

Mistaking the CEO for a Gigolo

Chapter 511

Nicole could not help but smile as well. Reaching out to touch Maya's jelly-belly tummy, she replied, "You'll be healthier when you slim down."

"Yoda said the same, and Daddy said the same thing too last time." Having mentioned Evan, Maya proceeded to question, "Mommy, when will Daddy be back?"

"..."

Nicole looked into Maya's bright eyes. She could feel her heart being ripped apart once more, and that felt really painful.

Nonetheless, she managed to suppress the pain that was throbbing in her heart and continued with her white lie, "Daddy will be back soon. When he's back, he'll definitely bring you to climb the mountain, okay?"

Maya furrowed her small brows and nodded.

In the meantime, Nina let loose a sigh out of nowhere. She muttered to herself that Nicole's statement was simply a silly attempt to coax a naive child.

If what she said was true, then why hadn't Daddy come home yet?

Nicole looked at Nina without a word as she continued to bathe Maya.

After giving them their baths, hauling them to their bedroom, and cajoling them to fall asleep, Nicole quietly crept out of their room and returned to hers.

As she sat on her own bed, unable to drift into slumber, Nicole could not help but feel distressed as she remembered the looks in Nina and Maya's eyes when they mentioned Evan just now.

Standing up and opening the doors of her closet to get her pajamas, she suddenly saw the box that she had sneaked out of Yoda's room.

Putting down the pajamas, she took the box out and returned to her bed, planning to study it properly this time.

How do I open this thing?

"Passcode. What exactly is the passcode, I wonder."

She murmured to herself as she studied the box, trying futilely to open it.

On the other side of the residence, Yoda had gone back to his lodging. When he opened his drawer to retrieve his things, he discovered, to his horror, that his box was missing.

His composure sank as his heart started beating wildly.

Who could have taken my box?

Thinking back carefully, he concluded that the box should have been taken during the time between dinner and his return to the room.

His expression was solemn, and after a brief moment of silence, a recollection of memory suddenly flashed in his mind.

He remembered bringing the four children back after their walk and recalled that Nicole had turned back to give him a very strange look.

Even though it was merely a quick glance, she had seemed suspiciously anxious. It had brought to his mind that the moment she caught him looking at her, she had quickly turned her head and left.

Something was definitely off there.

Could it be her who took the box away? Was she the culprit then?

Yoda immediately got up and walked out of his room.

Concurrently, Nicole was still fiddling with the box, unable to open it.

“That darn Yoda. What kind of otherworldly passcode has he set? Why is it so difficult to crack open this box?” Nicole muttered to herself as she attempted again and again.

As her patience ran thin, her anger flared up!

She heaved a sigh of frustration as she finally gave up and chucked the box back into the closet. Stopping to ponder, she considered that it might not be a safe place after all. Wouldn't her efforts be in vain should Yoda find out and retrieve his box back?

After pouring much thought into it, she ended up storing the box in the safest place possible within her current reach: her safe.

Taking out her pajamas, she confidently walked to the bathroom, having the conviction that the box would be secure. Soon the sound of water could be heard as she stood under the shower. From afar, her figure looked lonesome and somewhat melancholic.

She could not help but recall the scene when Evan helped her with her bath.

Closing her eyes, he seemed to be right in front of her. Reaching out her hand, she could only grasp the thin air.

If only she had known that it would end up like this, she would have asked him to bathe her a few more times.

No.

If she had known, she would stop at nothing to prevent Evan from leaving for K Nation.

Unfortunately, it was all too late. There was no such thing as what-ifs in reality.

She would wait for her four little ones to grow up. Once they had their own homes, she would go to him.

“Evan, you have to wait for me!”

...

After finishing her shower and walking out of the bathroom, she turned off the lights and lay on her bed.

As she was about to fall asleep, she suddenly sensed a slight movement in the corner of her room. Jumping out of her bed in shock, she immediately bellowed, "Who is it?"

Her question was greeted only with silence.

Straining her ears intently, she could no longer detect any more movement. Thinking that she might have heard wrongly, she proceeded to sleep.

In her drowsy and heavy-headed state, she suddenly felt someone touched her. In a sleepy daze, she asked dreamily, "Who is it?"

"Hush, you're dreaming," came the low and sensuous voice, seemingly bewitching her in a hypnotic spell.

"A dream..."

So, it was a dream.

Nicole whispered to herself. Caught in a sleepy and tired state, her eyelids felt like they weighed a ton each. Soon she drifted into her sleep once more.

