

Chapter 231 He Wants to Propose

There were three boxes altogether!

The crowd was clearly getting excited.

Nicole opened the second box with mixed feelings. ‘Huh?’

It was a white fall and winter hat.

The design was simple and there were no special features.

However, Nicole could tell at a glance that this was an out-of-season style from XN’s lineup two years ago.

It was a limited-edition item at that time.

However, it was not considered a limited-edition luxury nowadays.

Yvette scoffed in disdain.

“What the hell? I have one of these as well. It’s a style from several years ago! Aren’t you being too perfunctory,

President Ferguson?"

Julie looked at the hat thoughtfully and remained silent.

Nicole was also a little surprised.

There was a complicated look in her eyes.

She opened the third box without hesitation.

It was an exquisite and fine jade bracelet.

The color was bright and pure, the texture was deep, and the workmanship was luxurious and exquisite. It was flawless!

Quaint, simple, and elegant, yet extremely charming.

It was also worth a lot of money.

It most likely cost more than nine figures.

Even if the monetary value of the gifts all the guests sent today were added up, they would probably still be lesser than the

two gifts in front of her.

One was a diamond necklace.

The other was a jade bracelet.

Eric Ferguson was really quite generous...

Nicole stiffened slightly. She did not want to associate them with the past, but she could not help but remember.

The first time, she gave him a ring.

He gave her a necklace in return.

The second time, she gave him a scarf.

He gave her a hat in return.

She did not give him anything the third time, and he did the same.

However, he gave her a jade bracelet today.

Was he trying to make up for all the gifts he owed her before?

The things that she had stopped mulling

over once again surfaced in her memory.

Her emotions tangled and her heart grew sour. Her expression also sank.

‘Eric Ferguson really has a knack for upsetting me, huh? Does he think that I’ll pretend as if nothing happened if he does this? I clearly told him that we no longer have anything to do with each other, but he keeps reminding me time and time again! Fine, in that case, don’t blame me for being rude...’

“Ms. Stanton, you’re so fortunate to get two big gifts in one go! How thoughtful of Mr. Ferguson... I think that you two are truly made for each other. Why don’t you take this opportunity to reconcile?”

Hearing those words, Nicole’s cold eyes glanced over at the speaker.

‘Hah... Chloe Snyder!’

All the people that Nicole did not want to see showed up at her party.

The people around them also pricked their ears and listened closely.

If these two amazing figures got together, it would be more sensational than any celebrity scandal!

It was something worthy of shaking up the entire business world.

If these two powerhouses joined forces, they would be invincible.

The women who covet Eric Ferguson would no longer have a chance.

The men and women around the pair did not want them to get back together.

They secretly envied and resented them.

However, Nicole was unmoved when she heard Chloe Snyder's words. She even sneered.

“Selling myself for two gifts? Ms. Snyder, it seems like you haven't received a gift in a long time...”

Nicole pretended as if nothing happened and closed the lid of the box, ignoring Chloe's nasty expression.

Her expression was indifferent and unconcerned as if these were nothing to her.

"I'll accept your gifts, Mr. Ferguson. Thanks."

Nicole's nonchalant appearance shocked the people around her.

The relationship between Eric Ferguson and Nicole Stanton was truly puzzling to outsiders.

It must be very awkward for an ex-husband to give his ex-wife a gift...

However, everyone also secretly admired the heiress of Stanton Corporation for being so worldly. She did not bat an eye even when facing such expensive gifts.

Her temperament was so calm and

valiant!

Nicole turned around and left indifferently, not wanting to continue staying here and suffer the crowd's strange glances.

When Nicole subconsciously let out a sigh of relief, Yvette sneakily came up to her.

Yvette grabbed Nicole's arm and pulled her to the side. "Nikki, I just saw Ian secretly instructing the staff to prepare some kind of ceremony. I think he wants to surprise you..."

Nicole frowned.

That did seem like something Ian would do.

"There were so many roses too..." Yvette murmured.

Nicole was confused. 'Why would he need roses for a surprise?'

"He didn't tell us in advance, so both Julie

and I don't know about this. Julie told me to give you a heads up."

Yvette shook her head to express her exasperation towards Ian.

This was not a trivial matter. They had to distance themselves from each other!

"Got it. If Ian dares to make a scene here, my dad and my brother won't let him off the hook!"

Nicole snorted coldly with confidence.

Whatever Ian was up to, today's birthday party had to be perfect!

Yvette raised her brows and nodded.

There was a sudden noise outside.

It suddenly attracted everyone's attention.

Someone shouted in surprise, "Fireworks!"

Everyone looked over towards the

window.

Huge fireworks burst into full bloom in an instant. The colors were bright and brilliant, burning the sky with gorgeous colors.

While the fireworks raged on, their shape in the sky gradually changed from a beautiful rose into a woman's face.

The woman had long wavy hair, clear eyes, and curved lips.

Every detail was meticulously designed with care.

What was even more amazing was that the person's face became clearer to everyone.

"Isn't that President Nicole?" Someone finally spoke up.

"Yes, it's really her!"

Nicole naturally saw this as well, and her initial admiration turned into

astonishment.

Her look of surprise instantly sank.

The brilliant and dazzling light illuminated the expensive land inch by inch.

In just a few minutes, it lit up the night sky of the entire city.

Nicole's birthday was celebrated with fireworks all over the sky. It was indeed quite flashy!

The three gifts Eric said he prepared had already been received.

In that case, who prepared these fireworks if not Eric?

Chapter 232 Don't You Dare Kneel

Everyone looked at the daughter of the Stanton family who was loved by all, with envy in their eyes.

Grant smiled and approached Nicole.

