

Jojo and Coco's Unexpected Love By Aurora Summers

Chapter 261

Chapter 261 A Bastard Child

Harold asked, "She didn't bring you to the party with her?"

Joseph nodded as if he was complaining about it, but he did not notice his behavior.

Harold gave Chloe a reproachful stare. "Chloe, you guys are a married couple and are a team now. Your friends will get suspicious if you attend gatherings alone. You might even make a fool of yourself. If you two are having problems, talk it out in private."

"Okay, Grandpa, I won't do it again." Chloe picked at her nails as she stood in the corner. She appeared like an obedient child who had made a mistake, but she was secretly cursing Joseph inside.

Feeling worried, Harold told them off a while before he let them off the hook.

While Chloe headed upstairs, she planned to return to her own room, but Joseph pulled her into the master bedroom. He then looked at her condescendingly. "Are you that eager to let Grandpa find something amiss?"

Chloe knew that she was in the wrong, so she muttered, "Sorry, it was out of habit..."

After silence fell, she looked around the room and sat down on a chair. The room was filled with Joseph's unique scent. As his ex-girlfriend, she inevitably felt uneasy.

'I think Grandpa will leave at night... Otherwise, do I have to stay with Joseph for the night?'

While dwelling on that, Chloe became flustered.

When Joseph saw her lower her eyes to mull over something, he assumed that she was thinking about Icarus. He knitted his brows and exuded a sinister aura. His aura rose with great momentum, so it was hard to escape her notice.

She looked up and suddenly noticed that the back of his hand was injured. The wound had stopped bleeding and was scabbed over. "Did you hurt yourself in the fight just now?"

Joseph was stunned. A tinge of uneasiness flashed across his cold and handsome face.

He had lost control of himself the day she broke up with him and accidentally tore open the wound when he exerted himself in the fight earlier.

Chloe brought over a medical kit and attentively tended to his wound. Although they were no longer in a relationship, they were still bound by a contract. Hence, she could not stand by and ignore it.

Joseph did not turn her down either and arrogantly extended his hand to her. Slowly, he broke into a smile and was in a better mood. 'Well, looks like the dumbbo still cares for me. Icarus is just Plan B at most.'

When Chloe was tending to his wound, Lucas texted him. [Mr. Joseph, I've delivered all the

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evidence to Benjamin. He's now forcing Ava to take a paternity test at the hospital.]

Joseph threw the phone aside and pinched her tender face lightly. "Are you in the mood for some fun?"

Confusion washed over her. "What?"

"Read the message."

She looked toward the phone he threw on the sofa. Unable to suppress her curiosity, she walked over and picked it up to have a look. After she read it, she widened her eyes in shock. How did you get evidence of Karen cheating on Benjamin with Diego?"

Even the evidence had been delivered to Benjamin.

Chloe had planned to seek out Benjamin over the next few days but she now had to postpone her plan since Karen's love affair was exposed out of the blue.

Joseph snorted. "If one does something bad, people will inevitably hear about it."

He had let Benjamin see the photographs of Karen and Diego having a tryst but Benjamin decided to fool himself. Joseph, being left with no other option and having lost all patience to let the situation develop slowly, got someone to do a paternity test before delivering it to Benjamin. Karen would eventually expose herself if she was careless regardless if the paternity test was true or false.

Chloe nodded firmly and said decisively, "I want to go."

She would have ceased having any contact with the Johnsons if she had not discovered the truth of her mother's death. They were so cruel and had killed their mother using such a ruthless method.

Chloe would be a coward if she did nothing about it.

When Joseph noticed the deep hatred in her eyes, he patted her back. Even his cold tone softened a little. "Okay, I'll take you there with me."

Harold, who was sitting downstairs watching TV, saw them come down at the same time. He became curious and was about to ask about it. However, Chloe beat him to it. "Grandpa, Jojo and I are going for a walk. We'll be home in a bit."

Seeing this, Harold thought that they had made up with each other. He smiled and waved. "Go ahead."

At the door of a private hospital, Karen hugged Ava firmly without any intention to let

1. cried and screamed, "You doubt me just because of a paternity test that came from nowhere?! How do I show myself in front of our relatives and friends if words get out about this?!"

"Get lost! Don't even mention my relatives and friends. If they find out I raised the bastard of

She

another man for more than twenty years, I'll become the laughing stock!" Benjamin's face became hideous as he exerted a greater force to grab Ava's hair and pull her into the hospital.

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Score 9.5

Chapter 262 Premonition

"Ah! Daddy! You're hurting me!"

Ava was ignorant of the situation. Being pulled, she screamed. Although she was unaware of the situation, she understood one thing. Something, fishy must have happened to make her father so angry while her mother hugged her so tightly and refused to let go.

Hence, she refused to enter the hospital with Benjamin, and for a moment, the three of them were in a stalemate.

"Fine. You refuse to go in? Wait here then!" Benjamin anxiously strode into the hospital to ask for help from two doctors. They forcefully dragged Karen and Ava into the hospital while ignoring their struggles

Chloe witnessed the scene from a cafe opposite the private hospital. She lowered her eyes to hide her emotion. "How long does it usually take to get the results of a paternity test?"

