

Sweet Wife 371

Chapter 371 Wedding Anniversary

Archie had had the guest room specially prepared.

It wasn't a particularly big place at a hundred or so square meters, but the décor was elaborate, and the point was, it was a love nest just for them.

From the clear bathroom glass to the rose petals and candles visible everywhere, everything screamed romance.

Archie cut up a plate of steak and passed it to her, then took her own plate and started cutting it up too.

Because the two had similar tastes, they'd ordered the same meal. So Natalia didn't mind. She speared a piece with her fork and dug in.

"What's with the sudden romantic urge to come here today, Archie?"

The man looked up from his steak.

"You don't know?"

Natalia blinked. "What don't I know?"

The man's eyes showed a resigned bit of exasperation.

Natalia was a little confused. Then he put down his knife and fork and took out a red gift box from under a nearby desk.

"Happy anniversary, honey!"

Natalia froze rooted to the spot.

A-anniversary?

At that word, she almost choked on her steak and coughed several times before widening her eyes in disbelief at Archie.

"You mean today is our one-year's wedding anniversary?"

Archie's expression went a bit stiff.

He fell silent for a few seconds, then smiled and said, "What do you think?"

"..."

She finally reacted.

No wonder the man had acted so strange today!

Calling her from the set to be with him no less, then coming out to have fun and having her change.

Reserving such a romantic couple's room, and having wine...

It was their anniversary!

Natalia felt horrible.

Her memory wasn't bad. Pregnancy was supposed to dull one's wits, but she hadn't even gotten pregnant yet, so how was her memory like this?

She couldn't even remember their anniversary.

Natalia laughed awkwardly. "That's... I'm sorry... I-I didn't know today was... I forgot to get a present, but I can give you something tomorrow!"

Even she felt ashamed as she finished!

It was their anniversary! The anniversary was for the day; it didn't count after one day had passed, did it?

She grumbled at a certain someone internally.

He knew but didn't remind her and got her this embarrassed now, really, this man...

Archie's lips twitched. "It's fine. Take a look and see if you like it."

Natalia looked at the red gift box and swallowed.

Then she looked back at Archie. His smile might have been feigned, but he wasn't really angry. She reached out and opened the box carefully.

The red box was lined with a black brocade, over which lay a jade bracelet.

Natalia's eyes gleamed.

"Wow, that's such a pretty bracelet!"

Archie looked at her deeply. "Do you like it?"

"I like it!"

Emperor jade was rare enough on its own, but looking at the color of this bracelet, it was an even more thorough green than what she'd seen on the auction before.

Natalia was of the cool, elegant type, and regular jewelry didn't bring out her aura.

But with jade, other girls might have looked too aged in them, while on her, it looked sophisticated and pleasing.

So Natalia didn't like gold or diamonds, only jade.

Seeing that she liked it, Archie showed a satisfied expression.

"It's good that you like it, then. Here, I'll put it on for you."

Natalia stretched out her hand, and Archie clasped the bracelet on her wrist.

The bracelet was so green it was slick, and matched with her snowy white arm, it was breathtakingly beautiful.

With an arm like that in his hand, Archie looked at the scene and his heart throbbed, finding it rarely difficult to hold himself back.

“Natalia.”

“Hmm?”

Natalia was still studying the bracelet on her wrist, so while her mouth responded, her eyes weren’t on him.

Archie murmured, “You’ve got your present, but what about mine?”

Natalia jolted.

She lifted her head and looked up at the man, smiling awkwardly.

“That’s... I did just say that I forgot.”

“Oh, that means I don’t get anything tonight.”

The man spoke, and took his hand back, not hiding even a bit of his dejection on his face.

Natalia couldn’t just stand by and watch. The man was handsome to begin with, and she was used to seeing him calm and collected, or chatting animatedly, or deep in thought, or cool and serious.

She’d never seen him sad and dejected.

Unable to take it, Natalia blabbered, “I promise, I’ll find a way tomorrow to make it up to you, so don’t be mad, okay?”

Archie tried to smile at her.

“I’m not mad.”

“...”

“I’m just a bit hurt. It’s fine, go eat. No need to bother with me.”

He went back to cutting up his steak.

Natalia’s heart was about to break, so she couldn’t bother with anything else as she got up and ran over, hugging him from behind.

“I’m sorry, honey, I was wrong. I promise I won’t forget next time, really. Forgive me this time, won’t you?”

Natalia was hugging him from behind and didn’t see the smile that flashed across the man’s lips.

Archie continued to act dejected as he said, “Oh, so we can let this time go?”

Natalia was stumped.

How was she supposed to comfort him like this, then?

She thought about it, patted herself down, and felt something, her eyes lighting up.

“Actually, it’s not that I didn’t prepare anything today, but I’m afraid you wouldn’t like it, so I didn’t take it out.”

Archie raised an eyebrow. “What is it?”

Natalia hurriedly loosened her grip and took out a little hand bauble made from red string.

Archie was speechless.

That was such a plain bauble that it... didn’t even seem like a gift.

It was just a bunch of red string stitched into a circle, with a single chain of lucky golden beads hanging from it.

Archie almost threw the thing out the window.

He stared at Natalia, his smile growing sinister, “This is the anniversary gift you prepared for me?”

Natalia smiled pleasingly and looked at him, expectant. “Yes, I stitched it myself. See where I put a pattern there? I put a lot of effort in, right?”

The man’s grin grew even more sinister.??

Chapter 372 Making a Child

“So, you want me to wear this every day to my meetings and talk business with people?”

Natalia’s smile froze.

She cleared her throat awkwardly. “Er, actually you can wear it at home too. It’s a gift, so what matters is the intent, ha ha...”

“The intent?”

The man cocked an eyebrow, thought about it, and reached out.

“Okay. Then on account of your intent, let’s see how it looks.”

Natalia nodded, swallowed, and took his hand.

Archie had a diamond watch on his wrist. She took it off, then undid the string and put it on.

And then there was an awkward scene.

The string was too short to close around his wrist.

Natalia blushed straight from her cheeks to the roots of her ears.

She’d actually stitched the bauble with Nancy when she was bored on set.

Only to kill time.

And the beads were only there because Nancy said it was for good luck, so she'd went "whatever" and bought them.

So the bauble was for her size. Archie was a man, and his wrist was naturally a different size, so it didn't fit.

Archie looked at how her motions were frozen and looked at her with a half-smile. "So this is the present you prepared for me?"

Natalia was about to cry.

At a time like this, she knew she couldn't muddle things over.

So she cut her losses and pleaded guilty.

"I was wrong, honey. I promise, I'll give you a perfect anniversary gift tomorrow, so let's not talk about this today, okay?"

Archie stared at her, a hint of mirth showing in his eyes.

"No need to wait until tomorrow. You can give me a great gift today, too."

Natalia started, then reflexively asked, "What gift is that?"

There came a grip on her wrist and the next second, her body had fallen forward into the man's arms.

Archie embraced her and set her in his lap, lowering his head and murmuring, "You."

"..."

Tonight was going to be a wild night.

"Natalia, let's try for another child, okay?"

Natalia was already too tired to notice the "another" in his line as she mumbled consent.

