

Chapter 36 Passionate Kiss

This new lovers' restaurant opened right above Keith Ludwig's restaurant. It was very popular, so Keith had to come and experience it himself and even dragged Eric Ferguson with him.

The waiter stressed over and over again that this was a lovers' restaurant.

Keith winked at Eric and lightly tugged on Eric's arm. "Don't we look like a couple?"

"Ferg, Ludwig, what a coincidence..."

A man and a woman walked over to them. Colton White looked like a typical gentry, and the woman holding Colton's arm was a recently popular social media influencer with a small common-looking face and big eyes.

Keith snorted lightly. "Why are you here?"

"Lily said this place is nice, so we came to check it out. Isn't this a lovers' restaurant?" Colton implied something and covered his mouth to hold back his laughter.

They were all childhood buddies, so there was no need to evade each other. Eric scowled and glared at Keith.

Colton White felt amused since it was rare to see Eric at a loss like this. He did not leave and invited himself to their table. His date sat opposite Eric. When Lily saw Eric's chiseled face, she tried to suppress the excitement in her heart but dared not say anything with Colton around.

"Hey, Ferg. Isn't that the scheming b*tch?" Colton lifted his chin slightly in one

direction.

The music was pleasant and soothing. Ian dragged Nicole to the dance floor as he said, "It's just one dance. Since we're already here, don't you want to experience the feeling of being on this dance floor?"

Before Nicole could answer, the next song had already started, so it would only attract more attention if she refused. 'Whatever... It's just a dance...'

The music was upbeat. Ian and Nicole's steps only had a momentary pause in the beginning. Soon after, they matched each other's rhythm very well and gradually became the focus on the dance floor. The couples around them stopped to look at the pair. The man was devilishly handsome and the woman was elegant and beautiful. The hem of her skirt

swayed as she danced and the two of them stole all the attention.

Ian inadvertently saw a certain someone in the corner. When the song ended, he pulled Nicole into his arms, turned around with his back against the crowd, and lowered his head as he embraced the woman tightly. From the perspective of the crowd behind them, they were kissing passionately.

Suddenly, the restaurant resounded with loud applause.

Before Nicole could react, Ian chuckled and pulled her out of the restaurant.

In the corner,

Eric did not speak, but his face was a bit cold.

Keith Ludwig looked at the couple's departing back and coldly snorted. "It's

not that great."

Although their dance was comparable to professional dancers, Keith would never admit that Nicole danced well.

"Right? This scheming b*tch hooked up with another guy so soon?" Colton sneered.

Eric swept a cold glance at Colton when he heard that. "Scheming b*tch? Is that what you guys call her behind her back?"

"Yeah, what else? She did everything she could to marry you for money, didn't she? We know what she did to trap you, so we're all happy that you finally divorced her. You don't have to put up with that shrew anymore..."

Colton did not notice Eric's increasingly glum face. He recalled some of their old memories and retold them as a joke.

"I remember that when you just got married and we went out drinking together, that woman called in the middle of the night to check on you when you were in the bathroom. I picked up the call and warned her back then to know her place. She's so ignorant. Can't she see that marrying you is already an honor for her..."

Suddenly, a cup landed heavily on the table. The lively chatter and laughter at the table instantly ceased.

Keith looked puzzled. 'Eric is clearly angry! Is it because of that woman?'

Colton did not know what he had misspoken. Everyone knew that Eric was forced into his previous marriage.

The influencer was so frightened that she shuddered. She originally thought that

she would be able to hook up with someone more powerful, but she did not even get to say a word at the table.

"Ferg..." Colton looked to Keith for help.

Keith was just about to speak when Eric sneered and said, "Colton, why don't you just become the Head of the Ferguson family if you like to meddle in my business so much?"

Chapter 37 Meeting at the Banquet

After that, Eric Ferguson stood up and left, leaving the pale-faced Colton White behind.

Keith Ludwig chased after Eric. 'This must be related to Nicole again. That woman's really troublesome.'

"Ferg, why do you look so upset? We're all bros. You know that Colton's always been straightforward. Don't take whatever he said to heart."

Eric also knew that he had overreacted and did not expect to have lost control of his emotions like that. It was just that when he found out about these things that he should have known but was kept in the dark, his only thought was, 'Is this why Nicole hates me?'

His chest felt stuffy and uncomfortable.

He stood at the entrance for a while.

After getting blown by the cold wind, his mind felt much clearer. He took out a cigarette and lit it. "I know. You can tell him that it's not directed at him."

'I'm just mad at myself!' Eric thought.

Keith breathed a sigh of relief. "Okay, but you're not longing for that woman, right?"

Eric cast a sidelong glance at him and snorted. He was not bothered to answer Keith's curiosity. "Your restaurant can't compare with this new restaurant. My advice is for you to close your business..."

Keith's face reddened with anger. "Are you even my bro?!"

.....

J&L Corporation invited many socialites,

businessmen, and politicians for their anniversary. Everyone who attended the banquet was an elite.

Nicole had done her research. J&L Corporation was a relatively new company that did not have much backing, so it was not an easy feat to achieve such a reputation and develop to this scale in a few short years.

J&L Corporation's R&D focus was to integrate technology and artificial intelligence into regular life. They had already mastered core technologies that were beyond the reach of many countries.

Nicole thought, 'If I can land this artificial intelligence project, Stanton Corporation will be able to become a pioneer in this new field.'

Thus, Nicole came prepared this time.

Everyone was in the hall exchanging pleasantries when there was a sudden cry of surprise. The crowd looked towards the sound and saw a couple standing at the entrance of the banquet hall.

They were all familiar with the man - Grant Stanton of Stanton Corporation. He was ruthless, decisive, and feared by many.

The woman beside him had on exquisite makeup that highlighted her stunning features. Her long wavy hair was pinned back. Under her gentle appearance was a hidden majesty.

She wore a hand-stitched bespoke dress inlaid with diamond bits that accentuated her slender waist. Her dress glittered when she stood under the light, which made her shine so brightly. Her elegant

demeanor and extraordinary temperament made the crowd marvel at her presence.

Some people also recognized her. 'Isn't she Eric Ferguson's ex-wife? He's so blind to divorce such a stunning woman...'

People came forward to greet them. "Mr. Stanton, your female companion today is a real showstopper..."

"Mr. Stanton, welcome..."

.....

Grant Stanton's smile reached his eyes as he held up his wine glass to the crowd. "She's my Vice President, Nicole. Please take good care of her."

"Vice President Nicole is so beautiful and talented. You must be very outstanding to be able to stay in Stanton Corporation..."

"That's really remarkable! Vice President Nicole, please take care of us in the future ..."

"We must cooperate when we have the chance..."

.....

Nicole maintained a decent and elegant smile and responded to everyone's greeting. Grant saw that it was almost time, so he patted her wrist and lowered his head to whisper a reminder in her ear. "President Lichman of J&L Corporation is upstairs, so let's go."

This was their purpose of coming here. Nicole nodded gently. Her long slender neck was flawless and her every move was simply amazing.

Not far away, Ingrid Ferguson and her clique of high-society ladies watched as

Nicole accepted the crowd's praises. Their expressions were very amusing with all sorts of emotions because Nicole's diamond-studded dress stole all the attention away from their carefully selected dresses.

Ingrid looked especially shocked and angry because she already had an eye on Nicole's dress half a month ago. It was one of Louis Vuitton's private custom dresses. The diamonds on it were real diamonds from a famous jewelry brand. This dress was valued close to the nine figures and was only for display among the elites.

She had asked to rent this dress but was told that someone had already ordered it. Moreover, she was told that this dress could not be replicated because that mysterious lady wanted unique attention.

Who knew that the dress she wanted would be worn by Nicole?

'What's going on?' Ingrid thought.

Nicole used to be conservative and ugly when she was staying with the Fergusons. She only knew how to do chores around the house and did not even dare to utter a word. Nicole was so humble like a servant, but this woman in front of Ingrid was proud, confident, and had such a stunning aura. She was like a completely different person!

If it was not for the wrong occasion, Ingrid wanted to go up and tell everyone that Nicole was just an ugly, old-fashioned woman who had been abandoned by the Ferguson family. Ingrid wanted to tear off Nicole's confident mask and let everyone see how miserable and lowly Nicole actually was!

Who knew that the dress she wanted would be worn by Nicole?

'What's going on?' Ingrid thought.

Nicole used to be conservative and ugly when she was staying with the Fergusons. She only knew how to do chores around the house and did not even dare to utter a word. Nicole was so humble like a servant, but this woman in front of Ingrid was proud, confident, and had such a stunning aura. She was like a completely different person!

If it was not for the wrong occasion, Ingrid wanted to go up and tell everyone that Nicole was just an ugly, old-fashioned woman who had been abandoned by the Ferguson family. Ingrid wanted to tear off Nicole's confident mask and let everyone see how miserable and lowly Nicole actually was!

Who knew that the dress she wanted would be worn by Nicole?

'What's going on?' Ingrid thought.

Nicole used to be conservative and ugly when she was staying with the Fergusons. She only knew how to do chores around the house and did not even dare to utter a word. Nicole was so humble like a servant, but this woman in front of Ingrid was proud, confident, and had such a stunning aura. She was like a completely different person!

If it was not for the wrong occasion, Ingrid wanted to go up and tell everyone that Nicole was just an ugly, old-fashioned woman who had been abandoned by the Ferguson family. Ingrid wanted to tear off Nicole's confident mask and let everyone see how miserable and lowly Nicole actually was!

Chapter 38 Compliments and Cooperation

The girls looked at Ingrid's grim face and quieted down.

The second floor of the banquet hall was relatively quiet. When Grant brought Nicole upstairs, an unruly-looking young man in an expensive black shirt stood up.

The two men shook hands briefly. Grant smiled and said, "Mr. Lichman, it's been a while."

Gerard Lichman laughed. The corners of his lips hooked up charmingly. "Hello, Mr. Stanton."

Without waiting for Grant's introduction, Gerard had already moved his gaze onto Nicole. It was an appreciative glance with

a decent sense of proportion that was not offensive.

"Ms. Nicole, you're not only beautiful but also capable. I hope that you won't mind that I put off our dinner and invited you to this banquet instead."

Nicole smiled, "Of course not. Congratulations on J&L's 5th anniversary. I hope we'll be able to work together happily in the years to come."

She made a double entendre.

Gerard smiled. "Mr. Stanton, may I talk to Ms. Nicole privately? After all, if there's a chance for cooperation, the person we'll be liaising with is Ms. Nicole."

"Sure." Grant was not surprised by this request and gave Nicole a reassuring glance. He then turned around and went downstairs to network with others.

Gerard and Nicole stood facing each other in front of the railing on the second floor under the ambient light. The handsome man and beautiful woman talked eloquently and calmly.

"Ms. Nicole, I'd like to know why you're so confident about this cooperation."

Gerard held a glass of wine and casually shook the burgundy liquid in the glass.

Nicole raised her eyebrows. A strand of wavy hair fell across her forehead and around her ear. The look in her eyes was very alluring.

"Mr. Lichman, the conditions I gave are very sincere. I believe that you're also aware of it. Compared to so many investors, there's no one else more suitable than Stanton Corporation. To put it bluntly, you have the technology, and I

have the money. Stanton Corporation won't expect J&L to be profitable in five years. Instead, we're looking at long-term cooperation. I believe that in the next ten years, we will be the ones to determine the level of AI development in this world."

Those that could pay more than Stanton Corporation could not provide more benefits than Nicole, while those that could provide more benefits did not have the capital.

Gerard was not just a businessman. He was also an engineer, so he wanted to find the most suitable business partner for his brainchild.

Nicole's bold words made Gerard re-examine the woman in front of him with less playfulness and more solemnity.

Gerard bowed his head and pondered. "Vice President Nicole, do you mind

participating in a three-way partnership with another company?"

"Who else?"

Nicole did not believe that there was a better fit than Stanton Corporation.

Gerard raised his glass to indicate behind Nicole. Hearing the soft footsteps that gradually approached them, Nicole's heart suddenly jumped and missed a beat.

Nicole felt a sudden silence in the air. She turned around with her glass of wine and her smile was frozen on her face with just one glance.

Sure enough, the only one who could compete with Stanton Corporation in the same project was none other than Eric Ferguson.

Eric was wearing a black suit with

expensive cufflinks that looked familiar to Nicole. It made him seem so cold, indifferent, and unapproachable.

His gaze lingered on Nicole for a few seconds before he greeted Gerard frankly.

Gerard's eyes bounced between the two of them. "I guess I don't need to introduce you both since you should be familiar with each other. Ms. Nicole, my apologies for not telling you in advance that regardless of who our final partner is, Ferguson Corporation will be involved in the project."

Looking at Nicole's puzzled gaze, Gerard chuckled and continued, "That's because Mr. Ferguson has been funding all of my projects as an angel investor since the inception of my company."

Chapter 39 Just One Dance

Nicole thought, 'So that's how it is...he's already a shareholder, huh? I just didn't expect Eric Ferguson had set his eyes on the field of artificial intelligence for so long.'

If Gerard Lichman did not take the initiative to tell Nicole this, Nicole would not have been able to find out. The fact that he told her this information also proved that he genuinely wanted to cooperate with her.

Although Nicole was not happy about Eric's involvement, she had a clear mind and separated her personal affairs and business well. She would not give up on this opportunity.

Nicole lowered her eyes and smiled. "With

Ferguson Corporation's strength, you can very well enjoy the fruits of this cooperation by yourself. Why do you need a third party to get involved?"

She raised her eyebrows slightly and glanced at Eric.

"After all, this is a brand new field that no one's involved in, so Ferguson Corporation cannot take this risk alone."

