

## Chapter 401 Good-for-nothing

---

Following the auction, there was a significant amount of online speculation about the results, and it rapidly became the most discussed subject.

The internet was abuzz with news about it, and the stock prices of Bryant Group and Universe Group continued to soar.

The shareholders present in Universe Group's conference room were all ecstatic with joy.

All of them extended their congratulations to Loraine for the triumph of the bidding.

"Miss Torres made an excellent decision! The new shopping street is Universe Group's next most important project, and it's bound to get even better!"

"Yes. She is just as talented as our previous chairman!"

The shareholders were solely interested in making a profit and began praising Loraine for her ability to help them earn a lot of money.

Loraine smiled in response to their compliments.

Only two people in the group had hypocritical smiles.

They stayed behind for a private conversation after the meeting.

One of them was Duran Thompson, who paced impatiently around the room.

"What's your take, Reynolds? Loraine is gaining more success every day. Maybe she's truly prepared for the position. Do we need to continue listening to her in the future?"

Reynolds furrowed his brows as he smoked a cigarette, exhaling the smoke with a grunt. "Don't worry. She won't be able to maintain her influence for much longer."

Duran's eyes lit up. "Do you have a plan?"

Reynolds responded cryptically, "Let's go met someone."

Days passed by quickly.

The outcome of the new business district bidding was making headlines online. Everyone was expressing enthusiasm for the collaboration between Universe Group and Bryant Group. Suddenly, an affordable jewelry brand, Hurley Jewelry, publicly questioned the impartiality of the bidding process.

The brand wasn't well-known for it had low marketing. Although its products sold well on its online store, it received few positive reviews. As a result, few people took notice when it published the article.

Most people, including those present at the bidding session, thought that Hurley Group was making allegations because it was after money.

However, Hurley Group released some photos that quickly sparked controversy.

The pictures showed Loraine and Jennie talking to each other.

"If Universe Group's bidding event was genuinely fair and equitable, why was the winner the president of Universe Group's closest friend?"

Jennie had previously defended Loraine on many occasions. Consequently, people were aware that the two were indeed close friends. However, after hearing Hurley's allegations, everyone was uncertain about their stance.

Hurley led the charge on social media, causing a stir with his indictments.

"These photos were taken during the bidding session. Everyone was nervously guessing the price except Jennie Fowler, who was chatting with Loraine like it was a casual gathering. How could she be so relaxed unless she knew the result beforehand?"

One person quickly agreed with Hurley's point. "You're spot on. Everyone was on edge about the outcome except her, who looked very calm."

The internet was buzzing with debate, with some supporting Hurley's claims and others questioning his motives.

Those who doubted his allegations believed that Loraine would not stoop to such unethical behavior.

"According to the rules of bidding, the highest bidder wins. Those who didn't win simply didn't offer the best price. Why are you questioning the fairness of the competition?"

"Exactly! Someone is just envious of Loraine. Maybe her

best friend is just as loaded and doesn't care about money."

Since Loraine was quite popular on social media, most people sided with her. Hurley was angry because several people were supporting Loraine in his comment section.

Thus, he instantly paid people to leave positive comments on his post.

They quickly dug up some dirt on Jennie and started criticizing her.

"Isn't Loraine's so-called best friend good-for-nothing except for being rich? She only cares about having fun. Why would anyone support her?"

"I know a juicy secret! Jennie is not the rightful heir of the Fowler family. The Fowlers wouldn't give her that much money just to waste it away. Loraine must have rigged the bid for her best friend to win!"

Doubts began to take over the comments section.

Hurley then urged, "It's time for you to clear your name! We need Universe Group to disclose the bid made by Jennie Fowler."

Companies that lost the bid but wanted to participate in the commercial street program started to support him.

"Universe Group, please reveal the bids submitted by all the bidders! That's the only way we can uncover any foul play!"

The situation quickly spiraled out of control.

When Jennie got wind of the situation, she rushed to apologize to Loraine.

She didn't anticipate that her first successful venture would cause trouble for Loraine. She kept her head down and appeared despondent.

"Lorrie, I'm sorry. I..."

Loraine consoled her, "It's alright. It's not your fault. Universe Group is doing well now, so people will try to bring us down. Even if you had nothing to do with it, they'd find other reasons to cause problems."

Jennie wiped away her tears and nodded gently. "But what do we do now?"

Loraine was about to reply when her desk phone rang.

"Miss Torres! The board of directors has called for an urgent shareholder meeting!"



✓ You have unlocked exclusive limited-time benefits>>

GO NOW



## Chapter 402 The Meeting

Lorraine told Jennie to stay in the office while she went to the meeting room.