The man was overjoyed, and after that, there came a storm of pleasure.

The night gave way to dawn.

The next day, Natalia, unsurprisingly, couldn't get up at all.

By the time she woke, it was the afternoon.

Natalia looked at the bright sunlight outside, exclaimed, and sat up sharply.

The moment she moved, she found that she was sore all over, especially where a certain place felt like it was ripping apart.

She sucked in a pained breath and fell back down.

At that moment, Archie walked in holding a meal tray.

"You're awake."

Natalia looked at him and demanded, "What time is it?"

Archie set the tray down and looked at his wristwatch. "It's two p.m. What about it?"

"Two?"

Natalia's eyes widened and her face changed.

"Drat drat drat, I had scenes to shoot in the morning, the director must be looking everywhere for me."

She searched frantically for her clothes.

Archie smiled, then walked over and stopped her.

"No need to rush. I've already called to explain things. You're not feeling well today and need rest."

Natalia started, then finally reacted.

"You called?"

"Yeah."

She exhaled, then grew irritated.

"Archie McCarthy!"

The man replied mildly, "Speaking."

"Look at what you did last night! I'd have thought I was bitten by a dog if I hadn't known it was you!"

The man raised an eyebrow and chuckled, "Mrs. McCarthy, you initiated last night, and you enjoyed every bit of it if I remember things correctly. Why are you blaming me now?"

Natalia flushed bright red. She'd been feeling guilty last night, so she'd agreed when he asked for her as a gift.

In the beginning, to make things up to him, she really had taken the active role.

Who knew the man would go crazy afterwards? Not a bit of restraint!

Natalia sat on the bed, sulking.

Seeing that she really seemed mad, Archie put away his grin and sat on her bedside, soothing, "Sorry, I couldn't hold back last night. Does it still hurt?"

Natalia rolled her eyes at him.

"Yes!"

"I could massage you?"

"No!"

She snapped, then bit her lip, finding it hard to speak.

Still, Archie knew better.

He understood what he'd done last night, so he knew what was up with one look at her expression.

"Sorry. I'll have people send ointment over."

Natalia glared at him.

But she didn't refuse.

She didn't go anywhere else that afternoon, and Brian delivered the cream soon enough. Archie wanted to rub it on for her, but she wouldn't let him. Then it dragged on and on as she tried to work on it herself without getting where it hurt.

In the end, she had to have that man help her anyway.

Natalia swore she'd never done anything this embarrassing!

Archie was really serious applying the ointment, though.

He really had been too rough last night. The woman was delicate, and couldn't hold up to his nightly ministrations.

After he finished rubbing the cream on, he helped her put on the clothes that Brian had sent over before escorting her home.

After today, Natalia rested at home for another two days.

It wasn't that she hurt so much she couldn't move, but those marks were just too obvious. They were all over her neck and body, so there was no way she could go back.

Even if it was fantasy and she could cover her arms, that didn't mean she could cover her neck.

Anyone who knew their birds and bees could tell what she'd been through at a glance.

Natalia cared about her image, so she insisted on staying home for those two days, until the third day when the hickey had faded enough to be covered with foundation, and she returned to the cast.

The interior scenes went quickly. There weren't too many shots left, so it took them only a week to finish filming.

Over that time, the person who'd gifted Natalia the diamond necklace continued to send flowers and other presents over every day.

Even if she'd had a break for a few days and wasn't on set, the presents still arrived.

Even the people who didn't care to notice in the cast were starting to pay attention.

Everyone was speculating who it was behind the scenes bold enough to publicly court Mr. McCarthy's wife.

Chapter 373 Mr. K is Dead

The results came out soon.

This day, Natalia received an invitation for a fashion banquet.

The banquet was hosted by a brand that she liked a lot, so she decided to attend.

Coincidentally, Victoria, Laura, Hamlin and Stephen were there too.

They were in the same business, but they rarely had the opportunity to all get together in one event.

So Natalia, in her joy, drank a bit more than she usually did.

She wasn't particularly good at holding her drink, and she hadn't eaten dinner before coming tonight. Drink on an empty belly made for easy intoxication, so after downing a few, she felt a surge of drunkenness.

Natalia stopped drinking and told Victoria and gang she was going to the restroom.

Nancy followed her all the way. With her suit and cold face, she was every bit the strong capable woman.

Natalia give Nancy her bag and had her wait outside. She would come out after she was done.

The restrooms on this side were all sealed with only one exit, so Nancy wasn't worried and let her go in.

After Nancy finished going, she was washing her hands when she felt a chill on her spine, as if a large carnivore had set its eyes on her.

She instantly turned alert and spun, barking, "Who is it?"

But before she could finish, a hand extended from her back and clamped over her mouth, dragging her to a cubicle.

It was dimly lit inside the cubicle.

Natalia was pressed up against the door, her mouth covered, not daring to move.

She widened her eyes, but in the poor lighting, she couldn't see their face.

In the dark, she heard a man's breathing, and her own hammering heartbeat.

Her entire body tensed as she felt the man's head rub up against her ear, as if holding something back deliberately. Hot, frantic panting tickled her neck.

"It's been a while, little Seven. You don't recognize me?"

Natalia's pupils dilated as she trembled.

It was him!

She knew that voice better than anyone.

After all, for a thousand days and nights, he'd stayed by her side, guiding her, helping her.

It could be said that he was an important figure in her life, someone she owed, but also...

An enemy that she didn't want anything else to do with in her entire life!

Natalia frowned and mumbled incoherently.

The man chuckled.

His voice was light and shallow, without a bit of heat.

“Seems like you recognize me, little Seven. That’s good. You’ve forgotten my taste, but still remember my voice. That makes me a bit happier.”

After a while, he finally loosened her mouth.

Natalia glared at him.

She couldn’t make out his features, but she still glared at him furiously, gritting her teeth. “What are you doing back here?”

The man chuckled again. “Looking for you.”

“I no longer have anything to do with you!”

“Tsk, that’s going a bit far, don’t you think? All those sweet ‘big brother’, ‘big brother’s, and it’s only been a few years, hasn’t it? You won’t have this big brother anymore?”

Natalia sneered.

“No brother would do something like this! And I already told you back then, I’ve given back everything I owed, and I’m no longer your sister!”

The man shook his head, sounding quite disappointed.

“Seems like the cold one is still cold and the one in love is still in love, then! When you say you’ve given back everything you owed, you don’t mean that, do you? But you see, little Seven, I saved your life back then. If I hadn’t fished you out of the sea back then, you’d only be a bloated corpse now, your bones sinking to the bottom of the sea. You think those little things you’ve done are enough to make up for what you owe me?”

Natalia was furious, almost gnashing her teeth.

“Then what do you want?”

The man laughed again.

He even reached out, and patted her head.

“I told you. I want to marry you.”

This time it was Natalia’s turn to laugh coldly.

“Sorry. I’m already married.”

“It’s fine. I’ll wait for you to get divorced.”

“...”

This man was as bothersome as always!

Ignoring him, she walked outwards.

Outside the cubicle, with outside light shining in, she finally saw the man's face clearly.

He was tall, at 188 centimeters, about as tall as Archie but emanating completely different auras.

