

Chapter 26 What's the Bet?

Phantom led Monster and Nicole to take a bow after the performance. Nicole smiled brightly and got off the stage with poise.

'Luckily, I still remember the basics! This performance is still quite satisfactory.' Nicole thought.

Phantom and Monster followed Nicole off the stage. Monster went over and patted her shoulder. "Lil Nicole, why don't you just join our band? We're willing to kick Demon out for you!"

Nicole lowered her head and laughed. "If Demon hears this, he'd probably get up from his hospital bed right now and fight you!"

Monster was in great spirits. "I'm so thrilled to perform with you today. You're the composer of this song anyway, so except for Demon, only you can perform so flawlessly with us. Lil Nicole, you seem just like you were three years ago!"

Nicole felt a trace of bitterness in her heart. She seemed to have missed out on an inordinate amount of life's excitement in these three years. Fortunately, it was still not too late to get back on track.

Monster refused to give up and kept persuading Nicole to join their band. "Lil Nicole, if you join us, we'll surely shock the music world!"

Nicole was just about to reject his offer when Julie walked over with a smile.

"Forget about it, you two...Nikki's gonna start her career all over again!"

As soon as Julie pulled Nicole out from backstage, Yvette gave her a bear hug. "Nikki baby, that was fantastic! You're my goddess! Do you know how excited everyone was? Your violin is simply amazing!"

Nicole helplessly pried Yvette off of her body. It was all thanks to Ian's arrangement that Nicole got to have such a memorable night.

The three ladies thought that Eric and Keith should have already left, so they went back up to the second floor.

Unexpectedly, Eric and Keith were sitting next to the Carter brothers as they stared at Nicole weirdly the moment she showed up.

Yvette snorted in dissatisfaction and pulled Nicole to sit by Ian. "Ian, let's play something. It's boring having to sit with

such eyesores.”

Ian shrugged his shoulders. “Sure, the night’s still young!”

Everyone downstairs was shouting for The Lunatics to have an encore.

“I didn’t think that Nicole could play the violin. Why didn’t I hear about it before?” Keith could not help his curiosity. He was genuinely shocked.

The moment Nicole went on stage, she was so cool and confident like a queen that was in control of the whole audience.

“Why should we tell you? Who the hell are you even?” Yvette scowled at him and retorted.

Keith felt attacked, but he indifferently shrugged his shoulders. “Didn’t you say that you wanted to play something? How about poker dice?”

"Who wants to play with you?!" Yvette scoffed and was holding a grudge against them for Nicole.

'Stupid bastard!'

Eric Ferguson, who had not spoken, suddenly said in a deep voice, "Nicole, are you afraid to play just one game with us?"

Since Nicole came upstairs, Eric's eyes had not moved away from her. Nicole swirled the wine glass in her hand and looked down seemingly disinterested and treated them as if they were invisible.

Eric suppressed his shock. The Nicole sitting in front of him seemed familiar yet strange to him. At that moment, the emotions surging in his heart were incomparably complicated.

When Nicole was named, she nonchalantly lifted her head and swept a

glance at Eric with a faint smile on her face. "What should I be afraid of?"

Although Nicole felt that Eric's words were unexpected, she was not afraid of him. They were like strangers now, so playing a gambling game was not a big deal.

Yvette objected discontentedly. "Nikki, why do you wanna play with him? He's clearly just trying to provoke you!"

Julie pulled Yvette aside and looked at the ex-couple. "Don't worry, Nikki knows what she's doing."

Eric Ferguson grew up as a member of the gentry, so taking part in these social events was like second nature to him. Poker dice was the easiest game and a sure win for Eric. Keith, who was sitting on the side, could not hide his smug smile.

The waiter set the table with two players against each other. Nicole did not make a move. Instead, she looked down and said, "What's the bet?"

Chapter 27 Sore Loser

How meaningless would it be without bets?

Eric's eyes were deep as he stared at her indifferent side profile. "What are your thoughts?"

Before Nicole could say anything, Keith sneered and spoke first. "If Ferg loses, I'll walk out of here butt naked, but if Nicole loses..."

He swept a glance at the Carter brothers and continued in a disdainful tone, "You need to admit in public that you married into the Ferguson family for money, and you can never show your face in Atlanta ever again! Nicole, do you dare to bet on this?"

Ian and Hugh Carter were dumbfounded. Yvette was so enraged that she wanted to stand up and defend Nicole, but Julie pulled Yvette back and told her not to be impulsive.

Eric's eyebrows furrowed tighter. He was about to interrupt Keith when Nicole sneered and raised her eyebrows mockingly. "Sure, I accept."

Nicole looked so scornful of Eric, as if he was not a worthy opponent.

Keith laughed at the fact that Nicole was ignorant and oblivious to how strong her opponent was.

In the whole of Atlanta, Eric's poker dice skills were unbeatable, even if he played with his eyes closed. Back then, Eric won his first big cash windfall at Vegas, not to mention, these menial people in front of

them were all insignificant characters compared to Eric.

'I can finally avenge myself today!' Keith thought.

Eric stretched out his hand. "Ladies first."

Nicole took the dice shaker on the table and shook it, then casually rested the back of her hand on it as she looked at Eric. "Your turn."

Eric looked at Nicole quizzically and frowned. It was obvious that Nicole did not take this game seriously. 'Does she truly not care whether she wins or loses this bet?'

