

KINDA SWEET 51

Chapter 51 The Sweet Nothings In The Study

Natalia went downstairs, trying to explain to Mrs. Dottie.

However, Mrs. Dottie did not believe what she said at all.

On the contrary, she gave her a suggestive look, "I understand, Madam. You don't have to be shy about it. It's a great thing for couples to share a good relationship. Soon, a little young master will be on the way, and all the hustle and bustle in the Mansion."

In short, she rambled on but refused to believe Natalia about it being a misunderstanding.

Natalia gave up when she found that Mrs. Dottie was difficult to get through.

Technically speaking, Archie and she was a legally married couple. So it was nothing out of the ordinary for them to be engaging in a little intimacy.

It was quite awkward to be caught red-handed by elders but it was not a big deal.

Natalia decided to abandon her plan to forgo the chance to restore her uppity image in Mrs. Dottie's mind. Instead, she poured herself a glass of milk and headed upstairs.

When she passed by the study, she suddenly heard someone talking inside.

It seems that Archie was talking on the phone.

Not minding the slightest, Natalia was about to pass by, but she suddenly heard a gentle soothing.

"Oh baby, be good. Listen to me, take the medicine, then go to bed early today. Okay?"

Her body stiffened.

She was nailed to where she stood.

"I'll be back soon."

"Be a good girl, and I'll accompany you when I get back, okay?"

"Yes, of course Anne is the most adorable baby in the world."

The sweet talk continued in the study.

The conversation mostly involved gentle hushes of the man in an incredibly gentle tone that Natalia had never heard before.

She could even imagine Archie smiling with an affectionate look on his face.

It was a sweet scene, but she felt as though a splash of water hit her, sending chills down to her spine.

Natalia even heard Archie chuckling with delight.

"Okay, I'll miss you too. Good night."

The call ended.

The room went back to silence for a moment. Then, there was the sound of footsteps. Archie was heading out.

Natalia's face turned into blue.

Out of impulse, the strange coincidence had her turn tail and run.

She ran into the bedroom and slammed the door backhanded.

She sprinted all the way to her bedroom and slammed the door behind her in a wham.

Coming out of the study, Archie witnessed a whirlwind coming through from afar, and the next thing he knew, the bedroom door was closed shut.

He was petrified, and then he frowned as if he realized something.

Coincidentally, Mrs. Dottie came upstairs at this time. Archie stood in the corridor and asked, "What's wrong with Madam??"

Mrs. Dottie got confused by his question.

"Madam just come upstairs, right? She was alright!"

The frown on Archie's face deepened.

Without another word, he turned around and walked towards the bedroom.

In dimmed light, Natalia was leaning against the headboard, flipping through an entertainment magazine.

Archie trod over and asked in a causal way, "Did you just go by the study?"

Natalia took a glance at him and made a dry cough, "Yes, just passing by. Why are you nervous?"

Archie didn't answer her.

Even without looking at him, she could feel his sharp gaze hounding her with inquiry.

Natalia got tired of this topic somehow. So, she intentionally yawned and put down the magazine in her hand.

"It's too late. I'll hit the sack now."

Then, she lay down and pull up the quilt up. With her back facing him, she closed her eyes.

As she snuggled under the covers, Archie's eyes darkened.

Without further explanation, he headed to the bathroom to take a shower.

With the splitter-splattering sound of water going on the other side, Natalia couldn't fall asleep at all.

Those flirting words she heard outside the study were echoing in her mind.

They sounded so intimate. She wouldn't believe it if she hadn't heard it with her own ears.

Then, Natalia recalled what Archie said when he forced her to get the marriage license, and the scenes of these days. She felt bitter in her heart.

Fortunately, they had only been together for a short time. Although they were namely husband and wife, they were more like business partners.

Natalia would try her best to play the role as his wife, while he fulfilled his role as her husband when necessary.

It was for the better.

For someone who was betrayed once, Natalia no longer counted on meeting her true love.

So all was good... right?

Natalia kept reassuring herself and finally her nerves were alleviated.

However, a piece of her heart remained missing, dampening her spirits.

When Archie finished his shower, Natalia was still awake.

She nestled in the quilt, eyes closed, but her curled eyelashes fluttering. It was obvious that she was

pretending to be asleep.

Archie smirked but did not expose her. He dried his hair and drew near to the bed.

Natalia knew he was back.

The sound of the man blow-drying his hair and walking was reminding her of his existence. Was he

trying to draw to her attention?

She took a shuddering breath, feigning ignorance.

It was not long before the other side of bed dipped a bit and she was greeted with a refreshing fragrant

dampness.

Natalia frowned. She didn't notice Archie's smell before, for she usually fell into sleep very soon. But

today, the man's presence was rather intense, making the big bed small and narrow.

Especially when Archie approached her on purpose, she felt more insulted by his threatening vibe.

She held her breath in and tensed her body muscles,

She almost held her breath and tensed her body muscles, muffling her impulse to escape

All of a sudden, she felt the room darkened. Archie must have turned off the lights.

Amid the darkness, the human senses tended to be sharper than when there was light.

Their bodies were not touching, and there was even a tiny gap between them.

Nonetheless, the man's vivid presence could hardly be ignored.

Time passed

Natalia let out a mumble before turning over to roll to the side.

The gap between them was stretched to half a meter.

The distance did release the tension in the air at all.

Natalia secretly let out a sigh of relief but she felt warmth behind her soon.

Archie moved over as well.

Natalia frowned.

Even with her back facing him, she could map out the outline of the man's chest.

This weird position...

Gritting her teeth, Natalia tried another tumble.

Sticking like a barnacle, the man shoved over.

She opened her eyes and in darkness, she picked up the man's spaced breathing as though he was

sound asleep.

Not sure whether Archie was asleep or pretending to be asleep like her, Natalia dwelled in her thoughts for a moment.

In the end, she took a deep breath in and scooted towards the side of the bed.

No matter how big the bed was, three times a tumble had her hanging at the edge of the bed.

Another inch forward, she would be tumbling to the ground.

Nevertheless, the man seemed determined to embarrass her.

She just stopped when the person behind stuck close to her again

What is more, it came with a sinuous arm huddling over her supple waistline.

Chapter 52 She was Jealous

With a stiffened back, Natalia dared not make any sudden movement.

Amid the darkness, her eyes widened in the darkness.

Was he... really asleep?

He usually kept to his side of the bed. What was all the sprawling around the bed today? Was he pretending to be asleep?

Natalia waited for a moment, and Archie stopped fidgeting too. The pin-drop silence with the man's faint breathing in the background drew out a frame of tranquility and serenity.

When she was sure that the man behind her was indeed asleep, she carefully lifted his arm, trying to move it away.

However, the action immediately resulted in murmurs coming from behind her..

And the arm rested on her waist tightened to wrap her.

What's more, Archie's whole body pressed on her, his handsome face burying in her long hair, as if she was his large-sized pillow. She was totally imprisoned by him now.

Nestled in his embrace, Natalia was left breathless from suffocation while her body lay stiffened.

The faint breathing spewing between her hair and warm circulation curling her neck aroused a tingle of trembling numbness, electrifying her entire body like a surge of current.

With her head buzzing, Natalia's mind almost went blank instantly.

Yet, the man behind her remained unaware of her reaction, as he glided his arm over her waist, tightening his grasp over her.