Nicole turned her head and glanced at him. "Is this also one of the programs?"

'I didn't remember this being part of the plan...'

Grand smiled faintly, his aura steady and reserved. "Of course not."

Then, his eyes narrowed slightly.

He saw a man walking down the stairs on the other side not far away. His tone lightened considerably. "But I think I know who it is..."

"Who?" Nicole asked him and followed his gaze.

She stiffened slightly.

Ian wore a tailor-made tuxedo. With the bewitching smile on his face, his charm was truly impossible to ignore.

He held a large bouquet of delicate roses in his hands.

What the roses meant was self-explanatory.

He walked towards Nicole and stared at her with such deep affection.

However, Nicole only stiffened.

It was already too late to run.

She instantly felt her scalp tingling.

The people around them started to talk in whispers.

Everything that happened tonight was truly sensational.

First, it was Eric Ferguson. Now, it was Second Young Master Carter. The

surprises did not stop coming.

Not far away, Chloe Snyder saw this scene and looked terrifyingly pale.

Ian Carter had attracted everyone's attention.

Nicole maintained her elegance and composure. She stood there as if nothing happened and watched as the man walked over to her.

Her eyes flickered.

Ian slowly stepped up to her. His expression was clearly a little nervous.

Everyone was watching with bated breaths.

This was obviously the set-up of a proposal!

"Is Second Young Master Carter going to propose?"

"What a surprise!"

“But isn’t Eric Ferguson also interested in Nicole? Why else would he send her such expensive gifts?”

“Both men are excellent choices. I wonder who Nicole will choose.”

.....

When Ian arrived in front of her, Nicole could no longer hold back.

She could not stand there and watch as things got worse.

Everyone’s eyes were affixed to them.

With a light sweep of her eyes, Nicole saw Eric, who was standing in the crowd.

His cold and breathtaking eyes were staring straight at them.

Nicole stiffened slightly but did not have the time to think about it.

She gently stepped forward and looked at Ian with a faint smile.

Ian raised the roses in his hands, but just as he was about to speak, Nicole interrupted him softly.

She looked at him with a vague smile and spoke in a voice that only the two of them could hear.

It was a part threat and part warning.

“If you dare to kneel, I’ll break your knees!”

Ian instantly froze.

His body went cold.

The joy in his eyes disappeared in an instant and was replaced with a hint of gloom and dejection.

‘Hmph! Looks like my guess was right... Ian’s here to mess up my party!’ Nicole thought.

“Second Young Master Carter...” A cool and trembling female voice suddenly came from the side.

It was Chloe Snyder, President of Snyder Corporation.

“Second Young Master Carter, aren’t you going a little too far with your joke...”

Chloe knew that since the beginning, Ian only took Nicole as his world.

At that moment, Chloe finally could not hold back.

Chloe Snyder, who had always hidden her feelings, finally lost her composure.

It was truly surprising.

Ian was slightly stunned. He did not notice Chloe at all.

Her words fell on deaf ears.

Ian pursed his lips and had no choice but to speak slowly under everyone’s burning gaze.

“Happy birthday, Nicole. I wish you... All the best...”

Kai could not help but laugh when he heard those words. 'Hahahaha! All the best?! Ian's quite thorough in giving birthday wishes, huh?' 1

Grant shot a cold look over, and Kai quickly shut his mouth.

Everyone slowly waited for what followed.

However... Nothing else happened!

Nicole accepted the bouquet and smiled in satisfaction. "Thank you, I like this gift very much."

Ian hung his head, hiding the disappointment in his eyes.

Soon, Kai drew everyone's attention elsewhere.

Nicole took the opportunity to grab Ian's sleeve and pulled him away.

She did not notice Chloe's frustrated yet relieved eyes following them.

Nicole let go of Ian's arm when they finally reached an empty room.

“Ian Carter, what the hell were you planning?!”

The usually frivolous Ian Carter looked so sincere at this moment. It was clear that Nicole's reaction had hurt his fragile heart.

However, it was not to the point of being devastated.

After all, this was just the beginning!

“I just wanted to surprise you!”

Unfortunately, Nicole sensed what was going on and nipped his plan in the bud.

‘Today was such a great opportunity...
What a pity...’

“Surprise? You almost scared us all to death!”

Nicole glared at him speechlessly and

crossed her arms.

They were close friends, so Nicole did not have to worry too much.

That was why she spoke so bluntly.

It was not a deliberate attempt to embarrass him.

However, the result Ian had hoped for was impossible. Instead of wasting his time on Nicole, it was better if Ian could turn back in time.

The lazy and charming smile on Ian's face was bewitching.

"You stopped me in time for now, but I won't be so obedient next time..."

Nicole immediately became furious at his words.

"Carter, I'm a completely different type from all your exes. Why are you so fixated on me?"

All his exes were docile, cute, and lovely.

They were completely different from Nicole's style!

Did he want a change of taste?

Ian paused slightly before he laughed. "How can those women compare to you? I've never been moved by them..."

Nicole was not interested in listening to his spiel. Now was not the time.

She raised her hand to stop him.

"Carter, I'm not interested to know about your love life. We've known each other for so many years. We can only be friends!"

"You're jealous!" Ian said confidently.

His eyes shined.

Nicole was completely speechless. 'How should I kill his confidence without hurting his self-esteem?'

She flipped her hair back. "Forget it. I'm going back downstairs."

However, as soon as she turned around,
she was pulled back.

“Your zipper is open...”

Chapter 233 Disturbing a Show

Ian had noticed that Nicole's zipper on the back of her dress was open.

The large track of fair skin and her bare shoulders were breathtakingly beautiful.

At first, her long hair was draped behind her, so no one noticed.

