

Chapter 11 Cooperation

Wendy Quade's face was gloomy as she walked over to Nicole step by step.

"Nicole..."

Nicole stood there and already knew that someone was approaching her. She knew that besides Wendy, no one would come over to her.

She casually glanced to the side and saw Wendy's soft and gentle face that looked so pitiable.

Wendy walked up to Nicole with a cold smirk and had already removed her disguise.

"Did you come to the banquet on purpose? You wanted to get close to Eric, didn't you? You're already divorced, so why are you still clinging to him? If I were you, I'd hide far away. Don't come looking for trouble."

Nicole looked at Wendy with a harsh and mocking gaze.

“Wendy Quade, the whole world knows that you’re the mistress in our relationship. Did you have a good time lately?”

Since this scandal went viral, netizens dug up information on Wendy Quade, who was frequently seen around Eric Ferguson.

Although Eric Ferguson had already taken down those posts, Wendy Quade had been dubbed “the homewrecker” and was scorned by many, so much so that Wendy could not sleep well for some time.

“Nicole, a title isn’t as important as our feelings for each other. Eric and I will be together one day, unlike you.” Wendy coldly snorted out of jealousy and gave Nicole a once-over.

"Did you take the money from selling your blood to get this banquet invitation? How else could you come to such a place? The clothes and jewelry you're wearing are also rented, right?"

Wendy stepped forward. Her gaze flickered slightly as she walked next to the pool with a cold smirk.

"Nicole, you're just asking for it..."

As she said that, Wendy suddenly leaned backward and fell into the pool. The splash immediately attracted the attention of the crowd.

The crowd exclaimed.

Nicole looked at this scene with an indifferent and dark gaze. She suddenly thought about the banquet three years ago back when she had just gotten married to Eric. This exact situation happened as well.

"Nicole, I won't congratulate you on your marriage. After all, Eric isn't in love with you. If it weren't for the fact that you can donate blood to me at any time, Eric wouldn't have agreed to marry you. You will never be happy together. If you don't believe me, just watch..."

Wendy leaped into the pool back then, and Eric jumped in without a second thought.

She had proved to Nicole that Eric cared about her. Back then, Nicole thought that her sincerity would one day move Eric, but she had failed miserably.

Now, Wendy jumped into the pool yet again and struggled in the water.

A man rushed by. Without having to look, Nicole knew that it must be Eric. He anxiously brought Wendy out of the pool.

"Eric, don't blame Nicole. I came to apologize but she didn't forgive me. She must still hate me, but I'm sure she didn't mean to do this..."

Wendy looked so aggrieved as she shrank into the man's arms and suppressed her sobs. The onlookers pitied Wendy and looked at Nicole dubiously.

Grant Stanton heard the commotion and frowned when he saw this scene. Nicole stopped him from interfering. Instead, she whispered a few words into his ear. After that, Grant left.

Eric held the drenched Wendy and draped his jacket over her. His dark eyes glared at Nicole coldly.

Nicole met his gaze without avoidance and the corners of her lips curled up mockingly.

"She used this trick a long time ago. Did you fall for it again?"

Nicole did not care if Eric believed what Wendy said. She tucked a strand of hair behind her ear and smirked. "It doesn't matter. Her acting skills are so subpar without any improvement after all these years. I'll cooperate and ignore it."

'Why do I have to play along with her? It'll just lower my IQ!'

Nicole was just about to turn around and leave when Wendy suddenly got up from Eric's embrace and tugged on Nicole's arm. Wendy refused to let go of this wonderful opportunity to clear her name and cried.

"Nicole, I know that you don't like me, but every time you donated blood, Eric paid you for it. What else are you dissatisfied with? Why are you still pestering Eric after the divorce and slander us? You did everything possible to come to this party because you refuse to let go of him, right?"

Chapter 12 Payback

The guests looked at the trio strangely.

