

In A Flash 161

Chapter 161

Leslie possessed a refined sense of beauty. Even the most ordinary act of holding a cigarette held a sense of restrained elegance.

As he ended the call, he put out the cigarette in the bin.

His hands comfortably slipped into his pockets. The billowing smoke mist twirled the wind as he approached Aurelia, carrying a subtle scent of tobacco.

She stood dazedly and the faint aroma of tobacco in the air brought her back to reality.

“Mr. Synder, was it you who called the front desk?” she asked.

“Yes.” Leslie did not deny it.

“Thank you so much for today. Kimberly is in a difficult situation, and she probably won’t trouble me again,” Aurelia said.

“Will you still thank me if Kimberly doesn’t get demoted?” Leslie asked in a deep voice.

“No?” Aurelia hesitated.

How could she not get demoted with the situation escalating to this point?

“You’re still too young. Promotions and demotions require consensus between many people. Do you think those people don’t know that she’s actually incompetent? If she’s immediately demoted after today’s mess, they would be proving themselves wrong. How many people would be willing to do that?”

“Though you were careful not to take the lead just now, they aren’t idiots. They can’t possibly fail to connect Daniel’s appearance with you. It’s wishful thinking to think that they would immediately demote Kimberly and promote you,” Leslie explained.

Leslie’s words were direct and shattered fantasies in Aurelia’s heart. Yet, she appreciated Leslie’s directness as that brought her back to reality.

While capabilities were undoubtedly important, human hearts were unpredictable when it came to their own gains.

“I actually thought about it, but I still want to thank you. At least you cleared my name. You must have advised Mr. Xenos to provoke conflicts between Kimberly and others, right? Even if Kimberly doesn’t resign, the fact that she plagiarized will spread. She won’t be able to gain the support of the majority as the vice director.” Aurelia nodded.

Leslie lowered his eyes at her and a hint of appreciation flashed in his

Fortunately, Aurelia was not a narrow-minded person.

eyes.

“As long as you understand what’s going on. If news of Kimberly’s plagiarism spreads, her uncle will be the first person to act. She likes to show off, and everyone knows that she got into Young Advertising through her uncle. Her uncle is currently bidding on projects, and this matter may not end well.”

“I suppose.” Aurelia nodded again, then looked at Leslie cautiously. “Um... Do you have time this weekend? I’d like to treat you to a meal.”

Aurelia felt that she owed Leslie a meal.

“Sure.”

“Have you been standing here for a long time? Are you thirsty? There’s a nice coffee shop next door. Can I buy you a cup of coffee?” Aurelia pointed to the adjacent café.

Leslie raised his hand and checked his watch. “Let’s go.”

“This way.” Aurelia led the way as Leslie walked beside her. Just a few steps out, she stumbled. She usually wore sneakers or the high heels her parents had given her to work. After getting used to them, wearing different high heels always felt a bit uncomfortable.

She lost balance and fell into Leslie’s arms and she felt her cheeks heating up as the sunlight cast down on her.

Embarrassed, she said, “Will you believe me if I say that this was an accident?”

He held her waist and lifted an eyebrow pointedly.

Just then, a few people walked past them giggling and Aurelia pulled away shyly.

However, she ended up bumping into Leslie’s nose with a loud ‘baam.’

“Mr. Synder, are you alright?”

“I knew this would happen to my nose at one point.” He frowned and covered his nose, yet his tone was light-hearted.

“Why?” she asked in confusion.

“After all, one punch from you can-”

Before he could finish his sentence, Aurelia took out her phone and mumbled, “I’ll just send you money to buy your coffee. I wouldn’t want your nose to break.”

She seemed annoyed when he didn't even say much.

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"Let's go." Leslie rubbed his nose.

Aurelia nodded and set her phone down. Suddenly, she recalled something and asked, "Mr. Synder, was it really okay for you to get Mr. Xenos involved? Won't your boss be mad?"

"He won't. I told him about what happened. The opening ceremony is important for him. If we knew about the plagiarism and ignored it, our competitors may use it against us. There's no way he wouldn't understand that."

"That's good. Tell your boss to rest assured. I will make sure the opening ceremony is perfect." Aurelia sighed a breath of relief.

Sensing the shift in her emotion, Leslie said, "You seem to care quite a lot about our boss."

"Who cares about him? It's you I care about-" she blurted out.

Her eyes widened at this moment and she immediately looked away to turn to the cashier. "One ice latte, please. Thank you."

