

Spoiled 1401

Chapter 1401: Proven Plagiarism

After Florienna Ellis finished speaking, the comments in the live-stream turned into a unified front, pointing the blame directly at Charlotte Thompson.

It seemed that the accusation of Charlotte plagiarizing had already been confirmed!

"Where are those people who were saying it was all a deliberate publicity stunt? Why aren't they speaking up now?"

"Oh my God, how can there be someone so shameless? I used to admire Charlotte Thompson so much, but I didn't expect her to be this despicable!"

"No wonder Riley Group has declined so much recently. It seems this all started after Charlotte Thompson joined their company, right?"

"What kind of benefits can a designer who only plagiarizes bring to a company? But it's because Justin Battleson protects her that she's been able to act so arrogantly until now."

"A woman this shameless is completely unworthy of Mr. Battleson! How does Charlotte Thompson have the audacity to call herself a designer?"

The frenzied flood of comments in the live-stream almost made Charlotte's eyes sting and turn red.

She set her phone aside, rubbed her temples, attempting to relieve her current fatigue.

While Florienna Ellis had gone live to respond to the online accusations, ultimately, it was only Florienna who had spoken out.

To some netizens, it was still just one-sided testimony from Florienna, so there were still people choosing to support Charlotte.

After all, Charlotte was already internationally renowned as the designer Joy; there was no need for her to suddenly plagiarize an ordinary designer.

For now, the mixed opinions from strangers filled the comments section, but most people were waiting for Charlotte to make her response.

Charlotte's side, however, remained completely silent.

Conversely, the Worsen brand immediately pulled their new teaser trailer released earlier that afternoon and announced they'd be conducting a joint investigation of the matter with Riley Group.

The actions taken by Worsen brand seemed to suggest that they had quietly made their choice.

"Does Worsen have any updates?" Charlotte asked curiously, glancing at Justin Battleson as he hung up the phone.

"Though they've made a public statement about investigating the issue, the head of Worsen brand has already reached out to me to initiate termination talks. Before long, news of the termination will likely be officially announced."

Justin said this with an indifferent expression.

It seemed that this public backlash and forced contract termination were, to Justin, nothing more than trivial matters.

"Once Worsen brand announces the termination, it'll probably cement the idea that I plagiarized," Charlotte remarked lazily, leaning into the sofa with an apathetic tone.

Just then, there was a knock on the door to the study.

When Charlotte looked up, she saw several children rushing in one after another, their faces filled with concern.

"Mommy, the news online is saying you plagiarized. What's going on?" Grace Thompson was the first to reach Charlotte, her tone riddled with urgency.

"Yeah, yeah, and who's this Florienna Ellis person anyway?"

"She said she's a designer at Daddy's company. What's really going on here?"

The barrage of questions from the children left Charlotte momentarily unsure of where to begin her explanation.

But seeing the concern on their faces, Charlotte offered them a comforting smile.

"Don't worry, your Daddy and I already have a plan to handle this properly. You don't need to be anxious about it."

"But..." Grace hesitated, her words trailing off.

Chapter 1402: It's Not Time Yet

"Don't worry, my sweethearts. Mommy has faced situations like this before, hasn't she? And every time, hasn't Mommy handled it perfectly?"

Hearing Charlotte Thompson's words, Hank Thompson's expression softened slightly.

He then crossed his arms and let out a heavy snort. "I knew it! Mommy must have been wronged. Mommy is amazing—how could she ever do something like plagiarizing someone else's work?"

"Mommy, you should clear this up quickly, or it'll affect your reputation," Jack Thompson urged Charlotte.

The other children chimed in as well, but Charlotte shook her head in response.

"Now's not the right time," she said calmly.

Though the children were puzzled, they trusted Charlotte completely.

Still, as they looked at the hateful comments online, they couldn't help feeling annoyed.

"But the things those people are saying online are really mean!" Olivia Thompson said softly, her face showing clear frustration.