Keith was watching eagerly as if they had already won the game. 'Nicole is such a noob! Look at the way she shook the dice, how unprofessional! Does she think she can win with two simple shakes? No

way!

Eric pondered for a moment, then casually lifted the dice cup. It was a four-of-a-kind, an expected win. He then glanced at Nicole, who still looked unfazed.

Keith was so excited that he almost jumped up. "Ferg, way to go! You used your usual skills. Here I thought that you might get soft-hearted..."

Ian Carter clapped at the side and was not surprised by this. He smiled faintly and said, "Mr. Ludwig, Mr. Ferguson has never been soft-hearted towards Nicole, but at least we finally get to see Mr. Ferguson's ability today."

"Why are you complimenting Eric? Are you trying to divert our attention and renege on the bet? Nicole, why don't you let us see your hand? Don't be a sore loser

”
...

“Keith Ludwig! Empty vessels make the most noise, so shut the f*ck up!” Yvette could not help but rebuke.

Nicole watched as the atmosphere suddenly became tense and laughed lightly. Her slender fingers tapped the dice cup twice before she casually tipped it over. Before everyone had time to react, she took her purse and stood up. “I’m leaving, you guys carry on.”

Besides Yvette and Hugh who were both startled, Julie and Ian seemed to have already expected this result and were calm and unperturbed.

The moment Keith saw Nicole’s dice, he just felt like dying.

‘Five-of-a-kind! How could she get an upper hand over Eric? This woman just

simply shook the dice on the table and was able to get five-of-a-kind?!

When Keith looked up again, the woman had already disappeared.

Yvette gloatingly slapped the table and smugly said, "Mr. Ludwig, don't forget to strip butt naked before leaving! As you just said, don't be a sore loser..."

"You...you're cheating!" Keith's face was flushed as all kinds of emotions flashed by.

"Cheating? Mr. Ludwig, you're the one who wanted to play. These are the rules of the table, yet you dare say that we're cheating when you lost? If you can't afford to lose, why play in the first place? Mr. Ferguson, don't you think so?"

Yvette sneered and called Eric Ferguson out as she gnashed her teeth in anger.

Keith looked at his best friend with big, innocent, pleading eyes. The words "save me" were written all over his face.

Eric glanced at Yvette, then swept a glance at Ian and Hugh before his gaze landed on Keith. "We lost."

His face was calm and unmoved. At first, Eric felt it strange that the sound of the dice from his hand and Nicole's hand were a little off. However, he was not the slightest bit upset that he lost. Instead, he even felt a little delighted.

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Chapter 28 Apologies Are Useless

Eric Ferguson quickly left the table, leaving Keith stupefied as he received hostile glares from Nicole's friends.

The taut string in Keith's heart suddenly snapped.

Keith felt that those people led by Yvette just wanted to eat him alive.

'Eric left me like that? Aren't we bros?!'

Keith looked at the people in front of him and bit his lower lip as he spoke with no dignity, "Can you please spare me this time?"

The whole group said in unison, "No!"

Downstairs.

Nicole came out from the side door

where there was no crowd. She had just sent a text to her big brother, so his driver should be arriving soon. She also sent Yvette a message.

"Nicole..."

A raspy voice called her name as Eric's tall and brawny figure stood at the side door. Nicole was stunned for a moment, then immediately put on her aloof and guarded look.

Noticing her change in expression, Eric lowered his eyes slightly.

"What's the matter, Mr. Ferguson?"

The light at the side door was dim and elongated their shadows. When Eric took a step forward, Nicole took a step back, establishing a clear boundary between them.

Eric smirked and threw the lit cigarette in

his hand aside. He continued to approach her and stared at her closely.

“Nicole, Ingrid provoked you first at the restaurant, so I’ll get her to apologize to you.”

Nicole lowered her eyes and laughed for a moment. Suddenly, she stopped smiling and looked so cold with a trace of derision in her eyes.

“There’s no need for that. Just watch your family properly.”

The restaurant incident was not the only thing they needed to apologize for anyway.

Nicole no longer cared for their apologies.

Eric frowned slightly and wanted to say something, but a frantic scream coming from the door interrupted him. When he looked over, he saw a butt-naked Keith

running out with his hands covering his face. He was so humiliated and desperate that his voice cracked. "I won't let you get away with this!"

When Keith got to the door, there was a flash of light. The naked man stopped in his tracks and was shocked to see Eric and Nicole standing next to him. He was ashamed and vexed as he pointed at Nicole with his trembling arm. He even wanted to cry.

"You...you even took a picture?!"

Nicole looked at the picture on her phone with satisfaction. It was not blurry and the angle was just nice to capture everything. It was simply perfect!

She gently hooked the corners of her lips and glanced at Keith provocatively.

"Mr. Ludwig, it's a pity if no one recorded

your entertaining performance, so I purposely waited for you here."

Nicole knew that Keith would not have the guts to leave through the front door, and there was only one side door in this bar.

"You...you..."

Keith was so exasperated that he became speechless and covered his private parts with both hands.

Nicole's gaze was cold and her tone was stern as she said, "If you dare to mess with me again, I'll post this photo for the whole world to see!"

'Does he think that I'm the same stupid woman from three years ago? How dare he mess with me?'

As soon as Nicole turned around, Grant Stanton's driver was waiting by the

roadside. The driver bowed politely and waited patiently for Nicole to finish her business.