"3 dollars." The cashier studied her flushed cheeks with an odd look in his eyes.

Aurelia kept her head down and dared not to speak, while Leslie stood behind her, smiling.

Once the coffee was made, Aurelia handed it to Leslie and wasted no time to escape. "I'll go back to the office now."

“Alright.” Leslie nodded.

With that, she ran back to her office.

Leslie stepped out of the café and approached a car by the road. The car window rolled down, and he found Daniel and two other young men grinning.

“Bro, does the coffee the pretty lady bought smell good? You called us over early in the morning and didn’t even offer us a cup of coffee. Boohoo,” a young man said.

“Shush,” Leslie said coldly.

“Why did you have to get the two of us here? You could have picked any employee from the office. Why us?” another young man asked.

“Considering her personality, she’ll surely go out of her way to thank the person who helped her the next time she goes to One Technology. I’m afraid someone might accidentally tell her the truth. The two of you, on the other hand, she won’t be able to find,” Leslie explained.

“Huh? You’re actually going to such lengths for a woman? When are you going to formally introduce her to us? After all, we’re your cousins, right?”

“She doesn’t need to know the two of you,” Leslie said in displeasure.

“No? Bro, are you trying to prevent her from thanking the men who helped her at your company out of jealousy? My goodness, are you still our cousin who dislikes women?”

Leslie remained silent

“Bro, is your nose all red because she hit you? She is truly a heroine if she dares to hit you.”

Leaning against the car door, Leslie said calmly, "If you two have so much free time, I'm ending your vacation and pulling you back into the office to work."

"No, no, we haven't even graduated yet. We won't allow you to enslave us. Be careful or we'll go complain to your mom! We're going back to school now."

As soon as they heard the vacation was canceled, the two hastily closed the car windows.

Leslie turned and got into the car.

Little did they notice someone sneakily taking photos of Leslie.

Aurelia had just entered the elevator when an employee from another company on the upper floors rushed in.

"Aurelia, I just saw you hugging a man at the entrance. He seemed quite handsome from the back. Who is he?" She smirked like she had discovered some big secret.

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Aurelia wanted to say it was nobody, but recalled that this person was also a gossiping member of the building's chat group.

If she started spreading rumors, Aurelia would have to explain herself again.

She really didn't want to become the focus of discussion, especially with that building group including Seth.

"That's my husband. He happened to pass by to see me," Aurelia said.

The girl's eyes widened with surprise. "Your... Your husband?"

Aurelia nodded.

The woman whispered, "It's no wonder you dumped Seth. That guy looks stunning even from the back."

Ignoring that comment, Aurelia said, "I've reached my floor." With that, she walked out of the elevator.

Returning to the office, it was eerily quiet inside.

Everyone kept their heads down, and Millie was burying her head on her desk, sniffing.

Apparently, Zachary had already given her a stern talking-to.

Aurelia tiptoed back to her seat and turned on her laptop.

The screen lit up with a notification from the workgroup.

"Millie from the Marketing Department was found spreading false information among colleagues and fabricating rumors. 150 dollars will be deducted from her commission and she will be required to write a reflection letter of one thousand words."

"Kimberly from the same department plagiarized a proposal and leaked internal company information. 300 dollars will be deducted from her commission and she will be required to write a reflection letter of one thousand words. She will be on probation for three months in her current position."

Aurelia remained unfazed as she read this, her admiration for Leslie growing.

It was nearly identical to what Leslie had predicted.

Although it seemed both Millie and Kimberly received punishment and the plagiarism by Kimberly had been acknowledged, the boss had left a way out for Kimberly.

The deduction in commission/meant nothing significant to Kimberly. She simply needed to avoid trouble for three months and she would still be the vice director.

On the other hand, Millie ended up being fined and humiliated as the scapegoat for Kimberly.

That explained why she was sobbing miserably.

Still, Aurelia didn't feel any pity for Millie. She closed the notification and continued working.

Just then, Kimberly walked out of her office.

"I'm treating everyone to afternoon tea. Just order whatever you want."

The office fell into silence as no one dared to take her up on her offer.

Kimberly's lips twitched, and she looked at Aurelia with resentment as she strode towards her.

"Aurelia, you should learn to be more generous. Your proposal belongs to the company and I merely took it to One Technology for you."

Kimberly was still desperately trying to evade responsibility and attempted to mislead everyone. However, after what happened earlier, no one dared to side with her.

Seeing this, Kimberly glared at her usually supportive colleagues.

