

Right Person, Wrong Time Chapter 364

Chapter 364 Should Definitely Investigate

“Miss Nicole, Miss Julia, we are forever in your debt for saving Old Mr. Benedict’s life. I promise you that I will dig into the case. But now, you two have to rest. We’ll talk about this later.”

Nicole was indeed well spent and considerably burned-out, so she nodded in agreement. “Although Old Mr. Benedict is okay now, it’s not a guarantee because of that episode. Richard is an adept doctor, and he should be able to keep everything under control.”

After a pause, she continued, “Someone with medical knowledge will have to take turns looking after Old Mr. Benedict for the next forty-eight hours. If nothing bad happens within this period, he’ll be out of danger.”

When he saw how pale Nicole looked, Colton pulled her arm closer to him and carried her bridal style.

Nicole reflexively struggled when she was caught off guard, but Colton naturally wouldn’t give her the chance to do so. He whispered, “Don’t move. You’re still exhausted, so I’ll take you upstairs to rest. You can only catch the perpetrator after you’re well-rested.”

Indeed, she was exhausted, and her legs were still wobbly. Overusing her brain made her feel burned out. After all, the surgery lasted way too long, and nearly all her focus had been on Benedict with zero distractions.

As self-conscious as Nicole was, she still acquiesced to Colton’s decision to carry her upstairs.

On the other hand, Julia didn’t get as nice of a treatment, for Richard was currently with Benedict. Hence, she could only go upstairs to rest with the help of the Gardners’ servants.

Meanwhile, Colton returned downstairs after sending Nicole to recover in a room.

Since Benedict had just undergone surgery, no one disturbed him and instead remained in the living room, looking grim as they chewed on Nicole’s words.

When he saw that Colton had returned, Benjamin turned to him and asked, “What do you think about this?”

Likewise, Colton looked grim as he stood by the couch. His family was where he drew the line, and anyone who dared lay a finger on them would be doomed to death.

“There’s no reason for Nicole to lie to us, and something must’ve happened to Grandpa. Pull up the surveillance cameras in the house. We should investigate if this is targeted toward Nicole or our family.”

Either way, he wouldn’t show that person mercy.

Olivia was relatively silent. She disdained Nicole, but her impression of the woman changed now that she had saved her father’s life.

Pierre was the only stranger in this residence, and everyone who was working in Gardner Residence had been around for a long time. In other words, there was no way they would betray the Gardners.

However, all accusations relied on evidence. Pierre might not be well-reputed, but he was still notable in the medical community. They couldn’t do anything about Pierre if they didn’t have solid evidence.

“Alright, I’ll leave this to you.” Benjamin stood up.

They hadn’t slept a wink since Nicole commenced the surgery, and a weight was lifted off their shoulders after knowing the surgery was a success. They no longer felt as awful as they had been earlier.

“Let’s all get some rest. We can’t afford to stay awake like this when we’re all getting on in years. Imagine if all of us collapse before Dad wakes up. Someone is keeping an eye on him, and I’m sure we’ll be notified if anything happens.”

After knowing that Benedict was fine, they all could rest with peace of mind.

Olivia nodded in agreement, for she was exhausted after staying awake for so long. “I’m still worried about Dad. I’ll stay here for a few days and leave when he’s doing better.”

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Chapter 365 On the Same Bed

Anna understood where Olivia was coming from, but when she recalled Olivia and Nicole’s situation, she couldn’t help feeling somewhat uneasy.

Olivia seemed to have noticed Anna’s worry, for she said in a low voice, “As much as I have a problem with Nicole, she saved Dad, after all. I won’t give her a hard time.”

Though disdain still laced her tone, it was already much better than before.

Anna could finally put her mind to ease after hearing Olivia's words. Nicole was now considered their family's savior, and it wouldn't be right for her sister-in-law to continue treating the woman like before.

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Nicole had been asleep for a long time, and it had been a long while since she had slept so comfortably on a bed because of this surgery, as well as the days she spent honing her skills in the Hull Family's research center.

God knew just how long she had been asleep, but she felt groggy when she stirred. Although her brain was aware of reality, she couldn't open her eyes as it felt like someone had glued them together.

With that, she placed a hand on her forehead, taking a long time to open her eyes gradually. She then removed her hand aside, only to freeze when she was about to get up.

