

Chapter 401 Who's Warning Who?

Lucy thought, 'Mr. Ferguson wants to send me to the Philippines?! That'd be torture compared with my workload now! Will I still be able to come back? Did he hear what I said on the call earlier?'

Her panic spread from the soles of her feet to the top of her head as she trembled.

She knew very well how fond Eric was of Nicole now. Eric was also a man of his word.

Lucy quickly called Quinn and pleaded in tears.

In less than an hour, Quinn rushed over in a rage.

She just so happened to bump into Nicole, who was planning to go out shopping.

Quinn entered the door fuming.

Without a second thought, she pointed at Nicole and scolded, “You vixen! You’re already divorced yet you’re still seducing my son?! We let you reconcile, but you’re pretending to be unhappy and unwilling, yet here you are now! How shameless can you be?”

Nicole looked at Quinn with a cold gaze. Sure enough, Quinn was as loathsome as ever!

“Mrs. Ferguson, I hope that you’ll be a bit more respectful with your words. Don’t think that I’ll give in to you just because you’re older.” ①

Quinn turned livid. Nicole simply had no manners!

She was used to bossing Nicole around in the past. She thought that Nicole would not retaliate, but Nicole did. Quinn found that she could not fight against Nicole at all.

Quinn found it most unacceptable that a woman like Nicole actually dared to go against her.

Lucy hurriedly went over to Quinn and wept.

“Madam, Mr. Ferguson wants to send me off to the Philippines. You have to help me...”

Quinn sneered and looked at Lucy.

“Don't worry. With me around, no one will be able to send you away. You can stay here with confidence. Even if a certain someone doesn't want to see you, you can stay anyway!”

Nicole rolled her eyes. ‘Did Quinn have some sort of persecutory delusions? Did she think that I requested Lucy to leave?’

However, Nicole was not bothered to explain, let alone waste time here with a

n old shrew.

Nicole took her purse and got ready to leave.

However, Quinn did not plan on letting Nicole leave so easily.

She stepped forward to stop Nicole. “Nicole, I’m warning you. Don’t try to do anything to my son. Do you think that no one knows what you’re up to?”

Nicole raised an eyebrow. “What am I up to?”

“You want to kill my son! You made him eat random medication. I’m keeping an eye on you!”

“Who are you keeping an eye on?”

Eric’s voice was frigid as he restrained his anger.

Mitchell was right behind Eric.

Quinn looked at Eric and went over eagerly. “Eric, this woman...”

“I told you before. If you cause trouble again, Ingrid won't be able to come back for another ten years.”

His voice was devoid of warmth and carried a penetrating chill.

Quinn turned pale. She was infuriated and complained, “I'm doing this for your own good!”

“Save it.” Eric gnashed his teeth when he said this.

Quinn pointed at Nicole. Her voice was hoarse, and her expression was vicious.

“Didn't you see how she treated me just now? Do you want me to grovel at her feet?”

Nicole laughed coldly and turned to look at Quinn.

“Mrs. Ferguson, my attitude is decent enough. You should stop expecting things to be the same as before, nor

should you try to find ways to step on me. Honestly, I'm considered generous for not getting even with you, so you should count your blessings."

Quinn's body shook with anger at her words.

"How dare you?! My son's leg is crippled to save you!"

"Yes, your son saved me, but what does that have to do with you? Should I be grateful to you? Don't you think that you're thinking too highly of yourself? Old Master Ferguson didn't even say anything, but you came all the way here to flaunt your presence."

"Nicole Stanton, you dare to..."

"Mrs. Ferguson, it's fine if this maid doesn't go to the Philippines... In any case, I can always send her to the island that I was stranded on. It's certainly more interesting there..."

Nicole cast a light glance at Lucy as she spoke.

Her tone was sarcastic.

Lucy shuddered and turned pale with fear.

Nicole smiled and walked out the door slowly.

‘What a way to ruin my mood!’

Chapter 402 Retribution Came Too Quickly

Quinn went crazy. “Get rid of this woman! I won’t allow you to be together!”

Eric reminded her coldly, “You don’t have a say in my affairs.”

Quinn gnashed her teeth at him. “You’re my son. How can you disobey me?”

Eric’s eyes were calm and indifferent.

From the time Eric was sent abroad to receive special training at the age of five, he would call Quinn whenever he was homesick. However, Quinn, who was busy shopping, would just tell him impatiently to bear with it and grow up.

Quinn would then tell Old Master Ferguson that Eric secretly called her, so Eric would get a beating in exchange.

‘Now that I’m an adult, she thinks that she can control me? How ridiculous!’ Eric’s lips curled as he revealed a bitter and heavy smile.

“If you’re kicked out of the Ferguson family, I won’t be your son anymore.”

Quinn’s body shook fiercely. Her face instantly turned ashen.

Not even in her dreams would Quinn have thought that Eric would say such words.

Eric slowly collected the emotions on his face. His brows were relaxed, and his gaze was gentle and soft when he looked at Nicole’s departing back.

The longing in Eric’s eyes was hard to ignore.

Quinn felt like she was about to break down at that moment. ‘My daughter’s not around. My son never treated me

like a mother, and even that b*tch Nicole dares to belittle me! How dare she?! I'm the matron of the Ferguson family!' ①

She was so angry that her body shook. 'This is all Nicole's fault! If not for her, nothing would have changed.'

There was only one thought in her mind at this moment - for Nicole to disappear.

Quinn glanced around and saw the fruit knife in the fruit bowl on the table. She was determined.

She picked up the knife recklessly and rushed out the door...

Eric was startled. He tried to stand up, but excruciating pain in his right leg made him unable to stand.

He shouted, "Nicole, watch out!"

Nicole was just about to turn around

when Luca, who was beside her, suddenly yanked her to the right. It happened so quickly that Nicole was unable to react.

“Ah— Go to hell!”

Quinn screamed behind Nicole with bloodshot eyes. Nicole dodged as a cold light flashed behind her.

Quinn was swinging the fruit knife wildly at Nicole. She suddenly tripped and fell.

The fruit knife just so happened to sink into her belly.

Blood gushed out in an instant.

Nicole was stunned for a moment. She looked at Quinn lying on the ground in pain as the vitality in her eyes faded rapidly...

Lucy ran over in shock and cried. “Madam, don’t scare me! Are you

okay?!”

Eric’s face was filled with shock and anger. His eyes flickered.

Luca expressionlessly opened the car door for Nicole.

“Miss, watch your head...”

Nicole lowered her eyes and went straight into the car.

Behind her, Luca glanced at Quinn and Eric.

“There’s a dashcam in the car with evidence of Mrs. Ferguson’s attempted murder just now. Regardless of Mrs. Ferguson’s injuries, Ms. Stanton retains the right to pursue this.”

With just a brief statement, a lot of subsequent troubles were avoided.

Lucy, who was kneeling behind Quinn, looked up at them in shock.

Quinn's expression was hideous, but she did not have the strength to say a word.

The car engine roared to life.

Nicole sat in the car and closed her eyes silently.

Luca, who was acting as her driver, took the initiative to speak, which was a rare occurrence.

“Miss, do you want to move back to Stanton Mansion?”

Nicole scrunched up her nose. “Not yet. It'll look like I'm guilty if I leave like that. They're the ones in the wrong.”

She did not want any trouble. Quinn deliberately came over to kick up a fuss.

Quinn's wound in her lower abdomen was not fatal. She would just lose a lot of blood and suffer the pain.

**‘She deserves to be in this situation!’
Nicole thought without the slightest bit
of guilt. 1**

Chapter 403 Asking for External Aid

Imperial Gardens.

Eric's face was pallid as he sat in the doorway, looking at the numerous people going back and forth to move Quinn into the ambulance. The noise seemed to be very distant.

Was he sad?

No, not really.

He was just a little shocked.

Eric was shocked that Quinn hated Nicole to the point of wanting to murder her.

What Eric disregarded in the past had caused that hatred to fester and grow.

Mitchell finished with the arrangements and turned around to see Eric sitting in his wheelchair,

motionless.

His face was dark, cold, and sullen.

Even if Eric was injured, the coldness and ferocity that surrounded him did not diminish one bit.

Mitchell pursed his lips and walked over with trepidation and worry.

“President, don’t worry. The doctor said that she just lost too much blood. There’s no danger to her life.”

Eric did not speak, but his dark eyes became darker. Mitchell was unable to see the depths of them.

Eric slammed the armrest of the wheelchair and spoke in a deep, cold tone.

“Send the nanny to the Philippines. There’s no need for her to come back anymore. As for my mother...”

His voice did not have a trace of

warmth. His body permeated with a chill.

“After her injury is dealt with, send her to a sanitorium. She’s not allowed to be discharged without my orders.”

Mitchell’s expression froze as his pupils shrank.

How would he not understand what that meant?

If Mitchell had not heard about what happened from the bodyguard that had been secretly protecting them outside the house, Mitchell would have been extremely shocked to hear this.

However, since it was for Nicole, Eric’s behavior was understandable.

It was clear how much Eric Ferguson hated Quinn’s actions because he was willing to go this far.

Mitchell immediately bowed his head

and answered, “Yes, sir.”

After a period of silence, Mitchell cautiously looked up at Eric.

“President, will Ms. Stanton come back?”

