

## In A Flash 81

### Chapter 81

manager

Aurelia went to the sales to sign who immediately pulled her

the event: aside.

manager asked

“Earlier... Do you know him?” She cautiously, as if afraid of triggering

something.

“I don’t know him; we met a few times. I came out for help this time because the situation was urgent. I’m

for the inconvenience, Cached

Aurelia was still concerned that this matter

wasn’t close to him.

it almost disrupted your event.” It almost disrupted your event.

might

implicate Laelio Hence, she insisted she

“Why are you being so secretive about it? Is there something you can’t tell me?”

“I really don’t know him,” Aurelia asserted firmly.

The manager’s expression showed clear disdain as if Aurelia deliberately refused to help her climb the social ladder.

“It’s signed. The hotel has an event tonight, so I can only give you half an hour to check out.”

With that, the manager handed her the signed document and left.

Aurelia found it baffling. If she had really climbed the social ladder, would she need to be so subservient?

With the document in hand, Aurelia returned to the banquet hall, but Kimberly had already left. Left with no choice, she helped the decorators remove the arrangements.

Back at the office, Aurelia noticed that her colleagues were less welcoming than they had been in the morning. Some even seemed to be avoiding her.

Kimberly was leisurely sipping her coffee, a smile of triumph in her eyes that she couldn’t hide.

Perplexed, Aurelia sat back at her desk, turned to look at Millie, and whispered, “Millie, what’s going on?”

Millie pressed her lips together and shook her head. She said nothing, avoiding eye contact. with Aurelia.

It was as if she and Aurelia weren’t close at all.

Aurelia was puzzled when Zachary returned with a complex expression from the boss’s office.

Kimberly couldn't wait and stood up, saying, "Mr. Zeller, is everything okay now? I really didn't expect Aurelia to offend a foreign guest. Now, the guest must be causing trouble for the company, right?"

"It's all my fault! I couldn't stop her from getting close to the foreign guest. But she threatened me. She said if I didn't let her go, she'd accuse me and Mr. Lynch of having an inappropriate relationship."

"Mr. Zeller, is the company going to be all right? Will this have an impact on our entire planning department?"

As soon as she spoke, all the colleagues looked at Aurelia with resentment.

Then, Aurelia realized Kimberly had returned early to file a complaint against her.

She stood up and explained, "The other party's misbehavior happened first, and I addressed it appropriately. It did not disrupt the conference's progress."

Kimberly sneered, "Aurelia, is your way of handling things beating up the guest until he's bruised and battered?"

Aurelia furrowed her brows and emphasized, "I acted in self-defense."

"Did your self-defense involve not allowing the guest to even get up from the ground? He's the vice president of a biotech company, worth millions. You're also competing for the position of Vice President. Can't you handle a small matter?"

"Customer is king! If other clients find out about this, who would still choose us? Are we all going to starve?"

Kimberly seized the opportunity to attack Aurelia relentlessly.

Under the intense scrutiny of her colleagues, Aurelia bit her lip before replying firmly, "If prioritizing customers means taking a hit by drinking spiked red wine, then you should step up and drink it instead of hiding and cowering in fear."

Kimberly sneered, "How dare you accuse others of spiking red wine? He's a foreigner, highly educated, and a Vice President of his company. Why would he have a reason to target you? Seriously? It's not like he has poor eyesight."

Some colleagues joined in with laughter, ridiculing Aurelia's arrogance. However, most of them wore expressions of indifference.

Aurelia clenched her fists, saying, "In that case, I wish you all the best in encountering foreign Vice Presidents worth millions in the future. I'm sure you'll be delighted to drink that glass of wine.!!

Kimberly and those who had laughed awkwardly froze as Aurelia ruthlessly taunted them.

Everyone knew who was in the wrong, but they just enjoyed seeing others in difficult situations.

Kimberly flared her nostrils and turned to look at Zachary. "Mr. Zeller, what punishment did the boss decide for Aurelia? After all, we're colleagues, and it's hard to bear the thought."

Mr. Zeller furrowed his brows even deeper. He spoke slowly amid Kimberly's gloating smile, "David... has been dismissed."

## Chapter 82

"Aurelia has been dismissed! How..." Kimberly was about to rejoice but suddenly froze, "Wait, Mr. Zeller, what did you say? David has been dismissed? Not Aurelia?"

"Yes, David was dismissed for his misconduct. He even sent an apology email to the boss. His situation has become widely known within the industry. Not only can he no longer work locally, but even foreign companies have fired him," Zachary explained,

“Impossible! He’s so capable, and he’s a foreigner! How could he be dismissed because of Aurelia?” Kimberly exclaimed.