The man's voice was deep and clear. The corners of his lips hooked up. "It won't be a wrong move for Stanton Corporation to choose J&L. I hope we'll have a pleasant cooperation."

He raised his glass with his slender and beautiful hand. Gerard Lichman clinked his glass with Eric's and the two men waited for Nicole's response.

Since there was no other choice, Nicole

could only smile faintly and coldly as she gently raised her glass. The soft clink of the glasses was crisp and pleasant. Everything was settled.

Even though Nicole was not happy about it, there was no way out. Her chest felt stuffy and unpleasant.

Gerard breathed a sigh of relief and noticed the tense atmosphere between the two of them. He tried to ease the situation and said, "Why don't you two take the first dance as the opening to our anniversary celebration? I think this is undoubtedly the best way to announce our cooperation."

Eric frowned slightly. Nicole chuckled and reached out to tuck her hair behind her ears. She smiled perfunctorily and said, "Sorry, but I don't know how to dance."

After saying that, she turned on her heels

and left, ignoring Eric's cold and sullen gaze.

Gerard shrugged his shoulders and said, "It's just one dance, but she's not even willing to. It seems that our future cooperation won't be very pleasant. Mr. Ferguson, you're the first among the elites that have such a messy divorce."

Eric's face sank as he stared at Nicole's swaying dress. His expression turned even more downcast.

'Don't know how to dance? Hah! Then was I blind back at Ian Carter's restaurant?'

However, Eric suddenly thought of Colton's words and felt the anger in his chest dissipate. Instead, his heart clenched uncomfortably. 'I really owe her too much...'

Even if Nicole was upset, she still maintained a graceful smile. When she got downstairs, Grant approached her with a warm smile. "Done?"

Nicole's dull expression seemed somewhat cold without the joy of closing a deal. This made Grant a little puzzled.

"Eric Ferguson is a shareholder, so Gerard Lichman asked for a three-way cooperation," Nicole explained.

Grant paused for a moment and finally understood why Nicole looked so cold. He smiled and stroked her hair dotingly and gently. "It's okay. That just means we have someone to share the risks with. The benefits in this certainly outweigh the disadvantages."

Nicole froze for a moment and raised her eyebrows. She suddenly realized that

what Eric Ferguson was worried about was exactly Stanton Corporation's woes as well. The benefits of this three-way cooperation did outweigh the disadvantages.

After Nicole figured it out, the moodiness in her chest was instantly swept away. She smiled and took Grant's arm, then gently placed her chin on his shoulder as she whined. "G, thanks for reminding me. Otherwise, I would've been cursing all of them for days on end!"

Grant could not help but laugh. This intimate scene was an eyesore to a certain onlooker.

Eric stared at the pair from upstairs and watched Grant and Nicole's intimate gestures. Keith Ludwig came up and scoffed.

"Tsk tsk...I heard that Grant Stanton isn't

close to women, but why is he so attached to this woman? They must have an unspeakable relationship!"

Eric faintly retracted his gaze with a cold face. He ignored Keith and went downstairs to network with the other guests.

The banquet hall was finally abuzz. Gerard walked over and whispered a few words to the emcee, who then came forward with a microphone.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to J&L Corporation's 5th anniversary! To celebrate this momentous day, I will announce the latest project partners of J&L Corporation on behalf of Mr. Lichman, which are Ferguson Corporation and Stanton Corporation. Now, let's invite Mr. Eric Ferguson and Ms. Nicole to share the opening dance!"

The crowd cheered loudly.

Chapter 40 Some Kind of Relationship

When Nicole heard her name, she froze for a moment. She did not want to have anything to do with Eric Ferguson, but this situation was out of her control and she felt everyone's eyes on her at this moment.

The awkward relationship between them after their divorce added to the mystery of this coincidental cooperation.

Eric also did not expect this. Without a doubt, this was Gerard's doing.

Nicole was still in a pickle when Eric walked to her. He was exuding a cool aura as he bent slightly and reached out, inviting Nicole to the dance floor.

Everyone's eyes were focused on the pair.

There was no way Nicole could reject Eric's invitation because she did not want to leave a negative impact at the beginning of their three-way cooperation.

Grant gave his baby sister a heartfelt look. Nicole smiled faintly, then stretched out her hand to take Eric's.

The people in front of them consciously made way for the pair. Nicole carried her dress with her other hand and walked forward without looking at Eric. Eric's palm was slightly cold. At that moment, he suddenly realized that in their three years of marriage, they had never held a wedding ceremony and he had never taken the initiative to hold her hand. This was the first time they held hands.

Nicole's fingers were long and beautiful, like a work of art. Her hand was warm and delicate, and he immediately etched

this feeling in his heart.

The band began the next song at the right time. The refreshing and cheerful music echoed in the banquet hall.

The moment Nicole's hand landed on Eric's shoulder, their eyes met momentarily. Eric's dark and deep gaze was affixed to her face. When his hand rested on her slim waist, Nicole's body stiffened for a moment as she felt very uncomfortable.

The two of them had never been this close in their three years of marriage. Being here like this after the divorce was also really unexpected.

Nicole merely took a few seconds to regain her composure. She then put a fake and indifferent smile on her face.

Their good footwork, confident posture,

and humility, completely captured the audience's eyes while the music from the center of the stage drowned out their conversation.

"Can't dance, huh?" The man's deep and clear voice was very seductive.

Nicole raised an eyebrow. "Depends on the person."

She was straightforward and unforgiving.

Eric's eyes sank imperceptibly. The two of them moved back and forth. The music took a steep turn and the rhythm gradually quickened. The man tightened his grip on her hand and her slender waist.

"Why didn't I know that you know how to do business? Is it Stanton Corporation's idea to cooperate with Gerard Lichman, or is it yours?"

Nicole did a graceful turn and the two

came together again.

"There's a lot you're not aware of, and I don't have to tell you anything." The corners of her lip curled up gently with a hint of mockery.

In their three years of marriage, he never thought to understand her as his wife, so what was the point of telling him anything after their divorce?

To him, Nicole was just a passing character in the past three years, but for Nicole, this was an unforgettable lesson.

The light shone on the pair. Eric was as handsome as usual. His tall upright built made every woman marvel at him.

Nicole's dress swayed with every step she took. Her graceful posture and her striking features stunned the crowd. If time froze at this moment, one could see the people in the hall gasp collectively.

All eyes were on these two people. Their movements clearly matched tacitly, but the pair had no intention for interaction.

To be precise, Nicole had no intention of dealing with Eric. She only wished for this song to finish quickly because being so close to Eric Ferguson made her very uncomfortable.

Eric's gaze felt like thorns on her face as he quietly inspected her. The music took a turn into the final section.

Eric leaned his body forward while Nicole took a step back and lifted her head to end the dance. Her long and slender neck curved delicately. When the song was about to end, Nicole subconsciously straightened her back, but she did not expect Eric not to take a step back.

Their lips unexpectedly touched. One was

soft and delicate, and the other was cold and thin.

The last note dragged on before it stopped abruptly as if it reflected the freezing of time at this moment...

BIG SALE: 10,000 BONUS FREE FOR YOU!

GET IT

Chapter 41 He Did It on Purpose

The lights flickered.

Nicole gently shook the glass of wine and stood in front of the railing on the second floor. She watched the pretentious exchange of pleasantries of the people below.

Eric, who was walking over not far away, looked up at that instant and suddenly met Nicole's clear and cold gaze.

Nicole faintly retracted her gaze and ignored the discomfort in her heart. That kiss on the dance floor earlier made the crowd gasp. No one cared which of them actually made the wrong move at the end of the dance. They were just waiting for a good show to happen between the ex-couple.

Any reaction on either of them would lead to endless speculation.

Thus, at the moment their lips touched, Nicole instantly turned her face to the side. Fortunately, the music stopped and she drew back in time. She glanced coldly at Eric and turned away without looking back.

Keith was joking with several people around Eric. After sending them away, he let out a sigh of relief and looked at Eric, who had a cold and noble temperament. Keith frowned when he remembered the scene earlier and subconsciously blurted out. "You did that on purpose during the dance, right?"

Others might not be able to tell, but he knew that Nicole's beat was on point. The problem was with Eric.

Eric grew up in the gentry circle and received elite education on all sorts of social etiquette. How could he be slow to react during the dance?

'Could it be intentional?' Keith thought.

Eric's dark eyes swept over Keith. His face was taut as he said, "No."

"That's good. Don't even think about that woman. I think I lost my mind to think so. That woman must've done it on purpose. Hmph! She surely is good at scheming!"

Of course, Keith believed his best friend's words unconditionally.

Thus, those seeds of doubt disappeared in an instant.

The second floor of the banquet hall.

Grant was networking elsewhere while Nicole felt bored and looked around.

Suddenly, she saw someone waving at her from the doorway. The corners of her lips curved up into a smile as she waved back in response. Ian Carter soon arrived in front of her.

"Carter, you're late..."

Ian leaned nonchalantly on the railing looking relaxed and unrestrained. "Well, I come whenever I want to. If I hadn't heard that you were here too, I wouldn't have bothered to attend such an event."

"Don't even. I know that your father forced you to come." Nicole rolled her eyes at him.

Ian was not the least bit embarrassed after getting exposed by Nicole. He just grinned and said, "My purpose is always you."

Nicole wanted to say something when

she inadvertently saw the people walking towards her. Her face sank unhappily.

"Nicole, are you shameless? You're already divorced from my brother, yet you still try to seduce him? Do you still want to marry into our family? I'll tell you now that our family will never accept a woman like you!"

'Urgh, what kind of sh*tty luck do I have tonight? Everyone I hate just keeps popping up... Ingrid came over with her groupies trying to show me who's boss?' Nicole thought.

Nicole had been in the limelight today, especially after that kiss. Everyone began to speculate about the "reunion of the century" of this rich ex-couple.

'Remarriage? Nicole can dream on!' Ingrid thought.

Ingrid Ferguson was more agitated than anyone else. If it were not for her status as a Young Lady Ferguson, she would have jumped up and cursed at Nicole. 'How is this shameless lowly woman worthy? Her dress should've been mine! This eyesore stole my moment of glory! Stupid Nicole took away all my attention!'

Nicole swept a glance at Ingrid and the few ladies behind her. Besides Ingrid, the others did not look so hostile and were probably dragged over as backup.

'Ha! How childish!' Nicole thought.

"Yo, who's this with the foul mouth?" Ian looked at Ingrid with a cold smile.

Whoever dared to bully Nicole in front of him was dead meat regardless of gender.

Ingrid turned pale and fiercely glared at Ian. "What does it have to do with you?"

Are you her lover?"

Ian was delighted. "Her lover? I like this identity."

Nicole suddenly felt a headache because of the noise. She helplessly glanced at Ian with a warning intent. "Shut it."

She then swept an indifferent glance at Ingrid. "Ms. Ferguson, what do you want?"

Ingrid arrogantly lifted her chin and said, "Don't think I don't know what you're up to. I know you kissed my brother on purpose just now. Do you want my brother to fall for you? Dream on!"

BIG SALE: 10,000 BONUS FREE FOR YOU!

GET IT

Chapter 42 Ugly Past

Ian Carter looked extremely shocked. He caught onto the main point. "Kiss your brother? Haha...stop daydreaming.

Nicole's not crazy or stupid, so why would she look for a f*ckboy?"

"If you don't believe me, ask anyone here. Everyone saw it!" Ingrid argued.

Her friends hesitantly nodded their heads.

Ian dismissed them without a second thought. "Why should I ask the people you're colluding with? Do you think I'm dumb?"

Ingrid's face turned red with anger. "It's true anyway! Nicole, you don't dare admit it? My brother only cares about Wendy. You exist only because you can give her a

blood transfusion. Stop your wishful thinking that you can still marry into our family. We will never accept you!”

She knew that Wendy was a thorn in Nicole’s heart. Every time this name was mentioned, it made Nicole feel twice as desperate.

However, in front of others, Nicole faintly hooked her lips and laughed lightly. She coldly swept a glance at the girls behind Ingrid.

“The whole world knows about your brother’s affair with Wendy Quade. Ms. Ferguson, your words only confirmed the fact that he cheated during our marriage. You should’ve spoken out sooner.”

Ingrid’s face turned pale. She sneered in anger and furiously pointed at Nicole. She insulted Nicole without holding back.

"Don't you guys know who she is? Whatever she's wearing, eating, and using now is given to her by the men she slept with. Do you honestly think that she's a daughter from an affluent family?"

The atmosphere was slightly cold. Ingrid's outburst not only alarmed the people near the railing on the second floor but also startled many others who looked over one after another.

However, Nicole frowned slightly with a cold expression. She did not have any obvious mood fluctuations.

It was as if she was merely a bystander watching this farce.

"Nicole is a poor wretch that doesn't even have a penny on her! When she was still married to my brother, she'd reach out to beg my brother for money to spend. She's

just a maid in our house, doing the laundry, cooking, cleaning, and even landscaping! Whenever she comes back to our villa, our maids would take a day off. Hahahaha... My brother didn't marry a wife. He married a maid! She's even worse than a maid!"

Ingrid laughed unrestrainedly and tried to expose Nicole's most unknown and vulnerable side, stripping Nicole of her glory to reveal her miserable and bleak past.

"Ingrid Ferguson!"

A cold, stern voice suddenly came from behind her. Ingrid's laughter stopped abruptly as she looked back in shock.

"Brother?"

She did not know when Eric had been standing there. His face was extremely

glum. Ingrid subconsciously took a step back and her face was miserably white.

Quinn had already warned the maids in the Ferguson Villa, so they would never talk about what kind of life Nicole led while she lived with them. Thus, Eric would never get the chance to know because Nicole would never tell him.

Ingrid just felt like biting off her tongue at the moment. She had lost her mind and blurted out how they treated Nicole when she was staying with them.

