

Love Me Or Leave Me

#Chapter 121 - Read Love Me Or Leave Me Chapter 121

CHAPTER 121

Becky was already married and even had kids. How could he dare to think about her in a way he shouldn't?

One might live without shame but not without principles. Malcolm would never dream of seducing a married woman.

"At least you're smart about it," Charlie snorted.

Becky was the apple of the Carters' eye; someone they would always cherish and protect. If Malcolm could tag along with his sister, even if it was just as a minor companion, he would still benefit greatly.

However, the fact that Malcolm had the guts to confess his feelings to her spoke to his character. The entertainment industry was full of shady dealings, and it was better to have someone trustworthy like Malcolm around Becky than to risk unsavory characters getting close to her.

"Alright, but the best I can do is get you an audition. If you don't get the part, don't blame me," Charlie laid it out plainly.

Malcolm was overjoyed and nodded eagerly. "I understand. I'll do my best."

"One more thing," Charlie added as a thought occurred.

"I can't be around Becky all the time. If you land the role, keep an eye on the people around her. If anyone has bad intentions, step in for her. You can send the bill for any protection costs." Charlie proposed a new deal.

Malcolm's eyes lit up, and he quickly agreed, "Sure, no problem."

These were golden opportunities and ways to make some extra cash.

"Can I take the contract home to review? I'll bring it back signed in a couple of days," Malcolm said.

Charlie nodded. "Sure."

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Bursting with excitement, Malcolm repeatedly nodded like a pecking chicken. His luck had finally turned. From now on, he'd be riding the coattails of someone powerful, sailing smoothly toward wealth and success.

Having settled things with Malcolm, Charlie dusted off his hands and walked away,

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feeling quite pleased.

Brimming with excitement, he returned to the hotel and shared the news about signing Malcolm with his sister.

Stacey was surprised. "You signed a contract with Malcolm?"

"Yeah, I did. His acting skills are decent, his character is good, and he's willing to work hard to hone his craft. He just needed a bit of luck, so I signed him up. After all, we have plenty of resources," Charlie said with a cheerful grin.

Stacey nodded. "Yeah."

While speaking, Charlie carefully observed his sister's expression. He was curious to see if she had any feelings for Malcolm.

However, seeing her calm demeanor, he realized she regarded Malcolm as just a friend. His worries were unfounded, and he felt relieved.

Stacey was too innocent. After finally getting rid of that scoundrel, he didn't want her to be easily deceived by another rogue, especially one from the showbiz.

"Malcolm also wants to join your new production. I agreed to get him an audition, but I won't interfere beyond that. It's up to him to impress the director. If his acting is good enough and he gets the role, I won't stand in his way," Charlie added.

Stacey was taken aback. "He wants to join the The Empress production?"

Charlie shook his head, then nodded. "Not exactly, but sort of."

Stacey looked puzzled.

Charlie's smile faded as he explained earnestly, "He just wants to follow you around. He wants to be part of any production you join."

"Me?" Stacey was confused.

Charlie chuckled, unable to resist pinching his sister's cheek. "Yes, you. You're now the darling of the Carters, my dear sister. Everyone knows you're our princess. We'll always cherish and protect you. Malcolm sees this as a golden opportunity. He wants to be your sidekick because he knows that being around you means a high chance of success and making a lot of money."

Charlie laughed. "Malcolm is a smart guy with a decent character. I've looked into his past. He seems clean with some morals. He's just trying to make the most of his opportunities and ride on some coattails. Letting him stay around you isn't a big deal. Consider it his good luck.

"Just see him as a friend, nothing more," Charlie continued. Suddenly remembering something, he added, "Oh, I've hired him to protect you. If you run into any trouble, you can go to him. He'll keep you safe, and I'll pay him for his services afterward."

Stacey was speechless.

Rattling on, Charlie's mouth was dry. He quickly took a big gulp of water.

He went on at length to remind his sister that if Malcolm treated her well, it was because he was being paid to do so. There was no need to be overly moved by it.

Stacey had a hard time shaking off Theodore. He didn't want her to be easily taken in by another untrustworthy man.

What if this guy had ulterior motives and just wanted to use her?

The entertainment industry was too messy, so he needed to give her a heads-up.

Unaware of Charlie's thoughts, Stacey would have found it amusing if she knew.

After her experience with Theodore, she had no interest in romance or finding a partner. She just wanted to focus on herself, raising her two adorable babies, and living well with her parents and three brothers.

She only wanted to cherish the present and strive for a better future.

"Got it, thanks, Charlie," Stacey said, feeling blessed as she looked at him.

Charlie smiled, lifting his hand to affectionately pinch her cheek again.

She had inherited their parents' excellent genes and was very beautiful. The more he looked at her, the more he adored her.

“Charlie!” Stacey couldn’t help but pull away her brother’s mischievous hand.

She noticed that he loved pinching her cheeks ever since they got closer. But she wasn’t a child like Lily and Kev anymore.

Charlie quickly withdrew his hand, smiling, “Becky, do you have any plans for

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later? If not, how about I take you out for something delicious?”

“Really?” Stacey’s eyes.

lit up.

Lynn, standing nearby, chimed in, “You’re about to join the production. You need to watch your diet.”

“Becky is not fat at all,” Charlie retorted without a second thought.

Stacey chuckled and turned to Lynn. “Don’t worry, Lynn. I’ll watch it.”

She was about to sign a contract with the production team, so she needed to manage her figure and not indulge recklessly. Otherwise, she would be irresponsible.

Her parents and brothers always doted on her, giving her anything she wanted and constantly finding ways to treat her to good food. If this continued, she would be spoiled.

“We could go for something that doesn’t make me gain weight so easily,” Stacey said.

Charlie looked at her, feeling a bit downcast. “What kind of food doesn’t make you gain weight?”

Stacey cautiously answered, “Veggies?”

Charlie was dumbfounded, thinking, ‘Did Mom never mention that I don’t eat veggies?’

Stacey knew Charlie disliked vegetables. When they ate together at home, their mom would often nag a bit about how Adrian liked this, and Bryce liked that, but Charlie was the pickiest, refusing to eat this or that. When he was younger, his finicky eating habits even led to malnutrition.

Because of this, she hoped Charlie would eat more vegetables for a balanced diet, which was good for his health.

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“Let’s skip the veggies. It seems like no place in the Aotori shooting base has good veggies,” Charlie chuckled, trying to reject.

As he spoke, he stood up and said, “Why don’t you take the next few days to really delve into the script, Stacey? I’ve gone through *The Empress*, and it’s pretty solid. I think it’ll turn out well when filmed.”

“Charlie, you can’t be so picky about food.” Stacey laughed, reminding him gently.

Charlie looked at his sister with a melancholic expression.

“Balanced nutrition is key to good health,” Stacey added, exasperated.

“Don’t worry, I take my vitamins regularly. I’m not lacking in nutrition.” Charlie waved his hand dismissively, sounding like an old man set in his ways.

After spending a little more time in Stacey’s room, Charlie left.

Lynn also took her leave because there was nothing more to do.

Stacey was the only one left in the room.

She took out her script and began to memorize her lines.