Hearing this, Zachary looked displeased. He cast her a condemning gaze for her thoughtless

words.

“Do you grasp the situation here? David clearly upset someone, and they wanted to get rid of him. It’s not solely about him being a foreigner. Do you genuinely believe it’s still a foreigner’s world these days?”

Everyone was stunned; even Aurelia froze in her tracks. Who could have such power to dismiss a multinational Vice President with just a word?

“I... That’s not what I meant,” Kimberly realized her words had been inappropriate and shot a resentful glance at Aurelia.

Aurelia was puzzled. What did she have to do with this?

There wouldn’t have been such an embarrassing situation if it weren’t for Kimberly’s unnecessary complaint.

Zachary didn’t probe further and glanced at Aurelia. “Let’s move on from this incident. Just be more careful in the future.”

Aurelia nodded, already accustomed to Zachary’s favoritism.

After Mr. Zeller left, Kimberly cast a resentful look at Aurelia.

“Aurelia, you’re just a regular employee. You should be cautious in the future; you can’t rely on luck every time.” Kimberly sneered.

“Kimberly, did you bend over backward to study abroad? Being overly infatuated with foreigners is a significant error. Why should I be cautious when others are making mistakes? Or is it that you find the wine-scented breath they exhale appealing?” Aurelia smiled at her and then sat down.

“You! What nonsense are you talking about?” Kimberly gritted her teeth.

Millie stood up and said with a smile, “When did Aurelia talk nonsense? He already wrote an apology letter. Could it be fake?”

“It seems like you’re always licking up to foreigners. What benefits has he given you? Or do you have some undisclosed story with this Vice President? Do you need to defend him so vigorously?”

“Millie, I can’t be bothered to argue with you,” Kimberly replied, pretending to be generous, and returned to her seat.

Millie chuckled and sat back at her desk.

Aurelia felt that she had gone a little too far with her rumor-mongering and immediately sent her a message.

“Millie, that’s enough.”

“Aurelia, we finally had a chance to teach her a lesson. If it weren’t for her returning to complain, we would have never misunderstood you.”

“Millie, do you also think I would offend a client for no reason?”

Aurelia couldn’t forget Millie’s attitude of ignoring her just now.

Is it because Millie was actually afraid that it might implicate her too if Aurelia had genuinely offended the foreign guest?

Everyone in the office was going through their own struggles. She understood that, so she didn't blame Millie.

After a while, Millie sent several apologetic emojis.

"Sorry, okay? I'll treat you to coffee after work."

"It's fine now."

Aurelia smiled and raised the corners of her mouth at Millie. But there was still a layer of estrangement in her heart.

Half an hour later, Zachary sent a message in the group chat, urging Aurelia and Kimberly to submit their proposals.

Eager to impress, Kimberly was the first to send her proposal over.

Aurelia checked her proposal once again before sending it.

A little while later, Kimberly walked into Zachary's office. After about ten minutes, she came out with a baffled look in her eyes as she glanced at Aurelia.

There was also unwillingness combined with disbelief and a malicious plot in the mix. Aurelia had never seen Kimberly like this before.

What could have happened?

## Chapter 83

As Aurelia was still thinking about Kimberly's strange behavior, Millie nudged her.

"Aurelia, it's time to go home. What are you spacing out for?"

Hearing her, Aurelia got up and started packing her things. When she turned around, she saw Millie in her signature red dress, touching up her makeup.

"Millie, what... what's all this?"

Millie smiled mysteriously. "I have a blind date tonight. How do I look? Pretty good, right?"

With that, she twirled in front of Aurelia. However, she stumbled in her high heels, nearly falling over. Fortunately, Aurelia reached out to steady her.

"A blind date? Aren't you the one who hates blind dates the most? You said blind dates are an insult to women."

"Well... It's different this time. The matchmaker said the guy is a returnee. He owns his own company and has a penthouse apartment in Emerald Valley worth at least ten million. All he's looking for in a girl is someone gentle and family-oriented. That pretty much describes me!"

Millie held a little purse, transforming herself into a gentle and timid lady.

Aurelia found this all very suspicious and warned her, "If he truly possesses that level of wealth, finding a wife should be easy for him. He wouldn't need to rely on blind dates.

"Frequently, individuals who mention just one requirement may have numerous concealed conditions. Be cautious not to be taken advantage of."