"About a week. I think this kind of hospital that's specialized in doing paternity tests will be

faster."

"Then today's show is over?"

Joseph smiled mysteriously "Maybe Benjamin will get too impatient and opt for a blood test after going through the paternity test?"

One could possibly tell if their children belonged to them or not by referring to blood types. too. Of course, Benjamin would be able to figure out Ava's blood type.

Chloe's eyes lit up 'Yes, getting the result of a blood test is much faster than a paternity test.

Normally, the result of a blood test would be produced in half an hour.'

It was always the men who went out to work while the women stayed home to manage the household affairs in the Johnson household Thus, it would be very hard for Benjamin to discover it if Karen had done anything behind his back.

An idea dawned on Chloe. She looked at the man beside her who had one hand in his pocket, looking composed. He was even sneering.

She whispered, "Thank you."

"For what?" Joseph raised his brows.

"Thank you for doing this for me. I'm very grateful."

Her tone was sincere and her eyes were bright. Her pretty face was lively and attractive.

Joseph averted his gaze as a tinge of awkwardness arose in his dark eyes. He raised his chin arrogantly. "I didn't do it for your sake. I just found Benjamin an eyesore. Don't flatter

yourself."

Chloe's eyes turned gloomy. In the next second, she asked calmly. "What would you like to drink? It's my treat."

"Anything will do."

Chloe nodded before she went to the counter to order drinks. Since they wanted to wait there for a good show, they had to buy something from the cafe. She ordered a cappuccino and a latte and brought them to Joseph to let him choose.

Joseph questioned, "Which one's yours?"

"The latte."

"What a coincidence. I like lattes too."

Chloe was rendered speechless.

There was a university nearby, so the number of guests in the cafe was high. It was full of young people. A young woman walked into the cafe angrily with a man running after her.

“Dear, I’m a real man. Why should I stay in a cafe with you all day long? Can’t we go somewhere else for our date?”

“No, I like coffee. What’s more, many men buy drinks for women.”

While talking, the young woman looked at Chloe and Joseph. She became confident and politely raised a query. “Mister, Miss. May I know if you two are a couple?”

“No, we’re not,” Chloe answered.

Joseph glanced at her and explained lightly, “Yes because we’re married.

Jealousy filled the young woman’s eyes. “Mister, do you always go to cafes with your wife?”

“Of course. I’ll go with her anywhere she wants, but sometimes she isn’t willing to let me tag.

along.”

Joseph seemed to have thought of something before a tinge of sadness appeared on his face.

Chloe’s lips twitched vigorously in silence.

However, the young woman was confused. “Why doesn’t she want you to tag along?”

“It’s because she’s going on dates with other men. She’s afraid that I’ll disturb them.

Chloe became agitated as she covered his mouth. “Stop talking nonsense!”

‘He shouldn’t be giving young people a wrong impression!’

Joseph nodded and said to the young woman, "I can't tell you about it right now. My wife doesn't want others to know about this stuff."

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Chapter 263 Divorce

The young woman and her boyfriend felt sorry for Joseph.

"Things just keep getting worse.' Chloe clenched her fists tightly. She felt like teaching him a lesson. 'He must be taking revenge on me. Why did I not notice his pettiness in the past?'

The young woman gave Chloe a disapproving stare, showing contempt. "Miss, you are very pretty and must have a lot of admirers, but you're married now. You should keep your distance from other men. What's more, your husband is a good catch. He's so handsome, and he's dressed like a successful man. I hope you cherish what you have now. It'll be forever if you let him slip through your fingers."

Chloe tried to explain helplessly. "It's not what you think..."

The young woman's boyfriend snorted. Similarly, he wanted to seek justice for Joseph. "Is it worse than our imagination? Mister, there are plenty of fish in the sea. If you hold on to the old, you get nothing new. My older sister is single. If you two can't make it work as a couple, I can introduce you to my sister."

Joseph turned down the offer. "Thank you for your kindness but I only care about my wife."

Chloe rolled her eyes. 'Oh, please. Just shut up, you schemer. Stop pretending to be innocent and good!'

Joseph had long legs and was handsome. As a result, he would be the center of attraction no matter where he went. At this time, the other customers in the cafe noticed him too. When they heard his statement, they found Chloe ungrateful.

“Mister, why don’t you look at me instead? I’m a postgraduate student, and I’m about your age.”

“Me too! Although I’m a freshman, I’ve always wanted a mature man like you.”

“Why don’t we exchange numbers?”

“Yes, let’s exchange numbers.”

Chloe, who was implicated, felt extremely innocent. She could no longer take it and got up to leave. Joseph came out after her. His handsome face was cold and distant as he raised his brows lightly.

“Tsk, are you jealous?”

“No, I’m not. I just find that young people care too much about one’s appearance. They believe whatever others tell them. They care about nothing else but one’s physical charms!”

Joseph chuckled and felt that she was just being stubborn. ‘You are jealous. You’re just holding

it in.’

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After a pause, she tilted her head to glance at the man beside her. Actually, she could understand those young people. After all, this scumbag was indeed extremely handsome.

They waited for a while by the road when a heavy downpour suddenly started. Soon, they were filled with a deep chill.

July was the rainy season in Asper.

