

Right Person Wrong Time Chapter 41

Chapter 41 She Got in Through the Back Door

Nicole turned her gaze slightly to the speaker. The speaker was a woman with wavy hair and heavy makeup, and her oxblood red lipstick made her look like she was ready to devour someone alive.

The woman's words were instantly met with displeasure from the listeners. "Even if Lisa has F&M Apparel backing her up, she has to have certain capabilities to be able to take up the position of Chief Designer at the company, no?"

"That's right. I've seen Lisa's designs, and they're very novel and spectacular. Sabrina, you'd better stop saying things like these. Lisa is one of the best designers in our profession."

However, the person named Sabrina turned a deaf ear to the others' words of advice. With a disdainful look on her face, she said with a soft snort, "We have Miss Schmidt leading us in the Design Department. Even if Lisa never comes in, Gardner Corporation will be the No. 1 company in the industry sooner or later. However talented she is, she can't hold a candle to Miss Schmidt."

At the mention of Miss Schmidt's name, the others had a somewhat troubled expression on their faces, and they stopped speaking for Lisa. After all, Joanna Schmidt was the head of the Design Department and had been heading the department ever since Gardner Apparel started business. Furthermore, Joanna had single-handedly brought Gardner Apparel to where it presently was. Therefore, even if Lisa was well-known in the industry, they dared not say she was definitely better.

Seeing how these people had nothing to say, Sabrina spoke with even greater zeal. "Miss Schmidt is currently one of the best designers in our country, whereas Lisa is only famous abroad. We can't glorify everything foreign so much, right?"

Those in the Design Department were all sophisticated. After all, Joanna was their immediate superior. However capable Lisa was, she would leave after staying with the company for no more than a few months. Eventually, it was Joanna who would be supervising them.

Sabrina was brought in by Joanna herself from the outside. Since the two were on close terms, Sabrina always flattered Joanna both openly and discreetly, which was why she couldn't help speaking ill of Lisa. Seeing that her colleagues had fallen silent at the mention of Joanna, she lowered her voice and continued, "I heard from my friend that President Yates of F&M Apparel had once courted Lisa."

At the mention of such gossip, those women instantly became curious. They scrambled to ask, "Really? This actually happened?"

“Yes, of course.” Sabrina nodded. Then, she continued, “I have a relative who works at F&M Apparel, and he told me that Lisa only became F&M Apparel’s Chief Designer because President Yates was courting her. Now you all know the shady details behind this.”

Nicole was speechless, but she wasn’t very surprised to hear Sabrina’s words. After all, she had seen enough of the intrigues and plots within the Design Department at F&M Apparel. Back when she took up the position of Chief Designer, many had gossiped about her behind her back, saying that she landed the job through the back door. After all, everyone in F&M Apparel knew that Zachary was courting her at the time. Because of that, she had even asked Zachary if he only offered her the job because he liked her.

At the time, Zachary smiled a lighthearted smile and gave her a reassuring answer, saying, “Even if I wanted to do so, the board of directors wouldn’t have agreed to it. You were selected for the position with more than 70% of supporting votes from the board of directors. After all, this matter concerns their interests.”

Nicole was a self-assured person in the first place, and she firmly believed that she was good enough for the job.

Those in the Design Department didn’t want to offend Lisa, so they made a few casual replies without responding to Sabrina’s words. After chatting for a while, they returned to their desks.

It wasn’t until everyone had dispersed that Sabrina noticed Nicole’s presence. Holding her head high, she looked at Nicole with a slight frown and chastised at once, “Who are you? Don’t you know that outsiders aren’t allowed into the Design Department?”

Nicole’s lips curled into a graceful smile as she looked at the ferocious-looking woman before her.

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Chapter 42 Nicole Strikes Back

With expressionless eyes and a barely perceptible smile on her face, Nicole looked completely different from the ferocious woman before her. “I’m Lisa, the woman you talked about who got her job by relying on men.”

As soon as she said that, silence instantly enveloped the noisy Design Department, so much so that even the sound of a paper dropping to the ground would sound unusually obtrusive. After all, everyone in the department had just been gossiping about Nicole right before her, especially Sabrina, whose expression instantly became very interesting to watch.

Sabrina didn't expect Nicole to come to the Design Department at this hour. She was on close terms with Joanna, so she had only said those things about Lisa to lick Joanna's boots, but she never really intended to offend Lisa. After all, more friends meant more opportunities, whereas more enemies would bring more obstacles to herself. She had only spoken of Lisa like that just now because she thought Lisa wasn't here. After all, as F&M Apparel's Chief Designer, Lisa's status was well-established, for F&M Apparel alone was directly capable of leading the country's fashion trend. If Sabrina had known that Lisa was here, she wouldn't have dared to slander her so recklessly.

