

Mistaking the CEO for a Gigolo

Chapter 796

Nicole cast a stern gaze at him as she began to harbor thoughts within herself.

Ha! Happy birthday? A cruel and heartless demon like you should spend the rest of your days suffering, throughout the remainder of your life!

Since she had fallen silent for almost a minute, Levant urged, "Nicole, I'll allow you to leave once you've wished me sincerely."

Clenching her fists with all her might, Nicole pressed forth, "Happy birthday." It didn't sound like a wish in the slightest. Instead, it sounded as though it was more of a curse.

Nonetheless, Levant behaved as though he couldn't be bothered by it at all. He expressed his gratitude in a thick-skinned manner, uttering, "Thanks, Nicole!"

She had enough of playing along with him. In the end, she queried, "Can I leave yet?"

"Do you want me to get someone to send you home?" Levant gave it a thought and offered gently.

"Thanks, but no thanks!" After she finished her sentence, Nicole reached for her bag and sprinted her way out.

Levant had his eyes glued to the lit cigarette on the ashtray with a vicious smirk on his face. He couldn't help but wonder if Evan had noticed the faint scent of tobacco on Nicole's dress.

Meanwhile, after Evan reached Imperial Garden, he noticed that Nicole was nowhere to be seen again.

Thus, he summoned his children and asked, "Where's your Mommy?"

"I don't know, Daddy. By the time we'd reached home, she was nowhere to be seen."

“Yes, Daddy! Grandma was the one who had picked us up and brought us to Seet Residence for some time because she said that Grandpa missed us a lot. By the time we returned home, Mommy had long made her way out.”

“Could it be that she’s still working?”

Furrowing his brows, Evan was about to make a call, but a maid rushed over and told him, “Ms. Lane had reached home earlier than usual. However, she rushed out anxiously to a certain somewhere after she’d received a gift.”

“Gift? What sort of gift?”

“I’m not sure, but it has been delivered by a mysterious man. He insisted on having Ms. Lane check it out on her own. A few minutes after she returned to the bedroom with the gift, she made her way out again.”

Evan was shocked and confused at the same time. He couldn’t figure out the identity of the person who had delivered Nicole the gift.

He was increasingly confused as he thought about it. Immediately, he reached for his phone and called Nicole.

“Evan, I’m driving. I’ll reach home in ten minutes.”

“Okay. Drive safe.”

Evan decided to hang up the call for the time being. He decided to wait for her return because it would be better to have the conversation in person.

Meanwhile, Nicole, who was driving, stared at the dazzling illumination on the streets. She was feeling a sense of insecurity deep down.

She was certain that Evan would want her to tell him about her whereabouts, but she couldn’t possibly tell him the truth.

Otherwise, Levant would put her father at stake again. She had merely switched off her phone, yet the wicked man had already amputated her father’s finger to warn her. Nicole was afraid that

Levant would send her father's head her way the next time she ignored or defied his instructions.

After all, he was a maniac who would resort to everything and anything to achieve his goals. His cruelty knew no boundaries.

What should I tell him?

As she made her way home, countless thoughts crossed her mind, including a shopping trip with her best friend and an emergency that had arisen that required her immediate attention.

She thought of all sorts of things, yet none of them sounded convincing enough. Evan was a smart and capable man. Therefore, she would have to make something flawless up to deceive him.

She turned the idea over in her mind and finally got a few tentative excuses in her mind. In the end, she decided on the seemingly flawless one and murmured to herself, "I'll tell him this once I'm home! It's a flawless excuse! I'm pretty sure that he'll believe me!"

After she reached Imperial Garden and parked her car in the garage, she dashed over to the living room.

On the other hand, Evan sat cross-legged on the couch idly, perusing a stack of documents that he had with him. Immediately after he caught a glimpse of Nicole, he set them aside.

Staring at Nicole in the eyes, he was about to bring up the gift that she had received, yet Nicole got ahead of him and started explaining herself. "I have dropped by my assistant's place because lately, she has been zoning out at work quite frequently. After I got off work, I noticed that a man had been bothering her. I couldn't bear to leave her alone and I made my way over to her place after I'd reached home. Fortunately, everything is fine."

