

Divorce 771

Chapter 771 The Special Day

For some reason, the lingering smell of blood in my memory was too intense, making the breakfast in front of me tasteless.

After a few bites, I pushed away the breakfast. Atlas asked, "Why are you eating so little? Don't you like it?"

I shook my head, looking at him. "It's not that I don't like it. I just can't eat."

Instinctively, I reached for my temple and rubbed it.

Atlas nervously grabbed my wrist. "What's wrong? Another headache?"

"Yeah, maybe I had a nightmare. I didn't sleep well. It'll pass in a bit. Don't worry!" I quickly perked up, fearing he would make a big deal out of it.

Atlas quickly finished his meal and placed the used dishes in the sink.

Just as he finished cleaning up, the doorbell rang again. I was about to answer it when he grabbed my arm. "I'll go!"

Atlas strode toward the front door. I turned curiously, thinking about how noisy today had been. It seemed like the doorbell hadn't stopped ringing since Oliver came and rang it at midnight.

I saw Atlas open the door without saying a word. He received two large bags and closed the door again.

Then he walked in, pulling me along. "Let's change our clothes."

"What are you holding?" I asked curiously.

He raised his arm, casually saying, "These are our clothes for today. It's something special."

His mood seemed very cheerful. He held my hand, and we returned to our room upstairs.

I was still lost. When we moved to Pleca Park, we took all our clothes with us. Why did we have to get some delivered? Did he arrange this?

Back in the room, he opened the bags and pulled out two sets of clothes. One was an exquisite white suit for him, and the other was a beautiful white dress for me.

I was stunned by the sight of the two outfits. "Are we supposed to wear these today?"

He gave me an enchanting smile,

looking at me indulgently. "Have you forgotten what we're doing today? It's an important day for us. We need to be more formal, considering it's the beginning of our new life."

It suddenly dawned on me that he was referring to our marriage registration.

It seemed he genuinely considered this event very important and arranged it meticulously. Even the clothes were prepared without me knowing.

I asked calmly, "When did you plan all of this? Why wasn't I aware? Don't tell me it was all decided long ago."

He hugged me, nibbling my neck.

"Indeed, planned it a while back

But proposing to you yeste

was

spontaneous. It wasn't intentional. It just happened!"

My skin tingled with his touch. Were we really getting married?

How did it feel to wake up from a nightmare only to have the sweetest dream?

He smiled tenderly. "This has been my dream for so long, and it's finally coming true.

"After we get the certificate today,

my dream will truly be realized. So

of course, we need to make it

special. After all, it's a brand new day

for us."

His excitement infected me, and I quickly changed into the beautiful dress. We stood in front of the mirror together.

He looked dashing in his crisp white suit, like the prince charming every girl fantasizes about.

I appeared graceful and elegant in my white dress, with its unique design and flowing lines. I even styled my hair.

Atlas's eyes lingered on the reflection in the mirror, and he seemed lost for words. Then, he turned and pulled me into his arms.

Affectionately, he said, "Chlo, I've finally fulfilled my dream. You're about to become my wife."

He held me like that for a long time before gently letting go but firmly holding my hand. Together, we walked out.

Suddenly, I remembered something and looked at him curiously. "What about Oliver?"

Chapter 772 Anxious

Atlas disdainfully remarked, "Let him sleep here. I don't think he'll be waking up anytime soon."

I chuckled lightly. Who would have thought that the high and mighty tycoon of Foswood would end up passed out in my home?

Oh well! We didn't have time to babysit him.

Upon exiting the front door, I noticed the driver and a fleet of cars had been waiting. As our car pulled out first, I realized that Lauren and Ivanna's cars were also part of the convoy.

I asked Atlas, "Why are they here too? Did you invite them?"

Atlas's lips curled up as he embraced me, whispering, "They came on their own accord. I didn't arrange anything."

My heart warmed instantly. Having such supportive friends was heartening. Our convoy headed towards the county clerk's office, and I couldn't help but feel touched and a bit embarrassed. Did we need such a grand procession just for a marriage certificate?

