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But now with Blair and Tinsor's friendship that had blossomed within a short period of time, the tensed relationship between the Nolans and the Jaquins seemed to show signs of waning.

Of course, this was all thanks to Ashlyn, who beat up the two and ended up converting them into her fanboys.

After that round of beating, both Blair and Tinsor somehow found each other interesting companions to have fun with other than fanboying over Ashlyn together...

Right then, the lights of the Concert Hall dimmed, and the two emcees went on stage.

The duo consisted of a man and a woman, of whom both were the most famous emcees of Lake City TV Station.

After a brief opening note and a round of congratulatory praises for National Day, the female emcee announced excitedly, "For the first performance, we shall invite the most famous idol pop star of the country, Jonathan Quickton to perform the song 'Peace and Glory'!"

The spectators were all stunned in their places and failed to react even after the emcees have left the stage.

"Jonathan Quickton?"

"Jonathan Quickton is opening the Gala?"

"And he is performing the famous Peace and Glory! I heard that song was composed by an unknown composer five years ago to praise the glory of our country. But the said composer has never revealed himself all these years. Many have speculated the composer to be Snowstorm, but Snowstorm himself has never clarified this speculation around him."

"Yes, indeed! Although Peace and Glory is a song from five years ago, it is always performed on such patriotic occasions. But now... Jonathan is singing that song? Isn't he an idol singer who sings pop songs? An idol like him singing a patriotic song? Goodness, that sounds weird!"

"Can he even sing that song well? His image doesn't match that song at all!"

The spectators began to chatter in their seats after recovering from the surprise.

Even the VIPs were surprised by the announcement.

The voice of the director of Lake City TV Station trembled as he spoke, "How on earth did Ms. Berry get

Jonathan to perform in our program? This is Jonathan Quickton we're talking about! So many TV stations have tried to invite him to perform at a very high price, yet he turned them all down! And now he actually came here?"

The director grabbed Mr. Field's arms in excitement. "Mr. Field, can you pinch me? I'm not dreaming, right?"

"Why are you getting all excited? It's just Jonathan Quickton!" Mr. Field never paid attention to the happenings in the world of showbiz, so he couldn't get the director's excitement over Jonathan's presence.

The director explained so excitedly that his saliva almost flew around the table, "Jonathan is the most popular idol in the country! Once we have Jonathan performing, then our program's audience rating will be guaranteed! The fact that a pop star like him is singing a patriotic song is enough of a publicity stunt to promote our program! Goodness! What's wrong with Ms. Berry? Why didn't she make use of Jonathan to promote our program! She should have made use of this opportunity to boost our audience rating! Why didn't she do that... what a waste! Indeed, she is inexperienced!"

When the director recovered from his excitement, he began to lament over the missed opportunity to promote their program.

If only we used Jonathan to promote our program, do I need to worry about the program's popularity? Do I even need to worry about the audience rating?

However, Mr. Field merely smiled. "Ashlyn didn't want to rely on a mere publicity stunt to attract audience rating. You will know why she didn't make use of Jonathan to promote the program once you finish watching all the performances for the Gala Night."

Mr. Field suddenly recalled Ashlyn's words when she had first accepted the task to direct the Gala Night. "If I make use of Madeline Saunders' fame as a publicity stunt, then we would have both the headlines and the audience rating. But what about next year? We cannot rely on mere publicity stunts to keep a program running. What we should emphasize is the quality of our program. We should attract more audience rating by putting out more high-quality programs for the Gala Night."

She didn't even bother to make use of her own alter ego as the famous Madeline Saunders to promote her own program, let alone Jonathan, who was just an idol singer.

Lucas could hear their conversation clearly from his side.

He then took a sip of water from his own glass before adding, "Nah, she just couldn't care less about the publicity."

His words stunned the rest around his table.

Did... did Lucas just defend Ashlyn?

Goodness!

Why is Captain Nolan, who is also President Nolan of Nolan Group, speaking up for Ashlyn?

I thought he doesn't meddle in such affairs?

This cold and mighty man of the prestigious Nolan family... how on earth did he come to know of a mere director of an event program?

Various thoughts were running in the minds of the surrounding VIPs, but no one dared to voice out their doubts.

Following the first note of the music, Jonathan went on the stage in his black tuxedo. It was the first time he had dressed so formally since his debut, be it his attire, or his overall make-over.

