

## **Divorce 921**

### Chapter 921 Hidden Intention

He ate quickly and seemed to enjoy the meal. He smiled at me and said, "Yum! This is the best lunch I've had so far. Thank you, Ms. Chloe."

I smiled without saying anything, feeling like this man was beating around the bush too much.

After finishing the meal, he checked the time and stood up. "It looks like it's time for your meeting soon. I won't disturb you any longer, Ms. Chloe. Thanks for the lunch. How about we have dinner together another day?"

I nodded. "Sure, provided I have the time."

"Great! I can wait until you're free," he said confidently. "I'll take my leave now. I believe we'll become friends, Ms. Chloe."

He strode out of the small meeting room and left my office.

Watching his departure, I couldn't help but mutter, "Who gave you such confidence?"

Carol rushed in, reaching out to tidy up the utensils and curiously asking, "Is he gone?"

"Yeah," I absentmindedly responded.

I was pondering Melvern's purpose in coming here. I reviewed our conversation, contemplating his questions.

"Why do I feel like he came here to test me?"

"Test you? What do you mean?" Carol asked curiously.

I shook my head and looked at Carol. "Forget it. Let him be. He's gone, and that's good news. He came here and left without any issues."

"Should I get someone to stop him?" Carol asked.

"You can't stop someone like him." I shrugged.

"Was there anything serious today?" Carol seemed annoyed.

"For us, absolutely not."

I returned to my office, thought for a moment, and decided it was time to make a call to Atticus. We hadn't been in touch for a few days.

He answered quickly. "Ms. Chloe."

"Are you still in Operose?" I asked.

"No, I'm back," he replied directly. "Anything wrong?"

"You're back? Then, why didn't you call me?" I sounded unusually excited.

He chuckled. "What? Were you eagerly waiting to see me?"

"You seem to be in a good mood. Did you settle the follow-up projects in Operose?" I inquired.

"No, they fell into Melvern's hands," Atticus said casually.

"Ah?" I was somewhat surprised.

It seemed Melvern was quite cunning, quickly achieving success. This indicated he had some strength, unlike what I superficially perceived, lounging around with nothing to do but sit in my office.

A sense of dissatisfaction lingered in my heart. I couldn't shake the feeling that his visit had a purpose beyond what he claimed.

"What's wrong? Was it unexpected?" Atticus asked.

"I think Melvern's ability to get what he wants should not be underestimated. He just left my office," I told Atticus.

"Oh?"

"Yeah! He's mysterious and tricky.

He looks idle, but that's not the case.

I have a feeling he's here to find

some answers," I casually remarked. "He waited for half a day, asked a few questions, and left."

"What did he ask?" Atticus pursued.

I gave Atticus a detailed account of Melvern's visit and questions.

Atticus chuckled after hearing it. "He was testing you. The real meaning is not in the words, but in the hidden questions about Liora."

My mind raced, and I slammed the table. "I got it! No wonder he asked, 'If the other party isn't Matthew, will you have taken action against her?' He was clearly asking about Liora." Atticus laughed heartily. "Ms. Chloe, you're sharp."

"He's trying to test me, whether revenge on Liora has another purpose," I told Atticus. "And the other purpose would be for you."

"Exactly," Atticus affirmed. "He's trying to figure out the new connections in Foswood."

"But how did he think I could be related to you?" I asked, puzzled, "Isn't he overthinking?"

"No, something must have made him suspicious," Atticus said.

"Well, in that case, it all makes sense. The first time, he used cooperation to test me. He claimed he already had the project in the city under control, then wanted to see my reaction.

"The second time, he used Ardora's

shares to tempt me, to check if I genuinely wanted Ardora or if it was just targeting Liora. Both times, he didn't get the real answers. He came to me again today, but how did he know I would be aware that you're going for the follow-up projects in Operose?"

I fell into contemplation. This man didn't overlook anything, even following such subtle clues.

"What do you think?" I asked Atticus.

Chapter 922 A Powerful Witness

"When he invested in Liora, it was a probing move. Didn't I tell you? He came back for revenge this time, and I'm his target.

"Think about it. He needs to figure out everything about the people around me. He won't give up on any clues. The current situation between Liora and me forces him to pay attention to her opponents. He's afraid I might have allies, especially someone like you."

I found Atticus's words quite reasonable. "But one thing I can't figure out is how did he know we might have a connection?"

"That's not hard to find out. After all, we have some apparent cooperation," Atticus said casually.

