Chapter 2149 The President

"Then why didn't you say no?" It was beginning to dawn upon Francesca that she had made a mistake. If I knew we were attending the president's banquet, I would have asked Danrique before giving Monica an answer.

Though ignorant of most social norms, she understood what it meant not to put Danrique in trouble.

Danrique pinched her cheek. "Since you've already promised her, you would no longer have authority at home if I overruled your decision. Even if you made the wrong call, I must respect it since you've made up your mind. I'll help you clean up the mess if things do not go as planned." "Oh, Danrique..."

Those words touched Francesca. She had never once thought that Danrique could be so sensitive, responsible, and thoughtful.

"There's no need to place your safety in somebody else's hands." Danrique caressed her head. "Aside from protecting yourself, I should be the only person you could trust wholly."

"Hmm." Francesca nodded solemnly, feeling very moved.

Danrique did not say anything else. He reached out to pull her into his embrace and kiss her tenderly on the forehead.

"Is my outfit today too simple? They said I looked too plain without accessories. Will it embarrass you?"

Francesca began to feel insecure. She was always stuck in her ways and had never considered his feelings.

In spite of that, he was always thinking of her. She suddenly felt bad...

Danrique did not mind. "Not at all. Just dress comfortably." "My woman should never accommodate others. You just need to do what suits you."

"Wouldn't others think that I have embarrassed you, then?" Francesca was still not assured. "Will I become an eyesore to them?"

"I'll dig out the eyes of those who think that you're an eyesore," Danrique growled. "Besides, my reputation is the one at stake. What's it to them even if I have decided to do that?"

Francesca giggled before leaning over to give Danrique a fierce kiss, who held the back of her head and reciprocated in a domineering manner.

Then, the couple kissed passionately.

At that moment, they felt that they would be together forever.

The car stopped at the entrance of the presidential palace. A bodyguard marched over to open the door for Danrique and Francesca.

A group of lavishly dressed people rushed over before freezing in surprise at the sight of Francesca.

"Good evening!" Francesca smiled.

She knew everybody before her. They were all from the three great families. Donald was also there but without Eva.

"Er..."

Gerard and Kevin froze in shock when they saw Francesca.

Harrier, on the other hand, was very calm. He beamed and took the initiative to greet her as if they were old friends. "It's been a long time, Ms. Cece!"

"Long time no see," Francesca responded with a smile.

"That's true..."

Gerard and Kevin regained their composure at last. They smiled awkwardly, not knowing where to begin.

On the other hand, Hazel, who stood at the back of the crowd, greeted Francesca generously. "It's such a delight to see you, Ms. Cece!"

Francesca shot a half-amused glance at Danrique. "I'm happy to see you too."

Hazel smiled and said nothing more.

"Let's go inside, then," Donald called. "We shouldn't keep the president waiting."

"That's right. Let's go inside."

The crowd was just about to file back into the palace when a sonorous voice boomed. "You're just in time, Danrique! I was about to come out earlier to receive you, but I was interrupted by a call!"

Francesca looked up. She had seen the president on TV and thought he looked kinder in appearance than Frank. He wore a sincere smile.

Chapter 2150 The Dinner

"Mr. President, you don't have to come out to greet me personally!" Danrique shook hands with the president.

"Of course, I have to! You're here to attend the dinner. As the host, I should come to greet you in person!" The president laughed and turned his attention to Francesca. "Who is this beautiful lady?"

"She's my fiancée, Cece." Danrique had never disclosed Francesca's actual name to outsiders as he did not want to reveal her identity as Francesco. Hence, he had been calling her "Cece" in front of others.

"Fiancée?" The president took a glance at Hazel and quickly resumed his smile. "Oh, Danrique! You have a fiancée! Congratulations!"

The conversation sounded familiar to Francesca. It reminded her of her first visit to Frank's residence to attend a banquet. At the banquet, Frank seemed to have said the same thing.

Everyone was shocked too when they saw her.

"Yes, for a long time!" Danrique put his arm around Francesca and said generously, "She was the one who came back to save me in a car full of bombs at Frank's residence last time!"

"Oh, I see!" The president was shocked and looked at Francesca with admiration. "I've heard about that incident. Ms. Cece is indeed a hero!"

"You have flattered me," replied Francesca with a polite smile.