The car was parked in the parking lot. If they returned to the car, they would not be able to see the situation in the hospital. Chloe simply took shelter at the bus stop since she was reluctant to return to the cafe.

“You can go back to the car or go straight home. I’ll go home after they come out.”

Joseph replied coldly, "I like rainy days."

Chloe shot him a doubtful stare. "All right. He can enjoy the rain while I enjoy the fun."

Soon she heard noise from the hospital.

Benjamin grabbed Karen's collar and pushed her down at the entrance of the hospital. He spat out at her, "I must have been very unlucky to have crossed paths with you. We'll get a divorce tomorrow morning!"

"Daddy, Mom has been your wife for twenty years even if I'm not your child. You can't do this to her!" Ava came out. Water ran down her cheeks. It was unknown if it was rain or her tears, but she looked very sorry.

Benjamin roared angrily, "You're no nice woman either! Maybe you knew the truth long ago. and lied to me along with this wretch!"

Karen's face was badly swollen. It appeared like Benjamin had started slapping her in the hospital until they were outside. She fell into the puddles of rain, clearly beside herself. "I did. lie to you but I had no choice! Ava is innocent. She knows nothing. You're her only father. The words you say will hurt her!"

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Score 9.5

Chapter 264 Don't Let Calvin Down

Benjamin yearned to beat Karen up and kill her. "This bastard is no child of mine. We'll get a divorce tomorrow. She can take any man as her father. I don't want to be a gullible fool anymore."

After that, Benjamin left. He had no intention of having anything more to do with them.

Being struck on the spot, Ava asked, "Mom, am I not Daddy's child?"

Karen gritted her teeth fiercely. "I could've hidden this affair forever, but someone purposely exposed us."

“Someone exposed us... Who?”

“I don’t know, but we can’t stay in the Johnson family any longer. You have to latch onto Calvin fast and never let him down!”

“Are we going to have to give up the family property? Who else can he give it to if not me unless he donates it?”

Karen held her swollen face, gloominess written all over it. “Of course, it’s that bitch, Chloe. She’s his child at the end of the day. He’ll go back to her after divorcing me.”

She knew Benjamin too well. Naturally, she had relied on her wits to lead a safe and sound life for so many years.

After a brief pause, Ava continued, “Mom, do you think it was Chloe who emailed the paternity test to Dad anonymously?”

“She’s not that capable.”

“What do you know?”

They heard a sudden voice. When Karen saw the man and woman who appeared out of nowhere, she broke out in cold sweat from fear.

“You... When did you get here?”

Chloe and Joseph were sharing an umbrella. They stood side by side in the dense rain, being close to each other, and had a very tacit understanding.

A woman in the cafe had given Joseph that umbrella and Chloe benefited from it too. Smiling happily, Chloe stared at Karen. “I was here from the moment you guys were forcefully taken into the hospital for a paternity test until Benjamin pulled you out and hit you. In short, I saw all of your ugly looks.”

Enlightened, Ava instantly went wide-eyed. She demanded agitatedly, “It was you, You were the one who sent that email anonymously, right?”

wasn’t it?

“It wasn’t me. I don’t have to deal with such a trivial affair, isn’t that right, Jojo?”

Chloe gave Joseph an earnest look. 'Hurry up and echo my words!'

Joseph was slightly amused before he placed his hand around her waist. "Yes, you don't have to do anything. You just need to..." After a pause, he leaned down slightly. His hot breath was sprayed on her fair earlobe, his tone extremely ambiguous. "Please me."

Rosiness crept up her face but she did not expose her embarrassment in front of Karen and Ava. She even mischievously touched Joseph's strong chest. "Okay, Jojo, I'll listen to you."

Consequently, Joseph's body stiffened. His sharp eyes turned intense with desire as he looked at her full red lips. The urge to kiss her overcame him.

"I knew it! You shameless woman! Relying on men is nothing to be proud of!" Ava's face turned hideous. Although she made such a statement, she was extremely jealous. She too had recently hooked up with a superior and powerful man. He looked fine, but he could not compare to Joseph.

Chloe was indifferent. "Don't tell me you never do such things yourself. Isn't Calvin a man?"

"That's my Godpa!"

"Jojo is my man. We rely on our respective abilities. Why do you have so many comments?"

Joseph's charming brows went up. He enjoyed the way she addressed him very much.

"You!"

Chloe put on a sarcastic tone. "Don't see yourself as noble. Even if I'm bad, I'm not a bastard

child."

"That's enough! Don't fuss over small matters. You don't have to implicate Ava in the grudges of the previous generation!" Karen roared, still putting on the airs of an elder.

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Chapter 265 I Dislike Disobedient Women

A cold laugh escaped Chloe's lips. "Why didn't you say that when you wrongly accused me of stealing money back then?"

It was more than that, and things were just getting started.

Karen's face turned livid. If her gaze could kill, Chloe might have died a violent death.

Chloe held Joseph's arm and said sweetly, "Let's go. They're just crazy and noisy."

Unable to accept it, Ava shouted from behind Joseph, "Chloe is a woman rejected by the Cooper family. She even hooked up with an old man before getting entangled with Jake's uncle. Aren't you worried about catching a disease?"

When Icarus was mentioned, Chloe became nervous and anxiously stared at the man beside her.

