

My Flirtacious Husband Chapter 271

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After the press conference, the video about Genevieve's interview quickly spread across the internet.

Apart from Genevieve's relationship with Armand, everyone also knew that the shareholders voted for Genevieve to be the new CEO of Central Group. As such, Genevieve would temporarily manage the company on Armand's behalf.

The netizens generally believed that electing Genevieve's signaled the downfall of Central Group.

Nonetheless, all of them were touched by the words she said toward the end of the video.

The readers learned from news reports that Peter and Samantha attended the shareholders' meeting, claiming they did everything for Central Group. It turned out that Peter wished to become the CEO of Central Group. Later, the reporters also revealed that the shareholders' meeting of Faulkner Group was held without informing Armand's wife, Genevieve. In other words, the shareholders secretly voted for Samantha to take control of Faulkner Group.

Although Armand wasn't blood-related to the Faulkner family, everyone knew he devoted himself to the family.

At the same time, Peter and Samantha's despicable actions disgusted the netizens. Not only that they didn't care about Armand, but they also intended to snatch his company.

Instead of dwelling on Armand's family background, all netizens condemned Peter and Samantha's malicious ambition.

As a result, Faulkner Group's share price, which had only stabilized for a short time, slid again due to the news.

The company's stocks were down thirty to forty million within several hours.

On the way back to Xedells by her private jet, Samantha looked grim upon reading the news.

Miles away, Genevieve attended a meeting with the higher-ups of Central Group once the press conference was over.

The higher-ups of Central Group, including Jenny from the translation department, couldn't believe their eyes when they saw Genevieve entering the conference room.

My goodness!

Before this, Jenny always thought that Genevieve was Patrick's girlfriend.

Hence, Jenny was taken aback upon realizing that Genevieve was Mrs. Faulkner!

Night had fallen when Genevieve finally finished her work and left the company with Steven.

Genevieve recalled that she hadn't gone to the hospital for a few days because she was extremely occupied.

As such, Genevieve asked Steven to drive her to the hospital.

"Mrs. Faulkner." The bodyguard who stood near the ward greeted Genevieve.

Genevieve nodded at him in response before entering the ward.

After Genevieve came closer to the bed, she noticed Armand's face had reddened and wasn't as pale as a few days ago. Nonetheless, there were bandages around his head while the ventilator was still attached to him. At that time, Genevieve could hear his ragged breathing.

Pursing her lips, Genevieve sat beside the bed and held Armand's hand.

She realized that his palm was dryer and warmer, unlike the last time she held it.

Genevieve lowered her head and gazed at Armand, who was sleeping soundly. Deep down, she couldn't help but wonder why Armand would sell his shares of Central Group to Cooper and others.

Why did Armand risk his life to protect me when the car exploded?

The steel bar of the car wouldn't land on Armand if he quickly squatted down to dodge it.

Genevieve murmured, "Armand, what was on your mind? Why are you unpredictable?"

When Genevieve was deep in thought, Steven knocked on the door and came in with a set of dinner.

Then, Steven opened the boxes and passed them to Genevieve. “Mrs. Faulkner, let me drive you home after having dinner. You have to go to Central Group tomorrow morning.”

“Thank you.” Genevieve took a bowl of soup from Steven and thanked him.

Noticing Genevieve’s grim expression, Steven said in a deep voice, “Mrs. Faulkner, you’re now the CEO of Central Group. You can do anything you want and don’t have to worry too much about the rest.”

Genevieve gazed at him and replied, “Central Group is Armand’s blood, sweat, and tears. Won’t you worry that Central Group will collapse in my hands?”

Steven looked at Armand for a while and said, “Well, it doesn’t matter. You have heard what the doctor said— Mr. Faulkner’s chances of waking up are slim. I believe he would want you to manage his company instead of handing it over to someone else.”

After a while, Steven reminded Genevieve, “With Central Group, it will be easier for you to do a lot of things.”

Steven’s words enlightened Genevieve.

My early motive for staying by Armand’s side is to utilize his power to bring down the Wood family.

Now that Armand is in a coma, I can achieve it without obstacles!

Genevieve flashed Steven a smile and said, “Yes, I understand. Thank you, Steven.”

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It was the fourth day since Genevieve became the CEO of Central Group. Sitting in the CEO’s office, she was busy learning the abstruse knowledge about finance by reading the pile of documents.

Surprisingly, news about her private meeting with a man in Langfield Hotel spread on the internet.

From the leaked photos, netizens could see a blurred figure coming out of a room. Also, Genevieve was seemingly arguing with Armand in the room.

Genevieve hung on tight to a blanket, revealing her beautiful collarbones. When Genevieve looked up at Armand, she appeared nervous, while her eyes were wet with tears.

With those photos, some reporters began accusing Genevieve of having an affair.

Given that someone was behind the massive campaign to smear Genevieve's reputation, some netizens, who didn't know the truth, bought into the rumors and condemned her.

As expected, the rumors indirectly affected the share prices of Specter Corporation and Central Group.

After reading the news, Genevieve asked Steven to find the security footage and extract the part when Armand left the hotel that day.

