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In a Love Nest with the Aloof CEO Chapter 481

Well, I can't think of any other possibilities for that other than this being the doing of the Joneses. After all, they want to drag my reputation through the mud without tarnishing the reputation of the Jones Family. And it just so happens that I've got to attend a charity gala tonight. If I guess correctly, I'll definitely be the center of attention there, with reporters hounding me.

"So, this is the kind of woman you fancy?" Claudia, who just had a change of attitude toward Skylar, was presently foaming at the mouth.

Tobias himself had only learned about Skylar's scandal having spread like wildfire overnight moments ago. As such, he could understand why she was so worked up.

After all, the elderly believed everything they read. No matter how shrewd Claudia was, she still sent him some asinine news every so often, such as claims that cotton candy was made of cotton and how Coke couldn't be drunk with Red Bull.

"The news is fake. Considering Skylar's personality, she would never pick on someone else. Besides, her mother's affairs have nothing to do with her. She's also a victim," he mollified.

"Hmph! You're always defending her! I don't quite believe in her character," Claudia huffed. "Say, how is she better than Tanya? Alas, luck wasn't on Tanya's side. She went off her rocker, and she couldn't tie you to her with a child either. If it weren't for the accident back then..."

At the thought of that, she became dispirited. How greatly had I sinned in my previous life that everyone has grandchildren, yet I'm still all alone here in this huge mansion?

Sick of her nagging, Tobias interjected, "There's a charity gala I've promised to attend tonight, so I won't be having dinner with you."

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Only then did Claudia remember about the charity gala, and it was an event that Tobias was only attending because of her.

Nonetheless, she felt that the hefty sum he donated every year was also for his benefit since it would amass blessings for himself.

When Tobias arrived at the venue, he skipped walking down the red carpet since he wasn't a celebrity. And even if the organizer had wanted him to do so, they didn't have that much sway with him.

He went straight up to the VIP seating on the second floor. Before he came over, he learned that Skylar would also be attending the event tonight.

After her scandal broke out, he didn't call her to comfort her at once because he felt that she should be aware of what she would face in the future since she had chosen this path.

When he lifted his hand, his assistant immediately handed him a pair of binoculars that enabled him to see the red carpet clearly.

That night, Skylar wore an emerald-green evening dress with balloon sleeves. Such a dress was very demanding on its wearer, necessitating a slim figure and a tall stature.

Nevertheless, Skylar's slim and tall built fit the bill perfectly.

As for her hair, the stylist put it up. However, it appeared rather awkward since it was too high.

Her stylist had an emergency, so Kate got someone to stand in. Thus, she was borrowing Amelia's stylist.

The moment Skylar entered Tobias' line of sight, the corners of his mouth lifted.

Haha, her appearance today reminds me of a huge crown of broccoli! Of course, she's still beautiful, but it seems rather strange.

Thanks to her scandal, all cameras swung in Skylar's direction and started flashing away as soon as she made her appearance.

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In the face of the frenzy, she merely smiled cooperatively. When she went in, she took a seat on the sofa where her name was written.

A long sofa seated three celebrities. Largo was one of her seatmates, while the other was a currently popular actress, Faith Halliday.

Largo sat in the middle, and he handed a glass of wine to Skylar. "Are you okay? I told you long ago that you need someone backing you up when you're in the entertainment industry. What are you planning to do now? Whatever it is, don't affect the viewer ratings for Empyrean Sword. I don't want the audience to boycott the movie because they hate the female lead."

He spoke in a mere whisper, afraid that Faith would overhear him.

Meanwhile, Skylar pinned her gaze on the stage. At that moment, the host had already started introducing the items that would be auctioned that day.

Unlike previous years, the charity gala was switched to a charity auction that year. And everything that would be auctioned was provided by the families that required financial help.

The upcoming item that was going to be auctioned was a teddy bear.

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Upon seeing that Skylar was ignoring him, Largo straightened and sat ramrod straight even as he placed a hand on the button of his suit briefly.

The teddy bear was auctioned at a starting price of fifty thousand. Skylar didn't raise her paddle since she had little money left after buying a house. She wanted to give to charity, but alas, she couldn't afford it.

Never would she buy a teddy bear that she could purchase on Amazon for forty-five, considering the paltry savings in her bank card. Well, unless she lost her mind.

Nonetheless, she did understand that the significance was different.

Largo, however, raised his paddle and generously called out a bid of two hundred thousand.

Well, well... I can tell that he'll definitely be breaking the bank tonight to establish his goody-goody image! Skylar reckoned.

Even after Largo had offered a bid of two hundred thousand, there were still others who upped his bid. But in the end, it was still him who won the bid. After going on stage, he declared in a gentle and pleasant voice, "This is all for public welfare and charity. The children in the mountainous areas are really pitiful. In the past year, I've built dozens of hope primary schools in hopes that the children can head toward a better future with their own efforts."