I chuckled. "True!"

"Would you and your husband join us for dinner tonight?" Atticus suggested.

"No, I can't make it tonight. I have some supplier issues that I can't delay. Another time, perhaps." I declined Atticus's invitation.

I didn't ask him how he found out about my relationship with Atlas. Otherwise, he wouldn't have said, "You and your husband." These people are all sharp-minded, especially Atticus.

"How's Bourdamun? I couldn't make it to the groundbreaking ceremony. I heard there was quite a stir," Atticus inquired.

"Yeah, all thanks to your wife's masterpiece." I didn't keep it from him.

"The project is underway and going well. It just started now. Everything is smooth," I replied calmly. "Are you giving up on the Rivendell deal?"

"No, I'm not in a hurry. Let him enjoy his little victory," Atticus said, scheming.

"He hasn't sent over the project details yet. I think he won't easily trust anyone, especially us," I said, referring to Melvern.

"It's a matter of time. The later stage of the project in Operose can't deviate from what I'm doing now. So, he will have no choice but to turn to you guys," Atticus confidently stated. "Now you sound like an aloof expert. Watch your step," I teased him.

"I'm also waiting for Liora's final result. There's no rush. Let him stir things up. I'm taking a break and gathering strength. Once I'm rejuvenated and he has his designs and plans in place, what's wrong with enjoying my success?" He laughed contentedly.

"But I don't know the status of the court hearing application. I haven't had a chance to ask Adrian." I honestly admitted that I was feeling less guarded against Atticus now.

"Your call reminded me of a clue," Atticus suddenly said.

"What?" I immediately perked up.

"Matthew doesn't know about the corner-cutting in Muborough. There's a powerful witness," Atticus said.

I was shocked and asked hastily, "Who?"

"Arton Reese," Atticus answered without hesitation.

"Arton?" I was genuinely surprised. "How did you find out?"

"Don't forget, I'm also part of this puzzle. After all, I exchanged Muborough's project for Rivendell's. That's where my roots lie," Atticus said mysteriously, proving he was a sly fox.

"All the money Melanie got from Muborough's materials went into Arton's pocket. Don't you think he's an effective witness?" Atticus asked me

I was stunned.

It seemed like Arton could indeed be an effective witness.

"Think of a way to persuade Arton to testify in court," Atticus suggested.

"Okay, I'll think about it."

I felt a bit numb. After a few more words, I hung up the phone.

At this moment, I truly looked at Atticus differently. He was indeed a

cunning

strategist, seemingly in Rivendell, but well aware of the

situation in Foswood.

If he could pull Arton into this, it meant he had been watching Matthew's case all along. No wonder he got so close to me. To be honest, he was just using me.

Chapter 923 To Use and To Be Used

I sighed with a bitter smile. In the end, human relationships are all about using and being used.

However, reflecting on the events surrounding Liora and the incident with Atticus, his assistance to me is indeed a drop in the ocean.

No wonder Atlas has been observing Atticus's moves. It seemed that Atlas was my true behind-the-scenes support, the one manipulating the situation.

Atlas was the one pulling the strings.

I assumed that Atticus would never dare to act rashly against me. If Atlas wanted to push him into bankruptcy, it would only take a few minutes, and I believed that Atlas was capable of that.

Judging from the fact that he could pocket such a big project in the capital, it was trivial for him to give up on a project in Rivendell.

On top of that, I was in trouble at that time. Of course, he wouldn't let anyone succeed. He retreated in order to advance.

That was the real reason why Atticus had always treated me differently.

To be honest, Atticus has constantly scrutinized my relationship with Atlas, just like Melvern was observing my relationship with Atticus. Everyone has their motives.

If it weren't for Atlas behind me, Atticus wouldn't bother looking twice at a minor figure like me.

From a series of events, whether the Beringer family or the Huffman family, Atticus was undoubtedly an influential figure. Otherwise, he wouldn't be where he is today.

However, the hint he gave me just now surprised me. He must be following Matthew's case and preparing all along.

He was genuinely hoping for Liora to face retribution. This was understandable.

I unconsciously picked up the phone, dialed a number, and only realized afterward that I was equally anxious.

"Ms. Chloe!" Annika's cheerful voice came through the phone.

I quickly collected my thoughts. "Oh... I went to the capital, so I didn't have time to ask about Charlie's condition these past two days."