'If Brother finds out... Forget it. So what if he finds out? He doesn't even like this woman. They're divorced!'

Ingrid took a deep breath. She still had to maintain her Young Lady Ferguson image in front of her groupies.

"Brother, I'm just teaching her a lesson.

"This woman tried to seduce you..."

"Oh, quit the act..."

Ian, who was standing on the side, could not help but sneer and interrupt Ingrid's words. He was shaking with anger and wanted to beat Eric Ferguson up.

'Is this how the Fergusons treated our precious Miss Stanton that we coddled and pampered?'

"Ms. Ferguson, you still have the audacity to flaunt such repulsive acts everywhere like they're such glorious deeds? It's Nicole's lifetime of bad luck that she was blinded and married into your family!"

Ian's voice was cold as he stood protectively in front of Nicole. Nicole's rash decision and three years of recklessness should not be talked about and ridiculed!

"You... What's the relationship between you two? Tell us the truth. Did you have an affair with Nicole long ago before Nicole and my brother got divorced...?"

Ingrid still did not forget to hurl mud at Nicole.

"Ingrid Ferguson! Shut up!"

Eric Ferguson yelled at her and could feel his blood boiling. His heart clenched so tightly that it was hard to breathe.

Chapter 43 You're Different

Eric Ferguson did not bother to look at Nicole's expression and walked straight to Ingrid. His face was inexplicably cold.

"Was everything you just said true?" He asked with gritted teeth.

Ingrid was a little flustered. She bit her lower lip and did not know how to respond.

She grew up around her parents and was not close to her brother, who grew up abroad. After Eric returned to the country, he became a first-class business whiz in the industry and expanded the Ferguson family's wealth by hundreds of times.

This made Ingrid insufferably arrogant.

"Answer me!" Eric saw Ingrid's hesitation

and forced her to speak.

A crisp, cold scoff came from the left side behind him. Without a thought, he knew that it was Nicole who was laughing.

"Mr. Ferguson, it's all true."

As soon as Nicole admitted it, the surrounding people looked at these two people with a complicated gaze. They did not expect that behind Nicole's bright and beautiful exterior was such an ugly and miserable past.

After hearing Ingrid Ferguson saying it, they felt sympathetic towards Nicole. The scandal online after Nicole and Eric's divorce did not seem so groundless after all.

It was truly not easy to marry into a rich and powerful family...

Eric's body stiffened and felt something

tightly clenching his heart. It turned out that not only did his close friends despise Nicole, but even the entire Ferguson family were bullying her, and as Nicole's husband, he was clueless about everything!

Over their three years of marriage, Eric only went back to their house a handful of times. Each time, he only went to talk to Nicole about Wendy's health condition so that Nicole would willingly go to donate blood. He would also be polite to Nicole and ask if she had enough pocket money before he left her a bank card and left.

Eric had always thought that he had been nice enough to Nicole. It turned out that he had been deceiving himself. He owed her too much!

At this moment, he did not know how he should face Nicole.

His fists were tightly clenched and his whole body was tense.

However, Nicole only laughed lightly. Her voice was pleasant, but it had a piercing chill.

"Mr. Ferguson, you can go home and ask any maid to find out if it's true, but even if it is, so what?"

'So what if you find out about it now?'

The others only threw hell at Nicole because they all thought that Eric acquiesced to their actions.

Thus, what did it matter that he found out about it now?

Eric was the least innocent of them all because he stabbed her and left the deepest wound in her heart.

Under the soothing ambient light, Nicole's

bright smile was charming yet dangerous, and her beautiful eyes were extremely cold.

She was unforgiving.

"Mr. Ferguson, if it's true, what are you gonna do about it? Are you going to let M s. Ferguson and Mrs. Ferguson kneel to me and apologize? Will you let them do my laundry and cook for me as my maids? Or do you want to get rid of your poor ex-wife, who doesn't even have a penny to her name, by throwing money at her again?"

Everyone looked surprised. When it came to that point, everyone thought that both sides would just cry and apologize to each other. Someone would compromise and everything would be swept under the rug. They did not expect that Nicole would dare to speak out so blatantly.

The Fergusons were so rich that they did not need a dowry from Eric's wife.

However, being of equal social status was an unspoken rule among the gentry circle. It was just that no one would openly talk about it.

If this drama continued, it would surely get out of hand.

"Apologize? Dream on!"

Ingrid refused to admit defeat. There were so many people watching, so she certainly would not apologize to Nicole.

She glared at Nicole and stubbornly said, "I will never apologize to you. You even want me to kneel and be your maid?! Stop daydreaming!"

"That's enough!"

Eric dragged Ingrid back with full force.

Ingrid hit the railing, which was so painful that her eyes instantly welled up with tears.

He did not bother to glance at Ingrid and looked at Nicole with a complex gaze. He could not fulfill any of those conditions she mentioned earlier, except for money, but would she even accept it?

For the first time, Eric felt powerless.

"Nicole, I..."

"Mr. Ferguson, since you can't do anything, don't act like you have a guilty conscience. Apologies aren't worth anything. Are you trying to gain sympathy? Don't you think you're being too shameful?"

Chapter 44 Blind

Nicole sneered and looked at Ingrid Ferguson with a cold gaze. She lowered her eyelids slightly and said, "Ms. Ferguson, are you trying to embarrass me by bringing out this ugly past over and over again? Mind you, I'm not embarrassed. Your family should be embarrassed for treating their daughter-in-law like a maid. I wonder who will ever dare to marry into your family again..."

"Anyway, you're not worthy of being a Ferguson! Nicole, you were clearly trying to seduce my brother earlier. Aren't you gonna admit it?"

Ingrid was adamant that Nicole was deliberately seducing her brother with that kiss earlier.

'Nicole wants me to apologize?!

Ingrid was resentful and thought, 'Why can Nicole be so arrogant? Why didn't my brother back me up?'

"Ms. Ferguson, you actually think that I want to seduce Mr. Ferguson?"

Nicole laughed lightly. She was never one to beat around the bush and had always gone straight to the point.

'Seduce? I don't think I'm cheap enough to do this!'

That kiss at the end of the dance was unexpected and shocking. It must have planted seeds of doubt in the hearts of the crowd. In everyone's opinion, Nicole must be the one who was seducing Eric Ferguson.

Her eyes were clear and cold as she

swept a glance at Eric. The corners of her lips hooked up into a mocking smile.

"Three years ago, I was blind enough to marry Mr. Ferguson, but I'm certainly not so blind as to fall for Mr. Ferguson now. Even if I seduce every man on earth, I won't ever look at Eric Ferguson again."

Nicole did not want to look back and relive that depressing and suffocating past again.

Ingrid shuddered from Nicole's cold gaze. She felt that the current Nicole in front of her was a completely different person from the submissive Nicole in her impression.

The wine glass that Nicole placed on the crystal table made a crisp clink and broke the awkward silence. Nicole then turned around and went downstairs under the watchful gaze of the crowd. Ian glared at

Ingrid and Eric viciously before he quickly followed after Nicole.

The crowd looked at Eric, who stood there with a glum face. His gaze followed closely after Nicole's departing back with an indecipherable expression.

Keith stood on the side and felt shocked. Seeing Eric's attitude, it was clear that he felt heartbroken for that woman after knowing the truth.

"Mr. Lichman, I wanted to ask if this three-way cooperation of yours can be expanded to a four-way cooperation?" Keith laughed as he pulled Gerard Lichman over, trying to divert everyone's attention to other places.

After all, Eric Ferguson's gossip was not something that anyone could just watch for entertainment.

Everyone also had the good sense to continue mingling and drinking in the banquet hall.

Gerard Lichman had a faint smile as he pushed up the gold-rimmed glasses on his nose bridge. "No."

Keith said, "Can't you be a little more euphemistic?"

Gerard hesitated for a while and replied, "Sorry, it's not possible."

Keith was speechless. 'Forget it. I'd be better off talking to Eric...'

Once he turned around, the man who was standing there earlier had already disappeared.

"Where did he go?" Keith muttered to himself.

Gerard faintly glanced at a certain

location downstairs before he smiled and left.

At the same time, there were not many people around in the lounge downstairs, so it was quiet.

Ian pestered Nicole and was asking her what happened before he arrived.

"Did Eric Ferguson take advantage of you? Why did Ingrid Ferguson say that you seduced him?"

Nicole rolled her eyes at him. "No, it's just an accident."

This could only be an accident. Otherwise, there was no other explanation for it because no one would believe that Eric Ferguson did it on purpose.

"If he dares to bully you, I'll definitely beat him up!" Ian waved his fist.

Nicole swept a glance around and did not see Grant anywhere. "Where's my brother?"

"He just went to the VIP table with Chairman Lichman to talk business. Do you wanna go find him?" Ian asked.

Nicole shook her head. "Forget it. Let's not bother him."

When she turned her head, she saw Eric Ferguson walking towards them.

'It's such a coincidence that he keeps popping up everywhere. Why is that guy haunting me like a ghost?!

Nicole raised her eyebrows, held Ian's arm, and intended to leave as if she did not see Eric.

"Nicole, let's talk." The man's dark eyes sank.

"There's nothing to talk about." Nicole did not stop and left him high and dry. She did not want to have the slightest thing to do with this man.

He was just here to give her an apology, but an apology was the most worthless form of guilt.

She did not need it!

Chapter 45 Really Calculative

Ian Carter glanced sideways at Eric Ferguson. He smiled smugly and recklessly as if he was mocking Eric's current situation.

'Look at him! Even Eric Ferguson has his day...'

Keith Ludwig finally caught up to Eric. He followed Eric's gaze and saw Nicole's departing back. "Tsk tsk... Ferg, since you're already divorced, don't regret it. This is all that woman's cheap tricks anyway."

Eric cast a sidelong glance at him and said, "Do I need you to teach me how to do things?"

Keith suddenly felt a chill on his back and

did not dare to speak for a while.

'That woman humiliated Eric in front of everyone. Even I feel like dying from anger, so let alone Eric! Although what Ingrid said was indeed a little overboard, that woman asked for it since she begged to marry Eric in the first place! Was it not her own fault then?'

When Nicole first entered the hall, many came over to mingle with her perhaps because of her position in the Stanton Corporation or because of the drama tonight.

Since Nicole came here to expand her network and find out insider information, she was happy to chat with people. She would clink her wine glass with every one of them and take a small sip. No one forced her to drink.

After the mingling session, Nicole still felt

a little tipsy even though Ian had taken a few drinks on Nicole's behalf. She then found an opportunity and slipped to the bathroom.

Nicole washed her face with cold water and felt the stuffiness in her chest dissipate. Just when she was about to wipe her face with a paper towel, Nicole heard Ingrid's voice gradually approaching from outside.

"I won't let that b*tch Nicole get away so easily! She humiliated my family and is so shameless to surround herself with a continuous stream of men! Does she think she'll be a strong independent woman by sleeping her way to the top? She should just take a look in the mirror to see what a wretch she is!"

Ingrid Ferguson and her groupie walked in and saw Nicole leaning on the sink,

staring at them with her arms crossed and a cold smile on her face.

For a moment, Ingrid was stunned and instantly regained her nasty look as she coldly snorted. "Ugh, I have such bad luck seeing this b*tch everywhere I go."

"I feel the same way." Nicole could not help but laugh.

Ingrid raised her eyebrows. "Who are you to say that? Others might not know your true nature, but do you really think that you can erase the past and start over? You're just an uncouth lowlife who just smells of poverty wherever you go."

Nicole hooked her lips and did not turn around, but she still accurately turned on the tap behind her. Her action was smooth and quick. Water flowed out, but no one knew the meaning of her action.

Perhaps she was just trying to keep her words from being overheard.

"Ms. Ferguson, you should be thanking God that I didn't take the initiative to make a fuss about the previous things you did to me, so don't come and find trouble for yourself." Her voice was extremely cold, but the curvature of her lips made her look much gentler.

"What did you say? How dare you warn me? I'm the Young Lady of the Ferguson family, but what are you? After getting kicked out of my family, you're nothing!"

Ingrid glared at Nicole with a glum face. Without Eric's presence, Ingrid was not afraid of anything anymore.

This Young Lady Ferguson had always looked down on her "sister-in-law" since the very beginning, so that sense of

superiority had been engraved in her.

'How could this nobody Nicole even qualify to be on an equal footing with me at home and be respected? Can she help in Brother's career or can her family be of any assistance?'

In the past three years, Ingrid had deliberately asked Nicole to hand wash her clothes. When it was damaged, she would scold Nicole. Ingrid did not even bother to stretch her hands to pour herself a glass of water and preferred to order Nicole around instead. If she was not satisfied, she would get Nicole to redo it.

The countless times of humiliation and Nicole's forbearance and silence made Ingrid addicted to this feeling. Thus, Ingrid took it for granted and felt that Nicole deserved to be servile and

submissive.

Even after the divorce, Ingrid felt that Nicole could not refute her because Nicole would always be inferior to her.

"Only you think that the Fergusons are unbeatable. I really wonder where you got your superiority complex..."

Nicole scoffed and showed a playful smile.

"Hah! Why didn't you say that when you were so desperate to marry my brother? Nicole, have you forgotten how shameless you were? You'd rather be a mobile blood bank for Wendy just to marry my brother. This is your glorious past..." Ingrid could not help but provoke Nicole with the past.

Nicole collected her smile. Her face was calm and somewhat cold.

"Ms. Ferguson, I wasn't being shameless. I was just blind! If you want to mention the past again, then I'll get really calculative with you."

'Calculative? What's this broke woman trying to be calculative about?' Ingrid thought.

"Do you think I'm afraid of you? Nicole, if you have the guts, come at me then! Ah--" Ingrid suddenly shrieked.