Charlotte's gaze softened slightly as she spoke, "Mommy has told you before—don't bother looking at useless things online, remember?"

"But this is about you, Mommy—how could we not look?" Chad Thompson piped up in his childish voice.

"Exactly, Mommy," Hank echoed with nods of agreement.

"Those irrelevant comments aren't worth your time. Just wait for Mommy to clear things up and teach them an unforgettable lesson—how does that sound?" Charlotte said with a smile, looking at her children, while making a subtle gesture with her palm.

The children exchanged glances and then nodded unanimously at her.

"Mommy, you have to clear things up soon, so those people will stop being so arrogant!"

"Yes, and it has to be a statement that's exceptionally noticeable—make them realize who the real villain truly is!"

Chad puffed out his cheeks angrily and waved his fists in the air, as if imaginatively fighting back against the people leaving malicious comments online.

"Alright, my sweethearts. Mommy and Daddy will handle this, so you don't need to worry. Now it's time for you to head to bed like good kids," Charlotte said.

She gestured toward the clock on the table. The children nodded repeatedly, and under Cyrus Thompson's lead, they obediently lined up and walked back to the children's room.

After Charlotte tucked the children in and checked the updates online, she discovered a surprising new development.

Charlotte had yet to issue a clarification, while Florienna Ellis's words remained just one person's account. However, someone had now actively stepped forward to support Florienna.

That person was none other than Teddy Carter.

Florienna's sudden live stream might have caught some of the online audience off guard, as many were unfamiliar with her.

But Teddy was different. He was a renowned designer who had received awards and had several signature works to his name.

Additionally, someone who held the position of Design Team Leader at Riley Group was certainly not the kind of ordinary designer who could be casually hired for the role.

So, when Teddy announced his support, the internet erupted in shock.

First, he revealed that he and Florienna Ellis were both designers at Riley Group. Moreover, for this matter, he was appearing as Florienna's team leader.

In truth, Teddy had wanted to publicly disclose his romantic relationship with Florienna, yet she had always refused, so he didn't push the issue.

In Teddy's remarks, he affirmed Florienna's previous statements.

Charlotte Thompson did, indeed, bully Florienna in the workplace.

Chapter 1403: Public Relations

Teddy Carter also revealed that in the previous seasonal launch by Riley Group, there was originally a design by Florienna Ellis included.

However, when it finally hit the market, Florienna's design was conspicuously left out, making it clear she was deliberately targeted.

Teddy's remarks, coupled with Florienna's heartfelt and tearful plea in front of the camera, instantly pushed the online news and public opinion to its peak.

Teddy stared at his phone, scrolling through the trending topics, wiping the cold sweat from his palms. Yet there was still no reply from Florienna, which only made him more anxious.

"Nina, is something wrong on your end? Why haven't you replied to my messages?"

Teddy stared fixedly at the phone screen, afraid of missing even a single notification.

But after waiting for a long time, apart from the escalating verbal battles online, there was still no news from Florienna.

She must be upset after seeing all those nasty comments online, which is why she isn't responding. What should he do now?

How could an ordinary person possibly withstand such baseless attacks and online violence?

The more Teddy thought about it, the more worried he became. Eventually, he decided to drive straight to Florienna's apartment.

He figured he could comfort her in person and spend some time keeping her company.

Meanwhile, in her apartment, Florienna sat on the sofa after ending her live stream, gritting her teeth in anger as she scrolled through the online posts.

"How are there still people speaking up for that bitch Charlotte Thompson?!"

She had tried calling George Robbins earlier, but there was still no response from him.

This only made Florienna's expression even darker.

Suddenly, the noise at the door brought her out of her anger-filled thoughts.

Could it be a break-in? Could Charlotte have sent someone to deal with her?

Various thoughts sprang to her mind, leaving her both terrified and on edge. She took a few steps back but quickly saw who it was.