Upon arriving, I asked Lauren and Ivanna, "Why did you all come?"

Ivanna cheerfully replied, "What's the matter? You heartless woman, don't you want us here? We just wanted to congratulate you on becoming a wife again."

Upon hearing this, Atlas's face darkened, frightening Ivanna, who quickly covered his mouth and stepped back. She changed her tone and said, "I wish you both a lifetime of happiness and bliss." Laughter echoed through the group. I asked Atlas, "Did we come too early?"

Atlas proudly said, "I just wanted us to be the first ones today."

Lauren immediately interjected, "What's this about being the first? You're just too impatient. Are you afraid she changes her mind?"

The entourage couldn't hold back their laughter, and even Atlas abandoned his former aloof and cold demeanor. Today was undoubtedly a day of sunshine and warmth.

The county clerk's office staff, having just prepared for their day's work, witnessed our grand entrance. They stood there in shock, unable to believe what they were seeing.

I overheard a young female employee whispering, "Is that... Mr. Atlas? Why is he here?"

A slightly older female colleague immediately shot her a disapproving look and scolded, "What else would he be here for? To get married, of course!"

We completed the procedures as usual, and it wasn't until the staff handed over the marriage license that I finally processed my nerves.

Only then did the pounding heart in my throat finally drop. I looked at the license with trembling hands and saw our photos. In an instant, my eyes welled up. Atlas's smile in the picture was enchanting, and I looked demure and charming beside him.

When I married Matthew, everything

seemed natural, without too many expectations or excitement. It was certainly nothing like this, making me so nervous and warm.

It felt like today was the real deal—what I had longed for.

I locked eyes with Atlas for a long

time. We exchanged smiles, and et

suddenly, he bent down and kissed me. Startled, I pushed him away, but he held me even tighter.

I heard cheers around us. Nervous and shy, I found it hard to breathe, but he was lost in the intoxication of the kiss.

When he let go, I realized that the

county clerk's office had become crowded with people. Bodyguards were everywhere, preventing outsiders from taking pictures. en.swhovels.net

After leaving the county clerk's office, Atlas escorted me back to the company, saying he would pick me up to go home together in the evening. Later, everyone returned to their respective offices, acting as if nothing had happened. But an item in my bag made me blush and tingle. A marriage certificate!

Locked in my office, I couldn't stop looking at the photos of us getting married.

Carol knocked on the door and entered. When she reached my desk, she quietly said, "Ms. Chloe, Melvern is requesting a meeting."

Chapter 773 Too Comfortable

I asked in bewilderment, "Who?"

With a serious expression, Carol repeated, "Melvern is requesting a meeting."

Hearing her repeat Melvern's name, I was genuinely surprised. I had a premonition that he would appear before me sooner or later.

While Liora was joyfully bustling about during this period, he remained unusually quiet, which didn't make much sense.

"Let him in," I calmly said.

Carol walked out and soon brought Melvern in.

He looked dashing in a well-fitted suit. His eyes, however, were something I couldn't quite appreciate, almost repulsive.

As he entered, I conducted myself professionally, stepping away from the desk and gesturing for him to sit.

Seated at my desk, I asked, "Mr. Melvern, what brings you here?"

I cut to the chase, as I had no intention of being polite with him.

I did not know much about him, but based on his investment in Liora and his methods of seizing other companies, I could not form a favorable opinion of him. Moreover, the funds he invested were shady at best. His persistent interest in me and my company made me wary, and his gaze was particularly disdainful.

If he could manipulate Liora and have influence over her family, it spoke volumes about his character.

Melvern sat on the sofa next to me, earnestly smiling. "I hope my sudden visit didn't disturb you, Ms. Chloe."

I had to force a smile. "It's not exactly a disturbance, but it is a bit strange. After all, you and I have no business dealings. So, your unexpected visit to my office caught me off guard." Melvern, taking my words in stride, smiled candidly. "I didn't expect you to be such an upfront person, Ms. Chloe."