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Nicole blurted out the so-called flawless excuse of hers, which she had long rehearsed in her mind countless times, in a sincere and serious manner.

Evan gazed at her with his abysmal pair of eyes. He found her odd because she wouldn't stop fidgeting with the edge of her shirt.

Knitting his brows together, he neglected the things that she had told him and asked in return because he couldn't suppress his curiosity anymore.

"I heard that someone has delivered you a gift. What is it?"

Nicole stared at Evan, wide-eyed. She couldn't figure out who had turned their back against her and told him of the things that they should have kept from him.

If I'm not able to convince Evan, the flawless excuse that I have just made up isn't going to do me any good, right?

After falling silent for a few seconds, she explained, "It's a present from my assistant. I thought that something bad might have happened to her when I received the gift. Thus, I rushed over to her place to check if everything was fine."

"What is it?" Evan decided to probe further into the matter. He thought that there was something fishy going on behind the scene because he noticed that Nicole was being anxious in an odd manner.

He couldn't figure out the reason that she would want to keep him in the dark when it was a mere gift.

She spent some time making something up in her mind once again. "It's a bracelet, but I have returned it to her because it's not meant to be a gift. It's merely something to get me to rush over to her aid."

Spotting the doubtful look that Evan shot her after she finished her sentence, Nicole felt as though she didn't manage to convince him at all.

She was about to say something to prove the authenticity of her words, but the maid beside her exclaimed, "Oh! It's a bracelet? I'd thought that it was something horrifying when I'd heard you screaming in the room back then. I'd even heard the sound of you dropping the box."

Nicole's heart skipped a beat and started to race thereafter because of the maid's words. She had never once noticed that the maids of Imperial Garden were so observant.

Her nerves were at breaking point due to the maid's words.

She looked in Evan's direction and noticed that he had narrowed his eyes in suspicion. It was evident that he was anticipating an appropriate explanation from Nicole.

"What are you talking about? Are you sure that you were not hearing things?" Nicole decided to put the blame on the maid to get herself out of the nasty situation.

Have I been hearing things? The maid stared at Nicole with an odd look in return because she wasn't aware of such a condition.

She opened her mouth and was about to rebuke Nicole's words, yet she decided to give up in the end because she was merely a maid.

Since she shouldn't have defied Nicole's words, she apologized, "I'm so sorry, Ms. Lane. I think that I must have been hearing things."

Similarly, Nicole felt a sense of guilt because she had blamed the maid for something that she hadn't done. "It's fine. You should return to your position."

After the maid left, in spite of the loopholes that he had detected, Evan decided to stop probing further because Nicole seemed to have her reasons for keeping him in the dark.

He walked over and approached Nicole. Holding her hand, he suggested, "Let's go and get something to eat."

Nicole nodded, but Evan's expression turned gloomy because he detected the scent of the tobacco that was exclusive to a certain someone.

He could vividly recall the similar scent on her dress the last time she had made her way out abruptly in the evening.

The scent belonged to Levant because it was a unique scent, exclusive to his favorite cigarillos brand. It might have been a coincidence last time, but it's too much of a coincidence for a second occurrence!

Apart from that, she had said that she had dropped by her assistant's home. In short, she shouldn't have run into Levant! Where has this scent come from?

Evan was disheartened by the doubts that he had in his mind. He was determined to get someone to tail Nicole after this.

Suddenly, he recalled that he had previously dispatched Darius and Damien to protect Nicole. He decided that he would summon them and see if they were conscious of the ongoing incidents.

Throughout their dinner, as Evan was driven by the curiosity that he had felt deep down, he would occasionally take a peek at Nicole.

Nicole's heart started pounding furiously. She couldn't get used to it either because it felt as though Evan had seen right through her plan.

She avoided his gaze and lowered her head to savor the delicacies that had been served. Her heart wrenched the moment she took a bite of the baby corn because it reminded her of the amputated finger of her father.

"I'm full. I'll return to the bedroom first." Nicole got up from her seat and scurried her way upstairs after she explained herself.

Staring at her departing figure, Evan thought that Nicole had been behaving oddly the entire night.

I'm sure that she's keeping something from me!

He returned to the study room and got in touch with Darius and Damien through the phone. "Have you guys been keeping an eye on Ms. Lane?"