Chapter 46 Don't Want to Put Up With You

Ingrid Ferguson's face stiffened. She screamed and saw that a cup of cold water had been splashed on her face and body.

Nicole gently put down the decorative bottle at the sink and dusted her hands. Her gaze was calm as she said, "You asked for this."

"Nicole, how dare you..."

Ingrid was so angry that her face flushed red. She was shivering. The dress she wore was from Dior's off-the-rack collection. Although it was not as luxurious as Nicole's custom-made dress, it still had an eight-figure price tag. Many celebrities did not even qualify to look at i

t, but now it was ruined!

Nicole smirked. Her smile did not reach her eyes. "Do you really think that I'll put up with you like before? If you dare provoke me again, I'll teach you a lesson and settle both the new and old accounts together!"

Ingrid shuddered when she saw a penetrating coldness at the bottom of Nicole's eyes. She could not help but feel frightened.

However, she no longer wanted to think so much at this moment. She was the Young Lady of the Ferguson family and was revered everywhere she went. How could she be bullied like this at a banquet?

How was she going to get out later?

Her spare dress was far less expensive than this one.

Ingrid gritted her teeth and glared at Nicole. She was so infuriated that she was about to lose her mind. "Nicole, I won't let you get away with this!"

She lunged forward and raised her hand at Nicole.

'I'll show Nicole how powerful I am!'

Before the slap could land on Nicole's face, Nicole smirked slightly as if she was just waiting for Ingrid to make the first move. Nicole's eyes flickered and her body moved nimbly to the other side as she accurately clasped Ingrid's arm. She ruthlessly grabbed Ingrid's long wavy hair with her free hand and pushed Ingrid forward.

The running water was filling up the golden sink and was about to overflow. Ingrid plunged headlong into it, splashing

out a lot of water.

Ingrid's groupie in the back exclaimed and looked extremely shocked.

Nicole coldly swept a glance over and the groupie was instantly silenced. She watched the scene in horror and did not dare to go forward.

Ingrid struggled violently, but Nicole did not forcefully resist. She just wanted to teach Ingrid a lesson, so she let go of Ingrid and took a step back. Not a single drop of water got onto Nicole's dress and she still looked as beautiful and seductive as ever.

However, Ingrid was incredibly wretched. Her hair and makeup were no longer presentable.

Ingrid leaned against the wall and gasped for air. A trace of shock and unfamiliarity

flashed in her eyes.

She did not seem to know this side of Nicole, or perhaps she had never really understood this woman!

Ingrid's groupie immediately went forward to hold her. "Ingrid, a-are you okay?"

"Ms. Ferguson, I've already told you just now that I won't put up with you anymore. If you mess with me again, you'll pay the price!"

Nicole raised her hand to tuck a stray strand of hair behind her ears, then unhurriedly lifted her eyelids. Her intimidating gaze landed on Ingrid, whose face was pale. Ingrid looked like a wet dog, which made Nicole smile with satisfaction.

She pursed her lips and seemed to be

mocking Ingrid, then turned on her heels and left nonchalantly.

Ingrid only dared to scream in exasperation after Nicole left.

Nicole was in a great mood because she gave what Ingrid deserved, but who would have thought that when she looked up, she saw Eric who had been there for God-knows-how-long.

She paused for a moment and wanted to walk away as if she did not see him, but he called out to her. "Nicole."

Eric stood there and watched as Nicole deliberately ignored himself. He was clearly extremely uncomfortable, but he had to endure it because he owed it to her.

Thus, when he heard what was happening in the women's restroom, he

held back from going in to stop them.

The Ferguson family owed her much more than that.

Nicole stopped in her tracks and looked at him with raised eyebrows. "What's wrong, Mr. Ferguson?"

Without waiting for Eric's reply, Nicole smirked and said, "Oh, by the way, Ms. Ferguson is inside, but you came too late. She's not presentable enough to come out and meet people right now."

She put away the smile on her face. Her gaze was clear and cold as she glanced at him. "Eric Ferguson, have we ever met in private in the past three years? Have you ever given me a chance?"

"Wasn't he the one who acquiesced to all the bullying that others did to me?"

Every time they met, he had a business-like attitude. All he ever mentioned was Wendy Quade. Nicole felt tormented by that name.

Suddenly, Nicole recalled the time they had just gotten married. She did not understand why Eric was deliberately being cold to her and began to learn how to be a virtuous wife. Every day, she would prepare meals and wait for him to come home. She was afraid to disturb his work, so she dared not even call him.

However, Eric would not come home for several days in a row, so Nicole could not resist sending him a text message asking if he wanted to try her cooking. She never got a reply.

The countless attempts and gestures of goodwill yet getting repeatedly slapped in the face made her feel exhausted and worthless.

Later, when Nicole got used to Eric's cold shoulder, she learned that she was destined to be alone in their new house and that he would never come back.

They each had their own purpose in this marriage.

Now, Nicole finally freed herself from the past yet he wanted an answer?

If he had treated her as a wife, his family and friends would not dare to laugh so

blatantly at her wishful thinking.

'Wasn't he the one who took the lead to humiliate me?'

These words pierced his heart like a needle, which gave off a dense soreness in his chest. Eric frowned. "You actually had many opportunities to tell me..."

'So it's my fault?' Nicole sneered.

Nicole no longer cared about the past. She did not need others to stand up for her. She used to put up with their vile treatment because she loved Eric, but now, she would not endure any of it because she did not love him anymore!

"Mr. Ferguson, you only care about Wendy Quade, so how can you tolerate other women? I'm very impressed that you care more for her than your marriage, so what's the use of talking about this

now?"

"Actually, Wendy is..." Eric knitted his brows. He wanted to explain to Nicole about his relationship with Wendy when he was coldly interrupted by Nicole.

"That's enough. I'm repulsed by that name. Mr. Ferguson, it's best if we pretend not to know each other in the future..."

After that, Nicole strutted away on her high heels without looking back.

Her good mood was ruined. Nicole came out again with a sullen face, just in time to see Grant waiting for her after he was done mingling.

Grant probably heard the others talking about Nicole's fight with Ingrid earlier because his face was glum, but he looked relieved to see Nicole again.

Nicole walked over with a smile then hugged Grant's arm petulantly. "Is it over yet? Can we leave early? I'm so tired today ..."

Grant dotingly pinched her nose. "We can leave if you're tired. There's no need to care about the others."

Nicole smiled with squinted eyes. 'Brother's still the best...'

"Do you need to tell anyone?"

"No, I've already said my goodbyes long ago." Grant stroked her head. "Let's go, the driver's waiting outside."

Nicole nodded and took Grant's arm as they walked outside. The handsome man and beautiful woman were an extremely eye-catching pair.

As soon as they went out, Ian caught up t

o them from behind. "Mr. Stanton, do you mind if I tag along?"

Nicole looked at Grant, but Grant's face was cold. He had always been reserved and serious to outsiders. "I do mind. It's out of the way."

Ian was rendered speechless.

Nicole smiled and waved at him. "See ya later, Carter..."

Ian did not dare to mess with Grant Stanton, so he did not have the guts to cling to Nicole and hitch a ride with them. He could only stand there looking aggrieved as he watched the siblings get into their car. When the car door closed, Ian quickly went forward in a panic and opened the door on Nicole's side.

"What are you doing?" Nicole was startled.

Many people were talking near the

entrance, so they also noticed the movement there. With Grant's status, it was impossible to keep a low profile even if he wanted to.

Ian knelt on one knee and carefully held the hem of Nicole's dress that was clamped outside the car door. He then put it into the car and smiled looking up at Nicole. "Alright, you can go now. Bye!"

It turned out that Nicole's dress was caught outside the car door, so Ian deliberately went over to help her with it. In the eyes of the crowd, that gesture was extremely humble.

The men standing on the balcony of the banquet hall on the second floor saw this scene. Keith laughed and looked at Eric who was next to him. "This lapdog Ian surely has a knack for chasing women, huh? He even dares to flirt in front of

Grant Stanton?"

Keith assumed that there might be an ambiguous relationship between Grant Stanton and Nicole.

Eric's eyes were dull. "Let's go and have a drink with a few others..."

Chapter 48 Drunk

Inside the car, Nicole could hear the lovely and soothing sound of music that was like a refreshing stream of water to her ears. It was her favorite violin piece, "Serenade".

Nicole finally felt relaxed at this moment. She tugged at the hem of her dress in fascination, seemingly thinking about something.

Grant glanced to the side at his sister. "Lil N, is Ian Carter pursuing you?"

He could see at a glance that there was something fishy with Ian Carter.

Nicole paused in her movements and was startled. "Nah, he's just fooling around. He'll be back to normal in a

couple of days."

Grant looked away and laughed. "That's good."

"You don't like him?"

That was strange. The Stantons always had a good relationship with the Carters. Otherwise, they would not have allowed Nicole to get close to Ian and Hugh.

"He's had too many girlfriends, and his private life is too messy. He's not suitable for you, but if you're happy..." Grant was a little hesitant.

Nicole laughed. "What are you implying? How can I go for my friend? Besides, I'm not interested in men right now. I just want to focus on my career!"

Grant was visibly satisfied with this answer. "Yes, men are nothing. You can have as many as you want. Just take

things slow.”

‘I must train my baby sister to become the world’s richest woman!’

The driver in front thought, ‘Eldest Young Master is a bad influence on the Young Lady...’

Tattle Bar.

Since Eric Ferguson called them out for drinks, his buddies, who were nearby, went there as long as they could make it.

Inside the private room, Eric already had several empty bottles in front of him before his friends arrived.

Keith tried to stop Eric, but he did not manage to and could only watch on the side.

Colton White and the others who came later were shocked to see this scene. Eric

had not looked like this for many years. The last time he got so drunk was when Hendrick died.

"What's going on?" Their friends came in alarmed. "Why did you guys start drinking already?"

A glass of cold whiskey slipped down Eric's throat, but his face did not change in the slightest. He extended his hand. "Sit."

Everyone sat down in amazement. Keith was sober and poured them all a glass. "Bros should go through thick and thin together, am I right?"

Colton looked at Keith and asked, "Bro, what happened here?"

Keith pursed his lips. "What else could it be? It must be because of his stupid ex-wife..."

However, he dared not say it out loud.

Eric's eyes darkened as waves of emotions tumbled inside. He tugged on his messy shirt collar and revealed his collarbone. "I was married for three years but didn't introduce you guys to Nicole. Do you guys know her?"

This name was very popular recently, so who would not know her?

"Just because of her? Ferg, you both aren't of the same social status, so divorce is just a matter of time. Don't be so sad. Speaking of which, we should even celebrate it!"

Keith was desperately trying to stop Colton with his eyes but to no avail.

"Yeah! She's not on our level, so there's no need to introduce her. You don't even like her, so we've never acknowledged her

as our 'sister-in-law'."

"Right, didn't she marry you with a motive? We've seen gold diggers before, so don't take it to heart."

.....

'Look, it's because of my acquiescence that Nicole got hurt...' Eric's mood was very complex and he felt frustrated.

'She had a motive? I can't think of what her motive is... She didn't spend a penny of what I gave her and even threw it all out at that party when she fought with Wendy ... She didn't want anything when she asked for a divorce and left without taking a cent... My family bullied her like that yet she didn't say a word and even acted like everything was fine in front of me... My friends ignored her, yet she just shrunk into her shell quietly and didn't even complain... What exactly did she

want then?’

The alcohol gave him a burning sensation down his throat. Keith the blabbermouth then told everyone what happened tonight. Colton and the others were unfazed by it and kept drinking.

“Ferg, you’re just soft-hearted. It’s not your fault, so why are you blaming yourself?”

“Yeah, she asked for it. Women just like to find trouble for themselves. If she had a problem, she should’ve told you in time. If she kept it to herself, who can help her?”

“Who doesn’t have some conflicts at home? She can’t blame anyone for not being able to handle your mother and sister...”

“Stop thinking about it. Since she wanted a divorce, she should make a clean break.

You don't owe each other anything, so why torture yourself so much? Don't go looking for trouble."

"Keith, you usually have a lot of tricks up your sleeve. Why don't you think of a way to deal with that woman?"

Keith drank so much that he was a little tipsy. "I...I don't dare to...my nudes are still with her..."

"Hahahahahahahahaha..."

Everyone drank to their heart's content, and Eric even more so. In a daze, he remembered Nicole's face when she looked at him with disgust. 'Since she wants us to be strangers, should I fulfill her wish?'

Chapter 49 Throw It Away

Nicole's alarm clock rang, waking her up from her beauty sleep.

Nicole had requested to go back to her apartment last night. She felt a lot more comfortable without waking up to so many maids.

She looked at her phone and saw that the photos from last night's party had pushed her and Eric to fame once again.

[Rich ex-couple suspected to be back together?]

It was attached with a picture of Eric and Nicole's kiss at the end of the dance. It was an ingenious shot. Even the lighting and background looked very artistic.

Nicole sneered and did not pay attention t

o it. She closed the article and opened her email.

Logan had already sent Nicole's schedule to her early in the morning. Nicole washed up and listened to some finance news.

Last night's trouble had all been forgotten after a good sleep and she would not let Eric Ferguson affect her mood again.

Yvette kept bombarding Nicole with calls because she had just seen the picture online. She wanted to confirm the truth of the matter because the picture did not look photoshopped.

Nicole picked up and helplessly explained what happened. Yvette then breathed a sigh of relief and started to badmouth the Fergusons, then suddenly said, "Hey, look! The article's been taken down!"

After checking, Nicole saw that it was gone.

Nicole would not waste her money on this, so who could it be?

Eric Ferguson?

Yvette laughed loudly on the other side of the phone. "Look at our group chat! Ian spent money to take it down!"

Nicole clicked into their group chat and saw a ton of messages.

