

In A Flash 131

Chapter 131

“Mulan?” Aurelia was puzzled, but someone stepped forward to enlighten her.

“The Mulan Group is a business empire that has emerged abroad in recent years. Its luxury brand, Mulan, has been dominating other major fashion brands during Fashion Week. I heard that the owner behind it is extremely mysterious. Some people say that the owner is a woman,

that it’s a man.”

but others say

“Mulan’s haute couture fashion is highly sought after. Unfortunately, it operates on a membership system, but only those who have accumulated expenses exceeding 150 thousand dollars are eligible for it. The requirements for the eligibility to buy their haute couture clothings are even higher.

“Mulan has only recently set up stores in the country. The waiting period to get something from them is said to be about a year, but there are still many people queuing up to buy their clothes.

“One of my clients was supposed to organize the company’s annual celebration. But he forcibly postponed it to wait for Mulan’s clothes. That’s why I know so much.

“The dress Aurelia is wearing is definitely Mulan’s new design! It’s priced around ten thousand dollars on the official website, with a minimum wait period of at least one month.”

As the words fell, everyone in the office was stunned. Even Kimberly stood frozen in place as she took

in the facts.

The dress had to be fake!

She couldn't even buy the latest designs from Mulan, so how could Aurelia afford it?

Before Aurelia could say anything, someone else couldn't sit still any longer and walked directly to her.

"Aurelia, you... How could you wear a counterfeit dress?"

It was Millie.

She stared at Aurelia. The adorable girl that she once was had vanished without a trace. Instead, her eyes were now filled with resentment and jealousy, as if she wanted to burn holes in Aurelia's dress with her eyes.

Aurelia frowned. She never expected that her good friend would be the one to embarrass her one day.

She sighed inwardly.

In truth, Millie had changed long before, but Aurelia had simply refused to admit it.

"My husband bought it from the store."

After saying that, Aurelia didn't offer any further explanations.

She had said that to tell the others that she wasn't afraid if they were to inspect her dress. After all, the truth would be revealed at a glance.

A colleague who was sick of listening to Millie's boasting all morning immediately stood up.

"Aurelia, we believe you. After all, this dress is from the latest season, and it's highly recognizable. You look perfect in it, unlike some others who wear high-end brands but look like they've just borrowed them."

"By the way, Millie, why don't you get your boyfriend to buy you a Mulan dress as well? That's what real noble ladies are supposed to wear. Who would actually wear those brands that one can find everywhere on the street?" someone else said, glancing at Millie mockingly.

"I'm afraid that's not possible. Millie has been sending messages to her boyfriend the entire morning, but he didn't reply to any of them. Who knows what's going on? Maybe he's too busy," another colleague said with a mocking smile.

They were all slightly displeased by how smug Millie had been acting and how she had treated them as if she was above everyone else.

Millie paled and turned to look at Aurelia with resentment, as though Aurelia was the one who had embarrassed her.

Kimberly stepped forward. She seemed like she was changing the subject, but she was actually fanning the fire. "Aurelia, your husband has great taste."

Everyone focused on Aurelia once again, their eyes filled with envy.

"Aurelia has found herself a good match. Her mother-in-law treats her well, and so does her husband."

Everyone in the building knew that Aurelia's mother was critically ill. Anyone who married her would be in for a lot of trouble.

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No one had expected her to get a good husband with a caring mother-in-law. Most importantly, she now looked more beautiful than ever, so it was hard for the others to not envy her.

Aurelia wanted to end the conversation, but Kimberly's words led others to keep throwing questions at her.

Millie was completely ignored.

For the entire morning, she had bathed in attention. After being just an ordinary girl for 20 years, she finally had a taste of what it was like to be in the spotlight.

Yet, Aurelia's appearance had put her back in her place.

She bit her lip in resentment and darted out of the office. Standing by the window at the end of the corridor, she took her phone out and texted Jackson once again.

None of her texts had been replied to.

Did Jackson not like her? But if that was the case, why would he buy her so many things?

Millie was so focused on her phone that she didn't notice Kimberly approaching.

