

In A Flash 141

Chapter 141

Leslie thought Aurelia could handle her liquor well, given her frequent client meetings.

However, after five drinks, she revealed her true nature.

Considering her bad mood today, he didn't want to make a big deal out of it. Leslie reached out and knocked away her finger.

To his surprise, Aurelia took it a step further. Not satisfied with just poking, she directly grabbed his cheeks.

"Aurelia," Leslie warned with a dark tone.

"We've been together for three years! I've never asked anything of you! Why are you treating me like this?" Furious, Aurelia pinched Leslie's cheeks.

Leslie's expression grew darker.

Aurelia mistook him for Seth.

Did she still harbor feelings for Seth?

"Look carefully and see who I am!" Leslie warned.

Confused, she narrowed her eyes and leaned even closer.

The distance between them was so close that they could almost kiss with a slight movement of their mouths.

Leslie was stunned, and his breathing became erratic.

Aurelia smiled. "Do you think I wouldn't recognize you just because you had your face done? You jerk! Despite knowing how miserable I am, you still kick me when I'm down. I'll beat up!"

With that, she swung her fist at Leslie.

you

Leslie was quick to react and grabbed her wrist, gently guiding her into his arms.

Normally, Aurelia would dodge away but was too drunk to do so today.

Surprisingly, she reached out and hugged him, burying her face against his chest.

Leslie's gaze flickered, and his body tensed. This unfamiliar feeling made him uncomfortable,

wanted to push Aurelia away.

and he inte

Forget it.

moved around in his arms.

"Don't

I move," he warned in

Aurelia looko

face

Even Leslie couldn't help but admit that she was beautiful. It was the kind of beauty that made people feel protective over her.

But the next moment

"Dad! Why are you so mean to me? Don't you love me anymore?" Aurelia choked out.

"...What did you just call me?"

The hint of romantic atmosphere in the air shattered instantly.

"You are so mean to me, Dad!"

Leslie was instantly rendered speechless.

Just then, she noticed the steaming hot soup on the table and immediately picked it up to feed Leslie.

"Dad, I made this. Try it. See who makes this better, me or Mom?"

Leslie refused to take it because it was far too salty for his liking.

"Dad, are you mad at me?" She lowered her gaze.

"Fine, I'll have it," Leslie said and instantly regretted his choice as soon as those words left his lips.

Still, the spoon was already pressed against his lips. Seeing the look of anticipation on her face, he could only open his mouth and swallow it.

It was really salty.

After taking half a bowl, Aurelia stopped force-feeding him.

Just as he was about to relax, Aurelia leaned closer and wrapped her arms around his neck. Dad, thank you. I'm sorry that I couldn't protect Mom."

The look of displeasure on Leslie's face eased and he allowed her to hold him without a word.

Her words sounded rather familiar.

Back when he and Linda were chased out of their home, that was what he said to her as well.

"Dad, can't you come back to life? You said that I'm your princess and that you'd protect me for life, right? They are bullying me. I tried my best to fight back, but ...

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"I'm sorry. Do you think I'm useless? I wanted to make you and Mom proud, but why do they have to hurt me? They betray and slander me. Why? Am I not good enough? What did I do wrong?"

Unable to hold back any longer, Aurelia burst into tears and buried her face in Leslie's shoulder.

She went from silent sobs to loud cries within three seconds.

She wasn't the capable and intelligent employee of Young Advertising anymore. At this moment, she was just her father's little girl.

She was free to cry and make a scene if she wanted. Although crying felt liberating, Aurelia still sensed something missing.

Holding Leslie tightly, she clung to him as if he were her father. She feared that if she let go, he would turn back into a photograph.

After a moment, a hand gently landed on her head.

Yes, this was what was missing.

The warmth of the hand stroked her hair and back soothed her troubled heart. Eventually, she cried until her eyes and throat hurt. Her head was spinning, and she fell asleep in Leslie's arms.

Leslie glanced at her, then picked her up to carry her into the bedroom. After placing her on the bed, he turned to leave.

But before exiting, he wiped away the tears that had streamed down her face.

As Leslie left the room, he realized he had crossed a line.

Fortunately, Aurelia was sound asleep and blissfully unaware of what had happened.

