

CEOs Baby 871

Chapter 871: Step by Step, the Proposal

"No. I'm not interested in that," Monica replied.

Michael didn't say much. "The wedding will be held at a golf course outside South Hampton City. We'll limit the guest list to less than a hundred families. I know you have more relatives and friends, so tell your parents they can invite sixty families at maximum, and us Sanders will have forty."

Monica nodded.

"The wedding planner will update us on the rest of the details in a few days. As for the wedding dress, we'll try it on a week before the wedding."

"Alright."

"As for the betrothal gifts and dowry..." Michael said. "I'm not going to ask for any dowry. Feel free to ask if your family needs any betrothal gifts, but I can't guarantee that I can satisfy them all."

"No!" Reese suddenly interjected.

Michael and Monica looked at her.

"I don't care about the other things, but we've got to have the dowry."

"Mom," Michael called out to her.

"No. Monica marrying into our family is already a social climb for her. We can't let her take all the advantages. The Cardellinis should also express their gratitude."

"What do you want from us?" Monica asked.

"Thirty million in cash, two exquisitely-decorated houses of more than two hundred square meters in the center of South Hampton City, and a luxury car worth more than five million." Reese seemed to have thought about it beforehand and blurted it out.

Monica gritted her teeth. This woman really knew how to talk.

"If it can't be done, I won't agree to this marriage." Reese was certain.

Michael hesitated for a moment, then looked up at Monica. "It shouldn't be difficult for you."

It was not difficult, but she was furious!

Why was it that when others married off their daughters, they would send money into the family, but when she married out, her family still had to lose so much money?

"Alright," Monica agreed.

She had no choice but to agree.

In Michael's opinion, if she did not agree, the marriage would not be accepted. This meant Cardellini Enterprise would not be able to protect itself.

Thus, Monica did not reject the request.

"There's less than a month until the wedding. You better know your place. I don't want to use my methods against you," Michael threatened.

Monica did not respond.

"I'll send you back." Michael stood up. There was no delay once he finished speaking.

"No need. I can take a taxi back." Monica refused.

Michael looked at Monica coldly as she left.

Reese stared at Monica's back and turned to her son, saying fiercely, "You can't indulge a woman like Monica. The more you let her be, the higher her tail will be. After you two get married, let me teach her a good lesson. She must be obedient to you in the future."

Michael did not answer. It was considered a silent agreement. He felt that he should indeed let Monica learn how to behave herself.

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Monica took a taxi home.

After saying a few words to her parents, who had been waiting for her, she quickly returned to her room. Then, she called her advisor, Jeanne.

"How was it?" She asked about her performance at the press conference.

"Hehe." Jeanne laughed coldly.

Monica's hair stood on end at the sound of her laugh.

"Did I not do well enough? Didn't you say to let Michael perform so his ego would soar? I've been playing along with his performance." Monica said, a little agitated.

"It was pretty good, but..."

Jeanne's 'but' always frightened Monica.

“You've really blocked your marriage this way.”

“What kind of marriage could I have?” Monica had thought it was something important.

“So you don't want to get back together with Dr. Jones?”

“Stop joking,” Monica said. “I've already made myself like this. How can we get back together? He couldn't even work it out back then, let alone now. I'm prepared to die alone.”

“Alright, then.” Jeanne did not say anything else.

Based on the current situation, It did not seem like Monica and Finn would be able to reconcile.

However, as long as Monica figured it out, no feelings could not be washed away by time.

She had liked Eden before and then not at all. In fact, she could not even remember what it felt like to like him.

Jeanne returned to the main topic. “So, we have achieved our first step, which was to let Michael be praised by the world and have a good image. Now it's time to make Michael reveal himself in front of the public.”

“Yeah.” Monica nodded her head, looking very serious.

“Does Michael have any female friends other than you?” Jeanne asked.

“...Uh...” She did not know.

"I don't think so."

In her memory, Michael's only friend was Eden. She did not know anyone else.

Only now did she realize that she might have never loved Michael before. She did not even know what kind of people Michael had around him, but she knew Finn and the people around him very well, including those female seductresses, no, female nurses in his hospital department.

"I only know about Melody, but she's dead," Jeanne said bluntly.

"You're looking for one of Michael's female friends to trick him into sleeping with him?"

"It's easier to scheme the people around you. A random prostitute will easily arouse Michael's suspicion." Jeanne made it clear.

"Then I'll keep an eye on him and see if such a person exists around Michael or in his work circle."

"That's right. His work circle." Jeanne suddenly agreed with Monica. "It's impossible that no one likes a capable young man like Michael. Once this person exists, what we have to do next will be much smoother."

"I'll be sure to find out," Monica said.

"Careful not to alert the enemy. Michael's level of caution is beyond our imagination!" Jeanne reminded.

"Alright," she said.

"Oh, yeah." Jeanne suddenly thought of something. "How did Michael's mother treat you?"

"You mean Reese?" Just the thought of her made Jeann angry.

Probably. She did not quite remember Michael's mother's name.