"Millie, are you alright?"

Millie feigned a casual attitude and turned to smile at Kimberly. "I'm fine. Why won't I be?"

"That's good. They were just joking. Don't take it personally. Aurelia probably doesn't know that you'll be dressing up so beautifully today. Maybe that's why she dressed up today too. Everyone likes looking pretty, after all."

Kimberly had always been great with her words and she could see through the likes of Millie.

Millie was short-sighted and the calmer she appeared, the more hysterical she actually was deep down.

At a moment like this, she simply needed a little push to get suspicious.

Indeed, Kimberly was right.

Millie gritted her teeth. "How could she not know? She even asked who bought these for me this morning."

Kimberly became nervous. "Did you tell her?"

"Of course not. She's already married. What's the point of asking about someone else's boyfriend?" Millie said impatiently.

Kimberly relaxed a bit. In their current situation, Millie was even less likely to spill the beans.

"So, she knew, huh? Then, why did she come to the company dressed like this? Wasn't she supposed

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to take the day off to accompany her mom during the surgery?

"She rushed to One Technology this morning, and I was scared. She wanted to take the credit for my work. And since the company arranged it, I couldn't do anything about it."

"She went to One Technology?" Millie asked in surprise.

“Yeah, she snatched the contract to sign her name on it. She even said I copied her plan. It sounds absurd. If I really copied her idea, why would the boss agree to send me to One Technology? With Ber making a scene, I’m afraid she’ll become our supervisor in the future.” Kimberly sighed.

Millie was stunned for a moment. Although she was not very savvy in the workplace, she could understand some of what Kimberly said.

This time, Zachary and Kimberly must have had some connection with Aurelia regarding the proposal they brought to One Technology.

The question of who copied who was not that important. What mattered was who the boss sided with

The proposal would belong to whoever the boss sided with, and they would be the future vice director.

Millie simply couldn’t stand the idea of Aurelia having everything she could ever want while embarrassing her. She was so angry that she couldn’t think clearly, and she snorted

“She keeps saying how worried she is about her mom, but as soon as she thinks she’ll lose credit, she runs over to stir up trouble. She even told me not to be too eager for success. She’s just saying one thing and doing another. Why should she get to be the vice director?”

“The contract has already been signed. There’s nothing we can do now, unless ...Forget it, you’re her good friend. Why am I telling you all this? Don’t accuse me of sowing discord later. I’m going back to work.”

Kimberly was not in a hurry. She turned and left, took a few steps, then stopped and looked back at Millie.

“Millie, don’t send messages to Jackson anymore,” she added on purpose.

As soon as she heard Jackson’s name, Millie’s expression changed. She stepped forward and grabbed Kimberly’s arm.

“Why are you telling me not to message him? Did he say something to you? Tell me.”

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“Millie, Jackson is my friend, and I can’t betray him. But I also can’t bear to see you waiting for him like this. That’s why I’m telling you this. Don’t ask any more questions. I won’t answer them,” Kimberly said as she pushed Millie away.

Having experienced the glory Jackson brought into her life, Millie couldn’t bear to give up on him.

She rushed to Kimberly once again and whispered, “Kimberly, I understand what you meant just now. If you want to become the vice director, I can help you. Aurelia’s computer has a password, but I know it. I can help you delete all her records. Then, all you have to do is accuse her of plagiarism and stealing credit.”

A spark of excitement lit up in Kimberly’s heart. She knew Millie couldn’t resist making a move.

However, Millie’s thoughts were too simplistic.

Deleting records alone wouldn’t prove anything. To turn the situation around, they needed to make Aurelia indisputably guilty of plagiarism.

“Millie, don’t act recklessly. I was just chatting casually,” Kimberly said calmly.

“I’m not acting recklessly! She deliberately embarrassed me today. Why should I let her become the vice director?” Millie gritted her teeth. “Kimberly, I really like Jackson. I’ll help you. Can’t you help me out too? Once we’re together officially, I’ll surely remember what you did for me.”

Kimberly pretended to hesitate. “Well, I can see that you genuinely like Jackson. Let’s help each other.