He took out his phone and dialed a number. "Daniel, help me with something..."

"Of course."

Aurelia woke up the next morning and sat on the bed, feeling completely bewildered.

It felt like her time had jumped from having dinner yesterday to this morning.

What had happened during the gap? Her mind was a blank slate.

She rubbed her throbbing forehead, and fragmented scenes flashed through her mind.

Yesterday, Leslie must have noticed her bad mood during dinner, so he had her drink a glass of wine to vent.

Then, she seemed to have drunk too much. She remembered saying a bunch of nonsensical things to Leslie, but she couldn't recall the specifics.

She vaguely remembered doing something to Leslie.

Just then, the alarm clock rang, reminding her to get up.

Having no time to dwell on the past, she got up and changed into the clothes Leslie had bought for her yesterday.

It was a goose-yellow outfit made of silk. The top was in the style of a European corset, with a jade button as a finishing touch, and the sleeves had delicate green embroidery.

The bottom was a midi skirt, adorned only with side buttons with no other embellishments.

Aurelia looked delicate and gentle in the dress and she couldn't resist admiring herself in the mirror for a moment.

She didn't take too long to admire herself because she wanted to leave the house before Leslie woke up.

Thinking back to how she got drunk the night before, she didn't know how to face Leslie.

She quietly opened her door and tip-toed toward the main door.

"Finally awake? Come over for breakfast." Leslie's voice sounded behind her.

Taken aback, she froze and turned around to find Leslie sipping on coffee leisurely at the dining table.

There was a plate of toast and a glass of milk next to him. They were clearly for her.

With no other option, she could only sit down and eat with her head down.

"Mr. Synder, about last night ...I'm sorry. Are you alright?"

"I'm fine. I just somehow ended up as someone's dad."

Aurelia fell into silence and wondered, "Dad?"

She took a sip of milk and suddenly widened her eyes when memories started flashing back to her.

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By the time realization dawned on her, Leslie had already set his coffee down and gotten up.

He adjusted his tie and said, "Remember to wash the dishes, Aurelia."

She nodded dazedly. "Okay."

He observed the dazed look on her face and smiled, before turning to leave.

In the next moment, Aurelia held her head as she recalled what happened the night before.

She poked at Leslie's face, forced him to drink soup, and called him 'Dad.'

She slammed her head hard against the table, wishing she could just knock herself out.

After a few minutes, she sighed and picked up the dishes. She walked into the kitchen and saw that there was some leftover of the soup she made in the fridge.

Leslie was mistaken about her appetite and she actually wasn't full from just eating two pieces of toast.

Not wanting to waste food, she heated the soup and gulped down on it.

"Ugh!" Her face twisted with misery from how salty it was.

She then recalled how Leslie was forced to finish half the bowl and wondered how he managed to keep something this salty down.

Leslie's face showed no signs of displeasure and he even prepared breakfast for her.

Upon reflection, Leslie wasn't as cold as Aurelia had imagined.

Suddenly, Aurelia's mind shifted to scenes of herself feeding Leslie soup, and her face flushed. She quickly patted her cheeks to calm herself.

After washing the dishes, Aurelia took the trash downstairs.

On the subway, the thought of facing the challenges at the company caused her to sigh inwardly. However, after venting her emotions yesterday, she felt less devastated.

She had invested all her efforts into Young Advertising, and abandoning it wasn't an option for her, Especially with the project at One Technology coming, she had to ensure its smooth completion. On top of that, she needed to repay Leslie for his help.

As for other matters, she needed to take time to reconsider everything.

Arriving at the company, Aurelia saw many people gossiping around a red Ferrari outside the main gate.

"I saw her boyfriend escorting her in just now. Impressive."

"What's there to envy? Public displays of affection lead to a quick demise! How could a rich second-generation guy marry her? What does she have to offer? Her looks are average, intelligence is average, family background is average. Does she really think of herself as Cinderella? Even Cinderella was an earl's daughter, to begin with. The Ugly Duckling turns into a swan because it was originally a swan. Be realistic."

Aurelia overheard these words as she passed by, but they didn't stir much emotion in her.