“That woman hates me to death because I made a cuckold out of Michael. In addition, I've been lukewarm towards Michael, so she thinks I've sullied her son! When I went to their house to discuss the wedding today, I was slapped in the face by her. She even asked me for a large dowry sum, making me look like a good-for-nothing woman.” Monica's words were filled with righteous indignation, giving people the wrong impression that she was not too sad.

In reality, Monica was not as heartless as she appeared to be. She just did not want others to worry.

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Jeanne listened to Monica's seemingly heartless words.

This girl had never expressed her discomfort and always made others think she did not care much about many things. In reality, she just did not want others to worry about her.

Jeanne's heart ached a little but did not expose her.

She said, “Monica, it's not just about scheming Michael.”

“What do you mean?” Most of the time, Monica was not good at guessing other people's emotions, so she was a little surprised.

“Anyone who has a close relationship with him can become one of Michael's scandals and a legitimate reason for you to break off the engagement,” Jeanne said. “For example, with how Reese treated you. If you expose her malice and viciousness, you can also use it to force Michael's hand. Besides, I don't think you want to be bullied by Reese again, do you?”

“Of course not.” Monica was furious. She was still fuming at the thought of Reese's slap today.

As she was pampered by her parents since young, she had never suffered such a great grievance. While Michael did lie to her, he did not hurt her physically.

The more she thought about it, the angrier she got.

"Then we must use all the resources we can think of. From now on, just do as I say." Jeanne explained the next step of the plan to Monica very serious.

Monica was still a little confused. However, she was trying her best to understand and accept it.

The two of them talked for a long time.

"If you encounter anything unexpected that you can't solve or aren't confident about, you must give me a call. Don't let your emotions affect your decisions and act rashly." After Jeanne finished speaking, she did not forget to remind her, "Otherwise, if we're not careful, our efforts will be in vain. Michael may be smarter than we think."

"Alright." Monica nodded heavily.

She trusted Jeanne unconditionally.

"Oh, right." Monica asked Jeanne, "Where are you now? When are you coming back? I'd be more at ease if you're with me."

"I won't be back for a long time," Jeanne said bluntly.

"What are you up to?" Monica was a little angry.

Jeanne had always been elusive. However, the current Jeanne was too far away from her. She did not seem to be leading a normal life, either. What exactly happened in the seven years since she left?

Jeanne said, "There are many things that I can't tell you at the moment. It's not that I'm deliberately hiding them from you, but it'll only do us both harm if I told you."

The more Monica knew, the more danger she would be in. She did not want to bring Monica into her dangerous world. So the only thing she could do now was to do her best to help Monica overcome the difficulties in her life.

"I feel like you're getting further and further away from me, Jeanne..." Monica muttered. She was still a little upset about Jeanne's concealment.

Jeanne did not want to lie to Monica, so she chose to remain silent.

Silence meant consent.

Her living environment was completely different from Monica's, and she would also not drag Monica into this.

She said, "Actually, I think it'll be good for you to have me not with you at the moment."

Jeanne tried her best to find a reason that would comfort Monica. It was very clear Monica needed someone to rely on and accompany her.

With Monica's personality, she would definitely not tell her parents about her sadness. So, although it seemed she had lived a happy life since childhood, when she encountered something that made her really sad, she would bear it alone.

"Why not?" It was obvious Monica did not believe Jeanne's excuse.

"Michael should still be afraid of me," Jeanne said bluntly.

Although she had not found any concrete evidence to prove that Melody, Eden, and the others she had fought with had Michael's support, she was almost certain. She had been winning all these times. Michael must have his own scale.

It just so happened that she was not in South Hampton City. Now that she had disappeared temporarily, Michael would not be so guarded against Monica. It would also make their plan more successful.

“You mean, Michael won't suspect me too much because he doesn't think I'm a great strategist?”

“Yeah.”

However, Monica was not stupid.

“That's why we need to seize the opportunity. If we miss it, there won't be a next time,” Jeanne reminded her sternly.

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“Alright,” Monica said with a firm attitude.

Jeanne was worried and gave Monica a lot of instructions before finally putting down her phone. She was still in Lucy's room on the Delta island.

Lucy sat on the balcony and looked at Jeanne with a faint smile full of charm. After Jeanne ended the call, sat down in front of Lucy.

She had been spending a lot of time with Lucy recently. The assassins of the Delta had changed a lot. Many of the people that Jeanne was once familiar with had become new faces.

She was not used to it.

“I look forward to your daily phone calls to hear how Monica slaps Michael in the face,” Lucy joked.

With that, she made Jeanne a cup of black tea. In the Hills, they could still enjoy everything that they should.

There were some low-level assassins here. However, if they still could not reach the standard of a typical assassin even after training, they would be brought to the Hills' to be servants. The assassins would fight to the death outside, but once they returned here, they could enjoy heaven on earth.

This was probably the reason why there were so many assassins, but almost none escaped. Of course, the price of sneaking away was also very high, and few assassins dared to try.

Jeanne took a sip of the tea from Lucy. She felt that these peaceful days would not last for long.

It was always calm in the eye of the hurricane.