Archie was the sort of cool, elegantly put together individual, while this man was sinister, with the sort of naturally unrestrained, bewitching light in his eyes, the sort of poison that you absolutely couldn't touch!

Natalia said icily, "So you were the one who gave me those things on set before!"

The man squinted, smiling. "Yes. Did you like them?"

Natalia sneered. "I threw the flowers away. The necklace is in my bag. I'll give them back in a bit."

The man shook his head. "Still so heartless, little Seven!"

Natalia was turning to leave when he said that and she simply couldn't take it anymore. Spinning widdershins, she spat, "I'm warning you, don't call me little Seven again! I don't want to hear that again!"

The man raised an eyebrow. "Okay, little Seven?"

"..."

The man laughed again, his eyes twinkling playfully. "It's been four years, little Seven, did you miss me?"

Natalia felt her chest was about to explode.

She didn't know why she was so angry, but just looking at his face, the past echoed in her mind, and she just wanted to punch him.

Coldly, she snapped, "I didn't! And I'm not interested in you! So please, stay out of my life and don't come harass me again!"

With that, she turned around to leave.

At that moment, the man's slightly cooler voice came from behind.

"Mr. K is dead!"

Natalia halted in her tracks.

Her whole body stiffened.

She turned around, looking at him in disbelief as she choked on her words a little. "What did you say?"

The man's smile was gone, but his gaze was calm, emotionless, as if he was describing a normal affair.

"Mr. K's dead. Assassinated half a month ago. Should be the same people who were targeting you back then. I found that flower symbol on Mr. K's body."

Natalia stood there in a daze, her head empty, her ears buzzing.

She couldn't believe the news at all. After a while, she found her voice.

“What’s going on? Wasn’t he... always in the country recently? Why...”

“He was assassinated in the country. In his own home, with his wife and daughter there. But those two were only knocked unconscious, and they weren’t targeted. So I suspect Mr. K must have caught wind of something. From what happened seven years ago, they must be an organization with regulations and standards, who don’t kill innocent bystanders. That’s why they let the wife and daughter live.”

Chapter 374 Heartless

In her shock, it took Natalia a long time to recover.

“Have you called the police?”

The man shook his head. “No. Mr. K’s got too many skeletons in his closet for the police to get called. This can only be investigated and resolved alone.”

Understanding, Natalia nodded.

Her chest felt stuffy, as if it was being clogged by a rock.

Seeing her downtrodden look, the man laughed lightly.

He stuck his handsome face closer to him, laughing, “With that business out the way, little Seven, tell me the truth now. Did you really not miss me at all these four years?”

Natalia’s originally pale expression turned heated as she took a step back and glared at him with cautioning eyes.

“I’m warning you, Felix! Don’t try to seduce me with those dirty tricks of yours! I’m not into that!”

Felix laughed dryly, his eyes curving up like they were full of wine, almost intoxicating.

“You’re hurting me, little Seven. You were calling me big brother just four years ago, and now it’s Felix? How could you be so heartless?”

Natalia had no reply and didn’t want to waste her breath on him, so she turned to leave.

Behind her, Felix chuckled faintly. “I have your number, little Seven. I’m going to call you tonight. Don’t leave me hanging.”

His tones were merry, but Natalia could feel the cold, tinted with a bit of threat.

Her face darkened and she didn’t say anything as she speed walked away.

Outside, with things weighing on her mind, Natalia wasn’t inclined to stay further at the banquet, so she said her goodbyes to Victoria and gang, then left with Nancy.

It was already ten at night when they arrived home. Archie was reading in his room and knew that she mustn’t have eaten too much over there at night, so he had Mrs. Dottie make her favorite seafood paella.

Natalia didn’t have much of an appetite and set it down after a few bites.

At night, Archie stayed with her.

Her phone buzzed twice. The man noticed it sharply and didn't react. Looking at the number, Natalia knew who it was and was hesitating on taking it when she heard Archie say, "Have you found out who it was who was giving you all those flowers recently?"

Natalia started and didn't know if it was because she was feeling guilty or that her hand shook, but she accidentally pressed decline.

She lifted her head and looked at him in a daze, only reacting after a couple of seconds.

"Oh, not yet."

Archie's eyes dimmed.

"Need my help?"

"No, I'm fine."

She said hurriedly, afraid he'd really step in. By then, no matter what he turned up, it wouldn't be easy to explain.

Archie tilted his head at her.

"You're not feeling well?"

Natalia forced a smile and shook her head.

Then her phone started buzzing again.

Archie cocked his brow and looked at the indicated number, his eyes quizzical. "Aren't you taking it?"

Natalia could feel her body stiffening as she swayed between taking the call and not taking it. In the end, she still hung up.

"It's just work. It's too late now; we can talk about it in the morning!"

With that, she squirreled into the blankets.

Archie's handsome brow furrowed imperceptibly, but he didn't say anything about it as he turned the lights off and laid down as well.

The night went peacefully.

The following morning, before Natalia could get up, she was woken by the ringing of her phone.

She opened her eyes groggily, and before her vision could clear, she'd taken the call.

"Hello?"

"Natalia, it's horrible, something's happened!"

She frowned, a little irritated. "What's happened? Panicking like this in the morning."

Elsa was losing her mind with panic on the other end of the line.

“There are rumors out about you! With a huge figure, too! Augh, I can’t explain it all properly, so just go online and check!”

Natalia jolted, her grogginess leaving in an instant.

She hung up hastily and sat up, going straight online.

She was the number one search result on the internet.

Clicking in, she found the title – “Astonishment! High-end Wife Meeting Young Man at Night, A Ferocious Battle In the Bathroom!”

Whitening, Natalia dragged in.

There were a few muddled photographs shown there.

The angle was strangely crisp and clear, and even a semi-professional like her couldn’t figure out what angle it’d been taken from. Even so, the two people on top were still clearly visible.

Natalia was facing the camera so her face was clearly visible as the man pressed her up against the door and looked down at her. The shot was taken from his back, coincidentally blocking his face.

Natalia’s face darkened right away.

That son of a bitch!

She didn’t even need to think to know who took these photos!

There was nobody else in that restroom but her and Felix!

That rat bastard! He was only using these methods because she hadn’t taken his call that night.

Four years apart, and he was still a scumbag!

She thoroughly blasted Felix apart in her mind, but that wouldn’t stop Archie from catching wind of that incident.

Just thinking of that man seeing those photos was giving Natalia a headache.

Speaking of the devil.

It was rare for Archie to not head to the office with the day this late. Seemed like he’d just gotten out of the shower after the gym and he wasn’t wearing a top, only a knee-length pair of pants.

With a towel on him, his body was still steaming. Seeing she was awake, he towed himself off while asking, “You’re awake?”

Natalia smiled stiffly. “Yeah.”

Archie looked a lot better than she was expecting, but a bit of cold was still, expectedly, contained in his brow.

He flung the towel to the side after he was done with it and walked towards her.

“Anything you’d like to explain to me today, Mrs. McCarthy?”

Natalia looked at his face and swallowed.

“So... you saw?”

Archie cocked an eyebrow and grunted.