Natalia gritted her teeth.

This intimate posture was way past the line of flirting.

It could be said as risky.

Unable to bear it further, she clutched onto his hand to put it away, regardless of the fact that the action would wake him.

However, the arm on her waist suddenly strengthened its grip and she could not pull it away no matter how hard she tried.

Just as she was going to give it another try with all her might, she heard muffles of laughter behind her.

Dumbstruck like a blow to the head, Natalia finally realized something.

She turned her head over.

The light in the room was turned on instantly.

Natalia stared at the man lying on the bed, stunned and speechless.

He stopped playing dumb now that he had been discovered, but his arm still clung to her waist.

Archie grinned at her, his other arm propping his head on the pillow,

"You finally quit pretending?"

There was unmistakable banter in his voice.

Natalia said angrily, "You are awake at all the time, right?"

"Aren't you, too?"

"I..."

Knowing that she was wrong, Natalia didn't know how to retort. So she grumbled, "So what? I did not get on your nerves pretending to be asleep, but why did you have to try my patience when you are faking it?"

Archie stared at her quietly.

The woman's downcast eyes revealed faint guilt and fluster. Her embodiment of a lost deer tugged on his heartstrings.

She really was not the type to lie.

Just a little lie was already biting so much on her conscience.

Archie q smirked before asking her, "What did you hear outside the study earlier?"

Natalia didn't know how to answer him for a while.

Natalia paused and lifted her eyes to meet his gaze.

His eyes were profound and murky, like the finest black jade. Under the dimmed lighting, the seemingly penetrating eyes spoke of placidity and serenity.

Natalia felt uneasy at his gaze.

Archie was the one at fault but his calm gaze suggested as though she was to blame!

She got a little annoyed at the thought of this.

Making up her mind, she clenched her teeth and glared back.

“What did I hear? Anything and everything I'm not supposed to hear! What are you going to do about it? Mr. McCathy, are you going to explain to me?”

Archie got amused by her angry look.

He extended his arm to shuffle her hair, messing up her sleepy head.

Natalia jumped like a puffed-up cat.

“Don't touch me!”

Archie chuckled with glee as if he got more delighted by her annoyance.

After all, no one would have thought that Natalia, who was always reversed and distant to others,

would be like this in front of him.

It was not for everyone in the world but only his eyes to see.

It was as if layers of facade built throughout the years were ripped apart, revealing her one true self

Natalia was at the end of her tether with his constant laughter.

As she could not rest in bed, she got up and cast him aside, preparing to go out.

Retracting his smile, Archie pulled her back.

“Where are you going?”

Natalia blurted coldly, “Go on with your giggles! I'm going to sleep in the guest room.”

“Don't go.”

Natalia got irritated again.

“Archie McCathy! Don't cross the line! Although we didn't get married for love, we are both consenting

adults!”

“Shouldn't you have respect for my feelings even as a business partner? Putting aside the fact that you

were flirting with another woman in front of me, I can't even sleep in the guest room?”

Archie stared into her eyes, his eyes beaming.

“Mrs. McCathy, can I take your behavior as jealousy?”

Natalia choked, and her eyes opened wide.

An unfamiliar emotion agitated within her, throwing her into panic and confusion. She had the urge to run from it.

She shook off his arm. “Who said I'm jealous? Only an idiot would be jealous! You know you're free to hook up with anyone. I'm not your wife for real anyway. We can just divorce as soon as you work it out.”

She grabbed her pillow and headed for the door.

Seeing she was really angry, Archie hold her hands.

“Alright, alright it's my fault! You aren't jealous. It's all my fault, Okay?”

Natalia ignored him.

Archie continued to explain, “It really is a misunderstanding. I never had another woman apart from you, let alone any Tom, Dick, or Harry out there. If you don't believe me, you can check it out, or ask Brian.”

Smirking, Natalia threw him a glance.

“Brian works for you. Do you think I am so stupid to ask him?”

Archie choked on her words.

But her retort sounded reasonable at a second thought.

Well, she was indeed a hard nut to crack. And at such critical moment, Even a man as brilliant as him could become a bad problem-solver.

Indeed, soothing the nerves of one's wife was a life-saving skill. Even a man as smart as him could make a blunder in a pinch. How did he come up with such an idea?

He changed his approach and comforted her, "Well, whatever you say makes sense, but I swear that I never had another woman other than you. If any of my words don't ring true, I deserve a painful death"

Before Archie could finish her words, Natalia's eyelids throbbed.

For some reason, she had a sinking feeling in her stomach, and before she knew it, her hands were already over his mouth.

Archie laughed.

Natalia glared at him.

“I'm telling you, don't bother fooling me with your tactics. The world wouldn't have that many

douchebags if promises did any good.”

Seizing the opportunity, Archie grabbed her hands and smiled. “Yes, promises aren't worth anything but

those words came from my heart. Honey, now that I'm married to you, I won't lay a finger on another

woman. My moral senses and upbringing won't allow me to do such a thing. Do you believe me?”

Chapter 53 No Divorce

Eyes fixating on him, Natalia was sort of bought into it.

However, at the thought of those sweet nothings in the study, she found it hard to let them go.

Her face sank. She looked at Archie seriously and said, "Archie, I don't know why you married me or

how long this marriage will last, but I hope that if one day, you wish to end this marriage, you'll let me

know in advance. I don't mind you falling for another woman, neither do I mind a divorce, but I take

offense when it comes to betrayal, no matter what kind of relation we are, as couples or business

partners. Do you understand?”

Archie's face sank.

He darted a cold stare at her and solemnly replied, “You don't mind me falling in love with another

woman?”

Natalia felt like she got a stab in her heart.

Natalia could not make out why she had this feeling.

She and Archie weren't a real couple, and they were only together because of another reason. She had

no right to stand in the way if he found his true love one day.

Hence, she nodded.

"And you don't mind getting divorced?"

She nodded again.

Archie sneered.

Her gentle face became cold and gloomy.

He got up and went out.

Natalia was a little taken aback.

Before she snapped out of her thoughts, Archie came back with two red booklets.

These were their marriage certificates.

Natalia's eye was twitching. She didn't know what Archie was going to do, but, her gut was telling her

that it would not be to her liking.

He walked towards the front of a table and picked up a lighter. Suddenly the two red booklets were set ablaze.

Natalia widened her eyes.

“Archie McCathy, what are you doing?”

She pounced, trying to snatch the ignited marriage certificates.

Nevertheless, Archie stopped her.

Grabbing her by the hands, he pressed her against the wall.

“Natalia, I’ve told you, I, Archie McCathy, will only have one woman and marry once in this lifetime.

Since you always think I’m kidding, I will prove it to you today. Our marriage certificates are burned.

From now on, don't you dare to divorce me! Never! Don't even think about it!”

Natalia merely made a passing comment.

Why did he make a fuss? She didn’t mean it seriously.

She felt her wrist hurt by his strong clutch.

She turned at the wrist with difficulty, only to find that she could not pull away from his clench. Thus,

she surrendered.

“Alright, alright, I've got it. Will you let me go first?”

But Archie didn't loosen his grip.

Keeping an eagle eye on her, he said roughly, “Then, are you still thinking about divorce?”

Natalia rolled her eyes.

“Mr. McCathy, it was you who had an affair. Who gives you the right to ask me about it?”