"Eldest Young Lady, Miss Harmon." A servant knocked on the door respectfully.

Jeanne's lips curled into a smile as she sipped her tea. Many things were about to happen.

Lucy responded.

"Mr. Hill wants to see you in his room."

"Alright."

Lucy put her teacup down and looked at Jeanne's nonchalant expression.

"Let's go," she said.

Jeanne stood up, and the two of them walked into Kingsley's room.

The person following Kingsley was none other than Melinda. She stood behind Kingsley, looking very respectful.

Kingsley went straight to the point. "I've found some clues regarding the Duncans' descendant."

Jeanne's eyes narrowed. Lucy looked very serious as well.

"Do you remember when I told you that Finn disappeared for two hours?" Kingsley asked Jeanne.

She nodded.

"Through the analysis and elimination of the big data, we can finally confirm where Finn had disappeared to then."

Jeanne stared at Kingsley intently.

"A private villa in the southern suburbs," Kingsley said. "When we got there, there was no descendant of the Duncans in the villa. However, we found a strand of his hair. He had left his DNA on the scene."

Jeanne and Lucy listened in silence. They were waiting for Kingsley's instructions.

"With his DNA, it will be easier to find this person," Kingsley made clear. "On the 15th of next month, Michael's wedding will be held."

Jeanne's expression changed slightly.

"The Sanders suspect that the Duncans' descendant will appear, so they asked us to investigate them one by one," Kingsley said.

"What do you mean?" Jeanne could not help but ask.

She didn't want anything to disrupt her and Monica's plan.

"For the Duncans' descendant to be able to return to South Hampton City so quietly without leaving any traces behind, the Sanders felt this person did not appear and disappear out of thin air but rather replaced someone's position. To put it bluntly, this person may have already been around even before

the Duncans' descendant appeared. After the Duncans' descendant appeared, they immediately banned him. This way, no matter how we investigate, we would not be able to find this person.”

Jeanne frowned.

The possibility of this was indeed very high. After all, the human skin mask had already been developed to a near-perfect state. It had even allowed Mason to deceive everyone.

“What I meant was, we're going to investigate them one by one to see who the descendant of the Duncans banned.”

Jeanne understood what he meant. It was to dig out everyone in South Hampton City and search for them one by one. Even though the workload was a lot and the difficulty level was high, this was probably the only way the Sanders could think of. The Duncans had really pushed the Sanders to the extreme.

Kingsley nodded his head slightly. “Let's investigate the upper-class society first, which means those who have come into contact with Fourth Master Swan. Since the descendant of the Duncans chose to come back, he must have had some achievements. I don't think they would hide him as a small fry, so we will first investigate the famous. Most people from the political and business world will be attending Michael's wedding. It'll be the best way to save our time since everyone will be gathered together at once, so we're all going back.”

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Kingsley said that they were all going back.

Jeanne's eyes flickered.

Kingsley's gaze also landed on Jeanne. He said bluntly, “Once you go back, you and Fourth Master Swan will be enemies. I even suspect that Fourth Master Swan might have guessed what we're going to do, so he'll definitely try his best to stop us. If that's the case, the next time we meet, it'll be a fight to the death.”

“I understand,” Jeanne responded.

"Then prepare yourself," Kingsley said nothing more.

There were not many words that needed to be said in situations like this. The Hills only had to carry out the orders.

"Is there anything else?" Jeanne asked.

"You may leave." Kingsley waved his hand.

As Jeanne and Lucy turned to leave, Kingsley suddenly called out to her.

"Lucy."

Lucy stopped in her tracks and turned around.

"You stay."

Lucy glanced at Jeanne.

She felt that Jeanne needed her more at this moment. However, she always obeyed Kingsley's orders, and it was the same for everyone present. Hence, Jeanne left on her own.

In the room, Kingsley said to Melinda beside him, "You go out too."

Melinda's expression changed slightly.

The current Kingsley did not hide anything from her. No matter what it was, he let her be by his side. Now, his conversation with Lucy had sent her away.

She did not dare to show it, but she left with some resentment in her heart.

Only Kingsley and Lucy were left now. It had been so long since they had been alone that Lucy even felt a little uncomfortable.

She stood in front of Kingsley and awaited his instructions.

He said, "When you go back this time, your task is to look after Jeanne."

"I think you should trust her." Lucy had always been fair.

While Jeanne did have the motive to betray the Hills, she would not. Lucy had complete trust in that.

"I don't believe that she would do anything to Fourth Master Swan if it came to it," Kingsley said bluntly.

Yu Jia pursed her lips.

It was true. She had not considered this. All she thought of was that Jeanne would not betray the Hills. However, she did not expect Jeanne to betray Fourth Master Swan either.

It was difficult being caught between the two forces.

"If necessary, help Jeanne kill Fourth Master Swan," Cheng Kai ordered.

That would mean she most likely could not survive.

Putting aside the consequences of killing Fourth Master Swan, she would not even be able to face Jeanne.

"Jeanne trusts you," Kingsley said. "So she won't be on guard."

Hence, she should take advantage of Jeanne's state to plot against her.