"Enough niceties. We are both

professionals, Mr. Melvern. If you've

come to my office, there must

st be

something on your mind." I had no time for a staring contest with him. en.swhovels.net

"There is indeed something I'd like to discuss with you, Ms. Chloe," he said sincerely.

"Mr. Melvern, please go on."

Coincidentally, Carol knocked on the door and brought us coffee.

I gestured, and Melvern didn't hesitate to take a cup. After a sip, he looked at me and said, "Ms. Chloe, I'd like to talk to you about a potential collaboration." I was puzzled. "Collaboration?"

I pondered what kind of collaboration he could possibly be suggesting. Teaming up with Liora and wanting to collaborate with me seemed like a joke.

I didn't believe that he was unaware of the animosity between Liora and me. Therefore, his coming to discuss collaboration with me now seemed illogical.

My eyes remained fixed on him, unyielding. "Mr. Melvern, could you specify the nature of this collaboration?"

Seeing my lack of enthusiasm, he seemed a bit disappointed. "It seems, Ms. Chloe, you're not very interested in working with me."

I composed myself and spoke

directly, "I'm in the construction business, which I'm sure you're

aware of. While I don't know much aware of.

about you, if I remember correctly, you're involved in trade."

"That's right. But upon returning to Foswood, I've also invested in real estate development."

"Even if you've returned to Foswood

for real estate development, I believe, Mr. Melvern, you must know that I don't get along with Ms. Liora. She's also venturing into real estate development, and we will be competitors. You and I have no

reason to reach a collabo

agreement."

I was straightforward, holding nothing back.

Normally, this tactic should have left him flustered, but his calm smile made me suddenly feel that he was the one not playing by the rules.

Chapter 774 A Smile That Is Full of Secrets

However, his attitude left me unsure of how to proceed. I had no choice but to reach for the cup and sip from it.

As a second-best option, I waited for him to continue.

Sure enough, he said, "Ms. Chloe, you don't have to act so distantly. Since I've come to you for a collaboration, I have enough confidence to bring out a project for us to work on." His words did shock me a bit. He sounded a bit arrogant and self-assured.

I smiled, set down the cup, and felt relief. "Well then, Mr. Melvern, why don't you share the details of the collaboration you have in mind."

"I wanted to talk to you about the possibility of my independent development on acquired projects or land. Could I have your company handle the design and construction?"

He sounded very confident. "Since I've just returned to Foswood, I can say I'm in a tough spot. Once I secure a project, I don't have the conditions for design and construction."

Melvern's words flowed seamlessly, and he seemed genuinely sincere. "My return to Foswood has a clear purpose. I only want to focus on development."

Since he invested in Liora and his intentions were clear, why would he choose another company? Perhaps he had a pressing need for a development project.

After all, despite Liora taking over Ardora, the situation was far from stable. It was chaotic and unsuitable for significant projects. Besides, Ardora was still functioning as an agency.

Melvorn continued, "To be honest, I've secured two plots of land recently. However, given my limited energy, I hope to find a company with equivalent strength and superior qualifications to achieve our goals." I sighed inwardly, realizing my intuition was spot on.

"During this period, I've evaluated all qualified construction and development companies in Foswood. Tanum Corporation is my top choice."

As he spoke, I remained silent, focusing on his message.

From his words, it seemed he had been genuinely straightforward, thoroughly examining Foswood's construction industry.

When he said he chose Tanum, it didn't sound out of place. Considering Foswood's construction landscape, Tanum's strength had continuously risen after joining forces with ATL Empire.

Tanum has ascended to a higher level in design, construction qualifications, and personnel. It had even surpassed several industry leaders like Echelon Group to some extent.

Echelon Group excelled at

construction and development.

However, when compared to Tanum, which had the support of ATL Empire's Design Division, it was clear that Echelon Group was no match. If Echelon Group had high-demand projects, they would likely partner with Tanum to meet the requirements.

After all, ATL Empire's Design Division was globally renowned. Several internationally acclaimed design masters worked under it. As for my original design team, some of the world's top talents, such as Joyce and Hanna, were under my command.