Just as Genevieve wanted to clarify it, Cooper had posted on Twitter, saying that the incident happened after they had agreed to get a divorce.

Cooper added that both sides had signed the divorce agreement. Back then, they hadn't visited the City Hall because they were too occupied.

When a friend told him Genevieve was with a man in a hotel, Cooper lost his mind and brought reporters along to raise a ruckus.

After that, Cooper even showed the signed divorce agreement, including the date at the bottom of the document.

Genevieve heaved a sigh of relief after reading Cooper's tweet.

Cooper knew that Genevieve and Specter Corporation would be in trouble if others found out that he arranged for the man to show up in the hotel. Hence, Cooper decided to forge a divorce agreement to stop the rumors.

How smart! Genevieve couldn't help but commend Cooper deep down.

After Steven sent the security footage to her, Genevieve also tweeted that the man in the hotel was none other than Armand. At that time, they were already dating. Armand left Genevieve in the hotel because he had to head toward the company early in the morning. They registered their marriage at the City Hall not long after the incident.

The date on the marriage certificate matched Genevieve's explanation.

Furthermore, since the public relations department of Central Group and Specter Corporation quickly intervened, the news soon eclipsed.

Genevieve slumped in her chair after the mess was finally solved.

Suddenly, Steven knocked on the door and came in with some documents.

Genevieve started to feel a little dizzy once she saw Steven. "Steven, please let me off. There are dozens of documents on my desk that I haven't read yet..."

"I never expected to read documents from morning till evening and learn about finance till eleven o'clock. I wouldn't have agreed to become CEO if I knew it earlier!"

"What you are experiencing now means nothing." Steven shook his head as he put down the documents on the desk.

After a while, Steven continued, "Setting aside Central Group, Mr. Faulkner had to deal with over twenty factions within Faulkner Group and reorient the company's direction. Hence, he only had three hours of sleep for half a year after taking over the company. Later, he vomited blood due to overtiredness and was hospitalized for half a month."

Genevieve was stunned for a while before sitting up straight. "Even though Armand contributed so much to Faulkner Group, the Faulkner family betrayed him cold-heartedly."

To the family, Armand's status was even lower than that of Faulkner Group's employees.

"Faulkner Group always emphasized successors of the same bloodline over others. As such, the Faulknors dismissed Armand's contribution as soon as they knew he wasn't blood-related," Steven explained.

Pointing at the documents, Steven continued, "I've organized the documents based on Mr. Faulkner's instruction. Now, I think you might need these."

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"What is this about?" Genevieve opened the top-most document and read it.

Meanwhile, Steven stood still without saying a word.

Two hours later, Genevieve finished reading two documents and understood Armand's intentions.

Genevieve told Steven her guess. "Back then, Peter made a deal with Samantha. Samantha would support Peter to control Central Group, while she would take over Faulkner Group. However, Samantha never thought Mando would sell Central Group's shares to Cooper in advance. Now that Peter has failed in his bid to take over Central Group, he surely wouldn't let go of Faulkner Group. Nonetheless, Samantha wouldn't let him acquire any shares of Faulkner Group."

"You're indeed smart." A rare smile flashed across Steven's face.

Earlier, Steven heard that Samantha questioned Genevieve's credibility during the shareholders' meeting. However, Landon, the biggest shareholder of Central Group, argued that Armand wouldn't marry a useless woman.

Now, Steven believed that Landon was right about it.

After giving it some thought, Genevieve looked up at Steven and said, "Steven, can you help book a flight ticket to Xedells the day after tomorrow? Also, tell Peter I wish to meet him for two hours to discuss a business deal."

"Understood." Without talking much, Steven nodded and left.

Later, Genevieve gave Cooper a call.

Without Central Group's secretaries and Cooper's help to give Genevieve tuition in finance, she wouldn't have improved so much.

Once the call went through, Genevieve shared her analysis about Samantha with Cooper. "Armand's background is an embarrassment to the Faulkner family. Hence, Samantha will try different ways to dilute his shares in Faulkner Group. I have to sell the shares and meet Peter in Xedells two days later."

Upon hearing it, Cooper chuckled over the phone and said, "I'm sure you already have a plan about how to negotiate with Peter. Bring Steven along with you."

Genevieve murmured a response and reminded Cooper. "The masterminds who spread the rumors in the morning were probably Peter and Samantha. I'm sure they have other materials. You have to be cautious."

Cooper responded, "It's okay. I'll come up with countermeasures if they spread rumors again."

"Then I'll hang up now."

The smile faded from Cooper's face after he put down the phone.

Then, Cooper left the CEO's office and headed toward the secretarial department to meet Christopher.

"Mr. Sutton." Christopher quickly stood up when he saw Cooper.

Cooper instructed Christopher in a deep voice, "Genevieve will meet Peter in Xedells two days later. Please spread the news to the reporters, including those in the city. Also, send her photo to the best security company in Xedells. You have to employ bodyguards to protect her secretly... Ahem!"

The Faulkner family would be considered a suspect if something happened to Genevieve in Xedells.

Cooper bent over and coughed before he could finish speaking. Suddenly, his heart ached, and he almost couldn't breathe.

"Mr. Sutton!" Christopher quickly supported Cooper. "Let me take you to the office to get some rest."

