

Chapter 96 Appreciation Banquet

"Please, come in."

"Rhonda, your office is quite tricky to locate."

"Dr. Coyle, what brings you here?" Rhonda stood up and prepared a cup of tea for Robert.

"Mr. Hawkins and I are friends. I came to visit him and thought I'd stop by to see you as well."

Robert sipped his tea and said, "Rhonda, I have a question for you."

"What's your question?"

Robert initially wanted to ask if Rhonda had been a child from the orphanage, but he considered it impolite to ask directly.

Instead, he posed another question. "What do your parents do?"

"Why the sudden interest in my parents?" Rhonda smiled.

"Just curious. I didn't see your parents when your grandmother Nora was in the hospital last time."

"Well, my parents passed away when I was very young. My father had an accident at a construction site, and my mother died from complications during childbirth with my brother."

"Oh, I see." After pondering for a moment, Robert asked, "Did you ever fall into the water as a child?"

Rhonda didn't understand what Robert meant. She shook her head and said, "I had dreamed of falling into the water. Why are your questions so strange today?"

"Nothing. I mentioned before that I had a girlfriend who had a twin sister. She was abducted as a child."

"Abducted?"

"Yes, she was likely rescued while passing through customs and then sent to an orphanage. Unfortunately, the orphanage staff reported that she drowned shortly after arriving."

"How tragic!"

"Yes, indeed." Seeing Rhonda's lack of reaction, Robert thought he might be overthinking things.

He stood up and was about to leave when Cristina knocked on the door and came in. "Did I hurt you in the hallway earlier? I'm genuinely sorry. I didn't intend for that to happen." Cristina apologized to Robert.

"Be careful. Don't do it next time." Robert displayed no respect for Cristina.

"I truly didn't intend to."

"Did I accuse you of doing it on purpose?" Robert pushed Cristina aside and left the office.

Rhonda followed him out as well.

Cristina watched Rhonda escort Robert to the elevator, chatting and laughing, then waved goodbye to him.

Cristina's eyes burned with fury.

Two days passed.

Eliam sent messages to Rhonda daily, informing her that he had taken care of Leonard and sharing his everyday life with her.

However, due to what Diana had told her, Rhonda felt upset and treated Eliam somewhat coldly.

The previous night, Eliam sensed that something was amiss with Rhonda. After persistent questioning, Rhonda revealed what Diana had told her.



Eliam was honest and admitted that he asked someone from the police to bail out the scarred man, but it was not to protect Diana. Instead, it was because he was facing his own problems.

Rhonda, however, didn't believe him.

In the morning, upon arriving at the company, Rhonda saw Vanessa waiting for her at the office door.

"Aunt, what brings you here?" Rhonda ushered Vanessa into the office.

"Don't call me aunt. I don't deserve it," Vanessa expressed with contempt.

"What can I help you with, Mrs. Leslie?"

"I have something to discuss regarding you and Eliam. Technically, your marriage to Eliam was arranged by Richard, and we shouldn't interfere. However, as an elder to Eliam, I advise you to be realistic about your situation. Are you not aware of your own place? Aside from your decent looks, what makes you think you deserve Eliam? I truly cannot fathom what Richard was thinking. How could he select a country bumpkin like you for Eliam?"

"Mrs. Leslie, I admit that I come from a humble background, but that was given to me by my parents, and I had no say in it. Aside from that, I don't believe I am undeserving of Eliam."

"Hah, how laughable. It appears you have an inflated sense of self-worth. Are you just desperate to climb the social ladder? I'm telling you, I'm speaking with you out of respect. If I went straight to Mr. Hawkins, do you believe I could have you removed today?"

"I do believe it." Rhonda had no doubt that Vanessa was capable of such a malicious act.

"Does that not frighten you?" Vanessa asked.

"Yes, but does it work?"

Vanessa didn't anticipate Rhonda being so resilient, given her outwardly fragile appearance. "So you intend to fight me to the bitter end?" Vanessa stood up and declared, "We shall see."



After Vanessa stormed out angrily, Margret called Rhonda to inform her about a company appreciation event that evening. All Consulting Department members were required to attend, as it was an excellent opportunity to network and acquire new clients.

It went without saying that a banquet hosted by Eden Accounting would be organized to the highest standard. Eden would be in attendance that night, making the event particularly grand.

