

My Dreamy Old Husband Chapter 992

With all these agents gathered at the Michel Group's Cethosian headquarters today, the media had shown up in droves as well.

It was the first time the Michel Group's phones entered the Cethosian market. Other than their flagship Dragon Eye model, their budget range of Dragon Eye cell phones would also be making their debut in Cethos.

News of Dragon Eye's first budget range stirred up a wave of mad excitement across Cethos. The average person might never get the chance to touch a Dragon Eye phone; it was to the point where many people had never actually heard of this brand before. However, this brand was an exalted one to the upper crust. As the oldest and most successful line of high-end cell phones, people were excited for Dragon Eye's budget range.

Currently, there were a few dozen vendors eyeing the managing rights for the budget range. There were known vendors among them such as Plum Technology, who had seen a meteoric rise in recent years. On top of a gaggle of other successful people in this field, there was also Lucy from the Edwards Group and Sandra from the Mitchell Group.

Just who would become the official managing agent for the phones?

No one knew.

Everyone was vibrating with anticipation at the press conference; the reporters had long since been there even before the vendors had shown up.

The first person the reporters spotted entering the hall was Sandra. They immediately swarmed over to her, shooting all sorts of questions at her. "Miss Sandra, are you confident in becoming the official vendor for Dragon Eye's budget range of phones? What advantages do you have over your competitors? Can you talk about that?"

Sandra's wardrobe was immaculate, and her make-up meticulously painted on; she had already made the transformation from a sports star to a businesswoman. She looked into the camera and gave a polite smile. "To be honest, the other vendors here are all very impressive. I'm certain that I won't be able to get those managing rights, but I still want to give it a shot at the very least. That way, I won't have any regrets."

The reporters all nodded at her answer. Someone else asked, "In that case, who do you think is most likely to come out on top among your competitors, Miss Sandra?"

Sandra gave it some thought before replying, "Naturally, I think that it'll be Miss Lucy from the Edwards Group."

She continued to sing Lucy's praises into the camera, listing many of Lucy's good qualities. At last, she concluded by saying, "I dare say that the managing rights will definitely go to Lucy this time. Other than her, no one else in Bayside City will be able to get their hands on this deal!"

Just as Sandra was ending her tribute to Lucy, the woman herself entered.

As one of Bayside City's most successful famed ladies, Lucy was succinct and decisive. Even with this press conference, her entrance was swift as she strode in with big steps. Although she was here to attend this conference, she never left her work aside. A throng of assistants and secretaries trailed behind her, discussing business deals as they did so. One could see that there was no end to their talks.

The moment Lucy made her entrance, she heard Sandra praising her; anyone would have been delighted to hear that.

Having spotted Lucy, the reporters once again swarmed over and dumped all their questions on her. "Miss Lucy, both industry insiders and those outside of the industry have their eyes on you when it comes to Dragon Eye's managing rights. I'd like to ask about your thoughts on this."

"How confident are you in this competition for those rights?"

Lucy was frigid. She didn't accept any of the interviews, but she was brimming with confidence. She was sure to win the managing rights for the Dragon Eye cell phones.

This was a good opportunity for the Edwards and Michels to join hands!

The Edwards Family had the connections and pipelines, and their influence was not confined within Cethos only. Winning the rights for Cethos was not Lucy's final goal; it was a mere starting point.

What she wanted was exclusive global managing rights!

Lucy found a seat inside the hall and sat down; her assistants and secretaries all took a seat behind her. On the other hand, Sandra sat next to Lucy and winked knowingly at her. "Relax, Lucy—you're definitely getting those managing rights. Apart from you, no one else has the capability or the qualifications."

Sandra already knew that she stood no chance. There was no hope of her winning after she had offended Alice, but if Lucy could get her hands on those rights, Sandra would definitely be able to wring some benefits out of Lucy since they had a pretty close relationship. After all, Lucy might not be able to handle it alone since it was a major business deal.

Thinking about how she had been tricked, Sandra gritted her teeth hatefully; she never expected that Abbie and Lucile were actually scammers. She hadn't been able to find the pair up until today, and her money was gone.

Sticking with Lucy would be a more reliable plan. Unfortunately, Sandra didn't know that Lucy had long since given up any concern for her.

The situation with Mitchell International Energy and Technology was clearly obvious. Never mind the threat of Cooper; within the industry, the ship that was Mitchell International would sink sooner or later, especially with the Michel Group exerting its power. Those who were smart had already invested in Cooper.

Speaking of Cooper, Lucy's competitive spirit was aflame. She had to surpass him!

One by one, her so-called 'competitors' had arrived. However, Lucy didn't see them as a threat.