Eric’s expression tightened slightly.

He was worried about that too.

If Nicole left, he might never get the chance to get close to her again.

“Why don’t you give her a call later and ask what she wants to eat for dinner? I’ll have it prepared and delivered.”

Mitchell suggested.

Eric’s eyes flickered as the coldness in them gradually dispersed. He looked up at Mitchell.

“Are you trying to get a raise?”

Mitchell would normally not dare to suggest these things.

He smiled and tried his luck. “

President, if you want to pursue Ms. Stanton, you can't just rely on yourself. It's better to get some help. Since Ms. Stanton has a bodyguard, we can get external aid too!”

Eric said, “Get to the point.”

“My cousin used to have a white-collar job, but he recently opened a matchmaking agency. He has a silver tongue that can even persuade the dead to come back to life! He's known to be a relationship expert. If you're willing, you can give it a try?”

Eric's expression darkened at a speed visible to the naked eye.

A matchmaking agency?

The President of the Great Ferguson Corporation needed the help of a matchmaking agency?

If word of this were to get out, Eric would certainly become a laughing stock!

Mitchell's lips trembled slightly when he saw Eric's increasingly dark and unpleasant expression. He failed to rope in his cousin and might even end up losing his job!

That would be so unfortunate!

“It's fine if you don't want this. I just mentioned your situation to my cousin before, and he begged me to put in a word with you that he guarantees Ms. Stanton will change her mind, but I don't think he's that reliable...”

Mitchell spoke and stepped forward to push Eric's wheelchair into the elevator.

Eric suddenly said, “Get him to meet me.”

“Huh?” Mitchell thought his ears were

playing tricks on him.

Eric pursed his lips. His eyes turned dark and cold as he glanced sharply at Mitchell.

“If it doesn’t work, then you can leave with him!”

Mitchell shuddered. ‘Great... Now I’m tied to my unreliable cousin?!’

“No one can know about his identity, especially Nicole. Have him come as my butler. Do it right now.”

As soon as Eric finished speaking, he wheeled himself into the study.

Mitchell only came back to his senses a few seconds later. ‘He actually agreed to this?! He must be very desperate!’

Chapter 404 The Cousin is Here

Mitchell called his cousin immediately.

Less than twenty minutes later.

A fat man who looked to be over 100 kg appeared in front of Eric.

He had a wide smile which made his eyes squint into a thin line.

Eric paused and frowned. His expression was dark and ugly when he looked at Mitchell, who was standing beside his cousin.

“Cousin?”

Before Mitchell could speak, the fat man’s eyes curved into a smile. He introduced himself with spittle flying everywhere. “You don’t have to be so polite, Mr. Ferguson. There’s no need to call me Cousin. My name is Toto. Don’t worry, you won’t go wrong by choosing

me as your butler! One month to reconcile, three months to warm up your feelings for each other, and you two will be remarried within a year!”

Toto introduced himself eloquently. He could only appear confident by setting the goal clearly for Eric.

Otherwise, he felt that he was very likely to be thrown out!

Sure enough, the instant Eric saw Toto, Eric felt like he had gone mad to get persuaded by Mitchell for external aid.

However, when he heard the big picture Toto painted for him, Eric actually thought that they could give it a shot.

Mitchell desperately gave a look at his cousin, trying to get Toto to tone it down. If Toto boasted too much and ended up not achieving anything, Mitchell would lose his job as well. ¹

The study was silent for a moment.

Eric tapped his index finger on the desk.

“You used to be a white-collar worker, so why did you change careers?”

He always had a sharp eye for people. Even Mitchell, who had been with him for so many years, was only able to stay after going through rounds of tests and stringent selection.

Toto sighed and stomped his feet with lowered eyes. The flab on his body jiggled.

Eric thought, ‘Is he throwing a tantrum...?’

“That’s because whenever I go to the staff’s cafeteria, there won’t be enough left for others to eat their fill. Can you blame me for that?”

He pouted and was vexed at the mention of this. His words carried a grumbling tone.

“The boss of that company also said that my performance was good, but the money I bring in offsets my food expenses, so they can’t afford to feed me. Hmph! It’s clear that they just wanted to get rid of me after they finished using me!”

Eric’s brows knitted up slightly. For a moment, he did not know what to say.

He cleared his throat and spoke in a deep and cold voice.

“What’s your rate of success for your matchmaking agency?”

Toto was stunned. He immediately patted his chest.

“Ms. Stanton and you are my first couple! I’ll do my best!”

The corners of Eric’s lips twitched. His face was covered in frost as he swept a grim glance towards Mitchell.

‘I’m a guinea pig?!’

At that moment, Mitchell already regretted his referral.

Mitchell stood there like a scared puppy and hung his head silently. ‘I was wrong ... So very wrong...’

Toto laughed loudly. “President, when can I start working?”

Eric looked at him coldly and sharply.

“Your probation period is one day.”

He almost told Toto to get lost.

However, Toto shouted happily. “Sure thing! Then I’ll get cooking now!”

Mitchell, who was left standing there, received a death stare of scrutiny.

After a long time, Eric gnashed his teeth and said, “Get out!”

Mitchell did not dare to hesitate and

scurried out.

Eric sat in his study and took a deep breath as he rubbed his temples. 'I must've gone crazy!'

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After the nanny left, Eric did not rush to find another nanny because he was hesitant and worried.

It was almost evening when he smelled the aromatic food.

Toto knocked on his door, looking like a sycophant.

"President, call Ms. Stanton and ask her to come home..."

The phone was on the table in front of Eric, but the screen was always black without any movement.

Eric looked up. His eyes were deep and obscure with an indescribable irritation and coldness.

He did not even know how he should explain to Nicole about the situation earlier.

Toto's smile was very empathic. "I'll do it..."

Fortunately, when Mitchell left, he already gave Toto all the important phone numbers.

Toto went out and took out his phone.

"Beep— Beep—"

Chapter 405 He Entered by the Back Door

Within two rings, a cool and detached female voice came through. “Who is this?”

“Are you Ms. Stanton? I’m Toto, the new butler in Imperial Gardens. I accidentally messed up your cosmetics when I was cleaning your room earlier. Mr. Ferguson said to throw them all away and buy new ones, but I don’t understand the words on the bottles...”

Toto’s tone was quite aggrieved. Nicole’s cold and stern voice interrupted him before he could finish his sentence.

“Don’t throw them away! I’ll go back right now. I’ll kill you if you dare to throw my things!”

Eric, who was in the study, frowned

deeply. He heard the voice outside the door loud and clear.

‘That simple?!’

Nicole was not short of money or luxury items. Her cosmetics were all high-end formulas specially customized according to her skin and cost seven digits. Where would they buy new ones for her?

‘Those two stupid men!’

Nicole forgot that she did not want to go back to Imperial Gardens. All she wanted was to rush back and check on her cosmetics.

She took her purse and returned to Imperial Gardens with Luca.

Nicole stopped for a few seconds at the door.

The place where Quinn bled profusely earlier when she left was spotless.

It was as if that episode never happened at all.

As long as they did not cause trouble for her, Nicole did not intend to pursue it.

After all, Eric saved her so many times. If she insisted on this, the Fergusons would not be very happy either.

The door suddenly opened. A fat, round man ran out and came up to Nicole while panting heavily.

“Ms. Stanton?”

His eyes squinted as he smiled. “I’m Toto, the new butler. You’re so beautiful! You’re even prettier than those celebrities. Your beauty is in a league of its own and simply beyond description...”

Nicole stood there, frozen. A person with perfect manners and courtesy like her did not know how to act when she

was praised by the fat man out of the blue.

Behind her, Luca finally grew impatient. “Are you done?”

“Oh my! You must be Ms. Stanton’s bodyguard. You really fit the role so well! Your aura is much stronger than ordinary people. I heard that you’ve won the national championship several times. Gosh, you’re so amazing...”

Luca was speechless.

Nicole laughed out loud. “Where did Mr. Ferguson find a butler like you? You’re also in a league of your own...”

Then, Nicole strode inside.

Her ears almost fell off from all the compliments he fed her.

Nicole saw Eric sitting in the living room, looking at documents. His eyes were as cold and calm as always.

Hearing the footsteps, Eric's eyebrows twitched slightly. He quietly looked up at her. The corners of his lips curled up into a gentle smile.

“You're back?”

Nicole frowned. ‘How could he act as if nothing had happened?’

Before she could speak, Eric preemptively explained.

“The nanny has already been sent away and will never appear in front of you again. As for my mother... I'm really sorry, but she's my mother after all. The doctor said that she might have some mental illness, so I'll send her to a sanatorium to recuperate after she gets better. The same thing will never happen again.”

His voice was low and apologetic.

Under his cold complexion was a hint of

tension that could not be concealed no matter how hard he tried.

That was because Quinn was the person who gave birth to him. Out of ethics and morality, Eric could not drive her out as he did to others. 2

What he could do was to make sure that Quinn would never appear in front of Nicole again.

The seconds ticked by. It was just a few seconds, but it felt like a few centuries had passed.

Nicole chuckled softly. “You’re very pragmatic, Mr. Ferguson. Aren’t you going to blame me for speaking out of turn, which in turn provoked her?”

Eric’s lips pulled in self-deprecation. “What you said were facts.”