Nicole did not even glance at Eric and bypassed him, then sat inside Grant's luxury car. The car gradually drove out of sight, and only then did Eric withdraw his gaze.

Somehow, Eric felt uncomfortable seeing that Nicole's face was unmoved and filled with mockery without the slightest hint of shyness or evasion when Keith ran out naked.

However, when Eric looked back at the events tonight, from Nicole's violin performance on stage to the poker dice game, his original impression of the well-behaved and quiet Nicole suddenly changed. Every move she made was such a mystery. It felt like there was a

thin layer of fog that surrounded her, making it increasingly impossible to see through her. Thinking of this, the bottom of Eric's heart became irritable again.

Seeing Keith standing there staring at Nicole's departed car, Eric could not help but frown. He tossed the jacket in his hand on Keith's head and said, "Let's go! Do you not feel ashamed?"

Chapter 29 Utter Humiliation

Keith reacted with a jolt and quickly took Eric's jacket to cover his face as he scurried to the car. "Get in! F*ck! Your ex-wife destroyed me today!"

When Eric and Keith got into the car, Keith quickly put on his clothes while complaining. "Your ex-wife is such a femme fatale. She's so ruthless and heartless! I can't beat her..."

Eric's face turned cold when he heard his muttered words. He took out a cigarette with his slender fingers and lit it. The smoke coming from the cigarette made his eyes seem dim and inscrutable.

Yvette and Julie followed Ian out of the bar. They looked smug when they saw the two men in the car.

Ian took a few steps forward to the car. Through the car window, the corners of his lips hooked up into an unruly and playful smile. "Mr. Ludwig, it was just a bet, so don't take it to heart. We're still friends, right?"

Keith's body shook with anger. 'Hmph! Simple for you to say, you're not the one that ran out naked! I'm afraid my name will become the laughing stock of the city from now on! What a shame...utter humiliation! But...I brought this on myself...even if I feel wronged, I can't complain...'

Earlier when Keith was still clothed upstairs, Ian looked at Keith indifferently. "You don't wanna strip? If Nicole lost, would you have let her go?"

The answer, of course, was a solid no.

Thus, Keith was stripped off of his clothes.

Keith wanted to ignore Ian and let out a cold grunt. He arrogantly turned his head away to express his anger.

Eric glanced at Ian. His voice was deep and dangerous as he said, "Mr. Carter, are you venting out your anger on behalf of Nicole today?"

"Mr. Ferguson, you're kidding, right? Isn't it obvious that Nicole won by herself? You should be willing to lose when going into a bet. A big man like you can't even compare to a lady, huh?"

Ian laughed nonchalantly and tapped his finger on the car window. He pondered for a moment and gave Eric a meaningful glance.

"Mr. Ferguson, you didn't expect Nicole to

win, did you?"

"It was indeed unexpected."

"You were married for three years, yet you still don't know her at all. I guess in your eyes, Nicole is worth nothing." Ian had a faint smile in his eyes. He took a deep breath, tilted his head, and smiled devilishly.

"But...there's no need for you to get to know her in the future, because to us, Nicole will always be the best!" Ian cocked his thumb and raised his eyebrows in a sneer.

Eric's gaze was sharp and threatening as he narrowed his eyes. "Mr. Carter, you wouldn't be interested in that woman, right?"

Ian laughed out loud and met his gaze openly. "I am. I want to pursue her, and I

have to thank you for letting her go so that I can get this opportunity.”

Eric indifferently withdrew his gaze and looked to the front with an expressionless face. Keith, who was sitting on the side, could not stand it anymore and said, “Why are you talking so much? Ferg, just drive!”

He really could not stay here for another moment.

Eric stepped on the gas pedal and drove away immediately. Keith saw Eric’s sudden change in expression and was shocked.

“Are you angry?”

‘It’s so obvious that Ian Carter is interested in Nicole, so what’s wrong with him admitting it?’ Keith thought.

Eric did not want to answer Keith and

only said, "Don't you think that you should care about your photos more?"

"Damn it!" Keith cursed. This was the first time he was defeated by the same woman twice in a row.

"Why did you have to marry her in the first place? There are plenty of women who are right for you, so why her? I honestly don't know what you were thinking. We all felt so sorry for you, so lucky for you, we've never treated her as one of us." Keith muttered.

The car came to a screeching halt. Eric's face turned a few shades darker and his chest suddenly felt uncomfortably congested.

'They didn't treat her as one of us? Was I like that too?' Eric thought.

"Get out!" Eric's voice was icy cold.

Keith looked at him puzzled. "Why?"

"I'm going to the office, you're out of the way." Eric's face was inexplicably glum.

Keith had no choice but to get off. While he stood in the cold wind and watched as the car became more distant, he suddenly realized that Eric was not going in the direction of his office.

On the other side, Yvette walked over smugly. "That Keith Ludwig should lay low for now. He really won't back down until he knocks into a wall!"

Julie nodded. "If we don't show him who's boss, he'd really think that Nikki's a pushover..."

Yvette froze for a moment. "But when did Nikki start playing poker dice, and so good at that?"

Julie and Ian looked at each other and laughed. Julie then explained, "When Nikki was studying in France, there was one month when she fought with her family, so they cut her off financially. Then, she somehow got tricked into working as a dealer at the biggest underground casino there. To her surprise, she learned those skills under the table and even made a fortune! After Uncle Floyd found out, he was so scared that he immediately begged her to leave that place and compensated her with a black card that has no credit limit..."