In this building with hundreds of women, who chose to be their boyfriends was no concern of hers.

Although the words were harsh, they were also quite truthful. As Leslie had mentioned, people who compromised for less than those below usually had ulterior motives.

Instead of seeking others' approval, it was better to keep marching forward.

Aurelia was lost in thought and didn't notice a coffee spill on the floor. She accidentally stepped on it and slipped. Fortunately, someone reached out and caught her.

“Thank you,” she quickly expressed her gratitude.

“No problem. It’s an honor to assist such a beautiful woman like you.”

She frowned at the man’s flirtatious tone. When she raised her eyes, she met a pair of intense, scrutinizing eyes that scanned her from top to bottom.

Feeling uncomfortable, she tried to pull her hand away, but the man held on.

“Please let go,” she said with restraint.

“Hello, my name is Jackson Morrison. What’s

your name?”

Jackson tightened his grip, seemingly unwilling to release Aurelia unless she revealed her

name.

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Aurelia widened her eyes, never expecting to encounter such an improper person right outside her company.

She struggled and said, “Let go...”

Before Aurelia could finish speaking, a sharp voice cut through the air. “Aurelia! What are you doing?”

This was followed by a tremendous force. Even Jackson, a towering figure at six feet, was pushed back several steps.

Aurelia, who was wearing high heels, stumbled further backward. Fortunately, the glass door blocked her and prevented her from falling.

Rubbing her numb shoulder, she glared angrily at the newcomer. "Millie, what are you doing?"

"What am I doing? Aurelia, can't you stand seeing me happy? Are you actually flirting with my boyfriend in public?"

Millie watched Aurelia, who had transformed from her usual lifeless appearance into someone so dazzling and beautiful.

Her emotions fluctuated in her eyes and they all boiled down to resentment. Then, she walked to Jackson's side and linked arms with him to assert her sovereignty.

However, Jackson remained silent, his gaze still fixed on Aurelia.

Suppressing her disgust, Aurelia looked at Millie and said firmly, "I didn't do anything. I just slipped!"

Millie didn't believe her and turned to Jackson. "Jackson, did she intentionally try to get close to you?"

Aurelia looked at Jackson, expecting him to clear her name if he truly was Millie's boyfriend.

Unexpectedly, Jackson just shrugged, seemingly enjoying the attention from the two women vying for him.

Jackson's behavior fueled Millie's anger.

The people who gathered around the Ferrari heard the commotion and turned their attention over. Millie publicly rushed to Aurelia and accused, "Aurelia! Have you no shame? You're already married! Yet, you still seduced a friend's boyfriend!"

The crowd murmured, and their gazes toward Aurelia became more disdainful.

“You failed to copy your colleague’s work, so you changed your strategy? Why bother getting married if you are that thirsty for attention? Seeing that your friend has found a wealthy boyfriend, you can’t stand it, huh? Some people just can’t stand seeing others doing better than them.”

Aurelia paled, but Millie found it pleasing. It almost felt as if demeaning Aurelia elevated her

status.

Aurelia clenched her fists. Since Millie insisted on causing a scene, she would play along. Looking at Millie, she said, “Millie, you claim I seduced your boyfriend. Where’s the evidence?”

Millie hesitated for a moment, then sneered. “I saw it with my own eyes. What other evidence do I need? Are you saying that we are framing you? Aurelia, I know you are upset about the plagiarism incident, but you don’t need to vent your frustration on me, right?”

“Despite all your talk, you are basically saying that you have no evidence, right?” Aurelia countered.

“You...” Millie’s expression became awkward.

Ignoring her, Aurelia walked directly to Jackson. “Sir, do you also think I seduced you?”

Jackson’s gaze flickered, but he still refused to give a direct answer. However, he kept his expression ambiguous and misleading.

He clearly didn’t intend to explain the situation.

Aurelia had dealt with plenty of clients and wealthy men like Jackson were predictable.

They were only egocentric. They enjoyed being fawned over and maintaining control over the situation.

Millie needed him, so she was willing to fawn over him and allow him to manipulate her.

However, Aurelia was different.

She smiled. "Mr. Morrison, you sure were talkative when you introduced yourself just now. Why are you keeping quiet now? Don't deny it, or I wouldn't be able to know your name since this is the first time we met. Jackson Morrison, right?"

