

The Ashes 511

Chapter 511 Serenas piercing scream echoed from behind, forcing Harvey to whip around in shock. To his horror, he saw Ian and Ted, two of the most respected elders of the Weller family, dragging Serena across the ground by her hair, pulling her out from hiding

4 You two old bastards! Let go of me ! I command you, as the family matriarch, to release me immediately! Are you really going to defy your master ? Serena shrieked.

Her disheveled hair and furious expression made her look like a vengeful ghost.

Half of her face was bruised and swollen, evidence of a slap.

Harvey rushed forward, alarmed

Elders, what are you doing? Let Serena go, now! However, before he could say more, one of the elders kicked him square in the stomach, sending him flying backward.

Harvey tumbled to the ground, rolling over several times before coming to a stop, gasping for air, and almost spitting blood

11 As he staggered to his feet, dazed and clutching his burning abdomen, he roared, You old fools! What do you think youre doing? How dare you attack me, your head of the family? Do you have a death wish? Never in his wildest dreams had Harvey thought he would be struck, and certainly not by members of his own family

He was the leader of the Weller family, the one who held ultimate authority over them.

However, Ian and Ted were the familys most powerful elders, and they were far from intimidated. Ian, who had kicked him, sneered

You shameless fool, do you really not know why youre being punished? Teds voice was icy.

Why waste words on him? This kind of scum should be beaten to death

Otherwise, how will the Weller family maintain its reputation among the elite of Jayrodale ?
Harveys face turned ghostly pale as he stumbled backward

A Are you two really going to rebel against me? Ian shouted, his voice booming with anger.

You fool, are the rumors true ? Is it true that youve been having an affair with Serena ? Harvey stammered instinctively, No, absolutely not! Ted, who had not struck yet, moved like lightning, appearing in front of Harvey and landing a mighty slap across his face.

Harvey let out a sharp cry as blood gushed out of his mouth, staining his chin and clothes.

Clutching his throbbing cheek, Harvey glared at them with a mix of hatred and desperation.

What did I do wrong? How dare you treat me like this? Dont you realize that with one word, I could have you both executed? The elders merely laughed coldly.

Even now, youre still lying and refusing to admit your crimes.

Harvey, do you think your late father would forgive you? Do you think youve lived up to the Weller family name, to our ancestors? If it werent for the rumors spreading outside, we would still be in the dark, deceived by you, you despicable animal

To think you and Serena could stoop so low! Harveys expression twisted with rage as he shouted, Ive told you, I didnt do anything! How dare you accuse me without proof? Both elders sneered.

Didnt do anything? Serena already confessed, yet youre still denying it? Are you really going to force us to strip away the last shreds of your dignity and expose you completely? Harveys mind buzzed as if it were about to explode

There was no escape now, no way to refute the accusations.

Serena, sobbing uncontrollably, suddenly cried out, Harvey, Im pregnant... with your child ! Harvey felt the world spin around him, as though the ground had been yanked out from under his feet. What had started as pleasure had now turned into a nightmare, a disaster with no way out.

For families like theirs, nothing was more feared than public scandal

Francesca had endured Simons behavior to avoid damaging the Aickers reputation, but Harveys situation was infinitely worse

His disgrace meant there was no question he would be stripped of his position as head of the family. Panic gripped his heart as he dropped to his knees with a loud thud, tears streaming down his face. Bowing repeatedly to the elders, he pleaded, Please, I was wrong.

Ill never do it again.

Chapter 512 Please, just give me one more chance! I promise to turn over a new leaf and lead the Weller family responsibly, Harvey pleaded, his forehead nearly touching the floor. The two elders exchanged glances, their eyes burning with a desire to punish him severely.

However, there was no escaping the reality Harvey was Kanes only heir.

If they removed him, the Weller family would need to choose a new head, and frankly, there was not anyone else who seemed even remotely suitable.

Though Harvey was reckless and immoral, he had proven competent as the family leader.

The recent surge in profits from their wellness products was his doing, helping to pull the family out of a dire financial crisis.

Fine, get up, Ian said in frustration.

It was as if he speaking to an utter disappointment.

Having someone like you as head of the family is a disgrace, but its our misfortune, not yours.

Ted gritted his teeth.

