

## Spoiled 1341

Chapter 1341: Waiting for the Fish to Bite

Justin Battleson began pondering how to handle the situation.

"Is it very serious?" Charlotte Thompson looked at Justin Battleson, her brows tightly furrowed without the slightest trace of relaxation, and asked with a worried tone.

"Mm."

Justin nodded as he listened, then continued, "It's not just about whether we've signed cooperation agreements. Two companies even chose to break their contracts outright and pay compensation. This has wasted much of the time and effort we've invested, resulting in considerable losses for our company."

"How could this happen? Why would they act like this? What benefits could this possibly bring them?"

Upon hearing Justin's explanation, Charlotte was simply astonished.

Though Charlotte had never run her own company, she had often observed her brothers managing corporate affairs back in Ashton.

Not to mention the intrigues within a company, Charlotte was also familiar with inter-business competition. Still, this kind of behavior was something she had never heard of before.

After a moment of contemplation, she proposed her idea: "Could it be someone manipulating things behind the scenes, forcing those companies to suppress the group?"

Justin's eyes slightly shifted upon hearing Charlotte's suggestion.

"Besides, don't you feel this is all too coincidental? You just got injured and were hospitalized, and the company immediately received reports of multiple businesses refusing to cooperate. The timing is suspiciously precise."

It wasn't that Charlotte was making baseless assumptions, but overly coincidental events always sounded unconvincing to her.

Still, Charlotte was determined to investigate what had happened with the production team. Anyone who dared hurt Justin Battleson wouldn't escape her judgment.

"Actually, that's not all."

At this point, Justin paused. Charlotte quickly picked up on the implied meaning of his words, her expression growing increasingly serious.

"Are you suspecting someone within the company is behind this?"

Justin didn't directly answer her question but instead gave her a faint smile.

As for the mastermind behind everything, Charlotte already had some guesses.

Luckily, Justin and Charlotte had made some preparations earlier, so while this incident was abrupt, it wouldn't have too drastic an impact on Justin.

"The trap has been set—now we just wait for the fish to take the bait."

Justin smiled at Charlotte and, finally, pulled her into his embrace.

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After leaving the hospital, Charlotte got in touch with Annie Anne.

"How are things on your side?"

Annie thought back to Charlotte's previous anxious demeanor and couldn't help but ask.

"The doctor said there's nothing serious anymore—just the external injuries that still require rest and recovery."

Charlotte briefly shared with Annie the details the doctor had told her earlier.

"By the way, are you at the production site now?"

"Today our production team switched to filming outdoor scenes. What happened with Justin Battleson in the indoor set made the director very nervous. Plus, we're only shooting one scene today—after that, the entire team will be temporarily resting in the afternoon. About half an hour from now, you can come over."

"Alright, I'll come find you soon." Charlotte replied and then hung up the phone.

Charlotte and Annie planned to investigate the incident that had occurred with the production team earlier.

Although the explanation given by the team was that the props department had made an inspection error, Charlotte's intuition was telling her that things weren't that simple.

Chapter 1342 Campbell Prickly

After finishing the call with Annie Anne, Charlotte Thompson drove straight to the set.

The location for Annie Anne's shoot wasn't far from the film town, so Charlotte decided to wait for her there in the town.

While waiting, Charlotte wandered around the film town a few times and unexpectedly ran into someone familiar.

"Vincent? What are you doing here?"

Seeing the man standing not far away, Charlotte walked over with a hint of surprise.

Isn't this a filming location? Why would Vincent, a doctor, show up here?

"Charlotte? I didn't expect to run into you here," Vincent said, a smile spreading across his face when he spotted Charlotte.

Looking at Vincent's casual attire, Charlotte's deeply furrowed brows didn't ease in the slightest. Her gaze at him was filled with doubt.

"You've misunderstood. I'm not here to shoot a movie."

Noticing Charlotte's look, Vincent quickly waved his hand and explained, "A friend of mine is filming here, so I came by to wait for him."

Charlotte nodded in sudden realization.

"What about you? I remember you participated in a variety show before, is that what brought you here this time?"

Hearing Vincent's question, Charlotte let out a slightly embarrassed laugh and replied, "No, like you, I'm just here waiting for a friend."

