

Chapter 496 Who's Problematic?

What an ordinary and inspiring day!

Before Nicole opened her eyes, she received Yvette's incessant call.

Without needing to think, Nicole knew that the only one who would call her at this time was her best friend.

When she picked up, her voice was hoarse and lazy. "Hello?"

Yvette spoke in a hurry, "Nicole, you're on the hot topic again!"

Nicole's eyes widened and felt wide awake.

"Didn't everyone leave last night? Why didn't Xander leave and even send you off? Everyone thought that he was Eric Ferguson and thought that you guys were back together, but Eric's friend posted another photo denying the matter. Someone then found out that it was Xander."

Nicole's heart sank slightly.

She knew very well what Xander meant to the public.

the public.

It meant that her past relationship would once again become the talk of the town.

Xander's face would become everyone's target of speculation. Was he a replacement? Or her new love interest?

Nicole could already think of all the headlines that followed.

"I suspect that Xander deliberately hired someone to do this. What should we do, Nikki? If I'd known, I wouldn't have allowed Julie to take him back to Mediana!"

Yvette spoke with self-blame, remorse, and guilt.

"Forget it, I know that you mean well. I'll contact Dominic Young to find a way to suppress it, so don't think too much about it. Tell Jules to keep the others from last night in check. It'll be best if she can really produce a talent show."

Even if it was aborted later, it did not matter.

They needed at least a little semblance of the supposed talent show.

"Okay, I'll tell her."

Yvette understood what Nicole meant and quickly hung up the call.

Nicole scrolled through the news and got a general understanding of the stage of development this news was at.

[This guy is really Eric Ferguson's lookalike! Nicole found a replacement. What a pity!]

[Previously, Eric Ferguson was so humble wanting to reconcile his relationship with Nicole, but now, Nicole would rather find a lookalike than look at him, so who's the problematic one in this relationship?]

[She really is the heiress of Stanton Corporation! She can have anyone she wants in a matter of words. Your idols need to work harder!]

[Nicole's private life is so messy! Perhaps this is just the superiority of rich women... My heart aches for Eric Ferguson!]

[I'll always support Nicole! Only someone as capable as her can find a double!]

[Cheering for Fabian!]

[Cheering for Miles!]

[Cheering for Miles!]

[Cheering for Nathaniel!]

.....

Nicole was speechless with all the comments she saw online and dialed Dominic Young's number.

Dominic Young was probably just as shocked as she was.

When he received her call, he said, "President Nicole, don't worry. I've already started to suppress this news, but you need to be mentally prepared for any backlash because netizens are very sensitive to using privilege to manipulate the news. I'm afraid it won't be as simple as before because it'll look very abrupt. If Eric Ferguson didn't say anything, it'll probably pass after two days, but who knew his friend would post a photo to clarify his whereabouts? Did you two get into a disagreement?"

Nicole was silent for a few seconds. She ignored his last question and instructed in a calm voice, "There's no need to withdraw it then. Get someone to sign on Xander. Not everyone deserves to ride on my popularity. Didn't he want to be

my popularity. Didn't he want to be popular? Instead of letting others make money, why not get this money ourselves?"

Dominic clicked his tongue. He had long wanted to do this, but he dared not mention it.

Now that Nicole brought it up herself, he would naturally oblige.

"Okay! I'll contact his agent right now."

"Mr. Young, you don't have to be kind to him. Arrange everything and anything for him so that he'll get addicted to this sudden fame."

Dominic instantly understood what Nicole meant.

This was just a momentary hype. After it was over, Xander would be abandoned and left hanging.

'Huh, it's true that not everyone can afford to ride on Nicole's popularity...'
Dominic thought.

"Don't worry. I'll squeeze every last drop of oil out of him!"

Dominic spoke nonchalantly.

Chapter 497 Betraying Nicole

After hanging up the phone, Nicole went to work as usual.

Imperial Gardens.