Yvette's eyes widened in awe. She regretted not attending the same university as Nicole.

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Chapter 30 Set a Trap

Early morning.

Nicole opened her eyes in the warm morning light. It felt so cozy and mellow that she curled her lips into a sweet smile. Someone knocked on the door right on time. A maid asked in a soft voice, "Miss, are you awake?"

Hearing this, Nicole answered in a lazy voice, "Mm...come in."

Last night, Grant's driver brought her to the Stanton mansion.

Two maids pushed in a huge clothing rack and spoke respectfully, "Miss, these are the clothes prepared especially for you. Master and Eldest Young Master are waiting for you in the dining hall."

Nicole was slightly shocked. 'Dad is so extra...I bet he wanted to buy out all my favorite brands so that I'm the only one who can wear them...'

There were several pieces of the same style in different colors. Although there was no logo, Nicole could tell from the familiar workmanship and fabric that these were from Prada's private collection. Some of them were this season's latest limited edition pieces, so they were invaluable.

She certainly had to adapt to this kind of luxury lifestyle again. "Alright, you guys may leave."

Nicole got out of bed to freshen up, then randomly picked a little black dress that was chic and tasteful and paired it with a white blazer before she walked out of her room.

Inside the dining hall, Floyd and Grant Stanton were sitting at the dining table eating breakfast with effortless grace.

When Floyd saw his daughter, he smiled with squinted eyes. "My baby's finally awake!"

Grant turned to look at Nicole and smiled with his eyes.

"I heard that Keith Ludwig ran out of Tattle Bar butt naked last night. Even though he covered his face, he was still recognized. Old Master Ludwig dragged him back home to punish him early this morning. The Ludwigs are now busy dealing with the scandal online and their stock almost fell to its limit down. My little sister is really capable!"

Nicole helplessly shrugged her shoulders and walked over to sit down. "He was the

one who provoked me first.”

“Serves him right! What are the Ludwigs compared to my baby? Do whatever you want, Princess.” Floyd Stanton doted on Nicole and gave her a bowl of oatmeal.

After taking a few rushed bites of breakfast, Nicole took Grant’s car to the office.

When Nicole arrived at her office, Logan was standing at the door waiting for her.

“Vice President, Samantha Lindt came here early in the morning. She’s now waiting for you in your office.”

Nicole nodded. “Is there any news from J &L?”

“I’ve already contacted the President of J &L Corporation, Gerard Lichman. He proposed to have a talk in person over dinner.”

"Alright, set up an appointment then."

"Yes, Vice President."

When Nicole pushed the door open, she saw that Samantha was spinning leisurely in her chair, seemingly enjoying herself. For a moment, the atmosphere in the office was a little awkward.

Samantha's expression changed when she saw Nicole. She hurriedly stood up and looked at Logan reproachfully. "Why didn't you inform me that the Vice President is here?"

Nicole smiled insouciantly and walked over. "Ms. Lindt, since you like this chair so much, it's yours. Logan, send it to Ms. Lindt's office later."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Vice President Nicole, I don't mean

anything else. There's no need to give me this chair."

Nicole sat on one end of the sofa. Her eyes were cold. "I'm a germaphobe, so I won't sit on a chair that someone else has sat on."

Samantha was rebuffed, so she glared fiercely at Nicole. She secretly cursed Nicole in her heart and thought, 'She slept her way into this position, so what is she so proud of?'

"Ms. Lindt, why did you come in here?" Nicole glanced at her.

Samantha walked over with a document and threw it in front of Nicole.

"Here, don't say that I didn't remind you. There are a lot of people eyeing this project from FH Corporation. Their chairman proposed dinner tonight to talk

over this cooperation. Vice President Nicole, you ought to grasp this opportunity.”

Nicole flipped through two pages of the document and closed the file without another glance. She did not believe that Samantha would be so kind as to share such a big slice of cake with her.

However, since Samantha was so proactive, Nicole felt that it would be a waste if she did not play along with her.

She smiled. “Ms. Lindt, will you be present this evening?”

“Of course, I’ll introduce you both.”

“Great, then I’ll be there on time.”

Nicole handed the document to Logan. “Raise this by 30%.”

Logan took it over without hesitation. “

Okay, I'll get it done."

At this moment, Yvette barged in, holding a huge bouquet that blocked her line of sight.

"Nikki, quick! I'm exhausted!"

Nicole was a little surprised. "What's this?"

"Someone is pursuing you, of course...so he sent you flowers..." Yvette raised her eyebrows and smiled suggestively.

Chapter 31 Private Agreement

Nicole looked like she had a headache. “Yvette, who the hell is so dumb to send me flowers?”

“Of course, it’s Ian Carter. He instructed me to deliver it to you by hand.”

‘Ian? That Young Master is really capable of making things happen!’

Yvette laughed. “Old Master Carter sent Hugh to study abroad. I heard that if he fails this time, his grandpa will break his legs.”

“Awww... It’s a pity that we didn’t get to send him off. I guess we’ll just have to wait for him to come back and throw him a nice welcome back party!”

Nicole was helpless and got her assistant

to take the flowers out of her office. She felt a lot more comfortable without the strong scent of flowers in the air.

Yvette nodded. "Yup, my thoughts exactly. By the way, I've looked into FH Corporation like you asked me to last time."