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After saying this, she took out a USB from her pocket and handed it to Millie.

Confused, Millie asked, "What's this?"

Kimberly leaned in and whispered, "Don't ask too much. You only need to..."

Millie stared at the USB and nodded without hesitation. "Fine. Now, can you tell me why I shouldn't look for Jackson?"

Love-struck women were utterly brainless.

Kimberly couldn't help but mock Millie inwardly. Still, on the surface, she maintained a smile.

"Jackson comes from a wealthy family. His father is expecting him to inherit the family business soon, so there are many tests for him. If his father finds out he's in a relationship, he'll think you're a hindrance to him and might come after you.

"That's why he's ignoring you. In fact, he's doing it for your own good. If you really care about him, just wait for him to come to you."

Listening to this, a touch of gratitude appeared on Millie's face and she appeared completely smitten.

"Oh, he cares about me so much. Why didn't he tell me? I won't bother him in the future," Millie said with newfound understanding.

"I'll talk to him and convince him to treat you well," Kimberly added.

"Thank you."

"Don't worry. Jackson is my friend and I want him to do well, too. Come on, it's time to get some work done. Do this, and Jackson will come back to you."

“Sure.” Millie grabbed the USB and stepped into the office after Kimberly.

At the moment, Aurelia was still being surrounded by people.

Millie took the opportunity to get to Aurelia’s laptop and completed everything swiftly.

Once Millie sat down, Jackson’s message came shortly after.

Jackson explained his difficulties and mentioned that he missed her. He even invited her for dinner.

Overjoyed, Millie completely forgot about what she had done earlier.

Kimberly sat at her desk with her lips curled, waiting for drama to erupt.

In the afternoon, Aurelia glanced at the time and realized that his meeting should be over by now.

She was in a hurry to report what happened earlier.

Though the contract was signed, she didn’t want any accidents.

Just as she got up, she heard a commotion outside the office.

The boss had brought managers from all departments over and Zachary was standing right next to him.

Tension rose in the office.

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Her boss was a man in his fifties. He wasn't tall, but had an authoritative air about him with his sharp gaze.

"Aurelia," he called out.

Everyone instantly turned to look at her.

"I'm here." She stood and said, "I was just about to go to you..."

The boss raised a hand and interrupted her.

"It's fine. I already know what happened. You have better performance than Kimberly, but that's not an excuse for you to bully your colleague or to satisfy your ambition. You represent this firm, not yourself."

"Sir..." Aurelia was startled by his tone.

"How dare you run over to One Technology to claim someone's credit? So what if you signed the contract? You've embarrassed this company. Throughout my career, it's the first time I've seen someone so reckless!" The boss threw the file in his hand at Aurelia in rage.

"No, that's not ..." Aurelia tried to defend herself, but was interrupted by Kimberly.

As the words fell, Kimberly stumbled into the arms of her colleagues.

Instantly, speculation ran rife among the crowd about what Aurelia might have done.

After all, Kimberly had connections with the boss at One Technology, and securing the position of

vice director seemed inevitable for her.

How could Aurelia effortlessly sign a contract instead?

At this moment, Zachary stepped forward. He pointed at Aurelia with anger and said, "Aurelia! What's this attitude? Did you really think you've achieved something just because Kimberly overlooked your plagiarism?"

"Plagiarism?" Aurelia looked shocked as she glanced between Zachary and Kimberly.

She hadn't expected them to turn the tables on her.

People around gasped at the accusation.

Plagiarism was the most abhorred offense in their profession, especially when committed among colleagues.

Zachary remained unfazed and said, "Your proposal is an exact copy of Kimberly's. Out of consideration for your mother's illness, we didn't expose you publicly. We even approved your leave to take care of your mother. But what did you do? You went to One Technology to steal the credit! You've embarrassed us and the entire company."

Aurelia was unwilling to be wrongly accused and immediately retorted, "Mr. Zeller, it was you who informed me that the presentation at One Technology would take place on Tuesday and asked me to prepare for it. Yet, you went there today without me. What's the meaning of this? Were you deliberately avoiding me?"