Archie finally broke into laughter.

As if he was reminded of something, Archie rubbed her hair and murmured, "Silly girl!"

Natalia was confused and speechless.

Fortunately, Archie finally let her go and explained, “She's an important person in my life but not the kind you're thinking of.”

Natalia was suspicious of his words.

Seeing her questioning look, Archie smiled again.

“I'll take you back to Eqitin later. Then you'll know I'm telling you the truth.”

There was a quick change in Natalia's facial expression.

Back to Egitin?

She opened her mouth, trying to say something but held her tongue.

He came up to her, took her hands and pressed her to sit on the bed. Then, he leaned over to kiss her cheek.

"It's getting late. Go to sleep. Good night!"

She enjoyed sound sleep until the break of dawn.

The next day, Natalia took Victoria to Nathan's office as promised.

Jessica and Julia were also at Nathan's office.

Jessica was taken by surprise to see Natalia.

"Sister, why are you here too?"

Natalia faintly threw her a glance. Jessica adorned a proud princess look today, wearing a white dress

matched with a jacket of the same color.

Following behind her was another girl.

Natalia knew her. She was Jessica's distant cousin, named... Marie Witt?

Marie rose to fame as an online celebrity and signed with Jessica's studio. Her relationship with

Jessica and their resemblance on appearance earned her the title as Jessica Jr.

Because of this title, she was doing well in the entertainment industry.

Jessica was also glad to cultivate her. After all, nothing could highlight her beauty and excellence more than a Jessica Jr.

Natalia sneered in her heart at the thought of it, and coldly blurted. "Is this your office?"

That meant, why couldn't I be here?

Jessica's face froze.

She got embarrassed by Natalia's mocking.

But she was not in a position to take Natalia face on. After all, she had been keeping the image of a

lady and socialite in the entertainment industry and there were many reporters at present. Making a scene in public would ruin her image.

Compared to her scruples, Natalia was at ease.

She was not a celebrity anyway, so she could do as she pleased.

Julia came forward and stretched out her hand to Natalia.

"Long time no see, Ms. Natalia."

No matter how reluctant Natalia was, she shook hands with Julia.

Julia was a veteran in this circle. Although she was lacking in moral standing, she deserved respect due to her seniority.

Nathan had arrived earlier. Knowing that they all arrived, he ordered his assistant to take them to the studio at once.

The party of five entered the studio and found the equipment set up.

Two groups of actors were performing on a spacious stage, seemingly here for audition as well.

Nathan, with several other staff, was sitting in the auditorium watching their performance.

When they walked by, Jessica greeted him gently, "Director Nathan, here we are."

Nathan then looked up and swept a glance at her before his gaze fell on Natalia.

He smiled, "Everyone is here now. Have a seat!"

Then, he pointed to the seats around him and told the deputy director next to him to pass him several copies of the script.

Distributing the scripts to Marie and Victoria, he said, "Take a look at the script first. If you two have no problem, you can go for hair and makeup. Let's start with a line each and go from there."

On hearing this, Marie's face changed.

"Director Nathan, I thought this role was already mine? Why do I need an audi...?"

Before she could finish, Julia shot her a cold look.

Nathan assumed a scowling face.

"I did promise Jessica to give you a chance for audition, but I didn't say I would adopt you without an audition. Nicole Block might be a supporting role, she is critical too. Don't even think of this role if your acting isn't up to standard!"

As Marie's face went through a series of colors, anger stirred her to clench her fist.

By right, although Nathan never promised the role to Marie during their discussion, the situation should not be far off from it.

After all, she was joining the cast, bringing funds along with her. It was no easy feat for Nathan in preparation of this project these past few years. Naturally, he wanted to succeed in this make-or-break moment.

Her eyes scoured the room and finally landed on Natalia.

She suddenly knew something.

Chapter 54 Audition on the Same Stage

She may have a round face, but she was natural and adorable. At first, her bearing and face shape did

not work in her favor against a strong and perseverance character such as Nicole Block.

It never crossed anyone's mind that she would come out looking good after styling.

She not only inspired Nicole Block's forbearing temperament, but also had a kind of natural indifference and conceit.

This was a fairly complicated person.

After all, she was once a princess of an empire, high above the masses.

There was no one above her other than the emperor. Her arrogance was bred in the bone. Even with her country and family in ruins, she could not get rid of it, despite falling in the hands of the enemy.

Hence, she had to hide.

But she could not hide them all, so he made such a character with all kinds of temperament.

After Victoria came out, Nathan nodded approvingly.

The first scene was played by Marie.

This was a fight play. A middle-aged actress would be running the lines with them. The captured princess was thrown into the Imperial correction chamber in Kyrma Empire to be a courtesan, and the middle-aged actress acted as the correction matron, in charge of taming the disobedient Nicole and subduing her.

The performance soon began.

The correction matron sat upright there while Nicole was forced onto her knees by a few strong men.

Fixing her gaze at her, the matron adopted a stern outlook. "'I heard you refuse to learn dancing?'"

Nicole Block just entered the palace. Although her country and family were in shambles, she had the bearings of a royal attitude and conceited.

She stared at the matron indignantly. Her eyes were firm and cold.

"I am a princess of the Yepa Empire. why should I acquire the lowly expertise of a performer? Kill me as you please, but you can never break my spirit!!"

Just then, a whip fell on her body.

Nicole felt the pain and snorted, and the matron sneered.

"Princess? The Yepa Empire has long gone, and now you are just a humble sinful slave. His Majesty was merciful to spare your life and put you into training. Instead of thanking your lucky stars, you're stupid and stubborn to claim yourself a princess. Do you want a rebel?"

The matron's tone was stern. Nicole's face turned pale out of pain.

After a while, she bit her teeth and spit, "Pah!"

The provoking demeanor threw the matron into a rage.

She raised the whip, assuming the position for another go when she was held back by the palace attendant beside.

The palace attendant whispered in her ear, "Matron, His Majesty specifically pardoned her and sent her to be taught in the correction chamber. His Majesty may one day summon her. We'd be in a tight spot if we hurt her."

The matron seemed to be aware of this, and could only suppress her temper.

For a moment, she sneered.

"If I can't teach you a lesson, but I can do so to others. Bring them to me!"

There was silence on the stage.

No one came up.

Marie stared at the vast stage dumbfounded.

Natalia curled her lips.

In costume dramas, many scenes were difficult to set up, so most of the time they needed to act in front of the green screens.

Nathan was testing them in mind on their acting without props.

For a moment, Marie seemed to realize this and she wore a sullen look..

She was a online celebrity, and had not learnt acting skill. she never went through formal acting class.

Although she was involved in a few plays throughout the years, these were small productions.

The actors she worked alongside with were basically of the same level. She was not fond of learning, and made no progress in acting.

Moreover, she did not carry any passion for this drama. Costume drama needed hard work. The boundless war and fighting scenes in this drama were laborious.

If it weren't for the importance of the role and the production, she wouldn't do it!

Because of this, she didn't take it seriously at all. She thought she could make it without much effort.

Nonetheless, how was she to act without any supporting actors?

The matron was already onto the next line.

"I can't lay a finger on you because you're the princess of Yepa Empire, but they are merely enslaved prisoners. No one will say a word even if they die. Today, you'll learn. They'll live if you behave well.

Otherwise, don't come blaming me then!"