Everyone knew about the Ferguson scandal, but the Fergusons were powerful, so no one dared to add fuel to the fire and only watched the drama unfold.

'Is Eric's ex-wife not as innocent as she seems?'

Eric Ferguson frowned slightly and thought that Wendy Quade was being rude. He was just about to go over and pry Wendy away when he saw Nicole turn around with a cold face.

While the crowd was still dumbfounded, Nicole grabbed Wendy's arm and marched towards the pool.

Wendy was like a helpless puppy that was being dragged by Nicole and did not even have a chance to retaliate.

Nicole held Wendy's chin, then gave her a crisp slap across the face, which made Wendy scream in pain.

After that, Nicole released her grip. Wendy then fell into the pool with a big splash.

Wendy's scream stopped abruptly as she struggled in the water, shocked and humiliated.

Nicole withdrew her hand. Her gaze was cold and sharp, and her tone was indifferent as she said, "Since you accused me of doing something I haven't done, I ought to live up to it. You can stop the act. I admit to what I've done now."

Wendy was thrown into the pool under everyone's watchful gaze. Her reaction was very different from the first time when she jumped in herself. Thus, everyone began to be skeptical.

Eric Ferguson also questioned what he saw at that moment. The Nicole in front of him seemed like a completely different person.

The water in the pool was not very deep. Wendy saw that no one was going to save her, so she was about to climb up herself when she suddenly felt a cold liquid raining down on her head.

The scent of the 1982 Lafite wine was strong as it dripped down Wendy's hair. Wendy's dignity was completely crushed as she looked up in fear.

Nicole's eyes were cold and sullen with unbridled contempt as she poured half a glass of wine over Wendy's head. She was instantly in a much better mood.

"This is an extra gift for you, Ms. Quade. Don't be in such a hurry to leave just yet. I still have another surprise for you."

When Nicole left the scene, everyone looked at Wendy with disdain.

'How can a bad person act so righteous?'

One of them was calm and collected, while the other one was panic acting.

Everyone could see that Wendy started this pretentious act.

"Eric..." Wendy's voice trembled as she carefully looked at the man.

Wendy hated Nicole so much because Nicole stole Eric's attention and all the limelight away from her the moment she appeared.

If it was not for Nicole, Wendy would not be in such a mess and would not become a laughing stock.

Wendy admitted that she panicked. All she wanted now was to hurry up and leave because she did not know what other tricks Nicole had up her sleeve.

Eric withdrew his gaze and called a waiter to help Wendy, who was shivering after falling twice into the water.

"You fell in by yourself just now, right?" Eric's dark eyes were cold and gloomy.

Wendy looked flustered. "Of course not! Why would I frame Nicole? Can't you see that she's crazy and just wants to get back at us? Eric, do you not trust me? Do you not believe in Hendrick?"

Eric's gaze was deep as he scrutinized Wendy. His intimidating gaze made her tremble.

"I'll send you back first."

Wendy looked relieved and was just about to nod when someone shouted, "Look upstairs!"

Everyone's attention turned to the second floor, where Nicole was standing nonchalantly with a large crocodile leather suitcase in her hand.

She was leaning against the railing with her arms bent and had a cigarette in hand. The wisps of smoke made her look so enchanting that the crowd could not move their eyes away.

Wendy's heart shuddered, then watched as Nicole casually took out a stack of Benjamins from the bag next to her and threw it out insouciantly. Those crisp bills floated in the air and fell onto the ground and the water.

Nicole continued throwing money by the handfuls. Many waiters and guests excitedly picked up the notes and everyone was shocked by this scene.

After a while, Nicole felt that it was not satisfying enough, so she took the bag and inverted it over the railing. Just like that, \$25 million in cash eloquently rained down on the people below, including Eric Ferguson and Wendy Quade.

Chapter 13 Send Her Away

“Eric Ferguson, this is what you’ve paid me throughout the three years for my blood. Now that I’ve paid you back, we don’t owe each other anymore...”