The crowd fell into silence.

Millie's expression darkened and her

eyes

widened.

"What? Are you upset that your boyfriend is asking another woman for her name?" Aurelia thought. "You were just desperate to get others to condemn me, weren't you?"

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Here, Jackson's gaze turned cold.

This was the first time that a woman challenged him. Initially, he thought of letting Aurelia face public condemnation and then graciously resolving the situation to make her aware of his

power.

However, Aurelia directly tore off his facade.

A mere junior employee dared to go against him.

“What nonsense are you spouting? You were the one who leaned toward me all of a sudden,” Jackson retorted.

Millie nodded vigorously. “Yes, Jackson is my boyfriend. How could he be interested in other women?”

“So you can explain yourself, after all. When Millie confronted me just now, why didn’t you speak up? She’s your girlfriend. Don’t you think you’d hurt her feelings if you didn’t explain yourself?”

Sometimes, words alone were enough to cause changes.

The expressions of everyone present made it clear that they understood what was truly happening.

This man was merely playing with Millie, so he didn’t care if she misunderstood.

Millie stood there dumbfounded, her designer clothes that once made her feel proud suddenly feeling horrendous.

Jackson appeared indifferent and ignored her with hands in his pockets. “But you did seduce me. Otherwise, how did you end up falling on me?”

Hearing this, Millie glared resentfully at Aurelia.

Aurelia bypassed the two of them and waved to the janitor at the corridor.

“Auntie, did you forget to put up a sign here?”

The janitor had no idea what had happened and apologized repeatedly, “I’m so sorry, someone spilled coffee over there this morning. I rushed to clean it up. I did remember to get the warning sign, but when I turned around to throw away the trash, I forgot. I’m sorry, did anyone get hurt?”

The janitor was extremely nervous. This area had marble floor tiles. If someone fell and hit their head, she couldn’t afford the compensation.

Aurelia comforted her, “It’s okay. Someone caught me before I could fall.”

Mr.

“I’ll go get the sign.” The janitor sighed in relief and turned around to find the ‘wet floor’ sign. Aurelia looked at Jackson and said coldly, “Firstly, thank you for lending me a hand, Morrison. Secondly, I apologize for any misunderstanding caused. Lastly, I’m married, so it’s not convenient for me to disclose my name.”

People around chuckled and dispersed. They all came to admire Ferrari and Millie, only to end

up witnessing a ridiculous drama.

Millie and Jackson stood still.

Aurelia didn’t want to argue further and avoided Millie. She turned around to leave but was surprised by Kimberly’s voice behind her.

Kimberly had just gained power and she was determined to use Aurelia to exert her authority. “Aurelia! Falling into the same old habits, are we? These guys may be forgiving, but you can’t just keep provoking them, right? Your husband empties his wallet to buy you designer brands, and this is what you do? One should be faithful. Can’t you leave what others have alone? Do you have to snatch whatever others have?” Kimberly approached, her dark gaze fixed on Aurelia’s ink-blue outfit.

Because of Kimberly's words, Aurelia's earlier explanations became futile.

Kimberly made it sound like she was an unstable, fickle woman who couldn't be satisfied with just one man.

"I ..." Aurelia tried to speak.

Kimberly waved her hand and interrupted her. "Alright, I don't care what you think. This is our workplace, so please correct your attitude. Are you planning to argue with me here?"

With that, she went to console Millie.

Millie wanted to maintain the impression that she was deeply in love with Jackson, so she threw herself into his arms and turned to shoot a smug look at Aurelia.

Jackson tapped her on the back casually, but his gaze remained fixated on Aurelia.

Unable to stand his gaze, Aurelia figured that there was no point in arguing further and hurried into the elevator.

Inside the elevator, everyone kept their distance from her like she was a virus,

Meanwhile, Jackson gave Millie a few words of comfort before urging her to go upstairs impatiently.

"Millie, you are going to be late. You are my friend, but I've just been promoted so I can't let things slide," Kimberly chimed in.