But listen carefully, you pathetic fool.

You may remain as the family head, but your disgraceful relationship with Serena ends now.

If we ever find out that you continued this filth, it wont just be Serena who pays the price youll both die ! Harvey nodded fervently.

Rest assured

Ill cut all ties with Serena immediately.

I swear Ill never see her again.

The elders gave their orders.

Take Serena to the late patriarchs grave.

She will serve as a mourner for three years, and under no circumstances is she to leave before then.

As Serena was dragged away, her face streaked with tears, Harvey lowered his gaze.

His heart was full of regret not for his actions, but for losing his delightfully indulgent Serena.

Ian scowled.

The Weller family is already on the brink of ruin, ridiculed by everyone.

Harvey, as head of the family, its your job to restore our reputation.

If you fail, well have no choice but to replace you! Ted snorted

Ive come out of seclusion stronger than ever, having reached the senior grandmaster level.

The Weller family will no longer tolerate shame or weakness.

From now on, we'll crush anyone who stands in our way including that little punk Andrew.

I'll kill him with one strike if I must

Harvey's expression brightened with glee

You've reached the senior grandmaster level? That's incredible! This changes everything.

With your strength, the Weller family can dominate without resistance ! Wow, this Weller family scandal

is absolutely insane! Andrew chuckled, sitting comfortably in Lauren's office as he scrolled through the internet, where the Weller family's disgrace had gone viral.

Eunice, Lauren's secretary, scoffed

Serves them right.

What goes around, comes around

That Harvey is being torn to shreds online! Lauren smiled.

I can't imagine how Harvey will ever show his face in public again after this.

Eunice rolled her eyes.

How? He'll probably skulk around like a rat in the gutter, avoiding everyone! Lauren's gaze shifted briefly to Andrew, her expression unreadable

Then, she instructed Eunice, The morning meeting is about to start.

Go get everything ready

I need to have a word with Mr.

Lloyd

Eunice blushed

While she was reluctant, she stood and left the room

She could not help feeling awkward whenever she thought about Lauren and Andrew having their private chats they always seemed far too cozy.

As the door shut behind her, Lauren turned to Andrew, her expression serious.

Dr.

Lloyd, tell me the truth.

Did Mr.

Yates send you to infiltrate Rhodes Corporation and target me?

Chapter 513 Andrew froze, startled by Laurens serious tone.

Looking at her earnest expression, he seemed to understand something deeper Target you? Someone mustve told you that.

But, Lauren, what do you think? Andrew replied with a faint smile, offering no further explanation. Lauren shook her head firmly.

I dont believe it.

Thats why Im asking you directly

Andrews expression turned cold.

I dont care whos feeding you these ideas

I only want to tell you one thing I came to Rhodes Corporation for one reason: you.

There are no schemes, no ulterior motives, no hidden agendas.

Im here because I see you as my friend

Without warning, Lauren threw herself into his arms, catching Andrew completely off guard

A faint floral fragrance swept over him.

In the next moment, her soft, delicate body pressed against his, filling his embrace entirely.

Andrew instinctively wrapped his arms around her, startled.

Lauren, you- She tilted her head back, her eyes glistening with unshed tears as she whispered, her / breath warm against him, No.

I dont want to just be your friend

I want to be your woman, your wife.

I want you to claim me completely, passionately! No ... You- Dont speak.

Kiss me

Hard! Lauren murmured, closing her eyes and lifting her vibrant, kissable lips to meet his

Her lips were impossibly soft, smooth as silk, and carried the faint sweetness of her lipstick. The kiss flooded Andrews mind with a whirlwind of sensations.

He had been surrounded by beautiful women before, but this was the first time he had truly crossed the boundary of intimacy.

Laurens bold move was like lightning striking dry tinder a spark igniting a roaring inferno

The kiss grew deeper and more consuming, and an overwhelming rush of passion erupted within Andrew

Lauren was lost in this whirlwind, and her entire body trembled under his embrace.

The intensity of it all left her breathless, her neck arched, her pale skin glistening with a fine sheen of sweat

Andrews kisses were fierce and unrelenting yet somehow balanced with just enough restraint to avoid causing her discomfort.

They were like a sudden spring rain intense yet refreshing, soaking every fiber of her being without overwhelming her.