Instead of getting angry, Nicole looked quite unperturbed. Staring at Sabrina with complete indifference, she said calmly, "I've heard about Joanna, and she's a partner who's worth working with. Her design work is excellent."

Then, she suddenly changed the subject, becoming somewhat assertive as she spoke. "But I need to take a moment to clear up your slanders on me. I, Lisa, have never seduced anyone to get ahead in my career. My appointment as F&M Apparel's Chief Designer wasn't decided by President Yates alone, for it required 70% of supporting votes from the company's shareholders," she said while darting her eyes coldly at the person before her. "Or do you think that I was capable of getting the job by seducing all the shareholders?"

Nicole sounded unruffled as she spoke, but her words struck an involuntary chill into everyone's hearts. The designers who had chimed in with Sabrina just now involuntarily hung their heads and busied themselves with their own stuff like a bunch of dead-mutes, pretending that they didn't see what was happening.

Upon hearing Nicole's words, Sabrina, who had been putting on a ferocious front just now, instantly looked like a deflated balloon. She had been gossiping about Lisa with such righteousness just a while ago, but now, she couldn't get a word out, as though the words were stuck in her throat. Lisa's status is well-established, and Gardner Corporation has taken a lot of trouble inviting her to work with us this time. And she heard everything I had just said... She couldn't help breaking out in a cold sweat with fright as her face darkened. I've just talked through my hat on an impulse... Now I'm finished!

Even if Joanna was heading the Design Department, Lisa could kick Sabrina out of the department at once or even have her blacklisted by the entire fashion design industry with just a single word. After all, she had publicly set herself up against F&M Apparel by saying what she had said just now.

At this moment, Sabrina's heart clenched tightly like a rumpled rag. Her face took on a panic-stricken expression, and she stammered as she spoke. "M-Miss Lisa..."

Nicole smiled even brighter as she looked at Sabrina. "Why don't you elaborate on what you've just said? I'm curious to know how I got my job through President Yates," she

said with a smile while pulling a chair over to sit down. Despite wearing no makeup, she unconsciously projected a powerful presence as she seated herself.

Sabrina nervously licked her lips. Having shot herself in the foot, she could only keep silent at this very moment. "I-I..." She hemmed and hawed for a long time. Then, she finally uttered, "Miss Lisa, those were just unfounded rumors that I heard somewhere, and I only mentioned them without thinking. Please be the bigger person and don't take to heart what I've just said." She bowed, humbling herself as much as she could.

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Chapter 43 Keeping Her Poise

Wearing a half-smile on her face, Nicole looked impassively at the woman before her, whose face had turned crimson with embarrassment. Instead of blowing up or doing anything, she merely stood up and ran her eyes over everyone in the office. "We'll probably be working together for several months after this. I'll be working with everyone here at Gardner Corporation, so if you have any problems, just talk them out. I don't like talking behind anyone's back." Her gaze swept over everyone before falling upon Sabrina's face. "If you hear any rumors about me, you're welcome to go to me directly about them. After all, we'll be working together, so I don't want any misunderstanding between us."

Nicole's words were very well-said. Instead of lashing out at Sabrina, she dealt with the situation by being modest, but such a clever move put Sabrina on the spot. As a result, Sabrina had made a spectacle of herself in the Design Department.

Nicole's words were met with a positive response from everyone else in the Design Department. After all, the department's focus would be on Nicole in the next few months.

With a faint smile on her face, Nicole then rose from her seat. The stern and forbidding air she had had about her just now vanished as she resumed her gentle demeanor. "I'll be officially joining Gardner Corporation after the turn of the year. If you have any good ideas, feel free to share them with me so that we can discuss them together."

Nicole's words instantly drew everyone much closer to her. Compared with how Sabrina had acted like a snob behind someone's back, her self-confident and poised manner was even more likable.

Sabrina's face was deathly pale as she looked at Nicole. Not even Joanna could save me from the person I offended this time, she thought. She clenched her fists tightly. There had been word about Lisa coming to Gardner Corporation after the turn of the year, but who would've thought that she would arrive today? And yet, she chose to arrive when I was bad-mouthing her. Talk about bad luck!

