

Chapter 82 Here For Work Or Romance

Kimberly nodded slightly and moved forward, opening the door.

As the heavy black door shut behind her, Sandra's face took on a sad expression. She quickly regained her composure and walked away.

Upon entering the CEO's office, Kimberly looked around for Chris. The office was so large it was difficult to spot him.

Kimberly only noticed Chris when he spoke from where he reclined on a large leather sofa, his legs casually crossed.

"You're here." Chris was dressed in a hand-tailored light gray suit, his jacket thrown aside carelessly. He wore a crisp white shirt and matching gray trousers, displaying his typical elegance and calm.

With a twinkle in his eye, he gestured to Kimberly, who seemed deep in thought. "Why are you standing? Come and sit."

Kimberly shook herself from her daze and made her way toward him. She couldn't ignore the size of Chris's office. It took her almost a minute to reach him while feeling his piercing gaze. She settled onto the sofa across from him, where a coffee table overflowed with an impressive display of dishes.

"Hungry?" Chris grabbed a fresh set of cutlery and passed it to Kimberly. "We can have our meal while we talk," he said.

"So much food!" Kimberly said as she accepted the cutlery.

It wasn't an exaggeration; the dinner she had at the Holden family the previous night featured only eighteen dishes for the whole group. When Archie ate alone, it was typically four dishes and a soup.

The Holden family was known for their simplicity, unlike other wealthy families.

This was a value Kimberly had learned from a young age. Even after marrying into the Walsh family, she kept her old habits. She typically prepared three or four dishes for herself, and the Walsh family dinners rarely had more than ten dishes and two soups. That was why she was surprised to see a table arranged with eighteen dishes and two soups for just her and Chris.

Chris's eyes softened as he quietly served Kimberly some sweet and sour pork. "Is the Walsh family really that frugal?"

Chris used to such extravagant meals even when dining alone, found Kimberly's look of surprise enough to make him clutch his fork tightly.

The mention of the Walsh family made Kimberly's eyes grow cold. She put down her laptop bag, picked up her cutlery, and began to eat in silence. "Not really, just not as extravagant as yours, Mr. Howard."

Chris paused, staring at the display of food before him, lost in thought.

Was this too much?

Kimberly seemed to sense his unspoken question and felt a twinge of frustration.

She experienced the wealth gap firsthand, realizing that the Howard family truly lived up to their reputation as one of the most prestigious elite families.

Not wanting to waste time on such an insignificant topic, Kimberly casually placed a piece of braised pork onto Chris's plate. "Mr. Howard, I've already revised the latest project proposal on my way here according to your previous suggestions. Could you take a look and give me some feedback after we eat?"

Chris snapped back to reality, his eyes lingering on the braised pork on his plate. A slight smile crossed his face as he picked up the pork and slowly savored it.

"Sure."

Kimberly had slept in until noon and had barely eaten the night before, leaving her very hungry. She ate her meal intently, unaware of Chris's pleased and indulgent gaze.

She did not realize that her simple act of sharing food with him could secretly make his day.

Thirty minutes later, they finished eating. Chris escorted Kimberly to his desk, offering her his chair while he stood close behind his arms partially around her as they discussed the project proposal.

When Sandra entered to clear the table, she noticed them together. Her face paled as she cleaned, casting occasional glances their way.

The pair, deeply focused on their work, didn't catch the intense look Sandra gave them.

After tidying up, Sandra was ready to leave with the trash bag when Kimberly suddenly turned her head, her lips gently brushing against Chris's cheek. Both were momentarily taken aback, their eyes locking in a way that caused Sandra deep discomfort.

Overwhelmed by jealousy, Sandra gripped the trash bag tightly and asked, "Ms. Holden, are you here to work or to get overly familiar with Mr. Howard?"

Kimberly was taken aback by Sandra's blunt question, momentarily thrown off and instinctively pulling away from Chris.

But then, warm hands gently rested on her shoulders, calming her.

Kimberly looked up to see Chris's serious face, his expression cool and his eyes showing no warmth as he addressed Sandra, who stood nearby.

"Why are you still here? Does it really take this long to take out the trash?"

Under Chris's cold stare, Sandra felt a tightness in her chest that took her breath away.

She bit her lip, pretending not to catch Chris's hint to leave, and said, "Mr. Howard, since you've just come back to the country and haven't been around many women, I'm concerned someone might take advantage of you. You don't know what some are capable of for social climbing."

Chris's brow furrowed, his look turning colder as he cut Sandra off, "I don't need your advice on how to manage my personal matters."

"No, I just don't want you to be deceived..." Sandra looked anxious as she tried to explain herself, as though she truly cared about Chris.

Sandra had looked into Kimberly's background and knew she was still married. She was fully aware of the Holden family's current situation and was certain about Kimberly's intentions in getting close to Chris.

"Deceived?" Chris laughed dismissively, his confidence apparent. "She's not like that."

Sandra appeared stunned, unable to accept Chris's firm trust in Kimberly. She wanted to continue, but Chris interrupted her.

Chris's face showed irritation as he said coldly, "Even if she were deceiving me, I would accept it willingly. Sandra, remember your place. Just do your job and manage the tasks I assign. That's all. Leave now. I won't repeat myself."