So, from Melvern's perspective, proposing a collaboration with me made perfect sense. I couldn't find any flaws.

Melvorn kept looking at me, seemingly awaiting my response.

I put down my coffee cup. "Mr. Melvern, Tanum indeed has no reason to refuse this type of collaboration. However, not all projects are accepted.

"The projects taken on by our Design

Division require a certain scale or high-quality standards. You're aware that we're merely collaborating with ATL Empire. Their Design Division handles projects in the country and internationally."

I continued my response in a calm and measured tone, "So, Mr. Melvern, there is potential for collaboration, but it depends on the scale and Tanum's current plans."

I leaned back, expressing confidence. "This year, Tanum's major projects have taken up the majority of construction resources. If you're interested, we can evaluate and assess before making a final decision."

My answer was artfully ambiguous, leaving room for interpretation. I didn't want to corner myself. I couldn't treat Melvern as an outright enemy. Leaving some leeway was strategic, aiming to keep tabs on his strength and movements.

Melvern didn't seem annoyed. He just smiled meaningfully. "Naturally, I won't give you anything subpar."

Chapter 775 Atticus's Land

I nodded. "I have no intention of making things difficult for you, Mr. Melvern. However, this is Tanum Corporation's current situation. Since you've candidly assessed the situation, you must also know that this is

the prerequisite for cooperation with Tanum Corporation."

"I do." Melvern stared at my face, his emotions unclear. "Currently, there's a pressing project. I would like Tanum Corporation to design a plan for it, and I believe you will be interested."

"Oh?" I intentionally expressed interest and asked, "Where is the project?"

Melvern's smile was intriguing. He paused briefly, then said, "In Rivendell."

I felt a sudden chill. Without thinking, I asked, "Rivendell?"

Melvorn smiled triumphantly. "Yes, Rivendell! Have you heard of it, Ms. Chloe?"

I suddenly felt that I had overreacted.

"Yes," I responded to salvage my composure. "I heard rumors about a new development project in Rivendell but didn't pay much attention. After all, our current projects are in the consolidation process, and some are about to start. So, it slipped my mind. Is it true?"

I skillfully shifted the focus, turning the tables. Deep down, I felt a bit nervous. Could he be eyeing Rivendell because it belonged to Atticus?

"If you trust Tanum Corporation, you can provide the relevant information to our General Manager, Mr. Ryan. Let him assess it. I can introduce you to Mr. Ryan. You can communicate directly with him regarding the project. He's more professional and authoritative."

I delegated this responsibility to Ryan because he was undoubtedly more authoritative. Additionally, by doing so, I left myself a way out.

I needed to talk to Atticus privately about this matter.

Melvorn nodded. "No problem. Thank you, Ms. Chloe."

I stood up and said, "Please wait a moment, Mr. Melvern."

Then, I pressed the intercom button, and someone on the other end answered. I asked, "Is Mr. Ryan in his office?"

"Yes."

"I'm coming over."

After hanging up the phone, I smiled at Melvern, indicating him to follow me. Melvern stood up, buttoning his suit as he followed me closely.

I led him to Ryan's office.

As I knocked on the door, Melvern stood beside me, very close. Suddenly, I caught a scent that felt familiar. I recognized it from somewhere in my memory.

I took a deep breath, recalling where I had smelled this fragrance. When Ryan answered, I smiled at Melvern and then entered the office.

He greeted me warmly as he saw

me bringing a guest. I quickly introduced the two, and they shook hands politely. I gave them a brief overview of Melvern's intentions and left them to negotiate.

I had immense trust in Ryan, mainly since I had discussed my visit to Rivendell with him before. Therefore,

letting him discuss the del

matter with Melvern was more convenient for me in gathering information.

I exchanged a glance with Ryan and then left his office.

Back in my office, I called Atticus, but his phone rang without an answer.

I paced back and forth in my office, reminiscing about the conversation with Atticus in Rivendell. Could it be that he was right?