He looked like a completely different person now with his current matured and staid vibe, especially when compared with his usually hot performances in his own concert.

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With his gorgeous features, he was absolutely dashing in this formal suit!

Among the audience before him, there were countless female fans who were either married or in a relationship now.

Screams of adoration rang out from the audience the moment he started singing.

"Ah! My hubby is on stage now!"

"Ah! Jonathan is gorgeous!"

"My idol! My man!"

"I want to take photographs and videos of him!"

Hence, the fans whipped out their phones and cameras and started taking photographs of him before posting them on Twitter and sending them to their friends through WhatsApp.

The audience screamed excitedly, "Oh gosh! I have never expected the opening act of the Lake City's National Day Gala Night to be performed by Jonathan!"

"My idol is so handsome!"

“My dream has come through. Thank you, Ashlyn, for letting me see my idol!”

“I’m going crazy soon!”

Jonathan’s performance in Lake City’s National Day Gala Night became the trending topic on Twitter.

The power of Jonathan’s large fan base was indeed astonishing!

Although the other television stations had invited other top-notch celebrities, idols and famous actors for their gala nights, none was met with as much online fervor as Jonathan.

The posts about Jonathan’s performance achieved a record number of likes within a short time span due to his large fan base.

“Why doesn’t Ashlyn inform us earlier? There is no publicity about this at all. I almost miss a chance to see my idol!”

“Boo... she’s too much! My idol sings so well!”

“His rendition is better than the original version!”

“My idol can even sing a patriotic song. Furthermore, he sings it so well. To think that Ms. Berry can whip up such a good idea and convince a famous celebrity like him to perform such a wonderful rendition of the song! Thanks to Ms. Berry for showing us a different side of our idol!”

The fans continued to upload the pictures and posted them on various social media platforms.

The media covering the Gala Night was in a state of frenzied excitement too, as they snapped away at Joseph from various angles before posting the photographs onto Twitter.

After all, it was crucial for a reporter to jump on the bandwagon and report the latest trending news.

The other television stations were dumbfounded.

How does Lake City manage to invite Joseph to perform on its Gala Night when none of us can do him? And it has convinced him to sing a rendition of a patriotic song as the opening act! This unexpected decision reaps such good results!

Everyone knows that Joseph is an idol specialized in singing and dancing. He has been in a long-term collaboration with Snowstorm, and the latter has composed numerous popular pop songs for him over the years.

So who would have imagined that he will dress so formally and sing a patriotic song on stage!

What's more, in order to entice him to accept our invitation, we have promised him the freedom to choose what he wanted to perform without any intervention from the television stations and governmental authorities.

Now, the Lake City Television Station will be famous overnight!

After Jonathan's grand performance, everyone was waiting in anticipation for the other performances lined up for the National Gala Night.

Lisa was stunned as she held the phone.

Ashlyn has managed to invite Joseph? This is unbelievable! But so what if she manages to invite Jonathan? The Gala Night has started, and Janet has yet to turn up! Haha, what is Ashlyn going to do without her female lead?

Although Ashlyn was giving out commands to the broadcasting staff calmly, a hint of panic flashed across her face occasionally. Nevertheless, she managed to suppress her anxiety, and the performance went on smoothly.

A satisfied smirk played across Lisa's face as she observed Ashlyn from a near distance.

Ashley, you have embarrassed the Haddock Group and caused us to suffer great losses. We won't stop at kidnapping Janet.

Ashlyn caught the smirk on Lisa's face from the corner of her eyes.

Lowering her gaze, a discreet smile spread across her face.

Now I know who has kidnapped Janet.

Joseph bowed after his performance.

A resounding applause rang out from the audience.

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His manager hurried over to welcome him as he entered the backstage.

"Jonathan, you are great!"

"What happened?" Joseph looked at him, puzzled, as he undid the buttons on his collar.

He was too used to donning casual attire. The stiff collar of the formal shirt was making him uncomfortable.

“Your performance is amazing and has received unanimously great reviews.” The manager whipped out his phone to show him.

“Your sudden change in style and decision to sing the patriotic song has received great reviews from the netizens and the government. Look at this.”

The manager swiped his phone and scrolled down to view the comments on Twitter, “Look at this. The Youth Committee has left you a compliment through its Twitter account! The state media has praised you!”

Joseph was surprised.

Although he was popular with a large fan base, he was only a pop star after all. The government usually paid no heed to a small-time idol like him.