She hadn't expected Teddy to come over, and seeing him right now only added to her frustration even as she let out a sigh of relief.

"Why are you here?" Florienna asked impatiently.

"Nina, I noticed you weren't replying to my messages, so I thought I'd come check on you..."

Teddy nervously rubbed his palms together, raising his head to look at Florienna's pale face, which was still recovering from her earlier fright.

Seeing her like this stabbed at Teddy's heart.

He thought she was scared and overwhelmed by the online harassment.

"Why are you here? I just want to be alone for a while," Florienna responded stiffly, already thinking of ways to get Teddy to leave.

She really didn't have the energy to play along with him right now.

Teddy pressed his hand against the door, speaking sincerely, "Nina, I know you're feeling terrible right now, but I just want to stay with you for a little while, okay?"

Seeing his persistence like a clingy pest, Florienna didn't have the heart to say more and reluctantly opened the door to let him in.

This only solidified Teddy's determination.

Florienna's lack of response was only because she was in a bad mood, not because there was something wrong with their relationship.

"I was originally thinking that once all this blows over, we'd finally go public with our relationship at the company. Who would've thought something like this would happen?"

Teddy sat down beside Florienna, speaking as if deeply aggrieved, "If I'd known, we should've just gone public earlier. Don't you think so, Nina?"

These remarks earned him a dramatic eye roll from Florienna.

Go public with him? She'd rather die.

Florienna wasn't a fool. How could she ever go public with him? Especially when she was still having an affair with George!

She could only dodge the topic, saying, "I'm feeling really overwhelmed right now. I don't want to think about these things. Let's talk about it later."

Chapter 1404: He was plagiarized

At that moment, Florienna Ellis's phone rang at the perfect timing.

Noticing the name displayed on the screen, Florienna's expression shifted subtly. She hurriedly stood up and walked to the side to take the call, her back turned to Teddy Carter.

Teddy shook his head helplessly. What he had just said truly felt a bit inappropriate now.

He glanced at Florienna's cluttered desk and thought to tidy it up somewhat.

He discovered it was filled with drafts for fashion designs.

He hadn't expected Florienna to be working so hard nowadays, even reviewing design drafts at home.

But the designs—why did they look so familiar?

Instinctively, Teddy furrowed his brow and began carefully examining the sketches buried at the bottom.

An indescribable unease kept surging from his chest.

These were not just familiar—they were unmistakably his own sketches!

Designs he had once painstakingly created for a fashion show, only to have the plans mysteriously disappear.

Back then, he was so distraught he nearly broke down. Who would have thought they'd end up here with Florienna?

The more Teddy thought about it, the more something seemed off. These sketches had clearly been altered.

Not drastically, but the accessories had been tweaked and much of the luxury branding elements were removed, transforming the originally high-end designs into ones more approachable and grounded.

Overall, they retained their elegance and sophistication, almost resembling knock-offs of a luxury brand.

Could Florienna be connected to the disappearance of his designs?

With these thoughts swirling, Teddy pulled out his phone, nerves fraying, and opened Florienna's online store.

The shop had excellent sales and a large following. Although reviews were mixed, most of them were overwhelmingly positive.

"This store's clothing designs are truly amazing—not inferior to those of luxury brands. Wearing them makes you feel like you're walking in a fashion week show."

"I absolutely love this store's designs. When I wear them, I feel like a modern city woman. It fulfills my little vanity in some way, and the prices are perfect too."

"The quality isn't great. After a few washes, the clothes can't really be worn anymore, but the designs are brilliant. I'll continue to follow this shop."

All these positive reviews centered around two dresses with the highest sales.

And when Teddy saw the silhouettes of these two dresses, his pupils trembled uncontrollably.

These were unmistakably his designs!

How could they end up in Florienna's store?

Moreover, they were selling incredibly well, while he, the original designer, had remained entirely unaware.

His mind became a chaotic mess, replaying everything that had happened before. Could it really be true that Florienna had done something so reprehensible?