The two of them stayed entwined, lost in the moment, unaware of time slipping by.

When Lauren finally pulled back, gasping for air, her cheeks flushed, she managed to whisper, Dr. Lloyd, wait... I cant breathe! Andrew smirked.

Alright, Ill stop for now

But how long was now? Andrew was not counting.

He gave it a second or maybe less before pulling her back into his arms, making her cry out in surprise as he resumed his conquest.

Dr.

Lloyd, please ... Not like this... I cant even stand properly anymore! Laurens voice wavered, a mix of desperation and surrender.

Soon, the usually confident and teasing Lauren was pleading for mercy.

Her soft whimper only seemed to fuel Andrews fervor.

He refused to stop.

Bit by bit, Laurens slender legs, clad in sheer stockings, gave out beneath her, and she slid downward. Andrews strong hands easily supported her fragile waist, holding her firmly in place.

At that moment, Lauren looked entirely dependent on Andrew, her body trembling as she clung to him.

It was as though her world had collapsed into his arms.

Chapter 514 Dr.

Lloyd, I really cant anymore.

Please, have mercy and let me go, okay? Lauren pleaded, her wide, tear filled eyes staring at Andrew with desperation.

This is the office.

People are everywhere, and you cant go on for this long in one go.

Be good.

Lets stop for now, and III give you another chance next time, okay? she begged, trying to escape his grip.

Andrew lifted his head from her neck, chuckling.

Next time? And when would that be? Laurens eyes darted nervously.

Uh... tomorrow! Then forget it.

I cant wait until tomorrow.

Besides, you were the one who came to me.

I didnt force you, Andrew teased with a sly grin.

Ah, no, no, no ... Fine, how about this afternoon? That should be okay, right? Lauren stammered. Nope, Ill need more by lunchtime, Andrew replied firmly

Alright, alright! Lunchtime it is, you big pervert! Lauren grumbled, feeling both defeated and flustered. For the first time, Lauren felt a chill run down her spine as she looked at Andrew

This guy, who usually appeared so composed and gentlemanly, had turned into a wildfire when things heated up

She realized she had severely underestimated his intensity it was like trying to contain an unstoppable blaze

Just then, Eunice opened the door and froze, her face a mix of shock and disbelief.

Ms.

Rhodes, the morning meeting started ten minutes ago

Are you still not done here ? Lauren shot up like a startled cat, hastily pulling herself out of Andrews arms

She frantically smoothed her hair and adjusted her clothes

Why didnt you come in earlier to remind me ? she snapped, her voice tinged with panic.

Eunice pouted, clearly feeling wronged.

You two were ... doing that! If I barged in earlier, youd just yell at me.

What was I supposed to do? While she complained, Eunice could not help but glance around the chaotic

scene

Her heart raced as she saw Laurens neck and even her chest were covered

in red marks, and her lipstick was completely smudged away.

How long and intense had that been? Lauren forced a stiff smile.

Dr.

Lloyd, lets head to the meeting.

Andrew, calm as ever and without a trace of embarrassment, replied casually, Sure, but you seem a little shaky.

Want me to help you walk? Lauren clenched her teeth, spitting out each word with quiet fury. No... thank... you! 11.....

The so called morning meeting was not an official gathering but rather a private discussion among Rhodes Corporations top executives, including Michael, the CEO

Lauren and Andrew had been invited only as a formality, given Michaels complete control over the group

If not for the fear of Andrew accusing him of being dictatorial, Michael would not have bothered to include them at all.

As Lauren and Andrew entered the meeting room, Michael spun a pen in his hand and sneered. Well, well, Ms.

Rhodes and Mr.

Lloyd, you really know how to make an entrance.

The rest of us have been waiting over ten minutes.

Quite the power move, dont you think? Andrew ignored him completely.

Pulling out a chair for Lauren, he gestured for her to sit

He then sat beside her and said nonchalantly, Feel free to speak your minds, everyone.

Im just here to observe as a major shareholder.

Dont worry about me.

His casual attitude left Michael and the other executives, like Troy fuming.

They had extended basic courtesy by inviting Andrew, but he acted as if he were some high-ranking

official inspecting the company.

It was infuriating.