“Look! Even the state media praises you as an idol spreading positive influence! Haha, the state media seldom compliments celebrities!”

The manager was so proud that he almost cried tears of joy.

But Joseph remained humble, “Help me thank them. I still have a long way to go if I want to act in movies and television dramas. It’s only a patriotic song. There’s no need to blow up the matter.”

Though idols who could sing and dance could attract a large fan case, he was still keen on becoming an actor starring in family dramas instead of idol shows.

But he needed the government’s approval before he could act in television dramas.

The advice his boss gave him last night popped up in his mind. Indeed, Boss is never wrong! I finally got it!

He let out a deep sigh.

At this moment, Lisa was singing on stage accompanied by other dancers.

The performers were merely extras who were selected to represent their respective departments. But their level of professionalism surprised many. In fact, their performance did not lose out to professional actors.

Although the female singer’s voice was quite ordinary, she had a good sense of timing as her singing hit all the right notes.

The dance performance was well-coordinated with lively expressions on the dancers’ faces.

The audience, including those who did not appreciate music, enjoyed the performance.

Another round of applause rang out after the performance ended.

The audience had not expected such a good performance following Jonathan's performance. With the success of the two consecutive performances, the audience was waiting for the next performance in anticipation.

"They can sing and dance pretty well."

"The female performers' make up is particularly fashionable."

"I wonder what the brand of the female singer's lipstick is? It looks fabulous on her."

"Yes!"

"What's the next performance?"

Lisa brimmed with confidence as she entered the backstage after her performance ended.

Sweeping her gaze across the room, she feigned a concerned look and approached Ashlyn after she confirmed that Janet did not turn up, "Ms. Berry, you still can't find Janet?"

Ashley took off her earphones and cast a panicked glance at Lisa before answering her in an annoyed tone, "If I knew that Janet is so unreliable, I will not have cast her as the female lead for the sketch right at the start. She should let me know if she is not interested in performing instead of vanishing now."

Ashlyn ranted on in an irritated tone.

Lisa blinked innocently and consoled her, "Ms. Berry, don't be angry. Should I head over to the Smiths' house and take a look?"

"There is no need for that. It's all my fault that I have chosen the wrong person. A director has gone to the Smiths' house already. I have to find someone to replace her if she doesn't turn up," said Ashlyn, shaking her head resignedly.

Lisa was secretly thrilled.

Ashlyn returned to her work. Lisa sent a WhatsApp message to Sienna, "Ashlyn thinks that Janet has not turned up for work on purpose. It seems like the Smiths has not told anyone about her disappearance and is only searching for her secretly."

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"I get it. Be careful and don't let the cat out of the bag," replied Sienna.

At this moment, in the president's office in Haddock Group.

Sienna reported to Dixon about Ashlyn's situation.

Dixon narrowed his eyes. One could not read his mind from the indifferent look on his face.

"Since Janet's family is looking for her secretly, why haven't those losers ask you for more money?"

"I have made the full payment to them already. I guess they must be worried about the police, thus switching off their phones. In fact, they are uncontactable now as I can't reach them on their phones," explained Sienna warily.

"Losers!" Dixon chided coldly.

"Find those losers and get rid of them!"

"Yes!" Trembling with fear, Sienna left the office.

Get rid of them.

Sienna understood what Dixon meant by those words.

Taking in a deep breath, she began to send out orders to search for those thugs.

But they had no idea that Janet had returned home safely.

Everything progressed smoothly in accordance to Ashlyn's plans.

Time passed slowly.

All the performances were fabulous. The training, which the performers had undergone for the last couple of months, paid off.

The performers had improved tremendously, particularly those performing the dance segments. The folk dancers were graceful, while the modern dancers' vigor enraptures many. Many were also impressed with the fluid movements of the elegant ballroom dancers.

On the other hand, there was a wide variety of singing segments and sketches, entertaining the vast audience.

Furthermore, the audience learnt that most of the sketches were written by Madeline Saunders.

Needless to say, Madeline Saunders is a prominent figure. Not only can she draw, play the piano but she is also a popular author!

Her last novel was published three years ago, and her fans were pining for her new novel since then.

At that time, her last novel had caused a huge sensation, racking up immense profits. In fact, its sales record had topped the chart for over a year.

The sales were still going strong till date, resulting in several rounds of re-publications by the publisher.