"No, no, no. You're actually our savior!" The president looked very excited. "If it was not for your heroic actions that day, we wouldn't have the peaceful days we have now, right?"

"That's right!"

After Donald took the lead, everyone else echoed.

"I knew that the girl Danrique has a crush on must be very different, but I didn't expect her to be so unique!" the president had been praising Francesca continuously.

"Please stop complimenting her. She's blushing now. Hahaha!" Danrique cuddled Francesca lovingly.

"Hahaha..." The president laughed. "Come on. Let's go chat inside the house!

As he said that, the president made a gesture and walked side by side with Danrique. They chatted as they walked.

The three great families followed closely, with Donald and the subordinates behind them.

When they arrived at the main hall, the first lady had prepared a premium dinner for them. She greeted everyone enthusiastically and arrange for the ladies to be seated first.

The president, Danrique, and other men sat around in the living room on the other side, chatting. Hazel, being the head of the Atkinson family, also sat among the men.

The president introduced Francesca to the first lady when they came in just now. Therefore, the first lady treated her with exceptionally good hospitality.

However, Francesca's attention was all on Danrique. She saw that Danrique sat on the sofa gracefully with his legs crossed. There was a glass of wine in his hand. He was shaking the glass lightly and listening to the president.

Everyone else was sitting upright as though they were in a classroom, except for Danrique.

Danrique sat casually and even gave Francesca a gentle look while listening to the president.

Francesca exchanged gazes with him and smiled. She then looked away and entertained the first lady in a polite manner.

Although the atmosphere was a little serious and boring, Francesca was slowly getting used to it.

However, she did not expect that they had no intention to start the dinner even after chatting for more than an hour.

She was already a little hungry, and she was almost clueless about what to say to the first lady anymore. Left with no choice, she could only glance at Danrique earnestly.

However, Danrique was talking then, and everyone else was listening intently to him with a serious look, including the president.

Of course, he did not have time to pay attention to Francesca.

She turned to look elsewhere and found that Gordon and the rest were in the side hall on the other side. She tried to look for Monica in the crowd.

At that moment, a girl in a black suit waved to Francesca. She looked closely. Oh! It's Monica!

Chapter 2151 Carefree And Unrestrained

Monica was dressed in a black suit and looked tiny among the men, but at the same time looked smart. Looking at such a scene, Francesca found it quite funny.

Why did Danrique not allow Monica to wear a gown but force her to wear a bodyguard's uniform instead? Is he worried that she will overshadow me? He's kind of cute sometimes.

Fortunately, Monica did not mind it at all. She waved to Francesca with a smile.

Mylo pulled her hand and reminded her to take care of her manners. She then quickly turned around.

Francesca retracted her gaze too. Just when she thought she still had to wait for a long time, Danrique suddenly said, "Okay, I think the ladies are hungry now. Let's have dinner!"

"Hahaha! My bad! I've been talking with you guys and have neglected Ms. Cece." The president knew Danrique was worried that Francesca would be starving already. He hurriedly invited everyone to the table.

Danrique walked over and sat beside Francesca, holding her hand under the table.

Francesca smiled and looked at him with eyes full of love.

Danrique kissed her forehead and asked dotingly, "Are you hungry?"

"Mhm." Francesca nodded honestly.

Danrique giggled and hurriedly cut the steak for her. "You can eat now."

At the same time, the president raised his glass to give a toast to everyone. When he saw Danrique cutting steak for Francesca, he quickly put down the wine glass and waited until Danrique fed Francesca a mouthful of steak. Then, the president raised his glass again and said, "Welcome!"

The others raised their glasses too and downed their drinks in one go.

"This is nothing but a family dinner. Just make yourself at home and don't bother about the formalities..." said the president.

Everyone finally began to enjoy their meal.

On the other hand, Francesca had already eaten several mouthfuls of steak. She suddenly realized that her behavior was a little rude and quickly stopped eating. However, Danrique gently fed her.

Francesca immediately felt that she was not being rude after all.

Seeing the scene, the president and the first lady exchanged gazes with meaningful looks.

Everyone was enjoying the meal.

The men's topics at the table were all about international affairs.

The ladies were carefully taking care of their other half, including the first lady. The first lady had been observing every move of the president and handed him things he needed from time to time.

Francesca was an exception. She was just busy eating.