There was one thing I couldn't figure out.

Why did Melvern invest in Liora but

not let Liora take on this project? Was it because Atticus was Liora's husband? Or did he disdain the company she snatched for lacking qualifications? Or did he genuinely value Tanum Corporation's design and construction qualifications?

This situation felt more complicated than I initially thought.

Chapter 776 Tricked

Rivendell was Atticus' top priority. He had given up every other opportunity, waiting patiently for this chance. The last time I saw him, he seemed confident, but Melvern's recent attitude indicated that he was certain of success.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized this situation wasn't as simple as it seemed.

Glancing at the time, I pressed the intercom button to summon Carol. After giving her a few instructions, I told her to get Lauren, who was starting work today. I would take her out with me as cover. If Melvern noticed my absence, it would not raise suspicion.

It was better to be safe than sorry.

Lauren soon appeared in my office. I looked toward her. "Come with me." I grabbed my bag and hooked her arm before heading out of the room.

As Lauren and I took the elevator down, she asked, "Where are we going?"

"I want to see Atticus," I said.

The elevator went straight down to the underground garage. I dialed Atticus' number, but once again, there was no answer. I was puzzled, wondering why he was not answering. Was his phone not with him? Seeing that the call was a dud, Lauren asked, "He didn't answer?"

"No, he didn't." I shook my head. "Come on. Let's wait in the car."

Lauren knew me well. Seeing my serious expression, she asked softly, "Is something wrong?"

"Yeah." I unlocked my car and got in. "Atticus has probably been manipulated."

"What?!" Lauren was taken aback. "What's going on?"

I drove out of the underground parking lot while explaining to Lauren about Melvern coming to our company.

"Atticus has always been the one to handle the preliminary project in Rivendell. He competed with Atlas day and night for that project because he knew there was an underlying project behind it.

"That's why he stayed in Rivendell. The next thing to happen would be the true main event. But looking back, his well-laid plans might be falling apart. Also-"

Before I could finish, my phone rang. I quickly stopped by the side and picked up.

It was Atticus.

I quickly answered, "Mr. Atticus! Are you still in Rivendell?"

"Yes, I'm still here." He sounded calm.

"What's the situation over there?" I hastily asked, "Is everything all right?"

"Is there supposed to be something wrong?" Atticus asked in return.

"I've been hearing things."

I didn't hide anything. Between Atticus and Melvern, I sided with Atticus.

"Where did you hear that from?" Atticus asked.

I then explained Melvern's visit to our company in detail. Then, I asked Atticus straightforwardly, "Is Melvern's information reliable?"

"Yes," Atticus answered confidently.

I felt a chill down my spine. "Does that mean it's a done deal?"

"Not necessarily."

"What should I do to ensure cooperation with you?".

"For now, don't show your hand. If he wishes to talk to you, talk to him. If he wants to cooperate, go ahead and cooperate with him. You don't have to consider me in your decisions," Atticus instructed, "In business, focus on business.

"Let him understand one thing. For you, it's about the deal, not the person."

"Aren't you at risk of losing if that were to happen?" I was anxious. No matter what, the thought of betraying Atticus for the sake of business interests disgusted me. "Didn't I tell you? Handle this matter as usual." Atticus' tone was unmistakable.

"You have to level with me, Mr.

Atticus. I can't betray you for the sake of profit! Besides, I can't shake the feeling that his approaching me isn't all that simple. Don't forget, Liora is also in the mix."

"It's not that complicated. Currently, Tanum's reputation and status are continually rising. He may not be guaranteed victory if he finds someone else."

Atticus' analysis was spot on, as expected.

"But if I accept, won't you be out of the game?" I asked in puzzlement.

"Do as I say, and you'll be fine. Money isn't what Melvern lacks, so don't hold back. The proposal won't affect me. That's our

understanding," Atticus said, "Chloe, the more flawless the proposal, the better."

Chapter 777 An Enigma

I became even more confused after listening to Atticus. I had no idea how confident he was.