[Ian Carter: \$1 million PR fees! The audacity!]

[Yvette Quimbey: Carter, didn't you go to the party last night? Why isn't there a single shot of you?]

[Julie Nixon: If there's a shot of him, I wonder who'll pay to take it down...]

[Yvette Quimbey: Hahahahaha!]

[Ian Carter: Meanies!]

Nicole laughed helplessly and sent a message.

[Nicole Stanton: Next time, please transfer the money to me directly, then I'll come out to make a statement.]

[Ian Carter: *cries in despair* *vomits blood*]

Nicole put away her phone and was a lot happier.

At about 7:00 am, Logan drove over to pick Nicole up and brought breakfast for her. "I bought this on the way. I don't know if it's to your liking..."

Nicole was not that picky and took it. "Thanks. Let's go."

"There's a meeting at 8:00 am. President Stanton said that you're fully in charge of J&L's matters and that he won't ask questions."

Nicole knew that Grant was delegating it to her as part of her training, so she nodded and said, "Have you contacted J&L? We have to do our inspection in advance."

"I heard that Ferguson Corporation is doing their inspection next week, so I made an appointment for tomorrow morning."

"Good job."

Nicole looked down at the documents. She did not want to meet with people from Ferguson Corporation. Although Eric might not be personally involved in this project, she still did not want to take the

risk.

They talked on the way to the office about work matters. Nicole was relieved that Grant was willing to give her someone as capable as Logan.

As soon as they arrived at the office, the receptionist came over holding a huge bouquet and looked at her with a smile. "Vice President Nicole, someone sent you flowers."

Nicole frowned slightly and glanced at the card on it.

[Dearest Nicole,

I'll love you for ten thousand years <3

Yours truly,

Ian Carter]

Nicole did an eye-flip in her heart and said to the receptionist, "Throw it away for me,

thanks.”

After taking two steps, Nicole stopped in her tracks and looked back. “If there are any more flower deliveries in the future, just reject them.”

She did not want to give Ian the slightest hope and wanted to nip his little spark in the bud.

“Yes, ma’am.” The receptionist looked regretful. ‘These flowers are so pretty... but they’re about to be thrown into the trash can...’

The meeting began on time at 8:00 am.

When Nicole went into the conference room, everyone had already arrived.

Nicole sat on the main seat and looked at the people in the room. “Our cooperation with J&L Corporation has already begun. Now, we’ll need to form a project team to

follow up with the tasks. Logan will send you all a list later.”

Everyone knew that this cooperation with J&L Corporation was in a brand new field. Getting involved in this project would likely catapult them to success, so everyone was very eager.

After the meeting, Samantha Lindt came to Nicole.

“Vice President Nicole, why am I not on the list?”

‘How can I miss such a good opportunity to reap benefits in this important core project?’

Nicole looked up from her desk and raised her eyebrows. “If every employee who wasn’t on the list came to ask me this question, thousands of people would come knocking on my door. How do you

think I should answer?"

Chapter 50 Backer

Samantha Lindt hated Nicole, but since Nicole had something over her head, Samantha dared not get into an all-out fight with her.

"My experience in leading teams is no less than those on the list, and my performance is one of the best among the senior managers. Vice President Nicole, are you still holding a grudge against me because of what happened last time?"

Samantha was obviously a bit discontented.

Nicole lowered her eyes and laughed. "No, I don't hold a grudge against you, but I do remember that you were against cooperating with J&L before this. I'm just

afraid your attitude will affect our cooperation, so..."

"I will comply with the company's decision." Samantha eagerly showed her allegiance.

Nicole gave her a perfunctory smile. "This list has been announced at the board meeting, so I'm afraid there's no way to change it now. Let's talk about it next time we have the chance..."

She had already started to pack up the things on her desk, giving Samantha an obvious signal that she was done with this conversation.

Samantha gritted her teeth and said, "I'm sure it can still be changed. Vice President Nicole, just wait and see."

She then turned on her heels and left Nicole's office with confidence. Nicole's

gaze was deep as she raised her eyebrow. 'Great! She took the bait.'

In the afternoon, Logan called Nicole's office phone. "Director Zielinski wants you to meet him at his office."

'An old man that's about to retire?' Nicole raised her eyebrows. "Sure."

Aside from Grant and Logan, no one in the company knew of Nicole's real identity. As the newly instated Vice President, Nicole would like to see what Micah Zielinski wanted to talk to her about.

Micah liked to engage in speculative trading. He only became a member of Stanton Corporation's board of directors through special means and had refused to let go ever since. However, he did not have many shares in the company and was not considered a threat, so they let

him be.

Nicole knocked on Micah's office door and heard a tired voice coming from inside, "Come in."

She smiled and went in. "Mr. Zielinski, you were looking for me?"

Micah's eyes lit up when he saw her, but he suddenly thought of something and instantly looked regretful.

"Come, sit down." He pointed to the seat in front of him.

Nicole took a seat.

Micah smiled and coughed slightly. "Ms. Nicole, you're very pretty. No wonder Grant was willing to disregard so many objections and forcefully pushed you into this position."

Nicole's smile deepened. "So...he didn't

like that Grant's backing me?

She did not explain anything and just smiled at him.

Micah saw that she was not carrying on the conversation and coldly snorted. "Do you know that your position was originally reserved for Samantha Lindt?"

'Is he trying to scare me?'

Nicole paused for a moment and said, "Ms. Lindt is certainly capable, but I'm more suitable for this position."

Micah's face instantly sank and threatened her. "Young people who are arrogant in the workplace and have no respect for their elders will suffer."

Nicole smiled and stood up. "Then I can only prove myself with my capabilities. Mr. Zielinski, if there's nothing else, I'll take my leave."

"Nicole!" Micah was a little anxious. He was dissatisfied with the direction of this meeting and instructed, "Add Samantha Lindt to J&L Corporation's project team."

Nicole's smile widened. "It is really him... Samantha Lindt's backer is such a miserable old man? Did she think that I'd be intimidated by this old geezer? How absurd!"

Micah saw that Nicole only smiled without a word. His face turned glum. "Did you hear what I just said?"

"Yes..."

Micah's expression eased slightly. Nicole continued, "But I can't do it."

"What do you mean?"

"It won't be fair to the others."

"Nicole, do you think that you're safe just

because you have Grant? Do you believe that I'll..." Micah was exasperated and threatened her.

"Fire me? I don't believe that the board will fire me because of Samantha Lindt. I suppose Ms. Lindt didn't tell you what I have on her when she came crying to you. Please tell her not to mess with me."

Nicole swept a clear and cold glance at the shocked Micah Zielinski, then stood up and walked out without hesitation.

As soon as she left Micah's office, she called Grant's private number.

"What's wrong, N?"

"There's something fishy with Micah Zielinski. Samantha Lindt is one of his people. He must be the one who wanted to prevent our cooperation with J&L Corporation in the first place."

Grant laughed and praised her. "You caught on quick."

"You already knew about it?"

"How could I not know of the dissent among my company's board of directors?"

Nicole sighed in relief. "Then I'm relieved."

"That old fox is not easy to deal with, so I'll handle him. You should just focus on following up on J&L's cooperation. By the way, I heard that Eric Ferguson plans to personally take charge of this project." Grant gave her a heads-up.

Chapter 51 Sorry

Nicole was unhappy when she learned that Eric Ferguson was personally in charge of this project. She did not want to deal with this man, but it was inevitable that they would meet and talk during the cooperation.

'How annoying.'

The next morning, Nicole went to J&L Corporation with her team. Gerard Lichman came to receive them and wanted to take them to the research lab.

Seeing the latest research and achievements in the lab would give the people of Stanton Corporation an authentic experience of their research progress.

Nicole and Gerard were walking while talking. Before they reached the entrance of the lab, a small thing scampered out of nowhere to them. Someone from behind let out a cry of alarm. "Careful!"

On closer look, it was a fat tiger with pointed ears and whiskers. It was small, adorable, and so lovable. The little tiger only reached Nicole's ankle and was very furry. Besides its stripes, it did not have any semblance of a fierce and majestic tiger.

Everyone was shocked when they saw this little tiger. Nicole froze and was so startled that her heart skipped a beat. She then took a step back.

However, this "tiger" rammed into Nicole's shoes and rolled on the ground in pain. "Ouch..." It crawled back up clumsily and rubbed its head at Nicole's

feet. It then shook its head and looked up at her.

This action and appearance resembled a tiger cub that was spoiled, lazy, and curious about everything. Nicole felt the urge to kidnap it.

The "tiger" blinked and shook its whiskers on its cheeks. It stretched out a front paw from its chubby little body to touch the spot on Nicole's right foot that it had just bumped into like it was wiping off some non-existent stains.

Nicole patted her chest and took a deep breath, then rubbed her eyes in disbelief.

"What a pretty lady!" The tiger had the voice of a three or four-year-old boy.

Her eyes widened in shock. "This tiger speaks English?!"

'No, wait... Why would there be tigers

here? How can an endangered animal appear here?!

Gerard could not help but laugh lightly. "Sorry for scaring you."

He looked down and said in a gentle voice, "You should apologize for scaring our guests."

The "tiger" once again rubbed its head on Nicole's feet and sounded aggrieved as it said, "I'm sorry... Please forgive me. I just look fierce, but I'm actually very gentle..."

It spoke so naturally that it was no different from human speech. Its movements also did not make any mechanical sound. If it had not spoken, Nicole would have thought that it was a real tiger!

Her heart melted from its cuteness.

The crowd was shocked as they watched

on the side. Nicole squatted down in amazement and looked into the tiger's eyes. Although this was a model of a tiger, its eyelashes and pupils had the luster and characteristics of a real animal that could change with the light. It could certainly be mistaken as a real tiger cub, but upon closer inspection, Nicole could see a speck of infrared light in its eyeballs.

"This is our experimental team's latest specimen. They're currently researching pet companions to relieve boredom. It usually doesn't run around like this. Someone must've left the door open, so it took the opportunity to slip out." Gerard sighed helplessly.

"Is this also part of our project?" Nicole asked excitedly. 'If so, what a pleasant surprise!'

Gerard hesitated and said, "No, it's still not mature enough and there are many questionable factors, so it's not suitable to be rolled out into the market yet."

"It's so cute! I want to adopt one!" The group gathered around.

"Me too..."

"The cost of this tiger is comparable to buying ten shopping malls in West City. We use very high-grade materials from all over the world. Even if we were to compromise on various factors, it'll be hard to achieve mass production."

The crowd bemoaned the fact that this cute tiger turned out to be a gold mine that they could never afford.

'No wonder it didn't look anything like a machine! Amazing!'

When Nicole heard that it would not be mass-produced, she felt a little disappointed. This robot could communicate with people and could replace pets without the hassle of feeding, discipline, sickness, and death. It could even become a great companion in life. If such a product were to be released, it would certainly shock the entire industry.

Gerard could see through Nicole's thoughts and felt regretful as well. "Let's go."

Nicole looked at the "tiger" with fondness, but the tiger suddenly laid on the ground with its belly up trying to get Nicole to play with it. "Pretty lady, I want a hug!"

Seeing this, Nicole could not help but laugh. She looked at Gerard and he helplessly glanced at the little tiger before

he nodded in agreement.

Nicole carefully stretched out her hand. The tiger was very nimble as it jumped into her arms. It was about the size and weight of a cat and could easily be held by both hands. It was fluffier and softer to the touch than Nicole imagined. The tiger also rubbed its head on Nicole's chest and nestled in her arms comfortably. It had a lazy face and even squinted its eyes in enjoyment. It was so cute that everyone's hearts melted.

"Little Tiger, you're so cute..." Nicole could not resist talking to it.

"I agree..." The little tiger looked so proud and lowered its head to snuggle on Nicole's palm.

A female colleague next to Nicole came over. "Little Tiger, are all tigers just as cute and cuddly as you are?"

The little tiger rolled its eyes. "Please select an animal mode. Do you agree to switch to the fierce tiger mode?"

It even deliberately emphasized the word "fierce".

The female colleague rubbed her hands and saw that Nicole and Gerard had no intention to object, so she excitedly said, "Agree!"

The little tiger turned its head and twitched its eyebrows. "Roar..."

The crowd was puzzled.

"Roar... Roar..."

Everyone was speechless.

"Roar roar roar..."

The little tiger's voice was not fierce or scary, but cute as hell!

Everyone thought that it was speaking "tiger".

"I think it's better to switch back to the original mode..." Another person suggested.

Gerard could not help but laugh. Seeing everyone's incredulous expression, Gerard reached out and touched the little tiger's chubby neck. "Stop fooling around."

He then looked at everyone and said, "Its I Q is very high and was just teasing you all."

The people who were fooled by a tiger did not know how to react.

The little tiger rolled around in Nicole's arms like a pampered baby. "Everyone likes me..."

The crowd's mood changed from shock to admiration and finally envy. Everyone stared at the precious treasure in Nicole's hand and was afraid that this costly item would fall. However, it seemed to be asleep and even snored lightly.

This tiger was truly a wonder!

Gerard led the way and brought the group into the core research area.

J&L Corporation was truly worthy of being at the top of the artificial intelligence field domestically. Their focus was implementing artificial intelligence in various areas that would aid and make a huge impact on people's quality of life. They covered all areas, from autonomous driving to nanny bots, smart homes, robot doctors, and other unexpected aspects of life.

Nicole was increasingly amazed the more she explored. It was the right decision to choose J&L Corporation as a partner.

While everyone was looking around, Gerard took Nicole to the other side of the lab and went into an oval-shaped office.

The people inside stood up and nodded in greeting. Gerard gestured for them to sit down. "Go on."

A man came in through the side door. A staff member made him stand in a designated position and said, "Start stripping..."