However, when she flipped her hair earlier, Ian caught this small detail.

Nicole paused in her footsteps and looked back in surprise.

Ian was already zipping her dress back up.

In the next second, the door to the lounge suddenly opened.

"I'm so sorry, Nicole. I didn't mean to disturb you while you were making out with Second Young Master Carter. You guys carry on..."

Nicole immediately knew who it was by listening to the pretentiously sweet voice.

It was Lydia Smith.

Nicole coldly swept a glance at Lydia. “Are you blind? Which eye of yours saw us making out?”

Ian let go of Nicole at that moment and let out a cold snort. “Who is she? Is she blind?”

Lydia paused and bit her lower lip before opening the door.

She was not the only one standing outside.

Eric Ferguson was there as well.

The man’s tall figure completely blocked the light from outside.

His aura was cold and quiet, and his dark and sullen eyes were staring straight at the pair in the lounge.

Chapter 233 Dist

Lydia's eyes flickered as she glanced at Ian and Nicole. She spoke in a careful voice.

"I'm Lydia, Nicole's younger cousin. I'm really sorry, Nicole. I guess I was mistaken. I saw Second Young Master Carter taking off your clothes and assumed that..."

She hesitated, putting on a pitiful expression as if she was bullied into keeping quiet.

Nicole retracted her gaze from the man beside Lydia.

She looked at Lydia coldly. "You assumed? Why would you assume such a dirty thing? It seems like you have a lot of experience when it comes to stuff like this, huh?"

Nicole let out a cold laugh.

Lydia's expression instantly turned ugly.

Nicole sneered. 'Is she trying to act innocent in front of me? Her standards are just too low!'

"Nicole, you misunderstood me. I really didn't mean it. I just accidentally spilled wine on Mr. Ferguson and brought him up for a change of clothes. I didn't expect you to be using this lounge..."

Lydia bit her lip and glanced at Nicole aggrievedly.

Nicole shifted her gaze and saw the dark stain on Eric's jacket.

She really did spill wine on him...

However, it was impossible to tell if she did it intentionally or not.

Nicole's lips curled. "Then it seems like we're the ones who interrupted you.

Carter, let's leave... Unless you plan on staying back to watch the show instead?"

Ian raised his brows and held out his arm,

letting Nicole rest her wrist on his arm like she was a queen.

When they walked to the door, Lydia eagerly made way for them.

However, Eric continued to stand there like an unmoving mountain.

The light in his eyes was dark.

He had no intention to give way.

Nicole raised her eyes. "Excuse me, Mr. Ferguson."

"What did you mean by 'show'?" Eric's voice was tinged with coldness.

'Hah... How dare he play semantics with me? In that case, I won't be polite. This is my turf!' Nicole thought.

Her sarcastic smile deepened as she glanced at Lydia's uneasy face.

"It's exactly what you think it means... There are dozens of guests here today, but my dear cousin had a good eye and

poured wine on you, Mr. Ferguson, out of all people. Who would believe that you two came to the lounge together if not for the 'show' that'll follow?"

Eric's expression darkened. His gaze was like ice and his face was tense.

It was extremely unpleasant.

Lydia naturally would not admit that her thoughts were exposed.

She looked at Eric in panic. "Of course not. I didn't do it on purpose!"

Her eyes reddened in anxiousness.

She looked so pitiful.

"Nicole, I know that you don't like me, but you don't have to humiliate me like this, right?"

Nicole laughed. "Humiliate you? Is there a need for other people to do that for you?"

What she meant was that Lydia was

already inherently unclean.

Nicole could not be bothered with Lydia anymore. 'What a waste of time!'

She walked away.

Eric stood where he was. His lips pressed into a taut line.

His expression was dark, and his brows were furrowed.

Nicole approached him and smelled the faint scent of his cologne mixed with the smell of alcohol. His body was surrounded by a cold and austere aura.

He still did not move.

Nicole reached out and touched the soiled part of his chest, raising her brows slightly.

The distance between the two of them was extremely close.

They were so close that Nicole could hear his heartbeat.

Her lips curled into a smile and her eyes curved charmingly as she looked up at him with a cold and noble look.

“Mr. Ferguson, hurry up and get changed then...”

Her tone was suggestive.

Eric’s gaze was cold. All of a sudden, he grabbed Nicole’s hand.

Before she had the chance to resist, she was pushed into the adjacent room.

“Bam—”

The door slammed shut.

Nicole was pushed to the wall and a hand propped up next to her.

His scent enveloped her.

She struggled for a few seconds, then frowned and raised her eyes to glare at him.

Her voice was extremely cold. “Mr.

Ferguson, what's the meaning of this?"

This intimate action and close distance made Nicole extremely uncomfortable.

She was no longer the Nicole Stanton from three years ago who would swoon and be enchanted with just a gentle glance from Eric.

This atmosphere made Nicole feel like she was no longer in control...

Chapter 234 He Kissed Her

Eric's face was cold and expressionless.

His gaze was firmly fixed on Nicole's face.

“It's so you can see for yourself that the ‘show’ you expected won't happen.”

There was a hint of anger suppressed in his voice, but it was more of a sullen coldness.

He looked at her with an expressionless face and withdrew his arm.

Eric was suppressing a carnal light in his eyes.

He slowly unbuttoned his soiled jacket in front of Nicole.

Then, he carelessly tossed it to the chair on the side.

He did not even glance over.

There was a touch of wildness in his

reckless movement.

With one hand, he tore off his tie with a sharp tug and threw it on top of the coat.

The top button opened, revealing his sexy Adam's apple. His temperament carried a hint of charm and messiness.

An unruly coldness mingled in his aura.

What a suffocating atmosphere.

