His answer made her purse her lips as an odd feeling arose in her chest. She looked up and when her eyes fell on his handsome face, her lips parted as she finally asked, “Why did you spend all that time in the clothing industry, President Gardner? Why are you handing over the result of your hard work to someone else?”

The corners of his lips curled into a smile and instead of answering her, he asked lazily, “Don’t all designers want to have a brand of their own?”

When she nodded without objecting, Colton continued, “This might be a collaboration between the Gardner Corporation and F&M Apparel, but it is also a collaboration between Lisa and the Gardner Corporation. You are in charge of design, and I am in charge of the operation and finances. I will be fulfilling my mother’s wish, and you will get rich and famous if we manage to grow the brand. Isn’t this a win-win situation?”

Upon hearing that, Nicole was at a loss for words.

She only laughed after a while. “It is a wonderful plan, President Gardner. My collaboration with the Gardner Corporation is only supposed to be half a year. You are making it necessary to keep collaborating with your company this way.”

“It is not about the collaboration. It is about building your own design brand,” he corrected her.

Nicole pursed her lips at that. She had to admit that Colton's plan was a good one. It was indeed every designer's dream to create their own brand. Of course, as a designer herself, Nicole had also thought about it before.

The only thing that got in her way was the fact that she was the Chief Designer at F&M Apparel.

What Colton was doing was help her create a brand the right and proper way, but at the end of the day, he was still the one who had the power in his hands.

Seeing how she had fallen silent, he tugged the corners of his lips up and continued to ask, "How is it? What do you think, Miss Nicole?"

She narrowed her eyes but instead of refusing, she nodded and said, "Pleasure to work with you."

"Likewise." He smiled.

They did not continue to talk in depth, and Nicole left shortly after the negotiation.

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Chapter 228 Will She Go Crazy From Anger?

As the news about Nicole being the founder of 'Ann' spread, another topic had also become one of the trending searches—Wendy Gardner's 18th Birthday Banquet.

After all, the Gardner Family were heavily involved in business. Now that it was their youngest daughter's birthday banquet to celebrate her coming-of-age, there were business and political figures both in and out of the country who would naturally show her the respect as a member of the Gardner household.

The reporters and the media had also specially bombarded Wendy with praises and compliments on the Internet.

However, just as the public had their eyes on Wendy, another gossip broke out from a media outlet.

They had, without reservations, written a long article that could be summarized as—Lisa from F&M Apparel and Joanna Schmidt from the Gardner Corporation wanted to make

a dress for the young miss of the Gardner Family, but Miss Gardner finally chose Joanna Schmidt.

Even though it was just gossip, everyone couldn't help updating themselves with it.

Many online users began to wonder how Lisa could lose when she was the one who made that stunning gown, which was misunderstood to be a product of plagiarism, for Wendy's graduation.

Then again, everyone began to consider the possibility of Joanna being an excellent designer and she had ended up producing something better than Lisa did.

The public was thrown into a turmoil once again when the Gardner Corporation released news that Lisa was the founder of 'Ann'. They couldn't stop questioning the reason Lisa was the only one mentioned when it was supposed to be a collaborative work between the Gardner Corporation and F&M Apparel.

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There were different opinions on the matter. Anyhow, this so-called 'gossip' had become a hot topic that was highly debated.

As for where this gossip came from, Nicole would, of course, know about it.

Whitney knew that Nicole was ready. As long as they had the pink gem sent by Triton Studio, there was no doubt that Nicole would win this battle.

That was why not only Whitney wasn't angry, she was rather amused when she saw the discussions on the Internet. She turned to look at the calm Nicole and couldn't suppress the corners of her mouth as they rose. "I am sure Joanna was the one who spread the gossip, Miss Nicole."

Nicole only hummed without denying it.

Her reaction made Whitney gloat even more. "Miss Nicole, do you think she would go crazy from anger if Miss Gardner ended up wearing your dress over her?" she asked smilingly.

Nicole chuckled lightly with her eyes closed. She then raised her chin and propped it in her palm. "Joanna is a clever person. Even though she was never involved in the dirty things that Queenie did, I am sure she played her part in taking Queenie into doing them."

Whitney proceeded to look at her with confused eyes.

Nicole paused briefly before she continued, "Since she chose to stand in the same boat as Queenie, I don't see the need for me to hold back anymore."

As soon as she said that, she was hit by a sudden dizziness that made her close her eyes as she tried to recover from it.

