

## Chapter 74 Open Competition

"What's the competition about?" Fiona wasn't concerned about the project itself, but she was quite intrigued by Sloan Corporation.

Margret went on, "This project requires significant investment, so Sloan Corporation is seeking a comprehensive and practical tax-saving plan. This time, the company will give newcomers an opportunity. You'll work in pairs to develop a tax-saving plan. The company will first select five plans and present them to Sloan Corporation for their choice. If any pair's plan is chosen, the company will award that pair with an extra one hundred thousand dollar bonus."

As soon as Margret finished speaking, Fiona quickly chimed in, "I want to partner with Rhonda."

Margret glanced at Rhonda. In fact, she had hoped Rhonda would team up with a more experienced colleague, increasing their chances of winning.

Rhonda playfully smiled. "Aren't you worried I'll just slow you down?"

"I trust your abilities." Fiona wrapped her arms around Rhonda's neck and whispered in her ear, "If we win, the entire bonus is yours. All I ask is that you bring me onto the project team."

Rhonda couldn't help but laugh. She wasn't even certain they would win.

Soon, everyone formed pairs. They had just one week to prepare their tax-saving plans.

As Rhonda was about to leave work, Margret summoned her to the office.

"Why have you become so close with Fiona lately?" Margret asked directly.

"I think we've connected since we both joined the company around the same time."

"Do you know who she is? Her father is the chairman of the renowned Fiona Jewelry. She was born into wealth. She's only working here to pass the time. Mr. Hawkins instructed the finance department to pay her salary regardless of whether she shows up for work or not. You don't realize that you and she are from different worlds. It's not wise for you to be too close to her," Margret cautioned sternly.

Rhonda was aware of Fiona's family background, but she didn't think it should prevent her from befriending Fiona.

"I don't see the issue."

Margret was slightly disappointed.

"You should know that people like Fiona are often resented within the company. Fiona isn't bothered by it because of her influential background. But what about you? If you continue to befriend her, others will simply transfer their envy and animosity from Fiona onto you."

Rhonda let out a sigh.

"I think I understand now."

Because of the disparity in status between her and Fiona, befriending the latter would attract criticism. How tiresome those gossips were!

"Do you really understand?" Margret wasn't convinced Rhonda took her advice to heart.

Rhonda might have appeared gentle, but she was tenacious at her core. She only stood firm on what she believed was right, unconcerned with the opinions of others.

"I get it. Thank you." Rhonda recognized Margret's concern. She saw herself and Fiona as just friends, and she didn't think it was necessary to worry about what others thought.

With no other choice, Margret ceased trying to persuade Rhonda. Instead, she urged her to focus on the competition, as it offered a chance to collaborate with Sloan Corporation and demonstrate her capabilities to others.

When Rhonda walked out of the building, she noticed Fiona waiting for

her.

"Did Margret speak ill of me again?" Fiona was candid.

"No, she didn't. She just advised me to concentrate on this competition."

"I thought she disapproved of you partnering with me." Fiona seemed to have a keen intuition. "After all, I might hold you back."

"Ridiculous. I have my own weaknesses. There's much I could learn from you."

"Is there anything truly worth learning from me?"

"I believe you have a knack for interacting with people. You know how to communicate effectively with different individuals. I struggle with social skills, and that's really not ideal."

"But you excel in your work. Honestly, how confident are you about this competition?" Fiona asked.

"I'm not sure." Rhonda shrugged. "But with your help, perhaps we can give it a shot."

"What can I contribute?" Although Fiona had studied finance abroad, she wasn't proficient in financial matters.

"You could help me gather information on this project. The more detailed, the better."

Fiona's eyes sparkled. "It's a piece of cake. I've got this."

After bidding farewell to Fiona, Rhonda went straight to the hospital.

It took her quite a while to locate Richard since he had been transferred to another ward.

The nursing worker wasn't present. As Rhonda entered the ward, a nurse was bringing food to Richard.

Rhonda placed the meal on the table, put an apron for Richard, and fed him patiently.

Soon after, the nursing worker arrived, accompanied by Diana.

"Rhonda, what brings you here?" Diana raised her eyebrows and asked.

Rhonda disregarded her and continued her task.

"I'm talking to you. Are you deaf?" Diana charged over, attempting to grab the bowl from Rhonda's grasp.

Rhonda angrily set the bowl down.

"Can't you see I'm feeding Grandpa?"

"Hey, there aren't any security cameras here. Why bother pretending to be a dutiful granddaughter-in-law? Let me ask you something. Why did you tell Eliam what I discussed with you yesterday?"

"Whether I inform him or not is none of your concern." Rhonda no longer wanted to put up with Diana. The thought of Leonard's leg ignited her fury.

"Oh, your temper seems shorter today. Do you know who you are? You're a country bumpkin! How dare you act so haughty? I'm warning you, if you piss me off, I can drive you out of this city!"

Rhonda trembled with anger.

At that moment, Richard grabbed a roll of tissue from the table and struck Diana on the forehead.

"Grandpa!" Rhonda didn't anticipate that Richard would defend her so fiercely.

Diana's anger erupted. Although the impact didn't hurt, her fury stemmed from Richard defending Rhonda.

"You old bastard! How dare you hit me?" Diana grabbed her bag and hurled it at Richard's head.

Rhonda instantly shielded him with her body. Diana seized Rhonda's hair and pulled her away, causing Rhonda to cry out in pain.

"Enough!" A stern voice echoed from the doorway as the ward door was forcefully kicked open.

Diana involuntarily loosened her grip, and Rhonda crumpled to the floor.

She turned around and saw Eliam coming in with an angry face.

Eliam assisted Rhonda to her feet, inquiring, "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine." Rhonda gingerly touched her scalp. The pain was so intense that it felt as if Diana had ripped out some of her hair.

"Diana, have you lost your mind?" Eliam snapped angrily, "This is my grandpa's ward, not your home. If you want to throw a tantrum, do it at your own house! You're not welcome here. Leave!"

"Eliam, are you turning against me because of her?" Diana hadn't anticipated Eliam to be at the door. Had she known, she wouldn't have struck Rhonda.

"Rhonda is my wife. Technically, you're my cousin. Shouldn't you show respect to my wife? Hasn't my uncle taught you basic manners?"