Rhonda wore a khaki long dress ensemble, a gift from Eliam before he left. He claimed he had received a 90% discount on the dress, costing less than two thousand.

However, when Rhonda discovered the price tag Eliam had secretly discarded, it was actually over one hundred and twenty thousand.

Regardless, she had to concede that the dress truly accentuated her demeanor.

While Rhonda was naturally a gentle woman, the outfit showcased her more capable side.

Rich people gathered at the appreciation banquet.

Fiona attended alongside her father and sister, Alivia Stiller.

Alivia was a year younger than Fiona but appeared to possess superior social and conversational skills at the event.

Soon after, the four Leslie family members arrived with a somber demeanor.

Charlton and his wife were accompanied by Steven and Diana.

That day, Diana wore a golden fishtail evening gown and styled her brown wavy hair. She resembled a fairytale mermaid princess, ethereal and stunning.

Rhonda had to acknowledge Diana's beauty. From a distance, she observed Alivia chatting warmly with the Leslie siblings.

After some time, the Coyle family members entered the scene.

Michael and his wife escorted Robert, but Jennifer was nowhere to be found.

As soon as Robert arrived, Alivia noticed him. She approached with a glass of wine, intending to greet Robert.

However, she didn't anticipate Robert walking past her and heading directly toward Rhonda. "You look stunning today," Robert complimented.

"Thank you," Rhonda replied, blushing slightly. "It seemed that woman wanted to greet you just now."

"Really? I only noticed you and didn't see anyone attempting to greet me."

Rhonda's cheeks flushed with embarrassment. Simultaneously, she sensed a hostile gaze directed at her.

She glanced to the side and spotted Alivia approaching, accompanied by Diana. "Are you Rhonda Horton?" Alivia looked at Rhonda arrogantly.

"Yes, I am."

Alivia raised her hand and splashed a glass of wine onto Rhonda's face. "Who do you think you are? You're just a country bumpkin, and you want to be a part of high society?"

Rhonda's mind went blank momentarily, unsure how she had provoked Alivia.

Robert, who stood beside her, quickly grabbed a tissue and wiped Rhonda's face.

"Don't wipe her face!" Alivia said angrily.

Chapter 97 Mrs. Coyle

Alivia's loud voice drew the attention of all the guests.

The first to approach was Fiona. "What's going on here?" Fiona also took out a tissue to help Rhonda with the wine stains on her clothing.

"I have no idea." Rhonda was also confused.

As more people began to gather, Alivia's eyes welled up with tears, making her appear as if she had been severely wronged.

"Is it so terrible for me to teach Rhonda a lesson when she tries to seduce my fiancé?"

"Well, don't get upset over a nobody," Diana chimed in, siding with Alivia.

"Who is your fiancé? We've only met once. I never agreed to anything," Robert retorted, visibly angry at the accusation.

"Robert, how could you say that?" Robert's mother intervened, patting Alivia's shoulder. "Alivia, calm down. I'll take care of this."

"Thank you, Mrs. Coyle." Alivia wiped her tears and smiled through tears.

Mrs. Coyle escorted Rhonda and Robert to a VIP lounge.

"Robert, leave for now and come back later."

Mrs. Coyle was well-maintained and appeared to be in her early forties, despite being around fifty.

With some reluctance, Robert eventually left.

Mrs. Coyle called Rhonda in front of her, scrutinizing her from head to toe. Suddenly, she grinned. "Yes, you indeed resemble her. No wonder Robert is so captivated by you. But regardless of how much you look like her, you aren't her in the end. So, you'd better keep your distance from my son. Do you understand?"



"Mrs. Coyle, I didn't intentionally get close to your son."

"Really?" Mrs. Coyle's expression turned cold. "So you're implying that my son is the one pursuing you, correct?"

"I didn't mean that. Dr. Coyle and I aren't what you think. I'm merely an ordinary friend of his."

"Ordinary friend? I hope you are just ordinary friends, but he's actually rejecting a marriage arranged by our family because of you. How can you claim to be merely ordinary friends?"

"I don't know what he thinks, but I genuinely have no ulterior motives towards Dr. Coyle."

Mrs. Coyle, though still reasonable, didn't believe Rhonda was lying.