Chapter 52 What's There to Be Shy About

The man was prepared and stripped his shirt without any fluctuation in his expression. He exposed his chest and posed according to instructions. Nicole was the only woman there and was dumbfounded when she saw this. Her cheeks flushed red and she hurriedly looked at Gerard Lichman.

"What's this..."

"We're collecting various samples of the human physique in order to create different humanoid companions according to different preferences."

Nicole finally understood after Gerard's simple explanation.

She clenched her teeth and thought, 'What an enjoyable job...'

Gerard's assistant hurriedly came in and whispered a few words into his ear.

Gerard looked serious and turned to Nicole.

"Vice President Nicole, please continue to stay and keep watch here for a while. I need to take some of these guys with me."

As soon as he spoke, everyone immediately followed him out.

Nicole was left dumbfounded alone. She touched the "tiger" in her arms and muttered to herself, "Do we have to continue?"

Before she had time to think, the next person came into the room. She sat there without lifting her head and stared at the

LCD screen on the table. She was waiting for the person to go up and automatically appear on the screen while she tried to calm herself down.

"Start stripping..."

Nicole spoke in the same tone as the staff earlier. It was calm, routine, and perfect!

The person in front of her did not move, so she frowned and urged him.

The man still did not move, so Nicole urged him again. "What's there to be shy about? It'll be quick..."

Nicole got impatient and raised her head. At that moment, her brain buzzed. The man in front of her had deep and dark eyes with a cold glint. It was none other than Eric Ferguson.

She quickly regained composure and

frowned slightly. 'Isn't Ferguson Corporation scheduled to come a few days later? Why is he here now?'

The atmosphere was momentarily stagnant. None of them spoke.

Fortunately, Gerard Lichman returned in time. "Vice President Nicole, I forgot to tell you that..."

'Mr. Ferguson will be coming today...'

Gerard saw the other two people in the room and sensed the awkward atmosphere. He froze for a moment and said, "Oh, you've met..."

'I was still a step too late...'

Eric stared at Gerard. "What's this about stripping?"

Gerard came to his senses and laughed. "Oh, right! Mr. Ferguson, you have a great figure too. Why don't you take off your

clothes so that we can scan your body and take a sample? Vice President Nicole, are you also interested? I wonder who will have the opportunity to pick a robot with Mr. Ferguson's figure..."

Nicole stood up and said with a straight face. "I'm not interested."

She was about to leave, but the "tiger" in her arms suddenly jumped down and ran to Eric's feet. It rubbed its head on Eric's feet and tugged on Eric's pants with its two little paws as it whined, "Papa... Carry me..."

Nicole turned her head in shock. Eric's face was cold and sullen as he bent down and grabbed the "tiger" by the neck. Its four legs were struggling in the air and protested as if it was extremely uncomfortable. "Don't grab me by the neck... It's so uncomfortable..."

Eric was annoyed and held the tiger in his arms. He did not seem surprised and seemed to know the tiger's temperament very well. Eric raised his eyes to look at Nicole and wanted to say something, but Nicole just glanced at the tiger coldly and grunted before she turned around and left without looking back.

Gerard looked at Eric's increasingly glum face and could not help but laugh lightly. "She was so into the tiger just now and I was worried that she'd ask for it, but once you touched it, she didn't even want to look at it anymore..."

Eric glanced at him coldly. Gerard touched his nose and was sensible enough to shut up.

Once Nicole left the building, she received a call from Yvette, who was asking her to come out for lunch at a nearby mall.

Nicole was upset about earlier and needed to relax, so she informed Logan and went to meet Yvette.

The two of them went to a newly opened restaurant. Yvette had already made a reservation in advance, so they did not need to queue for a place. They ordered a feast. When they were almost done eating, Yvette looked at her phone and laughed out loud.

She handed her phone to Nicole and said, "Look at this dumb*ss Ian!"

Nicole glanced at it and saw Ian's new post. Ian had cropped out the photo of Nicole and Eric dancing and replaced Eric's face with his own. The caption: [This is more like it!]

Keith was among the people who liked the post.

Unexpectedly, Eric left a comment below.

Chapter 53 Slap Her With Money

Nicole had long since blocked Eric and cut off all contact with him. She did not expect to see his name in Ian's post. 'This circle is just too small...'

Eric's comment: [Knock-off.]

It did not do much damage, but it was quite insulting.

Ian angrily left a dozen comments below cursing Eric Ferguson. However, there was no other reply from Eric. The "war" was over.

Nicole rolled her eyes helplessly. "Ian doesn't have anything better to do, huh?"

"He's really interested in you. Everyone can see that. Why don't you give him a chance? You can take advantage of this

opportunity to annoy the crap out of Eric Ferguson...”

“I won’t be romantically interested in my closest and dearest friends. If I was interested in him, I’d have made a move on him long ago, so stop spouting nonsense...”

Nicole frowned thinking of how she should solve this situation with Ian.

“Then forget it. I’ve got my eye on a necklace. Wanna come with me to take a look?” There was always something to talk about between girls.

Nicole nodded and needed some retail therapy. The two came out of the restaurant and made a beeline to a specialized jewelry store.

Yvette had booked this necklace long ago and when the attendant took it out, it was

absolutely stunning.

“This necklace is the final work of the famous designer Pire. You ladies have a great eye. Would you like to try it?” The girl at the counter could see at a glance that these two ladies wearing such expensive-looking clothes were not ordinary customers and introduced the store’s latest products to them.

Yvette nodded and handed it to Nicole. “Try it on.”

The two ladies were like sisters and did not mind who bought what. Although Nicole did not shop often, she had plenty of jewelry. Every holiday or birthday, her brothers’ gifts to her were enough to fill out a warehouse. She would get the latest models of jewelry on the market without asking for it.

However, going to shops and trying on

jewelry was certainly more enjoyable.

Nicole picked up the necklace to try it on when she heard a taunting voice from behind.

“Try it on? Can she even afford it? Hey you, you shouldn’t just let anybody try on your store’s jewelry because her odor will cling onto the necklace and you won’t be able to sell it...”

Ingrid and her groupies were shopping and just happened to see this scene. The smell of barbeque from Nicole and Yvette’s lunch earlier was stuck on their clothes, so Ingrid could not help but speak out.

She had sustained a miserable defeat the last time at Nicole’s hands and was so angry that she did not have an appetite for a few days.

Yvette’s face turned cold. “What does it

have to do with you?"

Ingrid walked over arrogantly and said, "I want this necklace! Don't let anyone try it because I'm afraid it'll get dirty."

She gritted her teeth and stared at Yvette, then sneered at Nicole. "How much pocket money did your sugar daddy give you? You probably don't have enough to buy it, right? It's better if you just save it..."

"Please wrap it up for me," Nicole said to the store attendant as she put down the necklace.

She glanced at Ingrid with a cold and clear gaze that carried a hint of warning. Ingrid was startled and almost felt the fear of that day again. However, Ingrid was soon emboldened.

Ingrid thought that she was surrounded by people and the jewelry store's security

guards, so Nicole would not have the guts to make a move on her here.

"I said that I'll take this necklace," Ingrid interjected. She would not let Nicole have her way no matter what.

The store attendant spoke hesitantly, "Sorry, but these two ladies came first..."

"What did you say? I'm a VIP customer and should get the best treatment! I should get priority on whatever I fancy!" Ingrid glared at Nicole smugly.

The rules of this store were that VIP customers had the right to pick first.

The store attendant glanced apologetically at Yvette and Nicole and was about to take the necklace away when Nicole gently put her hand on it. The corner of her lips hooked up slightly.

Nicole took out a special black gold card

from her bag, which was an exclusive VVIP special card recognized internally by all international luxury brand stores. It was only given to ten celebrities in the world and even a certain royal family did not have a chance to see it. It was extremely precious and rare.

With this card, one could enjoy the best treatment in whichever luxury brand store in the world.

The store attendant took a look at the card and was stunned for several seconds. "M-Miss, I'll wrap it up for you right away."

She no longer heeded Ingrid's words and moved quickly.

Ingrid was still in shock and reluctantly questioned her. "This is a fake, right? Don't let her fool you!"

Although Ingrid had not seen or touched this card before, this card was a legend of its own in the gentry circle. The photos of this legendary card that were occasionally leaked left a deep impression on Ingrid.

The card in Nicole's hand was the said legendary card.

'How did she get it? What right did she have to own that card? How can she hold that card?'

The store manager immediately came over to drive away other customers. "We have to ask you to leave immediately because we'll now have to serve this customer exclusively."

Nicole snickered. Yvette could not help but say, "Hurry up and kick her out. She's such an eyesore!"

Chapter 54 Charity Trap

Ingrid Ferguson finally left the jewelry store in shame and anger. Yvette hurriedly took the card over and looked at it left and right. She said in surprise, "How did you get this card?"

Nicole pursed her lips and said, "My third brother gave it to me on my 18th birthday. He told me to bring it wherever I go. I didn't expect it to come in handy!"

"Why didn't God give me a 'Third Brother'?" Yvette held her forehead in envy and jealousy.

Nicole laughed and gave it to her. "If you like it so much, I'll give it to you."

"No way! This card is valid for life. It's invalid once it's transferred, so you keep i

t...but you can buy me what I like..."

Nicole nodded and liked this idea.

After buying the necklace, Yvette happily dragged Nicole around for a while before they left the mall.

Nicole was in a good mood when she went back to the office. Samantha Lindt had been making small moves, but Nicole did not care about it and let her be.

She knew that whatever Samantha did could not be hidden from Grant's eyes and ears. Since Samantha was digging her own grave, Nicole had no intention of stopping her.

After work, Nicole was about to walk out with her bag on her arm when Julie Nixon called her.

Once she picked up, Julie hurriedly spoke and cut to the chase. "Emergency!

There's a charity dinner tonight and my company's artist, Roman, needs a female companion. I'm not in the country now, so can you please attend in my stead?"

Nicole looked at the time. "Alright, I have time anyway."

"Thanks, love! I'll get him to bring you a dress. He'll be there soon."

After she hung up, Nicole raised her eyebrows. 'How is Jules so sure that I'd attend?'

Nicole informed Logan of her last-minute schedule and went downstairs to wait for the guy. Roman was a model and was relatively reputable. If people in the company saw her, they would inevitably start gossiping again.

Thus, Nicole wanted to avoid more scandals.

In less than ten minutes, a stylish sports car appeared at the office entrance conspicuously. Nicole was speechless when she saw Roman waving at her from the car as soon as she walked out, then she hurriedly got into the car. However, Roman even took off his sunglasses and sent a flying kiss to the crowd gathered at the entrance before driving off.

Nicole was exasperated and regretted it immediately. She wanted to get out of the car this instant!

She knew that tomorrow's headline would be about her again.

Nicole did not say a word, so Roman laughed and turned to look at her. "Ms. Nicole, we haven't met but we already know of each other. Thanks for your help."

She flashed a perfunctory smile and did

not want to say more. "I'm not helping you. I'm helping Julie."

"No wonder she was so certain that you'd help. You should be very good friends, right?"

"Yes." Nicole did not bother to say more.

Roman saw that Nicole was not in high spirits, so he did not try to make conversation again. They arrived early at the venue of the charity dinner, so Nicole found a room to change into her dress while Roman waited at the door.

This private charity dinner was not exclusive to artists, but also a place where many celebrities and dignitaries would gather. Nicole saw many familiar faces. Once she entered the venue holding Roman's arm, she saw Quinn and Ingrid Ferguson among the people in the hall.

Nicole raised her eyebrows. Since these two were present, Eric Ferguson must also be present.

'This family is really out to haunt me!'

The focus of this banquet was the charity auction session. Nicole did not intend to participate, but Roman was in high spirits. He tried to make a bid for almost every product in the auction but did not manage to get anything.

Nicole was a bit perplexed and leaned closer to ask him in a whisper, "Are you here to raise the bid?"

'Why else would he raise the price and not place the final bid?'

Roman pursed his lips and smiled mysteriously. "Julie asked me to increase my exposure and told me that doing so would definitely attract attention."

Nicole was speechless.

In the blink of an eye, the last piece was soon up for auction. The picture of the item appeared on the large LCD screen. It was an antique tobacco pipe with emeralds that had a high clarity and brilliance.

Nicole squinted and thought that this object looked familiar. She seemed to have seen it in the memorial hall at the Ferguson Villa. Nicole was shocked when she recognized it. 'Is this not Old Master Ferguson's most treasured object that had been passed down as a family heirloom for generations? Old Master Ferguson protects it with his life and won't even let others take a look at it, so how did it show up here as an auction item?'

Her brain spun quickly and her eyes

swept around the room. She did not see Eric anywhere, but Quinn and Ingrid were in front looking at each other with a smug look, enjoying the attention of the crowd.

Nicole suddenly understood something. Her smile deepened and thought, 'So it's a charity trap...'

Only a few people present knew about the Ferguson family heirloom and thought that this was just an ordinary emerald tobacco pipe.

Quinn and Ingrid must have stolen it for the auction and bid for it later. By the end of it, they would gain both money and fame...

"This is the charity auction item provided by Mrs. Ferguson and Ms. Ferguson from the Ferguson Corporation. They are very generous to donate such a precious item. Now, let the bidding begin! The starting

price is three million dollars..."

'Three million?'

Nicole laughed lightly. 'Old Master Ferguson's precious family heirloom was only worth \$3 million?'

Quinn raised her bidding paddle. "\$3 million!"

"\$4 million..."

Nicole lowered her eyelids and waited for a few seconds. Afterward, she raised her bidding paddle without hesitation. "\$10 million!"

Chapter 55 Must Have It

The scene was in an uproar as everyone's eyes were focused on Nicole.

Roman looked at Nicole in confusion. "What do you want this for?"

Nicole hooked her lips. "It looks pretty nice, don't you think?"