The intruder stroked her cheeks with feather-light touch as his lips curled into a slight smirk. "There is a punishment for thievery, you know." His voice rang deep and mellow, soothing to the soul.

As he finished speaking, he began to personally punish her for her deed of theft.

...

The next day.

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Nicole opened her eyes. Her whole body felt like it had been run over by a steamroller during the night.

Struggling to sit up, her eyes suddenly widened in shock.

She had obviously fallen asleep in her pajamas the previous night. Why on earth was she stark naked now?

As Nicole inspected her body carefully, she realized that not only was she naked, but she was also littered with bruises here and there.

The bruised marks from last time had not completely disappeared, yet this time...

How did these marks come about? Where did they appear from?

She sat there dumbfounded and tried her best to recall what had happened last night. Yet after racking much of her brain, she could not remember.

Scanning her room meticulously inch by inch, she vaguely evoked a memory of a slight movement in her room just as she was about to fall asleep...

Could someone have sneaked in last night?

Taking a gander around, she could not pinpoint anything unusual. Everything appeared normal and nothing seemed to be out of place. Quickly, she got dressed and scoured the whole room once more, hoping to find a single sign of abnormality that could justify her suspicion.

Nothing, however, was found.

Once again such an inexplicable thing had happened. She felt like she might be going bonkers – sooner or later.

To prevent that from ever happening, some measures must be taken. A drastic, measure to be exact.

Thinking long and hard, she decided to set up a surveillance system in her own room.

Jumping immediately to that decision, she found a professional who managed to set up the entire system in just one morning.

After that, she got ready to go to her company. Before that, she opened her safe and took out the box that she had pilfered away from Yoda's room last night.

She was determined to bring the box to a professional lock-picker to crack it open. She believed she would soon find out what was hidden inside the mysterious box.

Levant Winery.

Levant stood by the window, his eyes wandered off into the distance.

After a long silence, he suddenly turned his head to look at the manager who was standing patiently by his side all the while and asked, "Do you know how to court a lady?"

Courting a lady, huh?

The manager was taken aback, and hurriedly reminded him, "Mr. Levant, usually the ladies are the ones chasing after you. Yet you have indignantly kept your distance. What brings you to come up with this sudden question?"

That's true.

In the past, there was no lack of heiresses and socialites throwing themselves at him.

Not only was he indifferent towards them all, but if left to his own devices, he would love to kick them all away. Yet today, he actually took the initiative to ask such a question.

He himself had found it incredible as well.

"Mr. Levant, who do you have in mind?"

“Nicole Lane.”

Hearing the name, the manager smiled and mused, “Mr. Levant, I have been wondering for a while which lucky lady has caught your interest. Turns out you have your eyes set upon Ms. Lane.”

“I have genuinely fallen for her. One hundred percent sincere,” Levant declared.

The manager was struck speechless by his heartfelt declaration. Are you for real?

“Go and find me a love mentor.”

A love mentor.

Since when one needs a strategist in a romantic relationship?

The manager looked at him in disbelief. Ah, whatever! After pondering for a while, he decided to concentrate on the task at hand. Whether Mr. Levant was sincere or not towards Ms. Lane was not his business. His responsibility was to search for the so-called “love mentor” to assist in the courtship of Ms. Lane as soon as possible.

With the help of an expert, Mr. Levant might achieve his goal sooner than expected!

The manager made many phone calls and put in a lot of effort in his search. Lastly, he settled on the one he felt to be the best amongst a shortlist of selected candidates who claimed to be relationship experts.

“Do you have any idea what I want you to do?”

“Nope, not really,” came the swift yet curious reply.

“From now on, your responsibility is to assist Mr. Levant to help him court the lady he is interested in as swiftly as possible. As long as you help him achieve his goal, he will reward you generously.”

Upon hearing the manager’s words, the man’s eyes lit up as his mind started to dream and fantasize about the generous rewards and piles of cash he would potentially earn off merely giving advices. It seems to be an easy task!

“Don’t worry, I’m an expert in this field. To tell you the truth, I have plenty of field experience too.”
The man could not help but boast.

“That’ll be for the best then. Let’s go. Follow me. I’ll bring you to meet Mr. Levant.”

The manager brought the man to meet Mr. Levant. Upon meeting him, Levant scrutinized him from head to toe before deciding that the man looked like a total loser.

Levant could not help but query, “Why did you find such a person?”