Chapter 55 Immersed In the Role

With these words, she gave the whip a violent blow in the air.

The exploding crisp noise made Marie jump.

Owing to her nervousness, she stuttered and forgot her lines.

"If you lay a hand on them, I, I..."

What was it again?

Marie's face turned pale. In the auditorium, Nathan furrowed his brows.

Jessica's face was gloomy too.

She spent a lot of efforts to persuade Nathan so that Marie could take on the role, but today there was

a competitor and Marie failed to live up to her expectation!

It was not that she was good to Marie, but these years she was in the entertainment industry alone, and she felt more or less isolated.

Marie was not only her cousin, but also signed up to work in her studio. Even if she became popular, she could only be a marionette in her hand.

Not only that, a lot of things she could not deal with could be settled by Marie. She was really a rare good pawn.

Thinking of this, she turned her head and said to Nathan with a smile, "Marie has been working hard all the time. It's her first time she takes part in your play. She is nervous."

Nathan was still gloomy on face, but he said nothing.

He saved Jessica's face.

Behind, Natalia silently hook her lips.

She knew that sometimes even if she did nothing, the enemy had already messed up

That was the power gap.

Marie finally remembered the lines, stumbling through the last half of the performance.

But the effect... well, that was a matter of opinion.

Next, it was Victoria's turn.

With her downcast eyes veiling her thoughts, Jessica suddenly uttered, "Director Nathan, I've been acting for so long, but I've never tried to play the matron. How about I run the lines with her?"

Nathan frowned and didn't think it was a good idea.

But he was not in the position to say no, he lifted his head to glance at Victoria.

"What do you think?"

Victoria was taken by surprise.

If Nathan was not in the position for a refusal, as a junior, she could not refuse.

She could only nod, "Ok."

Jessica grinned.

After changing her clothes, she sat down in a chair.

Acting as Nicole Block, Victoria was detained by a few strong men.

Compared to Marie's pompous and flamboyant performance, Victoria displayed a calmer and

introverted nature.

Darting a sharp gaze at the matron sitting above, Victoria's eyes conveyed her burning rage without words.

The matron coldly blurted, "I heard you refuse to learn dancing?"

Nicole was on her knees and although her hands were tied, her head was held high.

She distinctly enunciated each word. "I am a princess of the Yepa Empire. Why should I acquire the lowly expertise of a performer? Kill me as you please, but you can never break my spirit!"

"Snap!"

The whip was wielded.

Following a grunt, Nicole quivered out of pain.

In the audience, Natalia suddenly changed her face.

When Marie was auditioning earlier, although the matron waved a whip the whip was skillfully lashed to an empty spot beside her.

Although the sound was alarming, the whip never touched her.

Yet, Jessica whipped Victoria?

Caught off guard by her, Victoria gawked at Jessica but the latter was already running through her next lines.

The searing pang on her arm distorted her face, but she quickly snapped back and resumed her acting.

Gritting her teeth, she glared at the matron on high and spat. "Blegh!"

"If I can't teach you a lesson, but I can do so to others. Bring them to me!"

It was the same actions without props.

Compared to Marie's fluster, Victoria clearly made adequate preparations.

Even if there was no one acting with her, she was able to bring the character to life.

Facing the air, she was angry and heartache, with endless pain and determination in the red eyes, but there was a hint of control over the helplessness.

"Caitlin Hardin! Should one day the tables be turned, I swear on the blood of my people, I will tear you to pieces for what you did to the Blocks today!"

The furious roar echoed the stage as Nicole was dragged away by the group of strong men.

The audition was over.

There was a burst of applause from the audience.

Natalia stood up and smiled at Nathan. "How is it, Director Nathan? Did the actress I recommended disappoint you?"

Nathan nodded with a smile.

"Very good, her performance is on point and she's able to deal with a sudden turn of events with a swift response. She's an actress in the making."

Natalia blinked her eyes, watching as Jessica returned from the stage.

"Sorry, Director Nathan, I was too immersed in the role to hold my hand back."

Nathan waved his hand, "It's alright but be careful next time. Although we seek role immersion, it's imperative to remain rational, especially when it comes to the safety of other actors?"

Jessica smiled, "Yes, you are right."

Then she looked at Natalia.

"Sister, congratulations on getting the part for your actress."

Natalia looked at her, curling her lips into a sneer.

"When I heard you won an award last year, so I was under the impression that there must be some

improvement to your acting! Today it seems you were too immersed in the role by a newbie actress that you'd forgotten what you were doing. I think you are not that good as a movie actress."

Jessica's face stiffened.

At this time, Marie and Victoria returned after they changed their clothes.

She took a deep breath and smiled, "I can understand your love for your actress, but I did that to better stimulate her mood. Victoria, don't you think so?"

She said, turning to look at Victoria.

Victoria looked at Jessica, then at Natalia next to her.

Although she was in grievance, she was only a unknown actress. Despite feeling wronged, she might stir trouble for Natalia if she were to lay bare. She was just a measly actress after all.

She could only nod, "Yes, you are right."

Jessica let out a satisfied smile.

Nathan found Natalia was angry, so he said with a smile.

"Well, it is settled. Natalia, bring her along to draw up a contract when you find the time. Jessica, don't

forget to study the script. We will start shooting next month. The shoot must run smoothly!!"

Jessica nodded, "Ok."

Natalia's eyes turned, and she suddenly said, "Director Nathan, I have always liked the role Alanna

Nelson. I noticed that there's a scene on sibling rivalry. Can I try the part?"

Marie, who just had her role taken away, was not one to back down.

Hearing that Natalia wanted to take part in, she immediately said in disdain, "You are not even an actress, why bother?"

"Am I not allowed to get a kick out of acting? Jessica is always nice to me, so I'm sure she wouldn't mind doing a simple favor by running the lines with me, right?"

Natalia threw a meaningful look at Jessica.

Chapter 56 On the Same Stage

Jessica's face stiffened slightly.

If she refused, she would be considered stingy.

Fortunately, she had been acting for so many years, while Natalia had never engaged in acting, so it was conceivable that she knew anything about acting at all.

If she wanted to be humiliated, let her be.

Thinking like this, Jessica smiled with confidence.

"Ok!"

Seeing this, Nathan agreed.

He sat back down behind the monitor with a vague sense of anticipation.

After all, although he chose Jessica to act as Alanna Nelson, but to be honest, Jessica was not the perfect candidate in his mind.

However, without a better candidate on deck, he had to put up with such an arrangement for now.

As for Natalia, he was amazed at first sight.

She had calm and indifferent temperament, which was similar with that of Alanna Nelson in his mind.

That calm yet distant demeanor and the chilling presence presented by the slight furrow between the brows was a similar resemblance to the Alanna Nelson in his mind.

But Natalia was not an actress after all, and did not seem to have any intention to venture into acting.

Therefore, even if Nathan had some ideas in his heart, he could only hold it back.

After all, performing arts was not a walk in the park anyway. Although there was editing involved in the

later stages, the acting skills of an actor or actress was still very important.

Although Jessica was not the perfect candidate in his heart, he believed, as long as he trained her, she could make the role alive.

Nevertheless, it was for the best to have them compete on the same stage.

He wanted to see which one was better, the Alanna Nelson in his mind and the candidate he chose.

Before long, Natalia and Jessica changed into the outfit and walked out from the backstage respectively.