Clutching the phone with a sense of helplessness, I pondered over Atticus' intentions. His call suggested that our design proposal was the key to giving Melvern a winning chance. Why would Atticus still want us to submit a proposal if that was the case?

At this point, even Lauren was baffled. She looked at me and couldn't help prodding. "What the heck is going on?" she asked.

Shaking my head, I said in resignation, "Looks like Melvern is truly going head-to-head with Atticus." I then explained the situation to Lauren, who fell silent for a long time.

She then said, "In my opinion, all we can do now is wait and see what happens. Steady yourself and let them duke it out."

"But I can't figure out what kind of scheme Melvern is playing," I said in genuine concern, "I can't just stand by and watch Atticus rise or fall."

"Don't overthink it. Atticus is no pushover. Have you ever seen him lose at anything? He just needs a little push at crucial times. That's all."

I grinned at Lauren. "Look at you. Such an enigma."

She leaned back and said, "I'm not an enigma. I just think that we shouldn't exert ourselves in vain for now. Ultimately, it might backfire and not be worth the effort."

"The immediate priority is to handle

these things subtly and stably. Let them fight it out while we sit back hands-free. You know what they say, 'Keep your eye on the prize,'" Lauren said, spreading her hands and explaining her viewpoint.

"You're right. I don't think Atticus is weak, either. It's more like Melvern has some sinister plans. I believe there are tricks behind his

knowledge of Liora's incompatibility with me. He came to discuss cooperation, knowing that I was well aware of the tensions with Liora. I just don't believe there isn't

something fishy about that."

As I spoke, I lowered the car window. It was a bit stuffy inside, and I badly needed some fresh air.

"So, we would do well to maintain neutrality, stay low-key, and cool-headed. We'll take advantage of this situation to get what we want.

"Once we stabilize our position, we'll grow into a towering tree regardless of how the landscape changes. Let everyone else swear allegiances. That's the perfect strategy."

Hearing Lauren's words, I felt

enlightened. This was the outcome I desired, but my train of thought had been blocked. I had initially wanted to discuss this issue with Atlas, but he was too busy, and I didn't want to trouble him with my company

was

matters. He had already done enough for me.

With her insightful analysis, I formulated a plan. Smirking, I looked at her with a sly smile.

Chapter 778 Meeting an Old Classmate

I playfully slapped Lauren's thigh, saying, "You're really something, girl. I must say, you've cleared up my thoughts. Who would've thought there was a mastermind right next to me?"

"I'm no mastermind, just an onlooker with a clear view. Tanum isn't strong enough yet, and some people don't acknowledge us. Why? Because they think we're winning unfairly with the support of the ATL Empire. They believe it isn't a fair fight."

"I have to admit that there's some truth to that."

"So, we need to continue to strengthen ourselves and make them submit. Bourdamun is our top priority, and making money is crucial for our growth. Didn't Atticus also say that Melvern isn't short of money? So, let him bleed.

"Whether his funds are dirty or clean, we'll make him pay through our strength. If he's twisted, that's his problem. We won't get involved. We're all in the business of making money, so this is only natural. Is there a problem with that?" Lauren looked at me triumphantly, wearing a mischievous smile.

I then recalled the man who got drunk in my villa the night before. "People are always clear about others' affairs but muddled about their own. It's like trying to cut your own hair." I sighed. She glanced at me, fully aware of what I meant. She retorted, "Don't preach to me!"

I shot her a glance. "Oliver got drunk at my place last night. I don't even know if he's awake right now."

Lauren stared at me in surprise. "How did he end up at your place in the middle of the night?"

"He stalked us," I coldly replied, "I figured he must be downstairs when we had dinner at your place. Did you know that he never left your ward for even a minute during your hospital stay?" Lauren's expression turned cold, and she looked out the car window, displeased.

"When we returned to our apartment, he showed up with a bottle in hand, already drunk. He even made Atlas drink with him." I watched Lauren's expression. "Are you really giving up on Oliver?"