Nicole only froze for a moment before looking away.

She suppressed her racing heartbeat.

Her lips opened slowly.

"Mr. Ferguson, you think too much. I never bother to think about matters that have nothing to do with me."

Nicole did not care what 'show' happened between Eric and Lydia.

Was it any of her business?

Eric's actions were truly intriguing.

“Nothing to do with you?” He lowered his voice.

It sounded slightly weak.

Maybe she misheard.

“Of course.”

After she finished, Nicole turned on her heels and prepared to leave.

Just as she turned around, her arm was grabbed.

These plays were simply incomprehensible.

Was there a need for this?

Just what did Eric want?

Nicole’s expression sank and she was just about to ask.

However, Eric pinned her against the wall again.

Without hesitation, he cupped her face

with his hands and pressed his thin lips on hers.

He lost control and invaded her sweetness with a trace of madness.

She was just as sweet and intoxicating as he imagined.

Nicole did not react at all.

His cologne mixed with the faint scent of alcohol was somewhat familiar to her because she was once fascinated by it for a long time.

However, when his cool lips tried to advance further, Nicole seemed to jolt awake.

She bit his lips hard. During his momentary pause, Nicole slapped him fiercely across the face.

The slap rang out loud and clear.

Eric's expression sank.

He stared straight at her.

Nicole pushed him away, furious.

“Mr. Ferguson, you’d better look clearly. I’m not a frivolous woman who can be bought by gifts. If you want to flirt around, there are plenty of women outside!”

Eric’s heart sank slightly as his voice grew hoarse and cold. “But the only one I want is you.”

He thought of what Ian Carter prepared earlier. ‘Was he trying to propose to her? Hah!’

Eric was filled with an unquenchable rage.

He did not know when it started, but it seemed like she was deeply rooted in his heart.

She took root and sprouted, and now that feeling was impossible to ignore.

Nicole’s pupils shrank fiercely.

It felt like the scar on her heart had been

uncovered and was dripping blood.

The pain was unbearable!

“Eric Ferguson, we’re already divorced. As you wished, I finally left your life. We have nothing to do with each other now, and we will never have anything to do with each other in the future. I have absolutely no feelings for you anymore, so I hope that you can stay as far away from me as possible...”

‘Who gave him the right to do this? When my heart was barren, he just barged in and peered into my scars. I feel pain too! What was he trying to do? Make a fool out of me? Mock me?!’

That one kiss made her panic and ache to the bone.

It was unexpectedly beautiful, yet also incredibly loathsome!

Nicole did not hesitate to leave. She looked like she did not want to see him

again.

She was afraid that he would notice and belittle her wretchedness and despair.

With fluid movements, she opened the door and left.

“Bam—”

She shut everything behind that door.

Eric was quiet. The slap mark on his face was a vibrant red, and blood seeped out from the corner of his lips.

However, he was not the least bit aware of it.

There was a dull pain in his chest.

He said, “Happy birthday, Nicole.”

At that moment, it felt like he had truly lost the most important thing to him...

Chapter 235 A Timid but Scheming B*tch

Ian Carter anxiously came out from the side and sighed with relief when he saw Nicole.

“I thought you’d been kidnapped, but now that I think about it, you’re the one who kidnaps others instead...”

‘Stop mentioning Eric Ferguson!’ Nicole quickly adjusted her mood and went downstairs as if nothing had happened.

The heaviness in her heart was not the slightest bit alleviated.

Nicole rolled her eyes at Ian’s words with an expressionless face.

She walked downstairs in her high heels, looking elegant and refined.

Lydia quickly ran after Nicole and bit her lower lip. When she saw Nicole’s unpleasant expression, she mustered the

courage to ask, “Nicole, is... Mr. Ferguson alright?”

Nicole’s lips curled as she cast a sidelong glance at Lydia.

She saw through Lydia’s thoughts at once.

If Lydia was frank and open about her intentions, Nicole would have admired her ambition.

However, the way Lydia acted like a timid but scheming b*tch really was truly disdainful.

Nicole lifted her chin.

The coldness on her face was startling.

She pointed upstairs to the room she had just come out of.

“If you want to know so badly, you can go inside and check...”

Even if Nicole hated Eric Ferguson, there would still be people who flocked to him.

However, Nicole was no longer the person she was three years ago.

Now, she could hide her heart flawlessly.

Lydia looked embarrassed.

“T-There’s no need...”

Ian frowned as he listened from the side.

He had been acquainted with the Stantons for so long, but he never heard of Nicole having a cousin like Lydia before.

Even if they were both ladies from the Stanton family, there was no need to be that secretive, right?

Thinking about it, he no longer bothered about Lydia.

Ian looked at Nicole expressionlessly. “Why is your cousin’s last name Smith?”

If they were cousins, Lydia should be a Stanton like Nicole, right?

Lydia's expression stiffened as she took awkward glances at Nicole.

It was as if she was afraid of what Nicole would say.

However, Nicole did not even look at her and explained, "Her mother is with my second uncle."

She could not be bothered to say anything more.

After all, it was not good to air her family's dirty laundry in public.

Ian responded with a faint "mm" and no longer continued to ask.

After all, he was not that interested anyway.

Lydia secretly sighed in relief.

She paused in her steps and narrowed her eyes involuntarily. 'If only my last name is Stanton like Nicole...'

Unfortunately, even though her mother, Jade, mentioned changing their last names multiple times to Noah Stanton, he always treated it like a joke and brushed it away.

Once Nicole and Ian went downstairs, they were surrounded by Grant and Kai.

Fortunately, everyone was dancing and did not notice them.

Ian's expression stiffened.

This situation... This scene...

His knees went weak...