"Nonsense! Do you have any evidence that I deliberately misled you about the timing? Both of you are my subordinates. Having either of you become vice director is a good thing for me. Why would I do this? Clearly, you misheard the timing, and we couldn't reach you," Zachary said sternly.

Aurelia pursed her lips.

The timing was verbally communicated, so how could she provide evidence? It seemed Zachary had intentionally told her the wrong time and avoided leaving any proof in the process.

Aurelia was not ready to concede defeat.

She took a deep breath and said, "Even if I misheard, what's wrong with me arriving at One Technology before the meeting? As for plagiarism, our proposals were kept confidential. How could I have copied Kimberly's idea without your help?"

Aurelia raised a valid question, the force of her voice echoing through the room.

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Hearing this, Zachary's expression changed, and he glanced sideways at Kimberly.

Kimberly then spoke pitifully, "My computer never has a password. We've known each other for years, and I trust everyone. Sometimes we forget to lock our computers when we go out for meals, and nothing has ever happened. Why did it happen this time?"

Everyone nodded. In the busy workplace, who would remember to lock their computers?

Nothing had happened until now. Why did trouble arise when Kimberly and Aurelia competed for the position of vice director?

It was likely someone deliberately took advantage of this situation.

The scales in everyone's minds began to tip, and they started casting disdainful glances at Aurelia.

Poisonous gazes pierced Aurelia's body and she could feel her blood freezing.

However, she dared not reveal any hint of misery on her face. She clenched her teeth and met the boss's gaze.

The boss asked, "Aurelia, do you have any explanations for this? You should know the company detests malicious competition among colleagues."

"I can prove I didn't plagiarize. We all know completing a proposal isn't as simple as a few PowerPoint slides. The process is bound to leave traces. I have complete documents and records, and they are all on my laptop." Aurelia pointed to her laptop.

The boss nodded and agreed with Aurelia's statement. "Go and open your laptop."

Aurelia turned and opened her laptop, then clicked on the encrypted folder and opened the document about One Technology's opening ceremony.

The next moment, she stared at her screen in disbelief.

"How ...How can this be?"

Looking at the magnificent visual effects and the elaborate wording, she instantly knew that this wasn't her proposal.

The boss frowned. "This isn't the proposal signed with One Technology. Where is your proposal? Where are your records?"

Aurelia's mind went blank, as she had no idea how to answer the boss's questions.

Kimberly leaned and gasped dramatically. "Aurelia! I was completely wrong about you! So, you've been wanting to plagiarize my proposal all along!"

"Kimberly, what do you mean? Explain yourself," the boss said.

“Boss, actually, I was worried about being plagiarized before, so I intentionally made up a proposal

with this style. At the time, I jokingly said Aurelia definitely wouldn’t copy mine. I didn’t expect that she would actually create a proposal with this style in secret. The whole office can testify to this

matter.”

Kimberly became increasingly hysterical as she spoke, almost as though she had been put through horrible hardship.

The colleagues around her nodded.

“We can stand witness to it. Kimberly did say that. Aurelia was in the office at the time.

It was at this moment that Aurelia remembered that indeed happened.

At the time, Kimberly was showing off that she knew the boss of One Technology and mentioned he liked something extravagant. She even warned Aurelia not to copy her idea.

Aurelia instantly grasped the situation. Combined with the description of the proposal, it was written in Kimberly’s style, making it Kimberly’s proposal.

Such a proposal couldn’t win One Technology over. Hence, Zachary discreetly switched their proposals.

Still, Kimberly should know the password to her laptop.

She changed her password frequently and most of the passwords she used were related to her mother.

However, these numbers were something that Kimberly couldn't possibly come up with.

Suddenly, Aurelia thought of someone and turned her head to look.

Millie kept her head down and dared not meet Aurelia's gaze.

It was Millie, of all people.

Millie was Aurelia's good friend. When she faced problems, she would come to Aurelia's computer to find reference cases.

Aurelia didn't mind, so she would directly tell Millie the password, allowing her to explore cases and gain experience to stand on her own sooner.