Needless to say, the sketches written by Madeline Saunders were terrific! The scripts coupled with the convincing acting of the actors resulted in a great performance, enjoyed immensely by the audience.

Lucas was seated among the audience, but he didn't care about the performances. His mind was occupied with the thoughts of seeing her...

But Ashlyn did not appear on stage even after many performances. Finally, he could not help but ask impatiently, "When will Ashlyn be on stage?"

Spencer swallowed hard and checked out the program list hurriedly. After looking through the list a couple of times, he replied finally, "Mr. Nolan, Ms. Berry is the producing director and won't be performing on stage."

Lucas' face clouded over.

The coldness he emitted sent a chill down the spines of the other prominent figures sitting at the same table.

What is wrong with him? The atmosphere seems to have become tense suddenly.

On the other hand, in the backstage.

Charlotte's face was ghastly white as she hugged her cello tightly. Her beautiful eyes were wide with terror.

Her exquisite makeup was unable to disguise the terror she was feeling now.

In fact, her hands were trembling badly.

I will be up in the next second... There are so many people here... I can't do it! I will die of fright... This is so scary... I feel terrible...

She felt as if she could not breathe.

Lochlan was trying his best to encourage her. Looking worried, he held her hands tightly and said softly, "Lottie, you can do it. You must overcome your phobia. Uncle Lochlan believes in you. You are a big girl now, so you have nothing to fear. Lottie, you will put on a great performance, just like how you have done during your practice. Do you understand that?"

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"Don't look at the audience. Just keep your head low and focus on your performance"

But his words of encouragement were utterly useless.

Charlotte was getting more terrified by the minute, and her mind went blank. She stared at Lochlan pitifully and whimpered in a crying voice, "Uncle Lochlan, I'm terrified..."

At this moment, Ashlyn walked to their side.

Her brows knitted as she caught the terror on Charlotte's face.

"There is no need to be afraid."

"Ms. Berry...Ms. Berry..." Charlotte withdrew her hands from Lochlan's grasp and tugged at Ashlyn's sleeves while looking at her as if her life depended on the latter.

"Charlotte, you have practiced so hard for the Gala Night, so you must go on!" Ashlyn held Charlotte's hands as she continued, "Your Uncle Lochlan is very concerned about you and really hopes that you can overcome your phobia. Charlotte, I have full confidence in you."

"No...No..." Charlotte shook her head vehemently.

She did not know what to do. Her fingers were frozen with fear, and there was no way she could play the cello given her current condition.

How can I perform on stage in this state?

Her hands started to turn numb, and she almost dropped the cello.

Looking at Charlotte's terrified state now, Lochlan felt regretful and sorry for her. It's all my fault. I should not have asked her to perform in front of so many people. My plan to toughen her up through this method has backfired, causing her to be so terrified. She has finally improved after such a long time and can hold simple conversations with outsiders now. I can't risk her being so terrified and retreat into her shell."

He looked at Ashlyn, troubled, "Ms. Berry, given Lottie's present state, why don't we cancel her performance?"

Ashlyn had been observing Charlotte quietly. Her exquisite features were filled with terror and anxiety. She must be really terrified. Indeed, the rumors are true. Autism is so scary. She's trapped in her own world and is too frightened to venture into the outside world.

After a thoughtful ponder, Ashlyn suggested, "Charlotte, you must be brave. Is it okay if I accompany you on stage?"

"You accompany me?" Charlotte's eyes widened with astonishment as she looked at Ashlyn in disbelief. "You accompany me?" She repeated.

Ashley wrapped her hands around Charlotte's hands tightly, "You can play the cello while I dance. Is that okay?"

"Really?" Charlotte bit her lips as her eyes sparkled with joy.

"Since when have I lied to you before?" Ashlyn smiled before continuing gently, "I will get changed now. Wait for me here."

On the stage, a stand-up comedy was coming to an end now.

Luckily, there were a lot of costumes in the backstage.

Charlotte was dressed in a white traditional costume.

Ashlyn chose a red traditional costume to match Charlotte's.

She put on a simple makeup swiftly and pulled Charlotte's hands, "Let's go."

On the stage, Charlotte sat in front of the cello. She was a refreshing sight, as she resembled a romantic ancient lady in her white traditional costume and exquisite makeup.

In fact, she looked like a fairy as the spotlights shone on her.

However, Charlotte was feeling suffocated as everyone's eyes landed upon her.