"Don't worry, Ms. Chloe, he's doing

well. Charlie is really easy to take care of. Myra's visits are getting shorter, and he doesn't make trouble. He just gets excited when he sees Myra." Annika laughed happily.

From her laughter, you could hear how joyful the current situation in the Reese family was.

"Does he wake up at night?" I asked.

"He does, but he's not fussy. Sometimes, Re even plays with his dad when he wakes up in the middle of the night! Since Charlie came home Arton hasn't gone out much anymore. Most of the time, he takes care of Charlie at night. It's quite a change," Annika said excitedly.

"That's good. He's responsible now. Isn't there a saying that you don't understand parents' hardships until you have children?" I smiled and said, "He's grown up." We both laughed.

"You can rest assured. He used to always be in fights. After my husband passed-" she suddenly stopped.

I knew who she was referring to, but I remained silent.

After a while, she choked up and said, "Since my husband passed away, Arton has become much more gentle. Even when he goes out, he rushes back home as if someone will snatch the child away if he's not there."

I also smiled. "Is he home now?"

"He is. He's feeding the baby milk," Annika quickly replied. "Charlie seems to have a good appetite. He's growing well."

I laughed. "I'll drop by one of these days."

"Okay, come over. We really miss you." Annika didn't hide her happiness.

"Alright! I'll see then if Charlie still recognizes me."

After saying this, I thought of Atticus's matter just now. If I were to mention this to Arton, how would he and the Reese family react to my intentions?

#### Chapter 924 Arton as Witness

Annika smiled and said, "Myra has talked a lot about what you've done for our Charlie. How could he not remember you? We won't let him forget your kindness." "Alright, I'll go visit him one of these days! It's been quite a few days, and I miss him," I said.

We chatted for a bit more before ending the call.

Annika's words deeply affected me. Charlie had an ungrateful mom. Hopefully, the Reese family would raise him right and not let him turn out like his mother.

I contemplated how to bring up the matter of testifying with Arton. It was a real dilemma. Convincing a father to accuse the mother of his child might not be an easy task.

If not handled carefully, my intention of sending the child home to them might be misunderstood. I could be seen as having ulterior motives, and Arton might get entangled in the case, even though it was Matthew's crime.

This made my head ache. I couldn't let a situation involving Matthew jeopardize the warmth Charlie had just regained.

As I was lost in my thoughts, Eleanor called. I was sure it was about Surface Solutions's matter, so I quickly answered, "Eleanor!"

"Ms. Chloe, I've already contacted Surface Solutions. They want to meet you as soon as possible. Do you have time tonight?" Eleanor asked.

"You can schedule a meeting. I also want to get it done as soon as possible." I was well-prepared.

"Alright, I'll schedule the time and place. I'll inform you shortly."

"Okay." I hung up the phone.

Shortly after, she sent the time and location for the evening. It wasn't far from the office. She was meticulous in her work.

Thinking about meeting Surface Solutions tonight, I quickly grabbed the materials Eleanor had brought me in the morning. I looked through them and identified their weaknesses and shortcomings so that I could have solid reasons tonight. Knowing the enemy was crucial.

After that, I checked the time, planning to call Atlas to inform him about the evening engagement. Just as I was about to make the call, he beat me to it.

I answered with a smile, "It looks like we're in sync. I was just about to call you."

Atlas's voice came through. "I was just checking in. What are you up to?"

"I'm in the office. What are you checking in on? I just wanted to tell you that I have an engagement tonight and might be home late." I laughed heartily, aware of his dependence on me.

"I'll wait for you. If you're late, it means it'll just be the two of us."

I knew exactly what he meant by that. We would go back to Amethyst Apartments.

"Sure." I readily agreed.

"I'll be busy these next few days. I need to inform my mom. I won't be back to Pleca Park these days," I told him.

Things have piled up. I needed to call Theo now that I'm back. There might also be news about Matthew.

Once all these were dealt with, there

was also the case with my father. There would probably be news of him by then. That was the most important thing.

Atlas's grandfather had also wanted us to visit him. These were all pushed back due to Matthew's case.

"It seems like you're eager for our alone time. We should indeed make up for the time we've lost."

His words were filled with affection, making my face blush. Luckily, he wasn't in front of me.

Just then, Carol walked in, heading straight to my office. I guessed she must have something important.

So, I quickly told Atlas, "I got to go. We'll talk about it when I get home tonight."

Then I ended the call and looked at Carol. She seemed helpless. "Mr. Jordan from Yorksen is requesting a meeting."