Seeing her in discomfort, Whitney hurried forward and showed her concern. "Is it your anemia acting up again, Miss Nicole?"

Nicole rested for a bit then. She hadn't had a good rest ever since she spent her nights and days doing her work. To make things worse, her old sickness was relapsing again.

"It is okay. I will be fine once my schedule is back on track after Wendy's birthday."

Still, Whitney couldn't help but worry. Although Nicole had makeup on, Whitney could still see the other woman's exhaustion peeking through.

Seeing Whitney's worried face, Nicole added again, "Julia will be in the country in a few days. I will be fine once I let her do her magic."

"Is Miss Hull coming too?" Whitney asked in surprise.

Julia Hull, a doctor who held a doctorate degree, worked as the attending doctor in a private hospital abroad. She was also the one who helped Nicole with the delivery of her child back then.

"Yeah." Nicole nodded. "She told me she will be here to accompany her boyfriend to a banquet, and after finding out that I am here, she said that she would stop by to see me."

Julia hadn't told Nicole anything about having a boyfriend before their conversation on the phone two days ago. She had directly told Nicole that she was coming to the country.

"Then, you should rest before Miss Hull comes. Your health should always come first," Whitney advised as she cleared up the table.

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Right Person, Wrong Time Chapter 229

Chapter 229

Chapter 229 Make the Dress

The internet became more fervent the closer it was to Wendy's birthday.

Everyone was watching the truth unfold, as though they were spectators of a show.

Nicole's reputation had soared because of plagiarism and suicide cases before. On top of that, there was a rumor going about that Wendy had chosen Joanna's design over Nicole's.

Everyone's curiosity had been piqued after the series of events that happened. They all wanted to see what kind of clothes Joanna had designed that could be better than Nicole's.

Joanna's reputation had improved as well.

She was finally done with the dress three days before Wendy's birthday.

After Joanna arrived at Gardner Residence, Anna had Edith bring tea over before Anna looked at her with a kind gaze.

Joanna proceeded to put the finished product on the table. "Mrs. Gardner and Wendy, the dress is done. You can try it on. I can fix it if there is anything you find uncomfortable with."

Anna looked at the dress and nodded.

Wendy, on the other hand, only glanced at the dress. She didn't seem all that excited about putting it on.

Nicole had promised her a dress if Nicole were to successfully borrow the main jewelry from Triton Studio. However, Wendy hadn't heard back from Nicole at all, even though the birthday banquet was just days away.

She couldn't help but panic when she thought of the possibility that Nicole couldn't get the jewelry.

Regardless, Wendy didn't let her emotion show as she forced an absolutely fake smile at Joanna.

"Alright, Miss Joanna. I will try it on."

She hugged the dress against her chest and went to change into it after she said that.

The dress designed by Joanna was actually not ugly to look at. Even though the overall style was on the mature and dignified side, it still looked good on the body.

Wendy, however, didn't look like she was in the best of moods when she came out in the dress.

In fact, she might have been satisfied with Joanna's dress if she hadn't seen Nicole's but since she did, she couldn't help but think that Nicole's dress was the better-looking one between the two.

Anna knew what her daughter was thinking, and she comforted her, "This dress isn't that bad."

Right after she said that, Nicole made her late appearance as she came in from outside. "Hello, Mrs. Gardner and Wendy," she greeted as soon as she walked in.

She was carrying a huge bag in her hand.

Wendy's eyes immediately lit up when she saw the bag. The initial gloomy expression on her face, too, had instantly become a happy one.

She had her eyes on the bag the whole time she hurried over to Nicole.

Joanna could tell what Nicole was up to. The smile on her face went stiff, but she knew she had to hold it in.

When she looked at Nicole, she squinted slightly and glanced at the bag that Nicole brought over before her eyes fell on the woman. "What brings you here, Miss Lisa?"

Nicole completely ignored her and proceeded to hand the bag to Wendy. Smilingly, she offered, "Try it on, Wendy. I had this specially designed for you."

Hearing this, Joanna clenched her fists, but because Anna and Wendy were still here, she forced herself to stay still.

With that, Wendy hugged the dress and turned to leave.

Nicole took the chance to sit down, and after she looked at Anna, she blurted out, "I just finished the dress today. I was thinking of letting Wendy try it so I can see if there is anything about it I need to change."

"I will leave it to you, then." Ann nodded.