"In that case, you'd better stay away from my son, because your face will make him lose his mind."

"I'm an employee of Eden Accounting. The company requested my presence at tonight's appreciation banquet."

"I'm not referring to tonight, but from this point on, I hope you'll willingly sever all contact with him. Can you do that?"

Rhonda felt humiliated. "Mrs. Coyle, as I've said, I'm just an ordinary friend of Dr. Coyle. You can ask your son to cut off all contact with me, but you have no right to deprive me of my social rights."

Mrs. Coyle was stunned by Rhonda's neither humble nor pushy attitude.

"Good, very good." Mrs. Coyle stood up and slapped Rhonda across the face.

"I've encountered many people like you. You'd do anything to marry a wealthy man. I even suspect that you've had plastic surgery to look the way you do."

"Mom, what are you doing?" Robert burst through the door, unable to contain himself any longer.

He immediately noticed the swelling on Rhonda's face. "Mom, how could



you hit her?"

"What's wrong with me hitting her?" Mrs. Coyle was furious. It was the first time her son had raised his voice at her.

"I'm sorry, Rhonda. Let me take you home." Robert then took Rhonda's hand and started to leave.

"I can walk on my own. Don't trouble yourself." Rhonda shook off his hand and exited the room.

As Robert was about to follow her, Mrs. Coyle stopped him, "Don't contact her again."

"Why? I like her, and I want to pursue her." Robert was also angry.

"No, you must marry Alivia now. Her father has agreed to invest in Glory Games. If you back out now, all our previous efforts will be in vain, understand?" Mrs. Coyle stated firmly.

"Mom, my marriage isn't a business, and my love isn't either. Are there any other families you are considering, apart from the Stillers?"

"Charlton has shut down all the routes for Glory Games. We're alone in this, and only the Stillers are willing to lend a hand."

"But wasn't it you who initiated contact with the Leslie family? You said you'd emigrate and sell the company. Why change your mind now?" Robert had never been involved in business matters, so he was unfamiliar with the details.

"How could we have known Charlton would be so cunning? It's our fault for giving him the opportunity to execute his plan. At first, we intended to sell a portion of our shares and start a new company overseas. We didn't expect the Leslie family to secretly conspire with other Glory Games shareholders, attempting a complete takeover. That's the accomplishment your father has devoted half his life to."

"That's your concern. It doesn't involve me," Robert retorted.

"You're a part of the Coyle family. How can it not concern you?"

"Did you consult me before deciding to sell the company? Did you

discuss collaborating with the Leslie family with me? Now that you've been deceived and want to use my marriage to remedy it, I don't agree!" After saying that, Robert slammed the door behind him and left.

Rhonda left the venue alone. As she walked out, she saw Eden and Margret arriving.

But they didn't meet each other. Rhonda sent a message to tell Margret that she would leave the banquet.

Back home, Rhonda received a video call from Eliam.

"Are you asleep?" Dressed in a suit, Eliam sat in a meeting room. He should be calling Rhonda before the meeting.

"No."

"What happened to your face?" Eliam noticed something was wrong. Her eyes indicated she had been crying, and her face seemed to have been slapped.

"I'm fine. If there's nothing else, I'll hang up." Rhonda could no longer hold back her tears. If he continued asking, she might break down and cry.

"Get to bed early. Remember to drink a glass of warm milk before sleeping. I stocked the fridge with plenty before I left."

"I saw them."

"Heat it before drinking. Cold milk isn't good for you."

"I know. You're so nagging."

"Since I'm not with you, you have to take good care of yourself."

"Okay."

"No matter what happens, wait for me to get back."

After ending the call, the senior executives entered one by one. Everyone sensed the tense atmosphere in the room.

They glanced at their boss, Giulio, whose face was icy cold.



So, they were too frightened to say anything.

After enduring for half an hour, Eiam finally dismissed the meeting.

He took out his phone and called David, asking him to investigate where Rhonda had gone and whom she had met that night.

Robert left the banquet after exiting the room.

After pondering the entire night, he decided he should inform Eden about Rhonda.

So, he called Eden at midnight.

"Who do you think resembles Sally?" Startled, Eden quickly sat up in bed.

"Rhonda from your company. She and Sally look like twins. They're incredibly similar."