Nicole didn't plan to stay around after finishing her sentence, so she politely said goodbye to everyone, saying, "I only came here today because I wanted to know you guys, so I won't be bothering you while you're working. I'll be going back first." With that, she turned around and left right away.

Sabrina gritted her teeth while watching Nicole's receding figure from behind. A mist had come over her eyes, and her heart kept thumping uneasily.

As soon as Nicole left, those in the office began whispering among themselves. "Tsk, talk about shooting herself in the foot."

"How could she say those words in front of Lisa? Lisa will definitely send her packing with just one word."

"That's right. After all, Lisa is F&M Apparel's Chief Designer. She's such a prestigious person..."

The other colleagues immediately chimed in. Their voices weren't loud, but Sabrina heard the words they said. At this moment, she only felt her cheeks burn with embarrassment. My career as a designer is gonna be finished, she thought to herself as a crimson blush came over her heavily made-up face. After pondering for a moment, she gritted her teeth, clenched her fists, and chased after Nicole in her high heels.

Nicole had just entered the elevator and was about to leave when she was stopped by someone. "Miss Lisa!" Having trotted all the way toward Nicole, Sabrina quickly stopped her when she saw that she was about to enter the elevator.

Nicole turned around. Seeing Sabrina's reddened ears, she curled her lips into a smile and raised her eyebrows, asking, "What's the matter?"

Lowering her eyes, Sabrina hurriedly apologized, saying, "Miss Lisa, I must've been out of my mind to say what I said just now. Please be the bigger person by not bothering yourself with someone like me."

Nicole looked at the woman before her with amusement. She's only saying this right now because I'm Lisa and can decide her fate in the company, she thought. After reaching out to press the elevator button, she entered the elevator without hesitation.

Thinking that Nicole wasn't going to forgive her, Sabrina anxiously ran toward Nicole and grabbed the elevator door with both hands to keep them from closing. Panic-stricken, she said, "Miss Lisa, I can't lose my job." As she spoke, her face took on a look of anxiety.

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Nicole looked up and darted an indifferent look at the woman before her. With a faint smile on her lips, she looked at Sabrina, saying, "Whatever you do, you have to face the consequences. If I didn't come here today, were you going to act one way to my face and another behind my back?"

Nicole sounded extremely calm as she spoke, but her words rendered Sabrina lost for words. She turned crimson with embarrassment, but at the thought of her job, she grabbed the elevator doors tightly and pleaded in a humble tone, "Please forgive me, Miss Lisa. If I get fired by Gardner Corporation, I'll never be able to work as a designer anymore." Whatever the reason was, getting fired would be a black mark on a designer's résumé.

Nicole stood in the elevator without moving as a smile appeared on her face. She said, "I won't say anything to President Gardner."

Sabrina had just let out a sigh of relief when she heard Nicole continue, "But do you think no one will tell him what happened today?"

Her words crushed Sabrina thoroughly. She's right; everyone in the Design Department knows what happened today, so they know that I've offended Lisa, thought Sabrina to herself. If Lisa had been absent, she would still have Joanna backing her up, and those people wouldn't dare to go around gossiping about her. But now that she had been caught in the act, even if Joanna were to side with her, it would be useless.

Nicole gave a light chuckle. Looking at the crestfallen woman before her, she joked, "Could you release your grip already, lady? It's a little dangerous to do so after all."

Sabrina also understood thoroughly that there was no hope for her even if Nicole kept mum about the incident. After all, how could she possibly keep everyone from talking about it? She slumped to the ground in despair.

Nicole's face showed no sign of pity as she looked at the closing elevator door and the woman who sat slumped on the floor. To her, Sabrina only got what she deserved for being unable to hold her tongue. She was going to join Gardner Corporation's Design Department. Without establishing her superiority, she might hear even more rumors about her in the future. Furthermore, Colton would definitely send Sabrina packing in order for her to join the Design Department smoothly. After all, anyone with half a brain would know who was more important once they weighed up the pros and cons.

After leaving Gardner Corporation, Nicole returned home right away. As soon as she opened the door, she heard the sound of Zachary and Hayden laughing and playing, which slowly soothed her tense nerves. She changed into her slippers and walked inside. With no regard to her image, she tossed her handbag onto the sofa and plonked herself down in her seat, throwing her head back in a comfortable posture.

Seeing how she seated herself, Zachary asked with amusement, "What's the matter? Did you come across something tricky at Gardner Corporation?"