Hearing this, Millie pursed her lips, looking quite unhappy. “Aurelia, can’t you just wish me well? If I marry into a wealthy family, you’ll be the first person I think of. I’ll introduce your husband to work in my future husband’s company, and your salary won’t be low.”

“But...”

“Okay, okay, I won’t say more. I’ve booked a ride–hail car, and it’s arriving soon. I have to go.”

Without waiting for Aurelia to finish speaking, Millie hurriedly left.

Aurelia sighed and organized her desk before preparing to leave. Just as she reached the office entrance, she heard Zachary’s voice.

“Aurelia, could you come in for a moment?”

“Sure.”

Aurelia put down her bag and entered his office. Behind her, a figure emerged from the pantry. – it was Kimberly.

Kimberly glanced at the tightly closed door of Zachary’s office and then in the direction where Millie had disappeared. She pursed her lips into a smile and quietly followed Millie’s footsteps.

Aurelia, you think you can compete with me,

you can compete with me, huh? Well, I’ll make sure you come out of this with absolutely nothing.

Inside the office, Aurelia stood respectfully.

“Mr. Zeller, is there something you need?”

“It’s not a big deal, really. The boss has set up a presentation with One Technology for next Tuesday at 10:00 AM. We’ll all head over there together. If they sign the contract, you’ll be promoted to vice director.”

“Alright, thank you, Mr. Zeller.”

Aurelia felt a rush of excitement. Next Tuesday was only two days away, and it wouldn’t conflict with her mother’s surgery scheduled for Monday.

“You can leave now. I’ve taken up enough of your time.”

The unexpected politeness from Zachary left Aurelia momentarily stunned, making her feel somewhat uncomfortable. However, she said nothing and smiled as she exited the office.

After clocking out, she made her way to the hospital. Upon entering her mother’s hospital room, she saw a nurse helping her mother with her personal care.

Aurelia stepped forward to assist, buttoning up her mother’s clothes and gently holding her hand. Her mother’s hand, with its thin callouses, gave her a sense of security.

Seeing this, the nurse quietly left the room, giving them some privacy.

After a while, Aurelia opened the curtain and expressed her gratitude to the nurse. “Thank you.

“You’re welcome, Ms. Simmons. Don’t worry; the doctor said this morning that your mother has met all the criteria for the surgery. Everything should go smoothly.”

“Thank you. I’m going to check with the doctor about the surgery preparations. I might need to head back a bit early today. I appreciate your help here.”

“Go ahead, dear. I’ll take care of things here.”

The nurse smiled warmly.

## Chapter 84

Aurelia felt relieved and proceeded to the doctor's office.

Although the doctor had mentioned that her mother's condition was relatively stable, the surgery still carried significant risks. The doctor emphasized the need for her to be mentally prepared.

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While Aurelia couldn't hide her anxiety completely, she understood that if she didn't try, mother's only option was a grim one. After expressing her gratitude to the doctor, she left the hospital.

On her way home, Aurelia's mind was in disarray. However, she found a moment to send a message to Millie.

"Millie, is everything going smoothly?"

"If anything seems off, please leave immediately."

She received a brief response from Millie.

"I got it, I got it."

Aurelia rolled her eyes, thinking they were both adults capable of handling their own situations.

When she arrived home, she was surprised to find Leslie's neatly arranged shoes on the rack. He sat on the brown sofa in a well-fitted suit, his long legs crossed. He exuded a sense of expensive luxury that filled the otherwise simple living room.

Aurelia couldn't help but stare in amazement.

"What are you looking at?" Leslie put down his phone and glanced at her.

"Nothing," Aurelia said, feeling a little embarrassed as she averted her gaze. She changed the subject, "Did the incident at the hotel today affect you?"

"No," Leslie replied.

"That's good," Aurelia said, feeling relieved.

"How about your company? Did anyone give you a hard time?" Leslie furrowed his brows, wondering why he cared about her.

"No, but..." Aurelia smiled and shared, even though she knew Leslie might just be making polite conversation, "Mr. Synder, did you know the foreigner was fired?"

"I didn't know," Leslie replied/disinterestedly. After all, he was the one who had orchestrated David's dismissal.

He thought their conversation had ended, but to his surprise, she put down her bag and boldly sat beside him.

"Mr. Synder, I thought I was in big trouble too. After all, I hit the client's VIP. I was bracing myself for a scolding when I returned. But who knew? He got fired! It's really surreal."

Aurelia was usually cautious at work. But once she got home, she usually couldn't wait to share what had happened with her parents.

Perhaps the week of living together had made her feel Leslie was reliable and a good listener, so she began to relax around him.