Sensing the discontentment in his voice, the manager quickly explained, “Mr. Levant, this man here is a well-known playboy, a man who has flirted with every possible kind of ladies, and conquered many more; he is a man well-versed in the esteemed art of seduction, the best I could find on the field.”

Levant hesitated. He still had his reservations. For assurance, he decided to give this man a test.

“So, I hear that you are best in the field.”

The man perked up upon hearing his statement. Full of confidence, he started to explain, “To court a girl, you must first put in the effort to know the girl very well. You must know her likes and her dislikes like the back of your hand. Only then will she be charmed by you, and you’ll conquer her and claim your prize.”

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Levant was speechless as he listened intently. While he had no experience in relationships, he could still sense some semblance of truth in the man’s long-winded explanation.

At the moment, he had no better solution, so he decided to keep the man at his side for now and gave him a go.

Upon hearing that Levant had decided to let him stay, the man was overjoyed.

It was totally out of his expectation that his years of accumulated experience in flirting and picking up girls would one day translate into a well-paying job.

His mind could not help but muse: Life is full of surprises indeed.

“Why don’t you fill him in about the current situation with Ms. Lane? Let him plan and come up with a strategy to help me court the lady of my dreams.”

Levant looked at the manager keenly while relaying instructions.

Strategy?

Mr. Levant can really blow a matter out of its proportion sometimes. Shouldn’t he just practice it? Why on earth does he want a strategy guide? To study in advance?

Despite his misgivings, the manager still nodded and accepted the request, “Yes, Mr. Levant.”

As the manager led the “love mentor” out of the room, a grin of joy crept across Levant’s face.

Nicole, here I come!

Meanwhile, the manager led the love expert to the next room and gave him a pen and paper. The manager briefed the latter not to worry nor rush, but rather to slowly think and write down the strategy with careful consideration – making sure to write down the most useful tricks in a courtship.

“Don’t worry. Even if I can’t do a single thing right my whole life, when it comes to relationships, I am confident there is no woman under the sun I can’t court. And that is not an exaggeration.”

The manager gave the man another visual scrutiny. Judging from his lanky body, his average appearance, and his shabby clothes, the manager secretly sighed and wondered: how good can this man be?

Then again, women loved sweet talkers.

“And you are?” the manager asked.

“The love expert, Zackery Williams at your service.”

“Huh?”

“Zackery Williams is my name.”

“Ah, that’s a good name.” The manager said politely.

Zackery gave the manager a sweet smile.

The manager could feel goosebumps all over his body. “Cut the crap and quickly write down what you’re supposed to do. After you’ve finished show it to Mr. Levant. Chop-chop!”

“Alrighty!”

Zackery spent two hours writing down all his precious experiences one by one.

After jotting it all down, coupled with the current situation with Nicole, he meticulously analyzed and wrote up a plan.

Gingerly he stood up and showed the manager the result of his hard work.

Just by merely glancing at the pages of densely-packed words, the manager could feel a headache coming up.

“Anything related to women is usually trouble. Forget it. Since I can’t understand it, you may as well show your work straight to Mr. Levant.”

Upon receiving the pages in his hands, Levant looked at them curiously. The more he looked at them the more they seemed like a script.

“Courting a lady involves acting too?” Levant queried incredulously.

“Mr. Levant, life is but a play. What I wrote for you is the most classic script used since ancient times. It will teach you the most effective dating tricks to win over Ms. Lane in the shortest time possible.”

“..”

Levant knew he was in for a headache as well. However, upon thinking of Nicole, he decided to bite the bullet and thus pored over the script carefully.

It was unthinkable that there was so much knowledge in the art of dating.

Meanwhile, on the other side.

After work, Nicole left the Lane Corporation early.

She had deliberately gone to a professional lock picker. It had taken a long time to open the box. The moment the box was pried open, she saw the content and was dumbfounded.

How could this be?

Inside the box was a note with a short line written on it: “Is it fun to be a thief?”

Darn it! Is it possible that the owner has long expected her to steal the box, hence, has stored the note inside since the beginning?

As she pondered on it, it felt unlikely.

Recalling the movement in her room last night, she concluded that the content of the box had been taken away and was replaced with the note on purpose.

Who then, is the one that did all this?

Studying the handwriting on the note, she suspected that it was the clue she needed. Tracing the handwriting to its source would lead her to find out who the culprit was.

Since the box originally belonged to Yoda, he would be the most suspicious one on the list and should be the first one to be investigated.

Putting the note away safely, she drove back to the Imperial Garden.