"It's okay. It's just some minor cough."

After his chest pain had eased, Cooper pushed Christopher's hand away. Squinting his eyes, Cooper said, "Instruct your subordinate to get in touch with the Aviation Authority. Find out which airline Mirrin left the country with and her destination."

Deep down, Cooper felt that something was wrong with Mirrin.

When Cooper wanted to add something, his body started to sway. The next moment, he collapsed and fell onto the floor.

"Mr. Sutton!" Christopher was shocked. He immediately asked for help from the secretarial department and called the ambulance.

Two days later, Steven accompanied Genevieve to the airport in the morning. The plane took off on time and arrived at Xedells Airport at almost noon.

Peter told Steven he would only be available from eight to nine o'clock tonight.

The Faulkner family was one of the four prominent families of Xedells. Moreover, Faulkner Group's business covered almost everything that ordinary citizens needed.

After the plane touched down, Genevieve chose to stay in Camphor Hotel, which belonged to Faulkner Group.

It was because the hotel was near the club where Genevieve had to meet Peter later.

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News about Armand's background and marriage was also widespread in Xedells.

The receptionists of the hotel instantly recognized Genevieve but didn't know how they ought to address her.

"Check-in, please." Steven put their passports on the counter and continued, "I need two rooms that are next to each other."

"Sure." One of the receptionists quickly assisted Steven with the check-in procedure.

After a while, Steven walked toward the elevator with Genevieve while holding the keycards. In the meantime, two receptionists craned their necks to look at Genevieve and began gossiping.

"She is Mr. Armand's wife, right? I heard that she comes from a once-prominent family."

Another receptionist responded, "Well, Mr. Armand's background is a disgrace to the Faulkner family. The family won't accept him."

"Why is she in Xedells?"

"Considering Armand has Faulkner Group's shares, she must be here to make a fortune!"

Throughout the afternoon, Genevieve stayed in her room to deal with all sorts of matters. She only realized that night had fallen when Steven knocked on her door.

As such, Genevieve quickly packed her things and left with Steven.

Camphor Hotel was located in the most bustling area in Xedells. Genevieve and Steven only had to take a turn to arrive at Ambrosia, the most well-known club in the city.

Therefore, Genevieve and Steven decided to walk to Ambrosia.

The club was established a hundred years ago and wasn't damaged by any artillery since then.

The club's exterior design was resplendent, reflecting luxury and enjoyment. On both sides of the staircase were two statues of mystical beasts with wide-opened mouths. Genevieve couldn't help but feel they would devour anyone who entered the club.

At that time, the club was bustling with many luxury cars parked around it.

After checking their member cards, the valet politely invited them to enter the club. Soon, a receptionist who wore a uniform came closer and greeted them.

Genevieve said to the receptionist, "We need a private room. When Mr. Peter is here, please invite him to come in directly."

"Sure."

Genevieve was hungry because she didn't eat anything in the afternoon. Therefore, she ordered a lot of food as soon as she sat down in the private room.

A few minutes later, the food that Genevieve ordered was served.

While Genevieve gracelessly gulped down the food, Steven, who stood next to her, twitched his lips and asked, "Mrs. Faulkner, why did you choose to negotiate with Peter here?"

I mean, we can meet Peter in a tea house, right?

Genevieve casually answered Steven while eating. "Well, I want to make Peter feel sick. He teamed up with Samantha to expose Armand's background and embarrass the Faulkner family. Now, I purposely want to meet him here to talk business. He will have no choice but to come."

Steven was stunned for a while before smirking. "I'm surprised that you hold grudges for Mr. Faulkner."

During the press conference a few days ago, Genevieve's sincere remark touched the reporters' hearts.

Hence, Genevieve successfully turned the tide— Peter and others were seen as sinners.

Genevieve sneered as she tried a piece of beef brisket. "Why do I have to hold grudges for him? By the way, the food here is rather delicious."

Peter had arrived when Genevieve had almost finished eating.

Peter's expression turned grim when he saw the scattered dishes on the table. Apparently, he thought Genevieve wasn't being very polite.

"Mr. Faulkner." Genevieve stood up and said embarrassedly, "I know that you're busy and will be late. I ordered some food because I was too hungry."

As they were talking, the waitress had cleared the table.

When Genevieve gave Peter the menu, he threw it on the table and said coldly, "My time is precious. Just cut the crap and tell me what you want!"

Although Peter was irritated, Genevieve flashed him a smile. Then, she took a document from Steven and passed it to Peter.

With a cold expression, Peter opened and read it.

After reading through the document, Peter looked up at Genevieve and squinted. "Are you going to sell Armand's shares in Faulkner Group to me on his behalf?"

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According to corporate laws, if a shareholder wanted to transfer their share in the company, other shareholders of the said company would be given the priority to buy the shares. If the shares were to be sold to someone outside of the existing shareholders, at least half of the shareholders should vote in favor of the new shareholder.

Central Group abided by this principle, but not Faulkner Group.

Faulkner Group originally was run within the family. However, many shares started being sold to outsiders as financial planning.