As Skylar listened to his speech, she would've rolled her eyes if not for fear that the camera would capture it.

Wow, his ostentatiousness is truly impressive! Unlike those philanthropists who truly donate their riches, those hope primary schools he mentioned were built with the money raised by his fans every month. It was all his fans' effort, and he didn't put in a single penny, yet the

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credit went to him at the end of the day. Despite him putting on such a show, they maintained it without a single word of complaint, gushing about the kindness of their idol!

Since she was now in the eye of the storm, the live television director kept shifting the cameras on her.

Thus, she maintained a smile throughout it all. Despite the chagrin within her, she still had to applaud Largo and gracefully hug him when he stepped down from the stage since they were co-stars.

Meanwhile, the weasel was very careful about his image in the public. Even when they hugged, he gentlemanly held his hands a hair's breadth away from her.

When Faith excused herself, Skylar finally couldn't hold her silence anymore. Speaking without moving her mouth, she murmured, "There's a character that's tailored for you if you act in Hamlet."

Hearing that, Largo arched an eyebrow. "Oh? And what character is that?"

"Claudius," Skylar murmured.

In Hamlet, Claudius was a hypocrite of the highest order. But despite her snubbing him in such a roundabout way, Largo merely smiled instead of blowing his top. "You're going down the drain before you've even risen to fame. Skylar, I don't mind however you disdain me, but you've really wasted my good intentions. You've got such an excellent hand of cards, yet you're playing them really badly. "Craig is coming back very soon, so you can opt for his son if you're really so averse to him. To tell you the truth, Craig has plenty of women out there, all pandering to him. Money talks in the entertainment industry, so every single female celebrity is committed to finding a sugar daddy to back her up."

"His son? Who do you mean?" Skylar questioned, latching on to that right away.

Having misunderstood that her interest had been piqued, Largo leaned in closer to her, so much so that they were almost touching. "Craig's son is usually in Anglandur, but he's coming back with him this time. He's the epitome of young and rich."

Upon seeing this scene, Tobias flung the binoculars in his hands away. I didn't know when she became so close with Largo Zeller! Why does she keep talking to him, and why are they getting closer and closer by the minute?

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Whipping out his cell phone, he gave Skylar a call.

However, his call couldn't get through. In fact, Skylar didn't even bring her cell phone along.

Frustrated, Tobias tossed his cell phone onto the sofa in his booth.

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"What's so interesting that she's talking to him for such a long time? She never talks that much to me," Tobias muttered.

Although his voice was a mere whisper, Susan could still hear him loud and clear since she was right next to him. Upon hearing that, she pursed her lips to stifle her laughter.

Well, well... Mr. Ford is really different when it comes to Skylar.

The last item to be auctioned was a painting by Claude Monet. It was a contribution from the organizer as the finale of the charity gala.

At that moment, the atmosphere in the room reached its zenith, and many of the top-notch A-list celebrities started raising their paddles.

Watching with flagging interest, Tobias lifted his hand and beckoned Susan closer.

"Have someone bid on it as a gift for Ms. Jones," he ordered.

Susan instantly took out her cell phone and made the arrangements. In the end, the winning bid for the painting was an exorbitant fifty million by a mysterious buyer.

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At that, Skylar felt that she was truly a hick who had no appreciation for art and famous paintings. After all, it was merely a piece of paper in her eyes, no matter how costly it was.

Hmm... But Tobias really likes such artistic things. Ah, what a shame that I don't have the money to buy it for him since the pittance I was paid has all been used to buy the house!

"Since Skylar Jones is going downhill before she has even been popular, Royal Entertainment will probably blacklist her."

"I heard that she has just bought a house for her mother. What a nice change of scenery for a murderer to live in a villa in the city after a stint in prison!"

"How could she possibly afford to buy a villa in the city? She must have had a devil of a time coming up with the downpayment. Hah! She's simply biting off more than she can chew. She won't be able to pay the loan when she's in the gutter."

"You're unlucky to have the same manager as her. I heard that Kate thinks quite highly of her. This is the first time she has ever made an error in judgment."

"If I were her, I wouldn't dare to show my face here today. After all, it's so humiliating!"

Speak of the devil! Xena and Amelia were so absorbed in gossiping at the dressing room backstage that they didn't notice that Skylar, who came in after them, had been standing behind them for a long time.

Xena Quantrill was renowned in the entertainment industry as a rich heir. She debuted in her teenage years, yet she had been mediocre in terms of popularity. She had starred as the female lead in several movies, but all of them merely garnered lukewarm responses from the audience.

With her strong family background and the exposure she enjoyed, she could be considered a local diva, albeit grudgingly. Also, she had a close relationship with Amelia.