As soon as she entered the living room, Nicole immediately ordered the butler to call Yoda into her study room.

Witnessing Nicole's darkened expression, the butler did not dare to delay. Turning around, he briskly walked away to call for Yoda.

“Quick! Ma'am is waiting!”

As Yoda headed towards the study room, he knew the reason why he was called and what was in store for him, yet he did not panic.

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With the upcoming showdown against Nicole, he could not possibly lose.

When he arrived at the study room, he stood by respectfully beside the desk.

Nicole had a poker face on but her icy stare still sends chills down his spine.

Unexpectedly, when she was angry, her fiery aura was not to be underestimated.

“Yoda, can you write?”

Nicole, being the woman with a straightforward character, did not beat around the bush.

Yoda crooked a slight smile as he nodded.

“If that's the case, come, write me something.” Nicole motioned him to come over.

Yoda tiptoed to the desk, took the pen and paper she handed him, sat on the chair, and started writing just as she requested.

Nicole warily observed his handwriting and hand movements. He had written in graceful curves and powerful strokes in a somewhat similar fashion as Evan.

Upon closer inspection, his handwriting still differed from Evan's.

Some of the lines in his letters were awkward and slightly skewed, in stark contrast to the handwriting on the note found in the box.

Therefore, he is not the one?

Nicole pondered for a moment.

Still refusing to give up, she turned her gaze on him, trying to gauge his expression as she asked, "Yoda, have you ever lost anything before?"

Yoda's eyes sank. It was plainly obvious that she was not feeling any guilt for stealing his box.

How shameless could she be to take the initiative to ask him about it?

Seemed like he underestimated how thick-skinned she could be.

Taking out his mobile phone, he proceeded to type in two words calmly: Yes.

Her interest piqued, she asked further, "What did you lose?"

He typed: Not long ago, I've just lost a box.

Upon seeing the word "box", a sudden flash of guilt flickered in her eyes.

She clenched her fingers tightly and reminded herself not to panic since he had no evidence to prove that she had taken it. Then again, she was the one questioning him, how could she back down?

Right!

Let's continue.

She coughed to cover her awkwardness and asked cunningly, "Are there any valuables in your box? What's in it?"

A glint of complicated feelings flashed in Yoda's eyes. Since she wanted to know more, he might as well lead her to a different path.

As Yoda was typing on his mobile phone, Nicole was studying him carefully, trying to detect any slight indication of his knowledge of the paper in the box from his facial expression.

However, Yoda's already sullen look got colder and colder, and after typing for a while, he showed his phone screen to her.

Nicole took a closer look and was stunned upon glancing at what was written on the screen.

The screen read: The deed to the burnt-down house, family heirlooms and pieces of jewelry, debit cards...

Nearly choking, she read on and pondered that this seemed too exaggerated.

Finally, she could not stand it any longer and gave the desk a slam.

"Yoda, I have never met a person who lies so blatantly. Who are your ancestors to be able to pass you such valuable treasures? Also, how could a box the size of a hand palm store so many things?"

A smile flickered across Yoda's expression as he furiously typed: Ma'am knows about the palm-sized box. You must have seen it, I presumed?

"..."

Nicole's face turned dark.

Damn you Yoda! How dare you trap me?

Does he know that I took the box?

“No. I don’t know. I’m merely guessing. I’ve never seen it!”

As her heart pounded heavily, Nicole lied through her teeth.

Yoda fixed his pair of eyes on her as if he could look through her. He typed: I thought Ma’am was the one who took it.

Nicole could only look away and refuted, “No, no. I did not!”

The box you mentioned just now sounded like a treasure chest. Even if I were to take it I would never admit to it. Who could afford to compensate you for the treasure inside?

I’m afraid even the whole Imperial Garden would not be enough to pay you back!

Staring ahead uncomfortably, Nicole coughed and decided to let him go. “Go ahead with your work. Leave me be. You don’t have to copy the documents anymore.”

Yoda nodded and walked out of the study room.

Nicole stared at him as he left. She could feel that there was more to this man than met the eye.

Even though there was no evidence, she had a strong hunch that both of them would still be entangled further in the matter regarding the box.

It would be difficult to deal with him with mere cheap tricks. Seemed like she needed a more sophisticated plan.

“Just you wait, Yoda. I’ll come and get my due!”

Muttering in determination, she got up. As she was about to head downstairs, her WhatsApp notification promptly sounded. Upon opening it, she received a message from the paternity test center.