He did not have any reason to blame Nicole.

Nicole lowered her eyes and smiled faintly. “Since it’s all in the past, I won’t hold her responsible. Let bygones be bygones.”

Eric snapped his head up. There seemed to be a dim light flashing in his eyes.

He did not expect Nicole to let this go so easily.

Behind them, Toto excitedly came forward and clapped his hands.

“Oh my! Such a good thing calls for a celebration! I just made some stew that’s delicious and low in calories. Would you like to try some?”

Chapter 406 Professional Bootlicker

Mitchell's cousin, Toto, was dedicated and refused to let go of a chance to get these two people together.

Eric looked at Toto with an expressionless face and was speechless.

Luca rolled his eyes, not wanting to look at Toto.

The corners of Nicole's lips twitched. “Mr. Ferguson, I see that you've changed your criteria for selecting staff, huh?”

The people around Eric were the crème de la crème of their fields.

Toto did not look like he had any advantages. Based on Eric's past preferences, Toto would have been eliminated due to his physique. It was very unexpected that he made it as Eric's butler. ①

The sun really rose from the west!

Eric pursed his lips and was about to find an excuse, but Toto just went up and smiled with curved eyes.

“Ms. Stanton, I came in through the back door!”

Nicole nodded and was very interested. “Whose relative?”

Toto squirmed around and said, “I’m Mitchell’s cousin. Don’t tell anyone about this. Otherwise, people will talk. It’s really annoying!”

Nicole could not help but chuckle. “Okay.”

‘Turns out he’s Mitchell’s cousin, huh? I didn’t know Eric valued Mitchell so much... How unexpected!’

Nicole had just taken two steps when she suddenly remembered the purpose of her return.

“My things...”

“I didn’t throw them away and have put them all back. Ms. Stanton, you can rest assured!”

Nicole breathed a sigh of relief. Her expression eased, and she was in a much better mood.

Eric was sitting at the dining table watching Nicole. He let out a soft chuckle.

He thought, ‘It turns out she’s not indifferent to everything. At least she left the cosmetics she cares about here...’

Nicole rolled her eyes at him. ‘What is he laughing at?’

Although Toto was round and fat, he was very nimble and fast in his movements.

A few small dishes were laid out in front

of Nicole in a short time. They were simple, not greasy, and looked very appetizing.

Nicole had a little bit of everything and finished the soup.

The light in Eric's eyes became warmer. Even his appetite became much better.

Toto was pleased that his cooking skills were recognized. It was really worth his hard work to get a chef's license. He almost bankrupted the restaurant that he did his apprenticeship in by eating all their quality food. ¹

While the two majesties were eating, Toto began to dish out compliments from the side.

“Mr. Ferguson is really amazing. He insists on working even though he's unwell. This kind of perseverance and tenacity to forge ahead is what we all should learn. Ms. Stanton, don't you think so?”

Nicole, who was put on the spot, suddenly looked up at Eric opposite her.

“Yes, yes, yes.”

Eric was originally in a good mood, but he almost choked on his food when he heard Toto’s words. His face became surprisingly glum. ‘I was just about to pass his probation because his cooking skill is quite passable, but this guy is just challenging my patience!’

“Such a man is so hard to find nowadays. Most men just crack under a little bit of pressure and complain about this and that, unlike our Mr. Ferguson, who speaks with his actions! He’s simply a role model to all men!”

Luca’s violent coughing suddenly came from the kitchen. He sounded like he choked on water.

Toto ran in with concern.

“Luca, are you alright?”

“No.”

“Then you should have some water...”

Toto quickly poured Luca a glass of water, but Luca was afraid that he would choke again and dared not take another sip.

Outside, Nicole looked at Eric with a teasing smile.

“Role model, huh? Well-deserved...”

Eric closed his eyes and felt humiliated. 1

His body was exuding chilly vibes that could not be ignored.

Nicole smiled with curved eyes, stood up, and went upstairs. She thought to herself, ‘This fatty is really an oddball! What an *ss kisser...’

“Ms. Stanton, why’d you go upstairs? I haven’t finished yet! If you’re looking

for a man, you should look for someone like Mr. Ferguson who's good-looking, capable, and most importantly able to withstand pressure..."

"Shut up!" Eric could no longer stand it.

Chapter 407 Ms. Ferguson

Nicole sat on the balcony on the second floor, basking in the sunset with a cup of tea next to her.

She squinted her eyes and felt a wave of sleepiness. She then heard deliberately lightened footsteps.

Nicole frowned. "Toto?"

"Ms. Stanton, you're so smart! You already know it's me without turning around. Your calm and cool temperament is so different from other women. I prepared some fruit for you. Was today's dinner still satisfactory?"

Toto nervously rubbed his hands with some apprehension in his voice as he continued, "Mr. Ferguson ordered those dinners. I don't know if they're to your taste. This is my first day on the job. I don't want to lose this job because

of the dinner. After all, I have a first-class chef license...”

The corners of Nicole’s upturned lips stiffened slightly.

‘Eric ordered these? I thought it was a coincidence that those are my favorite dishes... How did he know anyway?’

Nicole’s heart suddenly felt a little stuffy.

The more Eric put his heart into her, the more uncomfortable she felt.

Soon, Nicole regained her composure.

“I’m not a picky eater, so you can cook whatever you want.”

After all, Nicole did not eat much. If she really did not like to eat it, she could just go back to the Stanton Mansion.

Toto still wanted to say more, but Nicole put down the teacup she was holding and took a deep breath.

“I almost forgot. I’m going shopping with my friends later and will be back late. Remember to leave the door open ...”

“Shopping? Do you need me to carry your bags?”

Toto excitedly volunteered for the job. If he could gain Nicole’s trust, it would definitely make his matchmaking task so much easier!

Nicole forced an awkward smile. “No need. Luca’s with me.”

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Inside the mall.

Yvette and Julie sat at the lounge massage chairs while waiting for Nicole.

Nicole looked at these two women and chuckled lightly.

“Shopping in the evening? Are you two

that busy lately?”

Julie rolled her eyes at her. “We’re just tryna find ways for you to pass the time. Otherwise, there’s no guarantee that your old feelings won’t be rekindled if you face Eric Ferguson all day and night!”

Yvette nodded in agreement. “I heard that the old hag Quinn was hospitalized?”

Nicole raised her eyebrows and sat on the side. “You girls are pretty well-informed, huh?”

Luca had the sense not to follow too closely. He was on constant alert not far away to ensure that Nicole was within a safe distance from him where he could react if needed.

Yvette and Julie took their bags and dragged Nicole around the mall.

“How can I not be well-informed? My

uncle is the director of that hospital. I heard that she was covered in blood when she was sent over and even woke up cursing you. The strange thing is that the Fergusons kept this under wraps, and not a single person went over to visit her.”

Yvette looked at Nicole and continued, “Does this have something to do with you?”

Nicole laughed lightly. Her eyes were cold.

“She deserved it. That knife was meant to be stuck in me, but Luca blocked it.”

Julie and Yvette were silent for a moment.

Yvette stepped forward and took her arm. “Let’s not talk about that. By the way, did Eric Ferguson take advantage of you when you moved in to take care of him?”

“He’s a cripple now. How could he even get the chance?”

“That’s good. Although we don’t support you getting back together with him, we appreciate his effort this time.”

Nicole lowered her eyes and laughed. On the side, Julie tugged on Nicole’s arm. Her voice was filled with amazement.

“Look who’s there?!”

They followed the direction Julie was pointing at and saw a woman in uniform, kneeling on the ground to put on shoes for some customers. That was Ingrid Ferguson!

The three ladies were dumbfounded.

Chapter 408 A Wave of Puffery Before Bed

The three ladies all thought that they saw it wrongly.

Upon closer look, they realized that it was really her.

Yvette was the first to speak. “Ingrid Ferguson has been missing for so long, but she’s been right under our nose this whole time? Why didn’t anyone find out?!”

Nicole squinted her eyes. She was also amazed.

Although Ingrid’s humble stance and fake smile when she was putting on shoes for the customer were very clearly forced, Ingrid certainly looked much better than before.

They were just not used to Ingrid’s behavior.

No one expected that the arrogant and domineering Ms. Ferguson would end up working as a store attendant!

How could Eric Ferguson arrange his sister to this kind of place?

Julie Nixon asked, “Should we go over and take a look?”

Nicole shook her head, but Yvette was already dragging the two of them over.

“Of course!”

“Welcome to...”

Ingrid sent away a customer and immediately bowed to greet the new customers who just walked in.

When Ingrid looked up and saw Nicole and her friends, her face immediately changed.

“What are you doing here? Get out!”

‘Well, I guess her temper still never

changed...’

Yvette could not help but sneer. “We’re here to buy shoes of course! Ms. Ferguson, we’re more interested in knowing what you are doing here...”

Ingrid’s face flushed white with anger. She was furious when she saw Nicole, but when she thought about Eric’s warning, she dared not be as reckless as before.

“What does it have to do with you? If you want to buy something, be my guest, otherwise, get out!”

Nicole frowned. Her beautiful features had a hint of playfulness.

“Were you thrown here by your brother to experience a plebeian life?”

Ingrid gritted her teeth and glared at Nicole.

“That’s all thanks to you! You still have

the cheek to mention this?!”