No, it was impossible, absolutely impossible!

Florienna couldn't possibly commit such a betrayal!

There must be some kind of misunderstanding, something left unexplained.

At that moment, Florienna finished her call and emerged from the bathroom.

She froze when she spotted the designs in Teddy's hand, her face visibly turning uneasy.

"What are you looking at?" Florienna's tone betrayed a trace of panic as she rushed forward.

"Nothing, the drafts were just blown onto the floor by the wind, so I thought to help you tidy them up."

Teddy calmly placed the design drafts back where they belonged, his heart still in turmoil. He couldn't bring himself to believe that Florienna would do something as disappointing as plagiarism.

He just wanted an explanation.

Seeing that he showed no particular reaction, Florienna's heart eased a little. She walked over, gathered up the drafts, and locked them securely in a cabinet.

Only then did she straighten up, preparing to leave. Her face was expressionless as she looked at Teddy sitting on the couch. "I have something I need to do. If you don't have anything else, you should probably head out."

Chapter 1405: Enjoying the Scandal

Teddy Carter's mind was in utter chaos. Wanting some peace to think things through, he decided to leave Florienna Ellis's apartment for now.

On the way back, though, the more he thought about it, the more suffocated he felt. In the end, he couldn't even focus on other things—eating, sleeping, or working—all done absentmindedly.

It was as if he had fallen under a spell, wandering around like a soul lost in another realm.

After an extended period of silence, Teddy Carter finally made up his mind. He needed to confront Florienna Ellis face-to-face and get to the bottom of this!

He demanded that she give him a reasonable explanation.

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As the saying goes, when it rains, it pours. After Charlotte Thompson's plagiarism scandal came to light, the internet exploded with gossip as paparazzi media frantically dug up dirt on Charlotte.

The most striking revelation was that elements of plagiarism had been found in several collaborations tied to XTZ as well.

Overnight, netizens began sharing design drafts, indeed exposing a significant number of plagiarized aspects.

However, this instance of plagiarism didn't involve Florienna Ellis but rather some lesser-known designers.

Charlotte Thompson became a punching bag for critics heavily condemning her plagiarism scandal, and the online crowd didn't seem intent on sparing her personal life either.

Previously, some rumors from within Riley Group started resurfacing at this opportune moment.

Within just a few short hours, Charlotte Thompson had essentially become the internet's most reviled figure.

The once-recovering stock price of Riley Group also plummeted in reaction to Charlotte's scandal, sinking to an unprecedented low with no sign of recovery.

Initially, when Florienna's plagiarism matter had first gone public, a number of designers stood by Charlotte's side, helping to clear her name against accusations of plagiarism.

After all, many of them had worked collaboratively with Charlotte and genuinely recognized her professional abilities.

But as the momentum of public opinion grew uncontrollably, those designers who originally supported her opted to retreat into silence to avoid getting themselves entangled.

In the end, the only person still supporting Charlotte on the internet was Annie Anne.

Annie Anne's actions, of course, didn't come as a surprise to Charlotte Thompson.

Previously, Charlotte had already shared some details about Florienna Ellis with Annie.

Moreover, these developments were all within Charlotte's expectations, so she had already advised Annie in advance not to feel obligated to speak out on her behalf.

Yet now, with Annie stepping forward on her own, inevitably, she faced no shortage of repercussions.

Apart from Charlotte, others began digging into Annie's affairs as well. Fortunately for Annie, Oliver Hudson had her back; the moment any threatening rumors surfaced, they were swiftly crushed.

Naturally, this redirected all focus to Charlotte Thompson alone.

"Looks like they've brought out every skeleton from the closet, huh?"

Scanning the news filled with countless bizarre headlines about herself, Charlotte Thompson found herself oddly entertained.

Some were even trying to exonerate Ethan Allen, claiming it was all part of a calculated plot by Charlotte to frame him.