"By the way, I heard Justin Battleson got injured on set recently. What's that all about?"

Vincent's words made Charlotte pause slightly. The Battleson Family and the Thompson Family had already kept the news under tight wraps, so how did Vincent find out?

Then again, considering he mentioned he has an actor friend, perhaps he learned it that way.

"It was just a minor accident, nothing serious."

Even though Vincent was a friend, Charlotte refrained from sharing any specifics about Justin's situation with him.

Still, Vincent's remark reminded Charlotte that she should alert her brothers to stay vigilant. If any malicious media leaked the news, it would be quite troublesome to clarify.

But as Charlotte sank into her thoughts, she didn't notice the flicker of something dark in Vincent's eyes.

While the two stood in a moment of silence, a tall, striking man walked over and greeted Vincent.

Hearing the voice, Charlotte looked up, and when she saw the man by Vincent's side, she was genuinely stunned.

She hadn't anticipated that the friend Vincent mentioned would turn out to be none other than the hottest rising film star, Campbell Prickly.

Although Charlotte wasn't part of the entertainment industry, she occasionally kept up with its news due to Annie Anne, so she was somewhat familiar with certain names.

Campbell Prickly was lauded by many media outlets as a genius actor. In less than two years since his debut, he had clinched the Best Actor award with a single film—a highly prestigious honor—catapulting his fame to new heights overnight.

On top of that, Annie Anne was a fan of his.

"And this is...?"

Upon seeing Charlotte, Campbell's expression turned subtle.

He stared at her face. Before Vincent could even introduce her, Campbell had already displayed a look of sudden clarity and said, "You must be Miss Charlotte Thompson."

Charlotte was caught off guard that Campbell Prickly even recognized her. For a moment, she was at a loss, stunned into silence, before nodding slightly.

Chapter 1343: Collaborative Partner

"Hello." Charlotte greeted.

"I didn't expect to meet the famous designer Miss Thompson in the industry today. I'm a big fan of many of your design works, you could probably consider me one of your fans."

Campbell Prickly's words once again surprised Charlotte, making her feel a bit flattered.

"It's my privilege to meet Mr. Prickly too. I've seen many of your works and they're really outstanding, especially that award-winning movie of yours, I've watched it several times."

Particularly due to Annie Anne's recommendations, Charlotte watched some of Campbell Prickly's movies, which were indeed quite good.

In the award-winning movie, Campbell Prickly played a character with a cold personality, and coupled with his stern looks, he gave off a sense of aloofness.

However, after meeting him in person, Charlotte felt that Campbell Prickly was actually quite easy to get along with.

"What are you two praising each other for, it's really funny."

Vincent, who was originally standing to the side, shook his head with a smile, making Charlotte feel a bit embarrassed and purse her lips.

Besides her work partners, Charlotte wasn't very good at socializing with strangers in her private time.

When suddenly praised by Campbell Prickly, Charlotte was a bit unsure of how to respond.

At this moment, Charlotte's phone rang, it was Annie Anne calling.

Charlotte made an apologetic expression to Vincent and Campbell Prickly in front of her, then answered the call.

"Charlotte, I'm done filming. Where are you now? At the film base?"

"Yes, I'm right at..."

Charlotte responded and then looked around, seemingly trying to find a landmark to tell Annie Anne her location.

However, coincidentally, as Charlotte turned her head, she saw Annie Anne coming from around the corner and raised her arm to wave at her.

"Annie, I'm over here."

Seeing Annie Anne turn her head, Charlotte hung up her phone.

"Sorry for keeping you waiting." When Annie Anne walked over, Charlotte realized she still had her makeup on when she came to find her.

Then, Annie Anne noticed the two people beside Charlotte and turned her head just in time to see Campbell Prickly, making her blink in surprise.

"Campbell... Campbell Prickly?"

Then Annie Anne glanced at Charlotte and whispered to her, "Don't tell me you know Campbell Prickly!"

"We just met, he's a friend of Vincent's. We just ran into each other."

Charlotte explained, and Annie Anne naturally looked over at Vincent.

"This is the Doctor Vincent you often mention to me?" Annie Anne looked at Vincent with a sudden realization and nodded at him.

