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Chapter 321 A Partnership

Nicole asked herself the same question countless times throughout the afternoon, but she still didn't have an answer. Finally, Whitney told Nicole that Sarah had agreed to meet in the office sometime in the afternoon. At 3.00PM, Nicole composed herself and told Whitney to tidy the office and make some tea.

However, no one arrived even at 3.30PM. Finally, they received a call that told them that Sarah's schedule had been delayed. They suggested meeting at a high-end restaurant at 4.00PM.

Nicole only had 30 minutes to spare—she would leave if no one showed up by then. Whitney was fuming—she had nearly protested when Nicole held her hand up to stop Whitney.

"Something might have happened," Nicole said composedly. Whitney pouted before she started grumbling. "You think of her too highly, Nicole.

I bet this woman is just trying to make herself seem busy. Couldn't she inform us earlier? She's already more than 30 minutes late—how dare she call us and tell us that she has no time!"

Nicole chuckled. From what I remember, Sarah is a really warm and gentle woman. I don't think she would do that. "Why don't we go ahead and take a look first?

It's not far, anyway." Nicole gathered her items and prepared to head out. Even though Whitney was still annoyed, she had no choice but to follow Nicole.

They sped over to the restaurant that Sarah had suggested. She was a celebrity, so she had booked a whole private room for themselves. Nicole asked the concierge to lead them to the appointed room once they entered the establishment. Once they walked in, they saw three women sitting inside.

Two of the women were dressed in bright colors and bold outfits. They were chatting and laughing with one another. The other woman was dressed more casually and sat in a corner with her head hung low.

Nicole immediately recognized Sarah. She looked somewhat different from when Nicole first met her a few years ago. Her features were sharp, and she looked better than

before. The woman beside her seemed really familiar, but Nicole couldn't recall where she had seen her.

"It's been a while, Sarah," Nicole uttered while taking a step forward.

The conversation between the two people came to a halt when Nicole entered the room. They turned to gaze at Nicole, and the woman sitting beside Sarah frowned when she saw Nicole. "Did you just call Sarah by her first name? Do you know her, Sarah?"

Sarah gazed at Nicole and scanned her from head to toe. "No," she uttered while raising an eyebrow. The other woman burst out in laughter. "So, you guys don't know each other, huh? This old-school way of starting a conversation by acting friendly is so outdated," the woman said.

Nicole no longer felt any shame as she had been in this line of business for a long time. So, she simply smirked in response to their sarcastic remarks. "I'm Nicole. You can call me Lisa as well."

"Oh, you're Nicole. I remember now. You're that poor lady who used to be in my class!" The woman looked up when she recalled who Nicole was. "Tsk. You've changed quite a bit," the other woman commented.

Nicole stared at Sarah for a long time before she recalled how Sarah used to be one of the wealthiest girls in class. If I remember correctly, I believe her name is Yvonne Harris. Unfortunately, she changed too much for me to recognize her, Nicole thought.

I'm here to talk to Sarah about Ann's ambassadorship." Nicole smiled before getting into the main topic. Sarah, who had been silent for a long time, finally spoke up after a while. "I remember that F&M Apparel made an announcement about terminating their agreement with you," she commented.

Nicole didn't understand why Sarah was talking about this, but she simply nodded and agreed. "Yeah. I'm no longer the head designer of F&M Apparel," she explained.

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Chapter 322 Mocking

Nicole heard someone scoffing after she finished her sentence. Puzzled, she gazed at Sarah. "Nicole, you used to be poor and immature in school, but are you still trying so hard to impress now that you're out in the workforce?" Before Nicole could say anything, Sarah began speaking to her in a sarcastic tone.

Nicole's gaze darkened. She had always assumed that she and Sarah were friends—she hadn't expected Sarah to treat her that way. Sarah had shot to fame after posting a song on the Internet.

Nicole was the one who had written the song in class while she was bored, and she had just hummed some random tone to go with it. After that, Sarah asked Nicole's permission to take the song from her, and she got famous on the Internet with this very song.

A music program invited Sarah to attend a show after she rose to fame, and the program even requested to buy the copyright of the song from her. Nicole didn't mind giving the song to Sarah as it had just been a song she wrote while she was bored.

It was this incident that shaped the person that Sarah currently was. "What do you mean by that?!"

Whitney could no longer tolerate the women's sarcastic words. Who would like to hear such harsh comments the moment they entered the room?