Danrique would even pass her drinks and cut the steak for her.

Hazel saw all these actions in her eyes, but she acted calmly and gracefully, unmoved in the slightest.

Hazel's reaction was a little incomprehensible to Francesca. Does this woman really have nothing to do with Danrique? Even if there's nothing, shouldn't she be a little jealous? Why is she so calm?

Francesca did not understand, but she could not be bothered anymore.

Since Danrique treated her so well now and even introduced her to so many people, she had no reason not to believe him.

It was a very long meal. Everyone else took their own sweet time to enjoy the food and chat with each other.

However, Francesca finished her food very quickly. She was not interested to stay at the dining table and listen to their nonsense.

She felt restless on her seat.

Noticing her uneasiness, Danrique whispered in her ear, "Let's go for a walk."

"Okay." Francesca quickly pushed away her chair and left the table quietly.

Noticing that, the first lady quickly got up and asked, "Ms. Cece, do you need anything?"

"I…"

"She needs to use the restroom," Danrique answered on her behalf.

"Let me take you there." The first lady was about to walk toward Francesca.

"Uh, it's okay. I can go myself..." Francesca hurriedly rejected her offer.

Danrique smiled and said to the first lady, "No problem, Cece is used to being carefree and unrestrained. Just let her go by herself."

Chapter 2152 Her Advice

"Yes, I won't get lost." Francesca nodded vigorously. "All right then." The first lady did not insist anymore. She made a gesture and instructed a maid to lead Francesca to the restroom.

Francesca turned and smiled at Danrique. Then, she took her handbag and followed the maid to the restroom. The place was huge. They took a long corridor before arriving at the restroom.

If it was not for the maid to lead the way, Francesca would really get lost.

However, she did not really want to go to the restroom. After entering, she put on lipstick in front of the mirror, and then took out her phone to reply to some messages.

Her phone kept vibrating when she was eating just now. She wanted to check her phone so badly, but it seemed rude to look at her phone on that occasion, so she bore with it.

There were a few text messages from Monica on the phone:

Ms. Felch, are you in yet? I'm at the back.

Ms. Felch, I saw you.

Ms. Felch, just take care of yourself and don't worry about me. I'm fine with the bodyguards' team here..."

I didn't expect it to be this kind of family dinner. I thought it would be a banquet. The presidential palace is so huge and luxurious. It is exquisite and heavily

guarded. It seems that you don't need my protection here at all. I think I worry too much. Haha...

Francesca felt the same way as Monica. She used to attend that kind of open banquet where there were a lot of people, and it was very easy to get into danger.

In contrast, tonight's dinner seemed a lot quieter.

There were not many guests, and there were only a few bodyguards and maids. The people were all separated, leaving the event in an orderly manner, which made it hard to have any hidden crisis.

Francesca also felt that she thought too much.

Just when Francesca was typing a message to reply to Monica, a greeting suddenly came from outside. "Ms. Atkinson!"

"Mhm," Hazel responded briefly and walked in gracefully.

Francesca raised her head and looked at Hazel in the mirror. She was dressed in a tight-fitting dress in gold which showed her nice body figure and highlighted her elegant temperament.

Besides, she was much taller than Francesca. Francesca felt a sense of oppression standing in front of Hazel.

"I'm here to look for you. Shall we talk?" Hazel flashed a smile at Francesca.

"Okay." Francesca turned to look at her. "What do you want to talk about?"

"I really like Mr. Lindberg and want to marry him. However, I did not use any underhanded means to approach him nor announce any engagement news..." Hazel said bluntly, "The rumors that you have seen have nothing to do with me."

"Oh, really?" Francesca looked at her with a sincere look and was a little puzzled. "Who would that be if it wasn't you? Who would be so free to create scandals for others?"

"This is a little complicated. You won't understand even if I explain it," Hazel blurted out. Then, she quickly explained further, "Mr. Lindberg said you're a very naïve person, and you've never been a part of a battle for power. So you may not understand..."

In fact, Francesca did not care about that at all. "I guess that's right. I really don't understand, and I don't need to understand. Actually, you don't have to tell me about all this. If there's anything, you can talk to Danrique directly. I trust him."

Hazel chuckled. "You're indeed a naïve woman!"

"What?" Francesca was dumbfounded by her words.