Meanwhile, Justin Battleson drew Charlotte into his embrace. He didn't say a word, but the expression on his face was far from pleasant.

Though the current trajectory of events was within their expectations, Charlotte might be adept at shrugging off the malicious remarks.

That didn't mean Justin could put up with people's endless finger-pointing.

Without saying anything to Charlotte, he directly reached out to Michael Richard, instructing him to suppress all the trending topics.

Yet Charlotte, who continued to watch the online commentary, didn't notice Justin's evident displeasure. Instead, she exclaimed in wonder,

"Wow, I never expected there to be so much dirt on me!"

Chapter 1406: Punishing You

Fingers slid repeatedly across the phone screen, looking at the photos unearthed by netizens. These were all taken during the recording of *The Birth of Beautiful Clothes* featuring Charlotte Thompson.

However, most of them seemed to be malicious screenshots or edited photos deliberately showing Charlotte in unflattering angles.

"When did these photos get taken? They make my legs look so short."

Charlotte chuckled while wanting to share the photos with Justin Battleson. But when she turned her head, she saw Justin's face darkened.

He simply lifted his gaze, silently staring at Charlotte, his displeasure written all over his expression even without a word.

Seeing this, Charlotte softly poked Justin's cheek with her finger and smiled, "Didn't we agree earlier that you're not allowed to get mad?"

Yet Justin caught Charlotte's fingertip and even lightly bit it, as if punishing her.

Then, with furrowed brows, he looked at Charlotte in front of him and spoke in a grave tone, "When did I ever promise not to get mad?"

"It's just people online spreading rumors and making things up, don't take it too seriously," Charlotte said in a gentle voice, blinking her eyes.

But Justin kept his gaze fixed on her. Straightening his posture, he spoke with utmost seriousness, his cool lips spilling resolute words:

"You can choose not to care about what they say, but I won't. Whether it's about good or bad, anything related to you matters deeply to me."

It was rare for Charlotte to see Justin reveal such a solemn and serious expression.

Charlotte froze for a moment, then came back to her senses and stretched out her arms to hug him, burying herself entirely in Justin's embrace.

"But your reaction like this... it makes me... mm..."

Before Charlotte could finish her sentence, Justin tilted her chin and sealed her lips with his.

Through the kiss, Charlotte could clearly sense his current emotions.

Even though she didn't want Justin to get agitated over these baseless online rumors, seeing how deeply he cared about her still made her happy.

Charlotte tilted her head slightly, making an effort to respond to Justin's kiss.

"I'll suppress all the nonsense circulating online. There's no need to waste time looking at these trivial things."

Justin's tongue gently pressed against her palate. Although his words were resolute, the annoyance lingering between his brows had yet to dissipate.

"Alright, I'll follow your lead." Charlotte, seeing his mood, didn't argue further.

There wasn't even a need for Justin to step in; Charlotte believed that after these rumors emerged, the Thompson Family would undoubtedly take action to address them.

Though Charlotte, much like Justin, had told the family to ignore the rumors, the fiercely protective members of the Thompson Family naturally prioritized defending Charlotte over heeding her words.

Within moments, the trending topics that had taken hours to reach peak attention were forcefully silenced in mere minutes, thanks to Justin and the Thompson Family's joint efforts.

The Thompson sons, one after another, used their accounts to post on social media. Whether through implications or outright declarations, their messages were all in defense of Charlotte.

Henry Thompson even went as far as publicly issuing legal letters, announcing that anyone continuing to spread defamatory rumors about Charlotte would be taken to court.

The internet promptly returned to calm, leaving netizens marveling at the sheer power of money and influence.

Though the rumors online had been suppressed, the waves of public opinion had already reached a fever pitch, causing Charlotte's reputation to plummet dramatically.

Chapter 1407: Reporters Besieging

Charlotte Thompson's own post on Weibo—"The innocent are always innocent."