As soon as Toto saw the hot topic, he was so scared that he could not sleep anymore, especially after seeing the rebuttal from Eric's friend. He felt like it was completely over.

That was a detrimental friend!

This was such a good opportunity to protect Nicole that they could never wish for.

That man who walked Nicole to the car really looked like Eric if one did not look too carefully.

Toto did not dare to delay this and went upstairs to knock on the door apprehensively.

Eric drowned himself in alcohol and had anger pent up inside. When he opened the door, he glared coldly at Toto. "Speak!"

Toto took out his phone. "Mr. Ferguson, you should see it for yourself..."

One minute...

Two minutes...

Five minutes passed.

Eric's face turned increasingly glum.

He was the main character and had not been successful with Nicole, yet his double had already surpassed him?

The internet was filled with cries of sympathy for Eric.

It was not just sympathy. Everyone was just watching the drama.

Eric's heart was bitter and angry.

In the next second, the phone shattered into pieces on the floor.

Toto looked at the wreckage of his phone with pain. It was quite an expensive phone!

However, he dared not say anything. "Mr. Ferguson, should we do something about it?"

Eric's eyes were bloodshot from anger. "Go and get it withdrawn! I don't want to see anything about this!"

anything about this!

Toto quickly responded and called Mitchell, who was more experienced in handling such matters.

Eric went back to his room and took out his phone just as Keith called.

“Ferg, don’t get angry with what I’m about to tell you...”

“Who’s that person who’s meddling online?” Eric asked.

“You found out?” Keith secretly felt bad for the guy.

He knew all too well about Eric’s feelings for Nicole.

Their friend was “kind” enough to clear Eric’s name but doing so put Nicole in an awkward situation. Moreover, it made Eric look like he wanted to save himself and betray Nicole.

How could Eric tolerate such a thing?

Thus, as soon as Keith saw this, he tried to intercede in this matter.

However, he was still a step too late.

“Tell me!” Eric’s voice was cold with a compelling bitterness.

"Tell me!" Eric's voice was cold with a compelling bitterness.

Keith pursed his lips. "It's Yannick Zabinski..."

Even if Keith did not tell him, Eric would still find out.

Eric hung up the phone and called Mitchell. His mind was clear as he instructed. "Immediately announce that we're cutting off all cooperation with the Zabinskis.

Mitchell froze for a moment. "Yes, Mr. Ferguson."

Such a big thing happened so suddenly.

Mitchell guessed that it was related to what happened last night.

Eric calmly rubbed the corners of his lips. His eyes had a hidden ruthlessness.

Soon, the situation on the internet suddenly reversed.

Dominic Young released a statement with the company's official account.

Xander was a new artist that signed with Falcon Entertainment who was ready to

Falcon Entertainment who was ready to make his debut in Mediana through a talent show that Nicole invested in. His meeting with Nicole last night was completely accidental.

In just a few words, Nicole's involvement in this was wiped away cleanly.

There were quite a few people present at the time, so there was no need to explain.

Gradually, the discussion took a turn. Everyone became less obsessed if Xander was just Eric's replacement. There was also no response from Ferguson Corporation, so the discussion was not as rigorous.

It was just that everyone felt a little strange about Xander's debut. They started cursing Falcon Entertainment for generating hype just for the money.

No one knew that Falcon Entertainment was under Stanton Corporation, so they only pointed the finger at the unscrupulous media.

Dominic sat in his office, annoyed and cursing up a storm. Anyway, he was sure to profit off of this!

o profit off of this!

From the beginning, Nicole did not officially respond to this like she did not take this trivial matter to heart.

The discussion that had gradually died down suddenly got stirred up again before the end of the day.

That was because Eric Ferguson had acquired Yannick Zabinski's family business.

Chapter 498 A Date

It was hard not to connect the two things that happened on the same day.

Everyone found out after a deeper investigation that Yannick Zabinski was the person who posted the photo to clear Eric's name.

However, everyone's speculation was futile.

Ferguson Corporation did not miss out on the formalities of acquiring a small business.

