

What makes a power couple

Chapter 78:

After freshening up, Nicole made her way to the guest room.

Marissa had just stepped out, dressed and ready. Her eyes widened when she saw Nicole. “Nicole, you’re awake! I heard you passed out last night, and I panicked. Are you okay?”

Nicole didn’t answer. Her eyes were locked on the ring still hanging around Marissa’s neck. She spoke with a cold edge. “Aidan asked me to tell you—its real owner’s coming tonight.”

Marissa stopped breathing for a second.

Nicole raised a brow, the corner of her lip curling into a smirk. “Good luck.”

Marissa took a second to recover. Then she forced a small laugh. “I was just about to tell you. There’s a school event this afternoon. It’s a speech, and parents are invited. But Mom and Dad are busy, so—since you’re free, could you come with me?”

Nicole instantly caught the undercurrent of contempt flowing through Marissa's words.

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The message was clear. Supposedly, through Marissa's generosity, Nicole—uneducated and jobless—could experience academic life, attending lectures to expand her limited worldview.

What absolute nonsense! Marissa had barely scraped her way into college as an arts student, yet here she was, trying to flaunt her superiority before Nicole.

Unfortunately for Marissa, her ploy fell embarrassingly flat.

Nicole arched an eyebrow and delivered a crisp rejection. "No."

Disappointment flickered across Marissa's face. "Such a shame. This prestigious event celebrates this year's graduates. Had you not abandoned your studies, you'd be walking across that stage too."

Nicole tilted her head slightly, her voice laced with subtle mockery. "Is it truly such a shame?"

Inwardly, Marissa scoffed at Nicole's charade. Nicole was merely a country girl who had somehow landed a spot at an elite university, only to end up institutionalized.

During her last campus visit, Nicole had put on a performance, pretending to be an Ariosa University postdoctoral researcher—revealing how desperately she craved that diploma.

Marissa relished twisting the knife in Nicole's wounds. She nodded, adding with calculated casualness, "Squall, one of our most celebrated alumni, will address the graduating class. You harbored feelings for him back then, didn't you?"

The final question probed with deliberate certainty. Years ago, Marissa had overheard Nicole confess her attraction to Squall.

Nicole's lips curled into a knowing smirk. "I heard rumors about you two becoming an item?"

With those words, satisfaction surged through Marissa's veins. The more detached Nicole appeared, the more it confirmed her lingering academic regrets and resentment. After all, who wouldn't covet a prestigious degree in today's competitive world?

Nicole had once grasped such a golden opportunity, only to devolve into a rough-edged woman continually embroiled in conflicts. Savoring this thought, Marissa laughed softly, her cheeks flushing. "Squall pursued me relentlessly, but I hesitated, thinking of you..."

“He’s merely garbage I discarded that you’ve mistaken for treasure. Congratulations on your excellent taste,” Nicole cut in sharply.

Witnessing Marissa’s complexion drain to ashen gray, Nicole’s lips curved into a delicate smile. “Best wishes.”

With that parting shot, Nicole pivoted and glided away.

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