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“Mr. Seet, we have been keeping an eye on Ms. Lane, protecting her ever since we’d received the instructions from you.”

Evan asked, “Where has she been in the evening?”

Damien replied, “She had dropped by Levant Winery and had stayed there for half an hour. After that, she made her way home right away.”

Levant Winery? Why has Nicole dropped by Levant Winery? Why did she lie to me?

Levant? Does that mean that she was there to meet Levant?

All of a sudden, Evan had a hard time catching his breath. He had faith in Nicole and was sure that she wasn’t in an affair with Levant, but he wanted to get to the bottom of the reason that she had paid Levant a visit, causing her to lie to him.

He hung up the call and thought to himself for some time. After a few minutes, he made another call and told John in a hoarse voice, “I want you to tail Mrs. Seet from tomorrow onwards. If she gets in touch with Levant again, I want you to figure out the reason behind their meet-up.”

John thought that he had been hearing things because it sounded as though Evan wanted him to keep an eye on Nicole when they were in the midst of hardships due to external threats.

Oh, God! We’re in the middle of a nasty situation, yet he wants me to keep an eye on his wife? Seriously? Are we going to have another internal conflict when we’re being threatened by external foes?

“Mr. Seet, are you sure that you’re not overthinking things due to the stress that you have to endure lately? I swear that Mrs. Seet isn’t serious about Levant! When she’d lost her memory—”

“Just shut up and follow my instructions!” Evan hung up right after he made himself clear.

John was taken aback by Evan’s wrathful tone. Staring at the screen of his phone, it took him some time before he could return to his senses.

Mr. Seet and Mrs. Seet are having a fight because of Levant? No! I’m pretty sure that Mrs. Seet would never have gotten herself in an affair with Levant!

Although he had faith in Nicole, he couldn’t possibly defy Evan’s words.

Thus, the next day, John didn’t return to the company. Instead, he did as instructed and started tailing Nicole after she departed from Imperial Garden.

As usual, she spent the entire morning in Lane Corporation.

John couldn’t help but think that it was a waste of time because there wasn’t anything odd about Nicole.

Similarly, she spent the entire afternoon in her office. In the evening, John followed Nicole as she made her way back to Imperial Garden. After she reached home, he got in touch with Evan and summarized her entire day’s agenda for him.

“Mr. Seet, I believe that you’re overthinking things. Mrs. Seet will never—”

“I want you to keep an eye on her for another day!” Evan replied determinedly and hung up on the call once more.

John heaved a long sigh.

He was pretty sure that Evan had been overthinking things once again because Nicole would never turn her back against him and get into an affair with Levant. Thus, tailing her would be a futile effort.

John had faith in Nicole, yet the incident that would occur in the upcoming few days would cause his faith to waver.

Meanwhile, Nicole caught a glimpse of Evan's gloomy look as he made his way to the study room. It was evident that he had yet to resolve the hardship that had befallen Seet Group. Perhaps it was nastier than she had perceived it to be.

She couldn't help but start to feel uneasy because she couldn't locate her father's whereabouts just yet. Perhaps she would have to get married to Levant if Evan weren't able to get Seet Group out of the nasty situation.

Nicole couldn't bear to let her loved ones suffer. As Evan was the one behind Seet Group's current success, he would definitely be dejected if the company couldn't make it through the crisis.

Meanwhile, Stephen was her biological father. She couldn't bear to forsake his wellbeing for her own sake.

Levant had, undeniably, gotten the better of her since he had the fate of her loved ones under his control. There wasn't anything that she could do to retaliate against him.

Nicole pondered over the matter and decided to go after her father's whereabouts. She called her assistant and asked her to send more people over to locate her father.

Although it might have been a mission that was deemed impossible due to Levant's detail-oriented characteristics, she wanted to give it a try.

She was being hopeful and thought that a miracle might occur at the end of the day. Perhaps it wasn't the end of their relationship yet.

Once she thought about it, she took a deep breath and decided to appreciate their time together since they would venture into a future full of uncertainties soon.

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We'll spend the remaining time together and create as many memories as possible! Even if we have to be separated in the future, I'll hold on to the precious memories we have!

Nicole felt a strong urge to figure out the thing that Evan was up to at the very moment that the particular thought had crossed her mind. Thus, she sneaked her way over to the study room.