"Understood," she agreed immediately.

The Hills were about carrying out orders and nothing else. There were no feelings involved.

Once an order was given, they would be like a demon who lost their humanity.

After Kingsley had given his instructions and Lucy had agreed, a long silence filled the room. Perhaps Kingsley felt a little burdened, even if she would be the one to kill Fourth Master Swan.

Though, Jeanne was not stupid. She would be able to guess that it was an order from Kingsley, so there were still some thoughts for concern. However, this was Kingsley's business, and no one could change his decision.

She said, "Mr. Hill, if there's nothing else, I'll take my leave now."

Although there was still less than a month before they had to leave, this mission would be huge, and there were many things to prepare. She had to start planning now.

"Lucy," Kingsley suddenly called out her name, his tone a little cold.

Lucy looked at him.

"Are you hiding from me?" Kingsley asked.

Lucy was surprised. How dared she?

In the Hills, he had the final say. Her life was in his hands, so she could not hide even if she wanted to.

"Come here." Kingsley suddenly ordered.

Although the two were only a few steps apart, he wanted her to go to him now, so she went.

She took a few steps and stopped right in front of Kingsley.

“You want me to help you undress?” Kingsley raised his eyebrows.

So that's how it is, Lucy thought.

She smiled as she lowered her head and began untying her clothes bit by bit.

As she took off her clothes, she said, “ Mr. Hill, didn't you think I was too small?”

Kingsley did not answer.

“I thought Melinda served you well...”

“That's my business,” Kingsley said. “Whether or not I want you is mine as well.”

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Therefore, it was not up to her to make the decision.

Lucy agreed. She had no right to speak.

When her clothes were finally off, Kingsley just stared at her body. He looked at the many scars on her body. Some new, and some old. They looked hideous.

“Didn't you always used to deal with these things in the past?” Kingsley asked.

"I was still young then and loved looking pretty," Lucy said nonchalantly. "Now that I'm old, I don't seem to want to do it that anymore."

"I don't like it," Kingsley said bluntly.

"I'll get rid of it," Lucy said.

The Hills had many talented doctors who were first-class surgeons as well. These scars were like a drop in the ocean in their surgeries.

Kingsley suddenly reached out and grabbed the back of her head with his large hand to get her body closer to him, but Lucy instinctively used both her hands to resist her approach. Kingsley frowned slightly. When she realized what she had done, Lucy lowered her hands and pressed her body against his.

After that, enduring Kingsley's libido was all that was on her mind.

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Melinda was waiting outside as Lucy left Kingsley's room. Lucy glanced at her but didn't respond.

"Did you do it with Mr. Hill?" Melinda asked her.

Though there was no need to ask. It was obvious.

Lucy stopped in her tracks and said, "Melinda, if you want to stay by Mr. Hill's side for a long time, it's best you don't have any thoughts of jealousy. Mr. Hill hates dealing with emotional matters. You'd better understand that now."

"Are you threatening me?"

"I'm just reminding you out of kindness," Lucy said. "Of course, it's up to you whether or not you want to listen."

With that, she left.

Melinda stared at Lucy's back as she walked away. She gritted his teeth, furious.

She had accompanied Kingsley all this time, only venting his frustrations on her. He never looked for any other woman, which was something Kingsley had never done in his long life. She had clearly heard that when Lucy was with Kingsley, he had many women around him as well. However, when he was with her, she had been the only one.

She thought that she was different to Kingsley. However, today, Kingsley and Lucy actually had sex again.

There was no way she was tolerating this!

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Jeanne was lying on the chaise lounge in her room, seemingly waiting for her, when Lucy returned to her room.

Seeing that she had returned, she couldn't help but smile. "Kingsley's still spry."

Jeanne had been waiting for Lucy for three hours.

Lucy also smiled. She did not hold back from Jeanne. "It's a pity that I'm old."

Jeanne looked at her.

Lucy said, "My legs are weak. I'm going to take a shower first."

“Okay.” Jeanne nodded.

Lucy went to the bathroom to wash up. Looking at the marks on her body, she smiled bitterly. How long would such days last?

Perhaps not long at all, as Kingsley would eventually get tired of her.

Once she was done, she wore a silk bathrobe that showed off her good figure.

No wonder Kingsley liked it so much.

Jeanne looked at Lucy's flirtatious expression indifferently.

“He wanted to discuss with me about us returning to South Hampton City next month.” Lucy took out a cigarette and handed one to Jeanne.

“Yeah.” Jeanne said, “You know very well that I won't let Monica marry Michael.”

“That won't impact our mission much,” Lucy insisted. “You could also break off the engagement at the wedding.”

“It'll be a little more difficult to expose Michael at the wedding, though.”

She had actually thought about it.

The best way was to let Monica and Michael release Michael's video in front of everyone during the wedding so that everyone could see his ugliness. This way, Monica could reject the marriage in front of everyone, and Michael would have no excuse to go back on his word.

However, it would not be easy to tamper with Michael's wedding.

"Think about it. I believe you can." Lucy had absolute trust in her.