"I do want to forgive him, but I can't

get past the hurdle in my heart. Even if I swallowed my conscience, I wouldn't let him betray me in front of his wife. But she's gone, and I'm still alive. It's my heart that's been sentenced." Lauren smiled bitterly. "For the first time, I realize what kind of person I am, Chlo."

My heart ached, and I dared not say anything.

"You haven't experienced this kind of humiliation. You'll never understand the feeling. I'll never get over it!"

At the mention of Oliver, Lauren

became restless. She waved at me and said, "Don't mention him to me again. My head hurts whenever I

think about it. It's ruining my good

mood."

I had to stay silent. Just as I was about to start the car, a figure approached, bent down to look into my car, and said, "Chloe?"

The sudden voice startled me. Turning to the window, I was momentarily stunned. It took me a moment to remember who the woman in front of me was.

I quickly smiled. "Michelle, right?"

"I'm glad you still recognize me." Michelle reached past the open window into the car and patted me. I opened the car door, and she quickly took two steps back, giving me the space to step out.

Michelle greedily examined my car, exclaiming, "Wow, nice car, Chloe! It looks like you've hit the jackpot."

I could sense the envy in her tone and calmly replied, "Oh, it's nothing like that. Where are you headed?"

Michelle looked up at me, answering a different question. "I've been watching you for some time now. I didn't dare to believe it was you until you rolled down the car window." Hearing this, I regretted lowering the window. What was I thinking?

Chapter 779 Stuck Like Glue

"Look at you, getting more radiant every day. I heard you just got a divorce. People were talking about it recently. Did you or did you not?"

"You know, when you hooked up with Matthew, everyone said it was because he's handsome. What good is that? Looks don't pay bills. And lo and behold, you couldn't hold onto him in the end." Michelle's words made me embarrassed. I did not dare analyze whether what she said was praise or criticism. She had not changed one bit, and her true colors were showing.

Old habits truly died hard.

I could only force out a smile and ask, "By the way, have you been in touch with Beatrice?"

She shook her head. "I can't reach her. Did she go back to her hometown? You two were so close. Why haven't you been in touch? You have to stop thinking about making money all the time. You should think of your friends as well."

"Right. The kids were small then, and I was busy caring for them. I lost touch with everyone." I chuckled.

"How about I arrange a little reunion? It's been a long time, and we should catch up." Michelle patted me again. "Look at you, striking it rich and forgetting about us!"

"No, no! I haven't," I responded helplessly.

Lauren, who was sitting in the car, was a sharp one. From the short conversation, she knew what kind of person Michelle was. She spoke up, "Let's go, Chlo! I got a call!"

I seized the opportunity and quickly told Michelle, "Hey, I gotta get going. We'll catch up when we have time."

"Sure thing. We'll plan a reunion. Don't forget to show up when the time comes." Michelle grabbed me and insisted on organizing an event.

"Okay," I replied, shaking her hand off and quickly getting back into the car.

"Hey, what's the rush? You haven't given me your number." Michelle quickly took out her phone.

I had no choice but to exchange numbers with her.

"I'll call you. Don't ignore my calls!" Michelle said.

I smiled and nodded. "I won't. See you later." I started the engine, honked at her, and swiftly drove away.

In the rearview mirror, I saw Michelle staring in the direction of my vehicle.

Lauren asked with disdain, "Who was that?"

"My college classmate. Roommate, to be precise," I said with a wry smile.

"Haha! I know she's a bad influence in just one glance." Lauren expressed her contempt.

I smiled wryly "Back in college, we

stayed in rooms of six, and she was the most ambitious one in our room. At that time, I had a best friend named Beatrice. Unfortunately we lost touch after college. She was my best friend during those four years. We were even closer than Ivanna."

Thinking of Beatrice, I felt a bit resentful. So many years had passed, yet I did not know where she was.

"That one just now definitely isn't a good

gum. She'll stick to you if s

about your current state

Be careful. She's l

As both of us laughed heartily, I did not hesitate to praise, "You've always been spot on with people, Lauren!"