As stated explicitly in the policies of Faulkner Group: If a shareholder wishes to transfer his or her portion of shares to another member of the Faulkner family, the transfer can be made directly without the agreement of other shareholders.

Nevertheless, ever since Armand took over Faulkner Group, he had fired a lot of employees that he deemed useless without mercy. His actions caused the members of the Faulkner family to be terrified of him, leading them to be unwilling to join Faulkner Group.

Genevieve's lips curled into a smile. "Yes."

Peter scoffed with a disdainful smile as he tossed the documents onto the table. "During the press conference a few days ago, you were defending Armand in every sentence you said. You told the public that Faulkner Group would not have its glory today if it

weren't for Armand. One simple action of yours caused the stock prices of Faulkner Group to plummet. Yet here you are now, taking the initiative to meet me and trying to sell me your shares in Faulkner Group?"

Ever since the encounter at the Central Group shareholder's meeting, Peter was aware of how intelligent Genevieve was and had a bad impression of her.

"What are you really up to?" Peter questioned sternly.

"Nothing. I'm not up to anything. I just sincerely want to sell you the shares." Genevieve lowered her gaze as she spoke.

"I am completely clueless when it comes to financial planning. I am depending very heavily on Mr. Sullivan's and others' guidance when it comes to managing Central Group. Now with Faulkner Group added to the picture, I'm afraid I can't handle everything. Besides, I'm in need of money too..." Genevieve began to explain.

"The doctors said Armand might not wake up. If anything were to happen to Central Group, I would need to have some spare cash with me."

She then concluded, "Besides, I do not wish to have any animosity between us, Mr. Peter."

Genevieve picked up the teapot and poured Peter a cup. "I'm selling you my husband's shares on Faulkner Group in hopes that it would relieve your anger. After this, please stop interfering with the workings of Central Group in the future, is that alright, Mr. Peter?"

Peter did not respond. He merely kept his cold gaze on the document on the table as he tapped on it with his finger.

Before they had come to Xedells, Genevieve had asked Steven to look through the document.

Peter's wishes to join Faulkner Group had been denied by Samantha and the other shareholders. Genevieve had no doubt that her offer would appeal to Peter.

Genevieve poured herself a cup of tea as well and sipped the tea slowly while waiting for Peter's response, savoring the flavors of the tea.

After a while, Genevieve emptied her cup. Seeing that Peter still hadn't uttered a word, Genevieve leaned forward to take the document on the table. "Looks like you have no interest in my offer. In that case, I'll be leaving now."

Peter pressed down the document with his hand, not allowing her to take it away. With an icy expression, he glared at Genevieve. "The price stated here is too high."

“The price offered to you was based on the market. If I were selling the shares to other shareholders of Faulkner Group, it would not be so cheap.” Genevieve smiled politely as she negotiated. “How about this, considering the fact that you’re my husband’s ‘Uncle Peter’...”

Genevieve dipped her finger into some tea and traced clear digits on the table. “If you can pay me in cash, I’ll sell the shares to you at this price.”

Peter glanced at Genevieve coldly before exiting to make a quick phone call.

After half an hour, a man dressed in a suit rushed in while carrying a laptop.

After Genevieve had amended the amount on the contract and signed it with Peter, the man immediately transferred the money to her.

Once the transfer had been made, Peter stood up with the document in his hand. Following suit, Genevieve rose to her feet as well. “Leaving so soon? Don’t you want to stay for dinner? The dishes here aren’t bad. I also heard that there will be performances around ten o’clock...”

Before she could finish speaking, Peter tossed her a look of disgust and left with the man without looking back.

It was not long before Genevieve and Steven left the private booth as well.

As they were leaving, Genevieve could not help but complain. “When he wanted to buy the shares from me, he didn’t even flinch when I called him Uncle Peter. Yet the moment he got the shares, his expression instantly changes, as though the mere thought of Armand disgusted him. With his talent, changing faces could be a stand-up comedy!”

Steven burst into laughter while giving Genevieve a thumbs-up. “Your performance earlier was splendid, Mrs. Faulkner.”

Back in the private booth, Peter had been extremely domineering during the whole negotiation. His imposing aura was cornering Genevieve without mercy. At the side, Steven broke into cold sweat in fear that Genevieve would crumble under the pressure.

To his relief, not only did Genevieve handle the situation brilliantly, but she managed to turn the tables and frustrate Peter in return.

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As the pair made their way down an extremely posh corridor, Genevieve could hear someone making a fuss some distance behind her.

“Let go! Let go of me!” A female’s voice called out.

“I’m telling you, forcing a woman to be an escort or a prostitute without her consent is illegal in today’s society!”

Before she could turn around, Genevieve felt someone knocking into her shoulder as an outline of a person zoomed past her.

Genevieve stumbled a few steps before regaining her balance.

The woman who ran past her was tiny but extremely nimble. In the blink of an eye, she had made her way to the club’s exit. The woman charged toward the door, looking as though she wanted to leave that place as fast as possible.

To her dismay, two burly bouncers were standing outside the door. One of the men managed to grab her thin arms and yanked at her forcefully, halting her in her tracks.

The bouncers lifted the woman into mid-air and brought her back into the club. Kicking her legs around, the woman screamed hysterically, “I’m not the one who wrote the IOU! What right do you have to hold me captive?”