She seemed to have hit something just now.

Alarmed, she looked toward it to find Colton lying next to her in bed, leading her to curse in shock.

Fortunately, she stopped those words just as they reached the tip of her tongue, saving her from a gaffe.

As Colton hadn't entered deep slumber, he woke up as soon as Nicole swatted him, and he couldn't help feeling amused when he saw her covering herself up with the blanket, wide-eyed.

He had slept rather late that day, and it was only less than three hours since he climbed into bed.

When he saw her dramatic expression, he kindly explained, "This is my room and my bed, so there's no need to freak out that I'm here."

Since Nicole had been in his embrace from the beginning, she didn't have the chance to check the place out. She finally glanced around in hindsight.

"Why did you bring me here?" she asked with a frown, feeling somewhat displeased.

“You were sleepy, and I didn’t think too far ahead when I brought you here. I might not stay here often, but they still clean the room regularly. It’s not dirty,” Colton explained thoughtfully.

She didn’t mind the filth. Instead, Nicole was bothered by the fact that she was sleeping in the same bed as Colton. Though he was Hayden’s father, in her eyes, he still had nothing to do with her.

“Since I’m already sleeping here, shouldn’t you avoid arousing suspicion by sleeping in another bed, President Gardner?” Nicole asked with a half-smile, nearly gritting her teeth.

However, Colton smiled somewhat frivolously and shamelessly said, “I’m picky about beds, you see. I can’t fall asleep if the bed isn’t mine. I’m sorry, but we’ll have to snuggle in one bed.”

Nicole had a feeling this guy was so shameless that nothing she said would get him to leave.

Nonetheless, she still suppressed her anger. Honestly, must I go through something this annoying the moment I wake up?

With that, she lifted the covers and got out of bed. “It’s only past 4.00AM right now. Why don’t you sleep a little longer?” Colton’s voice came from behind her.

“No, I’ve had enough rest. I’m going to take a look at Old Mr. Benedict,” said Nicole as she fixed her shirt, which had been wrinkled during her sleep. Fortunately, they were both dressed, declaring them innocent.

Right as she finished speaking, a rustling noise came from behind her. She turned around to look curiously and found that Colton had gotten out of bed.

He was in a better situation than Nicole, for he had removed his jacket before going to bed.

“I’ll go with you,” he said while putting on his jacket.

Nicole didn’t turn him down since Benedict was his grandfather. She couldn’t stop him from seeing his own grandfather, could she?

She opened the door after fixing her shirt, letting Colton follow right behind.

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Inside the room, Benedict's body was currently connected to various medical equipment via tubes while Richard sat on a stool aside, monitoring the old man.

Richard turned around upon hearing noise coming from the door and froze for a split second when he realized that it was Nicole and Colton. "You two are early. You can actually sleep a while longer," he said with a smile.

Nicole took a gander at Benedict. Despite looking pallid, his breathing was considerably gentle.

With that, she asked Richard softly, "Are there any abnormalities with Old Mr. Benedict?"

Richard shook his head in response. "All good. I have to hand it to you and your skills. You even successfully pulled off such a life-threatening surgery."

A hint of admiration flashed across his eyes as he spoke.

Nicole smiled and replied with humility, "I'm just a doctor who's trying my best to treat my patient."

Seeing that the two had come, Richard stood up and rubbed his neck with one hand, tired from monitoring Benedict the entire time.

"Since you guys have come, I'll go back and take a nap. Call me if anything happens."

Nicole nodded at that. "Go ahead." Richard could go ahead and rest without worry since she'd be around.

After Richard left, it was just the two of them and an unconscious Benedict in the room.

It wasn't until she thoroughly checked Benedict and was certain he was okay that she grabbed a stool to sit on.

Colton, on the other hand, took the opportunity to sit next to Nicole. After pondering for a while, he spoke up. "I've had someone check the surveillance, but Pierre didn't seem suspicious from the looks of the footage. I also did a thorough examination, and someone hacked into the surveillance system earlier."

The man's finding surprised Nicole. Did someone hack into the surveillance system? Clearly, that person is trying to cause chaos.

"In other words, we don't have any evidence pointing toward Pierre now, do we?" Nicole asked.

Colton nodded in reply. "Are you sure it's Pierre?"