Wendy came out briefly after she went in to change. Nicole's dress looked like it was of way higher quality and taste compared with Joanna's dress just now. The slightly long trail of the dress and its youthful design would easily catch anyone's eye the moment they laid eyes upon it.

As Wendy turned around, they could see the back for her slender torso from the bareback design of the dress.

Compared to the lifeless dress from earlier, this dress had enhanced Wendy's grace.

There was no way Joanna wouldn't notice this. In fact, she had known from the start that her design could never compete with Nicole's. Still, she never expected Nicole would go ahead and make the dress, and even had it brought over to let Wendy try it on right in front of her!

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Chapter 230

Chapter 230 Deliver the Dress

"The dress you made is just perfect, Miss Nicole. It fits like a glove and it looks good!"

It was probably because Wendy really did like it that the smile on her face became a lot more sincere.

There was a pleased glint in Nicole's eyes when she nodded and said, "I am glad that you like it, Wendy."

However, Joanna, who was sitting beside her, was fuming. She only managed to keep her temper at bay when she tried her best to suppress her anger.

"Both dresses fit well. There is nothing I want altered," Wendy said before she sat down beside Anna.

Anna also nodded in satisfaction. "You two have worked hard today."

Joanna showed her a rather stiff smile while she shook her head. "No problem. As long as Wendy likes it."

As they continued to chat for a little longer, Nicole said that she had to leave to attend to something else, so she got up to leave soon after.

Anna seemed to think of something then, and she suddenly called out to Nicole. "Come here tomorrow again, Nicole. I have something to tell you."

Nicole immediately understood that it was probably about Hayden and Colton. "Sure." She nodded. "I will be back tomorrow."

She left swiftly after answering Anna.

Nicole had just stepped out of the Gardner Residences gate and was about to get into her car when Joanna followed after her. The sound of the latter's heels clicking against the cemented ground was clear as day.

Joanna had her eyes on Nicole the whole time she stomped toward her. Her dark eyes even looked like they were about to burst into flames. With her fists balled, Joanna growled through gritted teeth, "Miss Lisa, Wendy has chosen me to design her dress. What the hell were you trying to do just now?!"

Nicole smiled when she looked at Joanna, who was on the verge of losing control. "I am only here to deliver the dress. Weren't you there the whole time, Director Schmidt? Don't tell me you didn't see what took place."

Joanna's anger went up another notch as she looked at the nonchalance of the woman in front of her. Fortunately, she was educated and cultured enough to know better than to scream out loud now.

With her lips pursed, she mocked, "You are the esteemed Chief Designer of the F&M Apparel, Miss Lisa. I hope you won't resort to doing something underhanded."

Nicole suddenly laughed when she heard Joanna's words. She then turned to look at her and questioned, "Underhanded? Oh—do enlighten me. Whatever could you possibly mean by that? Does colluding to come up with the design draft beforehand count?"

Seeing that Nicole was still bringing this up, Joanna refused to admit to it no matter what. She calmed down slightly and said, "Wendy has already chosen me as her designer. You shouldn't get involved anymore, Miss Lisa!"

Joanna couldn't do anything about 'Ann' now that the issue had been put to rest, but there was no way she would hand the opportunity for the boost in her career through Wendy's birthday banquet to someone else.

Nicole didn't care about Joanna's relentless pressing on the matter and she only sighed. "Director Schmidt, why do you bother telling me all this if you have confidence in your design?"

The smile on Nicole's face grew wider when she noticed how Joanna's face fell after hearing her words.

She then continued, "Since you said that Wendy appointed you, you should do your job well. The only thing that you would be showing people if Wendy ends up not wearing your dress at the birthday banquet is your incompetence."

After indifferently saying those words, Nicole turned around and got into her car.

Joanna was so enraged that she was about to blow a gasket. Without saying a word, she only angrily stared as Nicole's car drove off into the distance.

Joanna tried her best to calm her heart then. Even though Nicole's design was better than hers, there was no way Nicole could cause any major problems as long as Joanna still had the jewelry Queenie had borrowed from Triton Studio.

She trusted Anna that she would not allow Wendy to give up on an opportunity like this!

Now that she had calmed down, Joanna suddenly thought of something that brought a resentful glint to her eyes. She had thought that Nicole wouldn't be able to do anything to go against her, given the short period of time she would be working at the Gardner Corporation. The situation now, however, seemed to have gotten a lot more complicated than she hoped for.

Don't blame me for coming for your neck if you ever threaten my peace, Nicole Anderson!

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