She never expected that Millie would stab her in the back.

Pointing at the screen, Kimberly said, "Aurelia, do you have anything to say?"

Aurelia retorted, "I didn't plagiarize. You couldn't even present without a script during the meeting. How can you prove it's your proposal? One Technology boss isn't stupid. He can judge."

"I was just too nervous. Moreover, do you really think that robot can make any judgment? One Technology's boss must have judged incorrectly because of it," Kimberly spoke firmly, sharing a similar disdain for technology with Zachary.

To them, the robot was just a lifeless matter.

Aurelia paused, realizing that arguing further was pointless.

She insisted, "If you don't believe me, then let's confront One Technology."

Kimberly and Zachary stiffened for a moment but quickly relaxed.

Kimberly turned to the boss and said, "Sir, I also want to confront them, but today's meeting

has already left them somewhat dissatisfied with us. If we need the other party to solve

internal issues, what would our clients think about you?"

Zachary considered the bigger picture and added, "Boss, it's my failure to control Aurelia. However, today's matter can't be blown out of proportion. I'm worried it will be seized upon by competitors if we make a big deal out of it."

"

The boss instantly became stern and his gaze swept over Aurelia with displeasure. "This matter is not to be brought up again. Aren't we embarrassed enough? Aurelia signed the contract and I'll consider it a way to make amends, but let it be a one-time exception."

Aurelia was stunned. On first hearing, it seemed the boss wasn't going to pursue it further. But in reality, he had tacitly accepted the notion that Aurelia had plagiarized.

"No! I didn't..."

"Aurelia, correct your attitude and know your place. If you want to continue at Young Advertising, reflect on yourself. If you want to leave, I won't stop you," the boss sternly warned.

Aurelia paled.

She understood that the boss was threatening her. If the situation escalated any further, she would be fired.

She was just an ordinary person and if she was fired for plagiarism, no other company would ever hire her.

She asked the boss, "Sir, do you really think that Kimberly wrote this proposal?"

The boss frowned in silence and left with the others.

Her heart sank.

The boss was a wise and perspective person. After reading countless proposals submitted by her and Kimberly in the past, there was no way that he didn't know how limited Kimberly's abilities were.

However, Kimberly had a powerful background and her uncle had a business collaboration with the boss.

He knew what was more important.

He merely punished Aurelia to shut her up and prevent her from mentioning this incident.

She stood frozen in place, surrounded by eyes of disdain and mockery.

Kimberly, who was playing the victim just a moment ago, leaned on the desk and smirked at her.

It was almost as though she was saying, "Aurelia, I told you not to waste your time. You can't beat me."

An hour after the boss left, the workgroup issued two notifications.

The first notification roughly stated that Aurelia had violated employee unity, damaged the company's reputation, and would be penalized 1,000 points. She had to submit a self- reflection of a thousand words and read it aloud at the Friday staff meeting.

The second notification announced the promotion of Kimberly to the vice director of the Marketing Department.

There was one punishment and one reward, leaving Aurelia's efforts in vain.

Immediately, congratulations for Kimberly filled the air.

"I knew Kimberly would be the vice director."

"Of course, Kimberly has a wide network and abundant resources. The boss isn't stupid. He knows who is important."

"No matter how hard others try, they can't have Kimberly's good fortune. They're just born without the luck to make a fortune."

Kimberly stood up with a smile. "Alright, everyone, that's too much. The boss chose me because he valued my abilities. People without abilities naturally won't catch the boss's eye."

Hearing this, colleagues unconsciously turned to look at Aurelia with disdain.

Aurelia sat at her desk in silence.

Kimberly glanced at Aurelia and continued, "I'll treat everyone to celebrate my promotion and pay raise."

“Yay!”

The cheerful voices of the crowd echoed, piercing Aurelia’s ears.

She clenched her fist to maintain her composure, but Kimberly had no intention of letting her off.

Kimberly approached Aurelia gracefully. “Aurelia, I’m not even angry with you. Why are you sulking? Tonight, I’ll treat you to something good...”