However, she hadn’t been studying for long when her phone rang. She picked up the phone and looked at it, and she found that it was an unknown number.

Stacey recently became wary of unfamiliar numbers because Theodore had called her repeatedly using new numbers.

After a moment’s hesitation, she decided to answer the call.

She and Theodore were divorced now, and she had no reason to fear him.

More importantly, she was working now, so this call could be from someone in the crew wanting to discuss work.

But once she picked up and Theodore’s voice came through, she instinctively hung up and blocked the number.

It wasn’t work-related at all. It was just Theodore bothering her again.

After ending the call, Stacey felt a bit unsettled. She closed her eyes, took a few

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deep breaths, and let it go.

It was all in the past now.

There was already no Rebecca Mitchell in this world. From now on, she was only Stacey Carter. She no longer needed to let Theodore affect her.

Soon, another unknown number called..

Stacey didn't answer. She simply blocked it, handling it all in one go.

In Hivalis, Theodore made call after call, only to be hung up on each time. When he tried again, he found himself blocked. His expression darkened.

He realized that Rebecca didn't want anything to do with him anymore.

Why? Was it because he had hurt her too deeply in the past?

In the middle of the night, Theodore stood by the window of his hotel room, memories flooding his mind. He recalled Rebecca's pain, her breakdowns, and the times he had driven her to despair.

He had indeed done many things that had caused her immense sorrow.

Suddenly, his phone rang. Theodore looked at the caller ID. It was Jenny.

His brows furrowed in annoyance, but thinking about the ongoing projects with the Smith family, he reluctantly answered.

Back in Aotori City, at the shooting base, after blocking several numbers, Stacey's phone finally went silent. There were no more calls from unknown numbers.

She waited, feeling a sense of peace return. Once calmed, she picked up her script and resumed memorizing her lines.

But just after two sentences, her phone rang again.

Feeling irritated, Stacey frowned, picked up her phone, and turned it off.

However, as she pressed the power button, it dawned on her that the caller ID seemed familiar. It looked like it was her mother.

Her heart raced. She patiently waited for the phone to shut down, then quickly powered it back on.

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After the phone rebooted, she checked the call log. Sure enough, she hadn't been mistaken. The last call was indeed from her mother.

Thinking of her mother, Stacey was delighted. She quickly called her back via video.

The call connected almost immediately, and she was greeted by the close-up of a baby's face. It was Lily.

"Mom," Lily said, holding the phone. Her voice was sweet and joyous as she looked at her mother on the screen.

"Yes, it's Mom." Stacey responded to her daughter with a smile.

Soon, the phone was back in Debra's hands, and her face appeared on the screen.

"Mom," Stacey smiled and greeted softly.

"Hey. Debra responded happily, then quickly asked, "why did you hang up earlier? I tried calling back but couldn't get through."

Stacey thought for a moment before explaining, "Theodore called me multiple times from unknown numbers. I didn't want to answer, so I kept hanging up and blocking them. But he had so many numbers and kept calling, so I turned off my phone. I didn't realize it was from you."

Hearing that Theodore was still bothering her daughter, Debra's face darkened. with displeasure.

"Becky, don't worry about him. You're divorced now and even got the divorce license. As long as you ignore him, he can do nothing to you," Debra reminded her.

Stacey nodded. "Yes, I know."

Debra looked at her daughter and added, "I'll ask your father to find a way to create trouble for the Edwards family in business. That should keep them too busy to bother you."

Stacey felt a surge of gratitude towards her parents.

“Thank you, Mom. But if doing that doesn’t benefit the Carters, don’t waste your efforts. It’s not worth it,” she advised.

For the rest of her life, she wanted her family to thrive and not be burdened by the chaos of the past.

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Sensing her daughter’s concern, Debra became cheerful. She smiled and said, “Don’t worry. Your father is smart. He won’t do anything that’s a waste of effort. If he’s going to target the Edwards family, it will be in a way that benefits us. You don’t need to worry.”

Suddenly, Stacey remembered the vast business empire her family controlled and how the money seemed endless no matter how much her mother spent. Maybe her mother was right?

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Her father had managed the business so well that he surely wouldn’t let the Edwards family take advantage of them.

With this realization, Stacey’s worries eased. She nodded happily. “Okay.”

“Mom.” As they talked, Kev squeezed his head into the frame, joyfully calling out to his mother with his sweet, baby voice.

He even reached out his chubby little hands, trying to grab the screen as if to touch his mother.

Seeing her baby, Stacey couldn’t resist reaching out her hand, almost as if she could grasp his soft little hands.

“Becky, how about I bring the kids to the shooting base in a few days?” Debra suggested casually, and her eyes filled with a smile. “I don’t have much to do at home anyway, and the kids really miss you!”

Stacey hesitated. “Wouldn’t it be too tiring for you to keep following me around?”

Debra raised an eyebrow. “Why would it be tiring? The places where the crew shoots usually have nice scenery. I can take Lily and Kev along as if we’re traveling. Why not?”

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Happiness seemed contagious.

Watching her mother's joyful smile, Stacey felt happiness well up inside her, too. She nodded. "Alright."

The next day, Debra, together with the two babies and the nanny, flew straight to the Aotori shooting base to reunite with Stacey.

Stacey saw Lily and Kev again. The two little ones, had missed their mother dearly. As soon as they saw her, they toddled over. Each baby hugged each of her legs, and in an instant, Stacey had two little cuties clinging to her.

"Mom," Lily said and looked up at her mother. Her words were much more fluent now, and she was no longer stuttering.

"Mom," Kev echoed in his soft, sweet voice, which was quieter than his sister's energetic tone.

Stacey bent down and scooped the little ones up, giving them kisses. They were just too adorable.

"Lily, Kev, I love you." Stacey nuzzled their soft cheeks, enjoying the closeness with her babies.

"Ah... Mom." Lily blinked, her babyish voice suddenly stuttering again as she tried to speak.

Stacey was stunned, and then her eyes lit up with surprise. "Lily, what did you just say?"

But Lily didn't repeat herself. Instead, she stretched out her chubby arms, hugged her mother's neck happily, and demanded, "Hug."

Hearing the word "hug", Kev also became excited, immediately extending his soft little hands to embrace his mother, cheerfully shouting, "Hug."

Stacey's heart melted. How could her two babies be so adorable?

Unfortunately, she couldn't lift both little ones at the same time.

Yet, she still held them both in her arms, feeling utterly joyful and full of love for her babies.

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Their mother held them, and although it wasn't quite as they had imagined, Lily and Key were still delighted. The two little ones eagerly extended their tiny hands to embrace their mother, showing how much they loved her.

After watching for a while. Debra greeted the little ones. "Lily, Kev, come over here. Your mom is tired. Don't disturb her rest

Lily and Kev looked at their grandmother with puzzled expressions.

Stacey released the two little ones. She stood up, walked over to her mother, and couldn't help but gently hug her.

She truly loved her mother so much

Her mother had always been so kind to her

Debra was taken aback for a moment but then opened her arms and gently returned the hug to her daughter, her heart filled with sweetness.