"I'd die for a beauty, but you..." Joseph sized Ava up and concluded lightly, "You can't rely on men. You'd better rely on yourself."

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Chloe heaved a sigh of relief. When she was back in the car, all the gloominess that had been hanging over her was dispelled. She thanked him joyfully. "Thank you. You can expect full cooperation from me from now on when we put on our act."

Turning the steering wheel with his slender fingers, Joseph was unmoved. "I don't need a verbal thank-you.'

Chloe bit her lips and inquired hesitantly, "Do you want money then?"

'But I don't have much. Will he care about this bit of money I own?'

Joseph retorted grumpily, "Have you forgotten what you said in front of Ava earlier?"

When he brought that up, Chloe recalled something. She covered her chest with both hands. "Are you serious?"

Joseph just felt like teasing her but her guarded look upset him. She behaved like she was guarding against a pervert. "I'm just a regular man. Is it very weird to have needs in this aspect?"

"That's right. But you have Xavia, don't you...'

"She and I are not together anymore." Joseph's voice suddenly turned cold. "Stop bringing it up."

'I took the initiative to contact you, so you should behave sensibly and patch things up me. I may have agreed.

with

'Why did you mention Xavia again? She has even taken Oreo away.'

Chloe fell silent before she refused him clearly. "No, I can't promise you that. Ask for something else."

"Hmm?"

"I have to say it even if you find it unpleasant. I don't care if you're with Xavia or not. It's at fact that you guys have an ambiguous relationship. If I use my body to repay your kindness, what does that make me? Your mistress?"

Joseph lost his patience. Impatience was his familiar friend now. "Are you done? Stop upsetting me. Don't you know who you are to me?"

Chloe replied calmly, "I'm just a person who's bound to you by a contract."

'If you truly liked me, you'd have given me the most basic thing-trust. You wouldn't have refused to give me a chance to explain. Or, it's just like what Jane told me in the past. I never had that. I remember every word very clearly.

'It does look like Joseph treats Xavia differently. Maybe Jane was right. She didn't lie to me.'

Joseph stared at the woman who claimed to love him. At that time, she behaved aloofly and cut off all ties with him. Her light voice created great turbulence in his heart. For a moment, he felt that all her love for him in the past was nothing but an act she put on.

However, Joseph was a deeply arrogant man. Even if he disliked that word and illusion deeply, he still put up a superior front.

“Playing hard to get is useless on me. There’s an endless line of women who want to be with me. I won’t help in situations like today again.

“You know very well that I dislike disobedient women.”

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Chapter 266 Your Woman Will Be Smitten With You

Chloe nodded firmly, her determination evident. “I can handle the upcoming matters myself. I won’t trouble you anymore, and besides, I want to move out of the villa.”

Joseph’s irritation grew, the anger within him simmering dangerously. He reached out and casually picked up an object nearby, fully intending to hurl it with all his might. But just as his fingers grazed the item, he abruptly let go. His brows furrowed, realizing that he had almost failed to control his emotions. He despised the thought of losing his composure for anyone.

Finally, he muttered a few words under his breath and strode upstairs purposefully. “No, Grandpa likes doing spontaneous checkups. You have to stay here.”

When Chloe stepped out of the car and made her way upstairs, she discovered that Harold had already left. Relief washed over her, and she exhaled deeply before retreating to her small bedroom.

Meanwhile, just a wall away in the master bedroom, Joseph was feeling increasingly frustrated as he typed a message into the group chat. [Why do women consistently doubt the true nature of our relationship with other women?]

Nathan: [Hehehe, because it's true.]

Joseph: [I'm referring to regular people, not you.]

Samuel: [Treat others the way they treat you.]

Joseph: [It's pointless.]

Nathan: [Wow, Chloe's pretty brave. You need to be more vigilant.]

Samuel: [It's not just about being vigilant. I saw it all today.]

The message has been retracted.

Nathan: [??? Why did you retract it? I want to know!]

Samuel: [Call me Daddy and I'll message you privately.]

Nathan: [Oh, fuck off. Getting back to the point, I think this phenomenon in women stems from their lack of security. The key is to create distance between yourself and individuals of the opposite sex. And here's a more straightforward approach, when she doubts your relationship with someone, publicly displaying affection in front of that person can work wonders. I guarantee your woman will be smitten with you.]

Gabriel: [It's a habit ingrained in them. Women just love to eat, drink, and have fun. When they raise such doubts, you should just kick them away.]

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Having made a decision, Joseph tossed his phone aside. He stood by the full-length windows, gazing at the forlorn figure of Toto in the garden. With Oreo gone, Toto lacked his usual excitement for food and play.

Realizing he had neglected to take the dog for an evening stroll, Joseph swiftly changed into comfortable attire, descended the stairs, and leashed Toto. Together, they ventured along their usual path. However, something caught Joseph's attention—a few scattered remnants of freeze-dried snacks strewn across the ground.

He continued walking, his gaze sharp as he meticulously scanned the surroundings. He discovered a few more scattered remnants of freeze-dried snacks along the path. While not immediately conspicuous, closer

examination revealed an intriguing pattern-the distribution of the snacks led toward the blind spots of the surveillance cameras.