Chapter 515 Troy sneered, feigning politeness.

Oh, judging by Mr.

Lloyds demeanor, it seems he has some insights to share.

Why dont we all listen attentively to his wisdom? His comment dripped with sarcasm, clearly meant to set Andrew up for embarrassment.

After all, in Troys eyes, Andrew was just a wealthy shareholder with no real business knowledge. Michael followed up with a mocking grin.

Mr.

MacAfee has a point.

Mr.

Lloyd, youre part of Rhodes Corporation now, so perhaps you could share some grand vision for our companys future or enlighten us with your development plans? The other executives, all five of them, smirked and watched Andrew expectantly, clearly hoping for him to stumble.

Laurens face darkened, and she was about to intervene to spare Andrew the humiliation.

She knew it was unrealistic for him to have a grasp on the intricate details of the business so soon after joining

Yet, Andrew simply smiled.

Visions and development plans? Lets skip the empty talk.

Its not practical.

However, since Mr.

Rhodes and Mr.

MacAfee are so eager, Ill share a couple of suggestions.

Michael and Troy exchanged surprised glances

They had not expected Andrew to actually play along.

Troy laughed derisively.

By all means, Mr.

Lloyd, please enlighten us.

Just make sure its something useful

If its nonsense or completely off the mark, dont blame us if we end up laughing.

Andrews expression remained calm.

Oh, dont worry.

You wont laugh you might cry instead.

He leaned forward slightly

I have two immediate recommendations regarding personnel arrangements.

First, I propose returning the CEO position to Ms.

Rhodes, where it rightfully belongs

Second, the position of head of the Pharmaceutical Division should also be reinstated to Mr. Chapman

After all, critical roles should be entrusted to individuals with proven competence and experience

Thats fair, isnt it? The room fell silent as Andrew finished, and Michael and Troys faces darkened. The other executives sat in stunned disbelief, their expressions quickly turning cold.

Troy slammed the table in anger.

Mr.

Lloyd, we asked for valuable, constructive suggestions not for you to spout ridiculous nonsense! Michael remained silent, his face grim and menacing, though his clenched jaw betrayed his frustration.

Andrew remained unfazed, smiling as he continued.

Mr.

MacAfee, dont get upset just yet.

Im not finished

I have two more points to share.

First, I believe Michael lacks the qualifications and ability to hold the CEO position.

Therefore, I propose that he be reassigned to a role better suited to his capabilities- perhaps heading the security department.

He could oversee the companys main entrance

That seems like a fitting role, dont you think? Ignoring Michaels furious, almost murderous glare,

Andrew pressed on

Second, Mr.

MacAfee is equally unfit for his role as head of the Pharmaceutical Division.

Thus, I suggest that he be removed from his position immediately and reassigned to oversee the parking garage.

With Michael at the main entrance, Mr.

MacAfee, the garage would be a perfect fit for you.

Andrew leaned back in his chair, spreading his hands.

That concludes my suggestions.

Now, who agrees? And who opposes ? Lauren could not contain herself any longer.

She burst into laughter, clutching her sides as she bent over.

Andrews audacity and sharp tongue were simply too much for her.

The rest of the executives stared at Andrew in sheer disbelief.

Chapter 516 They all thought it was an absurd and comical proposal, wondering how Andrew could even say those words with a straight face

Everyone in the room had braced themselves for Andrews lack of professionalism, but they had not expected anything this outrageous.

Suggesting the companys CEO should guard the main entrance? Recommending the head of the

Pharmaceutical Division be reassigned to manage the warehouse? It was the kind of logic that could only come from a genius with a truly unique imagination.

Troy was the first to snap, standing up and shouting, I object! Object! I object too! Unconditionally object! This is outrageous! Not a single executive supported Andrew

They all glared at him, their voices raised in protest, their faces red with indignation.

Andrew shrugged nonchalantly.

Well, since everyone objects, lets just pretend I never said it.

Michael, still seething, sneered.

Mr.

Lloyd, the companys meeting room is a place for discussing serious matters and high level collaborations not your personal stage or a playground for fools.

If you have nothing constructive to say in the future, I suggest you stay quiet! Andrew smirked and replied, But wasnt it you and Mr.