"Whatever I said is what I mean," Yvonne uttered. Her eyes twinkled with amusement as she gazed at both Nicole and Whitney. "Sarah is one of the hottest stars in the nation now.

If you guys really want to work with us, shouldn't you be more sincere? You should send someone who can actually talk."

"Nicole's the one who's in charge of Ann, so of course she has the right to come for this discussion!" Whitney shouted as she narrowed her eyes.

At that, Yvonne couldn't stop herself from laughing out loud. She clasped her hand over her mouth as she continued speaking. "You guys shouldn't be trying too hard.

Everyone knows that Nicole has left F&M Apparel. She's nothing at all. Ann is a partnership between F&M Apparel and the Gardner Corporation. Who do you think you are?"

The faint smile on Nicole's face remained on her face as she maintained a calm demeanor. She wasn't mad at all. If anything, she seemed like she was embracing everything that was thrown to her.

"Miss Brenner," Nicole uttered. She sounded much colder now that she was addressing Sarah in a formal tone.

"I remember the song of yours that became a hit. You told everyone that it was your song, didn't you?" Nicole said in a slow and careful tone.

Sarah's face paled as she spun her head to glare at Nicole. However, she calmed down after a while. "Yeah. I was the one who wrote the song and the lyrics. Are you planning on ruining my reputation?"

Nicole smiled. I've not seen her for a few years, and I'm surprised at how shameless she is now. She tugged her lips to form a smirk. "Fine. Since you want to lie to yourself and everyone around you, then you shouldn't blame me for what I'm about to do."

Sarah's expression changed upon hearing Nicole's words. She glared at Nicole for a long while before speaking through gritted teeth, "You're the one who got fired from F&M Apparel because you were incapable of meeting their standards.

Why are you releasing all that anger on me? Judging by the size of my fanbase, you'd be the one who would get attacked on the Internet if you were to attempt to defame me."

Nicole stood up. She had assumed that this would be a pleasant and fun partnership, but she just realized that it was all her own assumption.

"Miss Brenner, even though I've left F&M Apparel, I'm still the one in charge of Ann's partnership with the Gardner Corporation. I'm still the founder of the brand. Right now, I'm discussing this ambassadorship with you as the founder of Ann."

Nicole heard two women chuckling the moment she finished her sentence.

After the smile was wiped off Sarah's face, Sarah turned to look at Nicole. "Hey, Nicole, how do you have the guts to say such things? Ann is a collaboration between the Gardner Corporation and F&M Apparel.

Everyone knows that. I do want to be Ann's ambassador, but I've already spoken to Director Schmidt from the Gardner Corporation about this. What right do you have to talk to me about this?"

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Chapter 323 Substitute

What right do I have? I can't believe that this girl I used to consider a friend is actually such a huge idiot! "You can continue talking to Director Schmidt about it, then. Let's see if you'll get this ambassadorship in the end!"

Since Ann was so famous, there were tons of celebrities who wanted to be its ambassador. Ann was one of the latest and trendiest brands in the country, so it had definitely received a lot of attention.

Furthermore, it was the recent trend to be patriotic, so it would be ideal for one to be an ambassador of a local brand.

Sarah's expression changed when she heard how bold and confident Nicole sounded. At that moment, Sarah realized something might not be right.

However, she couldn't take back what she said, so she had no choice but to remain firm with her stance. "I didn't just obtain Ann's ambassadorship; I even had an agreement with F&M Apparel to be in next season's fashion magazine. That's how good I am!"

Nicole smiled. Even though she was no longer working in F&M Apparel, Zachary was still here. Sarah would lose her ambassadorship if Nicole just asked Zachary for a simple favor. So, Nicole pulled her phone out and called Zachary there and then, right in front of Sarah. Nicole even turned the loudspeaker on.

Zachary answered the phone instantly when he saw that it was a call from Nicole—the phone barely had a chance to ring. "What is it, Nicole? Did something happen?" The man's voice was gentle and caring.

Nicole questioned him in a direct manner. "Hey, Zach. Did F&M Apparel agree to have Sarah for next season's magazine?"

"Hold on. Let me check," Zachary uttered as the clicking sound of the keyboard sounded from the other end of the line. Soon enough, he got back to Nicole with the answer she wanted.

"Yeah. We've come to an agreement, but we haven't signed the final contract. It's just the last step left now. I heard that someone from F&M Apparel might be coming to sign the agreement tomorrow."

Nicole smiled as she looked Sarah in the eyes. "In that case, would it be okay if you guys don't sign it?" she asked slowly. Zachary responded without even questioning Nicole. "Of course. I'll immediately tell them to burn the contract."