Her eyes glistened with tears of fear.

At this moment, a woman in red danced in front of her and shielded her from the audience's gaze.

She trembled and looked at Ashlyn, who was dancing before her.

Her terrified gaze met Ashlyn's eyes, which were filled with warmth.

A stirring warmth flowed through her.

In that instant, she forgot that she was on the stage. Lowering her gaze, she started to play the cello.

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Coming from the cello, beautiful music dripped like honey as every string was strung.

Ashlyn started to dance along with the music.

She resembled a beautiful butterfly spreading her wings, graceful and beautiful. One could not help but be enthralled by her.

Lucas, who was in an irritable mood, was surprised to see her on stage.

His eyes widened with astonishment. That is Ashlyn! I never knew that she can dance so well!

Her legs extended like a prima ballerina, and she glided across the stage, arms held in front, fingertips touching, just like a beautiful butterfly flitting from one flower to another.

The audience looked at the pair of performers, each decked in red and white, with astonishment. The lady in white resembled a lily, pure and resilient; the lady in red resembled a red rose, symbolizing romantic love and enduring passion.

Some of the audience was so enthralled by the performance, the captivating dance accompanied by beautiful music, and forgot to take photographs.

The media was taking pictures frenziedly.

“They are so beautiful, and their coordination is perfect.”

“Oh gosh! This performance is so breathtaking!”

Impressed by the performance, the reporters posted the newly-taken pictures onto their Twitter with flattering reviews.

Again, their posts sparked another trending topic on Twitter.

The netizens made it their duty to find out the identities of the two female performers.

Some recognized Ashlyn immediately.

“Oh gosh! It’s Ashlyn!”

“I never knew that she can dance so well!”

“No wonder she is the producing director. She is indeed very talented.”

“The Gala Night organized by this television station is fabulous! It’s the best that I have ever seen!”

“Not only is Ashlyn talented but she is humble too.”

The Gala Night of the Lake City Television Station topped the trends on Twitter.

As for the other television stations, there was not much talk about their Gala Night. Needless to say, these television stations did not take their defeat well and were jealous of Lake City Television Station’s success.

Lucas was watching the performance, particularly the dancer, intently.

It was as if she was baiting him with her slender waist, her graceful silhouette and her godlike beauty.

His gaze was fixated on her, boring into her.

Ashlyn, why do you always surprise me?

He felt a strong urge to rush onto the stage and pulled her into his tight embrace to shield her from others’ gazes.

I should be the only person who can admire her beauty.

On the stage, both performers in red and white complemented each other.

Lochlan was seated among the audience and continued to take videos of Charlotte.

I must capture every moment of her first performance. It is wonderful.

He sighed and looked at the cellist on stage.

This is too astonishing. What a surprise. She is blossoming into such a beautiful, talented woman. There will be a day when the world finally discovers her true beauty. But I have noticed her unique talent in music before everyone else.

Finally, the performance came to an end, and it received great applause from the audience.

Ashlyn, taking Charlotte’s hand in hers, bowed.

Only then did she realize that Charlotte’s hand was wet with sweat.

She flashed a warm smile at Charlotte and there were sparkles in her eyes.

Charlotte felt a gush of warmth sweeping over her.

Lisa, who was sitting among the audience with the rest of the performers who had finished their segments, scoffed silently.

So what if you have performed well? Let's see how you are going to cope with Janet's disappearance!

As the Gala Night progressed, other than Jonathan, the subsequent performances were not helmed by any other top-notch celebrities but by extras who had only undergone a month of training. They were merely staff assigned by the various departments to participate in the performances. Yet, everyone had done astoundingly well. It was a real treat for the audience, and each segment had stirred up a lively discussion on Twitter.

The male singer could sing so well.

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The sketch 'Fool' had a profound meaning.

The two female performers in the cello performance were so beautiful.

Stand-up comedy 'Vegetable' was so funny.

"To be honest, I did not expect amateur performers to do so well. Coming to this Gala Night is so worth it."

"Especially the 'Vegetable'! He is not a veteran performer or a full-time artiste. Yet, he can do so well!"

"The cellist in white is so pretty, resembling a white rose, while Ashlyn resembles a red rose. Both of them cooperated so well."

"Yes, that's right! And the sketch 'Fools are only pretending' teaches one that it is a blessing to be more giving."