In the afternoon, Adrian returned with the contract that had been sent earlier. The contract indeed had some issues, and Adrian had marked them with a red pen and explained them to Stacey

After a thorough explanation, he included. "Becky, do you have the contact for the director of this production? Give it to the, and I'll discuss it with her."

Stacey was momentarily speechless.

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Feeling relieved, Stacey quickly agreed, "Alright"

She had been worried about whether the director might feel offended if her elder brother stepped in for negotiations. But since it was customary for Charlie, having Adrian handle it shouldn't be a problem

After ending the call with Adrian, Stacey still decided to check with Charlie and Lynn about this arrangement. Once she got their approval, she handed over Vicky's contact information to Adrian

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Although Vicky had mentally prepared herself, knowing that the previous contract had issues, her heart still pounded with nerves when the lawyer of the Carter family approached her.

After all, it was Adrian, the eldest son of the Carters.

Vicky had anticipated a lengthy negotiation, but to her surprise, it took just ten minutes.

Essentially, Adrian pointed out what was wrong with the contract and how it needed to be amended, and she, feeling somewhat dazed, kept agreeing to all his suggestions.

In the end, Adrian sent her a revised contract and told her to review it. If she had no objections, they could proceed with the signing.

As the conversation wrapped up, Vicky's mind suddenly cleared a bit. She wanted to protest that this revised contract was too generous. The terms were

akin to those of an award-winning actor like Charlie, while Becky was just a newcomer. How could she receive such favorable treatment?

However, she quickly recalled Becky's impressive performance during the audition.

"Can I think it over and get back to you?" Vicky asked cautiously, needing moment to wrestle with her thoughts.

"Of course," Adrian replied graciously, giving her the requested time.

Vicky hastily expressed her gratitude. "Thank you. I'll get back to you as soon as possible."

While Vicky carefully considered Adrian's contract, Janet was waiting for a response from the crew of *The Empress*. Normally, a small production like this wouldn't match her status, but her current position was rather precarious.

The viewership of "Disciple Meets Master" had been unexpectedly surpassed by a newcomer's work, *Lovey Princess*. She urgently needed a unique project to -overshadow that and regain her footing in the industry.

The Empress was recommended by a friend. She was intrigued by the protagonist's character design.

The role was distinct from that of typical female leads in current dramas, a notable

point that could potentially make the show a hit and help her reestablish her image.

The only downside was that the production team was somewhat unimpressive. It was a small crew, and the director had a rather average track record with no remarkable successes.

However, given her awkward status, a top-tier director wouldn't likely invite her to star in such a project. She was realistic about this.

Thus, the fact that this script was in the hands of a lesser-known director was actually a relief.

With her current status, joining a small production was relatively easy.

However, Janet hadn't expected that even with such a small production, her manager, Lisa, had been negotiating for over half a month without any result.

"Lisa, what's going on with the director of *The Empress*? Have you gotten the contract yet?" Janet asked impatiently, her tone cold.

Lisa frowned and quickly replied, “Janet, I’ve been pushing them. The director said she needed some time to consider.”

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Lisa’s eyes widened in shock at the news. “Janet, you’re saying some other artists. who are just as talented as you are interested in The Empress?”

In the world of showbiz, popularity ruled. Even if Janet’s star was fading, she was still the best actress with a fanbase. For someone

like her to join a small production, Vicky should be thrilled and ready to sign on the dotted line. She would be afraid that Janet might back out.

Lisa thought, ‘But Vicky isn’t jumping at the chance. It’s one thing to think it over, but it’s been half a month with no decision

‘Could it be that there are other top–tier talents on a par with Janet also in talks with The Empress? Who else could it be? Who else besides Janet would even consider this show?’

Lisa’s face fell, and she quickly said, “I’ll find out right away.”

Janet’s comeback would directly affect Lisa’s future success, so she was on edge, too.

After Lisa left, Janet was alone in the dressing room. She looked around the small makeup area and finally sat in front of the mirror. Her reflection showed a face that was far from pleased, with dark circles under her eyes.

Janet grabbed a makeup pad and tried to cover the dark circles in the mirror, but no matter how long she tried, they wouldn’t hide. She was shaking with anger.

She thought, ‘It’s all Rebecca’s fault. If it weren’t for her mess, I wouldn’t be in this state. Rebecca’s almost washed up. She’s been dragged through the mud online. Everyone’s calling her names, telling her to get lost. How can she make a comeback? A paternity test? The long–lost daughter of the Carter family?

‘Ha, I don’t buy it. Rebecca is the Carter family’s lost daughter? She might just have the luck of the draw, looking a bit like the Carters. It’s got to be a coincidence. Or could it

be... Charlie's trying to shield Rebecca? Seeing her take all this heat online, he'd go as far as faking a paternity test, claiming Rebecca as his sister to clear her

name?'

With these thoughts, Janet hatched a plan. She needed to get a hold of Rebecca and Charlie's DNA and get it tested to prove they were not really siblings.

This plan brought a smile to Janet's face, and finally, she felt sleepy.

She hadn't had a good night's sleep in ages. The idea of Rebecca as the Carter family's daughter had been driving her mad. Her body was exhausted, but her mind was wide awake, refusing to rest, resulting in those dark circles under her

eyes.

Janet returned to the lounge's bed, kicked off her shoes, climbed in, lay down, and pulled the covers over herself. This time, she drifted off to sleep quickly.

At the Aotori shooting base, after wrestling with her thoughts all night, Vicky finally signed her name on the contract with a grimace.

She told herself, "It's a sure thing. I won't lose money. I've seen what Becky can do on camera. We just need to find the right guy to play off her, and this show will be gold. I'll be rolling in the dough."

Adrian had emailed her a digital contract. Vicky signed it and shot him a message.

In Hivalis, Adrian got the message, gave a quick scan to make sure it was right, and then sent the contract link to his sister Stacey to sign, too.

Stacey gave the contract a final once-over. It seemed good to her, so she signed on the line. It brought the contract into legal force instantly. Now she was the lead in The Empress.

Vicky got the heads-up that the contract was signed. She checked it out, confirmed it was Becky who signed after her, and then exhaled. She thought, 'Just need the right male lead now. He's gotta be perfect and top-notch. Gotta make this show

pop.'

Lost in thought, Vicky was interrupted when an artist came knocking, one she knew well—Malcolm, who played the lead character Yves in Lovey Princess, the show he did with Becky.

Malcolm was easy on the eyes and not bad at acting. The show with him and Becky had been a hit. They had a bunch of fans already shipping them online. If Malcolm could nail the male lead in The Empress and team up with Becky, it'd be a slam dunk.

But here was the thing, acting chops were key. Just like Charlotte and Elizabeth

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were day and night, Raymond in The Empress was a whole other ball Yves in Lovey Princess. Malcolm killed it as Yves, but Raymond? Vicky had to see how he'd handle the audition.

Half an hour later, Vicky was blown away. Malcolm nailed it and acted smoothly. With his skills, landing the role of Raymond was a no-brainer.

"Mind if I ask you something?" Vicky couldn't resist it.

Malcolm nodded and said, "Shoot, Vicky."

Vicky hesitated and then asked, "Why'd you come to our show?" She was dying to know.