"What, does Charlotte often talk about me?" Hearing Annie Anne's words, Vincent curiously asked.

Annie Anne's eyes flickered and then she smiled slightly at Vincent, "After all, Charlotte did need a doctor's care while in the hospital."

Vincent's smile couldn't help but deepen.

"I didn't expect such a coincidence, Miss Thompson's friend turns out to be the person I'm going to collaborate with next." At this point, Campbell Prickly spoke up.

"Collaborate?"

Upon hearing Campbell Prickly's words, not only Charlotte but also Annie Anne was taken aback.

Then Annie Anne seemed to remember something and clapped her hands.

Chapter 1344: Deserving of the Title of Best New Actor, Such Great Acting Skills

"Don't tell me, the male co-star whose role hasn't been revealed in my new movie is actually you, Mr. Prickly?"



"That's right. I'm the actor working opposite you." Campbell Prickly nodded.

An expression of delight instantly lit up Annie Anne's face.

"Oh my God, I can't believe I'm collaborating with my idol!" Annie Anne immediately clung to Charlotte Thompson's arm, chuckling as she stood close to her.

Then Annie Anne tilted her head upward and flashed a smile at Campbell Prickly.

"Mr. Prickly, I've always been your fan."

Though Annie tried her best to keep her tone serious and composed, the look on her face gave her away—her genuine admiration for Campbell Prickly was unmistakable.

"I'm really looking forward to working with you, Miss Anne," Campbell Prickly said with a polite smile.

"It's getting late. We should get going. Let's connect when we have time."

Charlotte glanced at her wristwatch, realizing she and Annie Anne had more pressing matters to attend to, so she decided not to prolong the chat with Vincent and Campbell Prickly.

"Alright."

Vincent nodded at Charlotte, and the four of them headed off in different directions.

Once inside the car, Campbell Prickly's expression changed dramatically. He exhaled deeply, leaned lazily against the rear seat, and gazed out through the window at the film studio outside.

"Is that the one you're interested in?"

At these words, Vincent let out a derisive snort.

"She hasn't even showcased any design work yet, and she's already claiming to be your fan? A newly crowned actor indeed—your acting is top-notch."

"But her reaction was quite amusing." Campbell's tone was languid as he spoke, seemingly toying absentmindedly with his knuckles, creating a crisp cracking sound.

Vincent shot Campbell a sidelong glance but said nothing further. Campbell, noticing this, relaxed his shoulders slightly.

"Don't worry. I'm not like you—I don't have much interest in that kind of woman. But..."

Campbell stroked his chin, eventually curling his lips into a faint grin.

"That Annie Anne is rather adorable."

"Oh, you mean you find her skull adorable?" Vincent replied coldly before starting the car.

Campbell furrowed his brow immediately upon hearing this. "Could you not impose your aesthetic onto others? Saying such terrifying things in such a calm tone is honestly nauseating."

This time, Vincent said nothing further and focused on driving.

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At that moment, Annie Anne was still caught up in the excitement of having just met her idol.

"I'd tried for ages to subtly probe with my agent, but I couldn't get any details about who I'd be partnering with. And now, I unexpectedly came face to face with them today."

Annie's face still bore an excited smile, while her assistant was busy removing the ornaments in her hair. Hearing Annie's remarks, the assistant grew curious.

"Annie, have you figured out who your male co-star is?"

"Wanna know?" Annie raised an eyebrow at her assistant, provoking an earnest nod from them.

Then Annie deliberately narrowed her eyes with a mysterious air and crooked a finger, prompting the assistant to lean in quickly.

And in the next moment, Annie leaned close and softly uttered two words right into the assistant's ear.

Chapter 1345: Entering the Entertainment Industry

"It's a secret."

The assistant immediately deflated upon hearing that and looked at Annie Anne with a pout. "Annie, you're just like Ms. Chen now. You two know everything, and I'm the only one still curious, huh?"

"Isn't a bit of mystery kind of nice?" Annie Anne winked at the assistant.

Seeing the assistant's increasingly helpless expression, Annie couldn't help but laugh.

"Alright, fine, I'll tell you. The second male lead working with me this time is Campbell Prickly."

"Campbell Prickly? Are you serious?" The assistant exclaimed in surprise.