But under the post, the comments section was completely locked, immaculately clean, with nothing there.

It did, however, align perfectly with the tone of her post.

If an ordinary person encountered a situation like this, apart from immediately clarifying things, they would likely try to stay out of the public eye as much as possible to avoid scrutiny.

However, Charlotte Thompson did the exact opposite.

The next day, she still went to work openly and confidently.

As expected by both Charlotte and Justin Battleson, a swarm of media reporters had already gathered outside Riley Group's building.

As soon as they saw Charlotte and Justin arrive, the reporters rushed towards them in a frenzy, surrounding the two tightly in an impenetrable circle.

"Miss Charlotte, do you have anything to say about the plagiarism controversy online?"

"Miss Charlotte, did you really plagiarize?"

"Miss Charlotte, there's even an insider claiming that when you entered the fashion industry under the name of designer Joy, the gold award you received at the time was won with a plagiarized piece. Is that true?"

"Miss Charlotte, it's said that many of your achievements, even your so-called original works, are supported by the Thompson Family behind the scenes. Your success is completely reliant on the Thompson Family. What's your response to this?"

The reporters bombarded her with questions, nearly shoving their microphones directly into her face.

Amidst the relentless flashing camera lights, Charlotte remained calm. Justin, on the other hand, held her protectively in his arms, casting a menacing glare at the reporters.

The journalists, skilled in reading the room, could tell from Justin's expression that the situation wasn't looking good, even though neither he nor Charlotte said a word.

Though desperate to dig some headlines from Charlotte, the intimidating presence of Justin held them back, leaving them to watch helplessly as he escorted Charlotte into the company building.

Charlotte could very well have chosen to address and clarify the situation in front of the media, but instead, she opted to remain completely silent.

This choice of hers made outsiders believe that she might truly be guilty of plagiarism and was feeling guilty because of it.

On her way into the company, Charlotte endured the scrutinizing gazes of everyone around her.

Some were curious, while others were disdainful. Charlotte realized she hadn't received this much attention in a long time.

However, those who had always been critical of her now spoke ill of her even more openly, without any attempt to hide it.

"Just as I thought, relying on her family background to climb up the ladder. Some people don't need to have any skills; being born into the right family is all it takes for them to lord over us ordinary folks."

"Exactly, exactly. If I were exposed for doing something so shameless, I wouldn't even have the face to step outside the house again."

"What's there for her to be afraid of? Her husband is our Mr. Battleson, and she has the Thompson Family backing her up. What could possibly scare her?"

Hearing these blatant remarks about her, Charlotte turned her gaze toward those speaking.

The employees who had been sneering or condescending just moments earlier instantly clammed up when they met her gaze, hastily retreating with their tails between their legs.

Charlotte couldn't help but chuckle softly.

After parting ways with Justin, Charlotte returned to her office, while Justin headed to the conference room.

Chapter 1408: Firing Charlotte Thompson

Yesterday, the company faced such a major incident, and the stock price plummeted.

This shareholder meeting, naturally, was unavoidable.

However, the atmosphere at this shareholder meeting is completely different from the last one.

Almost everyone looked at Justin Battleson with a trace of dissatisfaction in their eyes as he walked in.

Meanwhile, George Robbins had already taken his seat early, and when Justin walked in, he didn't bother to greet him.

"Mr. Battleson, the company's current situation can be described as precarious, wouldn't you agree?"

Justin had barely sat down when someone couldn't resist speaking up.

"Yes, I watched the company's stock price drop so much yesterday. If this continues, the consequences will be unimaginable."

"Mr. Battleson, in light of this situation, how do you propose the company responds?"

"We had a collaboration that could have revived the company's operations, but now it's been... ruined by some people."

The meeting room became filled with a cacophony of voices.

Even Justin Battleson's subtle furrowing of his brow at the noise didn't silence the shareholders.

But when George Robbins cleared his throat, the shareholders' attention immediately shifted to him.