"I don't think so."

'It looks like an ordinary tobacco pipe... what's so nice about it?'

Nicole noticed Quinn and Ingrid's gaze on her, so she smiled faintly and did not avoid eye contact with them.

The Ferguson mother-daughter pair were obviously startled. They knew that Nicole recognized this emerald pipe.

Back then, Quinn had asked Nicole to clean the memorial hall alone one night. Quinn deliberately took out the pipe from the safe and placed it on a high shelf as she hoped that Nicole would "accidentally" bump into the shelf and break the emerald pipe. If that happened, Old Master Ferguson would certainly kick Nicole out of their family. However, Nicole was smart enough not to touch it.

If not for the surveillance camera in the memorial hall, Quinn would have broken it herself and falsely blamed it on Nicole. Unfortunately, her plan failed because Old Master Ferguson valued this pipe more than his own life!

Thus, Quinn never found the opportunity again.

This time, the Ferguson mother-daughter pair stole the emerald pipe and put it out

for auction because Ingrid had lost her reputation when Nicole told the world that Ingrid had stolen the "Daydream" necklace to gamble. After Ingrid came back to the country, she was repeatedly humiliated by Nicole, so much so that Ingrid was almost ostracized by the gentry circle.

Ingrid wanted to regain a firm foothold among the high society ladies circle and find an opportunity to become the focus of the group again. As the Young Lady of the Ferguson family, Ingrid must always be the center of attention.

This charity auction banquet was a good opportunity to help Ingrid redeem her image and maintain her persona as a "high-society lady". This was the most suitable occasion.

Thus, Ingrid begged her mother to

secretly take out her grandfather's emerald pipe as an auction item. The value of the emerald pipe was enough to put Ingrid in the spotlight.

The people who knew about their family heirloom would not dare to bid for it for fear of Old Master Ferguson. Those who did not know about it would not bid for it either, so her plan was perfect. She would take it out and bid it back herself as a show to gain back her reputation.

However, Ingrid and Quinn never thought that they would meet Nicole here...

Quinn was anxious as Nicole was clearly not holding back on her bidding price. Their limit was only \$10 million because the two of them had no power in the Ferguson family. They only got a monthly allowance and did not have much in personal savings, so they obviously could

not continue bidding.

Nicole's arrival was completely unexpected. Quinn had assumed that even if someone bid on the emerald pipe, it would not exceed \$10 million. Even if it did exceed \$10 million, no one would have the guts to fight with the Ferguson family.

However, Nicole was different.

She came for them, the Ferguson family!

"\$10 million going once!" The host's eyes lit up as he shouted.

Ingrid nervously tugged at Quinn's clothes and whispered something.

Quinn also pretended to be calm and turned back to glare at Nicole fiercely as a warning.

Nicole raised her eyebrows, smiled

faintly, and looked at the item on the stage. 'I must get my hands on it!'

"\$10 million going twice!"

The host looked at the audience, but there was no sound.

They did not dare to compete with Mrs. Ferguson to steal the limelight, nor did they want to waste money on an emerald pipe that they could not get their hands on.

The host's eyes swept across the hall and saw that Quinn had raised her bidding paddle.

"\$11 million." Quinn was calm and collected.

'I thought they'd cap it at \$10 million. I didn't think that Quinn wanted to continue bidding...' Nicole thought.

"\$12 million!" Nicole followed. She wanted to test their patience.

The phone in her hand buzzed. Nicole glanced at the phone number and knew who it was even though there was no caller ID.

'Ingrid Ferguson?' Nicole gently hooked her lips and refused to answer. She even blocked Ingrid while she was at it.

"\$13 million," Quinn called out again. She was visibly sitting on pins and needles at this moment.

The host seemed to understand that this was a game for both sides, and the atmosphere in the hall began to get tense.

He raised his voice, "Okay, \$13 million. Miss, would you like to bid again?"

Nicole did not respond, so the host

thought that she had given up. "\$13 million going once!"

"\$13 million going twice!"

Quinn and Ingrid breathed a sigh of relief.

"\$15 million!" Nicole immediately interrupted before the last call.

'How does that feel?' Nicole thought.

Quinn's eyes were so flustered. She lowered her head to speak to Ingrid.

Without hesitation, Ingrid looked like she had made a major decision. "\$20 million!"

'Do they think that my limit is \$20 million?' Nicole thought.

Even Roman got nervous and looked at Nicole. "Do you need help?"

Nicole smiled and raised an eyebrow. "No, this is nothing to me."

She raised her paddle again. "\$30 million!"

The crowd was in an uproar.

Nicole was no longer bothered to scare Quinn and Ingrid bit by bit. She wanted them to stop bidding.

The lights flickered and shone on Quinn and Ingrid's pale and gloomy faces.

"Okay, \$30 million going once!"

"\$30 million going twice!"

No one in the room made a sound.

Nicole knew that she won.

"\$30 million sold! Congratulations to this young lady. The proceeds will be donated to Elementary School of Hope..."

The crowd began to applaud and finally broke the suffocating and tense

atmosphere. Nicole greeted everyone with a decent smile and smiled widely at the two women in front of her. 'What a great day today...'

After greeting everyone, Nicole and Roman went backstage to get the item. As expected, Quinn and Ingrid still refused to give up and were waiting for her there.

Chapter 56 Can't Afford It

The staff on the side politely put the emerald pipe in front of Nicole, who picked it up and looked at it. There was a small red spot at the bottom of the tobacco pipe.

'So it is the real deal...' Nicole thought.

"Thank you," Nicole said to the staff.

She simply ignored the two women who were on the side. Quinn could not stand it anymore and coldly snorted. "Nicole, are your eyes on your feet? Don't you know how to be polite when you see your elders?"

'How did she treat me back then? She never treated me properly when I was her daughter-in-law and expects me to treat



Paused



00:06 / 07:54

her like an elder now?'

Nicole's eyes flickered. She raised an eyebrow and said, "Oh, Mrs. Ferguson, you're here too. What a coincidence!"

Her words were enough to make Quinn die from exasperation.

Quinn's face turned red with anger. "You think that just because you have a backer, you don't need to respect me? Don't forget that I'm your mother-in-law!"

Before Nicole and Eric's divorce, Quinn had never considered herself as Nicole's mother-in-law. Instead, Quinn only thought of herself as a master and treated Nicole as if she was a servant.

Whenever Nicole went back to the Ferguson Villa, Quinn would always find ways to mock Nicole's lowly ingratiation. She would make Nicole do housework



and chores, and find excuses to reprimand and punish Nicole. Quinn would often bring back other young single ladies from other affluent families to hang around in front of Nicole and even gave those ladies Eric's private numbers so that Nicole would know what to do and back off by herself.

At that time, Nicole was a thorn in Quinn's side.

Nicole could not help but laugh lightly. "Have you gone senile? I divorced your son long ago. You can find someone else to be your daughter-in-law..."

"Nicole, you're so rude! How can you talk to your elders like that?" Ingrid could not help but speak up. She was greatly humiliated by Nicole on several occasions, so when she saw Nicole again, she began to fear her.



Paused



00:28 / 07:54

and chores, and find excuses to reprimand and punish Nicole. Quinn would often bring back other young single ladies from other affluent families to hang around in front of Nicole and even gave those ladies Eric's private numbers so that Nicole would know what to do and back off by herself.

At that time, Nicole was a thorn in Quinn's side.

Nicole could not help but laugh lightly. "Have you gone senile? I divorced your son long ago. You can find someone else to be your daughter-in-law..."

"Nicole, you're so rude! How can you talk to your elders like that?" Ingrid could not help but speak up. She was greatly humiliated by Nicole on several occasions, so when she saw Nicole again, she began to fear her.



Paused



00:28 / 07:54

Fortunately, her mother was here, so Ingrid worked up the courage to speak.

The atmosphere felt heavy for a moment. Nicole's smile faded as she swept a cold glance at Ingrid. "Are you trying to teach me what to do?"

Ingrid shrank to the back and dared not make another sound. She just looked at her mother helplessly.

The Ferguson mother-daughter pair originally wanted to pull Nicole off her high horse, then coax her and take the emerald pipe away, but it turned out that Nicole did not do anything as they had planned.

If not for the staff in the room, Quinn would have been more straightforward and would not have the patience to babble on with Nicole.



Quinn was a little nervous and said, "Nicole, I'll give you \$30 million. I must take the pipe!"

She had already contacted her son because she knew that she could not hide it any longer. If Nicole really took their family heirloom away, not to mention her father-in-law, even her husband would not forgive her!

Nicole paused for a moment and laughed. "If you had \$30 million, you could've raised the bid earlier when it was still fair play. Now it's too late."

"I've contacted Eric. He'll be here soon."

Quinn knew how obsessed Nicole was with her son. Once Eric was here, she was certain that Nicole would compromise just to see him.

"Whether he comes or not doesn't



Paused



00:54 / 07:54

change the fact that this emerald pipe is now mine.”

Nicole laughed. ‘Does she still think that I’m the stupid woman from three years ago? Does she think that I’ll forgive and forget everything when I hear Eric’s name?’

“Nicole, \$30 million is not a small amount. Can you even afford it?”

Quinn did not believe that the penniless Nicole could fork out \$30 million so easily.

Back then, Nicole married into the Ferguson family without a penny to her name. Quinn was laughed at by other high-society women for having such a poor daughter-in-law, so Nicole was a disgrace to her.

Although Ingrid said that Nicole now had a lot of men backing her, why would they



spend so much money on a divorced woman? Were those men dumb?

Nicole hooked her lips, took out the black card from her purse, and handed it to the staff at the side. "Swipe it."

There was no hesitation.

"Yes, Ms. Nicole." The staff member took the card with both hands.

Quinn and Ingrid stared at Nicole with their pale faces. Ingrid felt so antsy and kept clutching her phone to call someone.

'Who is she calling? Eric Ferguson?'

Nicole smiled faintly. 'It's useless regardless of who shows up!'

She could spend \$30 million in a second without the slightest hesitation and could even afford to pay more than \$30 million as long as she wanted to!



"It's useless for you to take this pipe. What's the point of spending so much on it?" Quinn softened her attitude and used a roundabout way.

"I only took it out so that everyone could see it. You know that this is the old man's life. He'll die without this pipe. Do you want to see him suffer at such an old age?" Quinn said and began to cry.

'Who are you acting for?' Nicole looked at Quinn with a cold gaze and wanted to laugh.

"Since you said so yourself that this is Old Master Ferguson's life, were you thinking of killing him by putting it on auction? You're the reason for his suffering at his old age. So... What do I have to worry about? I bought this through the proper channels with real money. Anyone here can testify to it. The old man is quite



revered in the industry, so I believe that he'll understand what integrity means."

"Ms. Nicole, the transaction is complete."
The staff carefully handed her the card.

Nicole took it and signed her name on the relevant documents. This emerald pipe officially belonged to her now.

At that moment, the door was suddenly pushed open...



Paused



01:41 / 07:54

Chapter 57 How Much Do You Want

Seeing the oncoming person, Quinn's eyes immediately turned red as she walked over emotionally. "Eric..."

"Brother, Nicole snatched away the pipe! That's Grandpa's favorite. If he can't find it, he'll surely make a big fuss!" Ingrid spoke in a panic.

Eric Ferguson stood in the doorway looking very tall and handsome. His body was half-hidden in the shadows as he stared at the people in the room with cold eyes.

"Shut up! How dare you steal from Grandpa?"

He spoke in a harsh tone and scolded Ingrid, who shuddered in fear and hid



Paused



01:54 / 07:54

behind her mother, not daring to look up.

Behind Eric was the person in charge of this event, who stood there with trepidation. The organizer glanced at the staff on the side and asked, "Are the formalities done?"

"Yes, everything is settled." The staff replied cautiously.

Since everything was done and dusted, Nicole was not afraid of anything. After all, their precious family heirloom was in her hands, so she could call the shots.

Nicole looked at Roman, who was next to her. "Let's go. We shouldn't disturb their family reunion."

She did not even care to greet them and turned on her heels to leave.

"Nicole, you can't take it away," Eric spoke in a cold tone.



Paused



02:05 / 07:54

Quinn hurriedly added, "Yeah, we can't let her take it away!"

With her son's presence, Quinn was no longer afraid and did not want to act in front of Nicole anymore.

Nicole raised her eyebrows, laughed, and raised the document in her hand. "Look, you don't have a say here. The emerald pipe is mine now."

She swept a glance at Eric's glum face and was in an inexplicably good mood!

"Mrs. Ferguson, you should just save your energy and think about how you'll explain this to Old Master Ferguson. I'm sure he's very curious to know how his family heirloom appeared at a charity auction. I wonder what he'll do if he knew that this emerald pipe no longer belonged to him..."

Quinn's face was pale. She regretted



hiding this from her father-in-law. She was afraid and frustrated as she could imagine the old man's thunderous fit of anger. She might even get kicked out of the Ferguson family!

"Eric..."

Eric's eyes were deep and the air around him felt cold. "Nicole, how much do you want to leave this behind?"

Nicole laughed lightly. 'He thinks I want money? Do I look like I'm short of money?'

Her eyes lightly swept across the man's cold face. She raised the emerald pipe in her hand and said, "Leave this behind? Dream on!"

She then grunted and left the room. Roman hurriedly followed after her.

Quinn anxiously tugged on Eric's arm. "How can you let her go like this? We must



take it back from her..."

"Brother, we must! Otherwise, Grandpa will kill us!" Ingrid looked at him nervously.

Eric raised his eyes and looked at Nicole's departing back with his eyebrows slightly knitted. He looked at the two women in front of him indifferently and said in a cold voice, "I'll find a way to get it back, but you should think about how to explain this to Grandpa."

He straightened the cuffs of his suit and turned to leave.