Nicole couldn't give him a straight answer. After all, accusations required proof, and they had none at the moment. As such, she couldn't insist it was Pierre's doing.

"I have somewhat of a history with Pierre, and he might be after me this time. Back then, he failed to become White's disciple because of me, and now, I'm out here stealing his limelight. It's only normal that he loathes me."

All the servants at Gardner Residence had served the Gardners for decades, so they couldn't possibly doublecross the family. Nicole and Julia, on the other hand, didn't sign a waiver of liability and assumption of risk agreement, so they wouldn't do anything since they wouldn't gain anything from harming Benedict.

If they put it that way, only Pierre was the most probable suspect.

"Will you be able to detect the drug residue?" Colton asked after some thought.

Nicole shook her head in response, explaining as she drooped her eyes, "This substance volatilizes very quickly. It'll be gone after twelve hours of being in someone's system."

It was also why Pierre dared stay in Gardner Residence, not shying away at all. He knew they couldn't pull out any evidence even if he was suspected or discovered, after all.

Benedict would bleed out during surgery because of the agent, and a lot of time would be taken up regardless of whether they could save Benedict or not. More than twelve hours would've passed by the time they were done.

They had to admit that Pierre plotted every step to the T.

Colton crossed his arms and balled his hand into a fist as malice flashed across his face.

Since we can't do anything about him in the open, I'll have someone deal with him in the shadows! Colton thought as he drooped his eyelids.

While Colton was musing, an idea hit Nicole. "That's it. I have an idea."

After hearing Nicole's voice, Colton returned to reality, and a faint smile instantly replaced the malice on his face.

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“What idea?” Colton probably didn’t even realize the gentleness in his voice.

“Since Pierre is coming at me, he’ll get green-eyed if I have some form of medical achievement. That way, things will be much simpler,” she explained.

At that, she continued with a smile, “Isn’t there a pandemic in Espad lately that has forced the country into a full-on lockdown, and there’s a team in our country developing a vaccine?”

Colton was somewhat surprised as he looked at Nicole’s determined look with pursed lips. “Are you saying that you want to join the team?”

Nicole nodded in affirmation. “Although I specialize in surgery, I’ve also studied a good amount of medication back when I was learning under White, and I’ve even gained some achievements.”

Moreover, she could definitely join the team if she used her identity as White’s protégé.

“Alright.” Colton didn’t stop her. Gardner Corporation was funding this particular vaccine development team, so it shouldn’t be a problem to add Nicole to the team.

“This time, I’ll make sure Pierre is disgraced if he dares to make another move!” Nicole vowed through gritted teeth. A weasel like Pierre definitely couldn’t stand to see her succeed. Once he made another move, she’d make sure to get back at him for old and new grudges.

Colton knew Nicole was truly pissed this time, for he had never seen her this vicious.

Since this man is doomed, I’ll spare him until Nicole is thoroughly done with him, he thought.

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Meanwhile, at Kohlberg Residence, Bryan gave Queenie a ruthless slap on the head. His eyes were filled with darkness, and his face was grimmer than death.

“What use do you have for me when you can’t even get something this simple done?!” Bryan was beside himself with rage. This was supposed to be their final step to success, but who’d have thought that their barks were worse than their bite. Moreover, they ended up with nothing.

He clearly remembered Queenie promising that Benedict would definitely die on his death bed from the very beginning. As such, he had been waiting for this opportunity to take down the Gardners in one fell swoop while they were distracted. However, who’d

have thought the news he received instead was that the old man's surgery had been a success and that he was doing rather well? After all, he had already spent all the money and effort.

Queenie's face stung after receiving Bryan's heavy blow.

The only reason she had promised Bryan so was because Pierre vowed that Benedict wouldn't be able to leave the surgery alive even if God himself had come.

Bryan was overjoyed after receiving the guarantee and instantly got down to taking Gardner Corporation down. Unexpectedly, word was that Benedict's surgery had been a success.

As such, he instantly hit the brakes. After all, the Gardners could focus on retaliating when the old man was alive and kicking.

By then, not only would he have a hard time in business, he probably wouldn't have things easy personally either.

Presently, Kohlberg Group was way below Gardner Corporation's league, and he'd only be serving Kohlberg Group on a silver platter if he attacked the other party when they weren't having any internal conflicts.