Nicole’s voice was cold and resolute.

Eric’s eyes were dark and deep, and his mood at this moment was extraordinarily complicated.

The crowd was clear about the situation at this moment. Earlier, Wendy Quade labeled Nicole as a gold-digger who clung to Eric for his money, but in the blink of an eye, Nicole slapped her in the face by returning everything Eric had ever given her. Wendy’s reputation had gone down the drain with this incident.

Nicole walked away glamorously while Wendy was left with chattering teeth as she shivered in the cold.

'This woman is my nemesis!' Wendy thought.

"Eric, Nicole must be mad at me again. Let's just go."

Eric refused to let go of this opportunity to clear things up with Nicole and said to Wendy, "Wait for me at the entrance."

After that, he went straight in and saw Nicole sitting on a deck chair while the renowned Grant Stanton knelt by her side and rubbed her ankles that were slightly chafed by her high heels. Grant's gaze was so tender that Eric found it jarring.

The two of them looked up at the unexpected guest. Grant Stanton smiled and sat calmly next to Nicole as he put an arm around her in a protective stance.

"Mr. Ferguson, shouldn't you be comforting your companion? You're still in the mood to settle scores right now?"

Eric frowned. His body was exuding an extreme coldness and his gaze was locked on Grant's hand that was wrapped around Nicole. His tone was frigid as he said, "Nicole, if I've done something to upset you, you can look for me to settle the score, but you should apologize for what you did to Wendy."

Nicole hooked up her lips slightly and met his gaze. "What if I don't? Will you throw me into the water?"

Eric was displeased by her blasé attitude. Seeing that she was so quick to be associated with other men, Eric also felt inexplicably vexed.

"Since we used to be married, let me give you a word of advice. Be kind to others."

"Mr. Ferguson, I guess you don't know me very well. I was born evil."

Eric choked. Nicole's stubbornness was especially infuriating to him, but since they were divorced, he was in no place to tell her what to do.

His tone was cold as he spat out one word. "Fine." He then turned to leave.

Eric was so exasperated that he forgot his purpose of coming to Nicole. He ~~had wanted to~~ explain to her about his relationship with Wendy, but there was no need for that anymore.

Nicole's smile faded gradually. Grant patted her shoulder. "Lil N, do you still like him?"

"How's that possible?"

Nicole sneered. She would not make the same mistake twice.

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In Eric Ferguson's car.

Wendy Quade was wrapped in his clothes. She was just about to explain what happened tonight to dispel Eric's doubts about her when the driver exclaimed in surprise. "Eh? Isn't that Ms. Quade?"

The driver slowly stopped on the side of the road and pointed to the huge digital billboard behind The Hilton Hotel.

That advertising space that cost tens of millions of dollars per minute was looping the footage of Wendy and Nicole at the poolside earlier.

Their faces had been censored, but the celebrities and dignitaries who went to the banquet knew the identity of these two women.

Eric's eyes were fixated on the screen. It was a silent video, but it clearly showed that Nicole did not even touch Wendy. The latter just took a step back by herself, leaned back, and fell into the pool.

In an instant, the air in the car became cold and stagnant.

Eric's face was even colder. His eyes were stern and gloomy because just a few minutes ago, he had gone to Nicole and asked her to apologize to Wendy.

This was Nicole's reply to his request.

'Ridiculous! Simply absurd!'

Wendy's face was pale and she was trembling with extreme fear.

She never would have imagined that someone would play the surveillance footage from the banquet on a digital billboard that could be seen by the entire city!

"Bang!" The car door was slammed shut.

Eric Ferguson stood outside the car. His tone was cold and stern and his gaze was implacable.

"I'll have someone send you to France first thing tomorrow morning!"

Chapter 14 Parachuted

Wendy Quade pleaded in the car, but Eric Ferguson just felt like he had nowhere to vent his wrath.