Many in the circle felt that Eric's methods were too ruthless.

There were many complaints about his style of handling this.

Yannick only posted a photo, but Eric pushed the Zabinskis to the brink of extinction in a fit of anger.

However, no one could stop Eric's fury.

This was a lesson for everyone.

The matter gradually passed, and Xander's name came into the public eye. Although everyone did not have a very

Although everyone did not have a very good initial impression of Xander, a lot of people still supported him because he had Eric Ferguson's domineering face.

Dominic Young also put Xander's popularity to good use and arranged many activities for him and got him to do live streaming during his free time.

J&L Corporation.

The stipulated meetings of the project were important and required the presence of all four parties.

When Nicole arrived, Gerard Lichman, Eric Ferguson, and Clayton Sloan were already sitting in the conference room.

Their eyes were calm when they saw her coming as if they did not know that she was a frequent visitor on the hot topics lately.

No one knew if it was intentional that Eric and Clayton sat opposite each other with an empty seat beside each of them.

Nicole swept a glance and sat next to Clayton without much thought and expression.

Seeing this, Gerard shot Eric a meaningful look.

Clayton gently passed the meeting materials to her. "Ms. Stanton, we should congratulate Mr. Ferguson for his leg recovery."

With that, Eric, who had just mustered up the courage to speak to Nicole, was rendered speechless. His eyes sank as he glared at Clayton with cold indifference.

'Is he doing this on purpose?' Eric thought.

Gerard chimed in, "Yes, indeed..."

Nicole curled up her lips, but her eyes were filled with indifference and ridicule.

"Congratulations, Mr. Ferguson."

'This stupid liar!'

Eric could barely hold up his expression and nodded slightly. "Thank you."

Clayton said, "In fact, I recently got the news that many AI enthusiasts abroad want to invest in this project. It's mostly to everyone's benefit, but their conditions are all different."

Gerard replied, "If a large amount of capital is injected, it'll surely push our project to an admirable scale, but if the progress doesn't go smoothly, it'll have a devastating ending and it'll be more difficult to start again. Out of consideration for the protection of our core technology, I'm not in favor of it."

Eric hooked his lips. "They're just eyeing our project and want to squeeze us out of the game. Even if we want capital injection, we need to consider all aspects. Not to mention, we haven't yet reached this stage."

Clayton nodded in agreement.

Nicole raised her eyebrows and did not have an opinion about this.

Throughout the meeting, Nicole and Clayton had more interaction and had a very tacit understanding of each other. They would understand what the other party wanted to say with one look.

Eric was left out and felt bitter about it.

As soon as the meeting ended, Clayton leaned over and spoke to Nicole in a gentle tone.

tone.
"Ms. Stanton, let's have lunch together. Is there anything you'd like to eat?"

Before Nicole could say anything, Gerard answered, "I wanna join."

Eric chimed in. "Me too."

Nicole said, "Oh, then you guys can go ahead. I still have something to do."

There was a momentary stagnation in the air.

Nicole slowly packed up her things and left.

Gerard sensed that the atmosphere was not right and looked at Clayton.

"Mr. Sloan, you could've invited us along just now. Only inviting Ms. Stanton is misleading. It sounds like you want to date her."

Clayton smiled lightly and glanced at Eric.

"Indeed, I do."

Chapter 499 Clueless

Gerard Lichman could not bring himself to smile because he could clearly feel the tension in the air.

Eric's eyes were gloomy and cold as he met Clayton's deep and arrogant gaze without flinching.

"It seems that some people don't have any self-awareness."

"Mr. Ferguson, if you don't have any, why should I?" ①

This was considered an official confrontation.

Clayton laughed and turned to leave.

Eric snorted. His smile was arrogant and ruthless with a hint of powerlessness.

The room was extremely chilly.

The lobby of J&L Corporation.