MacAfee who insisted I share my thoughts? Or are you saying that as the fifth largest shareholder of this company, Im not allowed to speak freely? You- Troy pointed an accusing finger at Andrew, his face alternating between pale and livid.

He looked like he might explode, his anger simmering just below the surface.

Just then, a sultry, mocking laugh interrupted the tension.

Well, this is quite a spectacle.

I never thought I'd witness such an entertaining show at one of Jayrodales top corporations.

The speaker was a glamorous woman in a red slit dress with cascading waves of hair.

Sitting next to Troy, she threw Andrew a disdainful glance, her words dripping with sarcasm and ridicule

Laurens smile turned icy.

Ms.

Dickinson, what a surprise.

How was your time behind bars? I hope the meals were to your taste.

If not, I can arrange for you to have a few more years to savor them

The woman in the red dress was none other than Ruby Dickinson, whom Andrew had seen on the street the previous day.

She smirked at Lauren, her tone sharp.

Oh, Ms.

Rhodes, fortunes change, don't they? You'd be wise to keep your arrogance in check what goes around, comes around

She added, Im here today on behalf of Amberpeak Corporation, one of Blumedaes leading

pharmaceutical giants, to discuss a potential collaboration with Rhodes Corporations
Pharmaceutical Division

Rubys gaze grew sharper as she continued.

And you, Ms.

Rhodes, seem far from your former glory.

Now stuck in a cushy vice CEO position whats next? Being thrown out of Rhodes Corporation
entirely? Laurens voice was calm but laced with authority.

Ms.

Dickinson, the internal affairs of the Rhodes family are none of your concern

As for you claiming to represent Amberpeak Corporation, I find that hard to believe.

Ruby let out a cold laugh, clapping her hands as her assistant stepped forward and distributed

documents to everyone in the room

Andrew glanced at the papers briefly before losing interest.

He had never heard of Amberpeak Corporation and did not think much of it.

However, Troy, Michael, and the other executives read the documents intently.

Their expressions shifted to approval as they nodded.

This is excellent.

The Amberpeak Corporation seal is legitimate.

This could be a rare opportunity Rhodes Corporations Pharmaceutical Division might finally break into Blumedaes market.

Amberpeak Corporation is one of Blumedaes most dominant pharmaceutical players.

Representing such a powerhouse, Ms.

Dickinson, you are indeed impressive.

Ms.

Dickinson, please pass along my regards to your chairman.

Rhodes Corporations Pharmaceutical Division is eager to partner with Amberpeak Corporation ! o

Chapter 517 The Rhodes Corporation executives wore pleased expressions, their eyes filled with flattery and admiration as they looked at Ruby

Although Rhodes Corporation was a strong player, its influence was largely confined to Jayrodale. Even though the Rhodes family had ventured into Blumedale to expand their reach, they had only managed to secure a foothold, far from becoming a dominant force.

Amberpeak Corporation, on the other hand, was a renowned giant in the pharmaceutical industry.

If Rhodes Corporation could truly secure a partnership with such a powerhouse, it would undoubtedly be a golden opportunity

Ruby turned to Lauren with a smug smile.

Ms.

Rhodes, do you believe me now? Lauren frowned

Amberpeak Corporation is already a leading authority in pharmaceuticals.

If they were looking for partners, it would make more sense to find them in Blumedale.

Ruby, for you to claim you're representing Amberpeak Corporation and to come all the way to Jayrodale for collaboration it doesn't add up

Do you really think I'd believe that? Ruby sneered

I was simply being polite by explaining myself to you.

You seem to have forgotten that Rhodes Corporation isn't yours to command anymore it's Mr.

Rhodes who's in charge now.

Whether you believe me or not doesn't matter in the slightest.

Michael quickly interjected, making his decision clear It's settled then.

We are honored to accept Ms.

Dickinson's proposal for collaboration on behalf of Amberpeak Corporation.

Troy chimed in with a flattering grin.

Mr.

Rhodes, you should know that when I met Ms.

Dickinson yesterday, she showed incredible dedication in negotiating this partnership

I've been in business for decades, and I can tell you, it's rare to meet someone as professional and committed as Ms.

Dickinson.

Ruby covered her mouth with a coy laugh.

Oh, Mr.

