

Chapter 21 Surrounded by Women

For a moment, the atmosphere in the meeting room was tense and awkwardly silent.

Samantha Lindt felt humiliated. She had been in the company for so many years and got to her position with a lot of effort, so she did not mean to leave just like that.

Grant Stanton standing up for the newcomer Nicole was also a slap in the face for Samantha.

The meeting room was silent, and everyone looked at each other.

Nicole frowned slightly. She did not want to be targeted the moment she took office. Just as she was about to ease the tension in the room, Samantha stood up

apprehensively with a flushed face.

"President Stanton, I'm sorry for my transgression. I respect the company's decision and will work well with Ms. Nicole."

"Good. Meeting adjourned."

Grant Stanton did not say much. He did not want to waste another minute and left the meeting room in an imposing manner.

Samantha then let out a long breath of relief.

Although many others had opinions about Nicole's arrival, they dared not oppose Grant Stanton's authority. Nicole was also not bothered by this little episode because she would prove her capabilities over time.

When Logan arrived at Nicole's office, he

was very respectful. "Ms. Nicole, I'll be your assistant from today, so you can inform me if you have any orders."

Nicole knew that Logan was Grant's right-hand man, so having him by her side would be very helpful. "Thank you. The President mentioned something about J&L's project previously, so please get me all the information on J&L Corporation."

Logan nodded. "Sure, I'll get it ready for you."

After Logan left, Yvette waltzed in and swung her phone by the strap on her phone case. "Baby, my office is right next door, so we'll be working side by side from now on."

Nicole smiled and was in a particularly good mood. Her relationship with Yvette was back to how it was before she impulsively married Eric Ferguson.

“This job will be harder at first, but it gets better.”

Yvette sneered and did a hair flip. “I’m not scared. By the way, let me show you something.”

She smiled and handed Nicole her phone. Nicole looked at it quizzically and was dumbfounded when she saw the contents.

There was a new wave of comments online because Yvette had sent the full video of last night’s incident to many influencers, who helped spread the message. Through this video, everyone could see that the gangster first tried to take advantage of the drunk Yvette, but Nicole taught him a hard lesson and finally took Yvette out of the bar with her. This stirred a lot of debate online.

[OMG! How cool is she?! I wouldn't need a boyfriend if I had a good friend like her!]

[She's such a cool and valiant young lady! Now I understand why she got divorced and left such a wealthy family.]

[Nicole is my goddess!]

[She should be a celebrity!]

[My heroine! Please give me your number!!]

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Nicole was on the top trending topics again. She looked at Yvette helplessly. "Did you purposely go to get the surveillance footage last night?"

Yvette lifted her chin arrogantly and said, "Nah, it's nothing, just a matter of one phone call. I won't allow anyone to slander you under my watch!"

Nicole laughed. "Whatever, it's not a big deal anyway."

"Then do you know who's behind all this?"

Nicole shook her head but a name flashed across her mind. Yvette told her frankly, "It's Eric Ferguson's best friend, Keith Ludwig!"

Sure enough, it was not far off from Nicole's guess. Whether it was Ingrid Ferguson or Keith Ludwig, both of them were still related to Eric Ferguson.

Nicole snorted. Her face turned slightly colder. She would not have cared if she was clueless about this, but since she was aware of it, she could not let him get away so easily.

"Call Dominic Young, I want dirt on Keith Ludwig!"

"Now this is the Nicole Stanton I'm familiar with. We must get our revenge! Don't worry, I already have what we need to put him in his place."

Yvette had already dug up dirt on Keith Ludwig long ago. She sent all of it to Nicole, who took her pick and selected one of the photos. In that picture, Keith was wearing swim shorts at some party and was hugging a few girls left and right. It was back when he just got married.

Nicole posted the photo with a caption. [If you have a beef with me, just come at me directly. I'll retaliate openly and certainly won't stoop so low to create misconceptions by hiring paparazzi to edit clips. Mr. Ludwig, you should just look out for yourself.]

Chapter 22 Surrendered

Nicole used her newly registered social media account to post this. Soon, many influencers began to share her post and turned the tide. Everyone began to watch the drama unfold.

Before this, not many knew about Nicole's new social media handle, but because of this post, her following skyrocketed. Some people even started to dig up Keith Ludwig's details.

Ferguson Corporation.

Keith ran into Eric Ferguson's office in a huff. "Bro! That ex-wife of yours is trying to destroy me!"

Eric looked up from the document he was reading and swept him a faint glance.

Keith found the spiteful comments about him online and showed them to Eric. He angrily said, "She's trying to shame me in public! This is just too much! Look, this is her true self! This b*tch is up to no good. Now, my wife is making a fuss and wants a divorce! You have to help me, bro..."