"Thanks, Zach." Nicole ended the call after that. Both Sarah and Yvonne's faces turned pale instantly. Yvonne was the first to return to her senses, and she tugged on Sarah's arm while comforting Sarah. "Don't listen to her, Sarah.

Who does she think she is? She's no longer F&M Apparel's head designer, yet she's here acting as if she's the boss." Yvonne let out a small scoff after finishing her words. "I bet she called someone to act as President Yates. She couldn't even do better than that."

Yvonne's words seemed to make sense to Sarah, so the latter started to calm down a little. She lifted her head in an arrogant manner as she shot Nicole a disdainful gaze.

"Nicole, I thought you would've grown up a little after being in society for so many years. Are you still here playing these games? What is this? Do you find satisfaction through playing bluff?" Nicole laughed without responding to them. "Let's go, Whitney. I guess today is just a waste of time!" Then, she turned around to leave. Right then, Sarah's phone began to ring. It was a call from her manager, and she hastily picked it up. "Is anything the matter?" she asked in a quiet voice.

Everyone in the room could hear the person shouting on the other end of the line, even though Sarah's loudspeaker wasn't on. "What did you do?! Someone from F&M Apparel just called to tell me that you've been substituted!"

Nicole's footsteps came to a halt. Truth was, she hadn't expected Zachary to be so efficient. She let out a light scoff as she turned around to look at Sarah's pale face. In the end, Nicole gave Sarah a mocking look before she turned to walk out of the door with a cocky strut.

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Chapter 324 Huge Influence

Sarah hadn't expected Nicole to still have so much power after leaving F&M Apparel. "That's impossible!" Sarah uttered with a trembling voice. "I got this job from the head designer in F&M Apparel herself. She agreed to this!" Sarah cried. Her face was completely drained of color.

Kylie and Joanna had approached her previously, asking her to be the ambassador for Ann. Kylie had even agreed to have Sarah as the face for the next season of F&M Apparel's fashion magazine. While Sarah was talking to them, she could sense both Joanna and Kylie's hatred for Nicole.

That was why Sarah had the guts to be so rude and sarcastic with Nicole. Sarah thought that she could seize this opportunity to please Joanna and Kylie, but little did she know that this would happen.

"You should take some time to reflect on your own actions. You even made a post on Twitter a few days ago. Look at what you've done!

You posted a tweet before signing the agreement. How are you going to explain yourself now that F&M Apparel doesn't want you anymore?" the manager growled.

Sarah had only gained her fame from one song—the rest of her songs weren't a big hit. She only managed to maintain the amount of popularity she had through her first song and her good looks after she got plastic surgery done.

Sarah's fingers were icy cold as she clutched her phone and thought, Yeah, I immediately posted a tweet after Kylie agreed to have me, but it seems like I just complicated things now. I'm dead meat! I never expected Nicole to have such a huge influence!

Meanwhile, Nicole led Whitney out of the restaurant. Whitney was pleased that they had managed to get back at Sarah. Just the thought of Sarah's expression made Whitney happy.

Whitney smiled and held Nicole's hand. "This is her karma, Miss Nicole. Did you see her face when she picked up the call just now? I'm so glad!"

Nicole stopped in her tracks and blinked a few times. "She's only acting that way because Kylie and Joanna have contacted her before this. They probably promised her something," she said.

Whitney seemed to understand the situation after hearing Nicole's analysis. "Are you saying that Joanna and Kylie told her to do this?"

Nicole pressed her lips together to form a smile as she sneered. "The initial plan had been for us to sign the agreement in the company. Kylie and Joanna simply wanted Sarah to give me a hard time there so that I would feel ashamed in front of the other staff," she said.

At that point, Whitney realized what was going on. They had indeed agreed to meet in the company, but Sarah was the one who dug her own grave.

Sarah wanted to seem classier, which was how they ended up in the high-end restaurant. "Well, it doesn't matter. Even if we were in the company, your comeback earlier was still super amazing!"

Nicole shook her head. "If we were in the company, I wouldn't have been able to give Zachary a call. Hence, she really dug her own grave."

"Where are we going now, Miss Nicole?" Whitney asked.

"Let's head back to the company," Nicole replied. Her movements came to a halt as she seemed to recall something. Then, she turned to look at Whitney with a serious look on her face. "I might have to visit Old Mr. Benedict every day for the next few days, so I'll need you to watch over Hayden." "Don't worry about it, Miss Nicole." Whitney nodded. What Whitney truly wanted to say was, You shouldn't underestimate your child's abilities.