I was surprised. I didn't expect their response to be this quick, reaching my office so soon.

Seeing my momentary confusion, Carol said, "Should I turn them away?"

I pondered for a moment, shook my head, and said to her, "Let them in. We can't hurt the feelings of an old client."

After all, Yorksen had been our

long-term partner, and a few small projects were designated for their products. Moreover, Jordan sought the meeting, and I couldn't burn all bridges.

Carol led two people, father and son, into my office.

Chapter 925 The Carneys Want to Meet

I quickly stood up and walked away from my desk, warmly greeting Jordan.

"Mr. Jordan, hello." I smiled, gesturing for him to take a seat, and asked Carol to bring water and coffee.

I had heard from Eleanor that Jordan handed over the reins of Yorksen Doors to his son for health reasons. Seeing him, it was evident that his complexion wasn't great. "Ms. Chloe, it's been a while. Sorry for the trouble."

He was humble. But his son, Jesse, had an unpleasant and restrained expression. Even though they came to see me, it seemed like he wasn't too willing.

"You're being too polite. Please, have a seat." I gestured again.

Jordan nervously sat on the sofa, glancing around my office. "This is quite a big change. I used to be very familiar with this office."

He was trying to bridge the gap between us.

"Yeah. Time flies. It's been over ten years, and we've been working together for quite a while."

I glanced at Jesse, who still looked displeased, inspecting my office. Perhaps he sensed that my office was more high-end than his.

"Ms. Chloe, my secretary already briefed me about what happened this morning. Please don't hold it against us. My son hasn't been sensible lately. In light of our many years of cooperation, please give Yorksen a chance," Jordan said apologetically.

He seemed genuinely sincere as he said, "I brought my son here to apologize to you."

I wasn't a person with a tough heart, especially when dealing with someone with health issues. In theory, I couldn't disregard them.

However, my principles remained clear after seeing Jesse's dark and resentful face. His behavior earlier didn't help things, either.

After Jordan finished speaking, he sternly reprimanded Jesse, "Jesse, apologize to Ms. Chloe."

"Dad, I've already shown you respect

by letting you drag me here. Why should apologize to her? They are the ones who terminated the contract. Do we really have to beg for cooperation like this?

Jesse looked at his father with disdain. I maintained a faint smile, unperturbed.

Jordan was instantly angered by Jesse's defiance, slamming the sofa armrest. "Ungrateful brat!"

I felt awkward, but I also understood Jordan's urgent and frustrated state of mind. Jesse was about to speak again when I raised my hand, signaling to hold him back.

Then, I looked at Jordan, "Mr. Jordan, calm down. Whether he apologizes or not doesn't matter. What he said is true. We tore up the contract."

"It must have been a joke for you." Jordan sighed.

"There's no need to apologize. How about this? If Mr. Jesse has

something to do, he can leave now

I'll just discuss this with

Jordan," I tentatively

you, Mr.

I also figured out that in this situation. It wasn't appropriate to have both father and son stay. I was sure Jesse was also concerned about his image.

Sure enough, when Jesse heard my suggestion, he immediately stood up as if granted a pardon. He glanced at me, then turned and left.

He slammed the door so hard that it shook the room. I was truly speechless.

Carol, not knowing what had happened, rushed in. Seeing that Jordan was still there, she breathed a sigh of relief. I signaled to her, and she retreated. Jordan, his face pale from anger, clenched his fists.

He muttered to himself, "Useless son. Bastard..."

In a soft tone, I said, "Calm down. Don't be angry. Kids need to be reasoned with slowly. He may be egoistic. After all, he probably couldn't accept getting scolded in front of strangers."

"Forgive us. Forgive us for the embarrassment." Jordan's voice trembled.

I quickly picked up a glass of water and handed it to him. "Take it easy. A sip of water will help."

Chapter 926 A Misfortune in the Family

As he gradually recovered, I began to state my reasons for not wanting to work with Jesse.

I said, "His performance is just one aspect of this, Mr. Jordan. Our main focus is the high-end market for doors. Please don't worry too much about it."

He nodded.

"To be honest with you, my health is deteriorating. That's why I sought treatment. How could I let my unruly son take over?"

He mentioned his health, confirming that it wasn't just a rumor.

"He's been spoiled by his mother. He's good at all kinds of frivolous things, but he doesn't know how to do a thing when it comes to serious matters. It's unfortunate for our family." He sighed with a touch of

sorrow.