Natalia chuckled nervously, her mouth dry, and explained, “It’s a misunderstanding. I just met him by accident in the restroom, and he just had to stop me and tell me something. I had to stay, but I didn’t think the tabloids would have gotten a shot off. Really, I have nothing to do with him.”

Archie narrowed his eyes, his gaze still cold.

“Really? What a coincidence that he met you in the female restroom. This is the first I’ve heard of the second son of the Bissel family being a crossdresser.”

Natalia jolted, shaking upright.

“What’d you say? The second son of the Bissel family?”

At that, Archie was somewhat surprised.

“You didn’t know who he was?”

Natalia opened her mouth, thought about it, then closed her mouth and shook her head.

“I didn’t.”

President’s Sweet Wife

Chapter 375 He’s Angry

Seeing that, Archie explained, “Felix Bissel, second son of Ein Bissel, and his only bastard son. Because he’s not accepted by the elders of the family, he spends most of his time overseas and it’s not uncommon for him to stay away from the country for up to three to five years at a time. He met you this one time he came back. Isn’t that quite the coincidence?”

Natalia shook again.

She was in a bit of a daze, and it took her a while to digest what Archie had just told her.

“You said... he’s a Bissel?”

Archie cocked an eyebrow. “Yes.”

Natalia clenched her knuckles.

Archie continued, “So what did he tell you last night?”

Natalia looked at him, lips moving without making a noise.

She didn’t know how to explain to Archie her relationship with Felix. She didn’t want to bring up those past days and memories, but she didn’t want to lie to him!

Natalia was struggling, while Archie knew her too well. Just from her eyes, he understood what was going through her mind.

“You knew each other from before?”

Natalia thought over it for a long while before nodding.

“Yes.”

“How?”

Natalia didn’t speak.

Not that she didn’t want to, but that she didn’t know how to.

Those memories were too chaotic. Even she wasn’t sure. If she spoke about it, it would only be more suspicious.

And there was a secret in them too...

Natalia remained silent. Archie waited for a while, his deep eyes slowly cooling.

“It’s all right. I respect your privacy. Any time you want to tell me, you can tell me then.”

As he spoke, he got up. His attitude wasn’t forceful and his bearing was as mild as always, but Natalia could still hear that he was a bit angry.

After Archie left, Natalia went to the office herself.

Star Entertainment released a statement representing her, claiming that it had only been a joke with a friend she’d met by coincidence, and definitely not cheating!

She was married now. Forget Archie, with news like this, it wasn’t good for her image.

Thankfully, it seemed like Felix had only wanted to warn her and didn’t mean to drive her into a corner, so the moment the statement came up, Felix’s account also released a statement claiming it was just a joke and not to take it seriously, and that they were good friends.

Felix’s account, of course, didn’t have too many fans, and not too many people followed him.

But with how hot this piece of news was, the moment he released the statement, a lot of people reposted it.

So the incident died down.

Afterwards, Natalia gave Felix a call and gave him a tongue-lashing over the phone.

Felix didn’t get mad and kept on laughing leisurely, sometimes even rebuking himself in her place.

Natalia couldn’t even lose her temper at him right.

Finally, the man said coldly through the phone, “Still remember what I taught you years ago? Be a good girl. Disobedience comes with a price. You don’t want everything you have now to be ruined, do you, little Seven?”

Natalia massaged her migraine and snarled, “What is it that you want?”

Felix chuckled dryly. “I wouldn’t dare tell the truth if you take that kind of time, would I?”

Floundering, Natalia gritted her teeth and forced her rage down as she softened her voice. "All right, then, cards on the table, what do you want?"

"I want you. Do you want me?"

"..."

Her expressions changed repeatedly. He was clearly just teasing her.

Finally, she growled, "Drop dead, Felix Bissel!"

Then she hung up.

...

Meanwhile.

In the cinema park of Egitin, Laura got up early, changed into costume, and took her bag with her to the dressing room.

"Oh, Laura's here!"

The makeup artist was familiar with her after a while of working together, and so, greeted her the moment she appeared.

Laura nodded, then passed a small gift box over from her bag.

"I bought this a few days ago after going to a show overseas. It's not worth much, so I hope you won't mind."

The makeup artist hurriedly received it, eyes gleaming.

"I won't mind, of course. Every time you leave the country for an event or to walk the red carpet, you always bring back gifts. None of the others do that."

Laura smiled and didn't say anything, turning around to hand off her gifts to the others and having them split them among themselves.

After settling all that, only then did Laura sit down to do her makeup.

Her skin was good, saving her the trouble of doing her foundation. She got the makeup done quick, in less than half an hour.

Outside, the script supervisor had her go out to stand at her post, so she went out.

At that moment, a young woman walked in from outside.

"Miss Raine."

"Miss Raine, you're here."

Everyone rose to greet her respectfully. The newcomer was the female lead of the show, the so-called genius actress who'd received three awards last year, prized by countless top-end directors within and without the country, the latest queen of the silver screen – Josephine Raine.

Josephine wasn't old, at barely twenty years old. But she was clever and talented, blazing a path the moment she stepped foot into the industry. In just three films, she'd taken three awards, and she was great in front of the camera. Because of that, she was one of the few actresses in the business who was both acclaimed and drew in views.

This show was a large-production period drama. Despite it being a period drama, the script itself was a hard piece, with the director being a famous director she knew well.

So even a strict movie buff like Josephine, who'd stated that she only did film and never bothered with the small screen, took the show as an exception.

Since it was an exception, the cast naturally put her up on a pedestal, with nobody daring to offend her.

Right now, Josephine was probably tired from lack of sleep as she sat in place, yawning.

The makeup artist usually responsible for her walked over, smiling, "Are you doing the injury scene today?"

Josephine nodded mildly. "Yeah."

To the side, someone boldened up and said, "Miss Raine, when Laura came back today, she gave us all gifts. She gave you one too. The pink one on the table is yours."

Josephine glanced at it coldly, then opened the box. There was a hanging decoration inside of an iron tower.

She smiled an extremely shallow smile and just left it there without commenting on it. There was a bit of disdain in her brow.

At that moment, another woman walked in.

The woman's name was Sally. She was a side character in the show. Her family was rich but her acting wasn't good at all. She'd only bought her way into the cast.

Because of her family conditions, she was quite cocky and arrogant. Seeing Josephine, though, she did greet her politely.

Hearing that there were gifts, then looking towards the gift box on the table, she snickered.

"Hey, whose gift was this?"

President's Sweet Wife

Chapter 376 Hotel Audition

The makeup artist who was doing her makeup hurriedly said, "Laura gave them to us. Almost everyone in the cast has one, but the style is different. Look, mine is a chapel."

She said, and showed the decoration she'd already clasped onto her keychain.

A hint of contempt flashed through Sally's eyes as she sneered, "A piece of junk like that being held up as a treasure – and here I thought it was something nice! Keychains? We use fingerprint locks these days, okay? Only country rubes still use keys to open their doors!"

“ ... ”

The entire dressing room fell into an awkward silence.

Josephine had already finished her makeup and walked out coolly.

Everyone looked at each other, no one daring to say anything.

At that moment, Laura came in.