Aurelia looked up at her and said, “Ms. Watson, while it’s true that my planning was done for the company, it wasn’t for you. Since you’re so generous, you wouldn’t blame everyone for not taking you up on your offer, right?”

Kimberly laughed angrily when she heard the way Aurelia addressed her.

“Aurelia, so you do know that I’m still the vice director, after all. What’s the point in all that you did, then?”

“Well, the collaboration with One Technology has introduced me to plenty of big shots and my bonus will double. That’s not so bad. You, our dear vice director, may not be able to manage your staff if you can’t even hit the sales target, right?” Aurelia said thoughtfully.

“Why you—Why won’t I hit the sales target?” Kimberly gritted out.

“Let’s wait and see, then.” Aurelia smiled.

“Just wait, Kimberly. You will reap what you sow,” she thought. “Who would work with her after knowing that she became vice director through copying others’ work?”

Kimberly would certainly end up with nothing to show despite being given the title of vice director.

This would make her time in this position extremely miserable.

Livid, Kimberly stormed back into her office.

Aurelia lowered her head and noticed someone watching her. She turned around and met Millie’s eyes.

Without saying a word, she looked away. Millie was taken aback and felt hurt by this.

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Aurelia simply continued to ignore her and decided that she didn't need a friend like Millie.

Silence loomed over the office for the rest of the afternoon and everyone was busy with their own work, only stopping to exchange glances from time to time.

Just before office hours were about to end, Aurelia realized that everyone was looking at her. "Aurelia, did your husband come to see you?" someone asked.

She immediately realized what the colleague she ran into earlier that morning said on the group chat.

Not intending to lie, she said, "Yeah."

"Why didn't you ask him to come up for a coffee? He's so good-looking," her colleague asked curiously.

"Huh?" Aurelia stared at them in confusion, wondering how they knew that Leslie was good-looking.

Her colleague pulled out her phone. "Someone took a photo of you and your husband. It only captures his back, but judging from the smitten look on your face, he has to be really good-looking."

Aurelia refused to believe that she looked smitten, but was embarrassed when she finally saw the photo.

When she gazed up at Leslie, she did indeed look smitten and she hoped that he didn't notice it.

While she was deep in her thoughts, the others swarmed her.

"Aurelia, I've been meaning to ask this, but what does your husband do?"

“Is he in the financial district? I saw you coming back with the pastries sold around that area before. Your husband is dressed so formally that he must be an elite in the financial district.”

“Aurelia, you really keep things under wraps. When your mother-in-law came, I instinctively knew that you married into an extraordinary family.”

With everyone throwing comments her way, Aurelia had no idea who she should respond to.

However, these words didn't cloud her judgment.

They were suddenly friendly because Daniel represented One Technology and praised her her today.

They feared that their previous comments might have offended her.

After thinking for a moment, Aurelia smiled. “No, he's just an ordinary salaryman. He happened to be around today.”

Her colleagues were surprised by Aurelia's response.

If it were Kimberly or Millie, this discussion could have gone on for at least an hour.

Seeing that Aurelia didn't want to elaborate, everyone could only leave in disappointment.

Aurelia thought the topic had ended there, but received a message on her phone a few minutes later. She opened it and found that someone had added her to the building's chat group.

She was about to leave the group when she hesitated. Previously, Millie used to share messages from the building group with her.

Now, Millie probably wouldn't be willing to share with her. Aurelia didn't know what these people were saying behind her back, and she couldn't just wait for things to unfold without her knowledge.

With that thought in mind, Aurelia put her phone down and casually checked the messages in the group.

They were all talking about her and Leslie.

The only relief was that they only took pictures of Leslie's back, so it wouldn't have any impact on Leslie.

"Aurelia wins in life. She has a good mother-in-law and a handsome husband. Even the big boss of One Technology appreciates her. She's destined for success in the future."

"Indeed, finding a good in-law can never go wrong. Look how beautiful Aurelia has become recently. I heard people from her company say that the clothes she has been wearing lately cost thousands per piece. They were all bought by her husband."

These people probably didn't recognize Aurelia's WhatsApp name, so they continued speaking without much consideration.

"You didn't see their interaction. They were all lovey-dovey when they hugged each other on the main road. It was so sweet. It's a shame that the boss was beside me at that time, or I would have caught up to see what her husband looked like."

"With my experience in appreciating handsome guys, he's definitely the type that looks slim in clothes but has some flesh when undressed. Judging from the shape of his head, he's probably quite good-looking, too."