"Because of Becky." Malcolm was upfront. "Heard she's on board, so I figured why not give it a whirl?"

Vicky blinked and asked, "You're into Becky?"

Malcolm shook his head and replied, "Nah, I'm just chasing fame."

Vicky was speechless.

Malcolm got serious and said, "What do you think, Vicky? Becky's gonna be huge, right? If I tag along, even if I'm just a sidekick, I can get a job. I'm not picky."

Vicky's mouth twitched. She cracked a smile. "You're coming off like a freeloader here."

Malcolm smiled and responded, "What's wrong with a free meal? If it's there, might as well dig in."

"Fair enough." Vicky nodded and said with a smile, "You're not bad-looking and can hold your own on stage. If we're good, let's sign this contract. Becky signed this morning. You two are our leads."

Malcolm beamed, bowed in gratitude, and said, "Thanks, director, I won't let you down."

Vicky chuckled, pulled out the contract, and handed it over to Malcolm.

Malcolm scanned it. A few terms made him raise an eyebrow, but he was about to sign.

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Just then, Malcolm remembered he wasn't on his own anymore. Signed with Charlie's company, he had backup now. If he signed this contract solo, he wouldn't have much leverage, but if his company signed, that changed the game.

"Mind if I take this contract back to my company before I sign?" Malcolm asked, his voice cutting through the silence.

Vicky paused, surprised. "What company are you with these days?" she questioned.

"The L&K Group," Malcolm replied, a grin spreading across his face.

Vicky's brow furrowed, her mind racing. 'What group? Never heard of it, she thought.

Malcolm picked up on Vicky's confusion, and in a good mood, he explained, "Our boss is Charlie. He started the company not long ago. It's still pretty fresh."

Vicky's face fell. She thought, 'Charlie, uh-oh, this isn't good. Gonna cost me an arm and a leg!

"Huh, when did he start a company?" Vicky forced a laugh, trying to hide her concern. "You're with him now, huh? Why didn't he mention it?"

Malcolm, sharp and calm, noticed the shift in Vicky's demeanor. He went on, "Mr. Carter's gonna set up an audition for me. He said I'm on my own after that."

Vicky hesitated, "With his style, you still signed up?"

Malcolm smiled, "It's all good. I've got the chops and the talent. If he gives me a shot at an audition, I know I can land it on my own."

The tricky part was securing his spot after acing the audition and ensuring that he wouldn't get bumped by the investors' picks. He'd been sidelined before, but now, he saw that with Becky by his side, the Carter family would shield him. They'd make sure Becky's co-star was a real actor, not just some crony the investors wanted to slip in.

"Alright, take it back. Let Charlie check it out. If there's anything you're not happy with, we can discuss it. We're reasonable," Vicky said sincerely, getting straight to the point.

Malcolm was taken aback by her openness, feeling a surge of hope. Vicky's words hinted that the contract was up for discussion.

With these thoughts, Malcolm felt sense of validation about his choice of company.

He thought, 'If it were my old management, the director wouldn't entertain any changes to the contract. It's a one-size-fits-all deal. Take it or leave it. But with Charlie in my corner, everything is on the table. The director is willing to cut Charlie some slack, and having him as a backer means I have some leverage.'

"Thanks, Vicky," Malcolm said with the thought in mind, his tone earnest and his posture a bit straighter.

With their talk wrapped up, Malcolm walked away, contract in hand.

Meanwhile, Lisa tapped into her network, quietly figuring out which actresses were in the running for The Empress besides Janet. The name that stood out the most was Becky.

Lisa's face dropped at the mention. She thought, 'Why does Rebecca keep popping up everywhere? Can't she just vanish?'

Becky might not have Janet's star power yet, but Lisa felt a sinking feeling in her gut. It seemed like Becky was destined to steal "The Empress" from under Janet's nose. Janet was always having a hard time when Becky was around, as if her past misdeeds against Becky were coming back to bite her.

Deep in thought, Lisa returned to Janet's side and shared her findings.

Janet had just woken up from a nap, feeling refreshed, but her mood instantly soured upon hearing Lisa's news.

"Rebecca again?" Janet's anger was palpable, her heart aching.

Lisa nodded, her worry evident. "Yeah, I heard Vicky wanted you in the cast, but Becky showed up for an audition and killed it. Vicky seems to really like her."

"Like her? Please. Rebecca's just doing this on purpose," Janet snapped, her voice quivering. "How long has she been in the industry? What acting skills could she possibly have?"

"It must be the Carter family. Charlie's backing her. Vicky must be giving her a chance because of Charlie. No, Charlie must have invested in the production, just like with Lovey Princess. He must have poured in 20 million dollars or more. Vicky's only doing it for the money. That's why she's letting that bitch take the lead," Janet ranted, her words tumbling out in a heated stream.

Lisa was taken aback by the outburst but then realized it made sense. She thought, 'In the entertainment circle, investors can put people on a set as long as they have money. It's all too common these days. Even the lead roles in many smaller productions are forced in by the investors. The production teams, desperate for cash, have no spine, all too willing to say yes, and they pretend the actors got the roles on merit, which is just disgusting.'

'No matter what, Janet's a movie queen. Vicky would never just drop her for Becky. The most likely scenario is that Charlie has invested a fortune in The Empress, just like he invested heavily in Lovey Princess. Then, using his position as an investor, he can force Becky into the lead role, leaving Janet out in the cold.'

"What are we going to do?" Lisa asked, her voice laced with concern.

Janet's face turned red with anger. She thought, 'What can I do? Compete with the Carter family for who has more money? I'm not stupid. My family has some cash, but it's nowhere near the Carter family's wealth.'

"Forget it. If she wants the show, she can have it. Let's see if Rebecca really has what it takes to play the role well," Janet said through gritted teeth.

Lisa didn't respond.

Taking a deep breath, Janet continued, "Does our company have any other scripts? Ones that are better than The Empress?"

Lisa hesitated, "We have plenty of scripts, but for uniqueness, The Empress is still the best."

After a moment of hesitation, Lisa added, "Janet, how about we take a break from acting for now? Variety shows are really popular. Ben still wants you to go back to filming A Glimpse into Our Family, right? Why don't you go back to that show?"

"I think Ben treats you pretty well. If you go back, it won't be bad. Plus, variety shows are live, which can keep your popularity and heat up," Lisa continued, with one suggestion after another.

"No way." Janet refused without a second thought. 'Others have interactions with their partners, but I don't. The last time I was on that show, my mom had no idea what to do and just followed me around the whole time. Our team didn't generate any buzz. If the

director hadn't set up a little drama at the end, we would have been a total embarrassment,' she thought.

"Keep looking for scripts for me. Ones that are definitely better than The Empress," Janet said firmly.

CHAPTER 126

Stacey barely waited a week before Vicky called her in for a makeup test. The male lead had been locked down—Malcolm, the former co-star.

Stacey was caught off guard for a second, but then she figured it made sense. They'd worked together on Lovey Princess for months and knew each other's mettle.

She thought, Just like Charlie said, Malcolm's good-looking, can act, and isn't afraid of hard work. What he's been missing is just a bit of luck. Without those unspoken rules, it's totally normal for Malcolm to ace the audition with his real skills. From now on, let's work hard together.'