Grant's eyes were cold and indifferent, and his aura was imposing and slightly icy.

Although Kai looked handsome with deep features that looked like they were exquisitely carved out, at that moment, he also stood there with a roguish smile on his face.

Unfortunately, even though her mother, Jade, mentioned changing their last names multiple times to Noah Stanton, he always treated it like a joke and brushed it away.

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Nicole frowned and looked at the two men in front of her in confusion. “What are you guys doing?”

Kai held out a hand to block her with a serious face.

“Don’t mind us. We just want to talk to Second Young Master Carter about what happened earlier.”

The fireworks and roses.

Surely, he had an explanation for that, right?

Nicole looked at the two speechlessly.

“Okay, I’ll stay out of it.”

She was not in the mood to meddle!

The good mood she had tonight was completely ruined by that kiss!

Damn it!

Ian was at a loss. “You can’t leave me...”

He batted his eyes at her pleadingly.

Nicole duly avoided Ian's gaze and blinked in another direction.

Grant frowned imperceptibly. His gaze was cold.

“Second Young Master Carter, although you have a close relationship with Lil N, I hope that this won't happen again in the future.”

Each of his words sounded very polite.

However, all Ian heard were threats!

Kai chuckled. “That's right. Our Lil N is about to become the richest person in the world. She has no time for relationships. If you're not willing to accept that, you can talk to me...”

Ian's lips twitched. ‘What's there to talk about with him?’

Chapter 236 Are You Telling Me What to Do?

Ian naturally did not dare to say anything. After all, they were his future brothers-in-law...

He had to be polite!

Ian smiled. His attitude became very warm and bright. "Don't worry, this won't happen again. I'll keep my love for her hidden in the bottom of my heart..."

Grant frowned. His gaze was dangerously sharp.

Kai could not bear to listen further as goosebumps rose all over his skin. "Just shut up!"

Nicole simply turned around and left expressionlessly.

The band Kai invited was very good, and the live performance mesmerized the crowd.

Many people were dancing and immersed in the music.

Some people chatted in the small banquet hall to the side.

Hearing the sound, Nicole walked over.

Just as she reached the door, a person suddenly appeared and grabbed her wrist.

Nicole was dragged into the small banquet hall.

“What are you doing here? Come here...”

Nicole frowned. It was Jade Smith.

She clearly did not invite them, yet they were so shameless to come uninvited.

Well, Nicole should have expected it when she saw Lydia earlier. This mother-daughter pair would never miss such a good opportunity to make connections with powerful people.

Sure enough, people Nicole did not like

would always try their best to annoy her somehow.

Nicole struggled fruitlessly because she did not want to make big movements.

They attracted the attention of other people.

Jade pulled Nicole's hand and looked at a few bosses from listed companies in a friendly manner.

“Our Nicole is good-looking and capable. You must work together more in the future...”

Those people naturally had to respect Nicole's reputation.

They all came up to toast her.

Nicole took the opportunity to break away from Jade's grip.

She casually took a glass of red wine from the waiter beside her and clinked it politely with theirs.

The bosses immediately finished the toast.

Nicole only raised her glass in response, but she did not drink.

Jade refused to give up and continued to urge Nicole.

“Nicole, hurry up and drink. How can you be disrespectful to these bosses? You’re the President of Stanton Corporation, so you can’t be childish! In the business world, you must drink when a toast is offered to you. You’re being very rude...”

The several bosses exchanged glances, obviously stunned by Jade’s words.

With Nicole’s status, she was already showing them a lot of respect by letting them toast to her.

What did Jade mean by Nicole could not refuse to drink?

Nicole’s eyes narrowed slightly as she

cast a sidelong glance at Jade.

Her voice was slightly cold. “Are you telling me what to do?”

Jade froze. She never thought that Nicole would be so disrespectful to an elder like her in front of so many people. ‘How dare she question me like this? I’m already willing to forget about the last incident, but Nicole is just being too arrogant!’

She trembled in anger and suppressed her annoyance. Her words became odd.

“I’m doing it for your own good. After all, I’m your elder. What’s wrong with a family member giving you some pointers?”

Noah Stanton brought her to this event.

Jade was announcing her identity to everyone as the Second Madam of the Stanton family.

Not even Nicole could look down on her!

“Elder?” Nicole sneered. ‘How is Jade my elder? She really thinks too highly of herself...’

Jade was insulted by Nicole’s tone.

For so many years, Jade had no status or power while she was with Noah Stanton. She always had to suffer in silence and certainly did not have it easy.

Jade lived a fearful life under the empty title of the Stanton family’s Second Madam.

She was terrified that the Stantons would say that she was not one of them.

All these grievances she suffered were because of them!

What right did Nicole have to look down on her so much?

Jade was livid. Just as she was about to turn around and start an argument, she saw Noah and his brother Floyd walking

over.

Suddenly, with tears in her eyes, she turned and buried herself in Noah's arms.

"What's the matter?" Noah frowned and glanced at Nicole and the others.

Jade sobbed and complained. "I really don't know how to live anymore. I just saw that Nicole was being insincere when others were toasting her. I was afraid that other people would say that our family has no manners, but Nicole got upset with me. After all these years, am I still not a member of the Stanton family? Nicole doesn't think of me as an elder at all!"

Chapter 237 Comparing Who's More Shameless

The few bosses came up to greet Floyd Stanton and planned to leave immediately.

They completely ignored Jade's actions.

Floyd clinked his glass with theirs indifferently, but like Nicole, he did not drink either.

He saw clearly what had happened here earlier.

Although they were the hosts, it seemed the number of people who showed up had far exceeded the number of people they actually invited.