Leslie was slightly taken aback. It was as if a crack had formed in the icy barrier around him, and waves of warmth were seeping through. He wasn't used to it, so he shifted slightly, and Aurelia unconsciously moved as well.

"Mr. Synder, did you hear about this? I heard David offended someone, and they used my incident as an excuse to have him deported from the country. This person must have quite a bit of influence to get rid of someone like him so effortlessly, don't you think?"

This conversation seemed to bring a sense of ease to Leslie, even though he hadn't really cared about dealing with someone like David.

"Yeah," he replied calmly, but Aurelia seemed to be in a good mood and shifted closer to him once again.

"Mr. Synder, do you know who this formidable person is?" Aurelia continued her questions. "I don't know," Leslie replied, moving away from her slightly.

"I get it," Aurelia said, "People like that are often quite distant from us regular folks.

However, I must admit that your company is truly impressive. The entire industry seems to be abuzz about it."

Aurelia moved closer to Leslie again, who couldn't help but feel both amused and irritated.

"Aurelia."

"Yeah?"

“If you move closer again, I’ll fall off.”

## Chapter 85

Aurelia suddenly realized that while chatting, she had pushed Leslie from the middle of the couch to the very edge.

She blushed and immediately got up. “Sorry, it’s about time. I... I’ll go cook.”

Leslie also stood up. “I’ll help you.”

Aurelia was surprised. “Huh?”

Leslie took off his suit jacket and rolled up his shirt sleeves. “Any problem? I have some free time. I can help speed things up.”

Aurelia glanced at his fair and slender hands, knowing he probably had little experience with household chores. Yet, he offered to help her cook, which was just as shocking as Seth apologizing while kneeling.

However, she didn’t refuse. Living together meant they needed to make things work. A man who wanted to help was better than one who only gave orders.

She smiled and agreed, “Sure, but wait a moment.”

“What for?”

Leslie stood at the kitchen doorway, looking puzzled, as he watched Aurelia tiptoe to reach a high cabinet. During the initial renovation of the apartment, he hadn’t paid much attention to the kitchen. Thus he hadn’t noticed the extremely impractical height of the upper cabinets.

“Let me help you.”

“Thank you.”

Afterward, Aurelia wanted to make way for Leslie, but to her surprise, he stood directly behind her. His presence enveloped her like a cool, misty stream.

She blushed as she felt a tingling sensation in her ear. She quickly pressed her body against the counter, afraid of accidentally brushing against Leslie and causing any misunderstandings.

“What are you looking for?” Leslie’s voice sounded from above her.

Aurelia raised her head, and her hair brushed against Leslie’s chin. He seemed momentarily stunned, and the scent of her hair wafted under his nose. It was just the ordinary smell of shampoo, but he could always faintly detect a different fragrance for some reason.

Aurelia pointed inside a white plastic bag. “In that bag, there’s a new apron. Your shirt looks expensive, and I don’t want it to get dirty.”

“You even prepared this?”

Leslie furrowed his brows. But his expression became even more troubled when he took out the new apron.

The offer was “Buy one, get one free,” and he ended up with the free one.

Aurelia noticed his reaction and explained, “Normally, this apron costs 30 dollars. Now it’s buy one, get one free, which means it’s half price. Leaving money on the table makes you a fool.”

Her parents often took her grocery shopping, advising her on which discounted items were worthwhile. It was a phrase they often used, and she had said it without thinking.

She wondered if it was just her imagination, but she felt like her words had unintentionally aggravated the situation, and Leslie's expression worsened.

She immediately changed the subject, saying, "I'll put this on for you."

Upon seeing the apron, both of them were taken aback. Looking through the packaging, it appeared to be a simple blue and white checkered fabric. Little did they expect that it also had lace trim.

Holding the apron, Aurelia asked hesitantly, "Mr. Synder, do you still want to wear this?"

Leslie narrowed his eyes, pointing to her apron with red checks that didn't have lace trim." Switch with me."

"Okay."

They exchanged aprons. She had expected Leslie to look strange in an apron, but when she glanced at him, she couldn't help but be surprised. She lowered her gaze to her own apron.

Weren't they wearing similar styles? Why did Leslie, a man, look better in it?

He was wearing a black shirt that contrasted sharply with the red apron. His muscular arms, taut chest, and slender waistline all accentuated his restrained sensuality. The apron seemed to emphasize his pent-up desire.

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Leslie leaned against the counter, raising an eyebrow. "What are you at?"

Chapter 86

"Nothing." Aurelia immediately turned around a hint of blush on her face.



“What can I help with?”