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The result of her paternity test with Zane Lane was ready.

Nicole's heart was thumping.

The paternity test result showed that she had no parent-child relationship with Zane.

No relationship?

She carefully read and re-read the test result over and over again before finally accept that Zane really was not her father.

Who then, was her biological father?

Those who were privy to this matter, besides Zane, were none other than Levant and Sylphiette. Should she force herself to keep on investigating to get to the bottom of this matter?

Her deep contemplation was broken by a sudden announcement. "Ma'am, dinner is ready. The young ones are already grumbling that they are hungry."

"Got it."

Nicole was pulled back to reality by the maid's words. She kept the test result in a safe place and walked downstairs.

Yoda had already seated the children on their respective dining chairs. They were waiting for her.

Per her habit, Nicole still prepared a set of dishes beside her for Evan before letting the children had their meal.

“Yoda, can you help me fix my tablet later? It somehow malfunctioned and I can’t use it anymore.”

Juan gave Yoda a pleading look, resulting in the latter agreeing.

Meanwhile, Nicole seemed to be spacing out as she ate her food.

She was still perturbed by the result of the paternity test. Her mind was filled with questions she currently had no answers for.

Could she be the offspring of her mother’s affair with someone else?

Why did her mother never mention anything about her biological father at all?

The more she thought about it, the more she felt that she no longer had any appetite. Immediately, she came up with a blatant excuse and withdrew from the table.

Looking at her retreating figure, Yoda had a deep furrow on his face.

After the young ones were fed, he took them out for their usual post-dinner walk.

As Nicole was sitting in a daze in her study room, a panicked butler suddenly knocked urgently on the door.

“Come in.”

The butler walked briskly up to her and addressed her respectfully, “Ma’am.”

Seeing his solemn expression, Nicole asked curiously, “Is there anything wrong?”

“Someone wants to see you,” came the reply.

“Who?”

“This is his business card.”

With just a mere glance, Nicole frowned deeply as she saw Levant’s name printed on the card.

Why did he suddenly come all the way here?

Initially, she had planned to refuse to see him. Before she could ask him to leave, she remembered that Levant might have some information on his biological father and hence changed her mind just as quickly.

“Let him in,” said Nicole in a resigned tone.

“Yes, Ma’am.”

The butler welcomed Levant in and took him to the study room.

“Ma’am is inside. Please go in.”

Remembering the relationship stratagem formulated by Zackery which he had fervently studied before he came, Levant instantly gained a boost of confidence. After checking his composure and correcting his posture, he valiantly stepped into the study room.

“Ms. Lane, pardon me for the night visit.”

Nicole looked up and sized him up. He was dressed in quite the similar state as the first time she saw him: a black high-profile suit clad on a tall and handsome figure. He still exuded the same extraordinary air of a gentleman with fine temperament.

“Please, take a seat.”

“Thank you.”

“Anything going on for you to come to visit me at such a late hour?” Nicole asked in her usual straightforward manner.

Levant remembered the advice written in the relationship stratagem, “The more you like her, the more reserved you have to be. If you lose yourself, not only will you fail to earn her affection, but you will also lose her respect.”

He coughed to break the ice before raising his brows, “I must say, Ms. Lane. I’m quite troubled by the fact that my goodwill night visit has not been rewarded with at least a cup of coffee. Is this your hospitality?”

Nicole was caught off-guard by his question. Since his reasoning made sense, she ordered the maid to serve coffee.

“Please enjoy.”

“Thank you.”

Lifting up the cup and contently sipping on the brew, Levant was thinking hard about the next step on the stratagem. After a while, he gently placed the coffee cup back on the table.

“Ms. Lane, my purpose here tonight is to bid you farewell.”

“Farewell?”

Nicole was obviously surprised by this, for she had thought that Levant had shown up to pester her.

“Yes. I shall be leaving for K Nation in a couple more days. Therefore, Ms. Lane, take good care of yourself.”

Uh, that’s quite sudden.

Nicole’s mind was in a spiral. Since Levant is about to return to K Nation, shall I take the opportunity to enquire about my biological father?

After pausing for a moment, she opened her mouth and said, “And I shall wish you a good journey and god speed.”

“Thank you.”

Right after, she followed up with a question, “How much do you know about my background?”

Levant stayed silent. The stratagem had mentioned that for one’s words to hold value, one must not give it away freely, for no one would cherish something which is easily obtained. Therefore, even though he clearly knew about her background in detail, he had to keep it to himself for now.