Natalia was wearing an armor suit, while Jessica was wearing a bright crimson imperial wear.

They were going to take on the most dramatic scene in the whole play.

Natalia was playing the role of the heroine Alanna Nelson while Jessica took on the role of Alanna's sister, Priscilla Nelson

Alanna Nelson and Priscilla Nelson were originally daughters of the prime minister in the Yepa Empire.

After the fall of the Yepa Empire, they were marched to the Kyrma Empire with the princess Kallie Franklin.

Alanna had learnt martial arts since her childhood, and was a good friend of Kallie Franklin. She

shouldered the responsibility of protecting Nicole and her sister secretly.

Yet to her dismay, their stay in Kyrma Empire had not been long when Kallie Franklin willingly became a concubine to the emperor for the sake of their motherland.

She and her sister Priscilla gradually ran in opposite directions due to the disparity in values and views.

Priscilla fell in love with the crown prince of the Kyrma Empire. In order to be his wife, she did not hesitate to betray Alanna and revealed the hidden places of the survivors to the prince.

Cutting ties with Priscilla, Alanna fled from the palace and traversed six empires before leading the last of her people to raise the flag in the Northwest, establishing the first female-ruled empire, Yemoa Empire.

This scene was about Alanna led the troops into the Kyrma Empire. After many years, Priscilla had become the Empress Dowager. When they met again, it was time for farewell.

With the sound of "Action", the scene unfolded.

Priscilla sat upright on high. With the emperor passed on at this point and the new ruler still blossoming, she took on the reins of ruling as the empress dowager.

However, a soldier outside the hall came to report an emergency.

"Empress Dowager, Yemoa Empire's army has invaded!"

There was a commotion in the hall.

"What should we do? We'd better run!"

"It's too late. The North, South, East, and West gates were breached by the army of Yemoa Empire.

They are everywhere."

"Where is General Wallace? And the soldiers in the Fort Norma? Where are they?"

"Th... they have been killed!"

The ministers were in a great uproar, but Empress Dowager, who was sitting on the throne, remained

expressionless and calm.

It was then the palace gate was opened.

Soldiers in black armor rushed in.

"Kill them all, except those who surrender!"

The stage echoed with the sounds of cries and weapons clashing.

Staring at the figure walking through the palace gate, Priscilla's unperturbed face finally wavered.

Alanna was of such mighty presence, clad in black armor and equipped with a spear. Her furrowed brow addressed a chilling bearing that could only be of Hades from Hell, casting the arrogance and imperiousness of worldly disdain!

Back in the auditorium, Nathan was looking at Natalia coming, and his pupils shrank.

That was...

The picture in his head overlapping with his sight stirred quite an emotion in him.

This... this was Alanna Nelson in the flesh!

The woman whose homeland and family were in ruins, was left to dwell in troubled times. Having experienced the difficulty of life and her family lost in the flames of war, she gradually learned to put her feelings aside.

Ditching needlework, she picked up the spear and rode on a warhorse to take back the land!

At the very end, she finally returned, haughty and contemptuous!

Both Nathan and the rest of the crew stared in awe!

They never knew a girl looked so good in armor!

Not at all delicate, the sense of combativeness was instead brought out in her without seeming too masculine. A hint of fiery and domineeringness added to that feminine beauty, making her overbearing and commanding poise honed through years of leadership conspicuous and eye-catching

God! What a sight!!

Sitting above the hall, Priscilla gazed at the woman beneath clenching her fists in her sleeves.

"Here you are."

These simple words were somewhat ironically bleak.

Alanna darted a cold glance. The look prompted one of the men to drag Priscilla down from her throne.

"Let me go! I can walk on my own!"

She struggled a little, but she got a merciless slap!

The person who hit her was Alanna.

Alanna blurted coldly, "This is for your betray fifteen years ago!"

Fifteen years ago, Priscilla had already crawled into the crown prince's bed while Alanna was plotting her escape from the palace. Priscilla had promised to help her, but she betrayed her and disclosed her plans to the crown prince.

She was nearly killed by an arrow at that time.

Jessica's face hung to one side, as she did not expect that Natalia would hit her.

However, she quickly realized that it was payback!

Natalia was getting back at her for cracking the whip at Victoria.

She was a film star after all. Although lacking in skills, she got the fundamentals down.

After a swift show of fury, Jessica resumed her composure.

"Sister, do you know why I sold you out?"

Alanna Nelson looked at her, indistinctly having the answer in her mind.

She said slowly, "Since childhood, you have always been the best and the most beautiful girl. Dad and

Mom loved you the most. Even as enslaved prisoners, His Majesty the crown prince fell for you first."

"What is it in me that I am not as good as you? When it comes to poetry and painting, I am skillful than

you. Although I can't do martial arts, it is a male thing. Why do they all like you?

"I swear to myself that I'll never live in your shadow. I swear I'll climb to the peak and trample you under my feet on day!"

Chapter 57 Vengeance of the Whip

"I did it! But why? Why you have come to destroy me again?"

"Do you know how hard it was for me to become the empress? How much I had to endure to become an empress dowager?"

"Finally, I sat high above the masses, without being held in contempt. Why couldn't you allow me to indulge a little longer?"

Crying, shouting, Priscilla's tears finally let out.

Alanna didn't say anything.

Gazing at her once beloved sister for a moment, Alanna cracked into a smile.

"You said nobody loves you? When you were a child, you stole father's jade fan. Who was the one to get beat for you?"

"When you were ten years old, you fell into a pond and nearly drowned. Who risked the life to save you?"

"When you were fifteen years old, we were escorted to the Kyrma Empire..."

There was a sudden break in her voice, as if she had been reminded of some terrible memory.

Those clear and cool eyes caught a scarlet, with deep disappointment and hatred.

"Who was the one who came in the way when countless tried to defile your innocence during the journey of a thousand five hundred kilometers towards the East? Who grabbed a knife and fought them to the death? Whose innocence was trampled on for your safety?"

Priscilla stood there dumbfounded.

She stared blankly at Alanna Nelson. Events of the past sprung to her mind following Alanna's claims.

They were still young at the time when trouble fell upon their family. Before Priscilla realized what was going on, she was escorted to the Kyrma Empire with her sister.

While on the way, Alanna taught her to rub mud on her face to conceal her beauty from bad guys.

However, she was too fond of her appearance. Although she said yes, she was not the least bit willing to follow her words.

Finally, while everyone was sleeping one night, she quietly washed away the mud on her face.

She combed her hair as she admired her beautiful face in the water.

But at that moment the soldiers behind saw her and rushed towards her as if they had found a rare treasure.

She was so frightened that she kept screaming as hard as she could.

In the end, her sister came out to save her.

She did not know what her sister had told the soldiers.

Later, the group of soldiers stopped pestering her and took her sister to the woods behind.

She resumed her beauty sleep. The next morning, her sister returned with bruises and wounds on her face. Although her clothes were tattered and her hands covered in blood, she never talked about what happened the night before.

Priscilla never gave a second thought but found it strange that the few soldiers had not appeared since then.

The young girl then may not know what had happened, but she was in her thirties now.

She already knew what had happened that night in the woods.

It was just that she was not willing to admit and face it, as if the truth that made her regret would not exist as long as she avoided it.

Priscilla looked at her sister and suddenly began to laugh.