Eric frowned. His eyes darkened as he looked through the comments on Keith's phone. After a long time, he said in a deep voice, "So, you intended to cyberbully her but you got bitten in the *s s instead?"

Keith shuddered and hurriedly explained, "I...I just wanted to teach her a little lesson. Besides, I didn't know that the video was edited. The paparazzi cheated my money and did me dirty this time..."

Eric threw the phone on the desk and said with a cold face, "Serves you right."

“Bro, you gotta help me! I was duped by the paparazzi, and Ingrid asked me to help her with this. If it wasn’t for me, those people would be cursing Ingrid instead!”

Eric’s face turned glum. Thinking of what happened last time at the restaurant, he did not expect his sister to be so obtuse.

Keith begged for help with a bitter face, but Eric was unmoved. “You asked for it, so deal with it yourself. With your ability, why are you still worried about this kind of trivial matter anyway?”

“It was supposed to be easy, but that b*⁺tch went to find Dominic Young from Falcon Entertainment. That man is so cunning and doesn’t even answer my calls anymore. Now no one dares to help me. Everyone thinks I’m a monster now!”

Keith never imagined such a reversal where Nicole would get the upper hand and make him suffer such a big loss. How did that photo from the private party get leaked anyway?

His wife had been so obedient and well-behaved all this while, but because of this incident, she proposed a divorce.

Keith did not actually care about the divorce. The more pressing issue was that his grandfather wanted to beat him up and kick him out of the house. He was out of ideas, so he ran to Eric for help.

Eric raised his eyes and looked at him for a moment. "My advice is for you to go to whoever you provoked."

"Nicole?!"

Keith subconsciously rejected this idea. 'Why should I bow to such a despicable

woman?’

Eric did not want to say more. When his secretary came in to invite him for a meeting, Eric stood up and walked out.

Keith hit a wall with Eric and left in disappointment. He did not dare to go online to read the harsh comments and his phone blew up from the continuous stream of calls from his family.

“It’s none of your business how many women I hug!” Keith sat in the car and was so enraged that he was about to explode.

He must solve this problem as soon as possible, but having to apologize to Nicole was worse than getting beaten up.

However, he had no choice in the matter. If he did not compromise, he would be disowned by his family.

After some thought, Keith asked his assistant to post a statement with his social media account that had 800,000 followers.

[I didn't know that the video clip had been edited prior to posting it. I apologize for any distress and inconvenience caused to Ms. Nicole.]

Keith had lost this round. Since Nicole dared to blatantly call him out, she must have evidence on hand that he was behind it, so being at loggerheads with her would not benefit him.

Since Keith was not in the entertainment industry and did not depend on having a following to survive, he did not care about losing some followers. It was just that he lost his dignity in front of his friends for apologizing to Nicole.

Stanton Corporation.

Yvette smiled as she waltzed into Nicole's office and waved her phone around. "This Mr. Ludwig couldn't even hold on for two hours before he surrendered. I thought he'd put up more of a fight, but I guess he's just useless."

Chapter 23 Call Me Vice President Nicole

Nicole took out her phone and looked at the trending topics, then snickered and put it aside without a thought.

She was familiar with the Ludwig family's background and knew that Keith's parents must have pressured him.

Otherwise, knowing his character, he would never willingly admit his fault.

Keith must be hating her guts at this moment.

There was a knock at the door. Samantha Lindt let herself in and smiled. "Ms.

Nicole, is it convenient for me to come in and talk?"

Nicole nodded. "Please, come in."

Samantha walked in and glanced at Yvette as if she did not want to speak with the presence of a third person, but Yvette was not perceptive enough to wait outside.

“What’s the matter?”

“I saw that Mr. Logan is preparing some information regarding J&L’s project. Ms. Nicole, you might not know this, but we don’t have much of a relationship with J&L Corporation and have a slim chance for cooperation. If you want to gain your footing in the company, why don’t you cooperate with FH Corporation? I know that they have a project that’s very suitable for us.”

Samantha placed a document in front of Nicole and raised her eyebrows. She smiled as if she had given Nicole a good deal.

Nicole paused for a moment. "Okay, I'll consider it."

"Ms. Nicole, you ought to close this deal. F H is an old partner, so landing this project will be enough for you to stand firm in our company."

Samantha targeted Nicole at the meeting but sent her such a big gift after. It would be odd if there was nothing fishy about this.

Nicole raised her eyes and smiled meaningfully. "Please call me Vice President Nicole."

Samantha's face stiffened and her voice suddenly became shrill. "Don't think that you're all that just because the President is fond of you. Whether you can stay still depends on your luck! Anyway, I've given you this opportunity, so it's up to you to

seize it.”