Upon hearing Zachary's gentle voice, Nicole finally looked up at him. Breathing a soft sigh, she sat up and told him about what had happened today. "I just feel that the intrigues and plots over there are nothing inferior to those at F&M Apparel." When she finished her sentence, the nanny at home happened to bring her a cup of coffee, so she took the cup of coffee without ceremony and sipped it.

Realizing what Nicole was hinting at, Zachary comforted her with a smile, saying, "If you feel uncomfortable, you don't have to go there. We only needed to hand in our design drafts over the years during our collaborations, anyway."

Nicole shook her head. Looking at Hayden, who was sitting on Zachary's lap, she moved her butt a little closer to them and pulled Hayden into her arms. "President Gardner helped me a lot with Hayden last time. I don't want to owe him any favors."

Zachary knew Nicole's temper. Once she had made up her mind on something, she would never go back on it. Therefore, he merely said with a laugh, "If that's the case, then just go there. But if you come across anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, you can just quit by then. F&M Apparel will always be at your back." He paused for a moment with a smile. Then, he added, "And so will I."

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Chapter 45 Zachary Leaves the Country

Nicole didn't tell Zachary about what Sabrina had said. After all, having gotten sick of hearing such rumors at F&M Apparel, she was already able to take a calm attitude toward them these days, so she didn't take Sabrina's words to heart.

Zachary had wanted to spend the mid-winter holiday with Nicole and Hayden in the country. That night, however, he suddenly got a phone call, which seemed to be about something urgent.

Seeing the ghastly expression on Zachary's face, Nicole figured that the matter had to be quite serious. Therefore, when Zachary told her he had to leave the country, she expressed her understanding, saying, "Just go and deal with the matter first. Wherever Hayden and I are, it doesn't make any difference."

Looking at the considerate Nicole before him, Zachary heaved a soft sigh with a look of regret. "It's a rare opportunity for us to spend the mid-winter holiday together in the country. I never thought I'd have to go back."

Hearing the note of regret in Zachary's words, Nicole replied with a laugh, "It's okay. There'll still be many mid-winter holidays in the future. If you're free next time, you can still spend the holiday in the country."

Zachary's handsome face creased into a hurt look as he listened to Nicole's deliberately naive reply. "It doesn't matter wherever I'll be spending the mid-winter holiday. The point's just that I wanted to spend the holiday with..." he said, before breaking off mid-sentence under her stare. After lowering his head to glance at Hayden, he reached out and ruffled Hayden's hair, saying, "It's just that I wanted to spend the holiday with Hayden."

Hayden was a smart boy. Pouting his lips, he looked at Zachary and replied seriously, "That's not true, Mr. Yates. I know you wanna spend the holiday with Mom. All you know is to use me as an excuse."

Zachary didn't feel embarrassed when Hayden revealed what he really wanted. Instead, he nodded with a faint smile, saying, "That's right, you smart little boy."

Nicole didn't ask Zachary what the matter was. If the matter was about the company, Zachary would have told her about it without her having to ask him. Judging from how things looked at the moment, Nicole surmised that the matter had to have something to do with Zachary's family.

Nicole knew a little about Zachary's family. His parents were divorced, and his father remarried after that, whereas his mother remained single to this day. Most importantly, both his father and mother were wealthy and domineering. It was rare for Zachary to be able to have such a good temper after being raised in such an environment.

Having finished his sentence, Zachary began packing his bags.

Glancing at the dark sky outside, Nicole asked with worry, "Is the matter urgent? It's dark already."

Hearing the concern in Nicole's voice, Zachary smiled happily. His previously clouded expression vanished. As he packed his bags, he replied, "It's quite urgent, or I wouldn't have to leave overnight. I'll come back as soon as I finish dealing with it. Let's hope that I can make it before the end of the mid-winter holiday."

The end of the mid-winter holiday? That's almost half a month later. Seems like the problem he's come across this time is really quite tricky, thought Nicole to herself. Without asking anything else, she nodded, saying, "In that case, be careful on your way home."

"Uh-huh," Zachary replied. After packing his things, he left all the stuff at home to Nicole.

The villa was located in an upscale neighborhood. There were specially-hired bodyguards keeping watch outside the villa, and the surveillance network nearby was very intensive, so no outsiders would be able to get into the villa at all. Moreover, there were servants in the villa, so Nicole didn't have to worry about Hayden's safety.

Listening to Zachary's detailed instructions, Nicole couldn't help but interrupt him, saying, "Hey, you don't have to worry about unnecessary things. I'm an adult, so I at least know these things. Just deal with your own stuff."