Someone as smart as Hayden doesn't need anyone to care for him. However, since Hayden wanted to keep this a secret from Nicole, Whitney decided that she wouldn't expose him.

On the way back, Nicole phoned someone and chatted with the person happily. After she returned to the office, she directly headed over to the Design Department.

She could hear two people laughing the moment she went in. She didn't know what they were laughing about, but they sounded extremely happy.

When they saw Nicole walking in, they immediately stopped laughing. Instead, they gazed at her with concerned looks in their eyes. "How was the discussion, Miss Lisa? Did it go well?"

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Chapter 325 Contract Termination

Nicole smiled and nodded before replying to them. "It went really well," she said. Kylie and Joanna were stunned to hear this. Did she say that it went well?

They thought that they had managed to create the impression that they didn't like Nicole when they last spoke to Sarah. It doesn't make sense! Nicole tugged her lips into a lazy smirk when she saw the looks of surprise on the two women's faces.

"I hired Alice Murphy as the ambassador. How does that sound to you guys?" Nicole asked. Joanna froze when she heard that Nicole had hired Alice as the ambassador. Alice and Sarah were on completely different levels—Alice was a celebrity who had won all sorts of acting awards.

Joanna frowned as she spoke. "Miss Lisa, I know you hope to promote the brand to the locals, and Alice is certainly a popular individual. However, her rates are extremely high, so she'll definitely exceed our budget. I believe Sarah would be a better option."

"Sarah's attitude is bad. I don't want her to tarnish the name of my brand," Nicole didn't bother to sugarcoat her words even when she saw the sincere gaze in Joanna's eyes.

Joanna might not have expected Nicole to be so biased against Sarah, so she froze for a moment before speaking. "Are you going to make your decision based on your personal opinion? You've signed a contract, anyway. We'd have to pay if we don't use Sarah."

Nicole was aware of that, but she also knew that there was a line in the contract stating that the contract could be terminated if the artist were to engage in any form of misconduct.

The artist would even have to pay the company double the amount of money. "So what? One way or another, I can't allow Sarah to be the ambassador for Ann."

Joanna's gaze darkened when she saw how stern Nicole was. If Nicole insists on this, the higher-ups in the Gardner Corporation might investigate this matter and get me to take responsibility for it.

Hence, Joanna pretended to speak in a nice tone. "Miss Lisa, why don't you compromise this time? The company isn't just going to pay for no reason, you know."

Kylie couldn't bear to listen to the conversation any longer, so she tugged on Joanna's hand. "Just ignore her. If anything happens, she can bear the consequences on her own."

Kylie had been thinking of ways to teach Nicole a lesson, and the latter so happened to cause this trouble. If Nicole insisted on terminating the contract with Sarah, the higher-ups in the Gardner Corporation were definitely going to be displeased about it.

Nicole tugged her lips into a smile. "I want you to prepare the same contract for Alice. I'll go over to sign the contract with her in a few days' time."

Joanna seemed troubled at first, but she eventually spoke in a dejected tone. "I guess I shouldn't reject your decision since you're so firm about it. However, I'll have you know that the Design Department isn't responsible for what happens in the future."

Joanna had intentionally raised her voice to make sure that everyone in the room could hear it. Most of the people there were afraid of the authorities, so they didn't want to get involved when they heard that Joanna wanted to go against the rules.

Naturally, no one wanted to make a copy of the contract. "Fine. I can do it on my own." Nicole glared at Joanna for a long while before she spoke.

Joanna scoffed as she thought to herself, Nicole is really too full of herself. She's just the founder of a tiny brand. I can't believe she's so cocky! I'd like to see what the higherups say after she signs a contract with Alice. "Fine. You were the one who created Ann, so you have full authority over it." Joanna smiled. Kylie seemed just as eager to support Nicole's decision.

"I hope you don't regret this. You're sounding really arrogant now, but you better don't go crying and begging Sarah not to terminate the contract after this!"

Nicole narrowed her eyes and stared at Kylie while smiling. "Who do you think you are? Does the Gardner Corporation need an outsider like you to comment on their marketing strategies?"

"How dare you!" Kylie's expression turned dark. She had just wanted to gloat at Nicole, but she hadn't expected Nicole to attack her in return.

