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The comments reached Sonia's ears as well, but she just smiled and didn't take them to heart because she had heard such things countless times.
Confused, Carl looked at her smiling face and asked, "Aren't you angry, Sonia?"
She took a sip of juice and replied, "There's nothing to be angry about."
"They're speaking so badly about you." Narrowing his eyes, Carl scanned the gossip-mongers as though he wanted to memorize their faces.
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Chuckling, she answered, "Just let them say whatever they want. I can't possibly seal their mouths, can I? Furthermore, I can't be angry at so many people."
"But I am!" A spiteful look flashed in his eyes, but it disappeared the next second. These people who insulted Sonia I won't let any of them off!
Not knowing what was on his mind, Sonia patted him on the shoulder and said, "It's alright, I know you feel unjustified for me, but you shouldn't be bothered since I'm not even angry about it. Just let them be. They're simply a bunch of gossip-mongers, and we don't have to stoop to their level."
Grinning, Carl nodded. "Alright."

"I'm going to get another glass of juice," she said and placed her empty glass on the side before heading off to the drinks corner, leaving Carl and Charles alone.
Resting an arm on Carl's shoulder, Charles asked in a hushed voice, "Rascal, are you going to do something to these people?"
Throwing his arm off his shoulder, Carl replied coldly, "Of course. I have to teach them a lesson since they have the nerves to insult Sonia."
"I'm with you on this, but don't overdo it. If they become suspicious of Sonia—"
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"I got it," Carl interrupted while looking at him.
Charles patted him lightly on his shoulder and said, "Good, Sonia's coming back now. Don't reveal anything."
"Yeah," he muttered as Sonia came over with a glass of mango juice in her hand.
Smiling, she asked, "What are you guys talking about? I saw from afar that both of you looked very serious."
"We're just discussing your birthday gift," Charles said, laughing loudly.
Going along with his answer, Carl nodded. "Yes, Sonia. What would you like for your birthday?"

"My birthday is in June next year," she said, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. "There's still half a year to go and you're already discussing what to prepare as my gift. Don't you think it's too early for that?"

"Not at all," Carl replied gently, shaking his head. "Some gifts have to be custom-made ahead of time."

"Exactly, darling," Charles agreed.

"Are you guys discussing what to get for Sonia for her birthday? Count me in as well," Zane interrupted suddenly as he joined them.

Charles rolled his eyes at him and said, "What's Sonia's birthday got to do with you?"

"Of course it does since she's also my friend," Zane answered, sticking out his chest.

Snorting, Charles snapped, "Let me correct that. Your friend is Toby Fuller."

"So what if he is? There's no limit to the number of friends I can have, and I'm also Sonia's partner in work, right?" he said and winked at Sonia.

Charles sulked and had no words to retort all of a sudden, but Carl narrowed his eyes and asked, "Sonia, what are you working on with Mr. Coleman?"

"It's something important, but I can't tell you the details just yet," she answered, smiling.

The feud was between the Reeds, the Grays and the Colemans. Therefore, there was no need to tell Carl about it because it would just cause him unnecessary worries. However, his eyes turned gloomy and he appeared crestfallen at the fact that she refused to tell him.

"That's right, Sonia. Let me bring you to meet some important figures of the trade," Zane offered suddenly.

At first, Sonia's eyes sparkled, but then she scrutinized him dubiously. "Why are you being so kind and helping me to extend my network?"

"Take it as my thanks because you babysat Douglas the last time. Alright, let's go now and don't keep them waiting." Then, he grabbed her by her wrist and dragged her away.

Even though Charles was unhappy, he didn't stop him for the sake of Sonia's career, but Carl stared at Zane with a somber expression and asked, "Hey Charles, since when did he become so close with Sonia?"

He knew Zane as Toby's friend, and there weren't many exchanges between him and Sonia before, but how did he become so close with her in just a little more than two months? In addition, he really didn't like the way Zane looked at her.

"Maybe it's because of the partnership," Charles answered, swirling the wine in his glass.

Turning to him, Carl asked, "And what partnership is this, exactly?"

Spreading his palm, Charles said, "You shouldn't try to find out more about this. Since Sonia doesn't want to tell you, I won't go against her wishes as well. Let's go, I'll introduce some key figures in the entertainment industry to you."

In the meantime, Sonia was able to meet many bosses and collected a lot of business cards with Zane as her introducer. Although many of them gave her their business cards because of Zane, there were also some who were impressed with her self-presentation.

Whilst there weren't many of them, it still made Sonia very happy. At the very least, she was able to present herself well enough for the big bosses, and she believed that it would help her greatly in future partnerships.

"Sonia, I'm going to the washroom. You—"

"I'm going to the lounge area. I've been standing for a long time and would like to sit down for a while," she broke him off with a smile.

Nodding, Zane said, "Okay, I'm going now." He placed his wine on the tray of a waiter who was passing by and turned to leave the room.

After Sonia put the business cards into her handbag, she headed toward the lounge, but she had barely taken a few steps when a sarcastic voice belonging to a woman said, "Oh, isn't this Sonia Reed? Why are you alone by yourself? Where are all your boyfriends?"

Hearing that, Sonia pursed her lips and spun around, facing Cynthia and Tina with an expressionless face.

Tina tugged at Cynthia's arm and said, "Don't say that, Cynthia." Then, she gave Sonia an apologetic smile. "Miss Reed, I apologize on Cynthia's behalf. I'm sorry, she didn't do it on purpose. It's just because she's an outspoken person."

"Outspoken?" Sonia snorted. "Do you know what that means? It simply means that she meant what she said and wasn't just shooting her mouth off. The fact that you called her an outspoken person instead of disagreeing with her shows that you actually agree with the things she said. Therefore, why did you even apologize? Don't you think that's a little too pretentious of you?"

"Miss Reed, how could you say something like that..." Tina uttered, biting her lower lip and looking as though she had been accused. "Even if I said something wrong, you shouldn't have called me pretentious."

"Exactly," Cynthia echoed, raising her chin. "She just used the wrong word. Do you have to be such a bully? Also, did I say anything wrong? You were acting so intimate with so many men—"

"Are you envious?" Sonia interrupted, crossing her arms across her chest as she looked at her with ridicule.

Blood rushed to Cynthia's face and she shouted angrily, "Who are you calling envious?"

"If you're not, then why are you trying to stir up an issue with me using Zane and the rest? You don't have to use the men around me as an excuse to start a fight with me," Sonia snapped.

"I-I..." Cynthia stammered, tongue-tied as her eyes burned with fury.

Sweeping her disdainful gaze over them both, Sonia added, "I would suggest you girls to think of a better excuse before coming to pick a fight with me next time. Otherwise, you'll only make a fool out of yourselves."

With that said, she twirled and wanted to leave the scene, but Tina bit her lip and grabbed her arm all of a sudden after malice flashed in her eyes.

The moment her hand touched Sonia's arm, she acted as though she was shoved and staggered backward in horror before falling to the floor on her bottom. The glass she was holding shattered to pieces and the wine spilled all over her dress. Suddenly, the entire room fell silent and everyone turned their heads to look in their direction.

Seeing that everyone was looking their way, Tina raised her head and looked at Sonia with a tear-streaked face. "Miss Reed, you're too much. You didn't have to push me just because I bumped into you."