Zachary didn't hide his innermost feelings either. Looking into Nicole's eyes, he said, "Okay. I'll see you again when I get back." Having packed his suitcase, he left the villa that night.

Looking at his mother, Hayden said mischievously, "Mom, if you like Mr. Yates, just go after him."

His words snapped Nicole out of her thoughts. Looking down at her son, she replied with a straight face, "Stop talking nonsense. I don't like him. How can I take care of someone else when it's tiring enough for me to look after you?"

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Chapter 46 Being Latched Onto

The atmosphere in the villa wasn't festive enough, so Nicole bought some decorative lights and hung them up with Hayden to give the place a festive mood.

During the mid-winter holiday, the servants in the villa took three days off to go home and spend time with their families.

There was a little nip in the air during the mid-winter holiday, but the weather today was especially good. The sun was shining high in the sky and making people feel lazy with its heat. Since they had nothing else to do, Nicole took the opportunity of the good weather to take Hayden to her mother's grave.

Everyone was in a joyous spirit during the mid-winter holiday, so the graveyard was quiet with very few visitors.

Taking her son to the graveyard for the first time, Nicole drove up to the foot of the graveyard. Straightening Hayden's clothes carefully, she took his hand and said, "Remember to say something pleasant when you meet your grandma later." Even though her mother had passed away, Nicole always believed that she could hear them on the other side.

Hayden nodded obediently and walked forward in small steps while holding Nicole's hand.

The flowers Nicole had brought last time were still placed on the gravestone when she and Hayden reached her mother's grave. Surprisingly, there were fresh flowers placed on the gravestone. Who else would visit Mom's grave other than me? Despite being puzzled deep down, Nicole didn't think much about it. Laying the flowers in her hand on the gravestone, she whispered softly, "Mom, I've brought your grandson here to visit you. He's four years old already. If you were still alive, you'd definitely like him. This boy is smart."

After Nicole finished her sentence, Hayden put down the flowers in his hand as well. Then, with a straight face, he said as if reciting a text during class, "Grandma, Mom has brought me here to visit you. I didn't come to see you before because we'd been abroad. I was still little, and Mom said she was worried. Now that I'm a little older, I've come to see you right away."

Upon listening to Hayden's words, Nicole couldn't help but smile.

Hayden sounded very serious as he spoke to Nicole's mother's grave, recounting every bit of his and Nicole's past.

The smile on Nicole's face gradually deepened as she stood beside Hayden while listening to his words. She never thought that her son had always remembered these things.

After Hayden finished his speech, he and Nicole bowed to the grave. However, just as they were about to leave, they bumped head-on into a man.

The smile on Nicole's face vanished at once when she saw who the person before her was. She clenched Hayden's hand, wanting to go past the person and leave, but Joseph stopped her. He quickly went up to Nicole, saying, "What a coincidence, Miss Nicole."

Nicole didn't hold back her annoyance toward Joseph. After all, she never thought of forgiving him for what he had said last time.

Seeing that Nicole wasn't even willing to take a look at him, Joseph knew that he was very much disliked. However, upon recalling what Queenie had told him, he felt as though he had received a shot in the arm. After Queenie told him that Nicole's mother's grave was here, he came here right away and had been waiting for Nicole for about a week. In order to please Nicole, he placed fresh flowers on her mother's gravestone every single day so that he could speak to Nicole when she came.

Seeing that Nicole wanted to leave, Joseph hurriedly stepped forward and blocked her path. First, he explained what had happened last time, saying quickly, "Miss Anderson, I'm here to explain myself for what happened last time." Who knows when the next opportunity will be if I don't get to make myself clear this time? he thought. He hurriedly explained, "I heard from Queenie last time that you were going to marry my dad. It's

only been a few years since my mom passed away, so I couldn't help but find such a prospect off-putting, which was why I said something harsh."

Nicole stopped in her tracks. Well, these words at least sound reasonable.

Seeing that Nicole was visibly moved, Joseph immediately struck while the iron was hot, saying, "It was also because of that that I was somewhat prejudiced against you. Now that I've learned the truth of the situation, I just want to apologize to you."

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Chapter 47 Treating Her to Lunch

Nicole fell silent as she took a moment to calm down. When she turned to look at Joseph, her expression had softened slightly. "I forgive you," she said magnanimously.

As soon as Joseph's expression eased, he heard Nicole continue, "But I hope that we won't have any dealings anymore. I don't like you."

Whatever the reason was, the man before her had spoken ill of her son, so Nicole was unwilling to forgive him for this. Having finished her sentence, she took her son's hand and left with a stony face.