Perhaps the old man already knew that his beloved pipe was missing by now. Thus, Eric did not intend to hide this matter from his grandfather. They should learn to bear the consequences of their actions.



Paused



02:43 / 07:54

"What?" Quinn's eyes flipped back as she fainted. Ingrid hurriedly caught her mother and called out to her several times, but Eric did not turn back. Only a staff member came forward to ask if they needed help.

With such a valuable item, the organizer politely asked Nicole whether she needed a security escort, but she politely refused. She only wanted to spite Quinn and Ingrid and did not actually care about the pipe itself.

Seeing the elevator door opening, Nicole walked in and heard Roman's reminder from the side. "Is that Mr. Ferguson?"

Eric was walking towards them.

'He still doesn't wanna give up?' Nicole thought.

Nicole did not want to share an elevator



with that man, so she decisively pressed the close button.



Paused



03:10 / 07:54

Chapter 58 Cost So Little

Nicole glanced at the man outside the elevator like he was a stranger. The man finally disappeared from her sight as the elevator door closed.

When they were in Roman's flashy sports car, he finally asked the question that had been bugging him. "Is this thing worth a lot of money? Why do the Fergusons want it so badly?"

Nicole laughed and looked at the box in her hand. "This thing is a thousand years old. I heard it came out from a royal palace and had been the Fergusons' family heirloom for almost eight hundred years. Do you think it's worth a lot?"

Roman's driving speed obviously slowed down as he was dumbfounded and



Paused



03:21 / 07:54

shocked. 'This is simply priceless! They auctioned off such a valuable thing? No wonder Eric Ferguson asked Nicole to state her price. If Nicole asked for nine figures, Eric probably won't even have the slightest hesitation!'

Nicole's phone suddenly rang. She looked at it and saw that it was Grant, so she happily picked up the call. "Brother, I bought a little toy..."

Grant paused on the other side of the phone and let out a stifled laugh. "I heard ... It only costs so little to spite the Fergusons, huh?"

Nicole could not help but laugh when she thought about Quinn and Ingrid's impending doom. "Anyway, it's mine now, so I won't let go of it easily."

Grant knew his sister's temperament. She must have been so disappointed with the



Fergusons that she wanted to vent it out on them whenever she had a chance. It was indeed a rare opportunity.

'Forget it... Nothing else matters as long as she's happy...'

It was very sunny the next morning. Nicole went into the office to deal with some work matters. Recently, Samantha Lindt had been glaring at Nicole like she wanted to kill her, but she did not dare to act rashly because Nicole had something over her.

Logan knocked on the door to deliver some documents. "Vice President Nicole, the company has begun to investigate Samantha Lindt receiving kickbacks in various projects."

Hearing Logan's words, Nicole looked up at him. "My brother's ready to take action?"



"Yes. Micah Zielinski, who's backing Samantha Lindt, has already started to make his move, so President Stanton said that he'd no longer tolerate it."

To remove Micah Zielinski, they must first investigate Samantha Lindt. Samantha probably knew about it by now and that she was powerless. No wonder she did not pester Nicole about being part of the project team with J&L Corporation.

Nicole tucked her hair behind her ear. "Then hand over what we have to add fuel to the fire."

It was a recording of what Samantha said during the dinner with Nicole and Flint Zeller.

"Yes, ma'am." Logan stood there and paused for a moment. "There's one more thing. Mr. Ferguson's secretary called



saying that Mr. Ferguson would like to make an appointment with you for a meal.”

Nicole sneered and leaned back in her chair with her arms clasped. Her gaze was clear and cold.

“Say that I’m busy and push it. In the future, just push off any meals with him. You don’t need to ask me anymore.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

At noon, Nicole was planning to grab lunch when there was a knock at the door. Logan stood at the door holding a bouquet of flowers. “Vice President Nicole ...”

Nicole looked up and frowned. “I thought I told you to just throw it away?”

“Nikki, how could you hurt me like that? I carefully selected these for you. You



didn't even act surprised and even wanted to throw it out?!"

Ian Carter suddenly popped out from behind Logan, walked into Nicole's office angrily, and questioned her.

Nicole paused and glanced at Logan, who apologetically lowered his head and kept quiet.

'Forget it...this must've been Ian's idea.' Nicole was feeling a little guilty, so she could not blame Ian for feeling hurt.

"You can leave us," Nicole said to Logan.

Logan nodded and left with a sigh of relief.

Nicole reached out and rubbed her brow, then smiled at Ian. "Carter, why'd you come over today?"

"I came to ask you out for lunch. I didn't



Paused



04:21 / 07:54

expect you to give me such a big surprise!" Ian said with gritted teeth as he glared at her.

Nicole smiled apologetically. "You know how much everyone will talk if I keep getting flowers!"

"I sent you flowers just to let everyone know that you have a boyfriend!"

'So that they'll know they don't stand a chance!' Ian thought.

Ian was unabashed as he said that. Nicole felt a little helpless and said, "Ian, don't waste your time on me."

"I want to. Whether it's a waste of time is up to me."

Ian was not truly angry with her. He smiled devilishly and said, "Since you're a t fault, you gotta buy me lunch!"



Paused



04:34 / 07:54

Nicole raised her eyebrows, took her purse, and walked out of her office. "Fine. You decide on the place."

When they arrived at the restaurant, they once again bumped into the people they did not want to see.

Keith Ludwig snorted. "Nicole, didn't you say that you have an important project? So... You pushed off Eric for a date with Second Young Master Carter? Grant Stanton, Roman, Ian Carter... You sure change men like you change clothes! I guess you do have your hands full, huh?"



Paused



04:45 / 07:54

Chapter 59 It Means Rejection

Eric Ferguson did not make a sound on the side, but his eyes had a chill in them.

Nicole laughed lightly and took Ian's arm. She raised an eyebrow and said, "What does it matter to you how many men I change or how many people I date? Mr. Ludwig, do you wanna date me too?"

Keith was dissed and felt infuriated. 'Why do I always get bullied by Nicole?!

"You? You're not my type!"

"To be honest, the last time I saw your body, it's not that great. You'd better date women with no taste. I'm very strict about my requirements on men's physique."

'How dare you say my body's not great!'



Paused



04:57 / 07:54

Keith's face turned red and white as he shook with anger, but he did not dare to say another word. His nudes were in her hands, so it left him with no choice but to retreat.

He also heard what Nicole implied. 'Is this woman threatening me?'

Ian laughed at the side. "Her standards have always been very high. Mr. Ludwig, if we continue talking, it'll affect my boo's appetite!"

One glance at Eric was enough to affect Nicole's mood!

Nicole coldly glanced at Keith, ignored the man beside him, then walked inside.

Keith was so infuriated that he almost jumped up behind them. "This woman is too much! How dare she insult me for having a bad figure? Is my body not



Paused



05:09 / 07:54

great?"

Eric's face was surprisingly cold. He snorted lightly. "You think it's good?"

He was very annoyed that nothing was going his way lately. He did not get an appointment with Nicole and that matter with the emerald pipe was still unresolved. When he recalled the scene where Nicole had seen Keith running naked, the dreary feeling lingered in his heart. He felt inexplicably frustrated.

Keith was once again defeated. He did not know why Eric was throwing shade at him and blamed it all on Nicole.

When he went to Eric's office to look for him, he coincidentally ran into Eric's secretary, Mitchell, who was contacting Nicole's secretary, but unexpectedly, he was rejected!



The two of them then came out for lunch and saw Nicole on a date with Ian Carter, so how could Eric be in a good mood?

Suddenly remembering something, Keith hurriedly asked, "I heard that your family heirloom was auctioned off by your mother and sister?"

At the mention of this, Eric's face became even colder and he did not speak.

"Who bought it? Why don't you just spend more money to buy it back?"

Eric glanced coldly at Keith. "Nicole bought it."

Keith did not know what to say and only let out a faint "oh". 'That would be difficult ...'

Perhaps after seeing those two men that Nicole despised, she did not have much o



Paused



05:34 / 07:54

f an appetite and felt uninterested in the meal.

They had some wine, so Nicole planned on going home to rest after lunch. The wine Ian recommended was sweet in the mouth yet it burned her throat. It also had a high alcohol percentage because she felt tipsy after just one glass.

Nicole would have suspected that Ian had spiked the wine if it were not for him being tipsier than she was at the moment.

She held her forehead, called Logan, and told him to get someone to pick her up. She then intended to go to the bathroom to wash her face and sober up a bit.

Nicole did not walk very steadily, but she still managed to make her way to the bathroom and wash her face. After she sobered up, she regretted coming out with Ian.



She remembered the route back to the private room, but when she turned a corner, she bumped into someone.

"Sorry..."

As soon as she raised her eyes, Nicole saw Eric's cold face with his eyebrows tightly knitted together. She instantly sobered up and immediately took a step back to keep her distance.

"Mr. Ferguson?"

Eric noticed her movement and his eyes sank slightly. "What a coincidence, Nicole."

Nicole raised her eyebrows. "It's not. I was about to leave."

She was stopped by him before she could walk past him.

"Let's talk."



"Talk about what?" Nicole looked at him puzzled.

"You know what," Eric spoke and locked his eyes onto her.

Nicole laughed and no longer felt tipsy. "I don't think there's anything to talk about between us. For work matters, please contact my assistant."

Her phone rang at that time. It was probably the driver. Just as Nicole was about to leave, Eric said, "You can state any condition you like, but I must take the pipe."

'So he's here for the emerald pipe. Old Master Ferguson must've found out since it's been a day. I guess Quinn and Ingrid must be pretty miserable now...'

"Mr. Ferguson, do you still not understand? Since yesterday, I ignored



Paused



06:09 / 07:54

you guys no matter what conditions you offered. It means rejection." Nicole smiled brightly.



Paused



06:21 / 07:54

Chapter 60 She's Coming Back to the Country

After Nicole said her piece, she went back to the private room to call Ian and leave.

Before she got into the car, it suddenly occurred to her that she had left her bag in the private room.

She wanted to go back to get it, but Ian stopped her. "I'll get it. You can wait in the car."

Ian left without another word. Nicole thought about it and followed him, but did not expect to run into Eric and Keith, who were both just leaving.

To avoid unnecessary trouble, Nicole did not go forward and waited on the other



Paused



06:31 / 07:54

side of the fountain at the entrance.

Keith said, "I heard that Wendy's coming back soon?"

Eric gave a deep "mm".

Keith smiled and said, "I haven't seen her in so long. I kinda miss her. Although she was at fault, your punishment was a little too heavy. She's one of us, so you should just forgive her..."

The two men walked and talked, then got into the car and left.

The afternoon sky was gloomy, and the air was chilly.

Nicole retracted her gaze. She was a little lost in thought as she looked in the direction of that car. Her chest felt stuffy and painful.

'Wendy Quade is one of them, but no



matter how hard I try, I'm only an outsider to Eric Ferguson.'

Wendy Quade's name was like a curse that haunted her for three years. Nicole thought that she was finally free of it and never thought that hearing this name again would still bring out this suffocating feeling.

'I'm so useless!' Nicole thought.

Nicole knew that Wendy Quade had gone abroad after that party. Since Wendy was out of her sight, she did not want to pursue it.

'Getting Wendy Quade to leave the country is a punishment to them? Her return to the country is just a matter of a word of forgiveness from Eric Ferguson?'

Nicole suddenly felt that it was laughable. 'What about the three years of her



sucking my blood dry? I might be able to forgive others, but not her! So she's coming back? I'll welcome her with a big gift then...'

Ian walked over to Nicole with her purse in hand and saw her pale and glum face. "What's wrong? Are you not feeling well?"

Hearing his words, Nicole came back to her senses and smiled. "No, I'm going back. My driver is here."

"I'll send you back." Ian pushed Nicole into the car and sat beside her without giving her a chance to refuse.

Nicole nodded, smiled, and did not mind it.

Ian wanted to say something, but he still held back after giving Nicole a deep look.

When they arrived at Nicole's apartment building, Nicole asked the driver to send



Paused

07:07 / 07:54

Ian back and went straight upstairs.

In less than ten minutes, the doorbell rang, so Nicole went over to open the door.

When she opened the door, a bouquet of beautiful red roses appeared in front of her eyes, accompanied by Ian's charming face behind. Nicole looked at him helplessly. "Carter...I'm really tired today."

Her intention of sending him off could not be more obvious.

Ian raised his eyebrows. "I know. This bouquet isn't for my future girlfriend. It's for our Lil N who's upset today."

Nicole paused and looked up at him. Ian seemed a little less rambunctious at this moment.

"Since I'm already here, you're not gonna invite me in?"



Paused

07:19 / 07:54

She had faith in Ian's character, so she made way for him.

Ian walked in and said, "Nicole, even if you have one less Eric Ferguson by your side, you still have many people around you. Don't be upset because of him. He's not worthy of your attention."

'Yeah, to others, Eric is not worthy of me, but to Eric, I'm not worthy of him...'

Nicole poured Ian a glass of water and leaned back on the sofa lazily. "You saw through it? I'm so useless, huh?"

News of Wendy Quade's return made Nicole angry. Her so-called insouciance suddenly did not seem so frank anymore.

"Yeah, a little." Ian smiled. His eyes were extraordinarily alluring.

"Get lost!" Nicole snorted lightly. Her



Paused



07:31 / 07:54

heart inexplicably felt a lot better.

Ian laughed a little. He suddenly stood up, went over to Nicole, and insistently pulled her into his arms. When Nicole was about to struggle, he suddenly let go.

With a serious smile in his eyes, Ian leaned down and lowered his head to look at her. "He has no right to make you mad anymore. Lil N, you'll forever be my queen."

The sudden proximity between them stunned Nicole. His faint agarwood scent filled her nose cavity and made her heart jump violently.