Millie agreed and tip-toed to kiss Jackson on the cheek shyly, before running into the elevator. Jackson wiped his cheek and looked at Kimberly with a smile. "Is that Aurelia your colleague?"

“What do you want?” Kimberly asked.

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“Introduce us.’

Kimberly paused. “She’s strong-willed. Not your type.”

“It’s fine. Preference changes. I had a close look at her. Her skin was so fair and she’s pretty. My heart is still racing,” Jackson said with his hand on his chest.

“She just embarrassed you. Have you forgotten about it already?”

“I’m forgiving,” he said.

“She’s married,” she emphasized.

“There’s a price to every woman. I want her right now. It doesn’t matter if she’s married. If her husband is capable, she wouldn’t be working now.”

Kimberly was slightly displeased.

Though she was friends with Jackson, she once tried to pursue him as well. However, he rejected her right away, saying that she wasn’t his type.

Yet, he was immediately interested in Aurelia after meeting her once.

This was an indirect insult to her.

Still, she didn't refuse right away and said to Jackson, "Alright, but I've just been promoted. Just wait for a while. You still have Millie for now, right?"

Upon hearing Millie's name, Jackson's brows furrowed.

"This woman is so annoying. I would have kicked her out long ago if she wasn't so obedient."

"Don't. Don't kick her for now. Perhaps, she could still be useful in pursuing Aurelia," Kimberly said hastily.

If Jackson abandoned Millie at this moment, how could she leverage Millie for her own benefit?

"Alright, I'll leave now. Keep an eye on this matter for me. If I succeed, I'll buy you anything you want."

"Thank you in advance, Jackson." Kimberly smiled happily.

Jackson was devious, but if he were genuinely interested in Aurelia, it might be a good thing for her.

She also wanted to see Aurelia end up in disgrace.

In the office, Aurelia had just sat down when Millie and Kimberly entered together, both appearing in good spirits.

Kimberly packed up the items on her desk, preparing to move to the small office next to Zachary's office. This was the privilege of the vice director.

Millie and others immediately gathered around.

"Kimberly, let me help you pack," Millie offered.

“You shouldn’t be calling her Kimberly anymore. It should be Ms. Watson,” one of the colleagues chimed in.

Kimberly sat in her chair and enjoyed the service of others.

Suddenly, she turned her chair to look at Aurelia, who was working.

Taking on the commanding tone of a superior, she said, “Aurelia, is the self-reflection letter ready?”

Instantly, everyone in the office stopped working.

The only sound in the entire office was the tapping of Aurelia’s keyboard.

She replied indifferently, “No.”

Kimberly’s smile stiffened. “Did you forget about it? Today is Tuesday. You are supposed to read the letter aloud on Friday.”

Aurelia continued typing on the keyboard without stopping. “Why the rush?”

Kimberly fell silent and bit her lip resentfully.

She got up and had someone move her belongings into the small office. Then, she went into Zachary’s office.

About fifteen minutes later, Zachary came out with Kimberly.

“Today is Kimberly’s first day in office as the vice director. To congratulate her, I, as the director, will treat everyone to lunch.”

“Thank you, Mr. Zeller.”

Applause erupted.

Suddenly, Zachary’s tone took on a more serious tone. “Kimberly is a person approved by the boss. Although she is young, she has reached this position based on her capabilities. I hope everyone won’t feel unfair about this arrangement and will cooperate more with the work of the vice director.”

The focus of the conversation shifted abruptly, and everyone stole glances at Aurelia.

Zachary then pointed directly at Aurelia. “Aurelia, is the self-reflection letter written?”

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“No,” Aurelia said.

Zachary frowned. “Complete it by tomorrow and show it to me. This is to prevent you from making a fool of yourself in the meeting. It’s settled. Everyone, get back to work.”

With that, he left.

Aurelia fell into silence.

Was it really to prevent her from making a fool of herself? He was clearly standing up for Kimberly.

Kimberly smirked smugly and pointed at Aurelia, “Aurelia, don’t forget about it this time.”

Aurelia didn’t respond, but clenched her fists until her skin turned red.

She considered quitting the day before, but dismissed that thought soon after.

Once she quitted, she would never be able to shake the label of plagiarism. The entire industry would isolate her and years of hard work would be in vain.