MacAfee, you're too kind

It's just that Amberpeak Corporation's chairman has faith in me and gave me this opportunity.

Troy eagerly replied, Ms.

Dickinson, you're being too modest.

With your talent, beauty, and impeccable character and background, it's no wonder Amberpeak's chairman sees such potential in you.

Other executives, worried about falling behind, quickly joined in with their flattery.

Exactly! Ms.

Dickinson isn't just stunning, she's clearly destined for great things representing Amberpeak Corporation. She's easily one of the top female leaders of the new generation in Jayrodale

No, she's the undisputed number one! Amberpeak Corporation's business scope is vast, not just limited to pharmaceuticals.

Ms.

Dickinson, you must know Blumedale well please keep us in mind for future opportunities.

Surrounded by this chorus of praise, Ruby was practically glowing with pride.

She laughed so much that her shoulders shook, basking in the attention.

Thank you all for your kind words.

You're all the pillars of Rhodes Corporation, so I hardly compare.

But I'd be delighted to connect with you all more in the future, Ruby said, feigning humility.

Michael's smile turned sharp as he glanced at Lauren.

Lauren, you're the vice CEO and don't seem to have much to do these days.

Why don't you take this opportunity to work with Ms.

Dickinson? Maybe she has a suitable project for you.

Lauren's response was icy.

No, thank you.

I'm not interested.

And frankly, if the project is a scam, I'd consider it a blessing if all we lost were resources and not our reputation as well.

Im not like certain fools who cant wait to jump headfirst into a trap.

Troys face flushed red with anger, his veins bulging as he snapped.

Ms.

Rhodes, what are you implying? Fools? Are you calling me a fool ? Lauren smirked.

If the shoe fits, Mr.

MacAfee, then wear it.

Troys face turned livid as he turned to Michael.

Mr.

Rhodes, Ms.

Dickinson is someone I worked hard to bring to the table for the good of this corporation.

We cant let this insult slide!

Chapter 518 Troy slammed the table, his tone laced with frustration.

It seems my efforts were all in vain

Some people in the company dont appreciate my hard work and think Im just being foolish. Fine, if thats the case, the Pharmaceutical Division doesnt need this collaboration with Ms. Dickinson and Amberpeak Corporation.

After all, any losses will be the corporations, not mine.

Ruby seized the moment, feigning regret as she spoke Its such a pity.

If Mr.

MacAfee doesnt want this opportunity, III have to look elsewhere.

Perhaps the Weller family, whos been excelling in wellness products lately, might be interested. Michael panicked, immediately forcing a smile.

Ms.

Dickinson, please dont be hasty.

Of course, we at Rhodes Corporation are eager for this partnership with Amberpeak Corporation. Only a fool would reject it! Ruby smirked, adding, You can want it all you like, but I only trust Mr. MacAfee, so hell be my sole point of contact for this collaboration.

Michael nodded hastily, waving his hand.

No problem at all.

The Pharmaceutical Division is entirely under Mr.

MacAfees jurisdiction.

We never interfere.

He then turned to Lauren, his expression darkening.

Lauren, what exactly are you trying to do? This is an incredible opportunity, and youre about to ruin it. Dont forget your position

You're the vice CEO of Rhodes Corporation, and the company's interests should be your top priority. Ruby chimed in with mock innocence, her tone dripping with sarcasm.

I understand Ms.

Rhodes's reservations.

She clearly doesn't think much of me.

After all, someone like her, a high and mighty heiress, wouldn't let someone like me stand in her way.

To her, avoiding embarrassment is far more important than the company's benefit.

Lauren let out a cold laugh.

Ms.

Dickinson, your shameless attitude hasn't changed one bit, even after years behind bars.

Michael exploded in anger.

Lauren, I'm warning you show some respect to our esteemed partner! I know you've had personal issues with Ms.

Dickinson, but that's all history.

She's turned over a new leaf and risen to success.

Can't you let it go? Or are you just jealous? Lauren narrowed her eyes.

Jealous? You're actually telling me she's reformed? That's rich.

Michael snorted

Isn't it obvious? Otherwise, why would you keep targeting her? You clearly don't understand the stakes.

Not only Rhodes Corporation, but even the higher ups in the family wouldn't let an opportunity like this slip by.