Nicole looked up at her. Yvette laughed and said, "FH Corporation has long since become a shell company. They keep asking for loans everywhere and owe the bank a large sum of money they can't even pay off. Their company is about to be auctioned off and they just have a bunch of sh*tty projects left. Whoever gets involved with them will surely get into trouble. That Samantha Lindt is trying to push you into a trap, huh?"

This was what Nicole expected. She raised an eyebrow and thought, 'So she's

trying to dig a pit for me to jump in myself ... The dinner tonight will be extra interesting...'

"Thanks."

Yvette scratched her head. "It's nothing, but... I can't work for you anymore. My mom is coming back from Hong Kong. She just acquired a new cosmetic company and promised that I can participate in their research and development. Nikki, you know that this has always been my dream."

Yvette's mother was a famous career woman in the industry. She had always wanted Yvette to be part of the management in their family business, but Yvette preferred laboratory work. Since she finally got the opportunity to participate in research, she certainly would not give up on it.

Nicole smiled. "Sure, then I wish our dearest Miss Quimbey all the wealth in the world!"

The two ladies looked at each other and smiled. There was no need to say more because they had a tacit understanding between them.

"Then you should be careful. Just ask if you need help with anything. We'll support you as best we can!"

Nicole nodded. "Don't worry, I won't be a stranger with you guys."

Yvette took her purse and slipped away after chatting for a bit, then Nicole began to focus on work again.

After work, Nicole stood up from her chair and was planning to talk to Logan about the dinner. However, Samantha sashayed into Nicole's office and said, "

Since it's a private dinner, it's not necessary to bring your assistant, right?"

Nicole raised her eyebrows. "Okay then."

Logan looked at Nicole worriedly, but Nicole gave him an assuring smile.

When they got to the private club, they went into a pre-booked private room.

Samantha did a friendly cheek kiss with a pot-bellied middle-aged man who was sitting at the table, which made Nicole feel nauseous.

Out of politeness, Nicole still walked over to say hello. When Chairman Zeller saw Nicole's face, his eyes visibly lit up with unconcealed lechery, which was very disgusting.

"This is Vice President Nicole, right? I've heard a lot about you. You're as beautiful as they say..."

Chairman Zeller stretched out his hand, but Nicole only nodded slightly as a greeting before she took a seat. "Mr. Zeller, you're too kind. Your reputation precedes you."

Samantha gave Nicole a meaningful glance. "Vice President Nicole, since you just joined Stanton Corporation, you might not know that we have a good relationship with FH Corporation, so it's not a problem cooperating with them. Why don't you take out the contract for Mr. Zeller? If there's no problem, we can sign it today."

Nicole paused and raised an eyebrow, then took out the prepared contract. "Sure. Mr. Zeller, you'd better look at it carefully."

The middle-aged man opposite her took over the contract and swept a casual

glance at it as if he already knew of its contents. When he caught sight of a number there, his face instantly sank.

"Vice President Nicole, why is the commission on this 30% higher than the promised figure?"

Samantha was startled and took a look at the contract. Her expression changed greatly and said, "Who changed this?"

"Me, of course..." Nicole lowered her head with a smile.

"Since I'm here to talk about this project, I have the say in it. We can go with this percentage or forget about it altogether."

Everyone knew that if it was raised by thirty percent, FH Corporation's initial investment would be tens of millions more, which was too much for a faltering shell company on the verge of

bankruptcy.

Samantha's face turned red with anger. "Nicole, how can you just change it as you please?"

"I'm Stanton Corporation's Vice President, so I can do as I please. Ms. Lindt, I'm thinking of our company's best interest, so why are you getting angry? You should be happy, don't you think? Are you Stanton Corporation's employee or FH Corporation's person?" Nicole looked at Samantha meaningfully.

As soon as she heard this, Samantha's face turned glum. "I-I'm Stanton Corporation's employee, but Nicole, business is based on trust. We've already agreed on the amount beforehand, so you can't just change it like this!"

"As long as nothing's been signed, everything can be changed." Nicole

playfully looked at the angry Chairman Zeller. "Or perhaps, Mr. Zeller and Ms. Lindt have already reached some sort of agreement in private?"

Chapter 32 The Wine Is Spiked

Both Mr. Zeller and Samantha Lindt were shaken when they heard Nicole's words. Mr. Zeller suddenly smiled widely, picked up the bottle of red wine next to him, and poured a glass for Nicole.

"Ms. Nicole, since it's a negotiation, I came with my sincerity. Why don't you take a look at this document? As long as you sign it, I won't treat you badly."

Mr. Zeller took a file from his bag. The content was similar to the contract Nicole was holding, but the figure was another ten percent lower than the one Samantha had set.

Samantha looked at them and quickly advised her. "Nicole, what's the point of you only relying on Grant Stanton? You'd b

e better off getting a few more backers. Think about it, Grant clearly wants to do you harm because he just left you in this position without even guiding you. He probably won't marry you either..."

Nicole did not care for Samantha's sowing of dissension because she probably thought that they were lovers.

'Is she trying to poach me?'

"Look at the clothes you're wearing. They don't even have a brand. Did you buy them off those online catalogs? How do you get to and from work? A taxi?"

Samantha looked askance at Nicole's brandless getup and tugged on her Chanel suit, as she pursed her lips and smiled.

"To be honest, I've been in your shoes. You won't lose out if you follow Mr. Zeller.

He prepared a secondhand Audi for you. With Mr. Zeller's help on the project, you'll be able to sit firmly in your position..."

