52 Chapter 52 Office Politics

Elara 1

I didn't waste time thinking about Susan after our bathroom encounter. But while going through last year's business reports, I found something interesting. Susan's team was always dead last in sales numbers.

But her salary wasn't any lower than her coworkers. At the management level, she made the same as our top performers.

I asked Tyler to pull some more data for me. This Susan had only joined the company two years ago.Yet she'd already made it to management.

Everything screamed nepotism. The question was: who was backing her?

With the reports in hand, I went to Mark's office.

"Mark, are you busy?" I asked, leaning against his doorframe.

He looked up from his computer. He seemed happy to see me. "Director Park, what can I do for you?"

I noticed he was using my last name now. This guy had definitely done his homework. I decided not to correct him.

"Mark, I want to talk about pay scales in our business department," I said. I stepped inside and closed the door.

Mark raised an eyebrow. "You mean Susan?"

I was surprised he cut straight to it.

My biggest worry had been that Susan might be his spy. But his directness told me otherwise.

"Susan is definitely someone's plant in our department," he said. "Her salary is being topped up."

My eyes got narrow. "By who?"

Mark gave me a sly smile. "If I tell you now, Director Park, wouldn't that be showing my cards too early?"

"Mark, there are no cards to play," I said firmly. "I'm the majority shareholder in this company. Even my uncle Jack has no right to buy anyone's loyalty."

My directness seemed to impress him. "So you really are the former CEO's daughter."

Mark had joined the company right after my

father died. He was the only senior guy from dad's time who hadn't been forced out during the takeover. That took serious political skills.

I liked smart people. "Who else knows about this?"

Mark's smile got wider. "Besides me? No one."

That made sense. Only the head of sales would know the real performance numbers for each team. And employees weren't allowed to discuss salaries.

I nodded, then remembered something interesting. My uncle's wife worked in accounting. How had she missed this red flag?

I immediately texted my private investigator to dig into Susan's background.

After work, I hesitated about going home. I wasn't sure how to face Dominic after last night.

Unfortunately, Dominic's car was already waiting in front of our office building.

My phone buzzed with a text: [Get in.]

I stared at the flashy purple vehicle and bit my lip.

"Holy shit, is that a Bugatti? Wonder who that's for?" someone whispered nearby.

I walked faster, heading toward the back entrance.

I texted back: [Come to the back door. Too many people watching at the front.]

[Next time you pick me up, please drive something less obvious.]

I could almost picture him laughing at his phone.

After last night, my attitude toward him had changed completely. I was full of mixed feelings I didn't want to think about.

Dominic didn't seem bothered. He drove around to the back and even opened the door for me.

I quickly got inside. "Drive, drive, drive!"

Dominic hit the gas and pulled into traffic.

"I'm your legal husband, and you're acting like I'm your dirty little secret?" he teased. His voice had that rough edge that made my wolf perk up.

I pressed my lips together. "People gossip. Dominic, we need to get some things straight.

Yesterday was a mistake, and I'm willing to forget it happened."

"You're into guys anyway. Apart from pretending in front of your family, we need to keep our distance."

"You should really tell Linda the truth to avoid any more setups."

"She works for my father," Dominic said suddenly. His voice got that dangerous tone that made the hair on my arms stand up. "Unless you'd rather explain things to him yourself?"

I shut my mouth. There was no winning with him.

Today, Dominic's brother Yardley had invited us for dinner. When we arrived, I immediately spotted this famous older brother sitting on the sofa.

He looked like he'd stepped out of a business magazine. Well-dressed, with features even sharper than Dominic's, and designer glasses.

No wonder Orion was scared of his dad.

"Hello, Yardley," I said politely.

Yardley nodded. "Dominic told me about yesterday. Thank you for your help."

He turned to his son. "Orion, don't bother Aunt Elara with these problems anymore, got it?"

Orion pouted. "But you weren't there."

"You have my assistant's number," Yardley said coldly.

"That's enough!" Hunter interrupted. "You're a father who dumps everything on your assistant."

"You should spend more time with Orion!" Hunter grumbled. "Or find him a mother!"

Orion nodded eagerly, but his smile disappeared when he saw his father's stern look.

After dinner, Orion dragged me to the garden to play.

Author

Meanwhile, across town...

Alpha Zack was just finishing a business dinner when he found himself thinking about running into Elara at his nephew's school yesterday.

He had expected her to come crawling back for his help, but she hadn't called him at all.

He called his sister. "Hey, how's Ryan's injury?"

Alpha Zack's sister had been about to call him anyway. "Zack, this school is insane! My son gets beat up, and they want Ryan to apologize!"

"Do you know their principal? Could you put in a word for me?"

Zack's eye twitched. "The other family knows the principal?"

"Apparently they have serious connections. They even got Ryan's teacher transferred."

Zack's eyes narrowed. He remembered how the boy had called Elara "Auntie."

So his uncle had pulled strings?And Elara had really found some powerful guy to shack up with?