Chloe went about her work the following day, completing a portion of her tasks before feeling the need to stretch and take a break. With a lazy yawn, she planned to head to the pantry for a well-deserved cup of coffee. Just as she was about to step away from her desk, her phone rang, displaying an unfamiliar number with the area code of Docwood City.

Curiosity piqued, Chloe felt a slight surprise. She did not know anyone from Docwood, and logically, she assumed it to be a sales call or something similar. However, against her better judgment, she found herself answering the call.

“Hello, is this Ms. Chloe Johnson?” a voice from the other end inquired.

The voice that resonated through the phone was clear and melodious as if it were a pure spring flowing through the tranquil mountains. It took no time for Chloe to recognize the owner of this enchanting voice. Her almond-shaped eyes widened in surprise, a spark of recognition igniting within her. “You’re Mr. Noah from the Exotic Star jewelry exhibition.”

He was the same young man who had selflessly offered her an umbrella on that rainy day.

Noah’s chuckle reverberated through the phone. “I’m delighted that you still remember our

encounter.”

“Well,” Chloe responded, “With your striking good looks, it’s hard for anyone to forget you.”

Both Joseph and Noah were remarkable men, each with their own unique qualities. Joseph exuded an icy demeanor, while Noah emanated a warm and approachable attitude. Joseph also possessed a captivating charm that was undeniable, likely due to his maturity and experience, whereas Noah was slightly more youthful.

“Thank you for the compliment. The reason I’m calling today is to inquire if you’d be interested in becoming Exotic Star’s brand ambassador, Ms. Chloe.”

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Chapter 267 Weren't You So Affectionate Toward Karen

"Huh? But why did you choose me instead of a celebrity?" Chloe asked bluntly and without any hesitation. Big brands typically opted for celebrities as their brand ambassadors, making it uncommon for them to select an ordinary person like her.

"Because your temperament and image are more suitable to represent Exotic Star," Noah explained in a calm and gentle tone. "During the exhibition, our photographer captured a series of photos, and one particular shot featuring you caught the attention of our designer. It left a lasting impression, prompting his strong recommendation for you to audition."

Chloe's surprise turned into excitement. "Was it the renowned designer Santiago Hart?!" she squealed.

Santiago's name held immense weight in the fashion industry, known as a true titan with an eccentric personality and an exceptional eye for detail. To even capture his attention was a rare honor, typically reserved for a privileged few actors and models. In the fashion circle, there was a well-known saying: "If Santiago Hart sets his sights on you, it's as if heaven itself is bestowing its blessings upon you."

"If you pass the audition, the contract will be for three years, and there will be an

endorsement fee of 30 million. You'll also receive a limited edition piece of Exotic Star jewelry every year," Noah revealed.

Chloe's breath caught in her throat as she processed the staggering figure. "I can audition, but I'm just an ordinary person. I'm not worth that much money."

Her straightforward words amused Noah. "Even if you don't believe in yourself, don't you trust Santiago's judgment?"

Chloe contemplated his words and replied, "You have a point."

Since she had already taken three consecutive days off this month, they scheduled the audition for Friday evening. Shortly after ending the call, Noah added her on WhatsApp.

Chloe's mind raced with thoughts. If she passed the audition, she would finally be able to repay the money she owed Joseph in one fell swoop. Determined to accomplish her tasks, she remained in the office even after regular working hours. She sent Joseph a text, notifying him that she would be working late, before immersing herself in her duties once more.

Upstairs, Joseph, who was supposed to conclude a meeting, briefly glanced at his phone and composedly remarked, "Keep working on finding solutions. If you can't resolve this minor issue, you might as well stay in the office."

The executives from different departments had no option but to press on.

It was nine o'clock in the evening, and Chloe had finally cleared her backlog of work. As she descended the stairs, she noticed Benjamin patiently waiting for her, unknown how long she

had waited. She paused, a faint smile gracing her lips.

Benjamin's face lit up with an awkward smile as he spotted Chloe. "Why did you block my number?"

Chloe's eyes widened in surprise as she replied, "I blocked you three months ago. Did you just notice it today?"

Benjamin, knowing he was embarrassed, changed the subject. "I've divorced Karen, and I

kicked Ava out as well. Why don't you move back in? I'll hand over the company to you as well.

"I

Chloe asked, her expression feigning surprise, "Why? Weren't you so affectionate toward Karen?"

Benjamin's face alternated between pale and flushed, indicating his fluctuating emotions, in a moment of frustration, he kicked the nearby tree trunk. "Don't mention those bitches. Ava isn't even my daughter."

and

“Oh, I see. So, you’re coming to me now because you have no offspring and are worried about being alone in your old age?”

“Coco, how could you speak to your father that way?”

“Isn’t it true? If Karen and Ava were still around, you wouldn’t even spare me a thought.”

“The past is in the past. We share the same blood, and family shouldn’t harbor grudges. While Fairlight is a decent company, working for others can’t compare to the potential of building a family business. Spare a thought for your father, come back to the Johnson Group, and I’ll give you the position of manager.”

Chloe lowered her gaze, concealing her underlying resentment. When she lifted her head again, a smile adorned her face. “You’re absolutely right, my dear father. If I return, does that mean I’ll also be entitled to some of the company shares?”