Queenie didn't dare make a sound despite being hit, for the Anderson Family was now debt-ridden, and she no longer had Colton's support anymore. Hence, she could only hope to run away from all of this after getting money from Bryan.

At that, she forced tears into her eyes, looking all piteous when she looked up.

"President Kohlberg, Dr. Toth was the one who promised the outcome, though. I didn't know it would come to this either," Queenie mumbled with gritted teeth while she sobbed, looking all aggrieved.

As annoyed as Bryan was, he knew he still had use for this woman, so he softened up. "I'm sorry, I got a little ahead of myself. Did I hurt you?"

Queenie knew Bryan wouldn't blame her anymore when she saw that he had softened up. She whined while resting her arms on his shoulders, saying, "It does hurt a little. I think my face is swollen."

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Chapter 368 Anna's Focus

Bryan comforted Queenie as he looked at her swollen cheek. "I was just so angry just now. I'm sorry, baby. It'll never happen again."

He even pretended to look affectionate after speaking.

However, Queenie knew what sort of man Bryan was, so she only feigned innocence. She still needed his support, after all.

“Don’t worry, President Kohlberg. I’ll definitely help you deal with the Gardner Family. Naturally, I have leverage over Gardner Corporation since I’ve been working for them for so long.” Queenie let Bryan know she was still useful to him.

Sure enough, the man no longer looked as awful after hearing her words.

This time, he had spent loads of money and effort only to gain nothing in the end, but with leverage over Gardner Corporation, would he need to worry about overthrowing the Gardner Family?!

“I’ll let you see to it. Come, let me take a look. Your face is all swollen. I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have hit you.”

Bryan had his way with how he treated people, showing affection after giving them punishment. It was only then his minions would be obedient.

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Back at the Gardner Residence, Benedict regained consciousness two days later.

Nonetheless, he was still bedridden because of the surgery.

On the other hand, Nicole remained in Gardner Residence over the past few days, never leaving Benedict’s side apart from when she slept. She feared that another accident might happen.

Of course, Nicole’s actions hadn’t gone unnoticed by Anna, and the latter was glad. “Colton, I still think Nicole has feelings for you, or she wouldn’t be so concerned about your grandfather.”

How could Colton not understand what his mother was trying to tell him? Now that his grandfather was okay, Anna was worry-free, so she’d naturally turn her focus to Hayden.

With that, he lowered his head and looked at Anna, saying, “Mom, Nicole has done our family a huge favor this time. As for Hayden, it’s still down to what she thinks. If she’s not willing to, please don’t force her.”

Anna instantly panicked when she heard Colton's impassive tone. She had only come and talked to him about it because she could sense his love for Nicole. "That's not what I mean, Colton. I can tell that you like Nicole, and I don't oppose her marrying into our family either."

Colton felt rather helpless about his mother's anxiousness.

It was a good thing for him that Anna favored Nicole, but knowing the latter, she wouldn't compromise easily.

"Mom, a relationship will only work if both parties are happy to be together. You can't possibly kidnap Nicole and bring her here, can you?"

Anna fell silent at that. She had been wishing for a grandchild for nearly a decade, and she had never seen Colton falling in love with any other woman since Sasha left.

Now that so many years had passed and a woman finally caught Colton's fancy, could he blame her for being worked up? They even had a child together.

"But—" Colton stopped his mother when she was about to say something. "Mom, we're in Nicole's debt now. You can't possibly force her to have Hayden acknowledge his parentage now, can you?"

Anna fell silent for a long time after hearing Colton's words.

Her son was right; she couldn't do that.

Anna sighed after mulling over it. She was getting on in years now and couldn't do anything about the issues between these youngsters anymore.

With that, she waved her hand and said, "Fine, this is between you two, so I'll just stay out of it. I'll try to stop the media and not let anyone know Hayden's a Gardner."

Colton smiled upon hearing that his mother thought of the common good. At the very least, she was still reasonable. "Thanks, Mom."

Nicole, on the other hand, only left Gardner Residence after Benedict's condition was stable. As her days had been topsy-turvy of late, she didn't ask about what was going on with the outside world.

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Chapter 369 I Know What I'm Doing

Little did she know that Gardner Corporation had nearly turned upside down while she was away.

It wasn't until she resumed work did she learn that the sketches they had submitted to Aimee International were subjected to plagiarism.