Then, he continued, "I originally planned to elevate our door business and gradually shift toward high-end doors. Businesses need constant progress and development, but my health just gave out. I have stomach cancer."

As soon as the words left his mouth, my heart flipped.

"There's no way I can realize my dreams now. I've come to terms with it. Once I'm gone, the business will die with me. My good-for-nothing son will lose his easy life." Jordan's voice trembled as he tried to conceal his emotions.

Stomach cancer!

It seemed like time was running out.

"Don't lose hope, Mr. Jordan. Medical advancements today mean this isn't such a big issue. You should have a positive attitude and follow through with the treatment. Take a long break before you reconsider your plans for high-end doors. This isn't the end of the world. Many people recover after surgery. You need to be optimistic!"

I was not naturally inclined to console others, but I found myself offering encouragement in the face of a situation like this.

Parents' hearts were truly filled with compassion for their children.

"My body has broken down due to years of hard work as I provided my children with a comfortable life. But look at my disobedient son. He excels in everything except what's important. What a disappointment!" He complained.

"It's hard to find good workers now. They refuse to work on high-end doors because of the low production volume and lower commission. It's difficult to find skilled workers," he lamented.

"All these people at home are just waiting for death. There's no hope. When my hard-earned savings are depleted it'll be as if I never existed. I dreamt that Yorksen could become a century-old brand. Alas, I, Jordan Carey, lack virtue. I haven't

produced a suitable successor," he said with deep sadness.

"Don't be so down. You can guide him slowly. If ordinary doors suit him, make them the best they can be. There's a future in that too. Give him some time to mature and realize his responsibilities," I advised insincerely.

Deep down, I knew that Jesse was a lost cause, as his father rightly pointed out. He excelled in vices but struggled with responsibilities.

What a pity for Yorksen.

Jordan waved me away and shook his head.

"He doesn't benefit me at all. We haven't been on the same page since he was a child. I tried to teach him things, but he acted against me. It won't get any better.

"And selfishly, I've noticed that you don't want to work with us anymore. To be honest with you, I've worked hard day and night for this company, but- Bah! Forget it! It's a joke!"

I smiled silently, not wanting to comment.

Soon, Jordan calmed down and changed the topic.

"I've heard you're an elite. You took over Tanum not long ago, and it's thriving. What a pity this isn't my

fate. If I were still strong, I would et

have fought for the Bourdamun project with you. That would have fulfilled my dreams," he said regretfully.

I smiled, feeling regretful as well.

"Many of my projects need your supplies. We'll continue to work together, I promise you."

I had no choice but to take a step back. I still wanted to give him a chance even if I might get slapped in the face. This would save me some trouble as well.

"Thank you. I know this puts you in a

difficult position, Ms. Chloe. I'll

handle your orders personally. I understand everything now after our talk today. What you said was right. I don't want any more unhappiness. I'll complete your orders."

I smiled.

"Can your body handle it, Mr. Jordan?"

"I have to make it work, no matter what. Jesse can fend for himself. I want to die with pride, even if I die in the factory," Jordan vowed.

Chapter 927 Insincere Words

I felt my heart drop when I heard that.

"Well, take care. Let's put it this way. You focus on recovering. If your health improves, we'll continue to collaborate on other small projects involving high-end doors." I painted a hopeful picture for him. I had to do this. I couldn't bear to see this strong man be so defeated.

Sure enough, a hint of contentment appeared on his face. In reality, we both understood that this was just a verbal agreement. If his health didn't improve, our collaboration would naturally come to an end. Before saying goodbye, he said earnestly, "You're still young, Ms. Chloe. Health is wealth. Take good care of yourself. Don't push yourself too hard."

These words, once spoken, became a motto etched deep in my heart, and a memory of Jordan.

After I saw Jordan off, I was left with a heavy heart. It was clear that this man deserved respect, but all his dreams seemed destined to crumble because of his son.

It was a tragic outcome.

Carol reminded me that it was time to go to the hotel. I glanced at my wristwatch and realized that time had flown by.

The afternoon had been hectic, but all I had done was attend to trivial business.

I focused my mind, spoke to Carol, and got up, grabbing my bag as I headed outside.

Carol left work with me, and we chatted as we waited for the elevator.

Carol said, "Don't think too much of it, Chlo. Someone like Jesse isn't worth forgiving."

I sighed. "I feel sorry for his old man."

Carol scoffed. "In my opinion, it's a case of a failed father. This is a slap in the face for him."