Standing close to Annie at that moment, the assistant failed to keep his voice down, prompting Annie to wince slightly.

"Ugh, my ears. I should've just kept it from you." Annie rubbed her ear with a smirk.

The assistant quickly covered his mouth apologetically and handed Annie a bottle of makeup remover.

"Oh my gosh, Campbell Prickly? Wait, isn't he your idol, Annie?"

Annie nodded.

"I'm so jealous. You actually get to act alongside your idol." The assistant muttered in envy.

Hearing this, Annie flashed a dazzling smile at him. "I still don't know who your idol is. Tell me! Maybe someday I'll work with them, and I'll make sure to snag a signed photo for you. Deal?"

The assistant had been assigned to work with Annie right after graduating from college, and due to his age, Annie often teased him playfully.

Watching Annie interact with her assistant, Charlotte Thompson, who stood nearby, couldn't help but smile. She felt a genuine warmth inside.

The current Annie Anne was no longer the icy, indifferent person who used to react apathetically to everything.

Charlotte was genuinely happy to see Annie's growth.

Noticing Charlotte's gaze, Annie turned her attention toward her.

She rubbed her slightly red cheeks, irritated from removing makeup, and said apologetically to Charlotte, "Sorry for the wait. This makeup look was so heavy that cleaning it off took forever."

Charlotte shook her head, dismissing the concern, and placed the magazine she was holding back on the table before standing up from her chair.

"Actually, I think this styling suits you quite well."

"Speaking of styling, it reminds me of the time you were in the drama group acting alongside Riley Thompson."

Charlotte and Annie walked side by side. At the mention of Riley, Charlotte glanced at Annie curiously.

"Riley's looks are so similar to yours. When I saw her in costume back then, I couldn't help but imagine how perfect you'd look if you played that role instead."

"And when you made your first appearance in costume later on, it was absolutely stunning. The crew couldn't stop complimenting you on how gorgeous you were."

"Oh, you're exaggerating." Charlotte felt slightly flustered by Annie's remarks.

"By the way, Charlotte, you really don't plan on joining the entertainment industry? Nowadays, people from all kinds of fields are flocking here."

"Nah, I don't have any talent for acting. I'm perfectly happy being a designer. Just like you entered this industry because you love acting, I chose fashion design because of my passion for it." Charlotte answered earnestly.

However, hearing Charlotte's heartfelt response, Annie shook her head lightly.

Chapter 1346: Looks Familiar

"Nowadays, how many people genuinely strive for their dreams? I don't know when it started, but the barriers to entry in the entertainment industry have gotten lower and lower. And yet, despite the low threshold, the income remains high. It's no wonder so many people are racking their brains trying to squeeze into this circle."

After saying this, Annie Anne unexpectedly curled her lips into what resembled a self-deprecating smile.

But in the end, Annie Anne shifted the topic she had brought up.

"Oh, I already spoke with the crew's cameraman earlier. Luckily, the crew is only on a half-day break today, so the cameras are still on set. We can go check them out—maybe they captured something useful at the time."

Charlotte Thompson nodded at Annie Anne, and the two immediately headed to the set.

By this point, the props at the set had long been cleared away. Unlike the last time Charlotte visited, now there were only several cameras stationed at different corners.

Since the prop collapse didn't happen during filming, Charlotte and Annie Anne didn't check the two main cameras used during shooting. Instead, they opted for the remaining ones, systematically transferring the footage to the computer to start reviewing.

"These are some interviews that might be edited into the behind-the-scenes extras for the drama later," Annie Anne said to Charlotte as she watched the video.

The sheer volume of recorded footage meant Charlotte and Annie Anne would need a considerable amount of time to go through it.

"This part is from when you arrived; it's a segment of behind-the-scenes material. We'll have to scroll forward a bit to get to where you and Riley Thompson perform the scene together."

Annie Anne pointed to the video's progress bar. Soon enough, they reached the segment showing Charlotte and Riley's joint scene.

"As an actress, Riley's acting isn't even as good as yours—an outsider. If someone's going to join a production with backing, they should at least possess some skills."

Watching Riley's performance on the video, Annie Anne couldn't help but mutter a quiet complaint.