Everyone wanted to take this opportunity to build connections with the Stantons and get acquainted with other people.

Therefore, they took the opportunity to tag along with their invited friends and

relatives. In fact, they were not actually on the invitation list.

Floyd turned a blind eye to this, but he would not take into account or drink to every toast offered.

It was a huge honor to others if Floyd drank with them.

Seeing this scene, Jade's expression stiffened.

What did she say about Nicole earlier?

She had poor manners?

She must drink when someone offered her a toast?

Floyd looked at Nicole and then Jade. He did not say a word.

'Why is she kicking up a fuss here? She should at least know the occasion...'

"That's enough. It's Nicole's birthday. Why are you crying?"

Floyd's low voice sounded displeased.

He looked at her coldly, his power high above hers.

The tone in his voice contained a coldness that could not be rejected.

“Noah, bring her back home. We can't risk her ruining the Stanton family's reputation.”

Noah and Jade were taken aback by those words.

Jade still had tears streaming down her face. ‘We're being chased away just like that?’

Celebrities from all around the world came to Nicole's birthday party.

Jade went through a lot of trouble to convince Noah to bring her along to this event so that she could show off her status.

She had already been humiliated when

she was kicked out of the Stanton Mansion before.

If she got kicked out again this time, she would no longer be able to mingle with the other high-society ladies.

“Floyd, just let it pass...” Noah looked at Floyd in distress.

Jade had been with Noah for so many years, yet she had no legal status. Noah did feel guilty for that.

Jade pulled Noah’s arm in aggrievedly.

“See? Floyd doesn’t think of me as part of the family. It’s no wonder his children look down on me and can humiliate me casually. All the years I spent with you are in vain...”

Floyd’s cold face became more disgusted.

If not for the fact that there were outsiders around and it would be embarrassing to make a scene and ruin Nicole’s mood, Floyd would have already

exploded in anger.

Nicole watched the show from the side with a sneer.

She did not care who was around.

This was her party, so she did not have to put up with anyone who dared to cause trouble here!

Nicole spoke coldly. “Stop saying Stanton this, Stanton that. We have never thought of you as a Stanton before. Uncle Noah’s rightful wife passed away a few years ago, and we still pay our respects to our late second aunt every year on her death anniversary. Everyone knows that you’re just a mistress.”

Jade stared at Nicole in disbelief. ‘She actually dared to voice out such an embarrassing thing in front of so many people on such an occasion?!’

Some people knew about Jade being a mistress, but they did not dare to

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mention it.

Others did not know about it, so they naturally would not talk about it either.

However, now that Nicole said it so openly, everyone knew about it.

“Nicole—” Noah frowned and glared at her with a disapproving expression.

Before Nicole could say anything, Lydia ran over and stood up for her mother. “Nicole, how can you say that? My mom has taken care of Dad for almost ten years. Even if she has no name, she still puts so much effort into their relationship. They’re sincerely in love. If not for...”

Lydia paused and glanced sadly at Nicole and Floyd.

“If not for certain reasons, they would’ve been married a long time ago...”

Lydia went over and took Noah’s arm pitifully. “Isn’t that right, Dad?”

Noah was about to nod, but when he saw Floyd's cold face next to him, he eventually froze and dared not respond.

Jade looked at her daughter who stood up for her and felt heartbroken.

Thus, she thought of taking this opportunity to clear her name.

After all, so many people were watching. This was a rare chance.

“That's right. You don't understand at all, Nicole. When I was with your Uncle Noah, I experienced many difficulties... Compared to your second aunt, I...”

Nicole interrupted her words coldly. “Compared to my second aunt? What are you comparing? Your age, or who's more shameless?”

Chapter 238 I Can Say Meaner Stuff

Nicole deliberately did not lower her voice.

As soon as she spoke, the attention of everyone on this side of the banquet hall was drawn to her.

The atmosphere was frozen.

A chill spread.

Jade's face instantly turned red with anger. "You... You're so uncultured! How dare you talk to your elders like that?!"

Nicole cast her a disdainful sidelong glance.

It was just a glance, and she did not say anything, but it explained everything.

Elder?

Was she worthy?

A homewrecker did not deserve to be

respected by others.

Lydia gnawed on her lower lips as her body tensed up. Her face flushed red with anger.

She originally wanted to take this opportunity to socialize with other gentries and get close to Eric.

However, everyone now knew the fact that she was not in fact a Stanton.

Instead of running away like this, she might as well grit her teeth and make Nicole seem cold and cruel instead.

No one would benefit from this farce!

Lydia lowered her voice and sounded like she was about to cry from being bullied by Nicole.

“Nicole, how could you say something so mean?”

Nicole glanced at her expressionlessly and spoke in a cold voice.

“What are you acting innocent for? I can say meaner stuff. Do you want to hear them?”

Nicole could not be bothered with Lydia’s act.

This mother-daughter pair was so arrogant and shameless enough to cling to the Stanton family.

In that case, Nicole would not mind stripping their disguise so that they would never be able to face anyone ever again.

Lydia’s lips trembled as she felt the intent stares on her.

She did not have the guts to confront Nicole head-on.

However, was she supposed to bow her head and admit defeat?

She could not do that either.

Lydia paused for two seconds before

speaking.

She looked at Noah Stanton with tears in her eyes. “Dad... I don’t know how I provoked Nicole...”

Her pitiful look was truly nauseating.

Among the female companions brought by the guests, many of them were actresses in the entertainment industry.

However, in terms of acting skills, no one was better than Lydia.

Nicole interrupted Lydia coldly. “Is he even your real dad? Isn’t your real father a security guard at a high-end club under Stanton Corporation? Do you think that spending our money and living in our house automatically makes you a Stanton? You three Smiths are just spineless freeloaders who cling to the Stanton family and refuse to leave!”