"I heard that the last performance is also a sketch, advocating the fight against corruption. I really respect them for writing a script that centered around such a sensitive topic."

"Yes, I look forward to the sketch."

"Me too."

The lively discussion on Twitter continued.

Most of the reviews online were positive except for a few negative reviews.

“What rubbish are they singing? The singer is off-pitch! Is he lip-syncing?”

“Please, are you kidding? Anyone who lip-syncs will be perfectly in tune. Who will opt to lip-sync an off-pitch song?”

“Those who scold my goddess, Ashlyn, get lost!”

“Why can’t I scold her? What talent of her is there to affirm? She is only good at marketing herself.”

“What has she done? The official account had tagged her on Twitter only. Please get it clear. You can also ask Lake City to call you out on Twitter if you have the ability.”

The viewers of the Gala Night’s live broadcast increased along with the online discussions.

It started from 2 million viewers to 5 million viewers, 10 million viewers, and now, it had achieved 30 million viewers and still counting.

Needless to say, the broadcasting platform was thrilled.

The Gala Night was trending on Twitter, thus had attracted huge numbers of viewers to its platform.

After all, the netizens were very smart nowadays and would not waste a second on lousy shows. They just switched to the live broadcast of Lake City’s Gala Night once they realized it was interesting.

The ‘likes’ of the live broadcast were never ending.

Everyone was shocked by this unprecedented success.

It did not take long for the number of viewers to hit 50 million, and it was still counting.

Initially, the broadcasting platform had the same opinion as the netizens that Lake City’s Gala Night would not do too well.

But who would have expected that Ashlyn was so capable! She had trained the performers so well and convinced every one of her ability with the quality performances.

Soon, the Gala Night was coming to an end.

Lisa sat back on her chair with a smug on her face as she waited for Ashlyn to make a fool of herself.

Then, the lights dimmed.

The props were moved onto the stage swiftly before the lights were turned on again upon the host’s

signal.

The stage was awash in light.

At this moment, a familiar figure came onto the stage.

Who else could it be other than Janet with her tall, slender frame and her familiar face?

Lisa nearly fell out of her seat in shock.

“How did she get here?”

Before realizing it, she had stood up and exclaimed loudly in shock while glaring at Janet.

Everyone turned their eyes on her, including some bosses who were not too pleased with her interruption.

Their gaze on her jolted her back to her senses, reminding her that she should be watching the performance quietly instead.

Her face was ghastly white as she sat down.

Janet’s sketch centered around the topic of anti-corruption and had a profound significance.

Her role was of a section chief who abused her authority and lick her bosses’ boots while demeaning her subordinates.

She had cooked the books and accepted bribes while lying to everyone in every way.

But she had got away with her crimes because she always licked the shoes of her bosses.

Then, one fateful day when she was trying to flatter her new boss but to no avail. Her new boss discovered her crimes and reported her to the police.

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Janet’s acting was perfect in terms of her gestures and expressions.

She bowed to the audience when the sketch came to an end and said, “The Gala Night is coming to an end now. I want to thank Ms. Berry for all her help.

As the night came to an end, all the performers returned to the stage to sing the song ‘Unforgettable Night’ together.

Everyone’s spirits rose to their zenith.

Watching the live broadcast, the netizens had nothing but praises and even started a new thread, "What other talents a performer lack if he can perform in the Gala Night?"

Lucas' gaze remained fixated on Ashlyn.

She was pushed to the center by the other performers.

Despite having so many beautiful performers around her, Ashlyn's beauty is still so captivating. I can't tear my eyes off her. I wonder what she is saying to Jonathan, who is standing beside her now. His face is slightly blushed, and he seems to be looking at her with a flirtatious glint in his eyes.

Lucas felt a surge of jealousy rising within him.

How can a small-time celebrity seduce my woman! He must have a death wish!

Damn!

"Ban him!" Lucas ordered out of the blue.

"Mr. Nolan..." Spencer was placed in a difficult position. How can Mr. Nolan ban his own company's idol simply in a fit of rage? Spencer went on nervously, "Jonathan is the top celebrity in Nolan Entertainment. We need him to lead our rookies. Otherwise, those veteran artistes will not care a dime about our rookies."

"..."

Upon hearing Spencer's words, Lucas remembered that Jonathan was under his company.

"Cancel all his jobs next week to serve him a warning."

"..."

I wonder what has Jonathan done to offend his own boss to lose all his jobs for the entire week.