“Of course! You deserve it, so what does it have to do with me?” Nicole laughed indifferently.

The store manager standing on the side saw the three well-dressed ladies and knew that they were not ordinary customers with one glance. Thus, she quickly greeted them with a smile.

“Ingrid, are these your customers? Do you need help?”

Before Ingrid spoke, Yvette reached out and pointed around. “This, this, and this... Bring them all to me...”

Ingrid’s face turned ugly as she shot Nicole a death stare.

She stood there motionless and had no intention to serve them.

Ingrid was fuming.

The store manager whispered and

urged Ingrid. “Hurry up! Don’t you want the commission? You’ve only sold one pair of shoes this month, so you’re far from your target...”

“Please wait a moment. Ingrid will serve you immediately...”

Nicole smiled. “I don’t need to try them on. We’ll just buy those pairs that my friend chose earlier because I don’t have the mood to stay a second longer.”

Ingrid frowned and doubted that Nicole would be so kind to her.

The store manager said, “Okay. I knew that you ladies must be Ingrid’s friend and especially came here to support her, right?”

Nicole laughed lightly and replied, “We’re not friends with Ingrid. You can take the commission from those shoes we bought earlier. Wishing you all the best in hitting your sales target!”

Ingrid's face turned glum. The store manager heard this and beamed. She then personally went to wrap up those pairs of shoes.

Yvette wanted to tease Ingrid, but Nicole did not want to, so she could only let it be. After making the payment, the three ladies left.

“Why are you so nice to her? Did you forget how she treated you before?”

Yvette reluctantly reminded Nicole.

Nicole curled her lips. “Of course, I remember, but I don't wanna get involved with the Fergusons. One annoying Eric Ferguson is already a handful...”

Ingrid did not bother her lately, so Nicole did not mind letting Ingrid silently hate her.

Anyway, it did not matter to Nicole.

However, seeing Ingrid so servile and exasperated made Nicole feel delighted.

The three ladies walked around the mall and bought a lot of things.

Since it was getting late, they went back to their own homes.

Once Nicole came out of the mall, her bags were passed to Luca.

Imperial Gardens.

The lights in the living room were still on. As soon as Nicole entered the house, she could smell a fragrant chocolate aroma.

Toto was holding a spoon as he came out of the kitchen to greet them happily.

“Ms. Stanton, you bought quite a lot of things! Next time, you should take me with you so that I can help you to carry your bags. That way, Luca can free up his hands to protect you. I have a pretty

good eye too!”

Chapter 409 Sleeping in the Same Room

Nicole sniffed the air and asked, “What are you making?”

“I made some hot chocolate with Amedei’s 70% dark chocolate. It’s so rich and smooth. You should try it!” Toto immediately recommended his creation. “Would you like a cup?”

Nicole was enticed by the smell and nodded. “Is Mr. Ferguson asleep?”

“Mr. Ferguson is having a meeting in the study. Sigh... A man like him who’s so hard-working and rich is truly hard to find!”

Toto sighed while going back into the kitchen. He came out again with two mugs.

“Luca, would you like one too?”

Nicole took a sip of the hot chocolate and liked the silkiness. She looked at Luca. “Try some. Toto’s got quite the skills in the kitchen!”

Luca looked so fierce and unapproachable when he turned away. “No thanks, he can have it.”

Toto went over to Luca and pushed him to the table with all the strength he could muster with his 100 kg body.

He was exhausted and sweating as he looked at Luca.

“Don’t be so polite. I’ve already had my fair share just now while making it...”

Toto even let out a burp.

Nicole could not help but laugh. After she finished her cup of hot chocolate, she stood up and went upstairs.

“Don’t waste food! I’m going back upstairs. You guys should go to bed

early too...”

Toto waved at her joyfully. “Such a beautiful, kind, and lovely girl like Ms. Stanton is so hard to find!”

Nicole did not want to turn around and quickened her pace up the stairs.

Toto turned around and was just about to blow another wave of puffery at Luca when Luca chugged the cup of hot chocolate and walked away with a scowl on his face. Luca did not give Toto a chance to speak.

Toto looked at the empty cup and smiled smugly. “Wow... Luca, even the way you drink hot chocolate is so manly!”

If Toto was not Eric Ferguson’s butler, Luca would have thrown this fatty out of the house.

When Nicole passed by the study, she stopped for a moment and heard Eric’s

mellow and magnetic voice from the inside. Nicole was slightly stunned that Eric could speak such fluent French.

His voice and words sounded very pleasant.

What a great sound indeed.

Nicole did not disturb him and went back to her room. Before going to bed, she video called Floyd, Grant, and Kai.

As usual, Luca took his sleeping bag and intended to sleep right in front of Nicole's bedroom door. Before he could close his eyes, someone suddenly made a huge commotion next to him.

Luca opened his eyes tiredly and watched as the fat man spread out his bedding next to him.

Their beddings were completely different. Luca's was a sleek military sleeping bag, while Toto had a pink roll-up mattress with a matching pillow and

blanket.

When Toto laid down on his back, his body thickness was double that of Luca's.

Luca was completely blocked from the side view.

Seeing Toto next to him, Luca glared at him with sharp eyes and a fierce expression.

“What are you doing here?”

“I'm protecting Ms. Stanton. After all, you're a man. What if you take advantage of her? Ms. Stanton won't be able to defend herself against you, and Mr. Ferguson can't stand at the moment, so it's up to me to ensure Ms. Stanton's safety...”

Toto smiled with squinted eyes as he explained kindly and sincerely without any regard for Luca's increasingly ugly and fierce face.

“Don’t worry, I don’t snore or grind my teeth.”

Toto looked away and closed his eyes to sleep.

Luca gritted his teeth and looked at Toto who had fallen asleep like a dead pig in an instant.

He had the sudden urge to kick Toto away, but he could not because that man was over 100 kg of dead weight!

Thus, two big men were sleeping outside Nicole’s bedroom door.

Within ten minutes, there was a sudden deafening snore coming from next to him. The sensitive Luca jolted awake and was instantly alert. ¹

Toto was sound asleep and snoring loudly.

His snores gradually steadied and became rhythmic, but it was still very

loud.

Chapter 410 Bathe Him

Luca's expression turned extremely glum.

His fists were tightly clenched as he tried his best to restrain his anger.

Nicole could not stand the noise and opened the door just to see the two men sleeping at her door. She looked bewildered.

“Um... Toto...”

Luca's face was taut as he said, “Miss, you should go in and rest.”

Nicole laughed and shook her head.

“It's too noisy for me to fall asleep.”

It was so loud that Kai asked why she turned up the bass so late at night.

It felt like an earthquake!

Luca could no longer hold back and kicked Toto.

Toto's body shook. He opened his eyes in shock and immediately showed his loyalty.

“Ms. Stanton, why haven't you slept yet? Don't you worry, I won't allow any danger to come near you. As long as Luca doesn't leave, I won't leave either ...”

Nicole was speechless.

She closed her eyes and looked at Luca helplessly.

“Go sleep in the guest room. I'll be fine.”

Luca wanted to say something, but he could only follow orders.

He was a world MMA champion, yet he was forced out by this pig.

Luca's face was glum as he carried his sleeping gear and left. Toto was completely awake and followed him quickly.

“Wait for me! Let's sleep in the same room. Otherwise, I'll get nightmares. I promise I won't snore or grind my teeth ...”

Nicole was instantly relieved to see that those two were gone.

Suddenly, the door to the study opened.

Eric rolled out his wheelchair, looking quite exhausted.

He frowned. “Nicole, you're finally back ...”

Nicole wrinkled her brows. “Something wrong?”

“You're supposed to take care of me. Shouldn't you ask me if I'm well today?”

Eric's voice was low and raspy, and not as cold as it was just now. He even seemed somewhat fragile.

Nicole's heart could not help but tremble a little. Even so, she looked at him expressionlessly.

“Mr. Ferguson, how are you feeling today?”

Eric bowed his head and chuckled. “Much better now that I see you.”

Nicole rolled her eyes at him. She was already used to Eric's sweet talk.

When he recovered, Nicole would leave and never wanted to see him again.

“I'm going to bed. See you tomorrow.”

“Wait! I want to take a bath...”

Eric suddenly called out to her.

Nicole stiffened and looked at him incredulously. “What?”

‘What did he mean? He wants me to bathe him?!’

Eric pursed his lips and explained in a helpless tone, “The doctor said that I can’t get my right leg wet. It’s inconvenient for me to shower by myself. You wouldn’t want my injuries to worsen so that you’d have to stay here with me forever, right?”

That sounded quite reasonable, especially when Eric said it with such an innocent and harmless face that did not have the slightest unseemly thought.

Nicole stared at him for a few seconds. Eric’s frankness made it seem like Nicole was the petty one.

“Okay, I’ll get changed and go over later. You can get undressed and wait there. Your hand isn’t crippled, right?”

Eric sighed in relief. His eyes lit up for a

moment.

“Okay, I’ll wait for you.”

His voice was pleasant, and his heart leaped with joy.

Eric was thinking about what Toto said to him before Nicole came back. “Mr. Ferguson, a man has to have certain advantages to attract women. Your advantages are money and sex appeal. Ms. Stanton doesn’t lack money, so you have to seduce her with your body!”