“Cook the spaghetti.”

Aurelia handed two packages of spaghetti to Leslie.

Leslie didn't say anything, turned around, and started cooking.

Aurelia opened the refrigerator to prepare today's dishes: clam chowder, shrimp scampi with asparagus, and smoked barbecue ribs.

After getting the ingredients, she found that the refrigerator was almost empty. She couldn't help muttering, “I need to restock groceries again.”

At that moment, the water behind her stopped. She immediately closed the refrigerator door, ready to take over Leslie's place to wash the vegetables.

However, just as she turned around, Leslie also happened to turn around, and the two of them collided directly in the small kitchen.

“Ouch!” Aurelia's forehead bumped heavily into Leslie's chest. The asparagus her hand fell to the ground.

and shrimp in

“How do you manage to bump into things all the time?”

Aurelia was speechless.

She bit her lip. Only after meeting Leslie, she seemed to be constantly in trouble.

But she didn't dare to say that. She just said, "I'm sorry," and bent down to pick up the ingredients on the ground.

Leslie reached out and stopped her, then handed her the spaghetti.

"Stand still."

Aurelia was about to ask what was going on when she saw the tall and upright Leslie crouching down.

He picked up the shrimp one by one, discreetly dusting off the ice that had fallen out of the bag to the side.

That's when she noticed quite a few ice cubes had scattered on the floor right by her feet. She might have ended up on her back if she had accidentally stepped on them earlier.

Aurelia gratefully withdrew her gaze and saw the spaghetti in her hand.

She could tell at a glance that Leslie had indeed cooked the spaghetti perfectly.

Suddenly, she felt a mixture of emotions.

She remembered a time before when Seth had come to her house for dinner. Afraid that her mother would be too tired, she had decided to cook herself. Seth leaned against the kitchen door, talking about their future married life.

At that time, she had really thought Seth wanted to marry her. Otherwise, who would incessantly discuss scenarios from their future? She casually handed the spaghetti to Seth with a smile, offering him a sneak peek of their future married life.

At that moment, Seth's face flashed with a hint of awkwardness. But he quickly smiled and said he was highly honored.

She didn't think much of his awkwardness at the time, thinking it was only natural for a man to help with household chores. However, she didn't expect that when Seth handed her the spaghetti, it was barely cooked. Clearly, it was purely perfunctory.

Seth even said he had never done it before and didn't know how.

He said it as if it were a matter of course, forgetting that he had once said his family were in an average financial situation. As he had to do everything himself from a young age, he would never let her suffer in the future.

At that time, she and Seth were in the honeymoon phase of their relationship. So she instinctively found an excuse for him and didn't think too deeply about it.

Well, she admitted she was quite naive. Looking back, that reason seemed ridiculous.

In contrast, Leslie, who had faced tough times with Linda since young, always took her seriously.

"All done," Leslie got up and placed the shrimp back into the dish.

Aurelia snapped out of her thoughts. She gazed at the floor and was surprised to find that Leslie had actually wiped the floor clean while doing it.

"Thank you."

“Sure, let’s cook. What else do we need to prepare?” Leslie had a businesslike demeanor, a bit serious and a bit intriguing.

“Help me wash the shrimp and check for the digestive tract.”

“Okay.”

Leslie nodded and turned to handle the shrimp.

Aurelia stood next to him, washing the asparagus and ribs.

As the night fell, their two figures, one tall and one short, were reflected on the glass window in front of them.

Perhaps sensing something, they both raised their gazes to the window almost

simultaneously. At the same time, they saw each other’s slightly surprised expressions on the glass.

Aurelia turned around awkwardly. “I, uh, I’ll heat the pan.

## Chapter 87

Leslie looked at the reflection on the glass window at the busy and delicate figure before him and then at the shrimp in his hand. There was a strange feeling swirling in his chest.

His parents’ divorce had been an ugly affair. He was still young at the time and couldn’t do anything but stare in disbelief as his usually stern father hurled the most vicious words at his mother. At that time, he had never believed that man was his own father.

When he saw his father leave, he followed him outside, only to find a beautiful woman sitting in the car, holding a boy of roughly his own age in her arms. His father smiled as he picked up the boy and kissed the woman on the forehead.

He realized that even his father, who rarely showed emotion, could smile. At that moment, he felt nauseous.

Everything that happened afterward shattered his understanding of humanity. Since then, marriage was never a part of his plan.

But he hadn't expected to get married eventually, and the feeling of being married was different from what he had imagined.

As for what was different, he couldn't quite put it into words. It was as if nothing had changed, yet everything had changed.