Spencer would never dream that Jonathan was punished by Lucas simply because the latter was jealous.

After the Gala Night had ended, Jared asked Jonathan, "What did my boss say to you just now?"

"Your boss is right." Jonathan rubbed his nose before going on, "She asks if I'm interested to act in a movie. My role will be an idol."

"Act in a movie?" Jared raised his brows.

“Yes! She wants to invest in it, so I have asked her to speak to my manager.”

“Why don’t I know beforehand that my boss wants to film a movie?” Jared looked forlorn as he felt left out by Ashlyn.

“Maybe the thought just strikes her.” With that, Jonathan left with his manager.

Jared went to fetch Ashlyn.

She was in the midst of bidding farewell to the performers in the backstage.

Jared leapt with shock as he caught sight of the scene in the backstage.

If I don’t know better, I may have thought that someone just died.

The performers had not even changed out of their costumes and were surrounding Ashlyn.

Some were talking to her while some were wiping tears off their cheeks.

What... is going on now?

Jared was baffled and caught Ashlyn’s words, “Enough of this. We will have a chance to cooperate in the future. I have booked the restaurant at the Imperial Hotel for next Saturday. Why don’t I treat everyone to a farewell dinner?”

“Ms. Berry, Imperial Hotel is rather expensive. Isn’t it too extravagant to treat more than a hundred people for dinner at the hotel?”

“I don’t want to waste your money.”

“Yes, Ms. Berry. Don’t spend so much money on us.”

“It’s nothing. Don’t fret over it.” Ashlyn smiled and caught sight of Jared, thus she continued, “My friend is here to fetch me. I need to leave now.”

Everyone turned around to see Jared and started teasing them immediately.

“Ah, Mr. Quickton! Ms. Berry’s boyfriend!”

“Mr. Quickton is here to show off his love towards Ms. Berry!”

“Mr. Quickton, Ms. Berry is great! Your choice is fabulous!”

A blush crept up on Jared's neck and face. My relationship with my Boss is purely work. We are not lovers.

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Lucas and Spencer had just arrived at the backstage when they heard the performers' cheers. Their faces darkened instantly.

Lucas thought furiously, Just now, it was Jared Quickton. Now it's Jonathan Quickton.

What's with all the Quicktons?

Damn it!

When he imagined how these men stared at her, he couldn't help but feel upset.

His eyes glinted coldly as he walked to the backstage.

As soon as his tall figure appeared, everyone felt a chill running down their spines.

That's chilly. Why does it suddenly feel like the temperature has dipped below zero?

A heavy silence hung in the air.

Ashlyn glanced at the man whose face had darkened and raised her brows. "Mr. Nolan, may I help you?"

"I'll give you a ride home." The man's voice was like a cello, seductive and melodious.

However, he didn't manage to seduce Ashlyn who merely dug her ears and smirked. Her gaze was indifferent as she said, "I'm sorry, but Mr. Quickton and I are going the same way."

Lisa stood in a corner as jealousy blazed through her heart.

How did that b***h find Janet?

She wondered how Janet appeared right in the nick of time.

As Janet was here, the Gala Night was a great success.

She was certain Dixon would place the blame on her after looking into the matter.

Viciousness gleamed across Lisa's face as she thought, Damn it, how will I report to Sienna now?

I've assured her Janet won't be here.

Upon recalling how ruthless Dixon was, Lisa couldn't help but shudder in fear.

Meanwhile, Lucas could only watch as Ashlyn enter Jared's car.

He held back the fury in his heart as he knew he shouldn't force her to go his way. The only way to her heart was to follow her wishes.

However, it irritated him to see her with other men.

Suddenly, he suspected the advice given by the so-called online love gurus was nothing but nonsense. He shouldn't have trusted them.

Gritting his teeth, he ordered Spencer who was sitting right ahead. "Order 99 flower stands for me."

Spencer was confused. "Where do you want to deliver them to?"

"To the entrance of the city Hall."

Thus, the front page news of Lake City Morning Post read as following.

A mysterious man delivered 99 flower stands to the entrance of our city hall, with a note congratulating Ashlyn Berry for the success of Lake City's Gala Night.

This mysterious suitor is stressing out Ms. Berry's other suitors! This generous suitor must have deep pockets to be able to do something this extravagant!

That was the exact quote taken from Lake City Morning Post.