Seeing that Nicole was silent and in deep thought, Samantha thought that she was moved and winked at Mr. Zeller contentedly. She then stood up wobbly and said, "I'm going to the bathroom. You guys can continue the talk."

Once Samantha went out of the room, her eyes looked sharp. She saw a familiar person sneaking around the bathroom entrance and yanked him over. "Are the things ready?"

The waiter trembled. "T-That drug has been put into the wine..."

"Good." Samantha hooked her lips in satisfaction.

The waiter bit his lower lip. "Ms. Lindt, if

"I'm not mistaken, that lady is President Eric Ferguson's ex-wife, right?"

"Mm, you're right. That's her."

"How does Mr. Zeller dare to make a move on President Ferguson's ex-wife... Is he not afraid...?" The waiter did not dare to say it explicitly for fear of getting into trouble, but he felt extremely remorseful at this moment."

"She's merely an ex-wife, so how much would she matter to him anyway? She's the kind of woman that relies on other men to get to the top, so why would Eric Ferguson spare a look at her? Since she's sleeping her way to the top, it's all the same whoever she sleeps with anyway, so why not Mr. Zeller?"

The waiter buried his head very low. "Okay. I'll go back to work then."

"Get lost. If this matter gets out, I'll make you regret it!"

Samantha stomped to the bathroom on her high heels to fix her makeup without noticing a tall and well-built figure standing stiffly on the other side of the corridor.

Eric Ferguson's face turned cold and glum. His eyes were stern and intimidating as he pulled over a waiter nearby. "Which room is Nicole in?"

"Huh? Mr. Ferguson?"

Anyone who came in and out of this private club was rich and famous, so the waiters here went through the basic training of recognizing the elites. That waiter immediately recognized Eric Ferguson and was scared senseless that his face turned pale.

“Tell me!”

“A-At r-room 3888.” The waiter stammered subconsciously. He could not afford to mess with Chairman Zeller, but Eric Ferguson was on a whole other level.

Eric turned around and left, exuding a penetrating chill.

In Private Room 3888.

Chairman Zeller smiled lewdly as he reached out to touch Nicole’s hand on the table. However, he did not manage to touch her. Nicole picked up the wine glass and gently swirled the wine in it with her long slender fingers that looked like a work of art.

The middle-aged man took out an old car key from his bag and threw it on the table. “Ms. Nicole, this car is yours.”

Nicole stared at the car key for a long time and suddenly laughed coldly. "Samantha Lindt took more than I did, right?"

Mr. Zeller sized her up with his lecherous eyes. "Ms. Nicole, with your looks, Samantha surely can't compare to you. When this project is completed, there will be a bigger surprise waiting for you."

Nicole inadvertently found out how Samantha Lindt had gotten to where she was today.

'Great, I'll just clean it up in the meantime.'

"Let's have a drink and celebrate..." Mr. Zeller could not wait to raise his glass of wine.

In the next second, Nicole's phone on the table suddenly fell to the ground. Mr. Zeller bent down and picked it up, then

presented it to Nicole like it was a treasure. Nicole raised her glass and clinked it with his. He then chugged it all in one go.

Nicole's glass of wine only touched her lips, but under Mr. Zeller's eager gaze, she deliberately hesitated for a moment before she took a sip. The corners of her lips were dyed a slightly dark red, which added to her charm.

Mr. Zeller smiled in satisfaction and leered at Nicole's intoxicating beauty. He went over and put the Audi keys in her hand as he coaxed. "As soon as we reach a deal, I'll buy you a new Audi."

Nicole's face sank and did not have time to react before she suddenly heard Mr. Zeller's shocked cry. He was kicked to the ground!

Suddenly, someone tugged on her wrist

fiercely and a cold voice came to her ears. "This wine is spiked. Did you drink it?"

Chapter 33 Spare His Worthless Life

That handsome face with that tall and upright figure currently standing in front of Nicole was the man that she had been infatuated with for three years, Eric Ferguson.

At first sight, Nicole was stunned for a moment but quickly regained her composure.

'Why is he here? It's probably a coincidence.'

Nicole was not so self-absorbed as to think that Eric Ferguson had been watching her every move so that he could swoop in like a hero to save her.

"Mr. Ferguson?" Mr. Zeller stood up in a panic and trembled in fear.

Eric's face was gloomy as he glared viciously at Mr. Zeller. "Do you have a death wish? I can grant your wish!"

At this moment, a wave of inexplicable anger suddenly surged in his chest. His eyes were cold and intimidating.

Eric was just about to go forward to teach Flint Zeller a lesson when a figure suddenly appeared from behind. The other man kicked Flint Zeller, who had just stood up, back to the ground. Then threw a flurry of punches on Flint's face and body. No place was left out.

"Ian!" Nicole shouted at the man.

The man who hit Flint Zeller paused slightly and turned back. His cold eyes instantly turned warm. "I went to your office to look for you and they told me that you're here, so I purposely came over

to surprise you.”

Ian Carter then walked over to Nicole as if that episode earlier did not happen. He ignored Eric’s presence, took a bouquet placed at the door, and handed it over to Nicole. “Do you like it?”

Nicole sighed helplessly. Although her plans were disrupted, she more or less had gotten what she came for, so it was not entirely a failure.

“Thank you, but forget him. If you continue punching him, he might die... I don’t wanna get into trouble.”