Then, Nicole looked at Noah and said bluntly, “Uncle Noah, you should watch

out because not only are you raising someone else's child, you might be unknowingly supporting someone else's husband as well..."

Kai already had people investigate Jade and Lydia's little secret after they kicked them out of the Stanton Mansion last time.

Sticking his nose in other people's business was Kai's forte.

Noah's expression instantly turned glum.

He looked at Jade with cold and shocked eyes.

Then, he slapped her without hesitation.

A scream instantly rang out.

Jade lost her balance from the slap and fell to the ground.

This scene was truly sensational.

Noah's voice was extremely cold. He was so humiliated that he became infuriated. "

“Didn’t you say he died in a car accident?”

Jade looked up with terrified eyes as she trembled in fear.

“I... No... I didn’t mean to lie to you. I don’t know when he appeared...”

Lydia went over to help Jade up.

Noah stared straight at Lydia with cold eyes.

“Did you know about this too?”

Lydia glanced away for only a moment, but it made Noah extremely disappointed.

There was no need for her to say anything. He already knew the answer.

All these years, he treated this mother-daughter pair as well as he could, but they ended up using his money to support another man?

No one would be able to accept that!

“Dad... Mom didn’t mean to lie to you...”

“That’s enough! Haven’t you humiliated me enough? Get out of my sight!”

Noah suddenly thundered. A storm of anger raged over his face as he showed them no mercy.

Chapter 238 | Cal
"That's enough! Haven't you humiliated me enough? Get out of my sight!"

Noah suddenly thundered. A storm of anger raged over his face as he showed them no mercy.

Chapter 239 Kidnapping Or Robbery

Floyd Stanton stood by the side with a cold face, not saying a word.

He was not in the mood to watch his brother's family affairs.

The most hateful thing was that they ruined his daughter's birthday party.

Thus, he had no intention of helping them no matter how viciously Nicole fought back.

They deserved it!

Jade and Lydia were guilty. If this carried on, it would only be detrimental to them.

They left with their tails between their legs.

Noah Stanton was also not in the mood to stay, so he left after saying a few words to Floyd.

The small episode did not cause that much of a storm.

Everyone soon tacitly changed the subject. Some people continued dancing, while others exchanged pleasantries.

Who would dare to whisper and joke about what just happened?

Nicole quietly sipped a glass of red wine. The wine stained her lips crimson, and her cold and aloof aura made her even more bright and beautiful.

When she turned around, she saw Floyd's cold and gloomy face.

She walked over and shook his arm, coaxing him with a pampered smile.

“Don't be angry, Dad. I didn't suffer. Why should you be angry with such people? They're not worth it!”

Nicole's expression changed so quickly that everyone was surprised, but they felt

more helpless and interested.

Her gentle and lovable look now made it seem as if the coldness from earlier was a deliberate act to scare people.

Anyone's heart would soften when faced with such a beautiful and adorable young lady.

“Noah's getting more and more muddled in the head. How could he bring them along today? He must've been bewitched.”

Floyd's expression was clearly unpleasant after his good mood was ruined.

Nicole blinked and clung onto his arm like she was a koala.

“Uncle Noah has been duped for so many years. It's not something that just happened. Dad, your health is more important. Don't be so angry...”

“Alright, I won't...”

more helpless and interested.

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“Uncle Noah has been duped for so many years. It's not something that just happened. Dad, your health is more important. Don't be so angry...”

“Alright, I won't...”

Floyd was helpless by her actions and the anger in his heart gradually dissipated.

Soon, he went back to greeting and laughing with the guests who came over to toast him.

When the party was over, Nicole was already a little tired.

After talking to Floyd, she went outside.

She drank a little wine tonight, so she wanted to take a walk and enjoy the night breeze.

Too many things happened tonight. They piled up on her chest and made her feel stuffy and heavy.

Eric's kiss and Ian's bouquet of roses both upset her.

The lamps stretched her shadow long.

The night was dense, and the cool breeze blew her long hair.

Her footsteps were slightly heavy with her stilettos as she walked down the desolate road. Her figure looked so lonely.

The streetlights lit up the road, looking like a river of stars on the ground, stretching brilliantly for miles.

Shortly after walking down the road, a section ahead was dark.

The streetlights there were broken.

Nicole stood there and felt an extraordinary chill in the darkness.

She did not move because she seemed to hear a faint movement on the dark road next to her.

They sounded like tense and hurried breaths...

After a moment of hesitation, two burly men came out slowly and leisurely from that path.

Nicole tried to disguise her nervousness

with calmness.

“Miss, someone wants to meet you. Why don't you come with us?”

Nicole's expression stiffened as her breath stalled. 'Did I offend someone? If I'd known earlier, I would've gotten a driver or bodyguard to follow me...'

It would have saved a lot of trouble.

However, Nicole still did not feel any panic yet, and her expression was calm.

She slowly looked up at the two burly men with cold eyes. “Kidnapping... or robbery?”

Nicole did not care about them. She had to figure out their intentions before she could respond.

She had to understand if she encountered them because she was unlucky, or because of another reason.

The two men were clearly stunned.

It was the first time they saw a young lady remain so calm in such a situation!

They no longer dared to say the vulgar words they prepared to scare her with.

“Someone just wants to talk to you, right there.”

One of them pointed to the dark and dreary path.

Suddenly, a scarlet dot lit up in the darkness. There was someone there, smoking.

Sure enough, someone was waiting for her.

The atmosphere sank in an instant. Nicole did not know what danger would follow, but she could feel it. That person was bad news!

It might not be impossible to run now.