Lauren shook her head, exasperated.

You're as short sighted ever

Michael, let me repeat myself: Ruby cannot be trusted

People don't change, and she's nothing but a notorious corporate spy.

If you don't investigate this thoroughly, you're asking for disaster.

Michael's expression turned icy.

That's enough.

You don't have the authority to make decisions on major group matters

I'm the CEO, and what I say goes When this partnership with Amberpeak Corporation propels our

Pharmaceutical Division into Blumedale, I'll be standing on the family's podium, watching you grovel in

apology before the family! Lauren gave him a withering look, as if he were the biggest fool she had ever seen.

Sure, Michael.

You go ahead and dream about that.

Michael scoffed, then glanced around the room.

Anyone else have a problem? No? Good.

Meeting adjourned

He had not really expected any objections no one ever dared to voice dissent against him.

However, Andrews voice rang out, cutting through the air.

I have a problem

Everyone, sit back down.

Were not clone yet

A wave of exasperation swept through the room as the executives hesitated, their frustration visible, wondering what Andrew was up to.

Chapter 519 Michael, already irritated, snapped at Andrew.

Were talking about serious corporate business here- high level collaborations.

Do you even understand what that means? If you dont, stop interrupting just to make yourself seen! Michael was already annoyed earlier by Andrews suggestions and now, with Andrew raising another question, a wave of dread swept over him.

He feared Andrew might come up with something that would send his blood pressure through the roof. Andrew replied calmly, Who said I dont understand When it comes to pharmaceuticals, none of you here are even qualified to speak in my presence. Ruby sneered.

Mr.

Lloyd, lets not pretend you know what youre talking about.

Are you seriously trying to convince us that youre some kind of expert in medicine? What, are you claiming to be a miracle -working doctor or something? To Ruby, Andrew was just a lackey trying to pick

a fight for Laurens sake nothing more than a clueless, incompetent man, unworthy of her attention. However, as soon as she finished her mockery, she noticed something strange.

Michael, Troy, and the other executives looked uncomfortable, as though they wanted to say something but hesitated.

Lauren smirked and said, Ruby, youre not entirely wrong.

Mr.

Lloyd is a doctor and not just any doctor.

Hes a legendary healer who can cure virtually anything.

Rubys eyes widened in shock.

Mr.

Rhodes, Mr.

MacAfee, is that true? Michael, unwilling but unable to lie, grudgingly admitted, Yes, Mr.

Lloyds medical skills are truly extraordinary.

In this field, hes an expert.

Rubys expression shifted, her confidence shaken, though she forced a stiff smile.

Well, I didnt expect Mr.

Lloyd to have such capabilities.

Andrew remained composed.

No need for flattery, Ms.

Dickinson.

Since this is a partnership, I assume I can ask a few relevant questions, right? Rubys smile turned strained

Of course, Mr.

Lloyd

But you must understand that Im only a representative of Amberpeak Corporation.

Im not an expert in technical or medical matters.

Andrew spoke with an unhurried tone.

Thats fine.

The questions I have are basic and dont involve technical details.

But if you cant answer even these, it might call into question just how legitimate your role as Amberpeak Corporations representative really is.

Ruby silently cursed him but forced herself to respond Alright, Mr.

Lloyd

If you have questions, I'll answer what I can, though I reserve the right to withhold information regarding trade secrets or proprietary matters.

Andrew nodded

First question this collaboration with Rhodes Corporation, is it a direct investment from Amberpeak Corporation, a joint research effort, or are you simply looking to use Rhodes Corporation as a

manufacturing partner? Ruby exhaled slightly in relief at the question, smiling as she replied

Amberpeak Corporations capabilities in research and development are already industry leading, and we dont lack funding

So, this collaboration is purely for Rhodes Corporation to manufacture our products.

The initial order is worth two billion.

We'll transfer the payment immediately as soon as the products are produced

The mention of a two billion dollar order caused the executives eyes to light up with excitement.

They were clearly tempted.

Andrew scoffed

So, you're asking Rhodes Corporation to manufacture the products first, and then Amberpeak will pay afterward? Ruby responded with a confident tone.

Of course.

While the terms might seem strict, Mr.

Lloyd, don't forget that Amberpeak Corporation has the reputation and resources to justify such demands

Andrew nodded

One last question.