“As you wish, my queen.” Ian smiled and continued, “Then I’ll spare his worthless life.”

Flint Zeller looked at the people in front of him with fear. One of them was Second Young Master Carter, and the other was

Eric Ferguson. He could not afford to mess with either of them. 'Didn't they say that Nicole was abandoned by Eric Ferguson? How could he still meddle in her matters?'

Once Flint heard that they would spare his life, he endured the dizziness and wanted to flee in a panic. He certainly did not want to mess with these two big shots.

Before he could crawl out of the room. Something hard landed on his head before it fell to the ground. It was the Audi keys.

Ian sneered coldly. "Take this away! Don't taint my girlfriend's eyes."

"Yes, yes, yes." Flint Zeller ran out in a panic.

Nicole was rendered speechless. "Watch i

t..."

'What girlfriend?'

She glanced at Eric and felt a little strange. He then looked at her with a cold and deep gaze.

"Mr. Ferguson, why are you here?"

"Yes, I'm also curious. Why are you here, Mr. Ferguson?" Ian looked at Eric with obvious scrutiny.

"Nicole, didn't you know that there was a problem with the wine? Why are you attending all kinds of dinner parties? Is this the life you want?"

The mockery in his words was obvious. 'She accompanied others to dinner and was drugged unknowingly. Is this the life she wants after our divorce?'

Somehow, the rage burst out of his chest

at that moment.

Nicole lowered her head and laughed. 'I really made a fool of myself to think that he'd be so kind to help me. Turns out he just wants to find an excuse to teach me a lesson?'

She looked up at him with her bright and delicately made-up eyes that carried a hidden sharpness.

Under Eric's shocked gaze, Nicole picked up the glass of wine on the table and downed it. She then hooked up her lips and stood up. "Thank you for your help, M r. Ferguson. I've already replaced the wine beforehand, but you no longer have the right to comment on what I want to do with my life."

Who was he to lecture her?

When Nicole stood up to leave, Eric

grabbed her arm and stared at her coldly. "What do you mean? You didn't answer my question."

Nicole smirked and said with a straight face, "I didn't say it so explicitly as a courtesy to you, Mr. Ferguson. I came here for work, which is certainly better than being a lowly servant to your family in the past. Speaking of which, is there even a difference between your family and Flint Zeller?"

Chapter 34 Treated You Like a Sister

Nicole sneered and did not look at Eric Ferguson again. She took her phone and purse, then stomped away in her high heels. Her back was slim and valiant.

Ian raised his eyebrows and immediately followed after Nicole.

Eric stood frozen in place. His gaze was as cold as frost. Nicole's words felt like a thorn in his heart that made him uncomfortable.

'Being a lowly servant to my family? When did the titular Mrs. Ferguson become a servant?'

It seemed that there were too many things that Eric was not aware of.

As soon as Nicole walked out, she saw a

red-faced Samantha Lindt tugging on Flint Zeller at the entrance.

'So, she already knew and was prepared for it... Then was my move earlier superfluous? Tsk, tsk...' Nicole thought.

Nicole got into the car and left. When she heard Eric's misunderstanding earlier, she felt hurt because he did not know what kind of person she was after three years of marriage.

After a moment, Nicole regained composure and did not show any mood fluctuations.

She promised not to look back and repeat the same mistakes twice. Eric Ferguson had nothing to do with her.

Ian hummed a tune and glanced at Nicole. "I saved you today, so how would you like to thank me?"

Chapter 04: Treats You Like a Gift

“What kind of gift do you want? Or do you just want me to transfer money into your account?”

Ian looked at her with a smile. “This is the first time a woman tries to slap me with money, but I’d prefer if you pledge yourself to me!”

Nicole gave him a sidelong glance. “Dream on!”

“Why? You should give me a chance!” Ian grunted.

Nicole gave him a faint glance. “I’ve always treated you like a sister.”

Ian’s lips twitched. “Anyway, I’ll prove that I’m the most suitable person for you.”

Not knowing where his confidence came from, Nicole could not help but laugh. “Suit yourself.”

After all, Second Young Master Carter's enthusiasm usually would not last a month.

Ian looked at her smile and felt a pain in his chest. He would not give up this opportunity to anyone else again.

After Nicole got back home, Yvette excitedly called her to ask about the progress.

Nicole told her what happened. She paused slightly when she mentioned Eric Ferguson and lightly brushed over it.

"This Samantha Lindt is like a pimp at those nightclubs. I think her talent's wasted in the company. She should really just be a pimp instead."

Nicole lowered her head and laughed. "I can't just close this case sloppily. Now isn't the time to fire her yet. Samantha is

capable, she just doesn't have the right mindset. She's just a clown anyway. It won't do me any harm to keep her around as long as she doesn't make trouble."

The next day.

Early in the morning, Nicole went to the office and found that her chair was replaced with a new one. She was satisfied with Logan's efficiency and brewed herself a cup of coffee when her door was slammed open.

"Nicole, are you deliberately trying to mess things up? I clearly asked you to accompany Mr. Zeller to dinner, but you left me behind?"

Samantha barged in furiously. She still had some ambiguous marks on her neck that she could not hide. Flint Zeller's eccentricity was indeed horrifying.

Afterward, Samantha thought about it and knew that Nicole must have backed out. Otherwise, why would Flint Zeller not take a bite of the cake that was at his mouth?