She could sense the tense vibe in the air the moment she stepped in.

The shareholders wore varied expressions, but all seemed rather downbeat.

Lorraine knew most of them were fence-sitters who would flow with the situation.

But what came as a shock to her was that Marco was in attendance too.

She looked at him in surprise. "What brings you here, Marco?"

Marco remained nonchalant, emanating a strong aura that stood out among the elderly men.

Some wavering directors avoided eye contact and played dumb. However, Reynolds stepped up and spoke for Marco. "The bidding was a joint venture between Bryant Group and Universe Group. Since there's an issue with the project, isn't it normal for him to be here to address it together?"

Lorraine sneered.

She suspected that someone on the board had called the shareholders' meeting with the intention of making things difficult for her.

Otherwise, they would have informed Cayson instead of Marco.

Lorraine suspected that the board assumed she was not on good terms with Marco, so they tried to use him against her.

However, Marco saw through the directors' intentions and stood up and pulled out a chair for Lorraine.

"This bidding is a joint venture between Lorraine and me. If something goes wrong, I have to take responsibility too."

Reynolds' expression changed. Lorraine was shocked but said nothing

It turned out that Marco had come to support her.

However, since it was an internal matter of Universe Group, Lorraine knew that she had to rely on herself to convince the rest of the board.

Lorraine sat down and said to Marco, "I appreciate your kindness, but I would rather handle this on my own."

Marco frowned but respected her decision and nodded.

At the start of the meeting, Reynolds signaled to Duran, who was sitting next to him. Duran then asked Lorraine in a strange tone, "Lorraine, the commercial district project was a good program, but the company's image has been tarnished due to your personal reasons. You need to clarify the issue."

Reynolds said with a friendly smile, "Lorraine, we've known each other for years. We wouldn't be so tough on you if it weren't for the scandal. But you've damaged the company's interests, so an explanation is necessary. Gossip can be

damaging. You know that you can't just invite your friend to bid for the project, right?"

Several directors nodded.

"Yes, this scandal will damage our company's reputation!"

"Lorraine, how could you be so reckless?"

Observing the directors who spoke against her, Lorraine smiled and asked, "So, in your opinion, we should publicly announce the bidding prices?"

Reynolds chuckled and replied, "We have no choice. How else can we clarify it to the public?"

Lorraine pretended to agree. "You're right. The only way to prove my innocence is to announce the bidding prices."

Reynolds and Duran exchanged a satisfied glance.

Lorraine sneered inwardly and said, "But the profits of those who have already bid will be impacted, which will bring an even greater blow to the group!"

Reynolds stuttered, "Well... That's not necessarily true..."

"I understand that you guys are concerned for the group's well-being. However, our priority now is to keep the bidding prices confidential. Even if I announce them, there will still be doubt about their authenticity." Lorraine smiled knowingly. "It's possible that people may question whether I'm fabricating a bidding for my best friend, Jennie, since no one knows how much she's bidding on the project."

Reynolds' expression turned serious as his smile disappeared. "What's our next move then?"



Suddenly, the door burst open.

"Leave Loraine alone! If you have any problem, come to me!" Jennie shouted.

Loraine's assistant couldn't stop Jennie from barging in. She looked at Loraine with embarrassment.

Jennie cut off the poor assistant and glared at Reynolds.

"You're a selfish old man! You didn't say a word when you took the bonus from the company. You people can't solve problems, yet you have the audacity to confront Loraine like this!"

Reynolds' countenance changed. He slammed his hand on the table and rebuked, "Mind your manners!"

Jennie, who had been pampered by her family, was restless in the office. She couldn't sit still and watch Loraine being berated. She hurriedly entered the meeting room to look for Loraine. However, as soon as she entered, she witnessed the group putting Loraine in a tough spot, which rose her fury.

"No one has taught me how to speak properly, not even my parents. Who are you to criticize me like that? Let me make it clear to all of you." Jennie pointed at the present directors. "If it wasn't for Loraine, there wouldn't be a commercial district. None of you would reap any benefits, you bunch of leeches!"

"How dare you!" Reynolds and the other directors were incensed by Jennie's words.

Loraine secretly smiled, knowing that these old men needed someone like Jennie to deal with them.

Doran pointed at Jennie and bellowed, "This is Universe Group. Who gave you the right to interfere with our internal affairs? Guards, drive her out immediately!"

Reynolds regained his composure and said, "Furthermore, Jennie Fowler is the cause of this matter. Loraine, you are too young and naïve to associate with such an inconsiderate individual. However, we will not go easy on her!"

Jennie recognized Loraine's inability to see people clearly and was infuriated by Reynolds' words. She took responsibility for the situation and declared, "I don't need anyone to clean up my mess. I will handle it myself!"