"Haha. Are they really praising the shape of his head now? He does have a really good physique, though," Aurelia thought.

"In conclusion, one should keep their eyes peeled when finding a man. Being wealthy alone means nothing. Finding someone who treats you well is the main point. People don't just transform because they date someone better. No wonder some people's boyfriends go to introduce themselves to other people's wives."

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Though they didn't mention names, Aurelia instantly knew that they were talking about Millie and Jackson.

Millie was friends with Aurelia and everyone knew about it. Hence, when Millie confirmed that Aurelia plagiarized in the group chat, a lot of people were convinced.

As a result, all these people had been summoned for a meeting with the management after what happened.

On top of that, Young Advertising clearly stated that Millie was the one speculating false information, so everyone came to resent her.

Kimberly, on the other hand, didn't receive as much hatred.

Millie couldn't control her temper and jumped into the conversation. "You are all praising him before you even see his face. Aren't you worried that you may be wrong? My boyfriend is nice to me, too."

"No one is talking about you, so why are you arguing with us?" Someone replied and did not mince their words.

Millie glared at her phone and continued typing.

Soon, text messages from her started popping up in the group chat.

"I don't think you should keep talking about Aurelia. After all, Seth is in this group as well."

"Besides, Aurelia only married her current husband after breaking up with Seth. If you are all praising her husband, Seth would be devastated. @Seth"

She even went as far as to tag him in the message.

Aurelia truly wished she could stand up and give Millie a piece of her mind.

Did they really have to tear each other down just because they couldn't be friends?

Aurelia couldn't help but sweat nervously, fearing that Seth might emerge and play the victim.

Strangely, Seth didn't respond for some reason, almost as if he had vanished.

Before Aurelia could think much of it, Kimberly spoke up in the group.

"I apologize for the misunderstanding caused by certain circumstances. I have clarified the situation with the boss. However, due to the confidential nature of the internal information, I can't disclose the specifics. I've retained my position, and I apologize for the impact this has caused on Aurelia,"

It was internal news that Aurelia was being blamed for plagiarism, and Kimberly had promptly informed everyone in the building's group. Now, she claimed that she wasn't disclosing news about her because it concerned internal affairs.

It was stated that her position was retained, which implied she was innocent.

Was this really an apology? It seemed more like a subtle self-defense.

Following this, Kimberly continued with her passive-aggressive remarks.

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“I think Aurelia is very fortunate as well. Her husband is so generous. I wonder how many years of savings those dresses would consume. Looking at their interaction in the photos, I’d think they’ve been a couple for years. You can’t tell they just got married.”

The only thought in Aurelia’s mind as she read this was that Kimberly was truly vicious.

Since she couldn’t temper with the project any longer, Kimberly had resorted to hinting that Aurelia may have started seeing Leslie while she was still with Seth.

Aurelia angrily typed a reply. “Why do you care?”

However, before sending it, she held back.

Leslie’s words echoed in her mind.

What was the point of arguing with Kimberly? The real trouble she needed to address was Kimberly herself.

Now that Kimberly had no power over her work, she resorted to spreading rumors about her personal life.

To shut Kimberly up for good, Aurelia realized the best approach was to expose Kimberly’s private affairs in return.

After a moment of consideration, she deleted the few words she had just typed and quickly wrote a sentence praising Kimberly.

“Kimberly, my husband and I are just ordinary people. Of course, we can’t compare to your high-profile pursuer with hundreds of employees in his firm. By the way, why hasn’t he visited you recently? Is he on a business trip and hasn’t returned yet? Didn’t he invite you for dinner?”

The high-profile pursuer Kimberly spoke of was actually Leslie.

This was the topic Kimberly least wanted to be reminded of, and this instantly diverted everyone's attention.

"Who said he hasn't visited Kimberly? I just saw him downstairs a moment ago."

This message was accompanied by a photo. It showed Leslie standing next to a car, only revealing his head. Despite the limited view, his impressive looks were evident.

The group chat exploded with excitement.

"He's so handsome! He's even more handsome than before!"

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"Is that all? All you got is his head."

"Oh, come on. Doesn't he look handsome? If I get closer, people might think I'm a peeping Tom."

"Speaking of which, I've forgotten a lot of things lately. Kimberly, didn't you ask your tall, rich, and handsome guy to treat us to a meal?"

"Kimberly, Kimberly..."

Everyone called for Kimberly in the group chat.

Aurelia heard someone mention Leslie and felt a bit nervous. However, she was relieved when she saw the photos and considered this candid shot as a stroke of luck.