She had an ill mother to look after and she needed a lot of money.

She couldn't simply trouble Linda and Leslie all the time. As an ordinary employee, she couldn't fight back against absolute power.

She could only put up with it.

Some may think that she had it coming, but she had no other option and could only march forward.

Aurelia had a busy morning, and she went to the restroom as lunchtime approached. When she returned, the entire office was empty.

After checking her phone, she found messages in the group.

They had all gone out for a lavish meal with Zachary.

Aurelia knew they deliberately left her behind.

She used to think workplace bullying

was something distant from her, but she had now found herself entangled in it. Sitting alone in the empty office, her mind went blank. For a moment, she was unsure of what she was thinking.

She didn't want to confront them about why they didn't invite her as it would not lead to anything good.

Instead, she decided to contemplate how to resolve the issue at hand.

With Jackson causing a scene earlier, Millie was unlikely to tell her the truth.

However, the records on her laptop had all been deleted.

As she pondered, Aurelia felt like she grasped something important and immediately put her laptop into her bag, before leaving the office.

She took a taxi to the building of One Technology and dialed Leslie's number. After several

rings, he finally answered.

"Go on." Leslie's cold voice came through.

"Mr. Synder, have you had lunch?" Aurelia asked hesitantly.

"Is that why you called me?" Leslie sounded like he was about to hang up.

"Wait, I'd like to treat you to lunch. By the way, could you help me with something? My laptop is broken," she said.

"Where are you?"

"I'm already downstairs at your company. If you're busy right now, I can wait," Aurelia said, reluctant to press further.

"I'm coming shortly." With that, Leslie hung up.

Upstairs in the conference room, a gloomy atmosphere had lingered all morning until Leslie answered a call.

“Meeting adjourned,” he said.

“What?” Daniel was puzzled. “Didn’t you say we wouldn’t eat until the issue was resolved?”

“I’m hungry now.” Leslie glanced at the window. The temperature outside was estimated to be around thirty-eight degrees Celsius.

Aurelia would likely get a heatstroke if she stood outside for too long.

With that in mind, he stood up and left.

The entire conference room was left in a daze when they realized their workaholic of a boss decided to abandon work.

Downstairs, Aurelia stood under a tree and wiped the sweat from her forehead.

She thought she would have to wait for a long time, but Leslie appeared with an umbrella a few minutes later to her surprise.

Leslie took one look at the faint sunburn on her cheeks and handed the umbrella he borrowed from the receptionist to her.

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“Take it.”

“But I ...” She was holding her purse in her left hand and her laptop bag on the right, so she couldn’t spare a hand to hold the umbrella.

Leslie didn’t say a word and simply took the bags from her, before shoving the umbrella into her hand.

Despite his cold exterior, he was very considerate.

Smiling, Aurelia said, “Thank you.”

However, when they opened the umbrella, the two of them froze under the sun.

On the outside, it looked like an ordinary black umbrella. However, there was a picture of a muscular man on the inside of the umbrella.

Leslie narrowed his eyes and started wondering where Daniel hired all these strange people from.

“I borrowed it from someone.” He cleared his throat and urged, “Let’s go.”

“Okay.” Aurelia suppressed her laughter and glanced at the muscular man on the inside of the umbrella.

When both Leslie and she got drenched in the bathroom, she noticed that he had a muscular build as well, though not as exaggerated as the picture on the umbrella.

Recalling how the wet shirt outlined his abs, she felt her blood rushing to her head.

“Aurelia.”

“Huh? Yeah?” She snapped out of it.

“You are about to bump into the tree,” Leslie said with resignation. “What are you thinking?”

“Nothing.” She shook her head and glanced at the umbrella guiltily.

He glanced at it as well and realization dawned on her. “How naughty.”

“Naughty? What does he mean?” Aurelia thought. Not daring to ask him about it, she picked up her pace.

They found a simple restaurant near the building and ordered two-set meals. Aurelia discreetly glanced at the prices and they were reasonable.

She finally understood why Leslie had chosen this somewhat distant restaurant despite passing by many others under such hot weather.

He knew she probably didn’t have much money.