Hazel smirked. "Nothing. I just think that since you're so naive, I'm afraid it is difficult for you to protect yourself..."

"That's no concern of yours."

Francesca could not be bothered to talk to her. She washed her hands and prepared to leave.

Before Francesca left, Hazel added, "Actually, it's good to be a doctor who's free and easy. There's really no need to get involved in such a complicated political battle..."

Francesca was a little touched by her words. She used to think the same way back then, so she always avoided Danrique. However, she chose to follow her feelings in the end when he became unavoidable...

Chapter 2153 Daughter

Facing her love rival, Francesca still brought out her claws. Raising a finely plucked brow, she said coldly, "I'm certain this has nothing to do with you. On top of that, how did you know I was a doctor?"

"There are no true secrets in the world," replied Hazel sardonically. "The truth will eventually reveal itself."

Having said that, she turned on her heel and left.

Francesca could infer that there was a tacit implication in Hazel's words, but she could not quite put her finger on it.

She also couldn't be bothered.

After wiping her hands dry, Francesca left the restroom.

That maid had disappeared despite saying she would wait for Francesca.

Francesca was rendered speechless and decided to walk back by retracing her steps. Scarcely had she moved a few steps when she could hear someone crying.

She paused. Curiosity soon got the better of her as she followed the direction of the sounds.

This led her to a room where people were talking. "Diana, be good. Danrique brought his fiancée over today. That's why your father wouldn't let you out. It'll be awkward otherwise."

"What fiancée? Danrique's fiancée should be me!"

The young woman spoke fluent Ustranasion. Francesca heard every word and was taken aback.

Who is this woman? Hazel has just left. Do I have yet another love rival? On top of that, why does she sound so familiar?

"Stop causing a scene, all right?" A woman could be heard sighing in agitation. "You've been married once already. What makes you think Danrique will still be interested in you?"

"Back then, you all forced me into a marriage I didn't want! Do you know how unhappy I was? It's all your fault!" The younger woman was quite angry. "It was not easy to get a divorce. Now that I want to take charge of my own happiness, you're all intent on stopping me!"

"We're not trying to stop you. We also hope that you can be together with Danrique. But he doesn't like you! He's in love with someone else..."

"It's not true! It's not!" The young woman sounded very agitated this time. "Danrique likes me! The last few times we met, he even smiled at me!"

"That was out of politeness! Won't you snap out of it?"

"No! He likes me! He bought me gifts!"

"That's because of your father. The gifts were an act of courtesy."

"I don't believe you! You're lying to—"

"All right, that's enough!" the older woman interjected. In a grave tone, she went on, "You can't go out tonight. After the banquet, your father will explain things to you in person. Just go back to your room and stop causing a scene!"

"I want to see Danrique!"

"Why are you so stubborn?" The older woman tutted and groaned in annoyance.

"You two, come here!"

"Yes, ma'am." Two female bodyguards could be heard responding.

"Bring her back to her room!"

"Of course."

"Mom, how could you do this to me!"

"Stop shouting!" Frantically, the mother cupped a hand over her daughter's mouth.

"Listen to me. Be quiet and be a good girl."

Francesca immediately hid behind a wall.

The door to the room opened, and the older woman hurriedly came out. Two female bodyguards trailed behind her, forcefully tugging a beautiful younger woman with them.

Francesca peeked out and vaguely saw them from behind.

The young woman was not tall, but she had a decent figure. She would have been pretty. However, something about her psyche and behavior seemed a little off.

She was very agitated and did not stop struggling throughout.

The older woman gestured once, and a few more female bodyguards rushed over to help before they finally managed to take the struggling woman away.

The older woman wiped away the tears on her face and turned around.

Francesca was very shocked. Isn't that the first lady?

The woman did not notice Francesca at all. She smoothed out the wrinkles on her clothing and hurried back into the hall.

In the end, Francesca was the only one left in the corridor.

She mulled over her thoughts for a bit before coming to a gradual realization. As it turned out, the president's daughter had also fallen for Danrique. She seemed to have been married before but was now divorced, so she likely wanted to pick up where she left off with Danrique.

Her parents must have wanted to set her up with Danrique, hence the banquet.

They never imagined that Danrique would have attended with his fiancée. Thus, they had to keep their daughter locked away to prevent her from causing a scene and embarrassing them.