Seeing that customers were walking along the corridor, one of the bouncers was afraid that the woman’s screams would attract unwanted attention and slapped the woman hard on her cheek.

“Shut up! Or else!” he warned.

The slap was so hard that it tilted the woman’s head, causing her to fall silent. Perhaps it was because her cheeks were too painful for her to speak.

As the two men carried the woman past Genevieve, they nodded courteously at her before continuing on their way. With a lowered gaze, Genevieve tossed the woman a glance. The woman’s hair was messy and covering her face, presumably from running so fast.

A pale face peeked through the messy hair.

They were in Xedells. Word had it that the boss of Ambrosia was the child of one of the most influential families in Xedells.

Not wanting to stir up any unnecessary troubles, Genevieve ignored the incident.

However, just as she was about to leave the club, a sudden sense of familiarity struck her. Instantly, Genevieve turned around.

“Wait!”

She strode toward the two men and pulled the woman’s hair out of her face. When Genevieve saw the face of the woman in complete exposure, she was dumbfounded. “Johanna?” Genevieve asked, taken aback by who she was seeing.

The slap a moment ago caused the woman to be in a daze. At the sound of her name, Johanna raised her head and looked around in a blur.

At the sight of Genevieve, Johanna immediately snapped out of her daze and started struggling to get out of the bouncers’ grip once again. “Genev! Please call the police! The people in this club are holding me captive, and they’re even asking me to be an escort!” Tears rolled down Johanna’s cheek as she cried for help.

Genevieve peered at the men coolly. “Let go of her.”

“Please do not interfere, miss.” One of the men talked to Genevieve with a stony expression. “She’s one of our escorts here, and we have the right to punish her for her wrongdoings.”

“What if I want to interfere?” Genevieve lifted her chin and gestured with her fingers.

Understanding what she meant, Steven stepped forward. Within a few seconds, Steven had the two men on the ground, freeing Johanna.

They were in the main room of the club. There were surveillance cameras everywhere, as well as many bouncers behind each door.

At the sight of Steven beating up their staff, the other staff members of the club quickly gathered around and surrounded Steven, Genevieve, and Johanna.

The supervisor of the club showed up as well.

Eying the bouncers groaning in pain on the ground, the supervisor pursed his lips together in annoyance. “Your bodyguard is skilled, ma’am, but you should not have laid a hand on my staff. Not to mention that it was our escort that had broken a rule. The bouncers were merely taking her back to the girls’ dorm.”

Genevieve turned a deaf ear to the supervisor and crouched down to help Johanna up on her feet. “Aren’t you studying in Loang? What are you doing here?” she asked Johanna.

“My Dad. He tricked me... He sold me to this place.”

Johanna rubbed her sore and dampened cheeks as her tears continued to pour. “He called me, telling me that he has late-stage cancer. When I heard that, I immediately flew back. Turns out he had gotten into tens of millions worth of debt because of gambling, and sold me to them to repay it...”

Johanna sobbed. “You have to save me, Genev. This club might as well be a brothel. They even asked me to... to...”

Johanna choked on her words, as though saying it out loud was too much to bear.

“Hmph! What brothel? Watch your words!” The supervisor sneered. “Your father is the one who sold you to us to pay for his debt. Therefore, you have no choice but to work in Ambrosia till your father’s debt had been repaid! Only then are you allowed to leave!”

As he was speaking, the supervisor tossed Johanna a threatening glare. “Your father owed us tens of millions! If all you’re doing is serving drinks, you won’t be able to repay the debt even if you live up to a hundred years! Moreover, the job scope of an escort includes drinking with the customers and entertaining them.”

He took a step forward, closing the gap between him and Johanna. “You better stop this now and come with us! If not, you’ll face the music once you return to the dorms later!”

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The memory of getting beaten up and getting her clothes torn off the previous night floated to the surface of Johanna’s mind. Trembling in fear, Johanna tightened her grip on Genevieve’s arm. “Genev, please save me...” Johanna begged as her voice began to crack.

A hesitant look flashed across Genevieve’s eyes.

She and Johanna had been classmates for two years. Not only that, they were seated next to each other. Johanna had a bubbly personality. No matter what she was doing, Johanna would take Genevieve along. The two of them hit it off fairly easily. However, the two of them had lost contact after Johanna went overseas to study.

After so many years, Genevieve had almost forgotten Johanna’s existence.

Ever since Armand's birthright had been exposed, the Faulkners no longer consider him a part of the family. Because of that, she had lost a layer of protection.

Genevieve did not want to offend other influential families in Xedells just to save Johanna in fear that she would get into trouble herself.

The supervisor noticed Genevieve's hesitation and decided to target it. "I know you're Armand Faulkner's wife. However, Mr. Faulkner is no longer considered a Faulkner, is he? Furthermore, this is Xedells. I'll advise you to mind your own business ma'am. That way, you get to live longer."

Upon hearing his words, Genevieve sneered. "He might not be a Faulkner anymore, but he's still the CEO of Central Group! The amount he earns is an amount that you and your descendants can only dream about earning. You're earning—what—only a couple of ten thousand per month? Who are you to look down on him?"