Whitney was caught off guard as well. Worst of all, she was the one who signed them off.

Gardner Corporation had intended to collaborate with Aimee International to help Ann expand overseas. But now, Aimee International wouldn't compromise easily when the sketches were subjected to plagiarism.

Just as Whitney was overwhelmed by the issue, Nicole showed up.

"I've screwed up, Miss Nicole," Whitney said through gritted teeth, seething with rage.

She never imagined that she'd be screwed up because of an insider job.

Nicole furrowed her brows in response. Whitney barely made any mistakes the entire time she worked under Nicole, doing her job efficiently and proportionately despite her boisterous, devil-may-care attitude and seemingly unreliable front.

"What did you do?" Nicole asked. She didn't expect to be met with another problem as soon as she was done dealing with Benedict's issues.

"The sketches that we collaborated with Aimee International are being suspected of plagiarism, and we allegedly copied from Aimee's early designers' work." Whitney's tone was laced with anxiety.

Her words stumped Nicole for a second, but the woman quickly realized what was going on. "Are these from Joanna?"

After some thinking, Whitney shook her head while saying through gritted teeth, "I'm not sure. I had my plate full after I took over your duties recently, so I had no time to check. Also, Joanna kept urging me, so I just skimmed through them. It was remiss of me not to notice the plagiarism."

Whitney wasn't afraid of taking on the responsibility, but the problem was that she had signed them on Nicole's behalf.

She would never forgive herself for screwing Nicole up!

"Let me have a look at the sketches," Nicole urged. Whitney would've been able to tell a thing or two when she had seen so many sketches while working under Nicole for years.

With that, Whitney pulled up the original sketches straight away, to which Nicole turned grave upon seeing them.

She patted Whitney's shoulder and comforted her. "This isn't your fault. Joanna did this on purpose."

Whitney was taken aback. She kept thinking it was her remiss, but who'd have thought Joanna was the one behind it all?

When she saw Whitney's bewilderment, Nicole then explained, "These are Aimee's early sketches. No one but those who have worked in Aimee International or have seen these sketches by chance would know of their existence."

Since they were early sketches, coupled with the fact that the style was rather undesirable to the public, they weren't mass-produced and only sold in a small number of their retail stores. Hence, it was normal for Whitney not to have recognized them.

Meanwhile, Joanna had probably cross-checked every one of them before submitting the designs, for there was no way Whitney wouldn't have realized if there were any designs that could be found online.

As such, there could only be one possibility left—Joanna had done it on purpose.

"No matter what, this all happened because of my mistake. Miss Nicole, you might have been the one to sign the contract, but I signed these designs off. If Aimee International intends to sue us, let me face them instead."

Whitney had now accepted her fate, and she would not allow Nicole to take the blame for her mistake.

On the other hand, Nicole couldn't help chuckling when she saw how grave Whitney looked. "Relax, I know what to do about this. You and I are going to be fine," she said reassuringly.

Nicole's affirmative look took Whitney back for a second, and she quickly reacted by asking, "Are you sure, Miss Nicole?"

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Chapter 370 Causing Trouble

Nicole sneered, for she was certain what Joanna was scheming.

With that, she lowered her eyelids and said with a smile, "Since she wants to play ball, we'll play with her then."

However, Whitney still felt horrible, for things wouldn't have gotten so bothersome if it weren't for her.

When Nicole saw that Whitney was still glum, she chuckled under her breath. "Joanna has had a problem with me for a long time. She's just using this opportunity to bring me down through your hands. There's no need to burden yourself with it, Whitney. Things change, so roll with the punches."

Whitney knew that Nicole had a plan when she looked so confident. Then again, the fault was ultimately on her. She couldn't just pretend nothing happened, could she?

After some thought, she suggested with determination, "Miss Nicole, I should go to Aimee International. Perhaps they might be understanding."

At that, Nicole took a plain glance at Whitney, thinking the big shot behind Aimee International must have too much time on their hands if they dared to seek trouble when they knew she was the one who signed the contract.

"Don't worry, I've got this. I may have been the one to sign the contract, but Joanna won't be able to shirk responsibility either. Now that I don't have to worry about Old Mr. Benedict's issue anymore, I have plenty of time to play with them!"