I didn't deny that and nodded. "Jesse will regret it someday."

The elevator arrived, and we descended. As we stepped out of the main entrance, I saw Eleanor approaching. It seemed she was waiting for me.

I decided to let Carol drive me and Eleanor to the restaurant since it wasn't far from our office.

At the restaurant, I asked Carol to take my car back, knowing that Atlas would pick me up later.

When we entered the private room, Surface Solutions's people were already there. There were three of them.

As Eleanor and I walked in, a man in his forties quickly stood up, his laughter hearty. "Ah, Ms. Chloe! Pleasure to meet you!"

I looked the man over and found his

appearance quite pleasing. I hadn't seen him before, but I paid special attention to him due to his unique relationship with Eleanor.

Seated beside him was a plump woman, average-looking but skillfully made up. The jewelry around her neck sparkled, and it matched her earrings and ring. It was a complete set, giving her the air of a wealthy lady.

Eleanor took a step forward and introduced us. "Ms. Chloe, this is Surface Solutions's boss, Mr. Vernon Rhodes."

Then, she gestured toward the woman. "And this is Mr. Vernon's wife, Mrs. Andrea."

Eleanor looked at Vernon and said, "This is Tanum Construction and Development's general manager, Ms. Chloe Hartz."

Vernon quickly extended his hand to me. "Ms. Chloe, pleasure to meet you. It's about time we got acquainted. I regret missing my chance last time."

I smiled and shook hands with Vernon as a gesture of courtesy. "Nice to meet you!"

Vernon didn't let go of my hand

immediately. He looked at me and

said, "It's a pleasure to meet you. This really is an honor. Eleanor hasn't stopped praising your swift

and decisive actions."

I glanced at Eleanor, who looked embarrassed. We exchanged glances, and I immediately understood the hidden meaning in her eyes.

I hadn't expected this. His words sounded insincere.

Chapter 928 The Cherished Staff

I withdrew my hand. "Mr. Vernon, you're too kind. Please, have a seat."

Andrea kept her gaze on me, unmoving and unresponsive with an indifferent and distant demeanor. I didn't pay much attention to her.

With her attitude, she really suited someone like Liora. It was no wonder they had become good friends.

Eleanor then introduced another man, marketing manager at Surface Solutions. He was the one who had taken over Eleanor's position.

As we took our seats, I asked Eleanor if she had ordered the food. However, Vernon quickly spoke up.

"I've taken care of it, Ms. Chloe."

"Since you're here, let's make ourselves at home," I said politely.

"Seeing is believing, and today we finally meet! What happened before was a misunderstanding, and fate led us to miss a good opportunity for collaboration. I hope we'll be able to have a good chat this time." Vernon looked at me, eager to get to the point. It was clear he genuinely wanted to collaborate.

This wasn't surprising. Surface Solutions had hit a plateau. The company was in trouble. Bosses had been arrested, change of ownership had been hindered, and employees were uneasy. What sales could they even talk about?

That good friend of Andrea had really caused a lot of harm.

Liora had probably caused the current situation at Surface Solutions. Otherwise, Eleanor wouldn't have left, and Surface Solutions's sales wouldn't have drastically declined.

Vernon continued, "I didn't think we'd have a connection. My capable assistant ended up under your command. I've missed out on a great talent."

I knew that this man was shrewd. He had used Eleanor for many years while pretending to be ignorant, and she had not benefited from it. She had left the company empty-handed and dejected.

I chuckled. "You're right, Mr. Vernon. I've found a very capable assistant thanks to you. Eleanor is a rare talent in market management. She's saved me a lot of trouble since she joined me."

Since he had brought it up, I decided to sing Eleanor's praises. "She's managed my business very well, steadily increasing the market share, and monthly sales have been rising.

"Maybe you don't know this, but

Tanum Corporation used to be just a

material supplier in Foswood.

Thanks

everyone's love and trust

in us, we've 've never lost any of our old business, even when Tanum

Construction and Development was rising.

I explained my story in detail. I wanted to make Vernon regret the way he had treated Eleanor.

"My personal affairs affected the company for a short time, but since Eleanor joined us, everything has improved. Both personnel and sales have skyrocketed!"

It hadn't been entirely positive, but I couldn't hide Eleanor's achievements.

Vernon glanced at Eleanor. His eyes contained complex emotions.

Andrea couldn't hold back any longer. She smiled and said, "You have a really discerning eye, Ms. Chloe. It looks like our little outing has turned someone into a capable individual.