"Mr. Synder, do you like spicy food? I don't eat spicy, so if you want, I can make it separately," Aurelia's question interrupted Leslie's thoughts, and he turned to look at her.

She wiped her sweat while stir-frying the vegetables in the pan. Everything she did seemed ordinary, but he inexplicably felt that the entire house had come alive.

"I don't eat spicy food," Leslie replied in a deep voice.

"Alright."

Aurelia nodded and wiped her sweat again.

Despite the open window, she hadn't expected the kitchen to be so hot. It was strange for a high-end house; the kitchen window was so small. Did people living in high-end houses not cook? Her old house had bigger windows.

Just as she was about to overheat, a cool breeze blew toward her. She immediately turned around and saw Leslie bending down to adjust the angle of the electric fan.

“Do you

feel the wind?”

“I do, thank you.”

She would have forgotten about the fan if he hadn’t turned it on.

Leslie nodded and continued washing the vegetables.

Aurelia watched the clam chowder in the pot bubbling away and decided to add salt to season it. Her hand touched something else as she reached out to grab the salt shaker. She turned her head to look and was stunned for a short while.

She had accidentally touched Leslie’s hand.

“I was looking for the salt shaker,” she explained.

“It’s right there,” Leslie pointed.

“Okay, okay,” Aurelia quickly pulled her hand back, but her body felt even hotter.

“I’m done washing. Is there anything else?”

“No, no, it’s too crowded in here. You should go out first.”

Aurelia hurriedly escorted Leslie out. She was afraid she might get into more awkward situations if he stayed longer.

As Leslie left the kitchen, the coolness of the living room washed over him, relaxing his entire body. In contrast, even with an electric fan, the kitchen felt like a sauna.

He watched the figure busy in the kitchen and became increasingly unable to understand Aurelia's thoughts. She was accused of being materialistic, but aside from accepting money from his mother, she hadn't asked him for money again. They even split their living expenses evenly.

While lost in thought, the phone in his pocket vibrated. He glanced at the number, avoiding Aurelia, and went to the balcony to answer it.

At that moment, he saw a family of three dining in the building across from him. Since as far back as he could remember, he had never seen a family sit together for a meal.

As he watched the heartwarming scene, an image of Aurelia unexpectedly flashed through his mind. After hesitating for a few seconds, he lit a cigarette and answered the phone.

"Speak."

"Synder Corporation called to request a meeting with the company's owner."

"They can't wait any longer?" Leslie's face turned cold, and his breath formed a dangerous mist.

"Mr. Synder, do you want to meet them?" Daniel asked.

## Chapter 88

"Decline it. This is just their ploy to test my boundaries. Do you really think they'd send anyone important to meet me?" Leslie calmly analyzed the situation.

“Alright, I’ll reject it immediately and say you’re still overseas.”

“Okay,” Leslie instructed.

“By the way, Mr. Synder, Young Advertising has scheduled to present their proposal the day after tomorrow,” Daniel said, changing the topic.

“Okay.”

Leslie had seen some of Aurelia’s proposals, which were indeed good. However, this opening banquet was crucial for him. Hence, he needed to review the complete proposal before he could make a decision.

After Daniel acknowledged and was about to hang up, Leslie stopped him.

“Daniel, find an interior designer to see if we can install air conditioning in the kitchen.”

“Huh? Mr. Synder, what did you wash this time?” Daniel was no longer surprised by such requests.

“Washing vegetables.”

Daniel was speechless.

At that moment, footsteps approached behind Leslie, and he immediately ended the call.

“Mr. Synder, it’s time to eat,” Aurelia stood in the living room, waving.

“I’m coming.”



Leslie stubbed out the cigarette in the ashtray and opened the glass door on the balcony. Upon entering, he smelled the aroma of the food, which reminded him of the family across the street again.

A family of three?

Perhaps he was going a bit crazy from the heat.

After sitting down, they ate in silence as Aurelia occasionally glanced at Leslie.

“Is there something you want to talk about?” Leslie asked.

“I’ll be quite busy on Monday and Tuesday, so I might not be able to cook. You’ll have to eat out,” Aurelia explained.

Her mother was having surgery on Monday, and she had a presentation at One Technology on Tuesday, so she would be swamped. She wouldn’t have time to cook, so she thought it would be best to inform Leslie in advance.

“I see,” Leslie responded without much expression, nodding slightly.

However, he felt a bit puzzled. Aurelia seemed quite confident about her schedule. She was going to present at his company on Monday and already knew she would be busy on Tuesday.