Among the vendors present, she was most wary of Dana and Ian. Dana had the Winstons' resources behind her, and she had also been Lucy's rival for many years now. Meanwhile, Lucy was more familiar with Ian's capabilities. As for the two others from the Mitchell Family, she thought that they were nothing compared to her. She looked down even more on Sophia and her company, Plum Technology.

They're just a bunch of hacks. Even with Vincent joining their ranks, they're still a circus. Cooper's daughter is not the man himself; I don't need to worry about her. Plum Technology? Anyone who hears about them probably thinks that they're some shady company that sells pirated disks illegally. They can't show their faces here; competition in the cell phone industry is too fierce. Even companies that can fool around with some electronics have made their

debut. I am more experienced, more capable, and I have more connections! Alice knows who she should pick if she wants the most revenue.

Ian and Dana had arrived too. While both of them had given up the competition due to their own reasons, they still showed up. Even if it was just to watch the show, they wanted to see who among the myriad of vendors here would get the managing rights.

Ian was unusually subdued today. After he picked a seat at random, he sat down and began to handle his business matters with his laptop. He even reflexively clamped his legs together—it turned out that he had made the decision to cut his foreskin after Sophia mocked him. He ended up being bedridden for a few days, and the area still stung hard.

On the other hand, Dana was audacious. She was still dressed in her usual bespoke men's suit that clung to her straight figure; when coupled with the pair of insoles in her shoes to boost her height, she looked handsome and slender. To her left was a curvy and sexy female secretary, and behind her was a tall and handsome male assistant. The moment she sat down, the two clung onto her.

Dana plucked her sunglasses off with a flourish, her gaze lazily flitting about. She would be groping her secretary's luscious behind one moment and pinching her assistant's thigh the next. Needless to say, she was being openly lecherous.

At the sight of Lucy, Dana waved a hand and greeted her. "Hi there, Sweet Lucy."

Lucy didn't even look at her as she smacked Dana's hand away.

Soon after, the reporters were in a frenzy again; Plum Technology had made their arrival.

Leading them was Stanley with a cold and solemn expression on his face. His buzz cut was attention-grabbing, and there was a wolfish quality to his chiseled features. He strode in with big steps, looking rather like a terrifying king or emperor. Sean and Sarah followed behind him, their aura not as intimidating as Stanley's.

Sean's face, which was prettier than even a woman's, stood out in an exceptional way. Meanwhile, Sarah and her eternally youthful face made anything she wore look like a set of children's clothes. Sarah was still baby-faced even though she was already a mother, but she did her best to show off her own flair regardless.

With the pair behind Stanley, the trio looked like an emperor out on an inspection with his queen consort and his concubine.

On the other hand, Sophia and Vincent brought up the rear of the entourage.

Seeing that Plum Technology had arrived, Dana made her way over like a fly to a sweet piece of fruit.

“Hi, my little Sean! Nice seeing you here too, little kitten!”

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Sean and Sarah’s expressions immediately shifted the moment they spotted Dana, and they instinctively took a step back.

No one in Bayside City dared to talk business with Dana. She was too much of an abnormality—in fact, she was practically an oddity among Bayside City’s socialites.

Dana’s grubby hands had barely reached out before she drew them back with lightning speed as soon as she spotted Stanley.

Last time, Stanley had broken her nose because she flirted with Sean; half a year ago, she got her leg broken by him because she had groped Sean’s butt. A year ago, she took the advantage of working together and sent Sean a lewd picture to hit on him, but Stanley had hopped onto a plane and flew overnight to break her arm when he caught wind of this. After that, he got onto another overnight flight and continued attending to his business deals. Two years prior, she had wolf-whistled at Sean at a dinner party, causing Stanley to trap her in the washroom before smashing her face into the cover of the toilet bowl. This incident had caused shock to ripple through Bayside City.

The trio had been in the same class in kindergarten. Back then, Stanley and Sean were playing house; Stanley was the father, Sean was the mother, and they gave Dana the role of their daughter. Dana refused and insisted on being the mistress, culminating in an intense beating from Stanley.

During their dance lessons in kindergarten, everyone needed a partner. Naturally, Stanley's dance partner was Sean, but Dana wanted Sean to be her partner instead. Stanley ended up cornering her in the kindergarten's mini garden to beat her up.

Talking with Sean? A beating. Giving Sean some flowers or snacks? Another beating. Kissing Sean secretly? Yet another beating.

In the end, Dana ended up studying abroad. It wasn't until she returned a few years ago to take over her duties at the Winstons that she saw Sean. Yet, she still couldn't control her grubby hands.

Similarly, Stanley couldn't stop his own grubby hands when he saw her. One offending hand landed right by Dana's neck as he grabbed her by the collar and reflexively lifted her up.