Nicole stood in front of the huge floor-to-ceiling window with her phone. She was on a call and looked very relaxed as she stared out the window with a faint smile while she held her coat with one hand.

while she held her hat with one hand. She seemed pleased with herself.

Seeing Clayton walking over, Nicole hung up the phone. "Mr. Sloan, is there something else?"

Clayton had his hand in his pocket as he smiled at her. "The most pressing thing now is treating you to lunch."

This was the second time he asked today, so it was not good to refuse.

Nicole paused and chuckled. "Okay, but it should be my treat."

She only refused earlier because she did not want to share the same table with Eric Ferguson. Without Eric there, she had no worries.

The two of them got into the same car, which was seen by Eric, who was standing upstairs.

A thick coldness shrouded his body.

The displeasure in Eric's heart was shown on his face. Even his chest felt stuffy.

Gerard cleared his throat. "Don't be sad. Leaving together doesn't mean anything."

leaving together doesn't mean anything,

He could only give Eric such dry consolation. 'Why didn't Eric appreciate Nicole back when they were married if he likes her so much?' 2

Clayton and Nicole went to a private restaurant. The customers there were all regulars.

It was situated in a suburban villa with a nice environment. The food served was also delicious.

Nicole came here with Yvette and her friends a few times before, but a reservation was needed to enter.

The restaurant's business that day was too good. They even met quite a few acquaintances when they arrived.

Keith Ludwig and Colton White were also there.

Since Nicole was not friends with them, there was no need to exchange pleasantries. They then went to a quiet spot.

Clayton handed her a wet wipe for her hands and smiled gently. "I have a feeling that you're uncomfortable because of

that you're uncomfortable because of what I said last time?"

"Mm, a little."

Nicole was very straightforward. There was no need to hide it.

It would be strange if she was unmoved by it.

Clayton chuckled. "Sorry, that was my fault for being too abrupt, but it was effective."

Nicole said, "I don't want to waste time on relationships, but I appreciate your good intentions, Mr. Sloan."

"Ms. Stanton, may I ask why you rejected me so curtly? Are you dissatisfied with me in any way?"

Clayton's smile was sincere and genuine, which made her relax.

Nicole raised an eyebrow. "No. If it's a marriage alliance, you are indeed a good partner, but I can generate the value that a marriage alliance will bring by myself."

Clayton instantly understood Nicole's words. If he was only pursuing her for the sake of profit and a marriage alliance,

sake of profit and a marriage alliance, Nicole was unfazed by it.

She was not the type to sell herself for profit.

If it was not for profit, there did not seem to be any feelings to speak of between them.

The atmosphere was silent for a moment. Clayton's eyes were gentle as he rubbed his temples.

His tone was apologetic, and his voice was low.

"This is poor consideration on my part. I'm not pursuing you for the sake of a marriage alliance. What if I said that it was for selfish reasons? I've admired you for a long time."

Nicole poured a cup of tea with lowered eyes. When she heard the last sentence, her wrist shook slightly.

The fragrance of the tea filled the space. A few drops of clear brown liquid spilled out of the cup. It suddenly felt as if the blazing warm sun was shining on her.

The momentary fluttering of her heart

The momentary fl●ering of her heart made her slightly shaken.

However, she soon regained her composure. Her voice was a few degrees colder than earlier.

“Except for business matters, we don’t know each other well. I can even say that we’re clueless about each other, so how long exactly is a long time for you, Mr. Sloan?”

Chapter 500 You're Not Welcomed Here

Nicole was suspicious of Clayton's deceitful blather. She was not someone who could be coaxed with mere words.

Clayton met her gaze and said frankly, "Less than a year... But every day since I met you, I've been very happy to find out that you're single. Nicole, let's start anew. My name is Clayton Sloan. I was widowed three years ago, and I have a son."

He lowered his eyes and smiled a little self-deprecatingly. "I know that sounds like poor conditions, but I have a lot of money. I'm not quite sure on the exact amount, but if you want to know, I can get someone to tally it up, but it may take a little longer because I can't remember all the assets that I have. Also..."