Who'd have thought entertainment presented itself to her when she was beginning to think her days in Gardner Corporation were getting boring?

Whitney knew Nicole had always been assertive, so things would definitely be fine if she said so.

With that, she nodded. "Alright. Since that's the case, just tell me if you need anything."

Nicole fixed her clothes and hair before standing straight. "Come on, let's go downstairs and stir trouble."

Whitney hurriedly caught up with Nicole when she saw her going on the warpath. "Awesome, I'm coming with you. I've long had enough of them. Every one of them is more pretentious than the next. Who knows what sort of rotten schemes are in their minds?!"

Nicole chuckled at the sight of Whitney's indignation. It was only normal for the woman to be pissed when Joanna had set such a huge trap for her.

With that, she took Whitney downstairs to cause chaos.

After arriving at the Design Department, Nicole barged into Joanna's office with Whitney following behind.

Inside, Joanna happened to be chatting away with Kylie when the door suddenly opened, causing them to reflexively look over with bafflement.

When she saw that it was Nicole, Joanna immediately got out of her seat and pulled a phony smile while approaching her. "Miss Nicole, I heard you took a long leave because you had something you needed to attend to. You know, it just doesn't feel right without you here in the company."

Nicole, on the other hand, didn't express any anger on the surface. Instead, she hid a hint of malice beneath her eyes as she looked somewhat expressionlessly at Joanna. "Yeah, I'm back now," she said leisurely.

After a pause, she bore into Joanna. "Well, do you know what I've done during my leave?"

Nicole's question stumped Joanna, for she thought Nicole had come to criticize her. Instead, the woman brought the topic to this, and she didn't quite register for a second.

At that moment, Kylie stepped in and snorted disdainfully. "Why should we care about what you've done?"

At that, Nicole curved her eyes into smiling crescents, but her tone was filled with mockery. "Weren't you guys the most proactive in the past? Anything about me online is definitely your doing. I'm surprised you no longer care."

Joanna's face froze. Nearly half of Nicole's negative publicity was her doing, while the other half was Queenie's.

However, she wasn't dumb enough to admit it, and she tugged on her stiffened lips, playing dumb.

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Chapter 371 The Blame Game

"What are you talking about, Miss Nicole? I don't quite understand."

Nicole didn't beat around the bush with Joanna either; she went straight to the point and said, "I conducted surgery on Old Mr. Benedict during the past few days. The news has been circulating on the internet as well, saying that I'm White's apprentice. Director Schmidt, I don't think you're blind. You've seen the news, haven't you?"

Joanna's expression turned complicated upon hearing that and she touched her nose awkwardly. After a while, she finally cleared her throat and responded, "Turns out you're referring to this. Of course, I know about it. You're going viral on the internet now, and everyone is saying that you're an expert doctor for saving Old Mr. Benedict from the jaws of death. Indeed, you have my respect."

When Olivia sent Nicole to the police station, it had gone viral on the internet as well. Joanna had actually prepared to have a good laugh at Nicole at that time, but she didn't expect Nicole to overturn the situation through the revelation of her being White's apprentice and getting to conduct Old Mr. Benedict's surgery.

At that time, Joanna was even hoping that Old Mr. Benedict would end up dying on the hospital bed after receiving treatment from a dabbler like Nicole. If that happened, the Gardners would definitely never forgive her. Surprisingly, Nicole was lucky enough to have saved him successfully!

After hearing Joanna buttering her up, Nicole couldn't resist laughing anymore. She looked at Joanna's face with a smile on her lips, and her gaze moved down slowly. "I wouldn't do such a foolish thing if I were you, Director Schmidt."

When Joanna heard Nicole's satire, the smile on her face froze for a little while before she reacted immediately and pretended to not understand what she said. "What are you talking about, Miss Nicole? Did anything happen when you were not around?"

When she noticed the woman's pretentious behavior, Nicole continued to say with a smile, "Don't tell me that you don't know what happened with Aimee International."

Joanna just blinked and wore an innocent face before asking, "Hasn't the contract with Aimee International been signed already? Is there any problem with that?"

"There certainly is. The design sketch that we sent out was a plagiarized version. Moreover, it even plagiarized Aimee International's earlier sketch. Do you think it's really a coincidence?" Nicole stared at Joanna and asked her word-by-word.