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Chapter 268 Joseph’s Face Is Filled With Strangeness

“Okay, I’ll grant you 10 percent,” Benjamin reluctantly agreed.

Chloe remained firm. “That’s not enough. I want 20 percent.”

Benjamin’s expression shifted. “20 is too much.”

Undeterred, Chloe pressed on. “Nevertheless, you’ll have to give it to me eventually-to stop Ava from pursuing her intentions to claim it.”

Her directness struck a chord, and Benjamin, who had been deceived for two decades, surprisingly found her reasoning valid. Karen was not to be underestimated. In the future, she would try to extract as many assets from him as possible.

“Fine, we’ll arrange for that, but a portion of the shares is still registered under those bitches’ names. We have to transfer them back before I can allocate them to you.”

Chloe’s gaze flickered before responding, “All right. Then, I’ll remain at Fairlight for now. There are valuable connections here, and I can utilize them to benefit our family in the future. Oh, Dad, even though you’ve divorced Karen, you still need to legally sever your father- daughter relationship with Ava. That way, she won’t have any grounds to cling onto the Johnson name.”

“I’ll take care of it tomorrow. We can’t let them have any advantage.”

Benjamin’s animosity toward Karen had reached its peak. Nothing infuriated a man more than being cuckolded for two decades. He had hoped for Chloe’s return to the family, but she had refused with a justification for her decision. Since her attitude toward him seemed acceptable, he did not dwell on it.

As public transportation had ceased operating at this hour, Chloe planned to get a cab for her journey home. However, just as she was about to step onto the road, a nearby car suddenly switched on its high beams, flooding the street with its light.

She assumed that Joseph had already left, but to her surprise, he was standing by the car. His broad shoulders and long legs showcased his sleek and clean figure, accentuated by the tailored suit he wore. Joseph exuded an air of a top model-distinguished and elegant.

“There’s no need to go through all that trouble to secure the assets under your name,” Joseph remarked.

Chloe’s eyelid twitched, realizing that he had overheard her conversation with Benjamin. She responded, “I find it more satisfying to let them fight among themselves like dogs.”

The market value of the assets registered under the Johnsons was worth several hundred million, yet it fell short of being classified as a large company.

‘But the Johnson Group was built step by step through Mom’s efforts. She invested money and

put countless efforts into it. I won't easily give it up or allow Benjamin to benefit from it cheaply,' Chloe thought to herself, her determination growing stronger.

Joseph nodded slightly, seemingly unfazed by the Johnsons' situation. "Get in. I want to take you somewhere," he said.

"Where?"

"A restaurant."

"You haven't had dinner? But it's almost midnight snack time now."

"I haven't eaten. I had a busy day today." Joseph leaned back in the rear seat and casually added, "I'll take you to meet a few people while we're at it."

"Oh," Chloe responded, glancing at Lucas, who was diligently working overtime in the driver's seat. It appeared that many people were working late that day, including some department heads.

The journey to their destination was relatively short, taking only ten minutes. They arrived at a private speakeasy that had garnered a following online. The establishment was known for its exclusivity, allowing entry to only a select few patrons each day. With its clandestine charm and hidden entrance, the speakeasy exuded an air of mystery and sophistication. As they stepped out of the car, the owner himself appeared to greet them and lead the way.

"Mr. Joseph, please come in. Ms. Larson and the gentlemen have been waiting for quite some time," the owner said, pausing at the entrance of a private room.

Chloe's suspicion grew. "Ms. Larson?"

Could it be Xavia?

Joseph remained silent, simply pushing the door open.

As Chloe stepped inside, her expression shifted. Indeed, it was Xavia, accompanied by Nathan and Samuel.

'What's going on? Did they reconcile and couldn't wait to share the good news with his buddies? And me being invited here was most likely not Joseph's idea. Is Xavia asserting her dominance?' Chloe's mind raced with a whirlwind

of thoughts and possibilities. Her palms became sweaty, and her heart felt as though it was being tightly squeezed by an invisible hand, leaving her struggling to catch her breath.

Lost in her own thoughts, Chloe remained oblivious to the fact that Xavia, seated in the chair, wore an equally displeased expression on her face.

Nathan greeted them with a cheerful smile. "Ah, Chloe, Joe! You guys are so late. I'm starving to death!"

Chloe mustered a smile and tugged at the corners of her mouth. "I've been busy with work at the office."

Samuel flipped through the menu, voicing his frustration, "Who isn't busy? I was summoned for an important discussion and ended up waiting for two hours. Maybe next time I should charge for the delay."

Joseph glanced at him, his expression unchanged, "Submit the reimbursement request to Nate. He's the one who orchestrated tonight's gathering."

Nathan chimed in, "No, although I organized tonight's meet-up, my intention was simply to hang out with my buddies. Who would've thought you had this in mind? Well, forget it. Let's just consider it an act of goodwill."

Xavia, quick to catch on, asked cautiously, "What kind of goodwill are we talking about here?"

"Oh, nothing. By the way, how's your chemotherapy going?" Nathan abruptly changed the subject, causing a slight tension in Xavia's expression.

"It's been challenging, but I'm managing," Xavia replied, her voice carrying a hint of strain.