Joseph was startled for a moment. Upon coming to his senses, he quickly caught up to Nicole. "Miss Anderson, if I've done anything wrong, you may point it out."

Nicole looked at the man before her, who was as clingy as a fly, with a slight frown. Did I not make myself clear enough? "I find you revolting," she said bluntly while raising her black eyes, staring fixedly at him.

Joseph didn't expect Nicole to straightforwardly express her distaste for him without sparing his feelings. For a moment, he didn't come to his senses.

Nicole looked at the dazed person before her, who had obviously come here well-prepared. Although he wasn't wearing a suit and a pair of leather shoes, he was exquisitely dressed, and he had a barely perceptible scent on him. Curling her lips into a smirk, she continued, "Whatever the reason, you spoke ill of my son, so there's no way I'd like you."

Upon hearing her clear and resounding words, Joseph finally came to his senses. He hurriedly composed his features and said, "Miss Anderson, allow me to apologize again for my previous remarks, but I said those things for a reason. After all—"

Nicole frowned as she listened to the man's slightly loud voice. She interrupted him, saying, "So what do you want this time?" People like him were common in the business field. He had previously spoken rudely to her because she was nothing but Nicole. On

the contrary, he was able to humble himself right now because she was now Lisa. The world didn't lack such opportunists, but Nicole didn't like them. This time, Joseph groomed himself carefully and came here to approach her because he wanted to work with F&M Apparel.

Carrying himself with greater modesty, Joseph darted his gaze to Hayden before turning his gaze back to Nicole. "Miss Anderson, I'd like to treat you to lunch and discuss some matters while we're at it. Do you have time for that?"

Nicole's lips curled into a sneer. She refused him outright, saying, "No."

Joseph quickly replied, "Miss Anderson, it's not working with F&M Apparel that I want to talk about. I'd like to talk to you about what happened five years ago." After saying that, he stared fixedly at Nicole.

Even though Nicole had pretended to be calm, she looked slightly dumbfounded for a moment when Joseph mentioned the words "five years ago." Clenching her son's hand, she wanted to turn Joseph down, but her words were stuck in her throat. A chill came over her. How did Joseph learn about it?

Even though Nicole was good at maintaining her composure, Joseph noticed a slight change in her expression. He immediately stepped forward, saying, "How about it, Miss Anderson? Let's go for lunch together and sit down to have a nice chat. Some matters have to be talked out so that they won't be spread around."

Nicole didn't want her son to have anything to do with Joseph, but the man before her seemed to have learned something. Even though he didn't make himself clear at this moment, there was a hint of threat in his words. Furthermore, when she looked at the man, she saw the visible smile on his face. Clenching her fists, she slowly uttered from her dry throat, "Okay."

Joseph's taut expression finally eased when he heard that Nicole accepted his invitation. He was only sounding Nicole out in the first place. After all, he couldn't trust Queenie fully at the moment. However, judging from how Nicole had agreed to his suggestion now, it seemed that he might get what he wished for.

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Chapter 48 This Kid Is Mine

Joseph was very attentive to Nicole, so much so that he went out of his way to reserve a luxurious private room at a hotel for her. After Nicole seated herself, he respectfully handed her the menu with both hands and asked with a grin, "Please take a look, Miss Anderson. Is there anything you'd like to eat?"

Despite having followed Joseph into the room, Nicole didn't really want to have lunch with him here. Looking up at his face, she said unhurriedly, "If you want to say something, just spill it. I'm not in the mood to beat around the bush with you here." She feigned a look of composure, but she unconsciously tightened her grip on Hayden's hand.

Hayden seemed to have sensed something. Holding his mother's hand in response, he said forcefully in a childlike voice, "Don't be afraid, Mom. I'm here." With his words, he labeled Joseph as a bad guy right away.

The smile on Joseph's face became even more apparent. Gazing at Nicole's face with his dark eyes, he contemplated what he was going to say before asking, "Miss Anderson, did we meet each other five years ago?"

As soon as Joseph asked the question, Nicole answered resolutely, "No." However, the faster she denied that, the more it proved that she had a guilty conscience.

Looking at Nicole's calm expression, Joseph continued with a smile, "Miss Anderson, why don't you think about it carefully? We met five years ago at the hotel." His words weren't explicit, and he had a confident smile on his face.