Jeanne was silent.

Lucy said, "If we don't find this person from the Duncans, Kingsley will never be able to answer to the Sanders."

"Alright. I'll think about it." Jeanne nodded.

"If you can't figure it out, come to me again. As for today, I'm feeling a little sleepy." Lucy smiled.

Jeanne understood. After all, she had been through this before too.

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There had also been times when she was so weak that she just wanted to lie on the bed and never get up.

She extinguished the cigarette. "You should rest, then."

Lucy nodded.

As Jeanne left, Lucy looked at Jeanne's back, the smile on her face fading away.

She did not know if she could help Kingsley to kill Jeanne's Fourth Master Swan!

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South Hampton City.

Monica was going mad.

She had carefully investigated everyone around Michael, but none of them matched Jeanne's description of someone who would be interested in Michael.

Michael's life was just too simple. All he did was work.

He did not have any interactions with the outside, let alone with any woman she could use.

She was close to having another mental breakdown. Why was it so difficult for her to achieve something but so easy for Jeanne?

She was in an extremely irritable state when the phone suddenly rang.

Monica looked at Michael's incoming call, wanting to smash her phone. However, she fought the urge and answered the call. "Hello?"

"It's my mom's birthday tonight. We've invited some relatives and friends to a small birthday party. Dress up. I'll pick you up after work." Michael's tone was very cold.

Ever since the two of them had blown up in the face of the public, their relationship had been in bad shape.

She did not answer. She did not want to attend Reese's birthday party.

"I hope you know your place. We're getting married soon, so don't cause any unnecessary trouble." Michael's tone was even colder.

Monica pursed her lips. "I understand."

Just like that, she reluctantly agreed to go.

Michael, on the other end, did not say anything more and hung up. Monica was so angry that she threw her phone on the bed again.

She really was being led by the nose by Michael, but Monica calmed herself down. If what Jeanne's said was true, when the time came, she would tear Reese's face apart and ruin her high and mighty image as a noble lady!

Today's birthday party might be an opportunity. With this mentality, Monica went to participate. She even dressed up meticulously.

Michael looked at her clothes, a little impressed.

"I thought you told me not to cause trouble? I'm afraid if I don't dress up to attend your mom's birthday party, she'd beat me to death!" Monica said fiercely.

Michael did not suspect anything.

As he drove, he said, "The crisis of Cardellini Medical Technology has been resolved."

"Okay." She knew.

Her father had told her about it. Michael was really realistic.

Two days after the news came out, Cardellini Medical Technology returned to its absolute position in the medical world. Her father was not being ostracized by the board of directors anymore, and his position as chairman was secure. Now that their family crisis had been resolved, she had nothing to worry about.

Michael drove to the Rosses' compound. Every time she came here, Monica would feel traumatized.

A few years ago, she had lost all face here and was mocked by the Rosses. The last time she was here, she was even slapped by Reese. Just thinking about it made her angry.

Walking into the hall, she noticed that some people were already there. It was obvious that it was a small gathering.

What a tragedy to be born into a family like the Rosses. He had to pay attention to everything and also suppress.

Michael and Monica attracted everyone's attention as soon as they entered the hall. Since Michael was doing very well now, his relatives and friends naturally took the initiative to curry favor with him.

Many people in the hall walked over. "Michael's back."

"Michael has grown so much."

"Michael's such a talent."

Everyone was complimenting Michael while treating Monica like she was air.

Oh, how she wished she was air.

However, she had to hold Michael's hand and force a fake smile.

"Is this Michael's fiancée? She's even more beautiful in person than on television. When I saw the news about you, I thought you two were a perfect match." Finally, someone noticed her.

Monica barely managed to cope with it. It was not easy to deal with most relatives.

Then, Michael led Monica to the main character of today's banquet, Reese.

Reese was dressed in a bright red today. With her noble temperament and well-maintained figure, she did not look fifty at all. At forty years old, she still had a lingering charm.

“Mom,” Michael said respectfully. “Happy Birthday.”

Reese had always been good to Michael. The corners of her mouth curled out a smile, never once looking at Monica.

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However, Monica still pretended to greet her. “Happy Birthday, Auntie.”

Reese turned to look at Monica and said coldly and sarcastically, “Just a Happy Birthday?”

What else did she want?

“Monica and I have been so busy preparing for our wedding that we haven't picked out a present for you. How about we go buy it together this weekend?” Michael tried to smooth things over.

Monica sneered. It was not that Reese wanted a present from her, but to embarrass Monica in front of everyone. Sure enough, a few wealthy ladies who surrounded Reese were all looking at Monica with disdain.

However, Monica pretended to be oblivious. Whatever Michael said was true, anyway. She was not the only one who lost face.

“Auntie.” A female voice suddenly echoed in the hall.

Monica turned her head to take a look. She looked familiar, but Monica could not seem to remember who she was.

“Auntie, Happy Birthday.” The woman was very eager. “This is your present. I hope you like it.” As she spoke, she handed over an exquisite gift box.

Reese deliberately glanced at Monica when she accepted it. Monica, of course, knew what she meant, but she continued to remain indifferent.