‘Wow, it worked! I guess Mitchell’s cousin isn’t that useless after all. I’ll pass his probation early...’ Eric thought to himself.

Nicole returned to her bedroom and laughed lightly as she stood at the door. She raised her eyebrows and thought, ‘He wants a bath, huh? I’ll make sure he gets a good bath!’

Thinking of this, Nicole sent a message

to Luca.

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Chapter 411 Mocked

Eric Ferguson rolled his wheelchair to the bathroom.

Since he injured his leg, he wore baggy pants so that it was not difficult to take off. However, after some thought, he still put on his pajama pants.

After all, he could not do anything at the moment, so he should not go too far.

If Nicole was frightened by him, she might run away in a fit of anger.

Eric surveyed his bare upper body with satisfaction. His chest was strong and lean, with well-defined lines. His sculpted muscles on the back and abs moved gently with breathing. His usual cold vibes were replaced with charisma.

Toto's reminder came to Eric's mind. "Mr. Ferguson, your body and face are

simply amazing! No woman will be able to resist your appeal, so during the bath, you don't have to say anything. Just let Ms. Stanton indulge and enjoy her view. If she's a little shy, it means that it's a success!"

Eric was a little doubtful, but he would give it a shot.

A few minutes later, he heard the sound of someone opening the bedroom door.

Eric recollected his expression and opened his eyes to check himself out in the mirror. He casually tousled his hair so that it looked naturally messy.

The sound of footsteps stopped outside the bathroom.

"Knock, knock, knock--"

Someone knocked on the bathroom door.

Somehow, Eric felt a little nervous.

“Nicole, I’m inside, just come straight in.”

Eric took a deep breath, made himself look extremely calm, closed his eyes, and told himself, “Don’t be nervous!”

Toto’s reminder came to mind again. “Just close your eyes and let Ms. Stanton enjoy your body...”

Soon, water pattered against the side of the bathtub.

Nicole turned on the tap to get the water to the right temperature. Her movements were gentle and soft as she covered his leg with a towel to avoid water splashing on it.

Eric’s eyes were still closed, but his breathing became unconsciously rapid.

A warm towel touched his back as she began to wipe him.

Eric’s whole body unconsciously

became tense.

The towel moved from his back to his arms lightly and carefully.

Eric's face was taut as he tried to suppress his nervousness. There was only the sound of rushing water in the bathroom.

The two people were breathing carefully with the water splashing in the background.

There was a deep silence that felt a little off.

Eric could not help but wonder, 'Why didn't she speak? Why didn't she have any reaction?'

Toto said to him earlier. "During the bath, Ms. Stanton will definitely try to find a topic and will probably be flustered because she can't think straight when she's staring at your sexy body. You just need to give simple

answers and don't dive too deep into the topic.”

‘But... She didn't find a topic... If she's shy, a little conversation will ease the awkwardness, right? If she's angry, then her actions shouldn't be so gentle and careful, right?’

Eric could not help but furrow his eyebrows in thought, wondering if he should speak first.

The warm towel behind him suddenly left his body. Eric felt some discomfort when the warmth was gone.

The person behind him held two brand new bottles of shower gel and asked in a rough and hoarse voice, “Mr. Ferguson, do you want the mint or strawberry scent?”

Eric's body suddenly stiffened. He opened his eyes abruptly with a piercing chill.

In an instant, Luca's fierce expressionless face appeared in the mirror. Luca's sleeves were rolled up as he held two bottles of body wash. He looked to be in a tangle as he asked again, "Which scent do you want?"

Eric just felt like dashing out of the bathroom, but his right leg would not allow it!

He stared at Luca in shock. His eyes sank a little, but his face remained extremely calm, stoic, and grim.

"Why are you here?" Eric asked, gnashing his teeth.

'The tension, restraint, and the rich series of activities I fantasized about all originated from Luca, the bodyguard?! Where's Nicole?!' 2

Chapter 412 Let's Do Another Massage

Luca's shoulder even had another towel to wipe Eric. His technique was like a professional!

If Luca had not suddenly opened his mouth, Eric would not have known that the one who came to give him a bath was actually Luca!

Eric was angry and annoyed because another man touched him, but he did not know who to take it out on.

Luca's fierce face was calm as he said, "Ms. Stanton ordered for me to give you a bath and massage..."

Although Luca, as a bodyguard, felt very uncomfortable doing such a thing, this house only had two other men. That fat butler was snoring and could not be awakened even when Luca

kicked him. Thus, Luca could only sacrifice himself.

Eric's eyes narrowed sharply. His face was complex and deep at this time. His chest was heaving violently, and his mind was blank.

He clenched the handle of the wheelchair with a grim face.

Luca looked a little hesitant as he made up his mind. "Mint scented then..."

It did not seem appropriate that a big man would use strawberry-scented body wash.

After that, Luca skillfully pumped the body wash onto his hand and was about to lather it onto Eric's body when Eric interrupted him.

Eric's voice was deep, oppressive, and restrained.

"Get out!" He said through clenched

teeth.

Even if Eric felt cold, he could not stand the idea of Luca touching him so intimately again.

He knew that he would go crazy.

Luca's fierce face froze slightly as he was a little surprised. 'Why did his attitude change so fast? Wasn't he enjoying it just now?'

Luca held the bottle of body wash and looked tangled.

"Mr. Ferguson, you really don't want a massage?"

'It's Ms. Stanton's orders...'

Eric glared at Luca with a sharp and cold gaze. His face was extremely glum. "Do you need me to repeat myself?!"

Luca pursed his lips. 'Okay then, since he refused, I can't force him...'

He put down the things in his hand, turned around, and left.

Eric stayed in the bathroom for a full three minutes, trying hard to calm himself down and control his emotions. 'Didn't that fat*ss say that he'd find a way to get rid of Luca?! Why didn't he show up now?'

He calmly put on his bathrobe, wheeled himself out of the bathroom, and faintly froze when he saw the woman in the bedroom.

Nicole stood at the bedroom door and waved towards Luca before walking in.

Eric was wearing a bathrobe that revealed his well-defined collarbones. Water droplets dripped down his hair and happened to fall on his bare, sexy chest.

Nicole raised her eyebrows. A flash of light flickered in her eyes.

Eric's figure was indeed impeccable.

'No wonder Eric wanted to come up with such underhanded methods. He's trying to seduce me?!'

Nicole's smile deepened. "Mr. Ferguson, are you satisfied with Luca's service?"

When Eric thought of that image earlier, he just wanted to rewash his entire body.

His face was taut, filled with dissatisfaction and anger.

"Nicole, shouldn't you give me an explanation?"

'Why did it become like this? Whatever I imagined didn't materialize at all!'

A strange light shone in Nicole's eye as she looked at him.

"Although I'm here to take care of you,

we're divorced, so we should avoid any misleading contact.”

Nicole deliberately emphasized the word “divorced”. Eric’s face stiffened. The light in his eyes instantly dimmed.

Looking at her smile, the anger and coldness in Eric’s eyes instantly disappeared.

A trace of bitterness filled his mouth.

Eric finally had a taste of this heart-wrenching suffocation. There seemed to be no direction, no hope.

Her words pushed him into the abyss, leaving him powerless.

Nicole ignored his despair on Eric’s face and smiled. “Otherwise, if word gets out, how else can we marry other people in the future?”

Chapter 413 Fickle Men

Nicole was best at stabbing people in the heart, especially Eric's. It felt amazing. ¹

Her toes rested against the door as she looked at Eric with a nonchalant smile.

“Goodnight, Mr. Ferguson.”

Nicole left without waiting for his response.

She made it so clear to him, so he would certainly understand.

If he pretended not to understand, then she had other ways to wake him up from his delusions.

His tricks were so old-fashioned!

Eric's gaze was dark and sullen as he stared at her departing back.

Those words were like knives stabbing a

t his heart. It was obviously very painful, but he could not blame anyone and could only suffer the pain because he deserved it.

.....

The groundwork for the project from Clayton Sloan was finalized. Its specifications were very ambitious, involving a large scope. One of the most important parts was advancing the research of their current artificial intelligence project. Thus, Stanton Corporation involved J&L Corporation in the core project.

Last time, J&L Corporation's announcement of their AI doctor that could detect illnesses pushed them into the spotlight. They received high praise globally and gained many investors.

Stanton Corporation and Ferguson Corporation also monopolized the market in artificial intelligence.

Even so, their research and development could not stop because other countries could catch up to them quickly. If they could not keep their core technology under wraps, they would lose the opportunity to become the market leader.

Therefore, Nicole proposed for Clayton's project to encompass the J&L Corporation's research and development so that the progress could be quickened. Although this meant that the pie would be further divided, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages in the long run.

Nicole came up with this plan and discussed it with Grant early in the morning, who of course had no problem with it.

If this big pie was shared, there would be fewer envious parties.

It was just that working with J&L

Corporation would inevitably involve Ferguson Corporation as well.

However, these worries were useless.

Based on Ferguson Corporation's strength, it would just be icing on the cake if they joined this cooperation.

The morning breeze was slightly cool and humid.

Nicole picked out a slim black dress that was embellished with tiny pearls at the hem. It was formal and elegant with a hint of liveliness that made her look valiant and stunning.

As soon as Nicole came downstairs, Toto waved at her happily.