It was obvious that George enjoyed the attention, though he didn't let his smile show too conspicuously. He cleared his throat again, then addressed Justin:

"Mr. Battleson, given the scale of this issue, the company must come up with a solution, correct?"

"The online backlash against the company is undoubtedly damaging," Justin acknowledged with a nod of agreement.

Seeing this, George immediately chimed in: "The Worsen brand has already submitted a termination of their contract with us. Due to the plagiarism scandal, numerous brands have explicitly refused to cooperate with us. If the situation continues down this path, the consequences will truly be dire."

Before George finished speaking, some shareholders couldn't resist voicing agreement.

Justin propped his hand idly against his temple, calmly observing the enraged George as he spoke.

It was as if George were the victim of the plagiarism scandal, while Justin was merely an innocent observer.

"From the way Mr. Robbins looks, I presume he already has a solution in mind?"

Justin narrowed his eyes slightly and played along with George's expectations, asking the question.

George's eyes lit up, and he eagerly stood up.

He adjusted his suit, planted both hands firmly on the meeting table, then spoke in a righteous tone:

"The situation has escalated terribly, and if we're to resolve it, we need to address the root of the problem!"

"Mr. Battleson, I believe we must fire Charlotte Thompson. She is responsible for the plagiarism scandal and should resolve it herself, rather than dragging the entire company down with her."

George spoke with great conviction, as if presenting an excellent solution.

"Exactly. I think Mr. Robbins is right," someone chimed in.

"Such a person absolutely cannot stay in the company!"

"We can't let someone like that drag our company into the abyss!"

George kept his gaze fixed on Justin's face.

But Justin remained silent.

George's eyes revealed a hint of displeasure, though he concealed it well, not letting it show on his face.

"Mr. Battleson, I understand your connection with Charlotte Thompson. Perhaps, deep down, you choose to believe her, but..."

Chapter 1409: Dismissal of Florienna Ellis

"But the fact that Charlotte Thompson plagiarized has already been irrefutably established!"

"Even if you want to defend her, you should prioritize the company above all else. Set aside personal feelings for now!"

"Mr. Battleson, you wouldn't want to see the company you built from the ground up end up destroyed in someone else's hands, would you?"

Justin Battleson finally reacted at this moment—his brows slightly lifted—and then spoke in a deep voice:

"I think Mr. Robbins makes a valid point."

Initially, many expected Justin Battleson to strongly defend Charlotte Thompson, but after hearing Justin's words, George Robbins couldn't help but let out a scoffing laugh internally.

Everyone thought his relationship with Charlotte was so robust—but now it seems it's nothing more than that.

"Since the root of the issue needs addressing, it's naturally necessary to let some people go."

Justin nodded slightly and continued, "Then let's fire that designer—Florienna Ellis—immediately."

Justin's statement stunned everyone present.

"Mr. Battleson, what do you mean by this? Why fire Florienna Ellis?"

George Robbins blinked in disbelief and stared at Justin Battleson directly.

More than either surprise or confusion, a deep suspicion surfaced within George's gaze.

"Wasn't it you, Mr. Robbins, who suggested resolving issues at their root? And weren't these problems all triggered by Florienna Ellis?"

"Mr. Battleson, Florienna is the ultimate victim here! Firing her now—it's an absurdly outrageous decision."

At this moment, George Robbins was cursing Justin Battleson's stupidity relentlessly in his heart.

Even now, Justin keeps putting on a pretense of calm—utterly laughable!

"When the truth hasn't yet fully come to light, Mr. Robbins, are you so certain Florienna is the victim?"

Justin responded in a neutral tone, and for the first time, ripples of shock emerged on George's face.

However, George quickly recomposed himself and said to Justin:

"Mr. Battleson, all the evidence points to Charlotte Thompson being the true plagiarist! She has caused such enormous damage to our company—yet you're still trying to protect a plagiarist. Such an action will leave all of us deeply disappointed."