And the laughter turned into tears.

It was like a wild animal's crying, with a shrill anguish and remorse.

A soldier came trotting up with a wooden box in his hand.

"Your Highness, the imperial jade seal is found."

Alanna picked it up and took a glance before nodding.

She led her men and walked away.

A sudden shrill cry was heard from behind.

"Sister!"

Alanna stopped in her tracks but did not turn back.

The setting sun radiating into the palace, veiling a golden shimmer on the young general, her straight back reminded Priscilla of the time when Alanna taught her how to use the spear.

"Sister, I was wrong! I was wrong! Please forgive me! We're sisters! You can't kill me. I'm your sister!"

She fell on her face and crawled all the way, with tears and snot mixing. She no longer looked like the Empress Dowager of Kyrma Empire.

The woman in the combat wear still did not look back, but her eyes, which were covered in the sunset

glow, were stained with twinkles of red.

Her face tightened, and the hand holding the seal trembled slightly.

Scenes of their younger days - taking her sister to climb over walls, on trees, and play with mud but

was met with her sisters dislike, flashed in her mind.

Nevertheless, these scenes were soon replaced by images of their innocent people dying in her hands.

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

After a long time, she said in a cold voice, "The Empress Dowager Priscilla of Kyrma Empire is found

guilty beyond forgiveness for absence of virtue, going rampant and oppressing the people! She is

hereby sentenced to death!"

The sky thundered and a thunderstorm began to sound.

Priscilla stood still and stared in disbelief at the woman standing outside the palace gate.

The woman reached into her bosom and brought out a bottle of poison and laid it on the ground.

"This is poison extracted from the heptad snake. You were bitten by this type when you were younger. I

risked my life sucking the poison out for you. As a result, I was stuck in bed for three months. I almost

lost my life. Now... take this!"

With that, she left with large strides, not paying her more attention.

The scene finally came to an end.

Strangely, it was eerily quiet in the auditorium.

Natalia was feeling awkward.

Was her performance that bad?

Impossible! She had integrated all her understanding of the character into the role.

Suddenly, a burst of applause broke out.

Looking up, she saw Nathan.

He stood up from behind the monitor, with a look of disbelief, looking at Natalia excitedly.

"Great! It was awesome!"

As he spoke, the rest of the audiences pulled themselves out of the action, and then began to applaud.

"It's wonderful! Fancy acting is like that!"

"Right, I thought it was real for a minute."

"I'm moved to tears!!"

Natalia breathed a sigh of relief.

Apart from payback for the lash, her suggestion earlier to play this part stemmed from the impression left in her when she first laid eyes on the script.

She wept for sisterly feud and was regretful for the strong-willed and forbearing female general.

It was never her intention to rule the world at the end of the day!

However, things that were within reach of normal people, the most ordinary family affection and sibling harmony was, to her, unattainable.

For some reason, Natalia felt a sense of loss even though the performance was a success.

Nathan came forward and smiled, "You did great. It was refreshing and captivating!"

Jessica intentionally covered a face and forced to smile, "Director Nathan. You flatter me!"

However, Nathan did not pay much attention to her now.

She didn't even notice she was covering her face.

Instead, he stared at Natalia closely and even asked with an ingratiating smile, "Natalia, do you really like this film?"

Natalia was confused.

She didn't know why he asked her that.

She honestly nodded. "Yes, I read the script two years ago when it was first out. I liked it then."

As if he discovered treasure, Nathan rubbed his hands excitedly.

"Great to know that you like it."

Watching as the event unfolded, Jessica had a bad feeling in her stomach.

Was he trying to get Natalia to act in this film?

Chapter 58 Change the Actress?

Was it for real?

It was a production cost four hundred million dollars, and he wanted a newbie with no experience to act

in it?

Nathan must be out of his mind

Jessica believed this was impossible. Natalia was indeed great in her performance, but the way she

saw it, it was because she guided Natalia into her role.

So, she didn't give it a second thought.

But she said to Nathan with a sweet tone, "Director Nathan, you only praised my sister and forgot me."

Nathan noticed her now and said with a smile, "Jessica, you are great too. What happened to your face?"

Seeing he finally noticed her face, Jessica forced a smile.

"It doesn't matter, my sister just slapped me. It is Okay."

Natalia looked at her and smiled, "Oh, I'm sorry. I was way too immersed in the role to hold back. You can't deny that I managed to invoke stronger emotions in you. Don't you agree, sister?"

She returned the same words Jessica said to Victoria.

Jessica's face was stiffened.

At this time, Nathan finally realized that there was something wrong between the two.

The exchange of words...

He could smell the gunpowder in the air!

Nevertheless, they were biological sisters. Any personal vendetta had nothing to do with him as an outsider

So, he said with a smile, "Natalia is without experience for her first attempt in acting. Jessica, please excuse her. It's time to leave now that the audition is over. Natalia, when will you bring her over to sign

the contract?"

Natalia said with a smile, "Any time."

"Let's do it this afternoon, then. I'll give you a call later."

"Okay."

After fixing the appointment, Natalia left with Victoria first.

On the other end, a sense of doubt crept into Jessica's mind over Nathan's over enthusiasm.

Unsettled, she asked with anxiety, "Director Nathan, why did you ask my sister about the film? What are your thoughts on this?"

Nathan cast a glance at her.

To be honest, if Natalia didn't show up, Jessica was indeed the only person in the entertainment circle who was suitable for the role of Alanna Nelson.

But now it seemed that she acted well as Priscilla!

Compared with the cool and aloof character of Alanna, Jessica was better off playing Priscilla who looked weak on the outside but scheming on the inside.

Nonetheless, Nathan was not in the position to reveal many details as nothing was set in stone yet. He did not want to count his chickens before they hatched.

Thus, he let out a smile. "Nothing. Don't think too much of it. Study the script when you have the time.

Don't just set your sights on one role. Observe the inner conflict of other roles, and it'll help you in the future."

Jessica thought he meant that studying other characters would help her portray Alanna Nelson in a better way.

So she didn't think much about it and nodded.

Once everyone made their departure, Nathan went to McCathy Corporation with his laptop in one hand.

The biggest investor in this film was Annie International.

In other words, it was Archie McCathy.

Archie was having his lunch when Nathan came looking for him with his laptop.

He was busy. Usually if there were no visitors, Archie usually let Brian call takeaway and he would have lunch in the office.

So, when Nathan arrived, he saw Archie sitting on the sofa in the office, eating takeaway.

He hurriedly walked over and said with a smile, "Uncle, you are having lunch?"

Archie looked at him with a raised eyebrow and continued eating.

"Is there anything to talk about?"

"There's no rush, let's talk after you finish it."

Then holding the computer he sat down on the single sofa opposite Archie.

Archie was picky about food. After he was in Julio, besides food Mrs. Dottie cook, he only had the food from Mountain Club.

So, every day at noon, Brian sent someone to bring the food in advance.

The staff members over there would pack it in an insulated box, and when it arrived, it would be just right in color and taste.

Nathan looked at the delicious food and could not help but swallow.

His tummy rumbled.

He had been busy since early in the morning, going through several auditions in one sitting. He did not

have a bite to eat and the time was half past twelve in the afternoon!

But in front of Archie, he did not dare to be presumptuous.