She glanced at the small office and imagined Kimberly going crazy inside.

Just when everything had calmed down for more than a week, the subject of her so-called boyfriend had to be brought up again.

Where was she going to find someone now?

It was quite amusing to Aurelia.

If everyone knew that Kimberly was also lying about her personal matters, she would be the laughingstock of the entire building.

Being in a good mood, Aurelia put down her phone, checked the time, and realized it was almost time to leave work.

She packed up her things. As she stood up, she nearly collided with Millie, who was standing nearby.

“Why are you in the group chat?” Millie asked.

“Someone added me.

“Then why didn’t you stop me from saying those things? You weren’t like this before.” Millie frowned.

“Why should I? You’re in your twenties. Don’t you know what to say and what not to say? They mocked you because you were really out of line, not because of me,” Aurelia said.

“I get it. You’re still upset that I didn’t let Jackson get close to you, right? I’m telling you, you won’t-” Millie began.

“Shut up, Millie. Keep your own boyfriend in check. We’re just colleagues from now on, understand?” Aurelia dropped the words and left.

Millie bit her lip and people around her giggled.

Why did it turn out like this? Why were they laughing at her when she had Jackson?

Millie took a deep breath, slung her designer bag over her shoulder, and left.

“What a fool. She is just carrying a basic brand’s bag but acts like it’s Hermès. She’ll regret it in the future,” someone said.

“Let’s just ignore her. All she can think of is men. You can’t reason with her,” another colleague commented as they left together.

Inside the small office, Kimberly was on the phone.

“Mr. Warner, why don’t we go out for a meal? Let’s just sign the contract while we are at it...”

“Kimberly, our firm has found a better proposal. Let’s work together in the future when we have the chance. I’m going to hang up now.”

The beeping sound that signaled a disconnected call was heard.

Kimberly froze. Mr. Warner used to fawn over her, but now he had hung up on her.

Soon, she received a few messages from various clients on her laptop.

“Ms. Watson, we have no intention to sign a contract with you for the moment.”

“Ms. Watson, our supervisor has settled on a different partner. Sorry.”

They were all messages denying collaborations.

She set her phone aside in rage and cursed, "These people have no appreciation for what's good."

The phone hit the table and started ringing.

Kimberly glanced at it and immediately straightened her back.

"Uncle."

"Kimberly, what's going on in your office? Why is there an incident of plagiarism? I got you into Young Advertising through connections. What you did embarrassed me and affected my business."

"I'm sorry, Uncle. I didn't mean to. It's all Aurelia's fault..."

"Alright, alright. I don't want to hear your excuses. You better behave now." Her uncle was irritated and added, "By the way, why are you running your credit cards over the limit lately? Don't waste money, or I'll freeze your cards."

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"A-Alright." Kimberly dared not to argue.

After hanging up, her phone continued to vibrate from the messages of others, urging her to invite her wealthy, handsome pursuer to dinner with everyone.

The others had mostly forgotten about this. However, Aurelia happened to mention it again and coincidentally, Leslie's photo ended up in the group chat.

This was unfortunate for Kimberly.

Holding her forehead, she became increasingly angry when she recalled how others praised Aurelia, saying that she looked prettier and how she managed to secure a handsome husband. Who was Aurelia to compete with her?

Kimberly made a call to Jackson and said, "I told you to look into the son of the founder of that law firm. Have you found anything?"

"I did, but I don't think he's your type," Jackson said casually.

"It's fine. Just ask him out for me. I'll buy him dinner."

"Huh? Seriously? Are you not even going to pick who you date anymore?" Jackson shocked.

"He obviously can't compare to you, but I can help ask Aurelia out for you if you help me with this." Kimberly was frustrated and didn't consider Jackson's words carefully. After flattering him, she immediately offered an exchange.

Jackson immediately agreed when he heard Aurelia's name. "Don't you break your promise."

"No problem. Make it this weekend, then. I'll make the reservation."

"Sure."

After settling what was most important, she regained her confidence and thought, "Aurelia, let's see how smug you can be this time!"

Although the events of the Friday meeting were widely known, the office building never lacked new topics.

A new subject emerged on Saturday morning: Kimberly's handsome and wealthy boyfriend promised to treat her friends to a meal over the weekend.

When Aurelia saw the message, she was taken aback.

Kimberly's supposed boyfriend was none other than Leslie, so when did Leslie agree to this?

It couldn't be true because Leslie reminded Aurelia to clear her schedule for tomorrow and join him for dinner earlier that morning. The reservation for the restaurant had already been made.