'If this was fake, was anything ever real in the past three years?'

As Eric stormed away in the cold wind, a flashy sports car slowly stopped by the roadside. The person inside waved to him, "Bro! Get in..."

Keith Ludwig was also at the banquet earlier to network and witnessed the spectacle. Since Eric left in a huff, Keith got bored and followed suit. He did not expect to see Eric walking by himself at the roadside.

Eric sat in the passenger seat and lit a cigarette. When he saw the smoke, he thought of Nicole's figure when she held a cigarette earlier and stiffened.

"Bro, you saw Nicole, right? What's her relationship with West City's Grant Stanton?"

Keith's question annoyed Eric even more. Eric did not want to answer these questions that he did not even know the answer to.

Fortunately, there were no reporters at the event. Otherwise, it would cause another viral sensation in their circle. With the Fergusons' status, no one dared to spread rumors of what happened privately.

"We felt so sorry for you that Nicole married you back then with her sh*tty background. She's so rude to Wendy too! Luckily you got a divorce, otherwise, the Fergusons' reputation will go down the drain. I don't know how a woman like that can catch Grant Stanton's attention. They even look much closer than she was with you back then. I never expected her to be so capable in this arena."

With Eric's status, he should only marry a daughter of an affluent family. Nicole was just a gold-digger that married into the Ferguson family for money, so none of Eric's friends liked her.

Hearing Keith's frivolous words, Eric felt a trace of discomfort in his heart.

Eric's eyes were covered with a layer of frost and his eyes were deep and dark.
"Enough, stop talking!"

Keith pursed his lips. 'At least that woman knows better and got a divorce...she'd better stay away from Eric!'

Eric was silent. His face was glum as he stubbed out the cigarette and threw it out the window.

"Wanna go for a drink?" Keith proposed.

Eric nodded. "Sure."

He desperately needed to get rid of the irritable feeling in his chest.

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After this little spectacle, Nicole became the star of the banquet. Grant Stanton also took the opportunity to formally introduce Nicole as the parachuted Vice President in the company.

For a while, there was more speculation about Nicole and Grant's relationship, but neither of them bothered to explain and only laughed it off.

Nicole needed to get a strong foothold in the company before they announced her status as the company's successor. She must rely on her own ability first, so her network was most important.

There was a lot of dissatisfaction within the company, but no one dared to object to Grant Stanton's decision.

Grant even assigned his right-hand man, Logan, to be Nicole's secretary. Grant also set aside some time to give her extra lessons, so Nicole would stay in Grant's office for another two hours every day before they left work

Looking at Nicole, who was sitting leisurely in a rocking chair, Grant laughed and threatened her. "You're such a lazy bum. Why don't I get Dad to teach you personally next time?"

Nicole immediately sat up. "Please don't!"

"J&L's anniversary is in two days. They have a project to offer, so you can handle it."

Nicole's eyes lit up. "Okay. I'll definitely get it in the bag."

"It's not that simple. Everyone knows this is a big slice of the cake, so it's not that easy to land this. I'll probably be abroad for a meeting during that time, but K should be back by then."

“Is he coming back? I’ll pick him up!”

Nicole had not seen her third brother, Kai Stanton, in a long time. The last time she saw him was when she watched a TV show that he was starring in.

Grant smiled helplessly and looked at the time. “Let’s go. I’ll take you to dinner.”

As soon as they entered the restaurant, Nicole’s face sank. ‘What a small world to be able to meet my enemies here...’

Quinn and Ingrid Ferguson were there.

“Where’s the manager? Does this restaurant allow just any trash to waltz in?!” Ingrid yelled.

Chapter 15 Pour Wine

Ingrid Ferguson, who was gambling her money away in Germany on the other side of the Atlantic, was oblivious to the fact that news of her stealing her family's jewelry went viral back home.

Her reputation was ruined. Once Ingrid returned to the States, the ladies in her elite circle looked at her with contempt.