It was interesting because they didn’t communicate much. Yet neither had asked about each other’s plans for the next few days. Clearly, there was a time gap that went unnoticed.

Thinking about work reminded Aurelia of a question that had bothered her for a while.

“Mr. Synder, can I ask you something?”

“What is it?”

Seeing that the meal was tasty, Leslie didn't seem as distant as he usually was.

She asked, "Today at the Crystal Hotel, they were discussing an acquisition deal. Why would a programmer like you be there?"

When did a programmer's job scope include such diverse activities?

Leslie paused for a moment as he glanced at Aurelia. He saw nothing on her face but curiosity. She seemed genuinely puzzled.

"I was helping my boss deliver some documents."

"No wonder," Aurelia chuckled. "So... Which one was your boss?"

The name "Ian" referred to the One Technology CEO, was someone Aurelia heard almost every day. Aside from knowing his name, she had no idea what he looked like.

She was really curious about what kind of person would be hailed as a genius.

"He left as soon as the meeting was over. He had us wrap things up," Leslie replied calmly.

"Well, your boss must value you a lot," Aurelia said as she took a bite of her food.

What a pity. Aurelia had just scanned everyone she had seen in the meeting room earlier, trying to guess which one was Ian.

"Why? Are you interested in him?" Leslie's tone turned colder, not very pleased with Aurelia's distraction.

“No, no, even if I were, your boss likes men, and I can’t change my gender. On the contrary, you should be careful,” Aurelia started to go off–topic while chatting.

“Ahem, ahem.”

Leslie almost choked on his food when he heard that.

## Chapter 89

Aurelia quickly poured a glass of water for Leslie. “Are you okay?”

Taking a sip of water, he frowned. “You’re usually so composed. What’s going on in that head of yours? Today, it’s either a lot of talking or gossip.”

Aurelia chuckled and mumbled, “Well, don’t blame me for being curious. You have this look, and he’s into men, yet he seems to value you so much, so I couldn’t help but wonder...”

Leslie set down his glass, a mixture of laughter and exasperation on his face. “Do you still want to eat?”

Aurelia nodded. “Yes.”

Why wouldn’t she eat the food she had prepared herself?

She took a bite of smoked barbecue ribs but felt slightly choked. She wanted some clam chowder but realized she had forgotten to bring a spoon.

“Oh dear, I forgot to bring a spoon. Wait a moment,” Aurelia said as she got up and hurried into the kitchen.

Leslie watched her retreating figure, inexplicably curving his lips. The warm light above cast a beautiful glow on the dishes, making them look even more delicious.

A month ago, he returned to his home country filled with hatred, never imagining he would experience such a scene.

After a while, Aurelia returned with a expression.

on. She handed it to Leslie, and he took it with a calm

After finishing their meal, Aurelia placed the dishes and utensils in the sink before heading toward the bedroom.

“I’m going to my room first.”

“Okay.”

Leslie got up, rolled up his sleeves, and prepared to do the dishes. His movements were becoming increasingly skillful.

Seeing this, Aurelia was momentarily surprised. She hadn’t expected a man doing the dishes to look so handsome.

“Is there anything else?” Leslie lowered his head as if he could see her.

“N–no,” Aurelia replied nervously and rushed back to her room.

After finishing washing the dishes, Leslie came out of the kitchen and faintly heard sounds. coming from Aurelia’s room,

“Hello, um... by the way, how should I address the CEO of One Technology? I don’t even know his last name.

“Never mind, we’ll find out when the time comes. Hello, CEO, I’m Aurelia, the presenter of this proposal. For our grand opening, we’ve chosen a futuristic theme...

“No, I can’t talk this much. A CEO this important probably wants to avoid hearing me blabbering. Oh dear, I’ve never been this nervous in all my years in this industry! May the heavens bless me and ensure that the proposal gets approved!”

Aurelia began praying fervently.

She was unaware the apartment’s front door was the original one, which did not provide much sound insulation. Leslie could hear every word she uttered in the hallway outside her room.

Leslie couldn’t help but feel amused. She was a competent person professionally, but she seemed quite lively in private.

However, he also realized a crucial issue. Although he had been controlling the media coverage of his return, he hadn’t expected to get married so soon after his return. Once Aurelia went to One Technology, she would quickly discover that the CEO shared his name.

Their current relationship was neither particularly close nor antagonistic. Hence, he did not want to complicate things unnecessarily.

After some contemplation, Leslie turned and entered his bedroom, dialing Daniel’s number.

“At the fastest speed, create a new identity for me and inform the people below. From now on, replace my name with a Normish one.”