Nicole waved her hand, signaling for Logan to leave, then hooked her lips into a seeming smile as she looked at Samantha.

Samantha suddenly felt guilty and no longer looked so fierce.

“Forget it. This will all be over once you sign the contract.”

Samantha brought the contract over and threw it in front of Nicole.

Nicole did not even raise her head, took out her phone, and tapped on it a few times to play a recording of yesterday’s dinner conversation.

Chapter 35 Lovers' Restaurant

Samantha's face turned pale and her body trembled slightly.

Nicole laughed. "Samantha, if I expose this recording, the company will thoroughly investigate all the projects you handle. If so, you won't be able to stay in this industry anymore and might even be imprisoned. Are you really willing to give up your career for FH Corporation?"

Samantha would not give it up.

A trace of panic flashed in Samantha's eyes as her face paled. She immediately spoke with a respectful tone, "Nic- Vice President Nicole, I was too reckless earlier. FH Corporation's project isn't that great anyway, and that company is in fact already an empty shell..."

Nicole nodded with satisfaction. "Then don't mention the cooperation with FH Corporation in the future. I recognize your capability, but you have to use it for your own work. Don't worry about other companies."

"Yes, Vice President Nicole." Samantha stiffened slightly.

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After dealing with Samantha, Nicole had to study J&L's project. Getting this project was imperative because, besides Eric's Ferguson Corporation, there was no other company that had a stronger background than Stanton Corporation to compete for this project.

Nicole found out that Ferguson Corporation did not intend to get involved in artificial intelligence, so she was

confident about landing this deal.

The sky gradually dimmed. Logan came into Nicole's office with a stack of documents and said, "Ms. Nicole, J&L Corporation's dinner turned into a networking party. They invited a lot of people and intend to announce their project partners on their anniversary. They've sent us a VIP invite. Should I contact them beforehand?"

Nicole rubbed her temples. "J&L Corporation is pretty confident in their project. They know that they have a big slice of the pie and everyone's waiting to get a cut. There's no need to contact them in advance. We have the best conditions, so we'll just attend the party."

Logan nodded. "Yes, Vice President. Do you need me to arrange for a car to take you home?"

Nicole glanced at the time. It was indeed quite late. Just as she was about to leave work, there was a knock at the door. Ian stood there with a seductive smile and looked devilishly handsome. "Ms. Stanton, do I have the honor to invite you to dinner?"

Seeing the man, Nicole could not help but smile. "Of course, I'd love for Second Young Master Carter to buy me dinner."

Logan wisely retreated.

Ian was a gentleman and went over to put on Nicole's coat, took her bag, and excitedly said, "I've driven away our biggest third wheel, Hugh, so we can finally have some alone time today!"

Nicole rolled her eyes at Ian and did not take him seriously because Ian was always flirting and fooling around with

countless women.

"I'm hungry. What are we eating?"

"There's a new lovers' restaurant in South City..." Before Ian could finish his words, Nicole swept a glance at him, so Ian continued, "...That I just opened, so let's go check it out."

Nicole strutted out in her stilettos. Ian followed closely behind her with a smug face.

The restaurant was on the top floor of the building that had a great view of the city. They could see the colorful neon lights scattered everywhere that showed the vibrance and opulence of the city.

Couples were dancing to the music on one side of the restaurant. It was such a romantic atmosphere that it was difficult not to get immersed into it.

Nicole finally had time to relax. The music that was playing was Nicole's favorite song and moved her soul, so she closed her eyes slightly to enjoy the moment. She suddenly smelled a faint floral fragrance. Once she opened her eyes, Ian handed her a bouquet with a charming smile on his face.

"For you, your favorite Swiss lilies."

Music and flowers were the gold standard for a lovers' restaurant, but Nicole did not have the slightest romantic thought about Ian.

She smiled and took the bouquet from him, then put it aside. "Thank you. Not bad for a lovers' restaurant. The service is spot on!"

Ian stared at her blankly. 'She thinks that this is the standard service of this

restaurant? This fresh bouquet was flown in from Switzerland this morning and the soil was still moist when I received it.

Does she think that everyone can enjoy such an expensive service?’

He shook his head helplessly. ‘Forget it...I have all the patience in the world!’

When the food was served, Nicole no longer immersed herself in the scenery and music and lowered her head to enjoy the food. Ian passionately introduced her to the specialties of each dish. The atmosphere was very cordial.

Nicole was not very particular about food. When Ian saw her eating, he was elated.

“Did you receive the flowers I sent to your office?”

Nicole replied, “Mhmm, thanks.”

Ian’s face stiffened. “That’s it? Shouldn’t

you ask why?"

"Second Young Master, pray tell..." Nicole looked puzzled. 'Was this not just a whim?'

"I'm courting you!" Ian was a little annoyed that Nicole was slow to get his intentions.

Nicole just let out a faint "oh", then wiped her mouth gently and said, "Sorry, but I don't accept it. Don't waste your time and energy on me."

Ian was angry. 'Such a straightforward rejection without even caring for my feelings?'

He looked at Nicole solemnly. "We're not friends anymore. From now on, I'm your suitor."

Nicole blinked. "Then let's stop contacting each other."

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Not far away in a corner, Keith Ludwig snorted and said, "Look at those two people flirting with each other. What does Second Young Master Carter even see in such a woman?"

Opposite him, Eric Ferguson had a dull expression as he retracted his gaze. He looked down at the food in front of him and suddenly found it tasteless.