“Excuse me, Rhea, I just messed up my mascara. Can you touch it up for me?”

Because personnel were limited, other than the female lead Josephine, the rest of them had one makeup artist for a few people at once.

Rhea, as things went, did both Laura and Sally’s makeup.

Hearing her voice right now, she hastily said, “Oh, sure. Sit here, and I’ll fix your makeup right away.”

“Okay.”

But the moment Laura sat down, Sally’s biting tones rang out from the side.

“Rhea, I remember the cast specifically arranged you to do my makeup, so why are you doing hers?”

Hearing that, Rhea said awkwardly, “I’m sorry, Sally, but there’s only five makeup artists to over a dozen people who need their makeup done at once. So except for Josephine, everyone else has to share.”

Sally widened her eyes at that, as if she’d heard something astonishing.

“What did you say? We’re sharing?”

Rhea nodded uncomfortably.

“Then why didn’t I see you do their makeup before?”

“That’s because they came early, and you came the latest, so they were all done when you arrived...”

At those words, Sally’s face changed instantly.

Because it was a period drama, the costumes were complicated, so it was a bit more work to put in than modern shows.

To line up for their makeup every day, every actress woke up early. After all, to get the hairdo done followed by the styling and all those different steps, it took at least an hour or so.

And the director this time, Leroy, was one who only looked at acting ability instead of status, and there wasn’t a single example of his work that didn’t draw in crowds.

That was why Sally had tried her utmost to persuade him, not only bringing her own capital but also promising not to try anything with special treatment. Only then had she gotten in the cast.

If Leroy knew that she was arriving at the last minute every day, he’d probably have some choice comments.

Sally's expression turned particularly nasty.

Seeing that at the side, Laura smiled, "It's all right. Do her makeup first, Rhea. I'll wait at the side."

Hearing that, Rhea could only comply. "Okay, then."

With that, Laura smiled a friendly smile at Sally.

Sally, though, thought that meant she was scared of her, and sneered, "At least you know what's good for you."

Then she turned around and had Rhea do her makeup.

That scene, though, was clear for everyone else in the dressing room to see, and they all showed expressions of disdain.

Come on, she was just a third-rate little celeb who bought her way into the cast, what was she doing putting on airs?

Laura was the costar of the show. She had a lot of character moments. Other than the female lead, she had the biggest spotlight in the entire plot.

And if the show got popular, Laura was basically set to climb to the top of the industry. At that point, why'd she need to be concerned about how Sally felt?

Besides, Laura had quite a few great examples of her work before, and a good mass of fans. An actress who only got her roles because her family was rich had no business being snarky here.

Although everyone was dissatisfied with Sally's bullying, they didn't show it on their faces and compliantly did her makeup.

Their liking of Laura, though, grew a fair bit inside them.

The scene in the morning was an emotional scene in the rain.

Laura's previous roles had been with famous directors like Hamlin and Nathan, so her acting ability had naturally been honed very well.

Because of that, as she immersed herself fully into the role, she cut an incredible contrast with Sally, who was also acting in the emotional scene!

After one take, the director yelled, "Cut!"

He was frowning as he turned to Sally and said, "You need to rein in that expression of yours a bit. She doesn't know you're her enemy yet. Gnashing your teeth like that doesn't suit the mood at all. Retake."

Hearing that, Sally's expression grew a bit cold, but she didn't say anything.

It took them four takes to barely get a passable scene.

Soon, it was noon.

Laura only had one scene in the morning and nothing for the afternoon, so she could rest for now.

At that moment, her phone rang.

It was her agent, Maria.

Laura's contract was with Star, but Natalia wasn't responsible for that end anymore, having handed all duties over to Elsa.

And since Elsa was taking care of everything pertaining to the company, she didn't have time to guide actors personally, so everyone had been assigned to different agents.

And her agent was a new face in the industry by the name of Maria.

Laura hurriedly took the call and beamed, "Did you call me for something, Maria?"

On the other end of the line, Maria's voice was as collected as always. "Are you free this afternoon? There's an audition."

Laura started, then agreed without even thinking about it. "Sure, but I've got a show directed by Leroy right now and don't want to overlap. When would the role start?"

"Don't know yet. Just go try it out first. If you pass the audition, we can discuss the shifts afterwards."

Hearing that, Laura didn't refuse and agreed to the arrangement.

After hanging up, Maria sent the audition's location over soon enough.

Laura looked at it and found it was a hotel. She couldn't help but frown.

But since it was Maria who'd given her the location, then it should be right. Thinking of that, she changed her clothes, said goodbye to Leroy, and left the cast.

The address Maria had given her was for a luxury hotel.

At the hotel, Laura found the room number and pressed the doorbell.

Soon, a man's voice came from inside.

"Come in!"

She pushed inside and found that there was a rotund, middle-aged man sitting there, his broad face fleshy and fierce. There was a cameraman standing to the side, and two girls about her age, probably both here for the audition.

Laura heaved a sigh of relief.

To be honest, when she'd found out that the audition was being held at a hotel, she'd been a bit hesitant.

After all, this wasn't her first day in the business. She'd more or less come to know about some of the filth that went on from hearsay. But here, with a director, a cameraman, and other actresses auditioning for the role, it should be fine.???

Chapter 377 Copping a Feel

With that in mind, she said politely, "Hi, I'm here for the audition. I'm Laura Davies."

Laura's fame in the industry wasn't particularly big, but it wasn't particularly small, either. As an actress, she was somewhere between the second and third tiers.

It was her low-profile behavior, coupled with the fact that most of the shows she took were internal resources from Annie International, that meant people outside and inside entertainment circles didn't know too much about her.

The fat man on the table lifted his head briefly and shot her a sidelong glance, nodding muddlingly.

"Alright, have a seat! It'll be your turn soon."

"Okay."

Laura found a chair at the side and sat down. Those two girls followed the director to the bedroom in the inside, leaving only her and the cameraman there.

The atmosphere was a bit awkward.

She didn't know why, but the moment she set foot in this room, she'd felt something was off.

It was strange.

She looked at the smoking cameraman, who blew a smoke bubble and smiled at her.

"Nervous?"

Laura blinked. "Eh?"

The cameraman grinned. "I know you. You acted in some good shows."

"Oh, ha ha. Thank you for the compliment."

Laura didn't know what to say and even her smile was a bit unnatural. After a brief pause, she asked curiously, "Are they auditioning in there?"

"Yeah."

"Why aren't you going in, then? Don't you need to film them?"

"I don't."

The cameraman's reply was terse and he clearly didn't intend to say too much about it.

Laura was left both anxious and curious. She felt like something was wrong, but couldn't ask it outright.

Ten or so minutes passed, and the two girls finally came out.

Because it was summer, both of them were only in simple shirts. When they emerged, they looked a little disheveled.

One of the girls was blushing bright red. As she walked outside, she was busy rearranging her clothes. Both of the girls looked embarrassed and hasty as they hurried to leave.

Laura was looking on dubiously as the director's voice rang out from the bedroom.

"You, come in!"

Laura shot a look at the cameraman and confirmed from his gaze that he was calling for her before replying yes and walking in.

It was dark inside the bedroom, with the drapes pulled shut, and only a dim yellow lamp lighting the place.