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Chapter 326 Visiting Old Mr. Benedict

Nicole took a look at Kylie before taking another look at Joanna. "Don't forget what President Gardner said, Director Schmidt. She's an outsider.

You should know when to be careful while working in the Gardner Corporation. If anything related to Ann gets exposed, I'll hunt you down first." Nicole smiled and turned to leave after finishing her words.

Joanna watched as Nicole walked away, and the former felt a surge of resentment within her as she thought about what Nicole had said. She was close to losing her temper, but she had to remain calm and graceful in front of her subordinates.

Hence, she pressed her lips together and gazed at Kylie before whispering to her, "Don't get mad, Kylie. Miss Lisa has always been like that."

Kylie scoffed in response. "I know she's always been like that. Sooner or later, she's going to fall from her pedestal. She's going to fall to her death!"

Joanna didn't say anything more when she heard Kylie's angry words. Even though she didn't like Kylie that much, at least they hated the same person. That made them friends.

Once Nicole got to the office, she ordered Whitney to dig up all of Sarah's dark past and the exact time when Sarah had posted her first hit song.

Back then, Nicole had once uploaded this song on an international social media platform, but she hadn't gained a lot of acknowledgement. Hence, no one managed to find it even after Sarah took the song for herself.

When Whitney learned that they were about to make things hard for Sarah, she felt oddly motivated. She began hunting for information immediately.

Nicole had faith in Whitney's technological skills—as long as Whitney put her heart to it, she would certainly be able to find all of Sarah's dark history.

They had already wasted some time while visiting Sarah and they had to go to the Design Department after that, so it was nearly time to get off work by the time they got back to their office.

The next day was the weekend, so Nicole packed up and prepared to bring Hayden over to visit Benedict. However, after the fight she had with Olivia, she made sure to give Wendy a call to make sure that Olivia wasn't around before she brought Hayden over.

Hayden widened his eyes as he held Nicole's hand. "Mommy, am I here to visit Grandma and Great-Grandpa?" he asked puzzledly.

"Yeah." Nicole nodded. Benedict was in a critical condition, and they didn't know when he would pass away. The old man was fond of Hayden, so Nicole figured that she would bring her son over to visit since she had the time.

Anna probably heard about their visitation, so she walked out of the house to welcome them when Nicole and Hayden first arrived.

"Grandma!" Hayden called out sweetly when he saw Anna. She beamed at the young boy. "Hello, my dearest grandson!" Anna hugged Hayden and squeezed him tight before speaking to Nicole with a straight face. "Did you bring Hayden over to visit Old Mr. Benedict, Nicole?"

"Yeah. Old Mr. Benedict likes Hayden, so I thought I'd bring Hayden over to visit him," Nicole explained. Anna lowered her gaze to look at the young boy.

"Old Mr. Benedict's room smells like antiseptic. Would Hayden be okay with that?" Before Nicole could respond, Hayden answered for himself. "I don't mind. I used to be sick all the time, so I'm used to the smell of hospitals," he replied. A mixture of love and sympathy surfaced in Anna's eyes when she heard Hayden's words. "Were you a sick child in the past, Hayden?" she asked while kneeling down to meet the boy's eyes.

"Yeah. Hayden was a premature baby, so he suffered all sorts of illnesses when he was young," Nicole replied. That was also the reason Nicole hadn't hesitated when White offered to take her as his apprentice.

She figured that Hayden would be well and healthy as long as she had the necessary medical skills.

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Chapter 327 Pitiful-Looking Girl

Anna looked like she was about to say something, but she hesitated for a moment before keeping her mouth shut. Then, she sighed as she rested a hand on Nicole's shoulder. "Why don't you bring Hayden in to see Old Mr. Benedict? He's awake now and he'd be happy to see you guys," Anna said.

Nicole nodded before bringing Hayden into the house. Benedict was not lying on the bed when they visited this time. Instead, he was sitting on the couch with his head tilted to look out at the window.

No one knew what he was looking at. He was dressed in dark green pajamas, and his entire body rested against the couch. His hair looked even whiter than it did a few days ago.

"Hello, Great-grandpa," Hayden uttered in a soft voice. Benedict turned around when he heard the voice. He looked rather pale, and his lips were drained of color.

However, Benedict smiled the moment he saw Hayden. "It's my great-grandson!" Hayden walked over carefully and came to a stop in front of Benedict.

The child's round black pupils fixed themselves on the old man's face for a while before Hayden asked him a question. "Are you sick, Great-Grandpa? You look really pale." The child was direct—he stated his observations without any hesitation.