Joanna's mouth gaped as she wore a surprised expression and denied while saying, "That's impossible. I remember checking the sketch before sending it out. It can't have been plagiarized."

Nicole realized that Joanna was going to continue playing dumb, so she didn't want to beat around the bush. She took out the plagiarized sketch and showed the woman. "This sketch was released by Aimee International in its early days. Although it's quite uncommon, it can still be found on the internet. Now, Director Schmidt, don't tell me that you didn't double-check before you accepted the sketch."

Of course, Jonna had planned an escape plan after she did such a thing. She put on a faint smile and acted shamelessly. "Of course I checked. I just didn't think that it'd be plagiarism. When I handed the sketch to you, you didn't realize it as well, right? Either way, you can't blame everything on me, Miss Nicole."

Kylie, who was on the side, chimed in and said, "You're the one with incompetent supervisory skills, but now you're coming here to blame others for your mistake? Who gave you the courage to do so?"

"Joanna, I thought you'd be a smart person who knows what you're doing, but it's really out of my expectation that you would even do such a foolish thing!" Nicole ignored Kylie completely and said in a cold voice while staring at Joanna.

When Joanna heard that, her expression changed a little. It was obvious that she heard the cynicism in Nicole's words, so she replied while grinding her teeth, "Now is not the time to play the blaming game, Miss Nicole. Instead, we should be dealing with Aimee International."

At this moment, Nicole smiled before she burst out laughing.

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Chapter 372 A Scapegoat for Plagiarism

"Even though I'm the one who signed it, do you think you can just walk away from this when you're the one who handed me the sketch, Director Schmidt?"

Hearing that, Joanna had a slight change in her expression since she knew from the beginning that she wouldn't be able to stay out of it when she planned to do such a thing. She had already prepared herself for any criticism.

She lowered her head and said sincerely, "It's my fault for not taking a closer look. I'm willing to accept any punishment."

Nicole squinted her eyes and looked at the thick-skinned person in front of her who was still undaunted. If that was the case, then she had no reason to hold back either. "Alright, then. Since you've said it yourself, I should suspend you."

Joanna froze instantly when she heard Nicole talking about her suspension so casually. Her face paled at once, and her lips started to quiver. She lifted her head to look at Nicole before saying, "Nicole, you're just an outsider. On what grounds are you suspending me?!"

At this moment, her eyes were filled with rage. "I'm Gardner Corporation's design director, whereas you're just an outsider who's collaborating with our company. You're in no place to suspend me!" She had worked so hard throughout the years for Gardner Corporation, so she couldn't let her career be ruined by Nicole's words.

When she saw Joanna growing anxious, Nicole explained calmly, "Let me get this straight for you, Director Schmidt. When I was away from Gardner Corporation, I was at Gardner Residence, conducting surgery on Old Mr. Benedict. Now that his operation is a success, do you think President Gardner would reject my request for your suspension or dismissal? What do you think?"

Nicole's tone wasn't cold when she said that, and she even had a nonchalant smile on her face. Yet, Joanna felt her blood curdling when she heard Nicole's words. She widened her eyes, showing how unbelievable she felt about this situation. After all, she didn't expect Nicole to openly use this to pressure her.

"Miss Nicole, you used to be F&M Apparel's chief designer. Are you really this vindictive?" Joanna said while grinding her teeth in fury. Since Nicole was the savior for the Gardners now, if she requested Joanna's suspension to Colton, he would definitely agree to it without any hesitation.

At this thought, she wanted to slap herself for not thinking this through before she said what she had said.

On the other hand, Nicole was not surprised at all to see Joanna panicking. "I've always been vindictive. If someone treats me well, I'll remember it for the rest of my life, and this applies to people who treat me otherwise."

Joanna's face paled at once. She couldn't lose this job, and she didn't want to let seven years of her hard work in Gardner Corporation go to waste just like that! "Miss Nicole, it's all because of my negligence this time. I won't make the same mistake again." She lowered her head, acknowledging her loss.

Nicole just glanced at Joanna's panicked expression upon hearing that and said cruelly, "Director Schmidt, we're all adults who are supposed to take responsibility for our own doings. Don't you think it's quite unreasonable to just let this slide after you said that you wouldn't make the same mistake again?"