The director was slouching on a sofa chair in the corner, his legs crossed, puffing on a cigarette.

Seeing her come in, he waved, squinted at her and said, "Strip!"

"Huh?"

Laura froze.

Seeing that, the director frowned, dissatisfied.

"What are you doing standing there? Strip! How would I know if you have the right figure if you don't? The female lead has a lot of swimsuit scenes. Your figure matters a lot."

Laura reacted and instantly understood why the girls had been blushing as they went out.

She went red too and stammered, "Could – could I not..."

The director's frown deepened.

Laura was feeling awkward not over the female lead needing to wear a swimsuit, but that Maria hadn't told her about it beforehand.

Besides, normally, if they were auditioning for this type of scene, to keep things level, they usually had several people audition at once, keeping things from getting awkward and also keeping the actresses safe.

But other than the cameraman outside right now, there was only the director in the room.

Seeing her stand there without moving, the director snapped, "Are you stripping or not? If you're not, just leave. There's still other people waiting."

Laura bit her lip and didn't want to embarrass the company, so she said through gritted teeth, "Can I change into a leotard first? You can still see someone's figure through a leotard."

The director laughed irritably.

"Why don't you film it in a sweater, then? Is this your first day on the job? Getting so hung up over something like this – how are you supposed to be an actress from now on? If you don't want to audition, don't waste my time. Scram!"

With that, he flipped over a list of names in his hand and called, "Next."

Soon, another young and pretty girl walked in.

Laura was squashed to the side. The girl swiftly took off her clothes, revealing her skintight underwear, and turned around a few times in front of the director, smiling all the way, as if there was nobody before her.

Watching from the side, Laura was blushing bright red. The director, on the other hand, was squinting lustfully at the girl's form, nodding repeatedly.

"Not bad. Stay on! You start in three days."

"Really? Thank you, director!"

The girl replied, overjoyed. The director waved at her. "Come here!"

She walked over, and the director squeezed her chest, saying contentedly, "Yep, it's real. Okay, you can go!"

The girl didn't seem to think anything even of that. After getting dressed, she left excitedly.

Laura clearly saw the director pinch his fingertips after she left, muttering to himself, "Nice, copped a feel."

She was in shock!

Her basic values were being challenged!

That lascivious gaze and tone was treating her like she wasn't even there.

Laura's face changed, and she only felt nauseous.

"Uh, sorry, but I'll pass. I'm leaving."

She said, and hurriedly left. The director didn't stop her, only scoffing disdainfully up his nose.

At this day and age, did she really think she could keep pure just because she was a bit famous?

She'd only scraped through with luck so far. When she came up on a few more walls, she'd recognize reality soon enough.

With that many pretty girls trying to get into entertainment, she was far from the only catch, so he never forced anyone.

Without even trying, countless girls were trying to climb into his bed for a chance, much less the ones he expressed interest in.

Thinking of that, his eyes gleamed as he looked at the girl who'd auditioned just then on the list. Then he called his assistant.

"Hey, there's a girl today in the audition who caught my eye. I want her in my room tonight."

...

Laura left the hotel and went straight back to the cast.

When Maria called her in the afternoon to ask her about the situation, she told her the truth outright.

Maria hadn't known it'd be like this.

Apologetically, she said, "Sorry, a friend introduced me to that gig. I didn't know it'd be like that. I heard you were pressed for money, so I wanted you to try, since they were offering a lot of pay. If this was the case with them, let's leave it alone."

Laura nodded, remembered something, and hurriedly said, "You haven't told anyone that I'm running low on money, right?"

Maria was obviously busy, and her voice was noncommittal. "I'm not a gossipmonger; why would I tell anyone?"

Laura heaved a sigh of relief.

President's Sweet Wife

Chapter 378 Keep Her Secret

"If you didn't say anything, that's fine. You have to keep this a secret for me. I don't want too many people to know."

"Okay, I've got it. Don't worry! If I've got any other good jobs, I'll tell you about it."

"Sure. Thanks."

Laura hung up and sat there for a while, staring into space, then took out her phone and tapped into her bank account's remaining balance.

Looking at the four-digit number there, she had to laugh bitterly.

No one in this world could have imagined that someone like her – a proper up and coming actress, who'd won awards, who was now reasonably famous, who was a new star being showcased by the company – only had three thousand to her name!

Celebrities were supposed to have unlimited potential in the eyes of the public, so how was it that when it came to her, she ended up like this!

Laura sighed. At that moment, her phone suddenly rang.

She looked at the caller, her face changing rapidly.

Her finger hovered over the decline button, but after hesitating for a while, she still took the call.

On the other end, there came a raspy male voice.

"I thought you wouldn't take the call. Looks like you still aren't that heartless."

Laura walked to a quiet corner and muttered, "What did you call me for?"

"Me? I miss my sweet daughter, of course, so I'm calling specifically to ask about you!"

Laura raged, "I already told you, I have nothing to do with you! Stop calling me your daughter, my name's Davies, and yours is Jackson; we're not blood-related!"

The caller chuckled.

“Is that so? But I did raise you for ten years, and plenty of people then could have proven that you’re my daughter. Now that my daughter has struck it rich, you should be helping your old father, shouldn’t you?”

Laura’s eyes reddened as she steamed.

“Didn’t I give you money three months ago? You’ve gone gambling again, haven’t you?”

The caller clearly sounded guilty.

“No, I just... tried my luck, who’d have thought my luck would be that bad?”

“I don’t have money!”

Laura roared without even thinking about it. “I already told you to stop gambling, but you just wouldn’t listen and came to me every time you lost it all. You really think I’m an endless piggy bank? I don’t have a single cent to my name right now, and even if I did, I wouldn’t give it to you. That’s that, I’m hanging up!”

With that, she hung up right away.

The man called her several more times, but Laura didn’t take it.

In her fury, she up and dragged his number into her blacklist.

To the side, Iris the assistant walked over.

“What’s wrong, Miss Davies? Why do you look so upset?”

Laura hurriedly reined in her expression and forced a smile. “It’s nothing.”

“Oh, that’s good, then. Right, I wanted to ask for a day off. It’s my mother’s birthday tomorrow. I want to go be with her for the day. Is that okay?”

Laura blinked, then hurriedly nodded. “Of course, that’s nothing. Go back right away tomorrow.”

Iris smiled and nodded gratefully. “Thank you, Miss Davies.”

After getting off work at night, Laura dragged her lone, tired body back to the hotel.

The moment she got out of the car, a hand clamped itself over her mouth and dragged her to a corner.

She struggled desperately but was no match for her captor’s strength, and could only let herself get manhandled.

The moment the hand loosened, she tried to scream, but a familiar voice rang out. “It’s me.”

Laura jolted.

It was dim in the carpark, and they were in a corner. Despite all that, when she turned around, she still saw the man’s features in detail.

“Dad! What are you doing here?”

She cried in shock, then recalled something and her face changed.

"I told you that we no longer have anything to do with each other, so don't come find me at all!"

With that, she tried to leave, but the man pulled her back.

He sneered, "You were just calling me Dad, and now we have nothing to do with another? Even a swing doesn't flip-flop that quickly."