"Treatment is always tough. Just hang in there, Xavia. As long as the outcome is positive, it'll all be worth it."

After the dishes were served, Joseph casually picked up a delectable piece of food and placed it on Chloe's plate, drawing everyone's attention to the unexpected gesture.

"This dish is pretty good."

Chloe was taken aback, her eyes widening in disbelief. It was as if she had witnessed a supernatural occurrence. Joseph had always held a dismissive attitude toward such actions.

In his opinion, eating was a personal affair, and relying on someone else to feed you or peel shrimp was a sign of being overly indulged. But coincidentally, he had reached for a dish that was slightly out of Chloe's reach.

Only after he had finished the act did Joseph realize what he had done. At the same time, Chloe's surprise mirrored his own, her expression a mix of astonishment and confusion. An uncomfortable silence settled between them, broken by Joseph's cold question. "Is there something on my face?"

Chloe shook her head. There was nothing on his face, but it was filled with strangeness!

Chapter 269 Joseph, Have You No Shame?

Xavia maintained an unwavering expression, her delicate makeup accentuating her brows and eyes, giving her a rosy complexion. However, her hands holding her utensils betrayed a slight whitening of the knuckles.

Nathan let out a sigh and intentionally made a loud noise, "Well, well. Miracles do happen. Joe actually knows how to take care of someone."

Chloe felt a wave of embarrassment wash over her, leaving her unsure of the situation. She was at a loss for words, uncertain of how to respond.

As they finished their meal, Joseph gently put down his utensils and turned his attention to Xavia. "I discovered something last night. There were numerous freeze-dried snacks near the spot where the dogs went missing as if someone intentionally lured them there. It's highly possible that Oreo and Toto, just as Chloe mentioned, were deliberately enticed."

Chloe's eyelashes trembled slightly, and her eyes glimmered with astonishment as she fixed her gaze on the man beside her. An incredible thought surged within her, 'Was today's gathering specifically arranged to discuss this matter, involving both me and Xavia?'

Xavia's hand trembled imperceptibly, and she lifted her head with a guilty tone. "Ah... It seems that we've misunderstood Ms. Chloe."

"Yup."

"We acted too hastily and were confused. On Joe's behalf, I'd like to say we're sorry." Xavia sincerely extended her apology to Chloe.

Chloe was not one to hold grudges and whispered softly, "It's fine."

"Misunderstandings resolved. Fantastic!" Nathan exclaimed, raising his glass for a toast with Xavia. "In the future, if you need anything, just come to me. We're friends, after all. Whether it's taking care of the dogs or anything else, count on me. Now that Joe is married and Mr. Harold is eager for grandchildren, we should give them some personal space, right?"

Xavia suddenly looked at him, feeling a bit aggrieved. "Are you suggesting that I'm disturbing Joe?" She knew Joseph long before Chloe even appeared. Why should the newcomer take precedence?

"Have you forgotten Mr. Harold's attitude toward you?" Samuel interjected, his expression cold. "You often visit the villa, and if you happen to run into Mr. Harold, he'll surely speculate further. We're doing this for your own good."

Upon hearing the name Harold, Xavia's arrogance instantly vanished, replaced by a profound sense of resentment that flickered in her eyes. Five long years had passed, and she had waited impatiently throughout. Why was that old man not dead yet?

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Chloe, observant as always, noticed the shift in Xavia's emotions and furrowed her brows in

concern.

She got up to make her way to the restroom and coincidentally bumped into Nathan as she exited. After a brief moment of hesitation, she mustered the courage to ask, "Can I ask you something?"

"Of course, Chloe. Go ahead," Nathan responded with his usual charm, always willing to entertain the queries of attractive women.

“Has Xavia ever met Joseph’s parents?”

Nathan paused briefly, considering his response. “No, Mr. Harold never allowed her to set foot inside the Whitman residence.”

“Why?” Chloe pressed, her expression now tinged with perplexity.

Nathan’s expression took on a subtle shade. “Mr. Harold held the belief that a girl from the entertainment industry wasn’t deserving of becoming a part of the Whitman family. However, the primary concern was Xavia herself. Mr. Harold discovered that she had been involved with multiple men prior to being with Joseph, although these allegations were never substantiated. Following that, Xavia disappeared without any explanation.”

Xavia even had a brief and peculiar relationship with their mutual friend, Gabriel. Though, Gabriel had vehemently denied it.

Inexplicably, Chloe began to sense a connection between Harold and Xavia’s mysterious disappearance.

Back in the private room, Samuel excused himself to make a phone call, leaving Joseph and Xavia alone. Xavia’s eyes were red, indicating that she had likely been crying. Chloe discreetly avoided acknowledging it, while Nathan naturally maintained his silence.

Soon enough, Samuel returned from his call, speaking in a casual tone, “Gabe will be back soon. Our jolly group of brothers can then finally reunite.”

Xavia looked up in astonishment and exclaimed, “Didn’t he just take over the family business? How does he have the time to return so soon?”

Samuel

grew suspicious and questioned, “How do you know that he took over the family business?”

She hesitated for a moment before responding nonchalantly, “I saw it on TV.”

“We have some collaborations here to discuss,” Samuel said, looking at Joseph. “How about setting a time?”