Not only were their Twitter accounts filled with photos of them together, but their relationship was intimate to the point that they would also photoshop the other in those photos.

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“The two of you seem very much interested in my affairs,” Skylar remarked with a smile though her eyes were blazing with rage.

The two of them turned back simultaneously. At the sight of her, embarrassment showed on Amelia’s face. Hastily pivoting to face the mirror, she then proceeded to take off her earrings.

Conversely, Xena was much more unabashed.

“It’s rude to eavesdrop on someone else’s conversation. I was chatting with my best friend, but we can’t do anything if you insist on assuming that we were talking about you.”

Quirking an eyebrow, Skylar chortled. “I heard my name loud and clear. Or are you going to tell me that it was merely a case of having the same name?”

Amelia said nothing, for she knew that Xena was the kind of person who would always have the last word.

Sure enough, Xena simply couldn’t accept defeat. “Well, we have the freedom to say whatever we want! Or are you simply giving up and can’t be bothered about your problem anymore, considering its magnitude? If I were in your shoes, I wouldn’t have the time to eavesdrop on someone else’s conversation. Instead, I’d be racking my brains to concoct an explanation for the netizens,” she sneered.

“Why should I explain things when I didn’t do anything wrong? Oh, and do carry on with the conversation. Don’t mind me since I merely came over to kindly offer a word of caution. The thing is, my elders always told me that gossiping comes with swollen lips.”

When Xena heard that, she instinctively touched her lips with a hand.

“I’ll leave you two to your conversation, then. Please excuse me while I get changed. Oh yes, if your lips get swollen, remember to take some vitamins. Such a paltry scandal of mine is no business of yours anyway,” Skylar declared nonchalantly.

Only when she left did Amelia finally put down the comb in her hand and let out a sigh of relief.

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When Skylar walked over to the door, she spotted a man in a black suit and white gloves standing there stiffly.

Holding a painting that had been rolled up with both hands, he presented it to her.

"Here, this is a gift from my boss."

"I don't accept gifts from fans, so please return it to your boss," Skylar declined tactfully.

Her words fell into Xena's ears, and she scoffed, "Hah! You don't accept gifts from fans? Just drop the high and mighty act! If I were you, I would accept it gratefully. After all, there's no point acting all generous when you already have your back to the wall. You'd be better off thinking about your future since no one can help you, what's more with that family background of yours. If you accept the gift and sell it off later, the money will help you out a bit so that you won't be so hard-pressed."

Hearing that, Skylar turned and threw her a glance. Jeez, this woman is really flapping her lips too much without any reservations!

Meanwhile, the man kept his hands outstretched, so Skylar had no choice but to take the painting from him. The moment she opened it, she sucked in a breath.

What the hell? Isn't this the last item that was auctioned earlier? All at once, the painting in her hand felt like a hot potato.

Amelia and Xena were stunned as well. The latter, especially, was seized by jealousy. What? Who on earth is so extravagant to buy a fifty-million painting as a gift?

Feigning calmness, Skylar deliberately mused, "I don't know how much it will sell, but it'll probably be enough to pay off my housing loan."

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Carefully putting away the painting, she then held it with a hand. Nonetheless, she didn't dare use too much force, afraid that she would damage the painting. After all, she couldn't afford to pay for the damages.

It was only after they had gone out did Skylar ask the man, "Who is your boss? This is too costly, so I can't accept it. Please return it to your boss."

"Ms. Jones, please keep it since Mr. Ford asked me to hand it to you," the man replied conflictedly. "Also, he instructed me to tell you this – a pegasus has great staying power, so there's no need to be harrowed by the present."

Skylar was entirely stumped upon hearing that. So, this is from Tobias. And he must be aware of my brewing scandal since he's saying such a thing to me. Well, this is quite a surprise! I never expected him to be the mysterious buyer.

But still, she was reluctant to accept the painting. She had the man convey her words to Tobias, saying, "One never knows which horse will win the race before the very last moment."

Xena, on the other hand, was still feeling shocked. Even with her family background, the painting was still out of her league.

She indeed wanted to show off in front of others by winning the bid, but she had no choice but to admit defeat after having raised her paddle thrice.

"I've heard of men doing all sorts of things to win the favor of women, but never had I seen any man buying a woman a fifty-million painting as a gift. I wonder who is so crazy about that vixen, Skylar Jones," she groused resentfully.

Leaning close to her ear, Amelia whispered, "I heard that she is in a relationship with Tobias Ford. It's not at all surprising that he did such a thing, considering his financial capabilities. How did you think she got a role in Empyrean Sword?"

However, Xena smacked her shoulder hard. "Don't joke with me, girl! How could Tobias Ford possibly take a fancy to her?"

