

## Chapter 77

I'll find the best few companies that we can work with.

"Hello, Mr. Jacobs. May I ask... Oh, but I believe you still remember the deal that we discussed yesterday, right?" The moment Pauline picked up the call, she drew everyone's attention, including Selena, who looked at her as well.

"Sure, we'll work together some other time." Right after Pauline had just hung up the call, she heard her phone ringing again, so she had to pick up her phone again. "Hello, Miss Nolan. Regarding our deal yesterday—Oh... Okay, I understand." After putting her phone away, Pauline appeared to be a little disheartened.

"What's wrong, Pauline?"

"Well, we can talk about that after the meeting," Pauline said with a gloomy look on her face.

As soon as everyone was seated, Selena started off the meeting by complimenting her team, whereupon Linda proceeded to distribute the dossiers on each of the companies that they would soon be collaborating with.

"Let's discuss and select the companies that we think are suitable for us to work with. Then, we'll vote for the best later on."

When Selena finished her words, Pauline said, "I think there is no need for that, President Yard." The next moment, all eyes in the meeting room fell upon her.

"When you told me to give up the plan about working with

Fowler Corporation, I asked Linda for all the information on our potential partnering companies and went through every single one of them. In fact, I even paid some of them a visit to thrash out the details further. The discussions went well, and we even came to the point where they drafted a collaboration proposal for us." Pauline sounded dispirited, and Selena had never seen her like that before.

"I thought I could give you a complete proposal by today, but they just called me up this morning and told me to forget about the deals we discussed yesterday." Pauline apologized to Selena, looking guilty. "I'm sorry, President Yard."

Witnessing Pauline's depressed look, Selena felt sympathetic toward her. Poor Pauline! She could have taken two days off to get recharged, but she spent them all on her work instead. It was all because of my decision. "It's okay, Pauline. I won't blame you, but why is this so sudden? What did they say over the phone?" Selena brought up her main concern, as she had absolute faith in Pauline's capability. If she says it's taken care of, it's taken care of.

"It beats me as well. The excuses they gave me simply didn't add up. Some of them told me they're going to put the plan on hold for the year, while the others said they've already found some other better companies to work with, which sounds absurd to me. How could they possibly have found another company this morning when they just sealed the deal with me yesterday?"

While Pauline was confused about the sudden change of events, Selena immediately knew something was wrong.

"It's okay. We'll look for some other companies if these few won't work with us." Selena pulled herself together and shook Pauline's hand.

In response, Pauline forced a brittle smile. After all, these were the best companies that she had selected from the industry. Therefore, they would now have to lower their expectations and make do with their alternatives since it was no longer possible to work with these top-notch business players. For that, Pauline mentally braced herself, knowing that the path ahead to enter Astoria's market had become more difficult. "Alright, I'll find some other companies and talk to them."

After that, they moved on to discuss their brand positioning strategy before ending the meeting. Then, Selena sat in her office and took a few sips of her coffee. A few moments later, she suddenly thought of something, so she quickly went through her files to read more about those companies that turned them down.

"I see what's going on now!" Selena soon realized that those companies had business relations with either Empire Group or Fowler Corporation in one form or another. It's not so hard to figure out who's behind this 'strike', is it? At that moment, Selena could already see that smirk on Pierre's face in her mind's eye as he said, "Beg me!"