“OMG! Ms. Stanton, you're extraordinarily beautiful today! When the sunlight shines on you just now, you look like you were walking out of an oil painting...”

Nicole was stunned. Fortunately, she was holding onto the railing.

Otherwise, she would just fall down the stairs.

Luca stood aside with his expressionless fierce face. The corners of his lips were downturned, expressing disdain for Toto's sycophantic behavior.

Eric sat at the dining table wearing black loungewear. Even so, he still looked reserved, cool, and noble.

His expression was gentle as if last night's episode did not exist.

Watching her walk down the stairs, Eric smiled slightly. "Good morning..."

Nicole raised her eyebrows. "Good morning."

'Huh, this man sure is fickle...'

Toto cooked up a feast for breakfast, with all kinds of Western and even

Asian cuisine. Everything was well-plated and looked very appetizing.

Since Eric did not mention the awkwardness last night, Nicole did not intend to talk about it either.

Anyway, Eric was the unhappy party.

Nicole sat at the dining table and was extremely interested to taste each dish.

Suddenly, she thought of something and looked up at him.

“By the way, I saw Ms. Ferguson when I was shopping last night.”

Eric’s face was calm without the slightest surprise as if he had already known about it. “I know. The store manager told me about it.”

“How did she end up there?”

Chapter 414 She Only Cares About Looks

Eric Ferguson slowly ate the sushi in front of him. The delicate and elegant movements of his fingers were somewhat artistic.

His words carried a faint coldness.

“I’m just teaching her how to be a person in the fastest way possible.”

Nicole frowned and did not understand what he meant.

Eric patiently explained, “She used to be such a snob, so she didn’t think that she’d one day end up serving others. This will teach her a lesson.”

Nicole raised her eyebrows and instantly understood.

It was just that to Ingrid, such a punishment was a little too harsh.

Unlike ordinary people who needed to support their families, Ingrid was a pampered young lady since birth,

Nicole could not help but sigh in her heart. Eric was so ruthless even to his sister, which made Nicole think that she should not believe Eric's show of weakness.

However, from another perspective, scums like Ingrid were everywhere. The Ferguson family could afford to support Ingrid for life, so Eric was only doing so because of his feelings for Nicole.

Nicole finished her meal quickly and went to the office.

Only Eric and Toto were left in Imperial Gardens.

Toto looked at Eric with shining eyes and asked him excitedly, "Mr. Ferguson, did it go well last night?"

At the mention of this, Eric could not even take another bite of his food.

His gaze turned icy in an instant as he glared at Toto. He snorted coldly and wheeled himself back to the study.

.....

Stanton Corporation.

Nicole instructed Logan to contact Clayton Sloan to confirm J&L Corporation's involvement in the project before contacting Gerard Lichman to make the follow-up arrangements.

To avoid seeing Eric at Imperial Gardens, Nicole decided to take charge of this matter personally.

The three parties involved in the cooperation decided to meet at J&L Corporation to finalize the details. Since Clayton needed to understand

more about this partner, he took the opportunity to drop by and visit the R&D department of J&L Corporation.

For the afternoon meeting, Nicole went over to prepare in advance, bringing along a new project assistant, Tucker.

Tucker was a fresh graduate still doing his internship and was picked over a bunch of old-timers because he had no background. Hence, he would not be swayed easily. He had a firm stance and did not harbor any ambition or greed in his restrained and pure eyes.

Most importantly, Tucker would cherish this opportunity and work harder for this rare opportunity to prove himself because it was much better compared to moving up the ladder step by step.

Thus, Tucker was most suitable to follow up on this project.

Gerard Lichman prepared a temporary

office for them. Once Nicole and Tucker arrived, they met with Clayton's staff.

The meeting was scheduled for 3:00 pm.

Gerard saw Tucker behind her and raised his eyebrows slightly. "Logan didn't come along?"

He thought that Nicole would not feel comfortable handing over such an important project to someone else, especially a newbie.

Nicole replied, "He's busy with other things. This is my new assistant, Tucker."

Gerard nodded. "Mr. Ferguson still has shares in J&L Corporation, so a representative from Ferguson Corporation will also attend this meeting."

This was as Nicole expected, so she nodded calmly.

Anyway, Eric was recuperating at home, so he would not show up for the meeting.

Someone knocked on the door at this moment. It was Clayton Sloan.

“Ms. Stanton, Mr. Lichman. Am I interrupting?”

Nicole smiled. “Welco...”

The moment Nicole saw Clayton holding a bouquet of white chrysanthemums, Nicole froze and stopped mid-sentence.

Gerard was also slightly surprised.

Clayton had a mature, steady, and mysterious temperament that carried noble indifference. The bunch of white chrysanthemums he was holding felt miserably out of place.

‘What is he doing?! This father and son pair took turns to give me bereavement

flowers. Do they want me dead?!' Nicole thought to herself.

Chapter 415 His Sense of Crisis

Out of politeness, Nicole kept that thought to herself.

Clayton immediately sensed the change in Nicole's mood and smiled decently.

“Michael asked me to give it to you. He said that you'd like it, but I doubt it...”

With that, Clayton Sloan casually tossed the bouquet of white chrysanthemums on the side of the table and reached out to shake hands with Gerard Lichman.

‘What was I thinking to believe my stupid son that Nicole only likes white chrysanthemums?!’ Clayton thought.

Nicole breathed a sigh of relief. ‘Oh... It turned out to be Lil Michael...’

At the thought of this, Nicole missed the boy because she had not seen him in

a while.

Nicole regained composure and exchanged pleasantries with the rest. Gerard took a phone call and hung up after a few words.

Gerard said, “Let’s go to the conference room. Everyone’s here.”

Once they got to the conference room and saw the people inside, Nicole was slightly stunned.

‘Eric Ferguson actually came in person?!
,

Although Eric was sitting in a wheelchair, it did not look awkward. He still had an awe-inspiring aura and was able to command the scene.

Nicole did not say much about his arrival. The meeting went smoothly.

This project was originally Stanton Corporation and Clayton Sloan’s

cooperation. Although J&L Corporation was involved, Gerard Lichman did not get dividends from it. Even so, the benefits from getting involved in this project were not to be underestimated.

The simple meeting was over in no time.

Clayton still had something to discuss with Nicole, so the two of them went to Nicole's office.

In the meeting room, Eric looked at Nicole's departing back with slightly narrowed eyes.

Gerard could not help but laugh. "Are you anxious now?"

Eric shot a sharp glance at Gerard. "Where's the new assistant?"

He felt that Clayton Sloan would not be a threat to him because he had a son and was still mourning his late wife. Clayton's purpose of returning to Mediana was purely for business.

However, Eric felt extremely uncomfortable with that fresh graduate assistant who appeared next to Nicole.

Eric received Gerard's call about the meeting earlier. Before he left the house, Toto said, "You can't give that fresh grad a chance! Even though he can't compare to you, young hunks like that know how to sweet-talk women and can seduce women easily, so you have to go and intimidate him!"

Gerard's hand was in his pocket while he leaned on the table. His smiling eyes narrowed.

"Mr. Ferguson, you actually have a sense of crisis?"

Gerard then waved and beckoned for Tucker to come in.

Tucker thought that Nicole was looking for him, but as soon as he came into the conference room, he only saw these two

big shots with an awe-inspiring aura. There was an overwhelming chill in the room.

A fresh graduate like Tucker who did not have much experience walked over with restraint. He overlapped his hands and bowed slightly.

“Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Lichman, do you have any orders for me?”

Since Tucker was here to follow up with the project, he had to do whatever he was instructed to do since they were his bosses.

Eric sat in his wheelchair with a dull expression, but he had a sullen and compelling vibe that gave off an invisible pressure without him having to say anything.

He lowered his eyes to look at the minutes in front of him, then inadvertently swept a glance at Tucker, who was standing there respectfully

looking bewildered.

Eric's voice was low and clear.

“What's your name?”

“Mr. Ferguson, my name is Tucker.”

Eric let out a faint “mm” and did not speak again.

The room fell into dead silence.

There was obvious nervousness on Tucker's youthful face. His eyes were also puzzled.

‘So, what exactly did they call me here for...?’ Tucker thought.

After a long time, Eric finally spoke. “Did you just join the workforce? Logan didn't come with Ms. Stanton today?”

Tucker immediately nodded and replied, “Ah yes. Logan is busy with other projects. I just joined last month.”

He was nervous, especially in front of

Eric Ferguson.

Thus, he unconsciously answered Eric's questions.

Eric looked at him for a few seconds and narrowed his eyes.

After a long time, the corner of his lips curved downward.

“This project is very important, so don't let Ms. Stanton down. You may leave.”

Eric's words carried an innate arrogance and authority.

“Yes, sir.”

Tucker breathed a sigh of relief and hurriedly left the conference room.

‘What was that about...?’ Tucker thought in confusion.

Gerard tapped on the table. “That's it?”

Chapter 416 This Kind of Rough Work

Gerard Lichman thought that he could watch a good show.

Eric swept a cold glance at him.

“Nicole has high standards and won’t even look at minions like that.”

If Tucker had even a semblance of calmness and confidence, Eric would not let him off so simply.

Eric felt that seeing such a person as an opponent was insulting Nicole.