Inside the study room, Evan was in the middle of something; he had his eyes glued to the computer in front of him.

I suppose that he's still having a hard time because of Seet Group's crisis.

She contemplated for a few seconds. In the end, she made her way in and asked, "Evan, are you busy? When are you getting off of work?"

"It's going to take me some time to have everything sorted out! You should go to bed ahead of me." Evan raised his head and stared at her, finishing his sentence in a callous tone.

Out of the blue, Nicole rushed over and wrapped her arms around him from behind. "I'll keep you company!"

He recalled the scent of tobacco that he had detected again as soon as he saw her pair of skinny arms.

Furrowing his brows, he thought of something and asked, "Nicole, have you encountered Levant these past few days?"

Evan found his question somewhat abrupt. He couldn't predict the sort of answer that Nicole had in store for him.

Holding his breath, he focused intently in anticipation of Nicole's reply.

On the other hand, Nicole was dumbstruck for a few seconds. She hesitated for a short while but replied determinedly in the end, "Nope!"

Why is she trying to keep me in the dark? What is it about? Why can't she tell me about it?

He got frustrated and shrugged her off, telling her callously, "You should go to bed."

Nicole was at sixes and sevens because of Evan's sudden change of attitude.

She gave it a thought and ruled out the possibility of him bringing Levant up in front of her.

Frowning, she felt a sense of despair because he sounded as though he had figured out something.

Nevertheless, she was determined to keep him in the dark because she couldn't afford to let him know of the things that had been going on behind the scene these days.

If it weren't for her father's safety, she would have long told him everything that she had been going through because she needed someone to share the burden with her.

She could use another pair of eyes to get to the bottom of the entire incident and rescue her father, but she had put her father at stake and had caused him to have one of his fingers amputated. Therefore, she couldn't possibly afford to offend and defy Levant's words anymore. Otherwise, her father's life could possibly be at stake next. If anything were to happen to her father, she would blame herself for the rest of her life.

I-I'm so sorry for lying to you, Evan. T-There's nothing much I can do about it.

If Evan turned around, he would be able to detect the heartbreaking look that Nicole had; her eyes had brimmed with tears as she resisted the torrents of grief that was about to stream down her cheeks.

The occupied man who had been focusing on his work wasn't aware that his loved one had been suppressing her emotions.

Eventually, she couldn't hold it back anymore. As a few drops of tears streamed down her cheeks unwittingly, she lowered her head and dashed out of the study room.

By the time she returned to their bedroom, she started scolding herself in her mind.

Fortunately, he didn't catch a glimpse of you crying! If he manages to figure it out, you will be the one who has indirectly brought upon Dad's undoing! Nicole! How could you cry in front of him? Can't you even pull yourself together?

She took a deep breath and calmed herself down. After she regained her composure, she brought a set of pajamas with her as she walked into the bathroom.

Indulging herself in the bath, she felt as though she had been caught up in a dream due to the steam in the bathroom. In fact, she wished that it were indeed a dream that she could snap out of immediately. She hoped that her father wasn't imprisoned by Levant and that Seet Group hadn't been seriously affected by the crisis that they had been going through lately.

Closing her eyes to collect her thoughts, Nicole tried to think of an alternative that would allow her to stay away from Levant.

She had a great time in the bathtub; halfway through her bath in the dreamlike bathroom, she fell asleep.

By the time she woke up, the water that she had been submerging in had turned frigid. She rubbed her drowsy pair of eyes and frowned as she stared at herself.

Did Evan ignore me? Why didn't he bring me back to the bed? How could he do this to me?

Feeling aggrieved, the frustrated woman brought herself out of the bathtub and put on her set of pajamas before walking out of the bathroom.

The moment she returned to their bedroom, she was shocked because Evan wasn't in bed yet. Does that mean that he's still in the study room? Is he still working in the middle of the night?

Suddenly, she shuddered and started to sneeze consecutively. It was at that moment that she figured out that she must have caught a cold after submerging in the cold bath for so long.

Immediately, she searched for a thick jacket and put it on before heading over to the study room. Indeed, she was right; Evan was still in the middle of his work.

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“You should take a break. It’s getting late.”