He spoke, then looked around and muttered, "It's not safe to talk here. We'll talk upstairs."

With that, he sped towards the elevator with her in tow.

They went straight to her room and Laura closed all the curtains on the windows, making sure no tabloid could get a shot on them, then exhaled.

She turned and looked coldly at the grubby, middle-aged man before her. "What did you come to me for?"

The middle-aged man was named Diego Jackson.

He was Laura's stepfather and adopted father.

Diego sat down casually on the sofa, saying, "What else? They're really cracking down on trying to collect my debt, so I came for money."

"I don't have money!"

At just a mention of that, Laura's face changed as she barked, "Leave now, I don't want to see you again!"

Diego was a scumbag, and as a wandering sleazeball, he was used to being yelled at and didn't care. He smirked, "Sure, I can leave. I'm just afraid that after I leave here today, there's going to be hot headline news over Laura Davies' dirty laundry. We can bet on it if you don't believe me!"

"You!"

Laura fumed, her expression shifting from pale to beet red, temporarily incapable of speaking.

Seeing that, Diego's smirk grew even wider. "Getting back on track, if I hadn't taken pity on your mother and you and taken you two in, would you have gotten as far as you have today? What? Now that you're famous and you've left the nest, you want to leave me to die on my own? That's a bit too slimy of you!"

"I'm the slimy one?"

Laura's fingertips trembled with rage. "All these years, who was it who paid your debts for you? When you became a junkie, beat people up, and ended up in the station, who was it who bailed you out? Without me, you'd have been cut up into pieces by everyone you've wronged already!"

"Yes, yes! It's all your doing."

Diego just went with it and nodded, "That's why I can only come to you. They've got guns, you know? Guns, saying that if I don't pay them back, they'll put a round through my head. What could I do?"

Laura couldn't deal with him and sat down on the sofa, growling, "So how much do you owe this time?"

"Not much. Three million."

"What?"

She shrieked, "Three million? You think I'm a bank?"

Diego lifted his eyes and shot her a sidelong glance, leering, "Keep pretending. Everyone knows you're a hot up and coming star in the entertainment business. A single role makes you up to dozens of millions. What's a few of those zeroes for me?"

"That money isn't my own!"

Laura was pale with rage as she yelled, "The pay goes to the company. The company gets a cut, the agent gets a cut, and then how much do you think I get? You can't really think that all the effort I put into filming is all meant to go into this bottomless pit of yours."

Hearing that, Diego grew a bit impatient as his gaze turned cold.

"You really don't have any?"

Laura doubled down decisively. "I don't!"

"Okay!"

Diego stood, as scummy as ever. "If that's the case, then I'll have to turn to someone else. I hear you've been getting in good with a certain young master by the name of Beton, right? Isn't he chasing your skirt? If I can't count on my daughter, I'll have to count on my son-in-law."

Chapter 379 All Come to Ruin

With that, he rose to leave.

Laura blinked, then her expression turned ugly as she reacted and blocked his path. "What are you trying to do?"

Diego sneered at her. "I told you. I'm going to see my son-in-law about some pocket change. That's not going too far, is it!"

Laura's chest was about to explode.

"Have some shame, will you? I've got nothing to do with him! We just ate together a few times as investor and lead actress. Even if he really did feel something for me, we're not even together, so by what right are you asking him for money?"

Diego leered. "Not my business. You deal with it."

"You!"

Laura was getting a headache from her rage. She knew her adopted father was a slimeball, but she'd never thought he'd stoop this low.

All these years, she'd looked carefree and relaxed, but nobody knew her own pain deep inside.

Ever since her birth father had died ten years ago, she'd fallen overnight into hell, and had never climbed back up.

After a while, she sucked in a deep breath with red eyes. "I really don't have money right now. If you want it, wait until I finish shooting this show right now. That's the only way. Otherwise, it'll all come to ruin, so do what you want. I can't manage anything more..."

Seeing that, Diego was still dissatisfied, but knew there wasn't a better way out.

So he grudgingly said, "Fine, when do you finish shooting the show?"

"The end of the month, probably!"

"Okay, I'll wait until the end of the month. Don't go back on your word, or... heh, you get it."

Laura choked, not sure what to say.

She rubbed her brow tiredly, saying, "Just go. I'll tell you when I have the money."

Only then was Diego content to leave.

...

After Diego left, Laura sat in her room, silent for a long while.

About a dozen or so minutes had passed when she sighed, took up her phone, and dialed a number.

It only took a few trills for the receiver to pick up.

Laura asked carefully, "Maria, it's... I want to ask a favor, if that's okay."

On the other end of the line, Maria's voice was as cool as always. "What favor?"

"I... I want to have my pay in advance, is that okay?"

Maria frowned.

The agent paused, then replied, "I don't have a say over it. Do you need it urgently?"

Laura bit her lip, then said yes.

"Let's do this, then! I'll ask about it for you. The pay is usually calculated after the cast is dismissed, but if they can do it beforehand, I'll have them send it to you in advance."

Maria was talking in completely businesslike terms, but even so, Laura was grateful.

She hastily said, "All right. Thank you, Maria."

"Sure."

The line hung up. Laura massaged her nervous heart and relaxed slightly, walking back towards her quarters.

At that moment, on the other side.

After Maria hung up, she told Elsa about the incident.

Hearing what had happened, Elsa was quite surprised.

Considering that Laura might need the money for some emergency, though, she didn't overthink it.

But this show was primarily being invested in by Annie International. Star Entertainment was just attached to it on the side, and she didn't have a say over that.

Natalia wasn't managing Annie International anymore, so this was strictly business. Because of that, she didn't ask Natalia and handed in a request on that side directly.

The following day, the results came out.

The answer they'd given was that they couldn't give out pay in advance with no such regulations in the company, so she couldn't do anything about that.

Laura was gravely disappointed.

But she knew that Maria was doing her enough of a favor by even asking about it. So even though she was disappointed, she still thanked her.

Back at the cast, she was troubled over it the entire morning.

She usually didn't get called for retakes, but because of this incident, she wasn't focused today, and the director had to call for cuts again and again.

With so many cuts, the people around started gabbing.

The director was exasperated, too.

He walked out from behind the recording monitor and said, "What's with you today? Have you got something on your mind? Why couldn't you get in the zone?"

Laura lowered her head and bit her lip.

After a while, she gritted her teeth and said, "One more time, director, let me try again."

The director frowned at her.

Even someone hopelessly obtuse could tell that Laura had something weighing on her. With her like this, no matter how hard she worked, the results wouldn't be satisfactory.

Finally, he waved her off and muttered, "All right, I can see you're tired. Get some rest. If there's anything you need to deal with, deal with it first. We'll shoot the scenes you need to shoot today tomorrow."

Then he turned to the supervisor to the side and ordered, "Have Sally come over. We'll shoot her scenes today first."

"Okay, I'll call for her."

The director sat back behind the monitor as the supervisor went to fetch Sally. Soon, the scene switched to the one Sally needed to shoot.

Laura stood there, biting her lip, feeling a rush of shame.

She knew that she wasn't performing well today. Even though she'd tried to get immersed in the role, she just couldn't do it.