Aurelia glanced at Kimberly's office skeptically.

Just then, Millie's voice came with a teasing tone. "Don't bother looking. Kimberly's boyfriend is a genuinely handsome and wealthy man, but he's not interested in married women."

Aurelia turned to look at Millie. "Your boyfriend has quite unusual preferences."

"Why you... Aurelia, I know you're jealous of Kimberly and me, but everyone has their own destiny. There's no point in feeling jealous.

"But don't worry. Kimberly has also invited me to dinner tomorrow. I'll take more photos for you to see. I heard we'll be going to a Michelin-star restaurant.

"The average cost there is three hundred dollars per person. A single meal for us will cost at least two months of your salary."

That would mean that a meal there would require a spending of over two thousand dollars. This was indeed very expensive.

Aurelia was about to say something when other colleagues chimed in. "It's that expensive? What kind of restaurant is that?"

“A French restaurant. You guys won’t understand even if I tell you,” Millie said arrogantly.

A colleague scoffed. “You talk as if you understand. Now that you’ve stopped bragging about your own boyfriend, you start bragging about someone else’s boyfriend?”

Millie blushed at the comment and retorted, “Then, get Kimberly to take you there.”

The two of them ended their conversation with a bit of disagreement.

Aurelia awkwardly withdrew her gaze and decided not to participate in any further discussions.

She was curious about which handsome and wealthy man Kimberly would bring to dinner

tomorrow.

In the midst of her thoughts, her phone rang. It was the owner of the printing factory.

“Ms. Simmons, the preliminary versions of the stand–up sign you’ve requested are ready. I’ve asked a local delivery service to send it over. The system shows that it has been signed for. Please take a look and let us know which one you prefer, so we can expedite the production.”

“Alright, I’ll check at the front desk and call you back later.”

After hanging up, Aurelia hurriedly ran to the front desk. The stand–up sign was for providing on–site guidance to One Technology.

Since she had some doubts about the color, the boss had sent three versions for her to choose

from.

However, when she arrived at the front desk, she couldn't find the package.

She asked the receptionist, "Where's the local express package that has been signed for?"

The receptionist looked around and suddenly remembered something. "There was indeed a local express delivery this morning. When I received it, the vice director happened to pass by. She said that since it was for you, she would take it with her."

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"Alright." Aurelia frowned at the mention of Kimberly. She turned and walked to Kimberly's office, knocking on the door.

"Come in," Kimberly's arrogant voice sounded.

Aurelia pushed the door open and found three stand-up signs standing in the middle of the office, two of them already trampled.

"Why did you

touch

my things?" Aurelia asked.

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Kimberly furrowed her brows and stood up from her chair. "Aurelia, mind your tone. Is this the way you speak to a superior?" she said sternly.

“Ms. Watson, these are samples sent to me. Why were they trampled?” Aurelia retorted.

Kimberly clicked her tongue. “It says ‘Received by the marketing department, Ms. Simmons.’ It doesn’t mention your full name. These belong to the Marketing Department. Is there a problem with the vice director overseeing it?”

“The stand-up signs you designed are so ugly. I haven’t even gotten the chance to question you about it. You can’t just go through the motions simply because the contract has been signed. Do you want One Technology to become a city-wide joke?”

After speaking, Kimberly intentionally stepped on the broken stand-up signs and then pointed to the only intact one.

“I chose this for you. The color is nice. Let’s go with this.”

Aurelia glanced at it. It was obviously the least appealing of the three stand-up signs when displayed publicly.

Kimberly was sabotaging the project on purpose.

Aurelia wanted to argue but remembered Leslie’s words.

Only a fool would resist stubbornly. Now that Kimberly was the vice director, she indeed had the authority to modify employees’ proposals.

Even if Aurelia resisted, Kimberly would think that she was defiant of the boss’s decisions and the nature of the situation would shift immediately.

The boss was embarrassed after yesterday’s meeting. If even an employee thought his decisions were flawed, he would dislike Aurelia even more.

With that considered, Aurelia immediately picked up the stand-up sign from the floor and nodded at Kimberly.

“All right, Ms. Watson. Let’s use this one.”

Kimberly was momentarily stunned, as she didn’t expect Aurelia to compromise so quickly.

Soon, she recovered and quickly raised her chin arrogantly. “As long as you understand my intentions.”

Aurelia nodded, turned, and left the office.

Back at her desk, she took out her phone, took a few pictures of the stand-up sign, and sent them to Kimberly.