After finishing her speech, Samatha turned around and left, slamming the door shut on her way out.

Yvette was stunned by this and said, “Are you her boss, or is she your boss?”

Nicole nonchalantly flipped through the file that Samantha gave her. “She assumed that this position would be hers if I didn’t show up.”

“That’s just her wishful thinking, right?”

Nicole raised her eyebrows and snorted, then handed the document to Yvette.

“I remember that the Vice President of FH Corporation is one of your admirers?”

Yvette froze for a moment and laughed. “Don’t worry, I’ll find out what’s fishy about this.”

'Since my best friend is so serious about her career, I must support her in any way possible!' Yvette thought.

Nicole's phone rang. The caller ID showed that it was her old friend that she had not contacted in a long time, Julie Nixon.

Julie had single-handedly founded the internationally renowned fashion brand, Share. The private fashion shows she held were so popular that it was hard to get an invitation.

Once Nicole picked up, Julie could not wait to speak. "Come hang out with us tonight! We organized a little get-together at Tattle Bar to celebrate your return, so you must come!"

Nicole laughed. She missed her friends a lot. "Okay, I'll definitely show up."

After she hung up, Yvette added Nicole

into a chat group consisting of five people, which included the three girls and the Carter brothers.

Julie Nixon: [Nicole is finally back in our group! Congratulations, Baby!]

Ian Carter: [I already drank one whole night to celebrate Nicole's divorce...it's about time!]

Hugh Carter: [Congrats on your divorce, Nikki!]

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Nicole laughed in exasperation. "Are they gloating over my failed marriage?"

Yvette helplessly said, "No...you don't know how happy we all are for you! When we heard that you were suffering, everyone in this group cursed Eric Ferguson, but we were afraid that you'd get sad when you see it, so we didn't add

you into the group chat until now. You're finally over him now!"

Nicole thought, 'Sigh...it's my fault. I have to thank them for not leaving me after all that.'

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Keith Ludwig was depressed and dragged Eric out for a drink that night. When they arrived at Tattle Bar and got out of the car, Keith rubbed his eyes in disbelief and said, "Holy sh*t! Why do I run into this woman everywhere I go?"

Chapter 24 My Queen

Eric Ferguson followed Keith's gaze and was instantly stunned when he saw her.

Nicole was wearing a long silver-gray dress that was flared and glittery at the hemline and corseted at her slender waist. It made her look so tall and beautiful. Her long wavy hair was draped over her back and her temperament was incredibly striking.

Keith Ludwig cursed under his breath. "What kind of small world is this?! How can I run into someone I hate when I just want a drink..."

Yvette's group naturally noticed Eric and Keith. Although they did not want to see their faces, there was no reason to ignore them now that they ran into each other.

"Mr. Ludwig, have you finished cleaning up your messy love life? How are you still in the mood to come out for a drink? I guess the impact of that photo is still too small, huh?"

Yvette scoffed. Keith was not willing to show any weakness and glared at the culprit Nicole at the back. He sneered and said, "Nicole, I underestimated you. I didn't expect you to be a completely different person. I guess anyone would change if they have a strong backer."

"Of course! She's been a wreck relying on her good-for-nothing ex-husband for three years, so now that she's divorced, we're here to back her up. Mr. Ludwig, didn't you run to your friend whenever you encountered a problem?"

Julie Nixon chimed in and was infuriated when she saw Eric Ferguson. She pulled

Yvette over and said, "Let's not waste our breath with them. Go on inside."

Nicole looked indifferent as she followed her friends into the bar. She did not even take a glimpse at Keith or Eric and walked past them as if they were mere strangers.

A devilishly handsome man walked behind Nicole and was holding her purse. When the man walked past Eric, he glared at him and grunted before following Nicole.

Keith was vexed and anxious. 'What right did Nicole have to treat me like this?!

"I didn't realize it before, but your ex-wife is quite capable! She messed with me online all day today and even pretended not to see us?!"

Eric's face sank slightly. "Enough. Do you

want to create a bigger fuss? Go home and stay there!"

Keith took a deep breath. "I'm not going home. Why should I be the one to leave? I wanna see what else they're capable of!"

Eric was reluctant to go in, but his feet had a mind of their own and followed Keith into the bar. He recognized the purse that the devilishly handsome man was holding. Grant Stanton had also taken that purse for her at the banquet last time. It was Nicole's purse.

Julie Nixon dragged Nicole up to the second floor and was extremely excited. "I'm hosting the last fashion show of the season in a few days. Bring your third brother along. I reserved good seats for you guys!"

Hugh Carter, who was behind them, protested in dissatisfaction. "I've made

reservations a long time ago and you still haven't given me tickets! I don't care, I wanna sit next to Nicole!"