Benedict reached his hand out to pat Hayden on the head. "That's right. I'm sick, so I look rather pale now. However, I'll get better soon, so you don't have to worry about it," he said.

"Yeah. You're going to be fine, Great-grandpa. Dad is really rich, so he's going to cure you!" Hayden uttered with great certainty. Nicole felt her heart skipping a beat when she heard her son's words.

Hayden stole a glance at Nicole, and he continued speaking when he saw that she hadn't shown any significant changes in expression. "I heard Mom say that you took my grandmother as your daughter and that we're all family, Great-Grandpa."

Benedict couldn't help but laugh when he heard Hayden's words. "Yeah. Madeline is a really filial daughter. Where is she, by the way?"

Nicole clenched her fists when she heard Benedict asking about her own mother once more. She didn't know what to say. Hayden hurriedly addressed the old man's question.

"Grandma passed away before I was gone, Great-grandpa. She was sick as well. But don't worry, I'm sure you're going to get better."

Hayden observed Nicole's expression as he spoke. He knew that his mother was one of White's apprentices, and he knew that White had told his mother to stop using her healing skills.

Truth was, White didn't want Nicole to use her healing skills because he was afraid that someone would attack her since she carried the title of White's apprentice.

It wasn't his intention for Nicole to watch patients die without taking action. Things had been cleared up six months after White's passing, and White's reputation had been restored after that. Hence, there was no longer any reason for Nicole to be so secretive.

Nicole wore a rather stern expression as she gazed at Hayden and pressed her lips together. "You can stay here with your Great-grandpa, Hayden.

I'll go talk to your grandmother for a while," she said. Upon hearing that, Hayden responded with a sweet smile, "Sure. Go ahead, Mom. I'll be here with Great-grandpa; you don't have to worry about us."

Nicole nodded and went out after that. She had come to the Gardner Residence a number of times, so she was familiar with the layout of the house. She had just walked out when she heard the familiar voice of a woman.

"I know what I did was wrong, Mrs. Gardner. I'm really sorry about that, but trust me when I say that I'm truly in love with Colton." The voice sounded especially whiny and pitiful. As Nicole stepped forward, she found a pitiful-looking girl who looked like she was begging Anna for a favor.

Nicole only took one cold glance at Queenie, who was the woman before her eyes. Queenie probably hadn't expected Nicole to be there, because she froze for a short while after seeing Nicole. "I didn't know you were here too, Nicole," she uttered after a while.

A subtle frown formed on Anna's face. "Alright. Since you and Nicole are family, I guess we can just let go of the past without looking back," she uttered.

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Chapter 328 Medical Ethics

Queenie lowered her gaze as she responded, "I was out of my mind previously, Mrs. Gardner. I should've never done such a thing. I've reflected on my mistakes, so I'm here to plead for forgiveness."

Anna seemed even more displeased at Queenie's continuous attempts to seek forgiveness, so she simply waved the woman off as she took a step back. "The person you lied to is Colton. You can talk to him if you want to. If he forgives you, then I, as his mother, will agree with his decision."

There was a rather hurt look on Queenie's face for a while, but she quickly wiped it off as she put on a serious expression. "Mrs. Gardner, I heard that Old Mr. Benedict is ill, so I got a doctor to come over.

This doctor is one of the top doctors in the field of neurosurgery," Queenie uttered with her gaze lowered. There was a rather guilty expression on her face as she spoke.

Anna shot Queenie a rather suspicious gaze. After what happened at Triton Studio, Queenie had left a bad impression in Anna's mind. Presently, Queenie could sense the uneasiness in Anna's gaze, so she quickly added, "The doctor's name is Pierre Toth.

I'm sure you've heard of him." Anna's expression seemed to calm down after hearing the doctor's name. Pierre Toth was a famous neurosurgeon in the country, and Anna had intended to invite Pierre over until Colton rejected the idea. This was because Colton thought that Pierre was a rather unethical person when on the job.

Anna was still hesitating when Nicole spoke up beside her. "No."

Queenie hadn't expected Nicole to utter such a thing, so she paused her actions for a moment and looked into Nicole's eyes before questioning, "I know I might have made mistakes in the past, but Pierre Toth is a really good doctor. For the sake of Old Mr. Benedict, can't you just—"

On the other hand, Nicole was calm. She turned to look at Anna instead of maintaining eye contact with Queenie.