“Ms. Watson, I feel that this signboard’s color is a bit too dazzling in the sunlight, making the words on it unclear. Should I redesign it?” She wrote.

“Aurelia! I say what goes! Do you understand the rules? You’re not the vice director; I am! I said we are using this one!” Kimberly replied.

“Fine.”

Aurelia exited the conversation window but couldn’t help smiling.

“Kimberly, there are plenty of ways to deal with you,” she thought.

Ten minutes later, Kimberly walked out of her office in a good mood as she continued her efforts to regain the favor she lost yesterday.

“There’s still an available seat at the restaurant tomorrow. Who wants to go?”

The once quiet office instantly became lively, with many hands raised.

“I do.”

“I do.”

Kimberly’s gaze swept around the room, finally stopping at Aurelia.

“Aurelia, I apologize for what happened before. Do you have time tomorrow?”

“No, my husband and I have plans for dinner,” Aurelia replied truthfully.

Kimberly sneered. “You must really like your husband. One would think you two have been in love for many years.”

Aurelia looked up. “Why would we get married if we aren’t getting along? Would you marry someone you don’t like? What are you looking for then? Someone tall, rich and handsome?” Kimberly stiffened. “Forget it. I wanted to take you to a Michelin-star restaurant. It’s fine if you don’t want to go.”

“Kimberly, Aurelia hasn’t been to such high-class restaurants before. How embarrassing it would be if she didn’t know which fork to use. It’s best that she go and have a home-cooked meal with her husband,” Millie agreed along.

Kimberly nodded with a smile and invited another colleague who was known to gossip.

With Millie and this colleague spreading the news, the entire building would learn that she was dating the son of someone who owned a law firm and she wouldn’t even need to say a single word.

Aurelia didn’t respond and simply stared at her laptop quietly. Soon, a message popped up

she smiled.

She took a screenshot and sent it to the group chat without hesitation.

Soon, everyone's phone was ringing.

They all checked the group chat and froze. Kimberly, who was just smirking earlier, now tensed with a dark expression.

and

Aurelia sent the screenshots of her conversation with Jason.

"Mr. Lynch, what do you think about this stand-up sign? If you confirm on this, I will get the factory to mass produce this."

There was no issue with what Aurelia typed. The main issue was with Jason's response.

"Ms. Simmons, I thought that Young Advertising is amongst the top ten marketing firms in Seacester. Don't you think your judgment of beauty is a little strange?"

Chapter 169

"This has been selected by our vice director. I designed a total of three and she thought this looks the best. I can show it to you."

Then, Aurelia attached the screenshots of her conversation with Kimberly.

“Ms. Simmons, our boss signed a contract with you, not your vice director. I personally think those two that were destroyed looked way better. I’ll go ask our boss and director about this. Please wait.”

Aurelia maintained the attitude of an employee who was walking on eggshells, so it was not wrong of her to post the conversation in the work group chat.

Kimberly’s words were indeed repulsive and Jason clearly appreciated Aurelia’s artistic senses. The boss practically exploded with anger and wrote. “The one who signed the contract will be responsible for the project! If you don’t know how to do things around here, just quit!”

He was referring to Aurelia and Kimberly.

The boss rarely lost his temper in the group chat and one could easily tell that he was fuming.

Aurelia immediately replied. “Noted.”

After a while, Kimberly followed suit and replied. “Noted.”

Aurelia looked up and found Kimberly’s expression darkening.

She had been far too gentle with Kimberly in the best and let too many things slide. Because of that, Kimberly mistakenly thought that she was easy to bully.

Starting from this moment onward, she would have everyone know what Kimberly was doing every time she tried to bully her.

Although the workgroup seldom engaged in casual chats, everyone had their own small groups in private.

With each person sharing tidbits of information, the events of today were sure to spread.

Aurelia was curious to see who would end up being the laughingstock.

Just then, Kimberly's phone rang.

She glanced at her phone, then glared at Aurelia before walking into her office.

As she closed the door, her voice was still audible to everyone. "Boss, it's not like that. I just ..."

"Take your time to explain, Kimberly," Aurelia thought.

At least Kimberly wouldn't dare to intervene in the planning from now on.

Aurelia sent a message to Jason. "Thank you."

"

"No problem. The boss gave us an order to cooperate with anything you ask for, Ms. Simmons.

Jason replied.

"Huh? I don't think I know your boss, right?"

"You will get to know each other."

Aurelia stared at the message in confusion, but she didn't want to press further.