Ashlyn couldn't help but sigh in exasperation upon reading that article.

She was certain that crazy Lucas was behind this.

Why does he like to be the center of attention?

Ashlyn massaged her temples in resignation. She suddenly noticed Harrison and Anderson shoving each other unwillingly.

She shot them a look. "What is it? Stop pushing each other like little girls."

"Boss, er... It's about Berry Furnishings."

"A few days ago, we..."

"Get to the point," Ashlyn sat up and demanded while leaving the newspaper aside. "I told you to get

something on them, right? What did you get? It has been days. Don't tell me you got nothing."

"Yes, we did," Harrison hurriedly replied. "We wanted to report it yesterday, but we forgot about it."

"If you found something, hand the evidence to the authorities. The law is fair and just," Ashlyn replied coolly. "Since they misused the loopholes in the law, they should get punished accordingly."

"Yes, yes. We'll deal with it now." Both men ran away at once.

After a break, Ashlyn prepared lunch and went to the hospital.

She had been busy with the Gala Night, so she didn't have time for her grandma.

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Before she entered the ward, she could hear a commotion from afar.

Frowning, she picked up her pace.

"Look at that expensive stuff. Ashlyn must be rich now!" Horace's rude voice rang out as he stared at Susan viciously.

Susan cowered back in fear. "Lucas was the one who changed them."

"Who's Lucas? Are you lying to me? I don't see any Lucas here!" Horace demanded angrily. "I don't care. Get two million from Ashlyn. She's a famous doctor who gets paid a lot by those wealthy men! She must be rich!"

Susan gazed at her furious son worriedly. "Horace, it isn't easy for Ashlyn to earn a living. Can you stop extorting her?"

"Mom, how could you be so partial to her? Horace's company has lost a few contracts strangely within the past few days. We're facing a cash flow issue now. He's your son, so you must help him. The only person who can help Horace now is Ashlyn. If she can pay for this VIP ward, she can help Horace, too!" Mary shrieked. She then added, "You should be closer to your son than your granddaughter! Why won't you help your son?"

Tears brimmed in Susan's eyes. "Stop it! Ashlyn isn't rich at all."

"Even if I am rich, I won't give my money to ingrates like y'all." Suddenly, an icy voice rang from the door.

The three of them looked in the door's direction and saw Ashlyn with a lunchbox in her hand. She was dressed in an icy blue midi dress which highlighted her striking features.

She walked into the room with an icy aura around her.

Placing the lunchbox on the table, she said, "Grandma, I have prepared some chicken soup for you. Let me pour some for you."

She literally ignored both Horace and his wife. However, she couldn't help but think, Why is Horace's company in trouble now? I don't think they have handed the evidence to the authorities yet.

That's strange.

Susan gazed at Ashlyn and sighed before turning to the couple. "You should leave now."

"Mom, remember to consider what we've just told you!" Horace hinted at Susan before pulling an unwilling Mary away with him.

Mary grew increasingly afraid of Ashlyn after what had happened earlier.

She dared not say anything and scuttled out from the room.

"Ashlyn, that woman planted those evil ideas in your dad's head. Don't blame him." Susan spoke after a brief hesitation as she was afraid Ashlyn might hate Horace. "Your dad wasn't like this back then."

Ashlyn interrupted Susan before she could finish. "Grandma, stop defending him. He became an ingrate because you kept defending him!"

At her words, tears rolled down the old lady's cheeks. "I-I'm sorry."

Ashlyn immediately regretted her words, especially when she saw her grandmother's tears.

Upon recalling how her grandmother brought her up, her tone turned exasperated. "You don't have to say sorry. My dad is the one who should apologize."

She gave the bowl of chicken soup to Susan. "Here, try some."

Ashlyn let out a long breath as uneasiness crept up her heart.

Mary's voice was still audible in her ear. "You should be closer to your son than your granddaughter!"

She abruptly recalled a news article she had seen previously.

A paralyzed old man was buried alive by his son. But when his son was about to get locked up in jail, he showed up and humbled himself for the sake of his son.

Suddenly, she understood why her grandmother refused to stay with her no matter how many times she

made that offer.

She might be close to her grandmother, but Horace was her son. A mother would always love her son selflessly.

Perhaps Grandma loves Horace the most, she thought.

After drinking some of the soup, Susan put the bowl down and looked at Ashlyn, obviously torn. "Ashlyn, your dad's company isn't doing well."