As Stacey thought this through, she considered Charlie's company. She wouldn't be in showbiz for long and felt that if she could make Malcolm a hit before she left, it'd be a nice contribution to Charlie.

With that, Stacey texted Vicky back. [Sure, I'll be there tomorrow.]

Her mother had rented a villa close to the shooting base, where the whole family now lived happily, close to the set.

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Vicky replied: [Okay, see you tomorrow.]

Stacey responded cheerfully: [Okay.]

Just as Stacey hit send, there was a noise at the door. She looked up and saw Charlie.

Lily and Kevin, hearing the noise, scrambled up from the rug in front of the couch and rushed toward Charlie at the door, hugging his legs like little puppies wagging their tails.

Charlie squatted down, hugged one with each arm, and in one swift motion, lifted both kids up.

Marie and Gwen watched anxiously, ready to catch the kids if Charlie stumbled. But Lily and Kevin were smart. As soon as Charlie picked them up, they wrapped their little arms around his head, one on each side.

“Charlie,” Kevin and Lily called out in tandem. Kevin’s sweet voice trailed off while Lily’s voice sounded crisp and cute.

Just then, Debra came down the stairs and spotted them, quickly warning, “Chuck, don’t drop them.”

Charlie, of course, wasn’t about to drop the kids. He carried them to the couch, gently put them down, and gave each a kiss.

“Lily, Kevin, I’ve been gone all day. Did you miss me?” Charlie put on a serious face and asked the kids.

“Of course,” Kevin said and nodded, his voice sweet.

Charlie’s eyes smiled instantly, and he gave Kevin a noisy kiss on the cheek.

“I missed you, too.” Lily, seeing him kiss Kevin and not wanting to be left out, spoke up.

“Alright, I missed you a lot, too.” Charlie grinned and kissed Lily, clearly delighted.

Lily reached out, still trying to snuggle into her uncle’s arms.

Then Charlie hugged Lily.

Kevin, not wanting to be left behind, tried to crawl over.

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Stacey reached out and picked him up so he wouldn’t feel left out.

Stacey leaned down and kissed Kevin, who immediately focused on his mother, beaming.

“Mom,” Kevin said in his cute little voice.

“Oh, my good boy,” Stacey said, praising him.

Kevin was instantly overjoyed, hugging his mother tightly.

“Charlie, Vicky just told me to come to the set tomorrow for a makeup test,” Stacey said, looking up at Charlie while holding Kevin.

Charlie looked at his sister and said happily, “Yeah, I invested 20 million dollars in the production. If you need anything on set, just ask. Don’t hold back. And tell the costume and makeup department to go all out and spend when it’s needed. Don’t

cut corners.”

Stacey nodded in agreement. She was all for Charlie’s investment because the entertainment industry could be very lucrative. If a show was well-made and

became a hit, earning back the money was no problem. The key was for the actors to perform well and not mess up, to avoid ruining the show. There also shouldn’t be any issues later on. Otherwise, if the show got taken down, the investors would lose everything.

The following day, Stacey arrived on set for her makeup and costume test, where she bumped into Malcolm.

It had been half a year since their last encounter, and their faces lit up with smiles. upon reuniting.

“Becky,” Malcolm said, approaching her with a hint of shyness. With Stacey being the older of the two by a year, Malcolm regarded her with a brotherly kind of respect.

“Malcolm, here’s to working well together, Stacey said cheerfully, offering her hand to Malcolm.

Malcolm hesitated for a moment and then caught on quickly, shaking her hand with a grin. “Becky, here’s to a great partnership.”

Vicky emerged from inside the set, her eyes lighting up when she saw the two of them. “Becky, Malcolm, you both made it. Great! Come on in, the stylist is ready. Let’s create a look for you,” she said, her mood instantly lifted by their presence.

Stacey’s features were a clear inheritance from the Carter family—striking and adaptable. Back on the lovey Princess set when she played Elizabeth, the stylist had taken only half an hour to apply a sweet makeup look that turned her into a charming lady.

Now, on The Empress set, the stylist managed to give Stacey a regal makeup look in just over forty minutes. As she stood up, Stacey immediately exuded the grand presence of Charlotte.

Yet, as Stacey gazed at her reflection, she felt there was potential for more. She thought about the clothes in the Carter Manor and those at her home in Hivalis- there were each season’s latest collections from various brands, and many of them were limited editions, ordered for her by her parents and brothers. And the accessories were far superior to what the crew had provided.

It wasn’t that the crew’s offerings were subpar. It was just that comparisons

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highlighted the differences. No matter how diligent the crew was, their efforts. couldn't match the selections made by her parents and Charlie.

"Can I use my own jewelry and clothes?" Stacey advised the director and stylist. She thought, "Those clothes back home are just gathering dust. It's better to put them to use. If the show does well, the profits will be shared with Charlie too, considering how much he's invested."

CHAPTER 127

Sierra, the stylist, looked puzzled.

Vicky was confused too, but she quickly shook it off, her eyes lighting up with excitement as she asked, "You have a ton of clothes?"

Stacey thought about all the stuff her parents and brothers had gotten her over the years and nodded. "Yeah, quite a bit."

"I've got pictures. You can see if there's anything that fits, Stacey said, thinking out loud.

As she spoke, Stacey pulled out her phone and showed the director and the stylist the photos she'd taken. She had quietly snapped some shots of her wardrobe and storage back at Carter Manor, filled with clothes and accessories.

At first, Vicky and Sierra just figured that as a Carter, Becky's clothes would be pretty nice, way better than what the crew had put together. But when they saw the photos, they were floored.

Both Vicky and Sierra were fashion-forward women, so they could instantly recognize the brands and designers of the clothes, bags, and accessories in the photos. They could even remember which year some of them were produced. Usually, the latest trends were what everyone wanted, and last season's stuff wasn't cool in high society. But there was one exception: limited edition items.

For a moment, Vicky and Sierra were speechless. They scrolled through the photos, zooming in on each one, their eyes glued to the screen. Every piece of clothing in the photos seemed extraordinary. What was even more shocking was that there was more than one photo, each filled

with dozens, maybe even hundreds of clothes. And there were not just clothes, but bags and all sorts of accessories, too.

Vicky and Sierra were so engrossed in the photos that they forgot they were on the clock, completely mesmerized by the images.

Malcolm, who had finished his styling, was oddly left out. Despite being ignored, he was in a great mood. One could even say he was thrilled.

He had secretly studied the original novel of *The Empress* before his audition. The characters were crucial—the female lead and the male lead were both incredibly

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wealthy and attractive, exuding an air of nobility wherever they went.

For this drama to take off, it wasn't just about the acting. The costumes and makeup were key..

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He knew Becky was in this crew and figured the costumes and makeup would be top-notch.

But now, seeing that Becky looked down on what the crew had prepared and that she could bring in much more valuable, even limited-edition clothes and accessories, he thought it was clear that their show was set to outshine even the biggest domestic productions in terms of costume and makeup. He felt *The Empress* was bound to be a massive hit.