Archie took another look at him and saw him staring eagerly at the dishes on the table. Saliva was on the verge of dripping out of his mouth.

Although amused, his facial expression showed no emotion. He pressed a button on his landline.

"Brian, bring a set of cutleries in."

Nathan was stunned and waved his hand, knowing what Archie wanted to do.

"It-it's okay. Uncle, I've eaten!"

"Oh, Brian, no need for the cutleries! Put them back."

Nathan swore he was only being polite.

His uncle sure took things seriously!

Nathan wept without tears.

A minute later, he suddenly understood when Brian came in with a brand new set of cutleries.

He turned to look at Archie and was greeted by a teasing smirk reflected in the latter's eyes.

Nathan took over the tableware and said, "Thank you, Uncle."

Archie was almost done but Nathan was a distant nephew after all. Although Nathan was older than

him by almost twenty years, Archie could not let him wait with an empty stomach.

Putting down the bowl and chopsticks, he took a napkin to wipe his mouth and said, "Clean up when you finish, I gotta take a break."

With that, he was about to go into the lounge.

Seeing this, Nathan quickly got up.

"Wa... wait a minute."

Archie turned his head.

Nathan swallowed the food in his mouth in a rush. Without a care for the meal, he grabbed his laptop and trod over.

"Uncle, I'm here on business."

Archie frowned. "What's wrong?"

"I want to change the actress!"

Next, Nathan put the computer on the table, clicked on the scene recorded earlier this morning, and

turned the screen toward Archie.

"I swear, I'm really not trying to be fickle-minded. It's just this actress is too superb! She has the skills

and quite a beauty too! Most importantly, she's a replica of the Alanna Nelson in my mind!"

This actress has everything but a chance. If she's signed on to Annie International and plays the

female lead in this film, I can guarantee you she'll become fame soon! She'll definitely be the most

valuable money maker under your leadership!"

Without a word, Archie fixated his gaze on the screen.

A woman in black armor carried herself with a chilling presence. Her slick movements and resolute

gaze made her come to life on the screen. It created such an impact, pulling at the audience's

heartstrings!

The end of the recording saw the screen froze at the woman's receding figure at the palace gate.

The sunset kindled on her lonesome but pine-like staunch figure. Taking her once ideals and lost family

with her, she set on her path to become a ruler!

At the end of the video, Nathan gazed at Archie with expectant eyes.

"How is it?"

Chapter 59 Anyone but Her

Archie sat back in his chair, giving Nathan a half-hearted smile.

"As I have told you, I'm only responsible for investment. I'm not involved in the cast or filming."

Nathan smiled with embarrassment.

"I know, but this is a special case!"

He swallowed a mouth of saliva, and his courage was wearing out.

Archie scoffed lazily.

"Oh? What's so special?"

"It's like this. My current thought is for Natalia to play Alanna Nelson, as she's the perfect fit. If Jessica

agrees to this arrangement, she can play Priscilla. However, erm... she might pull the funds..."

He smiled embarrassingly, but his intentions were self-explanatory.

Archie raised his eyebrows.

"You want me to invest more?"

Nathan nodded.

"All right!"

Archie pulled open the desk drawer, took out his checkbook.

Then, he wrote a check and slammed it at Nathan.

"I can invest another 50 million dollars personally with one condition, that is, Natalia is not allowed to act in the film!"

Nathan's eyes widened.

Nathan glanced at the check on the table, and then at Archie. He could not believe his own eyes.

"No, wh...why?"

He already had a plan in his mind about how to persuade Natalia to join the cast.

From today's performance, he was sure that Natalia was absolutely the best.

There were two kinds of actors, those born with innate skills and those nurtured.

The latter acquired and honed their acting skills through practicing and hard work, but for the former, they were born to be on the screen and in the spotlight.

He had been doing this for decades and could not be mistaken. Natalia was really gifted in performing art! With his polishing, the film would be a huge hit.

He couldn't figure out why Archie refused him!

Archie sat there, looking at him and sneering.

"For the actress in the leading role, you can choose anyone but her! I don't need to explain myself to you. You can leave now!"

Nathan's face was constantly changing.

He had the urge to throw a tantrum but he did not have the guts. Nathan wanted to reason, but Archie had made it clear that was it.

Finally, he got up and walked out in anger.

Nathan was halfway to the door when he realized something. He turned back and retrieved the check and his laptop before leaving.

Archie sneered, as Nathan stormed out.

Was he kidding? How can he let his woman act in the film?

What if she got injured engaging in so many fight scenes and was exposed to the weather?

On top of that, there were intimate sex and kissing scenes?

Humph!

On the other side, Natalia did not know she had been denied a chance by someone.

After lunch, she took Victoria to his office after receiving a message from Nathan.

She was about to leave after signing the contract, but Nathan looked at her with guilty and said a lot of irrelevant words.

Natalia was confused.

However, she didn't think more about it.

Now that Victoria had a job, she had to find an assistant for her.

The personnel department in the company was in a total mess. In the afternoon, she returned to the company and sorted things out.

She finally felt relieved after arranging a seemingly quick-witted and honest assistant for Victoria.

As for Stephen's case, there were some prosperous clues.

In the wake of her reminder, Stephen followed the money and find large funds deposited in his girlfriend's account.

The person who remitted money to her was none other than Stephen's mother, Archie's aunt, Bailey Wall.

What a cliché!

It called to mind a certain plot about a future mother-in-law forced her son's Cinderella girlfriend away with money.

However, logically speaking, even if his mother wanted to force his girlfriend away, or if she wanted them to become enemies and never see each other again, there was no reason to risk his son's future.

Natalia felt confused, but further questioning revealed that Stephen's mother was against him entering the entertainment business in the first place.

In Bailey's opinion, the highest achievement after a lifetime in entertainment business was just a slightly influential celebrity status.

Compared to the McCarthy family who was high above the masses, that status was basically worthless but putting Stephen at the mercy of others.

His mother intended for him to join his cousin in business, but Stephen was not interested in doing business.

Having no other alternative, Stephen's mother came up with this plan.

After listening to this, Natalia was at a loss of words.

What the hell was this?

Stephen, on the other hand, was calm and collected.

Through the phone, he said very politely that it might not be convenient to expose his mother. In other words, he could not lay bare the truth to the public. Hence, they had to find another way to solve the issue.

Natalia agreed to his idea.

When she dug deeper, she found that she had already found a new boyfriend. At that time, she probably thought she would break up with Stephen anyway, and it would be good to make some money, so she agreed to her mother's request.

Natalia soon got in touch with the girl.

Playing her cards well, Natalia obtained the edited audio and video clips before forcing her to confess publicly on Weibo that she had lied.

Natalia gave her some leeway.

She did not say she accepted money for framing, but made up lies since she was not willing to break

up.

After all, a girl who was not willing to give up on her boyfriend was much easier to be forgiven than one who framed her ex-boyfriend for money.

Of course, there were still some loose ends to pull.

Although the apology video was posted online and made public, Stephen's image had been damaged to some extent.

Nevertheless, Stephen had a major production to be released. Natalia had heard positive feedback about this drama. Stephen's praise-worthy performance should win back his good reputation.

She wrote a few pieces of public advertorial and released them through her private verified account.

As expected, the effect was satisfactory. Gradually, many people said Stephen was wronged.

Many fans voiced their grievance on behalf of Stephen. It took time for the storm to pass over completely.