Truthfully, everyone in the production crew was well aware of the fact that Riley had joined the project thanks to her connections.

But such phenomena were the norm in the entertainment world, so it hardly surprised anyone.

The only thing that drew criticism from the crew was Riley's subpar acting.

When she performed solo scenes before, Riley's lack of skill wasn't glaringly obvious. However, her performance opposite Charlotte this time was an outright disaster.

What's more intriguing was how Riley and Charlotte shared such similar features.

A professional actress lacking professionalism, outshone by an amateur designer.

If word about this got out, wouldn't everyone find it hilariously absurd?

Charlotte, however, paid little attention to such matters and instead focused on Riley's face in the video, feeling vaguely uncomfortable.

Just as Charlotte was about to skip the segment, she suddenly seemed to think of something and paused her actions.

Noticing Charlotte's reaction, Annie Anne gave her a curious glance.

"What's up? Did you notice something?"

"Nothing, really. It's just that Riley's performance style feels a bit familiar," Charlotte replied, shaking her head.

Particularly during Riley's positioning and movements, some subtle gestures struck Charlotte as oddly recognisable.

It was as if she'd seen them on someone else before.

Chapter 1347: Suspecting Riley Thompson

"She graduated from a formal acting school. Since she came from a professional academy, it's normal for her acting style to resemble some of her fellow alumni, isn't it?"

Hearing Annie Anne's explanation, Charlotte Thompson found it reasonable and stopped dwelling on the matter.

Soon, Charlotte and Riley Thompson's duet scene came to an end, and the camera moved on to interview other actors in the cast.

At that moment, a startled cry rang out off-camera. When the lens shifted, Justin Battleson was seen shielding Charlotte in his arms, while the prop ladder had fallen onto his body.

Even though Charlotte already knew Justin was unharmed, seeing the incident unfold again from a bystander's perspective still made her heart clench uncontrollably.

"This camera is the only one to capture the ladder collapsing, but even so, it only caught a small part of it. The rest happened outside the frame."

Annie Anne, who had paused the footage on the computer, looked at the screen with some frustration. She gestured with her fingers on the screen, tracing the direction the ladder had fallen.

Moreover, the footage showed that no one was standing near the ladder's side, which reluctantly supported the assumption that it might truly have fallen due to negligence by the props department.

"Didn't we already review all the video recordings from different angles? Nothing unusual came up."



Even though Charlotte said this, she furrowed her brow tighter.

If there wasn't any solid evidence, all suspicions were merely conjectures of her own mind.

"Wait a second."

Suddenly, Annie Anne exclaimed as if she'd noticed something in the footage, drawing Charlotte's averted gaze back to the screen.

"Look here. Isn't it strange that Riley wasn't around at this moment?"

Pointing at the paused video, Annie Anne indicated that Riley Thompson was conspicuously absent from the frame.

This wasn't idle speculation on Annie Anne's part. The frame almost captured everyone from the cast and crew, except for Riley.

"She might've just had something urgent and stepped away," Charlotte said softly, staring at the screen.

"But her next scene is right after this. She has no reason to not be here."

Speaking, Annie Anne rewound the footage by a few minutes. When the camera panned across the crowd again, Riley was already standing among them.

"She wasn't there just a moment ago, but now she suddenly appears in the shot. This..." Annie Anne trailed off.

"And Charlotte, don't forget—the ladder originally fell toward you. If Justin hadn't protected you, it'd probably be you lying in the hospital now."

Annie Anne's words reminded Charlotte of something. She bit her lip lightly but didn't say anything.

Because at that moment, Charlotte also recalled the resentful look Riley had given her.

Was it really just because of acting that Riley would go to such lengths?

"We can't accuse her without evidence. Maybe she was just standing in a blind spot the camera didn't catch."

Charlotte's words made Annie Anne shake her head.

Annie knew this as well. She could only press her fist to her lips, clearing her throat with a soft cough.

"I know, but I just can't shake the feeling that Riley has something against you. And didn't she make snide remarks about your lack of formal training, questioning your acting skills? That day was the first time you two met, wasn't it? Most people wouldn't say something like that for no reason."

Chapter 1348: There Are No Walls That Do Not Leak Air

After listening to Annie's words, Charlotte let out a helpless sigh.