Evan raised his head and stared at Nicole silently. What’s wrong with him? He’s not behaving like his usual self. She felt uncomfortable due to his odd behavior. Suddenly, she started sneezing again.

Eventually, she got increasingly cold and decided to neglect Evan’s odd attitude for the time being because she needed to tuck herself in and get herself warm.

Once she had made up her mind, she brought herself back to their bedroom. As soon as she tucked herself in, Evan opened the door and made his way into the room.

He brought a set of pajamas into the bathroom and took a bath. After he walked out of the bathroom, he joined her in bed, sleeping by her side. Within a few minutes, he started sleeping soundly.

Listening to his steady breath, she turned around and took a peek at the man by her side. Engulfed by her emotions, she started weeping in the middle of the night. Evan! How could you do this to me? Perhaps we won’t get to sleep with one another anymore after a few days! Do you know how I’m feeling as of now? I’m cold, Evan! It’s freezing!

...

Nicole covered herself using the blanket and started weeping in silence.

She disliked others crying in front of her the most. Previously, she had always been irritated by Susan’s presence because she would always weep in front of them.

However, she couldn’t resist the urge to weep because she was heartbroken. She was concerned about her father’s wellbeing. Feeling aggrieved and exhausted, there wasn’t anything that the dejected woman could do about it.

By the time that she had arisen the next day, Evan was no longer by her side because it was almost noon.

She knew that something was wrong with her because she started having a fever before falling asleep last night. Nicole felt as though she had caught a high fever.

Since Nicole had yet to show up for breakfast when it was about time for lunch, one of the maids, Josephine, knocked on the door and asked, "Mrs. Seet, are you awake yet?"

"Come in!"

Nicole felt weak from head to toe. She decided to get Josephine to enter the room because she could barely carry on with the conversation.

Josephine grew anxious as soon as she entered the room because she noticed that Nicole's face had turned pale and haggard. "Mrs. Seet, what's wrong with you?"

"I think that I have caught a fever. Can you please call the doctor over on my behalf? I need him to check on my condition."

"Alright, Mrs. Seet. Should I get in touch with Mr. Seet as well?"

Nicole recalled the fact that Evan had spent his entire night working again last night. Thus, things must have had been tough for Seet Group.

As she didn't want to get in his way, she instructed, "No! Just get the doctor over!"

"Yes, Mrs. Seet."

After the doctor arrived, he took her temperature and told her, "Mrs. Seet, you're having a high fever. I believe that it's best for you to carry out intravenous therapy."

"Okay!"

After setting up the apparatus required to carry out the intravenous therapy, the doctor prescribed all sorts of medicine and instructed the maid to get Nicole to finish the medicine promptly prior to his departure.

Lying on the bed, the drowsy woman fell asleep once again. By the time she had woken up once more, it was already evening. The therapy had been exhausting for her.

Staring at the needle that had been pricked through her skin, she sighed because she didn't want her children and Evan to be aware of her condition.

Hence, she instructed the maids to keep them, especially Evan, in the dark.

"Yes, Mrs. Seet."

Once Evan returned home, Nicole sat on the couch and pretended as though she had a great time watching the show on the television. He didn't bother to engage in a conversation with her and made his way to the study room immediately.

As always, he switched on his computer and started working again. Staring at his departing figure, Nicole felt aggrieved because she wanted to tell him that she needed him by her side.

If it weren't for Seet Group's crisis, she would have wanted to keep him by her side and behave like a needy child, asking for his attention.

However, she didn't want to get in his way since he already had so many things on his plate.

As soon as their meal was ready, the maid informed Nicole that it was time for dinner. She looked in the direction of the study room upstairs and told the maid, "I'll go and get Evan to join me."

When she entered the study room, she noticed that he was in the middle of a conversation with someone. Thus, she decided not to interrupt him as she stood right in front of him.

Meanwhile, Evan had received a call from Susan. Since the production of her new drama would begin soon, she insisted on having him on the set on the first day.

Initially, Evan was about to turn Susan down due to their odd relationship and the crisis that had yet to be resolved. However, the moment he had caught a glimpse of Nicole, he recalled that she had been meeting Levant behind his back, keeping him in the dark. Thus, the wrath that he had been holding back caused him to go berserk in his mind.