## Chapter 403 Guarantee

Loraine frowned as she hadn't anticipated the current situation.

In comparison to the experienced and cunning old men present, Jennie appeared too young and whimsical.

Reynolds and Duran noticed that Jennie had already fallen into their trap after a few words, making them feel satisfied.

From their perspective, Loraine was a competent woman who was challenging to handle.

On the other hand, they viewed Jennie as a naive individual from a wealthy background.

Duran sneered, "Miss Fowler, no offense, but it seems that you're merely a wealthy young woman who lacks knowledge. How do you propose to solve the problem?"

Reynolds chimed in, "This is a serious matter. Are you confident in solving it alone? What if you fail? Who will bear the consequences then?"

Jennie found herself at a loss for words in that moment.

Suddenly, Loraine stood up. "If Jennie fails to handle it, then I'll shoulder the consequences. I will take full responsibility and give my resignation from my current position."

"Loraine!" Marco, who had been quietly observing the situation unfold, grew instantly anxious. He wanted to dissuade her but she stopped him.



Jennie stared at Loraine with a blank expression. The other directors were equally taken aback and began discussing the matter amongst themselves.

Maintaining her composure, Loraine gazed at Reynolds calmly and asked, "What are your thoughts on this proposal?"

Finally regaining her composure, Jennie asked worriedly, "Lorrie, what are you talking about? Don't be silly!"

Jennie had confidence in herself, but she also wanted to handle it independently without involving Loraine. However, it become too risky for Loraine.

Loraine reassured Jennie with a smile and turned to Reynolds once again.

Reynolds's eyelid twitched. He was filled with delight, nearly bursting into laughter.

Loraine's proposal was precisely what he hoped!

Yet, he concealed his true emotions on his face and feigned concern.

"Well, I don't believe it's necessary to go that far. I believe that Miss Fowler is capable of..."

Honestly, he secretly wished that Jennie would botch things up.

By then, even if Loraine wouldn't follow through with her words, her reputation within the group would be greatly affected.

Reynolds changed his tone and continued, "However, as the president of Universe Group, it wouldn't be appropriate for

you to retract your statement."

Lorraine understood exactly what Reynolds was thinking.

She sneered and responded coldly, "Since there are no other objections, that's a deal then."

Reynolds was confident that both Lorraine and Jennie would ultimately fail. He glanced at Lorraine with a triumphant expression and left the meeting room along with the other directors.

Understanding that she had caused a significant predicament for Lorraine, Jennie lowered her head and said disappointedly, "I'm sorry, Lorrie. I've once again created trouble for you."

Smiling helplessly, Lorraine replied, "Silly girl, I've already told you they would find other reasons to make things difficult for me, even without your involvement. Besides, I trust you and believe you can solve it, right?"

Uplifted, Jennie clenched her fists and promised, "Lorrie, I won't let you down! I must act quickly. Lorrie, I'll go back and find a solution as soon as possible!"

Observing her best friend rush out of the meeting room, Lorraine shook her head, unsure of her emotions for having such a best friend.

Just as she was about to follow Jennie, someone suddenly grabbed her arm.

Lorraine turned back and saw that Marco was still in the room. She raised her eyebrows in surprise.

Marco had been silent earlier, but it was evident that he was dissatisfied with Lorraine's decision. He furrowed his

brow and his eyes reflected concern.

"Lorraine! Even if you want to help Jennie, you shouldn't act so impulsively. Why insist on bearing the consequences? What if Jennie fails?"

Marco didn't care whether Jennie could resolve the issue or not. His concern was only for Lorraine.

If Jennie failed, would Lorraine truly accept the blame and resign from her position?

He believed there were numerous ways to assist Jennie, and Lorraine didn't have to choose the riskiest one.

Noticing the skepticism in Marco's words, Lorraine's expression changed.

"Do you also believe that Jennie is nothing more than a useless, wealthy young woman, just like those people do?" she asked, her tone revealing her disappointment.

Marco pursed his lips and remained silent.

It wasn't that he shared the same view, but rather that Jennie's actions had seemed impulsive and careless.

Lorraine felt a pang of frustration. She shrugged off Marco's hand and said, "I don't care what you think, but Jennie is my best friend. I know her better than you do. She may appear casual and uninterested in business, but that doesn't mean she lacks capability. When she puts her mind to something, she becomes more responsible than anyone else."

Observing Lorraine's angry expression, Marco's heart softened.

He wasn't concerned with what kind of person Jennie was.

What surprised him was Loraine's passionate defense of her best friend.

It was endearing.

Lost in thought, Marco stared at Loraine, his mind in a daze.