"I've heard of Pierre Toth in the past, Mrs. Gardner. He is pretty famous in his field, but his personality is terrible. He's a risk-taker when performing surgeries, and he often puts the blame on others when things don't go his way.

A man like him shouldn't perform the surgery for Old Mr. Benedict," Nicole explained while walking closer to Anna.

Anna frowned at Nicole's words. "Is that so?" she asked after a short pause.

"Yeah." Nicole nodded. Pierre had visited White a long time ago, and he had wanted to be White's apprentice, so he stayed around the hospital for a while. Although Nicole didn't come in much contact with him, White had told her things about Pierre. White said that Pierre was a talented and skilled man—all that Pierre lacked was some empathy toward patients.

Back then, Nicole had suspected Pierre to be the culprit for tarnishing White's reputation, but she didn't manage to find any evidence. There was no conclusion to the whole thing in the end. When Queenie heard Nicole interrupting her words, she quickly stepped forward to speak.

"The public might see Pierre as an immoral or unethical doctor, but we can all agree that his skills are top-notch. He's the best choice we have for Old Mr. Benedict's surgery!" Queenie wasn't wrong. She was familiar with Pierre's skills, and she had considered him the moment heard that Benedict was ill.

Anna, on the other hand, didn't seem too certain. Right then, Colton walked in from the door. It wasn't clear how much of the conversation he had heard, but he seemed rather displeased the moment he entered the room. "If you guys want Pierre to do the job, you might as well spend a little more effort to find one of White's apprentices."

Queenie's figure froze when she heard Colton's voice. She turned to look at him before forcing a smile onto her face. "Colton."

"Don't call me that," he growled. With his eyes narrowed, he glared at the woman before his eyes. Just the sight of her made him feel like puking. "I'm not causing you any trouble now, so what are you still doing here in the Gardner Residence?"

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Chapter 329 Hiring Alice

Queenie felt hurt to see how heartless Colton was. At the start, it was true that Queenie had approached Colton because of how rich the Gardner Family was.

However, after interacting with him for a while, she realized that she genuinely had feelings for him. Yet, the man that she had fancied for five years wasn't even willing to speak to her. At that point, Queenie felt more determined than ever—she had to succeed this time!

A hint of evil flashed across her gaze as she thought to herself, Don't blame me for being heartless, Colton. You were the one who refused to play nice.

She softened her tone of voice as she spoke. "I know that what happened previously was my mistake, Colton. I know what I did wrong. That's why I'm here to apologize. I hired Dr. Toth, and he said that he could promise at least 50% success in this surgery."

The same cold and uninterested look stayed on Colton's face, and he didn't show any sign of emotion at all. "The Gardner Family doesn't need outsiders to meddle with their business.

Leave before I shout at you," he uttered. Queenie was hurt by his words, but she no longer dared to linger around after hearing his words. In the end, she gritted her teeth and excused herself.

Anna, on the other hand, sounded rather interested in what Queenie had offered. "Queenie might have made a mistake, but if there's really a 50% chance of success, then I think we could get Pierre to come over and give it a try."

Colton knew what Anna was thinking, so he tried to comfort her. "Let's put Pierre aside for now. I've been trying to contact White's apprentices, and I'm starting to make some progress. Give me until this month, and we can consider Pierre if I don't find the apprentices.

A look of disbelief flashed across Nicole's face. How could Pierre promise a 50% success rate? Since when did he become so good at this? Judging by the sort of person he is, he's probably just lying!

However, Nicole couldn't say much in fear that she might expose herself. "Didn't you say that you had things to do? Why are you back so early?"

Anna looked at Colton curiously. She heard that Colton had something to do in the morning, as he had rushed out of the house. Yet, he was back before it was noon. "I've settled things," Colton answered dismissively.

The truth was that Wendy had called him to tell him that Nicole came over—that was why he rushed back from the company. "Well, you can talk to Nicole for a while.

I'll go play with Hayden." Anna was a thoughtful woman, so she claimed to have things to do before leaving them alone.

Colton's gaze landed on Nicole after Anna left. "Did you say that you don't want to have Sarah as the ambassador?" he asked after some contemplation.

"Yeah." Nicole nodded firmly. A slightly amused smirk formed on Colton's face as he continued to question her. "Alice Murphy is a famous award-winning actress, so it's going to exceed our budget if we hire her. Do you still want her?"

It was Nicole's turn to smirk this time. "I believe Alice's identity is a good match for Ann's standards."