The supervisor's face paled in fury as Genevieve's words rendered him speechless.

"How much does her father owe? I'll pay," Genevieve declared in a clear, calm voice. "Get me the manager!"

Reluctantly, the supervisor bowed to Genevieve and led them into a private booth, asking them to wait inside.

After a couple of minutes, he returned with a man dressed crisply in a suit.

The man was about forty years old. His hair was combed to the back. His fox eyes stared piercingly at his surroundings, causing a chill to run down one's spine.

"Name's Gabriel Jimmond, and I'm the manager of Ambrosia." Gabriel greeted Genevieve and took a seat on the opposite side of the table.

He tossed a side glance at Johanna as he asked, "You want to pay her debt for her?"

Genevieve was putting ice on Johanna's swollen face. Without even looking at Gabriel, she asked, "How much did her father owes you guys?"

"Twenty-eight million."

"Alright. I'll pay." Even though it was not a small amount, Genevieve could still take out that amount of money, especially after the exchange she just had with Peter.

"Show me the IOU," ordered Genevieve casually.

"No rush, Ms. Rachford. There are still further calculations to be made." Gabriel lit a cigarette slowly before taking a sip. "Twenty-eight million is just the base price. Including

the interest charge, her special etiquette training by professionals, food, and accommodation..." Gabriel moved his fingers as though he was counting. "You'll have to pay us thirty-six million."

"Even the loan sharks aren't as bad as you guys!" Johanna hollered, enraged. "I was only here since yesterday! Not only did I get beaten up... and locked up in a room, but I've never been to any etiquette classes!"

Johanna then shook Genevieve's arm. "Genev, let's just call the police. The police won't let them get away with this."

Gabriel merely shrugged at Johanna's threat. "By all means, you're welcomed to call the police."

Genevieve did not budge. She was fully aware that the police in Xedells not only will ignore their reports, but the police might also cause even more trouble.

"Deal!" Genevieve pursed her lips.

She took out her checkbook and scribbled a generous thirty-six million onto a page while waiting for Gabriel to hand her the IOU.

Without a second thought, she passed the check to Gabriel.

Just as Gabriel was about to hand the IOU to Genevieve, his phone rang at the exact moment.

The person on the phone said something to Gabriel. "Yes, sir." Before he hung up, Gabriel nodded and replied in a respectful tone.

After the phone call, Gabriel waved a waiter over and started whispering in the waiter's ear.

As the waiter left the private booth, Genevieve frowned, noticing that Gabriel was no longer giving her the IOU.

Within two minutes, the waiter that had left a moment ago came back with a bottle of brandy.

Thanking the waiter, Gabriel opened the bottle of brandy before turning to Genevieve. "Thirty-eight million and this bottle of brandy. If Ms. Rachford can finish this bottle, I'll immediately let you guys go without further issues."

Genevieve eyed the brandy in a calm manner. "How about another ten million in place of the brandy? Forty-six million in total." She bargained.

The manager shrugged nonchalantly. "If you're not drinking, you're not taking her away

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"I'll drink it!" offered Johanna, panicked.

Johanna did not know how to repay Genevieve after what the latter had done.

Brandy is unlike wine. The former has a higher alcoholic content.

Johanna could not allow Genevieve to drink it.

"No. Only Ms. Rachford is allowed to drink it." Gabriel glanced sideways at Johanna. "You drinking it doesn't count."

Johanna was so furious that her face went pale.

"Why are you being so aggressive, Mr. Jimmond?" Steven, who was standing silently at the side, spoke up coldly. "Before Mr. Faulkner was unconscious, he and Ms. Wood had a great relationship. A lot of projects and collaborations with the Wood family were due to the generosity of Mr. Faulkner. How could the Wood family treat Mr. Faulkner's wife so badly in return?"

In a demure manner, Gabriel explained, "It's not me who's being aggressive. Mr. Wood called and said that his sister was bullied when she was at the Central Group shareholders' meeting, so much so that the baby in her stomach was kicking around. Not to mention that if it's so easy to take Ambrosia's staff away, other guests would start following in Mrs. Faulkner's footsteps. Sooner or later, there would be no escorts left in Ambrosia."

Gabriel pointed to the bottle of brandy on the table. "Mr. Wood said that as long as Mrs. Faulkner can finish this bottle of brandy, he would consider that an apology for his sister." He turned his gaze to Johanna before adding, "And you're free to take this woman away."

Steven's eyes darkened. "Make it two bottles. I'll drink it in her place—"

"No need for that, Steven." Genevieve cut him off.

Johanna was still under Ambrosia. No matter what, Xavier would have the last say in whether or not Johanna could leave. Moreover, Xavier could add to the amount any time he wanted.

At that moment, Genevieve was certain that Xavier was hell-bent on making things difficult for her on Marilyn's behalf.

Nonetheless, she was unfazed, knowing that there would be other opportunities for her to take revenge. There was no rush.

Genevieve picked up the glass of brandy on the table and toasted Gabriel. "A bottle of brandy, am I right, Mr. Jimmond? I'll drink it."

With that said, she raised the glass to her lips and downed the liquor in one gulp.