Then she touched her cheek and said, "It's probably because I look too much like her. Plus, the online news is so overwhelming that it's impossible not to pay attention to it."

At this point, Charlotte paused and continued, "And besides, we can't find anything right now. Maybe it really was an unexpected accident."

As for Justin's efforts, they weren't faring any better than Charlotte's investigation.

Due to the sudden surge of crises in collaboration, even though Justin was injured and recovering in the hospital, he had no choice but to return to the company.

The issue had a significant impact on Riley Group, prompting the company to hold an emergency shareholders' meeting.

When Justin arrived at the meeting room, he noticed several shareholders gathered around George Robbins, chatting with him enthusiastically.

The moment Justin stepped in, the discussions in the room gradually died down, and everyone's gaze instinctively turned towards him.

George Robbins rose from his chair and walked toward him.

"Mr. Battleson, you're finally here. I heard you got injured and were hospitalized—are you alright?"

The moment George spoke, the surrounding shareholders looked at Justin in shock.

"What? Mr. Battleson got injured?"

"Where were you hurt? Why didn't we know anything about this?"

"So, Mr. Battleson, did you just rush over straight from the hospital?"

Because of injuries to his shoulder and arm, Justin only draped his coat over his shoulders. Upon hearing George's remarks, he smirked at him.

"I didn't expect Mr. Robbins to have such sharp news sources. Even my injury and hospitalization reached your ears."

Justin replied nonchalantly before walking over to his seat and sitting down.

George's eyes flickered slightly, and he spoke with a cheerful demeanor, smiling at Justin:

"After all, there's no wall that can block the wind completely. Actually, I only found out by chance. But Mr. Battleson, this injury of yours isn't a trivial matter—why hasn't it even made it to the media yet?"

"The media hasn't reported anything yet, but business partners are already terminating cooperation with us. If word of my injury gets out, wouldn't Riley Group collapse entirely?"

Justin responded calmly and then slowly raised his eyes to look at George beside him.

"What do you think, Mr. Robbins?"

George froze at Justin's words, momentarily opening his mouth but unable to respond. Just as he managed to restore his composure and prepare to speak, Justin had already turned away.

"As for the reason for today's shareholders' meeting, I believe everyone is aware. This is the most challenging issue the company has faced in years—what does everyone think we should do?"

Justin's gaze swept over everyone present, noticing that several people's eyes had subtly shifted toward George Robbins.

"Mr. Robbins, what do you think of this matter?"

Looking at George beside him, Justin inquired.

"This is undoubtedly commercial competition. Some company must be pressuring them from behind, forcing them to stop collaborating with us," George said seriously, tapping the table with his hand.

"Yes, it's clear that some company out there is competing with us."

Chapter 1349: Worsen

"But the strength behind this person is quite formidable, to be able to coerce so many companies."

Following George Robbins' words, a few others chimed in agreeably.

"But right now, there isn't a company completely opposed to our group."

One shareholder questioned: "In the fashion industry today, our Riley Group is considered a top-tier company. Across Druarus, only a handful of companies can truly compete with us."

These remarks sparked a wave of discussion among the attendees.

Yet Justin Battleson remained silent, quietly observing everyone present.

At this moment, Justin's assistant Michael Richard knocked on the door and entered, drawing the attention of everyone in the room.

Michael approached Justin directly and whispered something in his ear.

Upon hearing it, Justin's gaze flickered with a profound meaning. "Has the person arrived?"

Michael nodded slightly toward Justin.

"Let them wait for now," Justin instructed, and Michael replied affirmatively before turning and leaving.

George Robbins spoke up at this moment, addressing Justin: "Mr. Battleson, has something happened?"

"The person in charge of Worsen reached out to me and expressed interest in collaborating with our company." Justin replied calmly.

"Worsen? I've heard of them before. It's an emerging brand in Ashton, with a fair bit of recognition there," George Robbins said, visibly surprised.

"Mr. Robbins is correct. That's indeed the emerging brand," Justin nodded.

"This is excellent news. Our company has been lacking collaboration opportunities recently. I didn't expect Worsen to actively propose this partnership—it's truly a godsend!"