Nicole's heart skipped a beat as she looked at the man, and her eyes lowered with a flicker of mixed emotions in them. Pursing her lips with a frown, she said firmly, "What do you mean by saying that, Mr. Mann? My mother was critically ill five years ago, and I spent every single day caring for her by her sickbed. After she passed away, I went abroad, so I had never been to a hotel." She steadied herself, thinking, I mustn't let Joseph know that Hayden was born after I had a one-night stand with him five years ago!

"In that case, why would you agree to have lunch with me when I mentioned what had happened five years ago?" Joseph seized upon this; he didn't believe there was nothing fishy about it.

Nicole had given herself away a little at the graveyard, but she was now able to think very clearly. When she looked up to meet Joseph's gaze, her eyes looked calm and imperturbable. Curling her lips into a sneer, she stared fixedly at the man without averting her eyes. "I didn't want to be seen having physical contact with a man outside at the graveyard. You looked like you'd keep pestering me if I didn't agree to have lunch with you, so I followed you here to clear things up," she said. Then, before Joseph could say a word, she continued, "Just say what you want to say. I don't have time to beat around the bush with you."

Joseph's words died on his lips as he looked at the woman before him. He had at least trusted Queenie before F&M Apparel's annual dinner, but now, he could only doubt her. However, recalling how he had offended Nicole thoroughly at F&M Apparel's annual dinner, he decided to go ahead anyway. In any case, there was no way Nicole would

work with the Mann Family, but if Nicole's son was really his, he would be able to make her obey him.

"Someone told me that your son was born after we slept together five years ago. Although I doubted it, the person talked as if she had evidence to back what she said. So, Miss Nicole, may I take the liberty of asking you who your son's father is?" he said quickly while fixing his eyes on Nicole, searching her face for any possible clues.

Nicole's heart jumped when she heard Joseph's words. However, having worked in the business field for years, she had gone through many ups and downs, so she kept her countenance in check without giving herself away.

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Chapter 49 Taking a Paternity Test

Silence filled the air when Joseph finished his sentence. He stared fixedly at Nicole, wanting to see how she would respond.

Nicole fell silent for a moment before a smile suddenly appeared on her face. At first, she was smiling faintly; after that, though, she laughed right away while wiping the tears off the corner of her eye, as though she had heard an outrageous joke.

After laughing for a while, she finally put on a stern expression. Taking out her phone, she glanced at its screen with amusement all over her face before looking at the man before her, saying, "Mr. Mann, today is not April Fool's Day, but the mid-winter holiday. Don't tell me you've only come up with such a way to draw my attention after so many days." As she spoke, the smile on her face slowly disappeared, and her voice took on a grim tone. "We never met until we talked about our possible collaboration last time. What's your motive in making such an outrageous claim right now?" She stared at him with a layer of frost in her beautiful eyes. "How could you resort to such a dirty trick to get to work with F&M Apparel?"

Nicole's voice sounded increasingly grim as it turned colder and colder, sending a chill down Joseph's spine. Looking at Nicole, who was already seething with anger before him, he inwardly regretted what he had just said. Judging from how Nicole looks, what Queenie said is most probably a lie. I must've been out of my mind to keep believing that woman's words! But now that I've offended her to such an extent, if I chicken out right now, I'll be embarrassing myself. Gritting his teeth, he put on a tough front, saying, "Whatever the truth is, Miss Nicole, please let your son do a paternity test with me. If what the person said was a lie, I'll personally bring the rumormonger to apologize to you. However, if what the person said is true, please let me claim my right as the kid's father."

Rumormonger? A number of people crossed Nicole's mind before she quickly figured out it was Queenie. After all, only Queenie and she knew what had happened between

her and Joseph five years ago. Furthermore, it made sense when Nicole recalled what had happened at F&M Apparel's annual dinner. I never expected her to be so despicable, she thought. Blinking her eyes with a frosty expression, she uttered coldly through her lips, "You wish!"

Seeing that Nicole was unwilling to have Hayden do a paternity test with him, Joseph quickly continued, "Miss Anderson, no matter what the person said is true or not, we'll find out once we do the test. Also, doing the test would dispel our doubts. Wouldn't that be killing two birds with one stone? And besides, if what the person said is false, you can be on guard against the rumormonger earlier, right?"

Upon listening to how the man before her kept urging her to have the paternity test done as though he would never stop until he reached his goal, Nicole frowned with a hint of impatience on her face, and she spoke with a note of reproach. "If everyone approaches me with such an excuse like you do, do I have to let my son do the test with all of them? Mr. Mann, let's end our conversation here. If you keep on using such an excuse to pester me next time, don't blame me for being unpleasant with you."