"Well, that's good. Surface Solutions

has really nurtured talents for

others. You're a virtuous one for cultivating talent like this, Ms. Chloe. I'm glad to know leaders like you are out there. Birds of a feather flock together."

She had subtly criticized Eleanor and insulted me at the same time.

It seemed that Andrea was no better than Liora.

I smiled lightly and agreed with her. "You're right, Mrs. Andrea. I think so too. That's why I can relax now."

Eleanor's face paled a little, indicating her suppressed emotions.

Vernon was quick to play

peacemaker and interjected, "That's great! Eleanor has always been outstanding, strong in business, and efficient at handling anything. If she hadn't wanted a change of environment, we wouldn't have been Willing to let go of such an excellent talent."

Suddenly, I felt that Vernon's smile was quite out of place.

"I never expected her to end up under your command, Ms. Chloe. That's wonderful. In the future, it'll be easier for us to communicate when we do business, especially since Eleanor understands Surface Solutions."

Vernon gave Eleanor a meaningful glance.

Chapter 929 Undercurrents

Of course, I understood the underlying meaning in Vernon's words. Vernon was not as magnanimous as he was handsome. He was a master at schemes. The glance he gave Eleanor hinted that she should help him navigate this situation.

When I saw this couple's true colors, I immediately felt at ease.

So that was why the previous collaboration with Matthew had been so unpredictable. I had little faith in Vernon as I saw him exploiting Eleanor like this.

It seemed Eleanor had been captivated by his looks. It also made sense now that she had sold the company to him to help her father.

I smiled and began. "A few days ago, Eleanor talked to me about the collaboration with Surface Solutions. Unfortunately, I had to go to the capital to deal with something urgent there, so I couldn't see you." Vernon quickly responded, "You're too kind, Ms. Chloe. We really want to work with Tanum, so we wanted to meet you no matter what."

He looked at Eleanor and added, "I won't hide it from you. I had a private conversation with Eleanor too. I heard that Tanum is developing rapidly and is unstoppable. I really hope we can work and develop future business together. "

When Vernon mentioned his private talk with Eleanor, I noticed a momentary dimness in Andrea's eyes. She cast a cold glance at Vernon.

I immediately understood why Andrea had come to Foswood with Vernon. She was probably afraid that Vernon would spend alone time with Eleanor.

I also realized what was really going on when I heard what Vernon said. He had probably gathered some information about Tanum.

"I must admit that I have some reservations about collaborating with Surface Solutions at the moment. Eleanor has had detailed discussions with me about this. Since she was from Surface Solutions, she does understand it well, and she has explained the many differences between our companies," I said.

Vernon's smile deepened slightly, and he glanced at Eleanor involuntarily.

"Currently, Tanum is following a high-end route. After converting buildings into developments, we aim to build our own brand, so our requirements have become more demanding." I redirected the conversation. "Mr. Vernon, I'm sure you also know that the ceramic tile market is evolving rapidly and becoming more diversified. To us, Surface Solutions's products seem a bit thin." I conveyed my thoughts diplomatically. Before Vernon could respond, Andrea said, "It looks like you find Surface Solutions lacking, Ms. Chloe."

I immediately turned to her and said, "You're very straightforward, Mrs. Andrea."

I had no intention of avoiding the topic.

Vernon's face stiffened, and he turned to Andrea. "Don't interrupt if you don't understand what's going on."

Andrea immediately expressed her displeasure. "I might not understand everything, but I have ears. Didn't someone say our products were too thin?"

Vernon glared at Andrea. Andrea shook her head and closed her mouth reluctantly.

Vernon turned back to me, his smile becoming intriguing. "You're right, Ms. Chloe, In the past six months, internal adjustments at Surface Solutions have affected the

company's development, né

down the pace of new product development."

He explained, "I respect your honesty and practical approach in business, but please rest assured. Surface Solutions is still a well-known brand in the industry with loyal customers."

He smiled meaningfully. "When I

worked with Mr. Matthew back then, he always had high hopes for our new product development. Maybe you don't quite understand Surface Solutions, or maybe you just haven't visited our company. We have the best team and capabilities for developing new products, and we'll soon have new products on the market."

"Hmm! I've heard about that, and Eleanor has shown me some things." I nodded and continued, "But new product development needs breakthroughs and innovations, focusing on future market demands."