While speaking, George let out a demonstrative sigh of disappointment, the gesture clearly visible to all, causing dissatisfaction to ripple across the faces of other board members.

Yet there were still a few among the attendees who chose to side with Justin Battleson. And in response to George's remarks, they began to defend Justin.

"Mr. Robbins, I believe this matter requires further deliberation. Moreover, we should wait for Charlotte Thompson to provide a response."

"Wait for Charlotte's response? Do you think our company still has the time or bandwidth to wait?" George bellowed emotionally, almost gesturing wildly in agitation.

After silencing his opponent through sheer intensity, George redirected his gaze toward Justin once again.

"Mr. Battleson, if you truly insist on refusing to fire Charlotte Thompson and continue shielding her..."

George paused briefly, his eyes scanning the faces of others before finally settling squarely on Justin's face.

Before George could finish his sentence, another person abruptly stood up and spoke first:

"Mr. Battleson, while you're the company's president, certain decisions—if handled unfairly—may result in dissatisfaction from all of us."

Chapter 1410: Hand Over Management Rights

"Indeed, Mr. Battleson, hasn't your injury healed yet? If that's the case, it's better to rest quietly. We shareholders can help you discuss and handle the company's affairs."

"Mr. Battleson, after you suddenly got injured and hospitalized, many of the company's issues were handled with Mr. Robbins' assistance, allowing our company's operations to stabilize. I believe, during this period, handing over the company's management rights to Mr. Robbins shouldn't be a problem for you, right?"

Although some shareholders were eagerly praising George Robbins, a surprised expression appeared on his face, and he quickly waved his hand, refusing.

"After all, it's ultimately Mr. Battleson's company. Although I am the vice president, handing over the management rights to me seems somewhat inappropriate."

Even though George Robbins verbally refused, his eyes unmistakably revealed what was on his mind.

"But I still hope Mr. Battleson can be fair and handle the company's matters according to our shareholders' opinions."

After George Robbins finished speaking, everyone's gaze fell on Justin Battleson's face, and the atmosphere in the conference room grew tense.

"Hand over the company's management rights to you?"

Justin Battleson lifted his gaze, his keen eyes landing squarely on George Robbins' face.

Obviously being at an advantage, for some reason, George Robbins still felt a sense of guilt when meeting Justin Battleson's eyes.

Even such a calm inquiry from Justin Battleson made George Robbins feel that there was a deeper meaning behind it.

However, this thought quickly vanished from George Robbins' mind.

After all, he believed he held the winning card, and Justin Battleson had no way to resist his demands.

Unless he didn't want the entire Riley Group at all.

"Mr. Battleson, the shareholders just think that regarding this matter, I can still speak fairly since I have no relations with Charlotte Thompson that could involve personal feelings."

George Robbins wore a smile, trying to ease the tense atmosphere in the room.

"Today you use the pretext of fairness to have me hand over the management rights. Tomorrow, will you find another reason to make me relinquish my shares, and then Mr. Robbins, you become the major shareholder, and finally..."

Justin Battleson stood up and pointed to the chair he was sitting in.

"This chair would belong to you, right?"

Although Justin Battleson's voice was calm, every word carried an accusation directed not only at George Robbins but at the other shareholders present as well.

For a moment, everyone exchanged glances, and then George Robbins spoke solemnly to Justin:

"Mr. Battleson, I've been with the company for so many years, and I just want you to deal with current affairs more impartially. I didn't expect you to say this to me."

As he spoke, George Robbins seemed somewhat disappointed, shaking his head.

"If Mr. Battleson thinks this way, then I have nothing to say, and I believe there's no longer a point in trying to save this company."

With that, George Robbins sighed.

Without caring how Justin Battleson would respond, he directly walked out of the conference room.

With George Robbins taking the lead, those who supported him naturally followed suit.

In no time, more than half of the people in the company's conference room had left.