Dana's toes were a few inches above the ground as she stared fearfully into the terrifying eyes of Stanley.

"I've never hit a woman, Dana. Congratulations on being the first woman I want to beat up!"

Dana was fearful to no end. "My bad, Stan! It's my bad! I won't dare to do this ever again!"

Stanley flung Dana hard to the ground and stepped over her body. "I'm here to discuss business today, so I won't hit you. You'd better watch yourself next time!"

Dana scrambled back to her own seat, but she continued to sneak glances at Sean every now and then.

Eventually, Sean and Stanley found their seats and sat down. At the thought of Stanley's enraged glare earlier, Sean couldn't help but cover his mouth and grin. "She's a girl, Stan. You've got to treat girls more gently."

Stanley looked at the back of Dana's head, his hands reflexively getting the urge as he did so. He gritted his teeth and replied, "I would have already had her head if it wasn't for the fact that she's a woman."

Sophia had taken a seat as well. The moment she did so, she heard Dana's flirtatious whistles. She lifted her gaze to look at the woman who was as handsome as a man. Sophia was forced to rethink her views; with that short hair and men's suit, she couldn't see any signs indicating that Dana was a woman. The only thing she lacked was an Adam's apple. Like Sean, Dana was androgynous.

She simply retracted her gaze after a glance and continued to look at her phone.

While Dana didn't seem like an especially reliable person, she had been young when she took on the duty of running the Winston Group—she had even become Harry's rival. Naturally, she was not to be underestimated.

Everyone else soon arrived. Stanley glared at Dana, and the latter shivered as she kept whistling at handsome men and gorgeous ladies in the hall. Lucy was an enigma; Sandra kept glaring hard at Vincent and Derek, and Sophia's head was lowered with her eyes glued to her phone. From time to time, she would chat with Sarah. None of them were getting along with each other.

Alice arrived on the dot. As she stood in the center of the platform, the competing vendors and reporters all turned their gazes to her.

Alice didn't waste any time as she gave a brief explanation about the Dragon Eye budget and the high-end ranges' launch in Cethos, explaining her requests for the vendors at the same time.

At last, it was time for the most important part. "Dragon Eye is one of the oldest and most successful cell phone brands in the world. Ever since I took over, our market share has been on the rise. This will be our first time selling our phones in the Cethosian market, and we've received many love calls from so many retailers. In just a short time, over a hundred vendors from Cethos have been in contact with us. I hereby express my sincerest thanks to all those who have such trust and faith in Dragon Eye. After several rounds of decision-making, my team and I have chosen the best-suited vendor for Dragon Eye. With that, we have chosen..."

She deliberately paused in the middle of her announcement; with her eyes glittering as she looked down the platform, Alice's gaze swept over the group of people below. Everyone's hearts were in their throats.

With Dragon Eye entering the giant playing field that was the Cethosian market and its unreal purchasing power backed by their billion-strong population, initial calculations

indicated that they could pull in annual revenues reaching billions. Whichever vendor got the deal would be rewarded handsomely. Now, who would be getting their hands on this lovely piece of pie?

Everyone including Sophia held their breaths; even she herself didn't know if she would be able to secure the managing rights. After all, Lucy was about neck-and-neck with her. Sophia had swallowed Vincent's assets and was in a slightly more advantageous position than Lucy, but when she factored in Alice herself, Sophia actually didn't have much of an advantage.

Alice's gaze roved over the crowd. She spoke at last, continuing from where she left off. "I hereby announce that the sole Cethosian retailer for Dragon Eye shall be Plum Technology!"

Plum Technology!

Upon hearing those words, Sophia finally let out the breath she had been holding; there was a hint of a smile on her face.

This was a prize deal, but if Sophia wanted to keep it, she would have to rely on her skills. If she didn't manage this well, Alice could cancel the management rights at any moment. After heaving a sigh of relief, Sophia's tenseness returned.

Alice immediately left after her announcement, uncaring of the reporters' numerous requests for an interview.

The staff of Plum Technology were mad with excitement, and they all stood up to congratulate themselves.

Let's eat at Crimson House until they're out of food tonight!

Meanwhile, Lucy only got up when the Plum Technology staff and Alice had left. Her eyes were still filled with disbelief.

She had actually lost to a bunch of hacks who just slap screen protectors on phones!

Does Alice not have eyes at all?

Lucy had managed several internationally known cell phone brands and other luxury goods before. Reasonably, she was the best choice. What edge did Plum Technology have over her?

Sandra hadn't expected Sophia to snag the management rights either. *Didn't Alice say that she'd never pick Sophia previously?*

It must've been because of Vincent.