I pointed out their shortcomings

bluntly. "I won't hide it from you. I've

e

carefully examined the materials Mr. Ryan brought to us. Over the year, Surface Solutions's new products haven't made any significant breakthroughs. Many

seem similar, lacking innovation, and they don't seem unique."

The manager, who hadn't said a word until now, finally got a chance to speak.

He nodded obsequiously. "Ms. Chloe, what I showed you was just a small sample of the new product catalog."

His words made me chuckle involuntarily.

Chapter 930 Never Forget the Hand that Feeds You

I smiled faintly. "You're right, Mr. Ricky. The information you provided was limited. But Eleanor has brought me the latest data, and she's meticulously explained it to me.

"Eleanor has been very thoughtful. After all, when promoting your brand, you need to speak with your strongest offerings, don't you agree, Mr. Ricky? You have to show me your best! Otherwise, how can I figure out if I should work with you or not? If the product has no selling points, why should I collaborate?"

My tone was assertive.

I noticed that Vernon's expression soured a bit, but his displeasure seemed directed at their marketing manager.

Rumor had it that this marketing manager was a relative of Andrea's.

Vernon asked Ricky, "Why didn't you bring all the latest information?"

Then he looked at Eleanor. "Did you get the latest information?"

Eleanor immediately responded, "I got it from Johnson, the marketing manager at Ardora. It should all be up to date."

Andrea quickly spoke up to defend Ricky. "We can't risk our new products being leaked. After all, we've experienced situations where certain people resold our products under our name. I think Mr. Ricky was right."

Andrea's words hit the nail on the head, and I was left speechless.

After all, Matthew's actions were well-known within the industry.

I forced a smile.

"Ah, I've heard about things like that. But we're different. We're aiming to produce high-end products and won't produce knockoffs. We can't make a decision without seeing the best of what you have to offer." "We have high expectations for Surface Solutions's products in our secondary project, Ms. Chloe. The cost-effectiveness is still relatively high," Eleanor finally spoke up to support Surface Solutions.

"I don't deny this, but as you know, our secondary project is about to be complete." I rejected Eleanor's suggestion.

At that moment, the waiter started bringing in the food.

Eleanor quickly changed the topic.

"The food is here. Let's eat and talk. Ms. Chloe, if there are quality issues, I can provide some suggestions. Mr. Vernon, you'll need to work hard on the new products."

Vernon quickly said, "Eleanor is right. Cooperation requires constant adjustment. Of course, I also hope to hear more good advice from you, Ms. Chloe."

"I don't really have much to say about this. There are several excellent ceramic tile products in the market right now. They really are outstanding." I relaxed and casually mentioned a few names.

The names I mentioned were replacement manufacturers we had found after the failed collaboration with Surface Solutions. Their quality had been improving unexpectedly.

"You have a good eye, Ms Chloe. But their costs are relatively high," Vernon commented.

"Indeed, but with our large quantity, partner businesses can rest

assured. Just one project in

Bourdan un will be enough for them to avoid the hassle of attracting new customers. And there's also the project at Avalon Hills next, said assertively.

"Avalon Hills?" Vernon said with some doubt, "Avalon Hills... is your project too?"

"Yes! Both Phase Two and Phase

Three. It's just as good as Bourdamun," I said unapologetically "The design for Phase Two had been complete when they were attracted to the new Bourdamun model and added Phase Three, merging the two for construction."

"Isn't..." Vernon trailed off as he looked at Eleanor, evidently seeking confirmation.

Eleanor calmly said, "This project has always been under Ms. Chloe's control."

Vernon's face turned pale, and his jaw tightened.

Andrea seemed a bit uneasy.

"Avalon Hills has been signed to Liora. They said they would use Surface Solutions's ceramic tiles."

I remained silent, and Eleanor did not speak either.

When Andrea saw that neither of us had any intention of cooperating with her narrative, she became displeased. She shifted her frustrations onto Eleanor.

"Eleanor, they say that you shouldn't

forget the hand that feeds you. You

worked at Surface Solutions for so

many years. Don't you have any professional ethics? Now that you have a new boss, you shouldn't cause trouble for the old one!"

She continued disdainfully, "Do you really think all those unsavory traces have been wiped away just because you left your old place?"

Andrea's words made everyone in the room feel awkward, especially me.

Vernon suddenly turned to Andrea. "What are you doing? Is this the right time to make those baseless remarks?"

I looked at Eleanor, and she remained silent, looking at Andrea indifferently.