She paused, then slowly leaned on Aurelia’s desk. “Oh, I forgot. You still have to write that self - reflection. I won’t waste your time then.”

“Sure.” Aurelia nodded, her expression emotionless as she looked at Kimberly.

Seeing that Aurelia remained unfazed, Kimberly snorted.

“Just acting tough,” she muttered under her breath and left.

In less than half an hour, the entire building knew about Kimberly’s appointment as the vice director of the Marketing Department and about Aurelia’s plagiarism and penalty.

After work, others followed Kimberly enthusiastically to celebrate.

Aurelia calmly tidied her desk when her phone rang. It was a call from an unknown number.

Without much thought, she answered. On the other end, Seth’s triumphant laughter echoed

“Aurelia, how did you end up this way? Where’s your husband, the one who only knows how to hide? Why hasn’t he come out to help you make things right?”

“Aurelia, no one else would treat you right aside from me. Wake up!”

“Now, if you divorce and beg me to marry you, I promise not to hold grudges. I’ll treat you well...”

Frowning, she didn’t wait for him to finish to finish his sentence and hung up.

Seth was in the building’s chat group as well, so it wasn’t surprising that he knew what happened.

However, what made him think that she would get back together with him when he came to mock her for her failure?

Who did he think he was?

She set her phone down and prepared to get off work.

Just then, someone stood by her seat.

Glancing at the blue dress before her, Aurelia felt nothing but disgust.

“Aurelia, I ...

Aurelia didn’t give Millie a chance to speak and walked straight past her.

Millie was momentarily taken aback and caught up to her. “Aurelia, why are you doing this to me? Haven’t you embarrassed me enough today?”

Aurelia stopped and glared at her, wondering where she got the nerves to blame her.

“Millie, you need to get it through your head that I didn’t embarrass you. You embarrassed yourself.”

“Why you!” Millie’s expression darkened and she said with displeasure, “I’m sorry. I was being too blunt. But you knew I was dressing up today, so why would you steal my thunder?”

“Is that your excuse for scheming against me? Do you really think that I’m supposed to forgive you just because you said you are sorry?”

“What else do you want me to do? Do you have proof that I did something?” Millie asked nervously.

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Looking at Millie, Aurelia sneered.

“Millie, ask yourself what’s the difference between you and Kimberly now? Do you really dislike her? You’re only a step away from envying and admiring her to the point of imitating her. You should know better than others what it means to copy others.”

“Nonsense! Why would I envy or admire her? If someone is copying others, it’s you. I wear designer brands, and so do you. We’ve been friends for so long, and you can’t stand me being better than you?” Millie retorted with a displeased expression, but couldn’t hide her guilt in her eyes.

Aurelia sneered. “So, you still remember that we’re friends. I thought Kimberly is your friend.”

Millie stood there, dumbfounded.

Aurelia ignored her and walked straight into the elevator.

On the subway to the hospital, Aurelia’s workgroup chat kept popping up with photos of colleagues and Kimberly sitting in an upscale restaurant.

Millie was amongst them as well.

Aurelia's gaze flickered. It would be a lie to say that she wasn't upset, but what could she do?

She had no evidence to prove that Millie tampered with her computer, and she couldn't change Millie's choice.

Let it be. They would just be colleagues from now on and nothing more.

Arriving at the hospital, Aurelia entered the ward and the caretaker immediately stood up to greet her.

"Ms. Simmons, you're here. Your mother-in-law went to the doctor's office. The doctor said the surgery was very successful, and now we're just waiting for your mother to get through the critical period."

"Sure." Aurelia nodded and studied her mother's pale face.

The grievances of the day swelled in her chest, and she restrained herself. "Auntie, can I be alone with my mom for a while?"

The caretaker sensed that she was upset and agreed, "I'll go get some water."

After she left, Aurelia sat by the bed and held her mother's hand against her face.

In the past, her mother would gently touch her face like this, telling her not to be disheartened whenever she suffered hardship.

Her mother often said, "Life is not easy. Don't torment yourself with others' words. Look forward and don't dwell on the past."

Still ...