“Whenever,” Joseph replied casually.

During the meal, Chloe had little appetite but was privy to numerous gossip. As they made

their way back, she could not help but be astounded by the intricate dynamics of affluent families. However, Joseph's unexpected act of care during dinner lingered in her mind.

Chloe's reflection appeared in the car window, and each expression played out like scenes in a film.

Joseph, his eyes narrowed with a dangerous intensity, felt a sense of disregard that fueled his annoyance. Without hesitation, he raised his hand and swiftly delivered a firm slap to the woman's tender buttocks. A crisp "smack" reverberated in the confined space, leaving a tense silence in its wake.

Chloe froze, and she slowly pivoted her head, her hand instinctively reaching to touch her buttocks in utter disbelief. Her eyes widened in shock as she confronted Joseph, her voice filled with incredulity, "Did you just spank me?"

'Again, on the buttocks! This marks the second occurrence!'

Joseph met her furious gaze, a mischievous arch forming in his raised eyebrows. He taunted, "Was the impact too feeble? Perhaps you didn't even feel it?"

Chloe's face instantly flushed, a mix of embarrassment and indignation washing over her. "You have the audacity to admit it?"

'Joseph, have you no shame?'

Chapter 270 Just an Insignificant Gain

Chloe suppressed her anger, realizing that engaging in a verbal battle or resorting to insults would only be futile. She stared at Joseph with a feeble glare, her voice lacking any trace of intimidation. "If you lay a hand on me again, you'll regret it!"

In the front seat, Lucas could not help but chuckle. The peculiar dynamic between Joseph and Chloe was uniquely endearing.

Back at the villa, after Lucas parked the car and departed, Joseph remained seated inside. His cool gaze casually fell upon Chloe, who blinked in realization. She finally grasped the key point of the situation before and asked, "You invited Xavia today specifically to discuss the missing dogs incident, didn't you?"

He neither confirmed nor denied, his response carrying a subtle implication. "If there's a misunderstanding, it needs to be clarified," he said.

The incident involving Toto and Oreo going missing made him skeptical of anyone being audacious enough to orchestrate it. After reviewing the surveillance footage, it seemed to indirectly validate Chloe's claims. He was a person who valued evidence. However, in his mind, it was just a matter of two dogs, and he did not perceive it to be as complex as dealing with business affairs.

Upon hearing his words, Chloe could not help but feel a sense of injustice. "Tsk, you unconsciously place more trust in Xavia than in me."

"I don't."

"Yes, you do!"

Joseph's eye twitched, and his teeth clenched tightly. "I won't do it again next time."

"Ah, so you admit that you trust Xavia more than you trust me."

"Are you intentionally trying to provoke me?" His gaze returned to Chloe's delicate buttocks, and he lightly flicked his fingers. The lingering sensation from before brought a twisted

satisfaction to him.

Chloe shivered and quickly shielded her buttocks, giving him a sweet smile. "I was just teasing

you."

Finally feeling a sense of satisfaction, Joseph snorted and stepped out of the car.

When Chloe finished tidying up and was ready to retire for the night, she noticed Joseph standing at the entrance of the master bedroom, his handsome face betraying a trace of impatience. "Are you done cleaning up?"

"Just finished. What's the matter?"

"Sleep." He pulled Chloe into the master bedroom, slipped off his shoes, and embraced her in one smooth motion.

With a soft "click," the room plunged into darkness. In the absence of light, Chloe shifted and inadvertently collided with the warmth and solidity of the man's chest. Her heart raced, its rhythm quickening. "Wh-What are you doing?"

Were they really going to reconcile just like that?

"What do you think?" Joseph's arms encircled her slender waist, his voice exuding a magnetic allure. "Or perhaps you have something else in mind?"

Chloe immediately comprehended, vigorously shaking her head like a tambourine. "No, no, no!"

He bestowed a gentle kiss upon her forehead, his cool voice infused with a touch of tenderness. "Be a good girl and go to sleep."

Chloe's eyelashes quivered, and her tranquil heart stirred once more. She closed her eyes. After an exhausting day at work, her mind had been drained of considerable energy. Before long, she succumbed to a deep slumber.

The following day, Benjamin persistently called Chloe, inquiring about her coming home. Having severed ties with Ava and now presented with an opportunity to transfer shares, he sought to expedite the process.

Chloe readily agreed and arranged a meeting with Benjamin to finalize the contract. She also took the opportunity to tour the companies under the Johnsons in a comprehensive manner.

She found herself back in the same company again after six months. Those colleagues who had previously looked down on her now wore artificial smiles, going out of their way to please her.

A hint of mockery flickered in her eyes. She knew their behavior all too well—hypocrites like them always put on a show, fawning over whoever served their interests.

Suddenly, Chloe felt disgusted with this environment. After exchanging greetings with Benjamin, she decided to make a swift exit. As she descended the stairwell, she found herself face to face with Ava.

Ava's expression betrayed no surprise at seeing her there, and she sneered mockingly. "So, the shares have finally been transferred to your name, huh?"

Chloe smirked in response, her tone laced with satisfaction. "Just an insignificant gain. Feeling jealous, are we?"

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Jojo and Coco's Unexpected Love By Aurora Summers

Score 9.5