Upon noticing me driving aimlessly, Lauren asked, "Where are we going?"

"I can't go back to the office right

now. I just can't stand Melvern. How

about we go see the little boy?

could also ask Myra if Johnson has

asked for Matthew's opinion."

I had wanted to ask about this two days ago when Matthew had an accident, but it did not seem appropriate to bring it up at the time.

Myra was overjoyed to see us, and so was the little one in her arms. He stared at me, grinning and revealing his tiny teeth.

I extended my hand to him, and he eagerly reached out toward me.

Chapter 780 A Beautiful Snake

I picked up the little one and kissed him on his cheek. This kid, raised by Myra, had fair skin, and there was a soft baby smell about him that I just loved. Whenever I teased him, he giggled, lifting everyone's spirits.

Honestly, I felt a special connection with this child. He seemed to remember me, his eyes following me and touching my face as he babbled away.

Lauren looked at the little one and commented, "You're so kind, Chlo. You like every child you meet."

"You don't like his charming little antics?" I quipped back, and Lauren rolled her eyes.

I turned to Myra. "Did Johnson ask Matthew about the child's future?"

Myra nodded. "Yes, he did, but Matthew hasn't made a decision. It seems like he's having a hard time letting go. After all, he called him his son for several months. It's not easy to be so heartless." Lauren immediately retorted, "Does he have a heart at all? He's only that way because this little one has a dangly bit between his legs!"

Myra and I stared at Lauren. In truth, her words were straightforward and not entirely wrong.

Noticing our gaze, she defended herself. "What are you staring at me for? I said nothing wrong."

Myra and I laughed.

"Think, how does Matthew treat Ava? He raised her for a few years, yet he left her without even looking back. He was heartless then, so why is he suddenly so reluctant with this little one? It's because this one's a boy," Lauren bluntly stated.

"You're right. Everyone knows that the Murphys favor boys over girls," I said as Myra and I burst into laughter again.

Lauren disdainfully said, "Anyway, I have no good feelings toward Matthew. His fate isn't worth pitying. In my opinion, let the child acknowledge his roots. I'm sure Matthew won't be as kind as the mom in raising this child."

"That's hard to say. Matthew takes after his dad. Didn't Abby fool him? She played him like a fiddle, and even after he ran away, she still made him raise her child," I said as an example.

"That may be true, but look at Melanie. She's the best example we have. Look at what happened in the end. She ended up beating and kicking the woman who raised her.

"Isn't Matthew's imprisonment all thanks to Melanie? If Matthew doesn't learn his lesson, he's hopeless! Damn it!" Lauren replied a little heatedly.

Myra added, "He fell in love with a beautiful snake, and that incident made the whole Murphy family go bankrupt. I say Matthew's current situation is the result of his father's sins. It left a disaster in its wake."

I played with the little one and said, "But I don't have any say in how Matthew raises a child, though. I can't stop him."

Myra looked at me and said,

"Actually, Chlo, everyone can see

on whether you

interfere or not. Matthew is no fool.

He's not short of cleverness."

"He is! He's short of it! If he weren't short of cleverness, he wouldn't be so lacking in morality!" Lauren fiercely declared.

We all laughed, turning this into a comedy roast.

"I'm afraid that he'll blame me one day. I'm too overbearing, making decisions for him without consulting him. If Johnson takes care of it, he might be grateful. So, I want him to be thankful to Johnson. He needs to learn gratitude," I said as I looked at Myra. "During this time, you've taken care of the child, and he's not even your relative."

Myra sighed. "Chlo, you're really thoughtful, but I wonder if he'll ever understand your intentions."

"I hope he doesn't. I've only done as my conscience dictated. I'll be at peace with myself," I replied.

As we talked, my phone rang. Lauren took the child from me.

I glanced at the screen. It was Ryan calling. It looked like their discussion was over.

"Are you not in the office?" Ryan asked as soon as I picked up.

"I came to see the little one. Is the meeting over? How did it go?" I inquired.

"We'll talk about it when you get back."

"Okay, I'll be there soon."