“Mom, can you wake up? I feel so horrible, and I’m on the verge of collapse. How can people’s hearts change so quickly? Why...”

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Aurelia poured out her suppressed emotions, and by the end, her eyes were filled with tears. However, she wiped them away just before they fell.

“Mom, don’t worry, I won’t cry, I’ll move forward.”

Suppressing her choked sob was even more painful than letting the tears flow.

Outside the door, Linda tugged at Leslie’s sleeve.

“Aren’t you going in?”

“No.” Leslie took a step back, gently closing the door. “Going in won’t help.” “Leslie, she’s your wife. Shouldn’t you comfort her when she’s suffering?”

“Words, as comforting as they may be, are pointless,” Leslie said indifferently.

“Even so ...You can’t just watch as others bully her, right?” Linda became increasingly angry.

If it weren’t for Leslie’s intervention, she would have gone to Young Advertising to cause a scene.

How dare they bully her daughter-in-law?

“This is what she gets for trusting others so easily,” he said in a low voice. “She doesn’t learn from her mistakes. Are others supposed to just come around and realize that they were wrong?”

Linda sighed. She wanted to argue but was rendered speechless.

Aurelia was still too young and inexperienced. One could have many friends at work, but it was dangerous to entrust a particular person because they were bound to be used against her.

It wasn’t selfishness but self-preservation.

Frowning, she said, “So are we just going to let this slide? Aurelia loves her job and working for someone like that would kill her.”

Leslie studied Aurelia’s slim frame through the glass window and said, “Only those who are worthy could keep their positions.”

Realization dawned on Linda and she approached him with a smirk. “Leslie, you think Aurelia is nice as well, don’t you?”

Leslie looked away without saying a word.

Linda poked at his chest. “Oh, my. So there is a time when your words fail you.”

“Mom, if you are going to mess around, I will leave,” he said with resignation.

“Don’t leave. Aurelia is really fragile right now. I can’t rest unless you are with her. Get in there.” She shoved at him and he bumped into the door.

Inside the room, Aurelia sniffed and wiped her tears, before getting up.

When she opened the door, she was surprised by the person who came in. “Mr. Synder, why are you here?”

“Given what is happening with your mother, should he come as her son-in-law?” Linda said and gave Leslie a nudge toward the bed. “Why are you just standing there? Address your mother-in-law.”

Both Leslie and Aurelia fell into silence.

Despite the earlier sorrow she felt, Aurelia felt slightly amused, especially when she saw the hint of shock on Leslie’s face.

She didn’t expect Leslie to let his emotions show.

Leslie raised an eyebrow and Aurelia immediately pursed her lips. “Mom, my mother hasn’t woken up yet, so she won’t hear Mr. Synder. Let’s wait until she’s awake.”

“Alright.” Linda checked the time and urged, “It’s getting late. Both of you should go home. I’ve arranged for a single room for Aurelia’s mom, so she can rest well.”

“Mom, it’s not necessary. Single rooms are expensive, and I ...” Aurelia felt slightly embarrassed.

She couldn’t bring herself to mention that she was running out of money this month after the deduction of points for performance.

Linda glanced at Leslie. Leslie reluctantly played along. “My mom has a connection, so we’ll get a discount. Don’t worry.”

Linda’s mouth twitched. Her son was indeed something. After all, when did hospitals start offering discounts?

Aurelia didn’t think much of it and assumed the hospital offered a cheaper rate.

“Mom, thank you.”

“It’s no trouble at all. The nurse will come to change the room later. There’s still a caretaker here to take care of your mother. You can rest assured. You’ve been running around all day. It’s better to go back and rest,” Linda said with concern.

“Yeah.” Aurelia nodded and started packing her mother’s belongings.

When the caretaker and nurses helped move the bed, Aurelia struggled to pick up seven or eight plastic bags and two basins from the floor, causing her arms to ache instantly.

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She gritted her teeth and walked out of the ward. At this moment, a figure appeared by her side.

Leslie silently took the things from her hands and then cornered her against the wall.

Aurelia was taken aback and realized that someone was holding a large basin of hot water from behind.