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“That’s just a rumor I heard, so I don’t know whether it’s true. Anyway, she’s definitely using underhanded methods since she’s rising to fame so quickly. I wouldn’t be competing with her for resources if she has no sugar daddy backing her up,” Amelia asserted.

Sometime later... The lights in the room were turned off, plunging the room into pitch-darkness. And so, Skylar fumbled along the wall for the light switch. The moment glaring lights flooded the room, Miranda instinctively lifted a hand and shielded her eyes.

Right away, Skylar was greeted by the sight of beer bottles scattered all over the floor. The room was so messy that it appeared as though a tornado had hit. Miranda was sitting on the bed in a disheveled state with the covers a tangled mess even as the stench of alcohol emanated off her.

“You’re a grown-ass woman, yet you’re still using alcohol to drown your sorrows? You should at least clean up a bit when I bought such a huge house for you.” Skylar then heaved a sigh.

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Covering her face with both hands, Miranda whined, “I don’t even have a single shred of dignity left now. Everyone looks at me as though I’m a leper when I go out to buy groceries, all shying away from me and condemning me for committing murder when I failed to steal the man.”

“Is that not the truth? Oh, that doesn’t seem to be the case. The narrative should be you committing murder in a fit of rage after your man was stolen by someone else. But no matter what it is, it’s still a fact that you killed someone, and a murderer will never be able to hold her head up for the rest of her life. You know what? I was actually dreaming of going into the military or becoming a civil servant back then, but it required a spotless family background. You should feel guilty toward me,” Skylar drawled.

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"I didn't kill her! Why won't they just give me an opportunity to start over?" Miranda's voice rose a few decibels.

Having finally railroaded her into speaking the truth, Skylar immediately grasped onto that to get to the bottom of things. "Do you think it's worth having taken the blame for Thomas Jones? Although I have no idea what exactly happened between the two of you, he has been living the high life all these years. Irene spends millions a year just for her beauty treatments, and she has people fawning all over her whenever she goes out. In short, she's the envy of all women. And what about you? You were doing time and ended up in such a sorry state," she mocked.

Those words of hers were a sharp blade that stabbed Miranda right in the chest.

"So? What can I do about that? Am I supposed to give him up when I've already served such a long sentence? I can't bring myself to do that," she lamented helplessly. "Back then, Irene's sister, Tara, found out that Thomas had embezzled a lot of money from the Ziegler family and transferred it to his account overseas to set himself up for life. That day, I went to beg him not to break up with me, but nothing I said made a difference. He even insulted me, saying that I couldn't give him anything. "It so happened that Tara came over to confront him about the money right then. She had always been arrogant and looked down upon him, so she uttered a lot of unsavory remarks to his face, including how he wasn't a man but a useless piece of shit who sponged off women and would only be disdained all his life. As he listened, he grew incensed and also terrified that he would be exposed. In the next moment, he snagged a baseball bat and swung it at her as though having lost his mind. He hit her in the back of her head, so she died instantly. "He was beside himself with terror back then since the penalty for murder is imprisonment. Thus, he beseeched me to do him a final favor. I loved him so much then that I would've given my life for him. Unsurprisingly, I was taken in by his false promise of marrying me when I'm released from prison."

At long last, Skylar had unraveled the truth of the matter. Oh my God, she was too foolish to have staked her youth just for a promise Thomas Jones never had any intention of fulfilling!

"There's a simple solution – expose him. He truly needs to experience some hardships after his easy life all these years. Have him walk in your shoes and travel the path you once took, spending his twilight years in prison!" Skylar's gaze was flinty without a hint of empathy for Thomas.

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However, Miranda was dead set against it. Scrambling off the bed, she stopped Skylar, who was leaving, without even putting on her shoes. "No, you can't do that, Skylar! It's been so many years, and he's your father at the end of the day. You can't be so ruthless!"

Ugh! I simply hate it when she keeps harping on the fact that he's my father! If I can choose my parents, I definitely won't choose such parents in my next life!

Miranda wailed sorrowfully, tears and snot staining her face while she wore a tortured expression.

Damn it all to hell! In the face of her refusal, the only thing I can do to sway the public opinion now is to make myself into the victim. I'll have to publish a long and eloquent post on Twitter, playing it up for sympathy! But then again, I won't really have to "play it up" since I will appear pitiful anyway if all those things are truly bared to the public.

That was Skylar's final resort, for, given the choice, no one wanted to bare themselves to others.

She left in a hurry without even sparing the time to have a good look at her new house, ordering the driver to head to Jones residence.

Ultimately, someone had to take the initiative, and she was determined not to allow Thomas the chance to be a coward once again.

Before she went over, she didn't consider that she would be interrupting dinner. When she stepped into the house, the entire family was eating.

Thomas was taking a piece of pork cutlet for Avery, and the smell of grilled fish hung in the air.

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