Ending the conversation, she continued working until the end of the day when her phone vibrated.

It was a call from Linda.

“Mom, what’s up?”

“Nothing much. I happened to be near your company. Didn’t we agree to have a nice meal together?”

“Sure, I’m coming down right away,” Aurelia said.

After hanging up, Aurelia grabbed her bag and clocked out.

Downstairs, Linda was seen dressed in an elegant black dress that exuded grace and charm.

Aurelia quickly went to greet her. “Mom, think about where you want to eat. I’ll send a message to Mr. Synder.”

“It’s fine. I’ve already contacted him. How else would I know you and him are going on a date tomorrow?” Linda chuckled.

“It’s not a date, just dinner,” Aurelia hurriedly explained.

“Same thing. Let’s go, we have many places to visit today.”

Aurelia was bewildered but followed her mother out of the office.

After a simple dinner, they headed to the mall.

As soon as they entered the luxury shopping mall, Aurelia immediately wanted to turn back and tried to pull Linda with her.

“Mom, I just bought some new clothes. We really don’t need go shopping.”

Chapter 170

"This is the first time that brat is dating a woman, so we need to make sure that she's impressed," Linda said.

"T-The first time?" Aurelia was shocked.

Considering Leslie's looks, girls would be lining up to date him, so how could he have not gone on a date before?

"He used to have his mind full with studying and now, it's work. He keeps a straight face whenever women approach him, so who would want to date him?" Linda shook her head with a bitter expression.

"I know that my divorce with his father hurt him. We only separated because there was a third woman, so that caused Leslie's resentment toward women in general. I'm getting old now and I'm worried that he will stay alone forever if I leave one day. Aurelia, don't blame me for being selfish or for asking you to marry him. I'm just pleased that you two are getting along now."

Linda tapped her on the back of her hand as she spoke.

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out. Let's go

and shop,"

"Mom, I'm the one who should be thanking you. You've helped me out. Aurelia said gently.

She didn't have the heart to turn Linda down, so she linked arms with Linda and the two strolled into the mall.

Like any daughter-in-law would, Aurelia bought two dresses for Linda. Though they were all discounted products, Linda was grinning from ear to ear because of this.

She kept praising Aurelia for her great taste and telling others how caring she was.

“Look, we agreed on buying you a dress, but now you’re buying one for me. No more reckless spending, alright?”

“Sure, Mom.” Aurelia nodded with a smile.

Subsequently, Linda led her to the Mulan counter.

A suited man hurried over upon seeing Linda. “Hello, M-”

Linda gave him a casual glance, and he immediately smiled and said, “Hello, Ms. Miller, the clothes you ordered earlier are ready for you.”

“Good, bring them for this young lady to see.” Linda pointed at Aurelia.

The suited man looked at Aurelia and his smile widened. “Sure, sure. Please wait a moment. I’ll have them delivered right away.”

“Thank you.”

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ar, realizing that

Aurelia looked at the suited man and happened to see his name tag as he was the manager.

She was slightly taken aback. Linda was impressive to make even a manager so humble.

She often heard colleagues say that people working in luxury stores liked to look down on others. It seemed that Linda's aura was too commanding.

The manager wore white gloves and gestured to a rustic lounge area nearby. "Please have a seat and take a rest. I'll have some tea and snacks brought to you."

Linda sat down slowly, motioning for Aurelia to join her. "Aurelia, come sit down and rest. You must be tired from shopping just now."

"Okay."

Once seated, Aurelia leaned in and whispered in Linda's ear, "Mom, the clothes here are expensive. Let's leave."

"Don't worry, I know people. I got the insider's price," Linda said mysteriously.

"Oh, I see." Aurelia felt relieved.

Suddenly, a commotion erupted nearby. Aurelia peeked out and was surprised to see an argument.

It was Kimberly, Millie, and two other colleagues.

"What do you mean? Are you afraid that we can't afford it? Why won't you let us try these on?" Millie complained.

"Miss, is this your first time coming to Mulan? Our clothes are hand-embroidered and made from precious fabrics. Generally, we don't allow customers to try them on. We are trained professionals, and we can tell at a glance whether a piece suits you or not. This particular dress doesn't suit you."

The staff's tone was polite, but she glanced at Millie's mini handbag as she spoke.

Feeling like she was being looked down on, Millie retorted, "Impossible! If Aurelia can wear it, why can't I? I want this piece! Who do you think you are? How dare you stop a customer? You're just a lowly saleswoman!"