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Nicole and Clayton had a smooth discussion because they had very similar views on most things.

It was almost half an hour later when they came out of the office.

Since Clayton still had some work to do back at the hotel, Nicole sent him out.

“Lil Michael hasn’t shown up recently. Was he scared by the car accident last time?”

Clayton smiled politely. “He’s even experienced a bombing, so how could he be scared? I just found him a few tutors, so he has quite a bit of homework lately...”

Nicole instantly understood.

‘Sigh... Kids really have no freedom... What a poor baby...’

“If you want to see him, you can come over to the hotel anytime. He misses you.” Clayton added.

Nicole nodded. “Great!”

The two of them stood in front of the elevator. Before the elevator arrived, Eric’s voice came from behind.

“Going home?”

Nicole was slightly surprised.

‘He’s still here?’

Clayton nodded politely in greeting, to which Eric responded with the same gesture.

Eric’s eyes were fixed on Nicole. The corners of his lips had a sly smile.

“You should be free after this meeting, right? Let’s go home together then.”

His words were ambiguous.

‘Go home together?’ Nicole froze for a moment. She bent her slender neck to look down at the time. It was indeed past office hours.

“I still have to...” Nicole subconsciously refused.

“Toto sent me here and left already. You can’t just let me go back alone,

right?”

Eric said lightly and with a hint of roguish persistence.

Nicole rolled her eyes. ‘What an annoying jerk!’

The elevator arrived at that moment.

Clayton stood behind them like a gentleman. Eric did not intend to wheel himself in, so he looked up at Nicole with an innocent and weak expression.

‘Did he want me to push his wheelchair in front of Clayton? Or did he want Clayton to push his wheelchair for him?!’ Nicole thought.

The two men had comparable temperaments. It would not be good once the balance was broken.

Nicole could not imagine Clayton pushing Eric’s wheelchair, so she could only roll Eric into the elevator and

stand behind him.

Eric was satisfied with this and smiled gently.

After two seconds, Clayton still did not walk into the elevator.

Clayton nodded politely at them and said, “I forgot to take away that bouquet of white chrysanthemums. It’s not good to leave them here like that. We’ll get in touch.”

Eric nodded slightly with a detached and polite smile, then reached out to press the close button.

Nicole was speechless.

The elevator was quiet for a moment.

Nicole lowered her head and sent a message to Tucker, instructing him to take note of some things.

Luca was waiting for Nicole downstairs. As soon as the elevator arrived, he

immediately walked over.

Nicole stepped out of the elevator when Eric called out to her. “Nicole...”

She completely forgot that Eric was with her in the elevator.

Eric was waiting for her to push him.

Nicole paused in her footsteps and frowned. Just as she was about to go back and push him out, Luca hurriedly took a step forward.

“Miss, let me do this kind of rough work.”

Eric was rendered speechless.

Nicole nodded in satisfaction and continued to walk forward.

Luca came to Eric and pushed his wheelchair, but he was walking very fast to keep up with Nicole and did not care about the steadiness of the wheelchair.

Eric held his forehead and gritted his teeth, but there was nothing he could do.

Had he known this would happen, he would not have let Toto leave so early.

At Imperial Gardens.

Nicole wanted to go back to her room to organize some ideas from the meeting earlier and left Eric with Luca.

Once they entered the house, it was spotless. Toto wore a small pink apron and rushed over to get her shoes when he saw her come in.

“Ms. Stanton, you’re back! You’ve worked really hard. How on earth do people like you manage so much day-to-day and yet maintain your astounding beauty? I made you a nutritious vegetarian soup. It’s low-calorie and delicious!”

Toto looked at her with an ingratiating smile, which made Nicole speechless.

Chapter 417 Determined Cripple

Nicole smiled. “Thank you, but I’m going upstairs first.”

“Sure, sure!”

Nicole was halfway up the stairs when Luca opened the door. She swept a glance to the back and saw Eric being pushed in.

Toto greeted Eric excitedly, which made his little pink apron sway with his movements.

“Mr. Ferguson, you’re back! A man like you who works hard every day yet still maintains such charm is the best fit for Ms. Stanton! You two are simply perfect for each other! Sigh... I don’t even know what words to best describe you...”

Luca was about to go upstairs after Nicole. When he heard Toto’s words, he suddenly paused in his footsteps.

He turned around. His fierce face had a few moments of hesitation.

“I think there’s only one way to describe him.”

Toto’s eyes lit up. He ran over excitedly because this was the first time Luca willingly carried the conversation. It was a good sign of their strengthening relationship.

“What word?”

“Determined cripple,” Luca answered.

Nicole raised her eyebrows and could not help but laugh.

Eric’s speechless and already dark and sullen face turned colder.

Luca was not highly uneducated and felt that there was nothing wrong with what he said. He just strode over to Nicole.

Toto froze for a moment. He could feel the gradually suffocating vibes from Eric.

He suddenly regretted looking for a sense of belonging with Luca.

What a misstep!

Eric's sharp gaze looked up the stairs. Nicole instantly withdrew her smile.

'I'm only crippled because of her! How could she laugh at me?! No conscience!'

Nicole felt a little guilty and coughed slightly. "Mr. Ferguson is an extraordinary boss with tens of thousands of employees under him, so of course, he can't slack off."

Their eyes met. Eric looked stunned for a moment before the corners of his lips curled up into a smile. The gloom in his eyes faded away and was replaced with tenderness.

“Nicole, you have a good eye.”

Nicole was still the best. Eric felt like his whole body was doused in honey because all he felt was sweetness. It was very comforting and warm.

This was the first time Nicole praised him like this. ‘Turns out that I left a pretty good impression in her heart!’

Nicole breathed a sigh of relief and thought, ‘Wow, this man is easy to coax. He’s not mad after saying such perfunctory words?’

Toto thought to himself, ‘I said the same thing all the time! Why is Mr. Ferguson so happy when Ms. Stanton says it? Is this the power of love?’

Luca heard Nicole’s words and thought that he had belittled Eric earlier. He looked at Eric very sincerely and asked, “Mr. Ferguson, would you like a bath later?” ①

He hoped to express his guilt with actions.

The house was completely silent.

Toto's eyelids twitched fiercely. He looked at Luca's serious face, then glanced at Eric's cold, stern face.

Soon, Toto understood what happened last night. 'My wonderful plan was ruined?!'

Nicole raised an eyebrow and saw that Eric was about to die from exasperation. She did not say a word and hurried back to her room.

.....

Soon after, Nicole received a call from Clayton. He was asking if Nicole wanted to be his female companion for a private networking event.

Clayton's voice was calm as he said, "I found a clue to your car accident. It's

related to someone who will be at the reception today.”

Of course, Nicole agreed without hesitation.

“I’ll go right away.”

When Nicole came to Imperial Gardens, she did not pack any gowns for formal occasions. Thus, she picked out a silk dress from the dressing room. She looked incredibly stunning.

As soon as she came out of her room, Eric coincidentally came out from the study. He saw her outfit and frowned slightly, wanting to speak.

Chapter 418 Preferred Ladies

Nicole looked at Eric indifferently and said, “Clayton said that he found a clue about the car accident. I’m meeting him at a reception and will be back later.”

Eric’s complexion became solemn and cold. He pursed his lips. “Be careful then.”

Nicole nodded and went downstairs.

Luca followed her.

Toto hurriedly caught up to them.

“I’ll go too! Ms. Stanton, take me with you. I’ll protect you!”

Nicole was very reluctant to speak because she felt that her words might hurt his pride.

Luca rolled his eyes and said, “Ms.

Stanton is safe with me.”

“Luca, you’re an obvious bodyguard, but I can protect Ms. Stanton covertly! That way, it’ll be safer.”

Toto looked at Eric expectantly. ‘Hurry! Say something for yourself!’

Eric pursed his lips. “Take him with you then. If anything happens, you don’t need to care about his survival.”

Toto was speechless.

Nicole raised an eyebrow. “Whatever...”

When they arrived at the venue of the reception, Luca got out and opened the door for her. As soon as Nicole got down from the car, she saw Clayton Sloan standing at the door.

Clayton looked like a noble and mysterious man as he stood there with such a steady and indifferent temperament.

He walked up to Nicole and nodded with a light expression. “Don’t worry, there are no strangers around.”

The implication was that there would not be any sudden attacks.

Nicole smiled and felt relieved.

The two of them stood at the doorway and walked in one after the other. Luca lagged a few steps behind to distance himself from them.

Behind him, Toto came up and whispered, “Who’s that big boss?”

“I don’t know.” Luca glanced at him, not wanting to talk.

Toto was persistent. “Is he trying to woo Ms. Stanton?! You have to follow closer. How can you leave them alone?”

That man was extremely good-looking with such an extraordinary and noble temperament. Toto could tell at a

glance that he was no ordinary man because that man's aura was comparable to Eric. Toto instantly had a sense of crisis!

Luca was expressionless and ignored Toto.

Toto slapped his thigh and looked at the useless Luca. 'I can only rely on myself!'

At that thought, Toto walked in with a straight face.

Nicole and Clayton went in and saw some familiar faces. Others were new faces.

The atmosphere of the banquet hall was pleasant with nice music from a live band. Men and women were dancing gracefully while others were mingling. It was a nice environment to network indeed!