Seeing Sally saunter over in costume, she could only step to the side helplessly.

Noticing how distracted she was, the director frowned and urged, "You can't focus on two things at once. If something really has come up for you, deal with that first. Half a day or a day's delay is nothing in shooting. When you're done, we can continue with the scene afterwards."

Laura nodded. "I've got it. Thanks, director."

Leaving the set, she returned to the cast's hotel, showered, and lay in bed, staring dully at her phone.

She was in a daze. At a time like this, she really didn't know who to contact.

It wasn't that she hadn't thought of turning to Natalia. That amount of money was nothing to her now.

But she had her own pride, and knew her own situation. Diego was a bottomless pit. It was enough for her to be in such bad luck, but she didn't need to drag her friends into that pit with her.

Unless she absolutely had to, she wouldn't ask it of a friend.

Just as she was ruminating, her phone suddenly rang.

She jolted, lifted her phone, and saw it was Max.

She was a bit confused.

This man never contacted her at all for as long as she could remember, so what was he doing calling her at a time like this?

She didn't want to take it and hung up right away. After all, it couldn't be anything serious.

On the other end, Max sat on his office chair, legs crossed, waiting expectantly for the woman to pick up, but then she just hung up on him!

She hung up!

Max looked at the dark phone screen and steamed.

This damn woman! Hanging up on him?

Max was always popular wherever he went, but it was just her who kept on wising off to him.

What kind of temperament was this? It was so tough and prickly!

He ground his teeth and, after a while, sent her a text.

"Hanging up on me? The hell?"

Laura looked at the text and sneered.

She replied with a single, "Heh!"

Max could almost picture her stubborn, disdainful look.

He was fuming.

He looked at the phone and scoffed.

Fine, let it drag on! She'd end up with him eventually!

President's Sweet Wife

Chapter 380 Unutterable Predicament

Over the following few days, Diego gave her several more phone calls, chasing after the money with increasing urgency.

Laura was about to be driven insane. Sometimes, she really just wanted to let him expose everything and stop giving a damn!

As much as she liked acting, as much as she wanted to be an actress, she was done. If she was to lose everything she had now, fine, she didn't care!

But thinking of her mother still in hospital, her heart throbbed, suppressing every wishful thought of giving up the struggle.

She couldn't afford to break here!

If even she fell, what would happen to her mother?

At that moment, she received a call from Maria.

Maria was a blunt person who never minced her words or muddled her methods.

The moment they connected, she went right to the point. "Do you really need money badly right now?"

Laura floundered, then nodded hastily. "Yes."

"Okay. Tomorrow night, there's going to be a stage event. A friend of mine lost a couple of celebrities. It's not with Star but another company. I've told them about you and to bring you along. It doesn't pay much, but it can still round out to about a few hundred K. Only, after the event ends, you need to go have dinner with them. Is that okay?"

Laura hurriedly said, "It's okay."

"Great. I'll notify you tomorrow."

"All right. Thank you, Maria."

Hanging up, Laura finally sighed with relief.

Thinking that she'd make a sum of money after tomorrow, her heart was somewhat settled.

The following day, Laura asked for a day off from the cast and went on the scene.

When she arrived, she found that it was a car exhibition. Every model attending was either an outer-circle model or a seventh to eighth tier actress.

They counted as celebrities, but to put it a bit more rudely, they were women wandering around the edges of the entertainment industry.

These models were mostly pretty with great figures, only missing a chance to shine. So even though they knew that a car show like this was probably not purely simply, they still fought to get a spot here.

Maria hadn't been a famous agent before, and only got into Star Entertainment because she'd brought up a few decent ones.

As for the celebrities under her banner, other than Laura being a notable second-tier, the rest were rookies.

Laura didn't know what these models' relationship was with Maria, but they were probably acquaintances.

Maria had said it herself. This was an event her friend was responsible for. These models weren't too famous, but it was a good chance for them to get involved in the car exhibition.

After all, in this day and age, pretty girls trying to get into entertainment were like sand in the desert. It was good to have an opportunity to advance.

Laura didn't really want to get involved in an event like this, but to take care of urgent business, she couldn't pick and choose.

After getting changed offstage, she went out with everyone.

The work was simple enough, but Laura was small and only stood at one meter sixty-three. It wasn't too short for an ordinary girl, but it would be hard to pick her out from the models.

So after her makeup was done, the costume handler gave her a twelve-centimeter-high pair of shoes, with a small, narrow heel.

Wearing them all through the afternoon, her feet ached.

But thinking of the hundred K, she felt it was worth the pain, so she grinned and bore it.

Then, though, after the entire afternoon of stage work was complete, the staff members walked in from outside, clapped their hands and said, "Don't go, everybody, the businessmen in charge have put together a dinner, so we're going to attend."

Laura started.

Maria had told her that they'd probably have to have dinner together after work.

But with so many models having come in to work – there were over a dozen of them – it shouldn't have taken everyone. So, she was pondering how to refuse.

Then at that moment, a girl next to her spoke for her.

"My stomach's not feeling too good, George. Can I take a pass?"

The staff member called George sneered. "Can you pass on your attendance pay today, too?"

The girl who'd been asked the question blushed instantly, biting her lip, not daring to speak.

To the side, Laura saw it all and wasn't dumb or bold enough to bring up leaving first.

The one called George went out, and everyone heaved a collective sigh of relief.

They gathered round, muttering a few complaints, but no one said anything else.

Laura looked around and cautiously asked someone next to her, "Why are they having us all go for dinner? Where are we going?"

The girl she'd asked had participated in events like this before, so she knew the way things went.

Hearing the question, the girl shot her a look. "First time, eh."

Laura nodded.

"Then watch out tonight. In our line of work, sometimes, you just have to pay attention and stay alert. If you're smart, you'll be fine. They're all out for a good time and won't force anything."

Laura blinked, then heard her words and frowned.

The girl continued, smiling, "It's strange, really. We're in this event to scrape a living, so it's natural for us, but you're a proper celebrity, so what are you going there for? You can't be pressed for a hundred grand."

Laura floundered, then forced a smile.

"I'm just here to take a look. Haven't done this before. It's experience."

Hearing that, the girl snickered.

"Sure, then experience it for yourself!"

With that, she changed and walked over to the restroom.

Laura stood there, a little embarrassed. But some reasons were best left to oneself. So she could only follow them out.

They were eating in the city, at a high-end luxury hotel.

Laura got out of the car with everyone and walked inside.

She'd changed back to her own clothes. A white, casual outfit that looked pure and energetic, but also seemed a bit dull.

She'd dressed like that deliberately.

After all, in an environment like this, if she wasn't in more low-profile clothes, it'd be dangerous.

George looked at her as he led them over and frowned a bit contemptuously.

But he didn't say anything about it as he led everyone to the top, eighth floor.

They took the elevator all the way up, reached the eighth floor, passed a lavish lobby, and stopped at the door of a VIP compartment.

Even through the door, they could hear the bustling music and loud activity coming from inside.

A server opened the door for them, and the stink of wealth immediately wafted out.

Laura had to cover her nose. George walked in first, grinning, "Sorry we're late. Traffic jam on the way."