Reese opened the woman's gift in front of everyone and was surprised to see an exquisite watch inside. "Brie, how did you get it? Isn't this a limited edition? There were only eight pieces on sale in Harken. When I went to buy one, it was all sold out."

Brie smiled. "I heard from my mother that you liked it a lot but couldn't get your hands on it, so I got someone to buy it overseas. I'm glad you like it, Auntie."

"You're such a considerate child." Reese praised her with satisfaction.

Brie smiled brightly.

"By the way, Michael. You know Brie, right?" Reese suddenly said.

"Auntie, you must be joking. Director Ross is my immediate superior now, so of course, we know each other. " Brie appeared to be very proactive and generous. "I'll be counting on you in the future, Director Ross."

"That's right. I forgot that you were also admitted to the quality supervision department." seemed to have just remembered and said to Michael, "Take care of Brie."

"Will do." Michael was very obedient.

"That won't be necessary. As long as Director Ross doesn't despise me for not being capable enough," Brie quickly interjected. As she spoke, she glanced at Michael.

There was no telling through the look in her eyes if she had been gazing at Michael in some other way. Monica also could not see the reason. She had been observing this woman to see if she could be the woman Jeanne was talking about.

Suddenly, she understood why Brie was so familiar. She was Michael's subordinate and would often follow Michael to all kinds of official events, including meetings, dinner parties, and so on.

Monica gently pursed her lips, making herself look very calm.

“Don't just stand there. Sit,” Reese said to Brie. “There's no need to be shy.”

“Thank you, Auntie,” Brie replied with a smile and sat obediently beside her mother.

Monica was sitting on the other side of the sofa with Michael, casually watching the interaction between them.

So, Brie's mother was on good terms with Reese? Could Brie and Michael be considered childhood sweethearts?!

“I still have some work to do. Wait for me here, but if you can't stand it any longer, come upstairs and find me.” Michael suddenly whispered into Monica's ear. It almost scared Monica to death.

She nodded, feeling a little guilty.

As Michael stood up and left, Brie glanced at him. Could it have been an illusion?

In the main hall, everyone but Monica was chatting and socializing. She felt so out of place. She did not know anyone, nor did she want to.

Just as she was about to leave, she saw Brie suddenly stand up from the sofa and smile at the people around her before leaving politely.

Monica watched her walk to the second floor.

Seeing her leave, Reese couldn't help but say. “When they were young, I liked Brie so much that I even promised to betroth her to our Michael. Now that I'm looking at it, it really is a pity.” Perhaps she said it on purpose for Monica to hear.

"That's right. I had been looking forward to Michael marrying me, but in the end, he changed his mind just like that. You have to give me an explanation and make up for my hurt feelings." Brie angrily said on purpose.

"Alright, alright. When the time comes, I'll introduce you to someone as talented as Michael, okay?"

"That's a deal."

A few wealthy ladies were chatting with each other. While it was very lively, not a single nice word had been said. From time to time, they would even mock her. So Monica stood up and left the hall, heading straight upstairs.

She was unfamiliar with the Rosses' house, let alone the second floor. Thus, she could only bump around randomly before crashing into Michael's room.

Inside the half-closed door, Michael was working in front of the computer. Brie stood next to him, her head close to the screen. The two of them looked very close.

However, Michael noticed her the second she appeared. Brie, noticing Michael's change, turned to look at the door. When she saw who was there, she stood up straight and kept a distance from Michael.

"Miss Cardellini." Brie took the initiative to call her.

Monica glanced at her, then turned to look at Michael.

"Why did you come up?" Michael's expression did not change.

"Didn't you say that I could come upstairs to find you if I was bored?"

"Sit here for a while, then. I'll take you back once I'm done with the things at hand."

Monica nodded and sat on the sofa.

“You can head out first. I know what needs to be done.” Michael's tone towards Brie was very cold.

“Understood.” Brie smiled before leaving Michael's room.

Monica looked at Brie's back as she left, not showing any emotion. Then, she sat on the sofa in the room and played games on her phone to pass the time.

After about an hour, Michael seemed to have finished his work.

Just as he stood up and was about to leave with Monica, Reese pushed the door open and said to Monica bluntly, “Have you told your parents about the dowry?”

Monica really, really hated Reese.

However, at this moment, she secretly smiled to herself. She had been worried about how to uncover Reese's vicious face that she kept hidden from others, but it had delivered itself to her door so quickly!

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“Have you told your parents about the dowry?” Reese asked without hesitation.

Monica looked at her coldly and did not reply.

“Mom, let's not talk about this for now.” Michael refused.

“How can we not? You're getting married soon!” Reese's voice was high-pitched as if she had to answer immediately.

Michael was about to reply when Monica suddenly said, “Okay. Let's talk.”

Michael looked at Monica.

Monica said bluntly, "Since we've chosen to get married, let's make everything clear."

Reese sneered with a disdainful expression.

The three of them returned to Michael's study and sat on the sofa.

Monica said, "My family will prepare the dowry you mentioned previously, but there can not be a betrothal gift lacking."