George's face instantly lit up with joy as he eagerly asked: "Mr. Battleson, judging by your earlier words, it seems the representative from Worsen has already arrived here, correct?"

"That's right. The representative is currently in the lounge."

"Mr. Battleson, this is a tremendous opportunity for our group! I think we shouldn't delay any longer. Signing the partnership agreement with Worsen should be our top priority."

George spoke as he shifted his gaze toward the other shareholders, his words subtly urging them.

Those shareholders who were closer to George immediately echoed his sentiments.

It seemed that, in the eyes of these individuals, no matter what George said, their ultimate response would always be agreement.

Justin observed this scene silently, then leaned back into his seat. One hand rested lightly on the armrest, as he spoke in a low tone.

"However... I find this situation somewhat unsettling."

"Mr. Battleson, how is it unsettling? This clearly is a fantastic opportunity," George immediately pressed for clarification.

"Indeed, it's a great opportunity. But doesn't anyone find it a bit too coincidental?"

Justin paused, then slowly scanned the room, his gaze passing over the faces of everyone present.

"Our group has recently experienced a wave of forced contract terminations from several partners, causing significant disruptions. And now Worsen steps forward at this exact moment, offering collaboration. Setting aside the potential profits this partnership might bring us, if Worsen ends up like the others and reneges on the contract down the line, we won't be able to bear the consequences."

Chapter 1350: Catching Turtles in a Jar

Sure enough, after Justin Battleson's words, several shareholders who had been swayed by George Robbins' earlier remarks began to show hesitation on their faces again.

"How is that possible? The mistakes in our collaboration have not been made public, and Worsen has no idea about our company's current situation. They're simply coming to us for a partnership,"

George Robbins immediately refuted Justin Battleson's statement.

After hearing George's remarks, Justin's brow furrowed slightly, and he calmly asked, "With such a large-scale termination of cooperation agreements, no matter how well the news is concealed, it's impossible to guarantee that nothing leaks out. For example, my injury and hospital stay—didn't Mr. Robbins learn about it anyway?"

Justin's words left George momentarily speechless, unsure of how to respond with a rebuttal.

"At this critical juncture, bringing up a cooperation proposal like this still needs careful consideration. What do you all think?"

"Mr. Battleson, I believe signing this contract is very necessary for the sake of the company."

"But Mr. Battleson isn't wrong either—what if Worsen backs out at the last second?"

Nonetheless, Worsen is an Ashton brand, and it has never collaborated with a Druarus brand before. Now they've chosen us as their first partner in Druarus. If this succeeds, it will leave a strong impression not only locally but overseas as well, potentially great returns."

"Even if they're an Ashton brand, choosing to work with our company at this sensitive time doesn't seem appropriate."

The shareholders holding differing opinions began debating fervently again, and for a while, the entire conference room grew noisy and chaotic.

Finally, Justin Battleson tapped his fingers on the table in front of him, the sound quieting the room instantly.

"Everyone has made valid points, but the company needs a period of adjustment right now, so to be on the cautious side..."

Before Justin could finish his sentence, George Robbins quickly interjected, taking over the thread of discussion:

"Mr. Battleson, I believe that to maintain the company's steady growth, we should go ahead with this collaboration. After all, the company needs the funds to operate smoothly."

Justin hesitated for a moment, seemingly swayed by George's argument. He placed a fingertip on his chin and pondered briefly before standing up.

"Alright then, Mr. Robbins, come with me to meet Worsen's representative. We'll discuss how to proceed with this collaboration."

George's eyes gleamed with surprised delight upon hearing this, and he quickly rose to follow Justin's actions.

"Understood, Mr. Battleson."

Justin and George's departure symbolized the end of the shareholders' meeting. Once Justin exited the conference room, he headed toward the reception area.



"Mr. Battleson, is your injury on your shoulder? It seems fairly serious," George asked while glancing at Justin's arm as he followed alongside him.

As for Justin's head injury, the bandages had been replaced with smaller dressings, mostly hidden by his hair, making it hardly noticeable.

"It's not serious, just accidentally hurt my arm," Justin replied casually,

"I originally thought Mr. Robbins was very well-informed—not just knowing I was hospitalized but even being clear on what part of my body was injured."