The employees of One Technology were his trusted associates, so he wasn’t worried about anyone blowing his cover. His return here and the establishment of One Technology were just smokescreens.

“Mr. Synder, may I ask why? You’ve gone from being Mr. Synder to a programmer, and now you want me to create a new Mr. Synder identity? Even if it’s to dodge the hidden threats from the Synder Family, is this level of caution necessary?”

“No,” Leslie replied.

“Could it be... that Ms. Simmons?” Daniel was surprised.

“Less talk, more action.”

“Understood. I’ll go get it done,” Daniel replied with a tone of shock. He had expected Mr. Synder to deny it.

“Have it done by Tuesday,” advised Leslie.

Daniel was a clever person. Upon hearing ‘Tuesday,’ he realized it was related to the collaboration talks with Young Advertising, especially since Aurelia was handling their proposal.

“Is there any issue with Young Advertising, Mr. Synder? Should I look into it?”

## Chapter 90

“No...” Leslie paused in his speech. Then he changed his mind and said, “Investigate everyone who came to the company this time.”

“Understood,” Daniel replied before hanging up.

Leslie carefully considered the situation. Besides hearing his mother constantly mention this old friend, he knew nothing about Aurelia. Initially, when he learned about this woman, he cautioned his mother to be careful not to be deceived.

Young people who scammed money often liked to befriend middle-aged and older individuals. They would even go as far as addressing them as “aunt” or even “mom.”

Don't judge a book by its cover was Leslie's initial impression of Aurelia. However, these days of interaction had been surprising to him. Aurelia consistently exhibited qualities that contradicted his initial impression. To determine the truth, he would need a more thorough investigation.

After making the arrangements, Leslie put down his phone and entered the bathroom.

Inside her room, Aurelia was feeling anxious. Whether it was about her mother's surgery on Monday or the presentation meeting on Tuesday, she couldn't help but feel uneasy.

The presentation, usually a breeze, had become a challenge today. She had practiced it twice but still stuttered at times. Frustrated with her struggles, she sighed and lay on her bed, closing her eyes to rest.

Aurelia, don't be nervous. You can do it.

After a five-minute break, Aurelia sat up again, ready to rehearse. At the same time, her phone rang, displaying the number of the home care nurse.

Is something wrong with Mom?

Aurelia was trembling with fear as she quickly answered the phone.

"Ms. Elliot, Is everything alright?" she asked.

"Ms. Simmons, you need to come quickly! A woman claiming to be your mother-in-law is in the hospital room, causing a scene like a maniac. Security is here, but nobody dares to touch her, fearing something might happen."

Mother-in-law?

Aurelia was sure that such a shameless person could only be Rosa. reckless actions, and Aurelia's heart raced with anxiety.

She was known for her

“Ms. Elliot, tell her I’m coming right away! Ask her not to cause any trouble!” Aurelia replied urgently.

Another call came in as she was on the phone, but Aurelia was too frantic to check the caller ID. She accidentally hung up both calls in her haste.

Subsequently, she rushed to the door of Leslie’s room and knocked loudly. She was hoping

Leslie could give her a ride to the hospital as she was afraid she wouldn’t be able to find a taxi.

But, after knocking several times, Leslie didn’t respond to her. Aurelia was so worried that tears welled up in her eyes. She considered knocking again but eventually decided against it. After all, Leslie was only her nominal husband, and there was no need for him to be involved... in her family matters.

With that in mind, Aurelia rushed out of the apartment alone.

At this moment, Leslie was in the bathroom, having turned off the water and listening carefully to the sounds from outside. He thought he heard knocking on the door, but upon further listening, there was nothing. He must have been mistaken.

He continued rinsing the foam off his body in the shower. Everything outside was quiet when he walked out of the bedroom. It seemed that Aurelia had already gone to rest.

He didn’t pay much attention to it and poured himself a glass of water before returning to his

room.

In the hospital, Aurelia ran into the ward breathlessly. After a few steps inside, she tripped over a basin near the door. Fortunately, a nurse nearby helped her up.



The nurse looked at her and said urgently, “You finally came. Your mother-in-law is being unreasonable. This is the intensive care unit, and all the patients need rest. Please go home and resolve your conflicts.”

Aurelia, trying to catch her breath, said in a rushed tone, “No, she’s not my mother-in-law. I’ll handle it. I’m really sorry.”

The nurse then signaled to the security guard to let Aurelia pass through.

As Aurelia walked deeper into the ward, she spotted exactly who she had anticipated —Rosa.