"You still want a betrothal gift?" Reese's voice grew louder, her words clearly full of sarcasm. "Monica, you'd better check your own status. How dare you still have the cheek to ask for a betrothal gift? You're already climbing up the social ladder by marrying our Michael!"

Monica was a little angry after hearing Reese's words, but she suppressed it and said, "If I don't get a betrothal gift, in return, my family won't provide the dowry."

"Monica!" Reese smacked the coffee table in front of her. "You're being shameless again! What right do you have to negotiate with my family?"

"My parents didn't raise me to not stand up for myself. Just because you want my family to take out thirty million as well as two luxury houses and a car for a dowry, does that mean we should? While I admit that my family has the means to pay, it should be mutual. Why should my family give unconditionally when yours won't even give a single cent?"

"That's because you're unworthy! It's your honor that we let you into the Rosses, and to allow you to marry our Michael is your greatest betrothal gift. You better know your place! I'll warn you one more time. Not a single cent less for the dowry, and I must see it a week before the wedding. There won't be a single betrothal gift. It's up to you whether or not you want to marry him! If you don't, many women do!"

Monica glared at Reese, unable to hide her anger anymore.

"You saw Brie just now. She's an educated and well-mannered lady from a wealthy family. She's better than you in every single way. I'm not afraid to tell you that Brie and Michael grew up together. If it weren't for you, they would be the ones getting married now, and you wouldn't even be in the picture. So you better know your place. Don't lose more than you gain!"

"Enough," Michael interjected. "This marriage is between Monica and me, and I'll discuss the betrothal gifts and dowry with her."

"There's no room for negotiation!" Reese said coldly. "That's the condition. Michael, if you dare give Monica the betrothal money behind my back or secretly give the Cardellinis this dowry, our relationship will be over!"

"Mom."

"I won't ever compromise on this matter with Monica. I was already kind enough to let her marry into this family," Reese said firmly. "I don't care how Monica grew up or how her parents indulged her. Once she enters the Rosses, she must follow our rules! Moreover, this rule will be from the moment of marriage. There's no room for discussion!"

Michael seemed to be silent for a few seconds.

He did not want to have any conflicts with his mother regarding marriage! Since Monica was entering the Rosses, she should follow Rosses' rules. She definitely could not do whatever she wanted like before.

When they were in a relationship, it could be said that they doted on each other in front of the media. However, once married, Monica would take his family name. Whatever she did would be closely related to the Rosses at all times. So she had to have the demeanor of a Ross, and he could not let Monica do as she pleased anymore. It was not a bad thing to let Monica understand this truth now, either.

He said, "Monica, prepare the betrothal gifts and dowry according to my mother's instructions."

"So this is what you meant when you said that you like me?!" Monica smiled sarcastically.

“What I meant was, I like you in a situation where there are no benefits involved,” Michael added.

Monica's smile became even more sarcastic.

Fine. Since Michael put it so bluntly, she would not have any guilt in taking revenge.

“What if I don't agree?” Monica faced Michael with a firm attitude.

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Reese's expression changed again after seeing that Monica was still objecting. However, before she could roar, Michael said bluntly, “You don't have a choice.”

Monica gritted her teeth.

“I have many methods to force you to agree. You know that, don't you?” Michael threatened her coldly.

It was true. If she did not agree, Michael might take action against her family.

Jeanne was right. Only when the enemy was completely knocked to the ground without being able to even get up could it be considered a victory. She had to win the battle, not the war.

“Alright, then.” Monica agreed.

It was only because Michael had threatened her that she agreed.

He knew very well what Monica was most afraid of. She was terrified that the people most important to her would get hurt because of her, so she would compromise infinitely. He had no doubts about that.

Seeing that Monica had agreed, Reese sneered. "Monica, since you're marrying into the Rosses, you'd better know your place. Don't think you're still some rich lady! You must treat your husband's family as the sky, and do your duty as a wife. You must take care of Michael and be filial to me!"

Monica did not reply, and Michael did not seem to want to listen anymore.

"That's enough. I'll tell her about our family's rules in the future. Right now, we need to prepare for the wedding."

Seeing that Monica was obviously more obedient, Reese felt a little more at ease and did not say anything more.

"Let's go. I'll take you back." Michael said to Monica.

Monica glanced at Reese. She looked at this noble lady who was praised by the public as being virtuous, elegant, generous, with a noble temperament, and a role model wife. Right now, she was really eager to see how this 'role model' would be praised by the world and thrown down by them!

She left the Rosses residence with Michael. It was silent throughout the car journey back to the Cardellinis' villa.

The moment she got out of the car, Monica was suddenly pulled back by Michael.

Monica's eyes moved slightly.

"Sit properly," Michael said.

Then, he slowly got out of the car, walked to Monica's side, and opened the door for her.

Monica's mouth curved into a sneer.

He was acting so volatile around her, hot and cold. He threatened her in front of his mother, and now he was suddenly being considerate.

The moment they got out of the car, only then did Monica realize that she had overthought it.