Meanwhile, Sierra and Vicky were so excited about the clothes that they were. almost in tears. They believed that with these clothes, along with Becky's and Malcolm's acting skills, *The Empress* would be a smash hit in no time.

At Evergrande Entertainment, Janet tossed and turned every night since learning *The Empress* had been snatched up by Becky. She'd coolly told Lisa to scout for a better script, but who was she kidding? If top-tier scripts grew on trees, guys in showbiz wouldn't be scrambling for the next big hit.

If she couldn't find a script better than *The Empress*, Rebecca would steal her spotlight for good. The ladies of the Mitchell family's friends, who'd watched her and Rebecca grow up, were already snickering behind her back. She needed to outshine Rebecca fast, o she'd be the laughingstock at the next high-society shindig.

That night, sleep didn't come easy to Janet. Her mind raced with thoughts, but in the end, she hit on a plan.

She thought, Vicky's not casting me, but what if I commission a script? I'll model the characters after *The Empress*.

‘Copyright laws were a joke in our country. Plagiarism and piracy are the norm. Original works got ripped off left and right, and by the time the dust settles from legal battles, the knock-offs are already raking in the dough with fans across the globe.

‘And let’s not forget the fans of the knock-offs. They despised the original creators,

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accusing them of being envious and money-hungry. The real artists ended up as the villains in the public eye. If I pay for a script and produce it, any backlash will land on the writer, not me.

‘All I have to do is move fast. My show had to premiere before The Empress. First impressions matter. Whichever show airs first will be seen as the original, others as the copycat. Even if The Empress proves to be original, it wouldn’t matter. The audience will be smitten with the first show they saw.

“Though it’s the same storyline, the crowd will be blown away by the first one they lay eyes on. The later show will get compared, and no matter the outcome, it just falls short. It’s called the first impression effect.

‘Plus, I’m Janet, the movie queen. Rebecca’s just a flash in the pan, a newbie who lucked into a hit. If our shows air back-to-back, Rebecca will be setting herself up for humiliation. Unless, of course, Rebecca’s acting is so phenomenal that it can outshine mine, but is that even possible?

‘Rebecca is nothing but a pretty face, propped up by the Carter family’s deep pockets. Lovey Princess had been a fluke, a product of the Carter family’s wealth and PR prowess.

‘Now that Rebecca’s true ties to the Carter family are out in the open, what else does she have to bank on? Nothing!”

The more Janet thought about it, the better she felt. She could already see the headlines: Janet’s acting skills versus Rebecca’s, and Rebecca coming out as the loser.

With years in the industry under her belt, Janet knew her fair share of scriptwriters. She had several in her contacts.

Wasting no time, Janet reached out to the writer she knew, setting up a meeting.

Now, the money talked. If she was willing to pay, there was always a writer ready to write a script. She was ready to double the fee just to get the job done quickly.

CHAPTER 128

At the filming site, Sierra and Vicky stared at a photo for ages before snapping out of it, both looking at Stacey with faces full of admiration..

Stacey felt a bit nervous under their scrutinizing gazes.

In the next moment, Sierra grabbed Stacey's hand and exclaimed excitedly, "Becky, do you really have all these clothes, bags, and jewelry?"

Stacey's heart raced, she looked into Sierra's eyes, then turned to Vicky. "Yes... I

took these photos in my family's walk-in closet and storage back home. They were gifts from my parents and brothers before returned."

"Before you returned?" Vicky caught on.

Stacey nodded, "Yep. I got separated from my family when I was little. But my parents and brothers have always been good to me. Not only did they leave a room for me at home, but they also bought me lots and lots of things every year according to my age. I have everything a girl should have."

"Are these things all gifts from them in the past?" Sierra was thrilled.

Thinking about those gifts back home, Stacey also felt happy. She nodded. "Yes."

Sierra was truly envious. She thought, 'How can someone be this lucky in the world?'

"I don't believe it, Becky, can you take me to see them? Unless I see it with eyes, I won't rest in peace for the rest of my life." Sierra held Stacey's hand, pleading pitifully.

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Vicky rubbed her temples, feeling embarrassed for Sierra. She pulled Sierra aside and reminded her, "You need to control yourself. Today is just the first day we officially meet Becky. Don't embarrass yourself like this."

Sierra, with tears in her eyes, looked at Vicky. "Vicky, what's the point of being reserved? I just wanna go to see Becky's walk-in closet."

Sierra cried, "I don't care. I want to see it. I have never seen such a luxurious closet in this lifetime. Let me see it once. Maybe I can also have such a closet in my dream. You know, it can make my dream more beautiful."

“Just keep daydreaming.” Vicky couldn’t help but laugh.

Stacey also chuckled, saying, “These clothes are back in my hometown, quite far away. Otherwise, I’d take you to see it.”

Sierra’s eyes lit up. She gazed at Stacey, excitedly asking, “So does that mean if we head to your hometown, I can see the closet?”

Stacey was taken aback.

Not just Sierra, even Vicky looked at Becky expectantly.

Stacey was stunned. Then she hesitated for a moment before asking, worried it’s far?”

Aren’t you

Sierra pondered for a moment and blinked, then earnestly asked, “How far? End of the earth? Anywhere I can walk to with my two legs, I’m in!”

Malcolm couldn’t help but chuckle on the side, finding Sierra very adorable.

Then Malcolm turned to Becky and thought, ‘I have to admit that Becky is indeed enviable. Her family background and kin are something many only dream of.’

Stacey chuckled. In the next moment, she said with a smile, “All right. Sierra, if you want to see it, you’re welcome anytime.”

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Excited and thrilled, Sierra quickly said, “It’s a deal then! You’re not lying to me, right?”

“Of course not,” Stacey replied with a smile

Sierra was overjoyed, so happy that her hands were trembling slightly. She turned to Vicky, gripping Vicky’s hand, and exclaimed excitedly, “Vicky, did you hear that? Becky’s willing to show me her closet! Oh my goodness, that heavenly place. If I get to step inside in this lifetime, I could die tomorrow with no regrets. This is pure bliss!”

Vicky was speechless, but actually, she also envied Becky’s livestream room. If she weren’t so occupied filming The Empress, she’d have loved to swing by like Sierra. After all, that livestream room was perfect in her eyes.

“Since you’re planning to go, why not make a trip before the shoot officially begins?” Vicky said.

Then she turned to Stacey, “Becky, aren’t you planning to use those clothes for your scenes? How about you all go together, pick out the outfits and jewelry you’ll

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need, and bring them here? It’ll make things a lot easier during filming,” Vicky suggested with a smile.

Sierra’s eyes lit up at the suggestion. She excitedly asked, “So, does that mean I can head straight to Becky’s closet now?”

Vicky glanced at Stacey, then back to Sierra, replying seriously, “You need to ask Becky.”

Sierra immediately turned to Becky with excitement.

Stacey nodded with a smile, “Of course.”

Ecstatic, Sierra lunged forward, hugging Stacey tightly. She exclaimed, “Oh, Becky, you’re the best! My babe!”

Vicky envied them but earnestly added, “Don’t forget about the other character styles, especially for Raymond.” With that final remark, Vicky glanced at Malcolm.