However, if she ran, she would be leaving this danger in the unknown darkness.

There might be trouble in the future instead.

Hence, why not settle the matter today once and for all?

Nicole was also curious about who was so bold as to make a move on her.

After thinking about it, Nicole stepped forward in her heels unhurriedly.

She stopped three meters away from the flame.

The two burly men stood behind her to prevent her from escaping.

In the darkness of the night, a person stood in the shadows behind the wall. She could only faintly discern the outline of their body but could not distinguish their features.

This situation was extremely unfavorable to Nicole.

However, Nicole could easily smell the

perfume on the person, as well as the fashion cigarette's scent that she used to like.

Out of all the people who participated in her birthday party earlier, only one person wore this perfume. That person also had a domineering and cold aura.

It seemed to match this person's style very well.

The person did not speak, and Nicole did not open her mouth either.

She could feel the person in the shadows staring intently at her.

The atmosphere remained eerily quiet.

Nicole soon got impatient. It seemed like the person still had no intention of speaking. 'Is she trying my patience?'

Half the cigarette burned out. The ashes fell on the ground and scattered into the wind.

Nicole's tone was indifferent when she said, "Since you invited me here, why don't you say something, Ms. Snyder?"

The person across her was none other than Chloe Snyder.

Chapter 240 I'll Be a Good Girl and Listen

Nicole had only smelled that kind of cold and expensive perfume on Chloe Snyder before.

During their first meeting at the auction, in Ian's home, and at the banquet tonight ... Chloe had used the same type of perfume.

The person across from Nicole let out a soft laugh.

"Ms. Stanton, you're very smart... You actually recognized me?"

Nicole could not be bothered to talk with her and rolled her eyes.

Unfortunately, Chloe might not be able to see that eye roll.

What a waste of emotion!

Would Chloe Snyder, the legendary

woman who created a business empire and was worshiped, praised, and thought of as someone who could achieve anything, kidnap Nicole?

It was clear that Chloe did not do this on the spur of the moment, much less for money.

“I’m afraid you didn’t bring me here to say something nice to me, right, Ms. Snyder? Then just get to the point. What do you want?”

Chloe’s breath paused slightly.

Nicole could feel the irritation and coldness that Chloe was desperately trying to conceal.

From the beginning, Nicole was unexpectedly calm.

Even now, Nicole showed no fear at all. She even used a disdainful tone to expose Chloe’s identity.

Chloe stopped hiding. Instead, she

walked out of the shadows to stand in front of Nicole.

She met the woman's eyes calmly. "Ms. Stanton, aren't you scared? What happens next isn't going to be very pleasant..."

Nicole raised her eyes and looked up.

Their gazes locked onto each other.

Nicole suddenly laughed.

Her expression was relaxed and indifferent, and the words that left her red lips were articulated clearly. "This is about Ian Carter, isn't it?"

The surrounding atmosphere fell into a dead silence in an instant.

That name was the deepest thorn in Chloe's heart.

Chloe kept her affection and softness for Ian deep in her heart for the past ten years.

She thought that she still had a lot of opportunities.

However, after seeing everything that Ian prepared for Nicole tonight, Chloe knew that she might not have a chance anymore...

It drove her mad with jealousy. She hated Nicole to death!

Chloe did not feel so hysterical even if she lost a contract worth hundreds of millions!

She could cope with the coldness and ruthlessness of the business world.

However, the moment she saw that Ian was about to propose to Nicole, she felt like she had lost the whole world. Her faith collapsed and the world became desolated...

The pain and jealousy she hid deep in her heart burst out.

She smiled and said, "It's good that you know."

It was indeed because of Ian Carter.

Nicole frowned and shook her head in confusion.

She looked puzzled.

"Even if you target me or harm me, it won't make Ian like you. Ms. Snyder, isn't this method of yours too underhanded?"

Using force was one of the most stupid methods.

Furthermore, this was Nicole's turf.

If Chloe dared to touch Nicole, the Stanton family would never let her or her company off the hook.

Was this worth destroying all those years of hardship?

Chloe suddenly laughed.

Her eyes were deep and cold.

“It’s fine as long as it works. After all, you’re the high and mighty Ms. Stanton. It is a little cruel if I ruin you on such a memorable day, but I can’t think of a better way to deal with you besides this. The Stantons protect you too well, so I can only use your racy photos as a threat. I only want you to stay far, far away from Ian...”

It would be best if their worlds never met again.

“That’s the only way you’ll be a good girl and listen, right?”

Chloe’s eyes burned with a flame of insanity.

It was more blinding and scalding than the cigarette in her hand.

Sure enough, this psycho Chloe had lost her mind.

How could she come up with such a demented and disgusting method?

Nicole stared at her, the smile on her lips rippling. 'Chloe Snyder thinks that she can threaten me with a few nudes? Dream on!'

Her eyes were shining, glittering, and sparkling in the darkness.

Nicole's voice was pleasant and gentle as she said, "Right, I'll be a good girl and listen, but..."

Her tone changed as her gaze became cold and arrogant. "You won't be able to do it."

Nicole's arrogance and confidence contained an inherent noble indifference.

Even if she was just standing there in the dark and dreary path, Nicole was still the most eye-catching thing. She was always the brightest focus.

She was an inviolable existence.

Chloe's body stiffened imperceptibly.

She was shocked by Nicole's words.

However, she came back to her senses after a few seconds.

Chloe lowered her eyes and smiled slightly. Her aura was imposing.

She was someone who blazed a new trail in the business world. How would she be scared off by Nicole's words?

When she looked up again, her eyes brewed with ruthlessness and mockery.

She gently raised her hand.

"Then let's try it out. Apologies, Ms. Stanton..."