Moreover, the person who started all of this was Nicole, who they had kicked out of the Ferguson family.

Now that Ingrid saw Nicole in this restaurant, she clenched her teeth in anger. In the past, Ingrid looked down on Nicole's unknown origins and trampled all over her. When she saw Nicole again, she went to find the restaurant manager.

The manager heard the commotion and rushed over. All guests who came to this restaurant had reservations and were all influential people that they could not afford to offend.

"Ms. Ferguson, I'm really sorry..."

Ingrid glared at Nicole and wanted to slap her a few times to relieve her anger.

"She's affecting my mood for dinner. Get her out of here! We're your VIP customers!"

The manager turned around and was shocked to see Grant Stanton's handsome face turn glum. The lady beside Grant Stanton stood by his side with a faint smile. She looked so beautiful and regal with her long wavy hair draped at her back. She had glimmering eyes and stunning features and did not look the slightest bit affected by Ingrid Ferguson's outburst.

The manager hurriedly went over and respectfully bowed to greet them. "Welcome, Mr. Stanton. Your table is ready. This way, please."

Ingrid's face changed as she surveyed Grant Stanton. A trace of amazement flashed across her eyes, but when she saw that he was holding Nicole protectively, she frowned in dissatisfaction. "Hey! Did you not hear me? Get them out of here!"

Quinn sized up Nicole with disdain and echoed on the side. "Yeah, she should take a look at herself in the mirror! How dare she come here? Nicole, do you think you can be arrogant with us after finding yourself a sugar daddy? A woman who's kicked out of the Ferguson family doesn't have the right to show up here!"

Grant sneered. His oppressive aura was overwhelming. "Kicked out of the Ferguson family? Your ability to twist a story is pretty impressive! When did the Fergusons become so shameless?" He was furious and wondered what kind of life Nicole had when she was staying with the Fergusons.

Quinn froze. Her face turned red with anger as she looked at the manager and ordered. "What are you still doing standing here? I don't want to see them!"

The manager's face sank. He spoke decisively, "Mrs. Ferguson, Ms. Ferguson, Mr. Stanton is a major shareholder of our restaurant, so if you don't want to see them, you may leave."

Quinn and Ingrid were stupefied, and their expressions kept changing. Nicole chuckled. Her gaze was clear and indifferent.

Nicole turned to Grant. "Ignore them. It's just a meal, so there's no need for this impasse. I have something to say to the two of them, so you can go in and wait for me."

Grant looked indignant, but when he thought about the fact that Nicole was a changed woman, he felt reassured that she could deal with this situation.

With a slight nod, Grant turned and walked in. He was astonishingly obedient.

The remaining Quinn and Ingrid were not afraid of Nicole. Ingrid sat there and snorted coldly. "At least you're still self-aware. Our family won't care who's your new sugar daddy. My brother has never once fancied you, so I can make you vanish from Atlanta in a minute!"

Nicole looked down and smiled. Her eyes were indifferent. "Then...what do you want?"

"How about this...pour me a glass of wine and apologize. I'm sure you're used to serving others like this. Didn't you do this often when you were staying with us? I'll let you off the hook this once if you serve me well."

Ingrid raised her eyebrows and snorted coldly as she waited for Nicole to bow to her and admit her mistake.

Nicole laughed, went up to pick up the decanter, then skillfully poured out a glass of wine and handed it over.

Ingrid hooked her lips in disdain. Before her hand could touch the wine glass, she felt a chill over her head.

Every drop of wine in the glass that Nicole was holding spilled on Ingrid's head. Before Ingrid had time to scream or stand up, Nicole pressed her down on the shoulders. Nicole shoved Ingrid and said close to her ear, "Ms. Ferguson, remember this. I was the one who brought up the divorce. I'm the one that doesn't want anything to do with your family. If you dare bend the truth, I'll show you which one of us will vanish from Atlanta!"