"Dream on!" Julie retorted and greeted Ian Carter, who had already arrived long before them.

Nicole laughed and could not help but burst Hugh's bubble. "Will your father let you go when he sees that you're not doing your job?"

Hugh Carter paused in his footsteps and hugged Nicole's arm aggrievedly. "With you around, he won't be so harsh on me..."

"Tsk..."

Ian Carter waved when he saw Nicole. He smiled brightly and went over to hug her. "Welcome back, my queen."

The two Carter brothers, Ian and Hugh, looked alike. Hugh was the younger

brother that looked devilishly handsome. If he entered the entertainment industry, he would be the hottest rookie around.

Ian was a few years older and was the second son of the Carter family. He looked more mature and was handsome enough that a group of young ladies would chase after him, but he always fooled around with them and was never serious.

Nicole laughed and sat on the side. Ian was playing a poker dice game before their arrival, and the players were still waiting for Ian to make a move.

Ian waved his hand and said, "I'm out. By the way, Nikki, I hired your favorite band, The Lunatics. Enjoy!"

Everyone at the table was discontented. "What? Ian, you're not playing? We were just on a roll..."

"Mr. Carter, what a coincidence!"

As soon as Keith and Eric went upstairs, they saw Ian Carter sitting there languidly as he swirled a glass of red wine with one hand.

Chapter 25 She's Different

Although they were from different circles, the high society of Atlanta was small, so everyone would more or less cross paths with each other. Thus, Keith Ludwig and Ian Carter knew each other.

When Ian saw Keith, he naturally saw Eric Ferguson as well. Ian tipped his glass as a gesture. "What a coincidence, Mr. Ludwig."

Keith saw that Nicole and Yvette were sitting with Ian, so he figured that they were here together. Keith turned and pulled Eric to sit at their table. "Let's play a game together. You won't mind, right, Mr. Carter?"

Ian did not answer and turned to look at Nicole. "My queen, do you mind?"

Nicole stood up insouciantly. "Help yourselves, I'm going downstairs to watch the band."

Yvette immediately followed suit. "Let's go! It's so suffocating sharing the same space with such pests."

Julie took three bottles of fine wine and said, "I'm coming too!"

Eric watched as Nicole disappeared down the stairs before he withdrew his gaze and glanced at Ian. "Mr. Carter, what's your relationship with Nicole?"

Ian tilted his head and chuckled. "A friend."

"How can her kind be friends with you? Mr. Carter, don't be fooled by her..." Before Keith could finish his sentence, he was interrupted by Eric.

show, but they came to this bar?"

There were three people in this band, but only two showed up. However, these two were already enough to incite the crowd's excitement and passion as they controlled the energy of the venue.

Yvette was screaming and shouting at the bottom of the stage and did not notice that Julie had already brought Nicole backstage.

"There are three minutes until this song is over. Demon just had an appendectomy, so he couldn't make it. Without the violin, the song will lose its soul. The last song needs a violin accompaniment to the bassist. There's no one else but you now, so go!"

Nicole was shocked. "Me?!"

"You're the only one who has played with

them before, so of course, it's you. Do you really want them to be a failure?

They're here because of you. Plus, don't you want to get back your old feeling?"

The music was deafening. Those familiar memories made Nicole feel exhilarated. She smiled and said, "Okay, I'll go on."

Everyone cheered loudly for the band. Their bodies swayed to the rhythm, and everyone was exuberant.

No one noticed that Nicole carried a violin in her left hand while she held her flowing dress with her other hand as she stepped onto the stage.

The lights suddenly dimmed, leaving only a beam of light on the stage.

Monster and Phantom, who were part of the band, lit up when they saw Nicole. The bassist, Phantom, started the

rhythm. The best part about this piece lied in the bassist and violinist duet, which was an absolutely divine pairing. If they were not equal, the song would lose its soul.

Phantom passionately took over the melody, just enough to invigorate the crowd.

In the next second, a delicate, mellow sound of the violin seamlessly integrated into the bass. When the drums stopped abruptly, the violin suddenly sounded bold, rich, and deep. Everyone was astonished to see the woman on stage looking so cool and valiant. The violin in her hands sounded so magical and in tune, which matched her very distinctive style.

Everyone was so immersed in the music when the drums suddenly joined in again.

There was a tacit understanding between the drummer and violinist as they synchronized their rhythm. The stark contrast between the intensity of the drums and the softness of the violin formed a beautiful medley. After the short two-minute performance, the crowd's screams were even more thunderous and deafening than before.

"Ah!! My goddess!"

"Violin goddess!"

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On the second floor, the shock that flashed through Eric Ferguson's eyes was undisguised.