Clayton paused for a moment. He looked serious, and his warm gaze seemed to glow.

"Michael is actually my late brother's son. Due to certain religious beliefs and traditions, I had no choice but to marry Michael's mother so that her family

Michael's mother would agree to her giving birth to Michael."

Nicole stiffened. She suddenly did not know what to say.

His self-deprecating look earlier made her feel a little loss for words.

This secret also made her heavy-hearted.

No one probably knew about this secret, yet Clayton opened up to her about this.

Nicole's heart ached for Michael. Her mood was very complicated.

Clayton continued, "I'm only telling you about this because this is my biggest secret. Don't feel burdened by it. I originally intended to wait for Michael to get older before telling him about this"

Nicole pursed her lips. She seemed to have inadvertently touched Clayton's sadness.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to probe."

After finding out about this, Nicole could not bring herself to be happy.

Clayton seemed to reveal everything about himself with full sincerity, but what

about her?

Nicole was not at all ready to start a new relationship.

Clayton's smile was gentle and humble. "Well, I just want you to get to know me a little more. I don't want you to think that I'm only infatuated by your beauty."

Nicole gradually relaxed.

After a while, Nicole went to the bathroom.

Not far away, Keith and Colton were staring at the couple's movements. They seemed so cordial, and their stunning looks made them seem like a good match.

Keith looked at his phone anxiously. There was still no response.

He had sent Eric a message earlier, but Eric did not react.

Was Eric on the way here to kill someone?

Keith and Colton could not wait any longer. They took advantage of Nicole's absence and walked over to Clayton.

"Mr. Sloan?"

Clayton raised an eyebrow and nodded at

Clayton raised an eyebrow and nodded at the two strangers in front of him.

“Mr. Sloan, I’m Keith Ludwig from the Ludwig Corporation, and this is Colton White from White Corporation. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Keith felt that although Clayton maintained a modest and decent smile, there was something about Clayton that was so similar to Eric.

The only difference was that this feeling was more intense and obvious with Eric, while it seemed deliberately hidden with Clayton.

Keith subconsciously looked wary but thinking about his best friend Eric that was going crazy because of Nicole, he had to help somehow.

“Hello.”

Keith nonchalantly sat next to Clayton and pretended to be puzzled. “If I’m not mistaken, the one sitting here just now was Nicole Stanton?”

Clayton’s eyes darkened as he smiled and nodded his head.

He stood up trembling with an ingratiating and humble smile on his face. "I was just kidding. Why would I go about spreading rumors? I was just saying hello to Mr. Sloan..."

Nicole coldly swept a glance at him and sat on the opposite seat.

"Keith, if I'm on the hot topics, I'll make sure that you'll rank first."

Keith was shaken. His face changed slightly and instantly understood Nicole's warning tone.

'It's so hard to be Eric's bro!' Keith thought.

"I-I was wrong!"

Keith was ashamed to look at Clayton's expression. He felt like he had lost his reputation.

Nicole's voice was calm and cold. "Did Eric Ferguson put you up to this?"

Keith hesitated for a few seconds. "Of course..."

'Not!' However, he could not bring himself to say the last word. He looked at

He stiffly turned his head with a frightened expression. "N-Nicole..."

Keith's mind went blank. 'What did I just say? Divorced? Domineering and strong personality? No, I didn't say that, right?'

Nicole was indifferent and expressionless as she walked over. She curled her lips and said, "If you two know all about my affairs, you shouldn't just tell it to one person. You might as well just go to the media. Don't you think that'll have a better effect?"

Keith choked a little. 'No way! I won't dare to even if someone gave me the guts!'

Colton knew that they were in the wrong and stood to the side with his mouth shut, but his reaction was not as exaggerated as Keith's.

That was because Nicole did not have something over him. The fact that Colton almost married Melanie was just a stain on his life.

Keith was different because Nicole had his nudes. If she exposed his nudes in a fit of anger, he would not be able to show his face in public again!