The brandy burned her throat as she swallowed. Frowning slightly, Genevieve waited for the waiter to serve her another glass. Once the glass was refilled, she continued drinking.

At the side, Johanna looked on helplessly with tears in her eyes. She twisted her fingers together, upset.

As she was halfway through the bottle, Genevieve felt her stomach starting to get upset and her body beginning to heat up. Despite the pain and discomfort, Genevieve persevered, determined to finish the bottle.

Once she had finished the final glass, Genevieve tipped the glass over to prove that she had drank everything.

"Well-played." Seeing that Genevieve finished every last drop of the brandy, Gabriel passed her the IOU as agreed upon and let them go without a hitch.

It was only after they had exited the club did Genevieve rushed toward a corner and threw up. Her body shook as emptied her stomach, causing her to support herself on the wall.

"Genev!" Johanna rushed forward and rubbed Genevieve's back. Tears streamed down her face as she apologized, "I'm so sorry. It's all my fault. Are you okay?"

After vomiting, Genevieve felt much better.

She tossed Johanna a dismissive wave while rinsing her mouth with the water that was handed to her by Steven.

Johanna allowed Genevieve to lean on her body for support. As they were walking, Johanna was still sobbing her heart out. "You're too kind, Genev. I shall never forget your kindness to me even if I die and reincarnate!"

Johanna sniffed. "I shall now honor you as I will a parent. Don't worry, I will repay the forty million to you as soon as possible..."

Genevieve chuckled at Johanna's words. "Please don't honor me like a parent, that's just weird. It's alright, Johanna. We were friends. Besides, I could pay the amount just fine. It's not like I was going out of my way."

"You're the best, Genev." Johanna rubbed her head against Genevieve. "I shall forever be indebted to you!"

The pair of old friends continued to chat as they made their way to the hotel.

Upon reaching the hotel, Steven retired to his room while Johanna stayed with Genevieve.

Genevieve led Johanna to take a shower while she ordered some food.

As the server brought the food to the room, Johanna had just gotten out of the shower. Upon seeing the food, she immediately started shoving food down her throat.

Between bites, Johanna complained to Genevieve. "Ever since I was locked in that brothel, they only fed me a bowl of pasta these past two days. I'm absolutely famished."

Genevieve swallowed a forkful of pasta before asking, "Didn't you say your father is a very homely man? How did he become a gambling addict?"

"It's all his friends' fault." Johanna's movement slowed down as her face fell. "When I was still in high school, Dad came to Xedells for a business trip. When he was here, he was invited for a few rounds of gambling. Once he started, he could no longer stop. Because of that, Mom and Dad used to argue a lot. In the end, they divorced each other."

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Chapter 279

"I was supposed to follow my mother after the divorce, but she remarried when I was in the second half of the eleventh grade. The man was rich and had his own children, so my mother arranged for me to study overseas to hide the fact that she had a child. She had often visited me in the first two years, but that was about it. She had stopped coming to visit me since then," Johanna told her story in a hoarse voice.

Her eyes turned red as she continued, "I wanted to visit her when I came back last year, but she refused to meet me. She gave her a credit card and warned me not to look for her. If I did, she would stop giving me money-"

"I'm not after her money. I just want to spend time with her. Does she not think of me as her daughter?" Johanna said in between sobs while sprawling over the table.

Genevieve could only stroke her back to console her.

Genevieve still remembered how Johanna used to tell her that her parents were the happiest couple in the world during their school days. At that time, Johanna also thought she was the luckiest girl in the world.

Little did she expect her parents would part ways when she was in the eleventh grade.

"But it's okay now. It's fine if she doesn't want to acknowledge me as her daughter. No big deal." She wiped the tears from the corner of her eyes.

"I'm an adult now, and I can look after myself. What drove me mad is my gambler father lied to me, telling me he had cancer. He even sold me to a whor* house!" Johanna trembled in anger when she recalled what her father did.

"He had never shown any concern about my life and death after divorcing my mom, yet he had the guts to sell me off? What a monster!"

After venting her frustration, Johanna went up and embraced Genevieve. "Thank God I met you, Genev. My life would have been over if it weren't for you, and the world would never get a chance to see what a brilliant designer I am. You're my savior, Genev-"

"Get off me, please!" Genevieve could not take it. Johanna was just as expressive as she was during their school days. "You better behave if you don't want me to throw you out of the room."

Johanna instantly released her and continued eating her food. After a few bites, she could not stop herself from asking Genevieve why she went to Ambrosia.

She also wanted to know why Gabriel called Genevieve Mrs. Faulkner.

"You can read about everything on Twitter," Genevieve replied before walking to the bathroom.

By the time Genevieve came out of the shower, Johanna had read all the updates on Twitter.

Her eyes got teary, and she went up and gave Genevieve a hug. "Genev, you and I are destined to a hapless fate. I can't believe you've become a widow at such a young age, you poor thing! But it's all right. I'm here with you and I can be your wifey!"

Johanna's remark rendered Genevieve speechless. "Thanks, but no thanks! I want a man to be my life partner, not a woman!"

Johanna stopped teasing upon hearing what Genevieve said. She then fell into a deep slumber, giving Genevieve a chance to sleep peacefully.