“Turns out Mr. Sloan's female

companion is Ms. Stanton! It seems that their cooperation is pretty solid...”

“Don’t even think about it. If Mr. Sloan could give up Ferguson Corporation and choose Stanton Corporation, we don’t have any more hope.”

“Oh? Is there something going on between Mr. Sloan and Ms. Stanton?”

“Shhh! Do you have a death wish?”

Those whispers drifted into Nicole’s ears, which she ignored with a smile.

Perhaps they would never know the real reason behind their cooperation.

Nicole and Clayton were also not interested in explaining themselves to everyone.

She looked at Clayton with a puzzled look. Clayton swept an indifferent glance at the gossiping people, which made them zip their mouths in an

instant.

Clayton bent his arm like a gentleman. Without a word, Nicole gently took it and flashed an impeccable smile.

Their intimate gesture would only convince others of their solid and smooth cooperation.

Soon, three familiar people came over with their wine glasses for a toast.

Nicole recognized that they were the three people who Clayton invited to the private dinner at the hotel that day.

Theodore Shaw from Shaw Company, Paul Newton from Newton & Co, and Hayden Zink from P&K Corporation.

Since the project had already been finalized, they need not walk around eggshells with Clayton. They only needed to maintain basic courtesy.

Theodore Shaw was holding a cigar and looked more casual. He smiled and

looked at Nicole meaningfully.

“Mr. Sloan, had I known that you preferred ladies, I’d have gotten my sister to go to the private dinner that day. Although my sister isn’t as beautiful and elegant as Ms. Stanton, she’s not too bad...”

Clayton replied, “In that case, it’s fortunate that you didn’t bring her.”

Theodore was rendered speechless.

Chapter 419 Become a Stepmother

The remaining two could not help but laugh. Hayden Zink patted Theodore Shaw's shoulder and said, "If you don't mind that it's my third marriage, you can introduce me to your sister..."

Theodore rolled his eyes and gritted his teeth. "Haha..."

Paul Newton laughed at the side and raised the glass in his hand.

"No matter what, Stanton Corporation is well-deserving of this project. Congratulations."

Nicole raised her eyebrows and lifted her glass in response. "Thank you, Mr. Newton."

Paul's eyes flickered. "I heard that Mr. Ferguson was injured. Is he okay? A few days ago, we had an appointment to go golfing, but his assistant pushed it off a

t the last minute. I was going to visit him, but I was just too caught up with work...”

Nicole said, “I’m not sure.”

After all, the fact that Nicole was taking care of Eric was not known to anyone else but the Stanton family.

She did not want rumors flying all over the place.

Paul laughed. “Oh, right. How would you know about Mr. Ferguson’s condition when you’re already separated?”

Nicole’s smile froze slightly. Her eyes were cold as she swept a glance at Paul Newton.

Although Paul made it seem unintentional, he was deliberately bringing it up on this occasion.

Paul looked at Nicole and Clayton with a

slightly surprised expression.

“Could it be that Mr. Sloan still doesn’t know about your relationship with Mr. Ferguson...”

The other two people standing on the side looked at Paul strangely. They did not understand why he was mentioning this matter at this time.

If there was something between Nicole and Clayton, mentioning this might affect their relationship.

Nicole smiled faintly. Her voice was cold.

“Mr. Newton, thanks for your concern, but there’s no need to announce my relationship with Mr. Ferguson to everyone, is there?”

Paul’s face stiffened. He smiled faintly. “It’s a slip of the tongue.”

Clayton’s voice was light. “Mr. Newton,

you don't need to concern yourself with this. I've known Ms. Stanton for a long time, so there's no need to bring up her personal affairs.”

As soon as he said this, Clayton's phone suddenly rang. He frowned slightly and looked at the group. “Please excuse me.”

Nicole was left alone with the other three. She smiled as if nothing was wrong.

“Ms. Stanton, have you and Mr. Sloan known each other for a long time?”

Paul asked her probingly.

Nicole raised her eyebrows and thought that he seemed overly concerned.

“I... Won't tell you.”

Seeing Paul's stiff smile, Nicole laughed smugly and turned to find a place to sit.

Somehow, Toto came out of nowhere

dressed as a parvenu. There was even a rose sticking out of his suit jacket pocket.

“Ms. Stanton, I’ve inquired clearly...”

Nicole was startled and speechless when she saw him like this.

She wanted to pretend not to know him.

However, Toto was not self-aware and sat down by her side.

“Ms. Stanton, I just inquired about Clayton Sloan. Although he’s Medianian, he’s lived overseas as an expatriate for a long time and has a wide range of business. He’s been single for so many years yet there’s not even a single woman around him...”

Nicole frowned and interrupted him. “What are you trying to say?”

“Think about it... Such excellent conditions without a woman around

him? I'm 80% sure that he's gay!" Toto spoke with confidence.

Nicole helplessly rubbed her temples.

"He has a son!"

Toto leaned in closer to Nicole and lowered his voice.

"I heard that his son doesn't even look like him. Even if Clayton Sloan isn't gay, I guess no one wants to be a stepmother to that kid..."

Toto sighed and held up his round chubby face with a longing look.

"They're both powerful men, but our Mr. Ferguson is totally clean. He doesn't have any messy scandals or a kid and only has eyes for you. He's simply so pure and noble. Comparing Clayton Sloan and our Mr. Ferguson, I'd totally choose Mr. Ferguson if I'm a woman!"

Chapter 420 It's a Trap

Nicole picked up her glass and took a big sip of wine. She did not want to talk to Toto.

She just wanted to pretend that she did not know him!

The one-sided conversation between Toto and Nicole quickly drew the attention of the others. Paul Newton was undeterred and came over with his glass of wine. He looked at Toto strangely.

“This man is...”

Nicole had no intention of introducing Toto.

On the contrary, Toto stood up and scrutinized Paul. Paul's eye had a complex desire that seemed to carry a bit of hatred and malicious intent.

Toto laughed. His eyes narrowed into slits as he went over to shake Paul's hands.

“Oh my! It's been such a long time!”

Paul pondered for a moment. Seeing how familiar this man acted, they must have met before, but Paul could not remember who it was.

He smiled stiffly. “Yes, yes. I saw that you and Ms. Stanton are having a nice chat. Am I interrupting?”

“Of course not!”

Toto waved his hand. He was calm, frank, and not at all restrained.

At first glance, Toto looked like someone well-acquainted with the people here.

There was not a single flaw in his act.

Paul smiled meaningfully at the two

people.

“Ms. Stanton, you’re truly so beautiful that there are men around you everywhere you go...”

“How could someone like us be worthy of Ms. Stanton? Toto interrupted him and looked at Paul Newton seriously.

Although Toto did not know who Paul was, Paul looked like a rich man and clearly had bad intentions for Nicole.

“You see, I’m so fat and dumb, and you’re so old. Let’s not make a fool of ourselves. People like Ms. Stanton only deserve people like Mr. Ferguson...”

Paul initially had a cunning smile, but it quickly faded upon hearing Toto’s words.

‘He’s calling me old?!’

Paul asked, “Which company are you from?”

He smiled sincerely and was very curious.

However, his eyes looked dangerous.

It was as if Paul could easily bankrupt that company as soon as Toto told him. He had the ability to do so.

Toto said, "I'm not telling!"

The atmosphere was instantly stagnant.

Nicole was considering whether to say a couple of words for Toto, but she inadvertently met Clayton's gaze from not far away.

Clayton hung up the phone and walked over briskly. His face was a little glum. He grabbed Nicole's wrist and whispered in her ear.

"He's awake and can speak. The doctor told us to hurry over..."

That driver woke up?

Nicole was shocked and followed him without a word.

No one noticed that Paul Newton's face instantly changed after Clayton said this.

Toto looked at Paul hesitantly and trotted after Nicole.

However, he was still too late.

Nicole and Clayton already left.

Luca hurriedly followed in another car and soon disappeared into the night.

Toto waved his hand. No one waited for him because he was too slow.

Nicole sat there nervously. "Is he really awake?"

Clayton let out a low chuckle. The expensive watch on his wrist reflected the cold streetlights amidst the darkness.

“No, that person can't be saved at all.”

Nicole froze. “So, it's a trap?”

She suddenly thought of what Clayton said earlier and had an epiphany. “The mastermind behind this is one of those three?”

Clayton gave her an appreciative look. “Right.”

Nicole's heart instantly sank.

She had been guessing that it was her enemies, but she had not offended any of those three before...

‘Could it be because Clayton chose Stanton Corporation for the project?’

Nicole raised her eyes and met Clayton's gaze.

His voice was cold and deep. “You guessed it right. It's indeed because of the project.”

Nicole had a complicated expression before she calmed herself down.

“How did you find out about them?”

Clayton's eyes were cold. His voice was icy.

“I've placed eyes around them and just got the news. They've sought the same private detective, who earns commission by laundering money for the rich and transferring assets abroad. That extra money in the driver's bank account came from this private detective's offshore account.”

Nicole was shocked. “So, is it really them?”

She had an intuition that it was Paul Newton.

Although Theodore was rude, he was a straightforward person. Hayden Zink had always been sly and careful. Only

Paul Newton revealed a malicious intent in his words.

It made her extremely uncomfortable.

“We’ll know soon,” Clayton said.