After all this, Natalia knew that the follow-up would not have any problems, so she felt relieved.

Now it was time to take care of her personal business!

In the evening, it was still early when Natalia returned home.

Dinner had not been ready yet. It was not even six o'clock yet. Archie wouldn't be back for more than half an hour.

Natalia went into the kitchen and found Mrs. Dottie and several servants were busy in the kitchen.

Everyone looked at her curiously as she came in.

Natalia said, "Ignore me. I'm just looking around."

Mrs. Dottie smiled, "Madam, it is greasy in the kitchen. You'd better go out and have a seat! If you're hungry, I can pour you some soup to take the edge off. Master should be home soon."

Natalia smiled. "What are you serving tonight?"

Although Mrs. Dottie did not know why she asked, she truthfully answered.

"Braised bamboo shoots with mushrooms, fish in vinegar, diced spicy and sour lotus root, lily and lotus seed soup, dumplings with three fresh shrimp..."

Hearing the names made her mouth water.

After listening to the menu, Natalia pointed to the two dishes.

"Are these two dishes ready?"

Mrs. Dottie was stunned and then replied, "Not yet."

"All right, then I'll cook these two dishes."

As soon as she said it, Natalia changed her clothes, put on her apron and walked into the kitchen.

A group of servants, though surprised, were relieved when they heard that she was cooking for Archie.

Archie and Natalia had a close relationship, and they made a perfect couple with their outstanding

appearance. Soon, the mansion should welcome a young master!

Chapter 60 Kissing Her

The servants' hearts were gaily pleased.

They were good-looking, and surely their baby would be very cute!

Natalia did not know what they were thinking.

She was still thinking about how to mention it to Archie when he came back.

At 6:30, the black Rolls-Royce pulled into the courtyard, and Archie came back.

The servants had already served the dishes the table.

Natalia changed the clothes, obediently sitting in front of the table, waiting for him.

It was the first time that Archie saw her so lovely. He was a little surprised. He glanced at the food and

found two dishes that were different from the previous ones.

But he said nothing, pretending not to notice them.

Natalia greeted him with a smile. "You are back! Sit down and eat!"

Archie nodded, took the hot towel from the servant and wiped his hands before sitting down.

The first dish was the mushroom braised bamboo shoots made by Natalia.

These years Natalia had been taking care of herself, so she was good at cooking, but Archie was picky, she was not confident to make him satisfied.

Years of taking care of herself had hone Natalia's cooking skills, yet she was not sure whether she could please a picky eater like Archie.

The upcoming negotiation would be more hopeless if she failed to woo him with her cooking.

Archie took a piece of bamboo shoot and put it in his mouth.

Natalia looked at him and became nervous when she found him frowned.

"How is it? Is the taste... okay?"

Archie looked at her, "You made it?"

Er...

Natalia did not know whether she should admit it. What if he did not like it?

As she wanted to deny, Mrs. Dottie said with a smile, "Sir, Madam made two dishes especially for you, the dried mushroom braised bamboo shoots and sweet and sour fish!"

Mrs. Dottie sure had a mouth on her.

She had to show an embarrassing smile, "I was just trying it out. Don't eat it if you don't like it."

Then she reached out to move the two dishes away.

But no sooner had she reached out her hand than she was stopped.

Archie looked at her with smiling eyes.

"When did I say I didn't like it?"

Natalia was stunned.

He took a piece of sweet and sour fish in the bowl and had it slowly, as if he was enjoying it.

So why did you frown then?

Mrs. Dottie's recipes basically avoided the food they didn't like, so even if Natalia casually picked two of them, it would be fine.

Coincidentally, she and Archie had similar tastes.

They didn't like spicy food. Natalia preferred sweet and sour food, and Archie didn't like it or dislike it.

Since he did not reject the food, Natalia was finally relieved.

Nathan looked at her with a smile and asked, "Do you need you help?"

Natalia smiled sheepishly, "I want to discuss something with you."

"Let's talk after dinner?"

After dinner, Archie went to his study to take a phone call.

Natalia went to the kitchen and cut a plate of fruit, then went up with the fruit plate.

As soon as she entered the room, she saw him sitting behind a computer desk in what looked like a video conference.

Natalia was hesitating about whether to enter the room or not.

Then Archie looked up and waved at her.

On the screen of his computer showed an office beyond the Atlantic Ocean, where executives from the overseas branch of Mccarthy Properties were reporting to him collectively.

Natalia dared not to disturb him. He walked to the sofa and sat down, and then put the fruit plate on the

coffee table.

Having been abroad for three years, Natalia was proficient in English and French, but she still had trouble understanding the complex technical terms in the video conference.

Time passed slowly.

Bored, Natalia sat on the sofa, holding her chin with one hand. She picked up a fork and casually feasted on the fruit.

Behind the desk, Archie looked at her. Archie stared at her exquisitely red lips opening and closing.

His Adam's apple rolled.

The usually hour-long meeting ended in a tight squeeze of forty minutes.

"You said you have something to discuss with me. What is it?"

Seeing that he was done, Natalia got up in a hurry and said, "As you know, I'm taking over Star Entertainment right? The situation in the company is not good, so I want to discuss with you if I could attach the company under Annie International. You know, to share resources and something else."

The more Natalia talked, the more abashed she became.

Needless to say, Annie International didn't have to cooperate with such a small company as Star Entertainment since it had reached its current scale.

Archie was not short of her measly shares.

However, Natalia really could not think of any other better way. The company was almost in a standstill state. If there were no good resources, the future would not be prosperous.

Most importantly, no matter what happened next, she did not want to stand on the opposite of Annie International.

Therefore, it was better to cooperate with it in advance.

Archie looked at her and chuckled.

"You want my help?"

Natalia squeezed an ingratiating smile and nodded.

"Hmm...It could be done."

The man sat in his leather chair, fingered the arms, and casually asked, "How are you going to bribe me?"

Natalia was stunned.

Archie looked at her, with a smile in his dark eyes.

A deep blush crept over her face as she thought of something.

She dropped her eyes slightly and mumbled, "How can I bribe you..."

Smiling, Archie leaned closer to her and lowered his voice. "Mrs. McCarthy, if you really want to bribe me, there are many ways. I am sure you get what I mean"

The men were very close, and the clear smell was on the tip of her nose, with the heavy smell of male hormones.

With the man approaching, a fragrant cold breath lingered around her nose, carrying with it a heavy scent of testosterone.

She later thought that she must have been blinded by lust to be shamelessly giving him a peck at that moment.

Archie's pupils dilated.

Without further delay, he reeled her in the moment she pulled back.

Having lost her footing, Natalia fell into his arms. The next second, the back of her head was held down

as a passionate kiss ensued.

Archie kissed her fiercely.

It was in his nature to be distant and aloof. Natalia was taken aback, but did not realize what happened.

By the time she returned her senses, his tongue was in her mouth.

The man fiercely attacked her mouth, which was extremely inconsistent with his domineering manner.

It had been a long time.

Archie finally released her.

Natalia was panting. Her face flushed. Her clear eyes were wet, like a poor little beast. Her swollen lips

from the kiss sparkled of wet glistening.

Archie stared at her, feeling a lump on his throat. He wanted to kiss her again.

"Mrs. Mccarthy, are you seducing me?"

He muttered in a raspy voice.