What exactly does Amberpeak Corporation want Rhodes Corporation to produce? Are we talking about health supplements, therapeutic products, or disease treatments? Ruby shook her head, smiling as if Andrew's question were naive.

None of those, Mr.

Lloyd

The products you mentioned are common in the pharmaceutical market, and Amberpeak Corporation doesn't lack any of them.

We need Rhodes Corporation to manufacture a specialized pill.

The specific ingredients and functions are detailed in the documents we provided earlier.

If you have concerns, you can take a closer look at those

Chapter 520 Andrew smiled calmly.

Alright, one final question.

Ruby, clearly irritated, snapped, Mr.

Lloyd, enough is enough.

You just said the last question was your final one.

Andrew chuckled, unfazed.

It just popped into my head, Ms.

Dickinson

No need to get so tense this one isn't about the collaboration.

Just casual chit chat.

Ruby huffed

Tense? Whose tense? You're quite the joker, Mr.

Lloyd

Ask your question I have other matters to attend to

Rhodes Corporation isn't the only company knocking on Amberpeaks door.

Andrew's smile took on a sharper edge.

I heard from Mr.

MacAfee earlier that the two of you discussed the collaboration thoroughly and worked very hard, even late into the evening

Is that correct? Ruby froze for a moment, then nodded.

Yes, Mr.

MacAfee is very dedicated.

We had a detailed conversation yesterday and talked until around nine in the evening.

Troy, clearly proud of himself, chimed in, It was exhausting, but for Rhodes Corporation, its my duty. Mr.

Lloyd, as someone who lives a carefree life of wealth and leisure, wouldnt understand the dedication and effort this kind of work requires

While he highlighted his sacrifices, Troy could not resist sneaking in a jab at Andrews supposed lack of professionalism

Andrew, still grinning, said, Oh, I see.

Ms.

Dickinson and Mr.

MacAfee really did work hard and for quite some time

He glanced at Lauren and added, Coincidentally, Ms.

Rhodes and I happened to witness just how hard the two of you were working yesterday.

Lauren caught on immediately and smiled sweetly.

Exactly, Mr.

Lloyd

Yesterday, we were standing outside the Stanton Hotel and saw Mr.

MacAfee and Ms.

Dickinson leaving together.

They certainly seemed to be putting in a lot of effort.

In fact, Lauren continued, her tone turning mischievous, from the way they were chatting and laughing,

one could guess their negotiation likely took place in one of the hotels more... intimate king-sized suites.

It must have been quite the scene business discussions so intense they practically brought the house down! Honestly, I've never seen such a unique way of closing deals.

Truly, Ms.

Dickinson and Mr.

MacAfee are exceptional in their approach to business on a completely different level than the rest of us. The two played off each other so seamlessly that the room's atmosphere grew increasingly tense and awkward

Troy's face turned beet red, a mix of embarrassment and anger.

He stammered, 'Wait, how did you know we went to the Stan- He cut himself off, realizing he had almost given himself away

Rubys face twisted in a mortified grimace.

She gritted her teeth and said, Yesterday, Mr.

MacAfee and I simply passed by the Stanton Hotel.

Mr.

Lloyd and Ms.

Rhodes must have misunderstood! Andrew raised an eyebrow, his tone dripping with sarcasm.

A misunderstanding? Youre probably right.

No, wait maybe Im just blind.

He continued with a smirk

Because what I saw last night was Mr.

MacAfee holding Ms.

Dickinson around the waist as the two left the hotel, laughing, flushed, and looking thoroughly entertained

But now that youve cleared it up, I must have been seeing things.

III make an appointment to have my eyes checked maybe theres something wrong with them! The other executives squirmed uncomfortably in their seats, unsure how to respond

Andrews words had taken the room to a strange and unsettling place.

They wanted to intervene but did not dare.

This was not just a pointed jab at Troy and Ruby it was a full blown exposé wrapped in sarcasm.

Even if Troy and Ruby had finalized their deal in a hotel room, there was no formal rule against it.

Some executives even envied Troy.

After all, Rubys curvaceous figure was jaw dropping her hourglass shape and striking features made her a showstopper.

For many, she was impossible to ignore.