If it weren’t for Leslie, she would have collided with someone else while carrying so many bags and it would be disastrous for hot water to spill everywhere.

Slightly terrified, she said, “Thank you.”

Leslie responded with a nonchalant hum and added, “Focus.”

His warm breath caressed on Aurelia’s head. She couldn’t hear clearly what he said, but she felt an itching sensation and a slight warmth in every place his breath touched.

Linda cleared her throat.

“How long are you two planning to stay like this? We still need to move the bed.”

The nurses and caretaker couldn't help but laugh.

Aurelia blushed and slipped out of Leslie's embrace. “I'll help.”

She bowed her head to support the bed, not daring to look at Leslie.

Leslie was left speechless and his mother immediately joined in for some fun. “Oh? There's finally someone avoiding my handsome son, huh?” Linda teased. He remained silent.

Chapter 140

Leslie glanced at how red Aurelia's ears were and remained silent.

After settling her mother down, Aurelia left the hospital.

Linda said that she needed to go home for her beauty sleep and left in a taxi.

Aurelia followed Leslie into the car and the two didn't speak throughout the journey.

Her phone kept vibrating and that was the only noise in the car.

She took out her phone and saw photos of Kimberly partying with her colleagues. The others had nothing but praises for Kimberly.

“Thank you, Kimberly, for taking us out.”

“Anyone will benefit from following Kimberly’s lead.”

“Here’s to our department. Let’s hope we will get even better in the future.”

There were photos of them drinking in a high-end restaurant.

There were eighteen people in the department and seventeen of them were present with the exception of Aurelia.

She exited the group chat and saw Millie’s latest post on her social media account.

It was a photo of her and Kimberly with a caption of “My best friend.”

Seeing those three words left Aurelia’s hands trembling. She took a deep breath and locked her phone, before turning to stare outside the car window.

Leslie saw everything but did not comment much and focused on driving.

Once they were home, Aurelia set her purse aside and turned to walk into the kitchen.

“Let’s just eat something casual,” she said in a weak voice.

Without waiting for Leslie to answer, Aurelia darted into the kitchen.

Fifteen minutes later, she came out with two servings of mushroom soup.

“Thank you.” Leslie took the bowl, intending to chat with Aurelia after they finished eating. However, when he took the first sip, the overly salty taste nearly made him spit it out.

He frowned and wondered if Aurelia pour half a bottle of salt into this.

“What’s wrong?” Aurelia looked at him with lifeless eyes.

“Aurelia, can we talk?”

“No, I’m fine. I have to thank you for today, even though the result ...isn’t great.” Aurelia forced a smile and lowered her head.

She knew she must look awful when she smiled at this moment.

Leslie stood, then took two glasses and a bottle of wine from the liquor cabinet. “Want some?”

Aurelia looked at the red liquid and bit her lip.

She didn’t usually drink, but at this moment, she felt an overwhelming urge to grab the bottle and chug it down. Maybe that would ease the pain in her heart.

She nodded. “Sure.”

Leslie poured two glasses of wine. He pushed one towards Aurelia and then raised his own glass to take a sip.

Under the warm light, Leslie tilted his head slightly, and even his eyelashes seemed to glow. The bright red liquid slowly slid over his lips, disappearing as it rolled down his throat. He looked both graceful and restrained.

His every movement was deeply etched into Aurelia’s mind, and she couldn’t help but swallow hard.

Leslie noticed her gaze and lowered his eyes slightly:

Startled, she picked up her glass and took a gulp.

This wine was quite good.

Aurelia poured herself another glass, thinking Leslie might stop her. To her surprise, he just sat there and quietly sipped his own drink.

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This made Aurelia gradually relax, and she slowly opened up.

By the fifth glass, Aurelia was already quite tipsy and started speaking freely.

The next moment, Aurelia slammed the table with a loud bang and glared fiercely at Leslie.

Leslie was surprised and almost dropped his wine glass.

Before he could react, Aurelia's finger poked sharply at his cheek. "You! What gives you the right? Why do you treat me like this?"