Before the food arrived, Leslie casually rolled up his shirt sleeves, a move that seemed effortless yet exuded a casual sense of beauty. This instantly caught the attention of the surrounding office workers.

“What’s wrong with the computer?” he asked.

“It’s just...the files are gone.” Aurelia hesitated. Not wanting to trouble Leslie, she refrained from mentioning that she had been schemed against.

Little did she know that Leslie had overheard it all outside her hospital room yesterday.

He took a sip of water. “Were they deleted by someone?”

Aurelia looked surprised. “How did you know? Can you recover them? They are quite important.”

“It won’t be hard.”

“Thank you.” Aurelia breathed a sigh of relief.

“But even if you bring back the restored files, what’s the point?” he asked.

“Well...” Aurelia hadn’t thought that far because she just wanted to prove her innocence.

“They can still claim forgery. Unless you have a foolproof solution, it will be a never-ending problem. Sometimes avoiding trouble doesn’t mean trouble won’t find you. Instead of dodging trouble, it’s better to resolve it. The same thing applies to troublesome people.”

Leslie’s voice was calm, but each word weighed heavily on Aurelia’s heart. It felt like the fog before her was gradually lifting, and many things became clear.

Her problem wasn’t plagiarism. It was Kimberly.

Besides resolving the plagiarism issue, she should also address Kimberly.

She considered herself a person who didn’t seek trouble, so she would draw the line when faced with provocation.

She didn’t want to make things too ugly since they were colleagues. However, not everyone appreciated this approach. Seth and Millie were perfect examples of someone who took advantage of her restraint.

Kimberly was also one of those people who thought Aurelia wouldn’t resist due to her humble background, so she behaved recklessly.

Had Aurelia drawn the line with Kimberly right from the start, Kimberly would never have dared to plot against her so ruthlessly.

Since things had come to this point, talking wouldn't change anything.

Aurelia frowned, feeling down. "You're right. Whatever I do now is useless. It's my own fault."

Leslie looked at her and said in a deep voice, "Is it going to kill you to ask for my help?"

Aurelia fell into silence and thought, "Huh?"

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Aurelia was momentarily stunned before she grasped the situation.

"Mr. Synder, I've already sought your help. The current situation is a result of my mishandling of the matter."

"You know what I'm referring to," Leslie said.

Aurelia knew he belonged to One Technology, and asking him to seek intervention from the higher-ups wouldn't be difficult.

However, she had been trying to handle things on her own from the beginning. This made Leslie curious about the kind of person she truly was, although he had never been particularly inquisitive.

Aurelia pursed her lips. Leslie was indeed perspective. He saw through everything.

She chuckled helplessly. "You don't owe me anything. What if my issues end up affecting your job? We're just employees. You have a mortgage to pay, and you need to take care of your mother. I can't be so selfish. I'll figure out a way to handle it."

"What kind of way?" Leslie asked.

"Just..." Aurelia struggled to come up with an answer.

"Are you going to handle it like you did last night?"

"Mr. Synder!" Aurelia covered her forehead, widening her eyes as she interrupted. "Can we not mention last night? It's too embarrassing."

Leslie raised an eyebrow. "It seems you remember everything now."

Aurelia immediately covered her mouth and realized she had let it slip.

She had initially planned to pretend that she didn't remember a thing. Conveniently, the dishes arrived at this moment, and she quickly pointed at the food in front of them.

"Let's eat first," she said, blushing.

She took a large mouthful of pasta, hoping to alleviate her embarrassment.

Leslie could tell that she was embarrassed and said calmly, "There's nothing to be embarrassed about. There's no rule that says people can't cry, nor is there a rule that says strong people aren't supposed to seek help. Stop listening to others. Only fools would hold it all in."

"... Oh," Aurelia mumbled. Though she had already swallowed the food in her mouth, she still felt a lump in her throat.

She remembered the day of her father's funeral. Her neighbors, relatives, and friends all told her, "Aurelia, you can't cry. You have to stay strong. You are the only one your mother has

now."

Even Seth told her that modern women were supposed to be independent and couldn't go crying to their boyfriends.

Hence, she took on everything and never let others worry about her.

Leslie was the only one who told her that it was not shameful to cry despite what she had done the night before.