The next day, they went to the hotel restaurant for breakfast.

Johanna asked Steven, "My dad should still be around Xedells. Steven, do you think you can find him?"

"Why would you want to look for him?" Genevieve tilted her head aside and asked Johanna.

"If the monster knows someone redeemed me, he might come to me and sell me for the second time. He did it once, and he can do it again!" Johanna pouted and stuck a fork on a strip of bacon. "I must teach him a lesson!"

Genevieve recalled how Johanna wept last night and wondered if she was capable of teaching her father a lesson.

Yet, she still asked Steven, "Can we find him?"

"Not a problem, I guess. Give me some time," Steven said. After breakfast, He got his friends' help to locate Johanna's father, Yorick.

Genevieve returned to the hotel room to continue with her work while Johanna waited quietly as she knew she should not disturb Genevieve.

At noon, Steven came to look for Genevieve and told her he had found Yorick at a local sauna.

He then sent the two ladies over to the sauna.

Johanna went into a massage room and noticed a few men lolling on the recliners on the right side. They were all smoking and chatting, enjoying the time of their lives.

Johanna instantly recognized Yorick. She exploded with rage and flung a foot bath basin at him.

Yorick, who was all drenched, immediately got up from the recliner. "Who the hell-"

When he lifted his head and saw Johanna, he froze for a moment. "Jojo? what are you doing here?"

“Why? I should be in that filthy whor* house, right?” Johanna smashed the basin to the ground and shot daggers at her father.

“I never counted on you to take care of you after you’d divorced my mom, but I’m still your daughter! How could you sell me out just because you needed to pay off your debts?”

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Chapter 280

Yorick’s eyes flickered as he tried to explain, “I was only putting you under their care for a few days as I’ve planned to redeem you once I won some money. In fact, I’ve decided to redeem you tonight.”

“Save it!” Johanna wiped the tears off her face. “You expect me to believe the story you made up?”

Yorick got up from the recliner and tried to grab her hand. “I haven’t seen you in years. You look much prettier than you’re on screen. You’ve grown to become a lovely woman now. Come, I’ll take you to dinner and buy you clothes. Please forgive me, all right?”

Before Yorick could touch her hand, Johanna took a few steps back. “Do you still see me as your daughter? You’ve lost your daughter the minute you sold me away!”

“It’s my fault, Jojo. You can blame me all you want,” Yorick coaxed.

“But I’m your father. Your mom has abandoned you, and I’m the only family member you can count on now.”

Johanna gritted her teeth and did not give him a response. Yorick continued, “Your stepfather has his own kids. That’s why your mom sent you out of the country. You must have felt lonely. I’ll not do that to you, I promise! We’re a family, and family members don’t hold grudges for long, do they?”

Genevieve knew Yorick was merely playing the sympathy card. But since Johanna was the one who wanted to meet her father, Genevieve was not in any position to intervene.

When Yorick was about to make the next move, Steven returned after getting the other men out of the massage room.

He walked up to Johanna and handed something to her. "Here's the thing you asked for, Ms. Joule."

Yorick saw Steven pass a chopper to Johanna.

The knife with sharp edges glinted under the cold incandescent light.

The man felt his scalp tingle. "Jojo, wh-what's with the chopper?"

Yorick felt something was amiss when he saw the determined look on Johanna's face when she took over the chopper from Steven.

He wanted to escape, but the sharp-eyed Steven caught him and grabbed him by his arm.

Yorick, who had never exercised because of his gambling obsession, was a skinny man. He shrieked in pain as if Steven was about to break his arm.

Johanna ran her fingers through the sharp edges of the chopper. She then sniffed and said, "Steven, please pin his right hand on the table."

After kicking Yorick on his knee and making him kneel, Steven grabbed his hand and put it on the table.

"No, Jojo. Don't do this! I'm your father!" Yorick trembled and howled in fear. "Have you forgotten how I cared about you when you were a kid? On your eighteenth birthday, I even got someone to airmail you a princess gown from Petalgrove! You were and still are my precious!"

"It's all my fault, Jojo! Please forgive me! I won over twenty million last night, and I promise to use the money to start a business in Jadeborough. I'll stop gambling, I swear! Please forgive me!"

"Oh, really?" Johanna inched closer. "Give me your phone."

Yorick fished out his phone from his pocket the minute Steven let go of his hand. He unlocked his phone and handed it over to Johanna. "You see, the money I have in my account. From now on, I'll not gamble anymore. I promise-"

Johanna looked at the phone and asked him, "What's the password?"

After asking for Genevieve's number, Johanna transferred the money to her bank account.

She then tossed the phone back to Yorick. "Genev had spent over thirty million to redeem me from the club, so I've transferred twenty million from your account to hers. You can keep the remaining money."

Yorick nearly exploded and wanted to give Johanna a piece of his mind upon hearing that.

But since he was at Steven's mercy, he could only soften his approach. "Yes, yes. She deserves the money since she rescued you. Jojo, could you please ask this man to get off me?"

"No!" Johanna responded indifferently. "I still want to teach you a lesson that will remind you not to repeat the same mistake!"