At the moment, she could only put on a tough front with a hint of frigidity in her eyes. Just as she took Hayden's hand and stood up to leave, she seemed to recall something; after pausing in her tracks, she turned around and said to Joseph, "My mother preferred not to be disturbed while she was still alive, so don't disturb her peace anymore." With that, she opened the door and left quickly.

Gazing at Nicole's receding figure from behind, Joseph unclenched his fist, revealing several strands of fine, short hair in his hand. He had plucked them just now when Hayden walked past him. Right now, he could only take a gamble. If the test results showed that Hayden was indeed his son, there was no doubt that the Mann Family would definitely rise in status in the future with the backing of Nicole and F&M Apparel.

Right Person Wrong Time Chapter 50

Chapter 50 Nicole Starts Working at Gardner Corporation

Hayden looked up at his mother, whose face looked somewhat pale. He shook her arm and comforted her, saying, "Mom, what are you worried about? Joseph isn't my dad, anyway."

His voice snapped Nicole out of her thoughts. Looking down at her son's tender cheeks, she swept him up in her arms and pinched his cheek gently with her fingers as her lips curled into a forced smile. "I was just angry because I thought someone's trying to snatch you away from me."

"Don't be angry, Mom. I'm yours; no one can snatch me away from you," Hayden replied in all seriousness while hugging Nicole.

Thanks to Hayden's words, Nicole's gloomy expression finally eased somewhat. Walking on with her son in her arms, her tone turned jolly, and she said, "You're right, Hayden. Let's go home. I'll make something delicious for you to eat."

"Okay! I want to eat noodles."

Although Hayden refused to admit that Joseph was his father, Nicole knew that she had spent a night with Joseph five years ago. Joseph was the only man she had ever slept with. There was no light in the room that night, and she didn't get to see what the person on top of her looked like, but Queenie had had Joseph intoxicated and sent into the hotel room at the time in order to attach herself to the Mann Family. Nicole knew the whole process, which was why she refused Joseph so fiercely when he said those words. If Joseph learned that Hayden was his son, someone like him would definitely use Hayden to intimidate her into helping Mann Clothing Co.

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To Nicole, this year's mid-winter holiday wasn't any different than ordinary days, for she only spent the holiday hanging out everywhere with her son. This was the first time Hayden returned to the country with her, so he was very curious about everything in the country and the country's customs.

Nicole had thought that she would be able to leave the country after the mid-winter holiday. However, after doing some mental calculations, she now realized that she had to stay in the country for at least another three months. Hayden's school was about to reopen. Nicole had wanted to send him back to school, but he refused to go to school and insisted on staying in the country. Having no other option, she could only let him stay in the country with her for the time being.

After the mid-winter holiday, the companies had begun to resume business one after another. There was a nanny in the villa to look after Hayden, who was a smart and mischievous boy himself. Hence, with nothing to worry about, Nicole went to work at Gardner Corporation right away.

Even though Nicole didn't have a work badge, the front desk lady was already very familiar with her, so she received Nicole with a bright smile.

Nicole went all the way up to the Design Department. Today was the first day she officially joined Gardner Corporation, where she would be staying for three months.

At 9:00AM sharp, Nicole stepped into Gardner Corporation's Design Department. Thanks to her arrival, the originally boisterous office instantly fell silent.

Today, Nicole wasn't dressed as casually as she did when she came to the department for the first time. Wearing exquisite makeup, she was dressed in a light-colored overcoat that made her look especially radiant, matched with a tulle skirt and a pair of

high heels. When she walked, her skirt would swish, creating an air current. The way she dressed today made her look like a successful businesswoman at first glance.

When she glanced around the office, no one looked up at her; everyone was lowering their heads and busying themselves with their own stuff. She darted a glance at where Sabrina was previously seated, and sure enough, the woman was no longer there, and her desk had been cleared. Seems like she has really been sent packing.

Shortly after Nicole came in, a young lady wearing a white down coat suddenly came to her side with a timid expression. She said in a whisper, "Hi, Miss Lisa. I'm Scarlett Lockhart, your assistant at Gardner Corporation. If you need anything, I'm at your service."

Inwardly, Scarlett was in a state of nerves. She happened to join the company before the turn of the year. However, after the mid-winter holiday, she was suddenly informed by her superior that she would be working as an assistant for Lisa, the woman at the apex of the entire fashion design industry. Now that her first job out of college was to be Lisa's assistant, she inevitably felt somewhat nervous.