Thinking back to the previous night, she blushed again and tried her best to focus on the

present.

According to what Leslie said, it would be unrealistic to retrieve her proposal. After all, everyone had already seen that extravagant plan on her laptop.

Even if she presented another plan, they could simply say that she added it to her laptop afterward.

What if she found her plan in front of everyone? No one could say that she was sneaking around anymore.

However, she wasn't a professional in technology and the only person who could complete such a thing with ease was Leslie.

She looked up at him and considered her words.

He seemed to have anticipated what she wanted to say. "Go ahead."

“You already know about the situation. I don’t know how to handle it, so can you help me out?” she said. Once spoken, she realized it wasn’t so hard to seek help after all.

When facing Leslie, she somehow felt a sense of security.

Leslie set his fork down. “And what do I get in return? Even siblings should keep things clear, and so should married couples.”

Act Fast: Free Bonus Time is Running Out!

Chapter 150

Aurelia was taken aback and showed five fingers at Leslie. “How about five hundred?”

He narrowed his eyes and felt speechless.

She was once in a relationship, yet she knew nothing about being in one.

How could married couples discuss money?

He reached out and poked her on the forehead gently. “Is money all you can think of?”

“Huh?” She froze. Where Leslie touched felt like it was on fire and her heart raced.

Leslie paused as well when he realized that his action was slightly out of line.

He withdrew his hand and took a sip of his water. Clearing his throat, he said, “Buy me a meal.

“Isn’t that what I’m doing now?” Aurelia glanced at the dishes on the table.

“Aurelia, do you know how much you owe me? How many days has it been since you last made me lunchboxes? Are you seriously going to even things out just with a meal after that presentation?”

“How about I give you five hundred and you can have whatever you want with it ...” Before she could finish her sentence, his sharp gaze silenced her. Changing her mind, she said, “Sure, Mr. Synder. I’ll treat you to a grand meal.”

“He is so scary,” she thought. “He was calm just now and got upset the next moment.”

Leslie’s furrowed brow relaxed. “I’ll choose the place.”

“Oh.” Aurelia returned to the main topic. “So, is there any way to salvage my situation?”

“For now, the company wants you to write a self–reflection and read it aloud in public.”

“How did you know that? How are you even aware of our company’s internal matters?” Aurelia stared at Leslie in disbelief.

Leslie was supposed to be a programmer, so how could he be so well–informed?

Their company wasn’t particularly large, and the recent growth didn’t warrant news spreading everywhere.

Leslie remained unwavering. “Mr. Lynch mentioned it. He is connected with Kimberly’s social media account.”

Aurelia nodded. Kimberly was the type to broadcast every detail in her friend circle, after all.

“No wonder. Now, Mr. Zeller doesn’t want me to cause any trouble, so he wants me to submit the self–reflection in advance. If I refuse, it’s insubordination. If I write it, I’ll be confessing to a crime I didn’t commit. That’s why I came to you,

“The director is supporting Kimberly because she has a wealthy uncle. If you want to control Kimberly, you need to start from this angle.” Leslie provided a brief analysis.

You even know that Kimberly has a rich uncle?” Aurelia looked at Leslie in amazement, then shook her head in denial. “Her uncle treats her like a daughter. He even covered the expenses

for her study abroad. How can I control her with that?”

“However close the uncle is with her, he’s not her father. He won’t tolerate the damage to the company’s reputation caused by Kimberly unconditionally. For a business, impact on

reputation is fatal.”

“Impact on reputation?” Aurelia pondered his words, and suddenly it clicked. “Are you suggesting that I ...”

”

“Yes. When the time comes, do you think her uncle will protect the company or his niece?” Leslie asked casually.

In both morality and reason, Kimberly’s uncle had done everything for Kimberly. If Kimberly damaged the company’s reputation, he wouldn’t support her unconditionally.

Even if he used her as a shield to overcome the crisis, others wouldn’t condemn him for it.

Without her uncle's protection, Kimberly's position in the company would be entirely different. Aurelia guessed that at that time, Kimberly wouldn't have the leisure to scheme against her.

Aurelia gazed at Leslie with a steady look and whispered, "Mr. Synder, are you really just a programmer?"