The lead actress’ costume and style were crucial, and the male lead’s couldn’t be low-key. To be precise, after the female lead’s styling reached the top-notch level, the male lead’s attire must also be outstanding enough to match hers. Only then could they stand side by side without causing dissonance for the audience.

Sierra was shocked as she exclaimed inwardly, I’m done for. Becky’s got all those rare outfits. Where am I gonna find suitable clothes for the male lead to match her outfits?

“How about we tweak the male lead’s character, turning him into a broke guy?” Sierra suggestively chuckled.

“Buzz off!” Vicky didn’t even think twice before snapping back.

She wouldn’t allow anyone to change the script.

“Maybe we can have Adrian offer his old clothes. Malcolm has a body type similar to Adrian’s. He should be able to wear Adrian’s old clothes,” Debra, who had been silent all this while, chimed in with a smile.

Everyone turned to look at Debra, Becky’s mom. Stacey looked slightly surprised, glancing at her mother too.

Debra looked at her daughter, then said with a smile, “Your brother has a lot of clothes I bought him before. But he hardly ever wears them. Those clothes just sit in his closet going to waste.”

Stacey suddenly remembered that Debra liked going shopping. She understood everything, finding it amusing. “Better ask Adrian first. We gotta have his approval,” Stacey insisted. Those clothes belonged to Adrian, and she wouldn’t touch his stuff without his permission.

Debra nodded with a smile. “Sure thing!”

Beside them, Sierra and Vicky were shocked, and Malcolm was pleasantly surprised.

With his status, he could only wear what the production had lined up—decent but nowhere near Becky’s outfits. He had already prepared himself to stick to the production’s clothes.

But now, there was a chance he could wear Becky’s big brother’s old clothes. Even if they were obsolete, they’d be way fancier than the production’s clothes.

Will Becky’s big brother agree?’ Malcolm couldn’t help but secretly anticipate in his mind.

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CHAPTER 129

In the evening, Stacey called Adrian, asking in a probing tone if he still had any clothes that he didn’t wear.

Adrian was initially puzzled, but after Stacey explained, he understood.

“Everything’s at home. I’ll have the housekeeper pack it up and send it to you,” Adrian immediately responded.

Adrian didn’t like changing clothes daily, but his mom kept buying him clothes, and their storage room was overflowing with new stuff.

“Really?” Stacey’s eyes lit up.

“Thanks, Adrian!” Stacey expressed her joy the next moment.

Adrian couldn’t help but smile. He was glad that he could make his sister happy.

“Don’t mention it,” Adrian said.

Stacey quickly nodded in agreement. "Got it, got it!"

After they sorted things out, the next day, a helicopter from their hometown. arrived, and Stacey brought Sierra along as they flew back home together.

Sierra was stunned when she saw the helicopter, eyes locked on the chopper, completely awestruck.

'Is this real? I actually got a chance in my life to ride on a wealthy family's private helicopter!' she exclaimed in her mind.

"Oh my goodness. Becky, you're amazing! I love you so much!!" Sierra cried out in excitement, turning around and lunging to hug Stacey.

Stacey chuckled, letting Sierra hug her tightly.

After a moment, Sierra finally let go.

"We should head up. The sooner we go, the sooner we'll be back," Stacey said.

Sierra quickly pulled out her phone and snapped away at the helicopter, capturing every moment.

She hadn't seen much of the world. She wanted to document it all for future

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memories. And most importantly, she wanted to flaunt these pictures to her future. kids, grandkids, and the next generations to come, bragging like crazy, telling them that she was once flown in a helicopter..

With the snaps taken, Sierra joined Becky as they boarded the helicopter together.

This trip was to collect some stuff from Stacey's hometown, so they'd be back soon. Debra and the ayah didn't tag along this time. This was Stacey's first solo trip back home.

The helicopter soon started up, leaving Aotori shooting base behind.

Meanwhile, Theodore, after dealing with a tricky project at the company, had just rushed over, dusty and tired, eager to see Rebecca as soon as possible.

Theodore was pressed for time. There had been too much going on at the company lately, especially with Gifford being in the Deputy General Manager position. If he didn't keep a close eye, Gifford might meddle with things.

And at this moment, the Carter family had come to make trouble for him. Theodore had noticed that the Carter family was intentionally targeting him.

Theodore felt exhausted, but he restrained himself whenever he thought of Rebecca.

He believed that as long as the misunderstanding was explained clearly and Rebecca calmed down, everything would pass.

But to Theodore's surprise, after flying for four hours to reach the shooting base, others told him that Rebecca had left again.

"When is she coming back?" Theodore asked urgently, glancing at his phone, then turning to Vicky for answers.

Vicky remained composed, saying seriously, "We're not sure about that. After all, the production hasn't officially started, and we can't restrict the actors' movements."

"Do you still need investment for the production? I'll invest 20 million in the project." Theodore pulled out a card and handed it to Vicky.

Vicky's heart skipped a beat. Her hand almost reached out. After all, that was a huge sum of money. But thinking about the exclusive investment contract she signed with the Carter family before, she had to restrain herself. "I'm sorry, Mr.

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Edwards, we already have investors for this project," Vicky said cautiously.

Theodore was surprised as he looked at Vicky.

Vicky explained, "Mr. Edwards, I'm not lying. We've already signed an exclusive investment contract with the Carter family and can't accept investments from others." Violating the contract would mean a hefty penalty, something they couldn't afford.

After a moment of silence, Theodore finally took back his card.

"Let's exchange Whatsapp numbers, and if Rebecca... if Becky returns, please inform me," Theodore added.

Vicky hesitated for a while but eventually took out her phone and added Theodore as a friend.

‘Anyway, he’s a wealthy tycoon. Even if this project couldn’t secure Theodore’s investment, there might be opportunities for future cooperation. No need to burn bridges unnecessarily, Vicky thought.

Adding Theodore on Whatsapp didn’t mean Vicky would inform Theodore when Stacey returned. Stacey had the Carter family backing her, and Vicky didn’t want to offend them for the Edwards family’s sake.

Finally getting Theodore to leave, Vicky quickly texted Stacey, informing her of Theodore’s visit.

On the helicopter, Stacey was checking her phone when she suddenly received a message from Vicky. After she read it, her face darkened for a moment. But in just a second, Stacey swiftly replied to Vicky, “Vicky, thank you. Just ignore him.”

Back at the film city, Vicky received a reply from Stacey, confirming her suspicions. “The situation between Becky and Theodore is indeed complicated. Thankfully, I didn’t interact with Theodore just

now, or I might have offended Becky and the Carter family.’ She sighed a breath of relief in her mind.

After flying in the helicopter for a long time, they finally arrived in Alagua City.

That night, Stacey took Sierra to her closet and warehouse, picking out various clothes, jewelry, and bags that might be needed and then neatly organizing and packing everything.

During this process, Sierra’s eyes widened as she snapped pictures like crazy with

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her phone. She had never seen such a luxurious closet and warehouse in her entire life. Stepping inside, even the floor felt super expensive.

When everything was packed, it was very late. A lavish dinner was prepared by the staff.