Just as Joanna was going to explain herself, Nicole cut her off before she could say anything. "You and I both know what you have in mind. Since you've done it, you should be prepared to take the responsibility!"

Joanna clenched her fists and gave up acting at last. Then, she tried to drag Nicole down. "Even if it was my mistake, you're the one who signed and stamped it before sending it to Aimee International. Do you think you can stay out of it?"

A smile played on Nicole's lips while she stood upright and said, "I'm not trying to stay out of it. This is a matter of plagiarism, so even if I leave Gardner Corporation, I can still continue living without being impacted. I don't think it'll be that easy for you, though."

She felt that the best way to deal with shameless people like Joanna was to threaten her since finding a scapegoat for plagiarism was not something new, especially in design companies. In fact, it was a common phenomenon.

Right Person, Wrong Time Chapter 373

Chapter 373 Subpoena

"Also, if a person has to take the blame, why do you think that it won't be you?"

Since finding a scapegoat for plagiarism was not something to be discussed openly, Joanna didn't expect Nicole to talk about it so calmly. She looked at Nicole with shock written all over her face, full of disbelief. "Are you saying that you want me to become your scapegoat, Nicole?"

When she heard the question, Nicole just chuckled without explaining any further. She then stared at her before saying, "Director Schmidt, you should think about the consequences before you do anything. Otherwise, you wouldn't know when you'd shoot yourself in the foot."

With that, she turned around and left.

Even though Whitney stayed quiet the entire time, she was actually gratified deep down after seeing Nicole's strong aura. As soon as they left the place, she gave Nicole a thumbs up and said with a smile, "It's so satisfying to see her darkened face!"

After leaving the design department, only then did Nicole say sluggishly, "I'm just giving Joanna a warning this time. If she dares to do something like this again, don't blame me for not giving her any more chances by then."

When Whitney heard what Nicole said, she asked her surprisingly, "Are you saying that you'll forgive her this time?"

Nicole scoffed and answered, "I'm not forgiving her, but since she wants to drag us into this, we can't let her stay out of it. Let's just see what she'll do when the time comes."

After Nicole left, only then did Joanna snap back from her daze. She moved her body and blinked her eyes while still feeling confused. Did Nicole mean that she'd push me out to take the bullet for her? Have I really shot myself in the foot this time?

Meanwhile, Kylie went over to comfort Joanna once Nicole was gone. “Don’t worry about it, Director Schmidt. It’s Nicole’s signature on the contract with Aimee International. Even if she wants you to take the blame, she doesn’t have the capability to do so.”

Joanna regained her senses gradually after hearing Kylie’s words. That’s right. Even though I handed in the design sketch, it’s Nicole’s signature on the contract with Aimee International. Furthermore, the collaboration with Aimee International is under Ann instead of Gardner Corporation. Either way, Nicole can’t run away from it.

“That’s right. Who cares if Nicole is the Gardners’ savior? After everything I’ve done for Gardner Corporation, I don’t think they’ll really ask me to leave. At most, they’ll just scold me for it,” Joanna said, starting to relax a little.

Kylie stood on Joanna’s side too. “Don’t worry. No matter how much Nicole has helped the Gardners, President Gardner will not comply with whatever she says so easily.”

The gloominess on Joanna’s face finally dissipated, and she calmed down a little.

Just when Nicole thought that this matter could still be discussed, she didn’t expect Aimee International to file a lawsuit against Gardner Corporation right away. She was so enraged that she nearly laughed when she saw the subpoena on her desk. Do they have nothing else to do? Are they actually suing me?

Before she could say anything, she was stopped by Tony as he rushed into her room. “Miss Anderson, President Gardner is in a meeting with the board of directors. They’re asking you to come over right now.”

Nicole wasn’t foolish. Without much thought, she knew the reason behind the board of directors calling her over immediately. Although she hadn’t done anything to cause this, she couldn’t stay out of it either.

After tidying up her attire, she had a calm expression as she nodded without panicking and said, “Let’s go and see what the board of directors has to say.”

When he saw Nicole’s indifferent expression, Tony started to worry. On the way, he explained the situation in the meeting to Nicole, saying, “The board of directors feel enraged because of the subpoena from Aimee International. They said that it’s because of your... incompetence. Hence, they’re thinking of laying you off from Gardner Corporation and Ann to help them get through this crisis.”