There was no need for Michael to pretend in front of her. His affectionate actions towards her were only because he had discovered a paparazzi hiding around her villa. As long as there were paparazzi around, Michael had to show his deep love.

Monica cooperated with Michael and reluctantly said goodbye to him. Before Michael left, he lifted the back of her head and planted a kiss on her lips. Monica did not resist. Some scenes had to be played out with Michael.

They kissed for a long time. It was like two lovers who were glued together and could not bear to part.

Monica did not refuse Michael's advances. To her, he was just a body. She would even go so far as to sell her body in order to deal with Michael. Furthermore, it was just a kiss, a deep kiss.

So she allowed Michael to kiss her. She kissed Michael so deeply that even the scarily self-disciplined Michael had a slight reaction, his eyes filled with lust.

He said in a hoarse voice, "Don't resist me in the future."

"Alright." Monica agreed with a smile.

"I can love you very much." Michael made it clear. As long as she was obedient, he could love her very much.

She agreed again with a smile.

Michael touched her red and swollen lips with his finger. "Only leave after I've gone."

"Alright," Monica agreed. She would agree to anything he said.

Michael kissed her forehead again before getting into the car and driving further and further away as Monica watched on.

All this while, she had been showing how much Michael loved her. So it was Michael's turn to show that she loved him very much too. Watching her fiancé's car leave for a long time was a sign of love, especially under the deliberate guidance of certain people.

Monica's eyes flickered as she watched the hidden paparazzi leave. Then, she sarcastically turned to leave. The moment she turned around, her heart suddenly tightened. Finn was standing not far behind her.

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Why was Finn at her house?

Though, all she was thinking about at that moment was whether or not Finn had seen her and Michael kissing.

She bit her lip lightly, looking blankly at Finn. Michael's kiss lingered on her lips, making her feel indescribably disgusted. She watched as Finn took in all her movements and appearances and walked past her coldly without saying a word.

He did not react to her at all. Would he not have at least some emotions about her? After all, she used to be his woman. Even if he was possessive, he should have some reaction.

It seems there was no salvaging her relationship with Finn. Last time, she bumped into Finn while she pretended to sleep with a young hunk. Other than avoiding her in disgust, he did not have any reaction either. Perhaps there was a second when he wanted to scold her, but in the end, he still remained indifferent. She had really lost Finn, and there was no getting him back again.

She smiled faintly, and a tear fell from her eyes.

The pugilistic world was a long journey. From then on, they had no more connections.

As she walked into the villa, she found her parents in the living room. Monica composed herself before raising her voice and said, "Dad, mom, I'm back."

"Reese didn't make things difficult for you, did she?" Ruby hurried over and asked. She knew Reese too well and could not help but worry.

"How could she? I didn't grow up a vegetarian." Monica did not seem to care. "Don't you know how irritable I can be? When I'm ruthless, I won't even care about my own family. So how would she dare bully me?"

"Even so, you still have to be careful. That woman isn't easy to deal with." Ruby knew her daughter would not be wronged, but she still reminded her worriedly.

"Okay." Monica nodded and said, "Reese mentioned the dowry again. I rarely argue with her, mainly because I don't want to mess up my plan. You guys should prepare to give it to Reese a week in advance."

"Alright." Ruby nodded. Mumu had told them this before.

Even though she knew the wedding was fake, after hearing the other party's conditions and that they were not contributing a single cent, she was annoyed.

As long as they were good to Monica, the entire Cardellini business would be theirs. So why would they care about such a small amount of money?

"It's getting late. I'll head upstairs to wash up and sleep," Monica said.

The moment she left, she suddenly thought of something. She asked nonchalantly, "Oh, yeah. I just saw Finn coming out of the house? "

"Your Father's heart hasn't been in good condition the past two days, so we asked Finn to come over and take a look," Ruby said. "No matter what state you and Finn are in, he's still your father's attending doctor and knows his condition best. We can't just cut off all contact. Besides, even with your history with him, he's still quite good to us. So there's no need for us to strain our relationship with him."

"Your relationship with him has nothing to do with me." Monica was a little unhappy after listening to her mother's explanation.

Did she think that she would be petty? It was just a divorce. Could they really not meet for the rest of their lives?

"By the way, is your health alright?" Monica asked Gary with concern.

Gary took a deep breath. "Finn said I've been under too much pressure recently, which is why I have an irregular heartbeat. He told me to relax and take my medicine on time."

"Dad, could you stop worrying about me?" Upon hearing her father's words, Monica felt very guilty. "I'm handling it."

"Alright, alright. I'm not worried. I believe in you, okay?" Gary could not stand to hear Monica's complaints.

"If anything happens to you, there's no point in me living anymore."

"What do you mean by that?!" Gary berated.

Monica pouted. "Anyway, you guys better take good care of your bodies. Then, watch as your daughter tears that scumbag Michael apart!"

"Alright. we'll wait and see," Ruby quickly chimed in. They had always held Monica in their hands, afraid she would be sad and suffer.

Monica's eyes teared, a little moved. After so many things had happened, she did not feel that her parents' love would be so natural.