Colton didn't seem to have much of an opinion. He simply nodded in agreement. "Fine. Let's go with Alice Murphy. I'll get the law department to settle Sarah's termination fees."

"There's no need for that," Nicole uttered abruptly.

Colton froze for a moment. He seemed to understand the situation when he saw the confident smile on Nicole's face. "Do you have a plan of your own?" he asked while narrowing his eyes.

"The company won't have to pay a single cent. Instead, we'll be able to get Sarah to pay, and this sum will contribute to the funds needed to hire Alice," Nicole replied.

Nicole and Sarah never had any conflict in the past, but it was Sarah who had been too condescending toward Nicole. Sarah had made things tense between both of them, so Nicole figured that she would teach Sarah a lesson.

When Colton saw how confident Nicole looked, he no longer felt concerned or worried about the situation. Nicole probably has her own way of settling this.

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Chapter 330 Plagiarized Song

"We'll do as you say, then. If there's anything you can't handle, you can always let me know. I'll deal with it for you," Colton offered in a gentle tone.

Nicole felt rather uneasy to see the warm expression on his face, so she took a few steps back before nodding in agreement. "Alright. Thank you, President Gardner."

A while later, Anna brought Hayden out of Benedict's room as Benedict wanted to take a nap. Anna had intended to get Nicole to stay for dinner, but Nicole rejected the offer as she claimed that she had other matters to deal with at home. Then, she brought Hayden back to the villa.

Once they got home, Nicole found that Whitney had already dug up all of Sarah's dark history. It wasn't just her music copyright issue that they found; they also gathered some videos of Sarah engaging in immoral activities for the sake of more fame and sponsorships.

Nicole was certain that Sarah's reputation would be ruined if they uploaded these videos. However, Nicole didn't want to be so harsh with Sarah just yet. After all, Sarah had only uttered those words after Kylie and Joanna convinced her to do so.

So, Nicole told Whitney to prepare a comparison of her original song and Sarah's version of it before uploading it to the Internet. Sarah was one of the new trending artists who was gaining more followers each day, so the post gained a lot of attention even before Whitney tried to promote it to more people.

This was part of Sarah's dark past, and many netizens started blasting her harsh comments after they saw the video. They scolded her before they even verified the information.

When a few news and entertainment accounts saw this post, they reposted it onto their sites. All that they needed was more public engagement, so they didn't mind using Sarah's name as a means of gaining more attention on their accounts.

Soon enough, the news spread like wildfire and turned into one of the trending searches on the Internet. Sarah began to panic on her end. Her manager had already been furious to find out that she had ruined her job opportunity with F&M Apparel. Now that Sarah was involved in another controversy, her manager was close to losing her mind.

"Didn't you say that you were the one who wrote this song?" she shouted at Sarah.

When Sarah saw how legitimate the evidence on the Internet looked, she couldn't seem to explain herself. "I... I didn't..."

Her manager brushed her off angrily. "Stop explaining yourself. I just want you to tell me if you were the one who wrote this song!"

"I..." Sarah seemed rather troubled. She had intended to claim that she was the one who wrote the song, but her manager was an experienced woman.

Through Sarah's hesitant tone, her manager could tell that Sarah had something to hide. "You've already fallen into a burning pit of fire, Sarah. How do you expect your company to save your reputation if you're not going to be honest with us?" her manager uttered.

Sarah finally spoke up when she understood how critical the situation was. "It's true. I didn't write it. My classmate wrote it and gave me permission to sing it."

The manager pressed a palm against her forehead. She shut her eyes as she felt her limbs turning weak. I knew it, she thought. "Did you ask to purchase the song from her? Did you pay her anything?!" the manager asked in a shaky voice.

"I did, but she didn't want anything from me." Sarah had no choice but to be honest when she saw how mad her manager was.

"Are you saying that it was just a verbal agreement?" The manager knew that things were about to get out of hand this time. The verbal agreement between Sarah and Nicole wasn't the issue—the issue was that Sarah had marketed herself as an independent and talented woman who wrote her own songs.

Now, even if her classmate had once agreed to give her the song, the public would still find out that Sarah wasn't the one who wrote the song.

In that case, Sarah's reputation would be tarnished. She would have to lose all her recent contracts and ambassadorships, and she would have to pay tons and tons of compensation fees.

"You idiot!" the manager cried.

Sarah hesitated for a moment before she realized something. "I know who posted this online. I'll look for her!" Nicole has to be the one who posted it after our fight in the restaurant the other day. She clenched her fists as she thought, Nicole!

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