Before dinner, Sierra snapped away again.

“Don’t worry, Becky. I’ll only keep these photos for myself, won’t leak them out,” Sierra hurriedly reassured Becky after taking the photos.

This was Stacey’s home, and privacy was a big deal to many here. Though Sierra was envious, she also knew not to casually reveal someone else’s privacy.

“Okay.” Stacey nodded with a smile.

After dinner, they were both tired and sleepy, so they headed to their rooms to rest.

A guest room was prepared for Sierra by the housekeeper.

Rather than immediately returning, Stacey spent a whole day showing Sierra around Alagua City before they headed back to Maeloria together.

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The back and forth was quite exhausting, but Sierra didn’t feel tired at all. She was excited and thrilled from start to finish.

Most of Adrian’s clothes were in Hivalis. Two days later, those clothes were sent over and placed in the villa they rented.

Sierra came to check them out and asked Malcolm to come over and try them on. The results were fantastic.

CHAPTER 130

Time flew by, and after half a month, the director finally decided on all the key actors for the production. It was time to inform everyone to meet at the set for the kickoff ceremony. Little did Stacey expect that she would see Theodore at the ceremony.

To be precise, Theodore wasn’t part of the crew. Just like a fan, he stood outside holding a bouquet of flowers, waiting for the ceremony to end so he could talk to her.

The Carter family had assigned for bodyguards to protect Stacey. When the guards saw Theodore approaching, they became alert and immediately stopped him.

Stacey didn’t look back. She simply got into the car and left.

Theodore was anxious, but with so many paparazzi around, he hesitated to follow. Yet, as Rebecca’s car drove off into the distance, Theodore couldn’t bear the frustration any longer. He had come to visit her many times already, but he didn’t expect Rebecca to keep ignoring him.

Wearing a cold expression, Theodore finally tossed the flowers into the trash and walked away.

However, after a few steps, he froze. After a moment's pause, he turned around, approached the bin, carefully retrieved the flowers, and took out a small gift box hidden inside.

He opened the box, and a tiny ring was revealed. Today, he planned to propose to Rebecca again. But it seemed like she didn't want it.

Theodore held the ring, inspecting the carefully engraved name on it. The name was meticulously engraved stroke by stroke by him after he learned from a designer. It was originally a surprise.

He gently traced the name on the ring—Rebecca.

Suddenly, rain poured down from the sky. In a luxurious car nearby, Theodore's brother, Gifford, cynically observed Theodore outside. And the person sitting beside Gifford was Jenny.

Gifford turned to look at Jenny and then said, "Ms. Smith, you also saw it. My big brother isn't exactly a good guy. Why don't you be with me..."

Jenny didn't wait for Gifford to finish his words. She turned, opened the car door, and walked out with an umbrella.

Gifford's remaining words got stuck in his throat, unable to come out. He just watched as Jenny, holding the umbrella, walked towards Theodore in the pouring

rain.

Under the curtain of rain, Theodore carefully placed the ring back into the gift box, closed it, and stood up. Unexpectedly, as he turned around to leave, he found himself covered by an umbrella held by Jenny.

Theodore's hand holding the gift box slightly stiffened. He looked around, quickly spotting the luxurious car nearby, with Gifford sitting inside.

As the gazes of Theodore and Gifford met, the atmosphere became tense. Neither of them was easy to mess with.

"Theodore, you're getting wet. Let's head back to the hotel first. You need to change into dry clothes," Jenny spoke gently.

Theodore withdrew his gaze. He looked at Jenny, hesitated for a moment and then nodded. "Thank you."

Jenny held the umbrella for Theodore. She wasn't very tall, much shorter than Theodore, making it a bit difficult for her to hold the umbrella.

Theodore gently took the umbrella from her hand, holding it for both of them.

Then they left together.

In the luxurious car not far away, Gifford's face darkened for a moment, but it quickly passed. Gifford took out his phone, snapped a picture of the two of them leaving side by side, and then rolled up the car window. With a few taps, he swiftly sent out those photos.

At the same time, Stacey received several messages.

It was from an unknown contact on Whatsapp, without a name attached. Stacey couldn't remember who this person was or when they became friends. But now, this person messaged her. She checked the messages to find a photo of Theodore and Jenny leaving together with an umbrella near the garbage can at the shooting

base.

Stacey felt a bit disgusted after just one look. She closed her phone, not wanting to see any of that messy stuff again.

Back home, Lillian and Kevin ran over. "Mommy, mommy," the two little ones called out in their sweet voices.

In less than a minute, Stacey's knees were greeted by two fluffy cuties.

They were truly fluffy as they were dressed up in adorable tender yellow plush duck outfits, super soft to the touch.

Her babies really grew up fast. Now, the two little ones were walking more smoothly, even sounding more natural when they called her "Mommy".

Stacey squatted down to kiss each of the babies, saying, "Mommy loves you."

"Love you, Mommy," Lillian said while pouting her lips to place a kiss on Stacey's cheek.

"I... Mlove you, too, Mommy!" Kevin got anxious, quickly adding. He held Stacey's face, giving her a little peck.

Debra smiled and asked, "How was the opening ceremony? Was it smooth?"

Stacey didn't want to bring up Theodore's matters and nodded with a smile. "Yes, everything went smoothly."

“Becky, I want to throw a party to formally introduce you to everyone and let them know you’re back,” Debra looked at Stacey, saying earnestly.

Thinking back to the rent hot topic, Stacey chuckled. “Isn’t everyone already in the loop?”

“It’s different,” Debra said.

Stacey smiled and nodded. “Alright, I’ll follow your plan.”

Debra smiled at Stacey, contemplating, ‘What outfit should I prepare for Becky when she formally makes an appearance? She must be dazzling at the party.

The party planning was mostly on Debra’s plate. Stacey’s next task was to film The Empress. The production had officially kicked off, keeping her busy with numerous scenes every day.

However, while she was busy, Theodore seemed as if he was pumped up, coming back to the set every day to bring her flowers and food, talking less but remaining persistent in his gestures.

Whether it was flowers or snacks, Stacey didn’t even spare them a glance. Every day on set, she came to work seriously.

Debra would occasionally bring Lillian and Kevin to the set. The two little ones. were enthralled by watching Stacey act, and they were so adorable that all the staff liked them.

Days passed by, and before they knew it, the day of the Carter family’s party arrived.

The Carter family had sent out many invitations, but neither the Mitchell family nor the Edwards family were on the guest list. This made both families quite upset.

Ever since Rebecca’s true identity was exposed online, both families had been showered with congratulations, well-wishes, and even envy from everyone.

Among those who knew that Becky was Rebecca, the Mitchell family’s adopted daughter, many believed that the Mitchell family was now destined for great success alongside the Carter family. Some even tried to cozy up to the Mitchell family by sending gifts, hoping to leverage their connection to the Carter family.

Suddenly, even those who had no plans to deal with the Mitchell family showed interest in doing business with them due to their “relationship” with the Carter family. They signed project contracts with the Mitchell family, hoping for introductions and connections to the Carter family.

During this period, the Mitchell family inadvertently gained numerous benefits due to these vague and unclear connections.

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