Her gaze flickered over to Lucy, whose eyes were shooting streams of fire. The gears in her mind whirred, and she deliberately added a biting touch to her voice. "I really have no idea how she got it. Clearly, she doesn't measure up to you. She must have used some underhanded methods..."

In her eyes, Plum Technology was more or less being hard carried by Sophia alone. However, she failed to see that Sophia had Stanley of the Fletchers; Sarah of the Winstons; Vincent of the Mitchells; as well as Cooper and Michael behind her. Sophia had it all—be it skill, connections, or channels.

Without a word, Lucy stomped off. She had used her own power to compete, but she still lost to those measures.

Huh, let's just see how Sophia is going to choke on this slice of pie!

Lucy left huffily, her expression just as distant as ever. The reporters surrounded her and promptly bombarded Lucy with a load of questions.

"What are your thoughts on your loss, Miss Edwards?"

"Are you feeling resentful because Plum Technology has been announced as the retailer for Dragon Eye in Cethos?"

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A sense of resentment? How could I, Lucy Edwards, possibly feel a sense of resentment toward those two subpar, inferior teams? They aren't worth my time; I don't care about them at all. If I harbored resentment toward nobodies like them, I'd probably end up hating half of the world. My business is huge, and my income is in the millions; I'd rather spend the time earning my money than hating on losers like them. Despite this, Lucy still wanted to know the reason she had lost, so she gave Alice a call.

Alice picked the phone up personally and provided Lucy with an explanation. "Miss Edwards, I'm sure you must be disappointed to hear the results. Objectively speaking, it's true that you are the most capable one among the rest of your competitors—there's no questioning that. However, there's something else that you have to understand. The Michel Group itself has a really qualified sales team, various channels of exposure, and 30 years of experience in successful sales across the entire globe," Alice said.

Lucy scoffed, "So what are you trying to say here?"

"The reason we decided to find an agent for our low-end phones is because our prior successes have always been in the field of high-end technology. We don't have any experience in marketing low-end products, and the strategies employed for these two fields differ greatly. That's why we had to find an agent that would be suitable for marketing low-end phones. You, Miss Lucy, are the same as us; your success has been limited to the high-end markets, so it's not what we're looking for," Alice explained.

Lucy burst into laughter after hearing what Alice had said. "You're so full of nonsense!" She then ended the call before hastily walking out of the Michel Group. As she left, she turned around to glare at the Michel Group's logo outside. They really think too highly of themselves! They're just a bunch of cheap phones! I only came forward to fight for this agency deal for the sake of Linus. I can't believe they didn't choose me.

"I want you to respond to Serpent and tell them that I agree to be the sole agency for their handphones in the whole of Cethos!" Lucy gave her orders to her secretary through the phone in an icy tone. Serpent phones were one of the oldest brands in the market. It differed from Dragon Eye as it didn't maintain its public image as a high-end phone. Instead, it went for a more people-oriented, friendly approach that categorized itself as a mid to low-end product, and its price was about the same as Dragon Eye's low-end phones. The Serpent brand had gathered a huge amount of popularity across the globe, and it was one of the most widely sold handphones in the world. Once Dragon Eye entered the low-end market, Serpent would be one of their strongest competitors.

Coincidentally, Serpent's contract with their previous agency in Cethos had just expired, so they approached Lucy and offered her the opportunity to be their exclusive agent in Cethos. They wanted to heighten the standards of their brand with the use of the Edwards Family's connections and channels. Since Dragon Eye was starting to up their game in the market, Serpent felt threatened by it and therefore wanted to seek out a more powerful agent within the region. Lucy hadn't planned on taking the job initially, but now, she had to do it! She was about to show Alice what she was capable of doing!

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Meanwhile, Alice had just moved into the Edwards Residence at Riverdale. It was inconvenient for her to stay in a hotel for long, and she wasn't planning on leaving Cethos anytime soon since the work in Cethos was far from completion. She therefore decided to move in with the Edwards. The Edwards Residence was large, and she got a small lot all to herself. She liked the vintage architectural design of the building, especially because it was close to the exit from the back door—it meant that she could leave every morning without having to bump into Sophia and her family. They wouldn't have to disturb one another.

That day, Sophia and her team were out late. They were probably having a celebration in some restaurant in town. They called Alice to join them for a meal, but Alice was too tired to do anything but stay home. As she scrolled through the news, Alice saw the article about Lucy agreeing to be the agent for Serpent phones. She simply glanced through it before throwing her phone aside.

Serpent was currently the major contender in the mid and low-end phone markets; its global sales went up to four or five times more than the other brands that came behind them. Serpent was also one of Dragon Eye's largest competitors now that Dragon Eye was entering the low-end market. The intention behind Lucy's sudden, hasty agreement with Serpent was clear. Alice felt a little troubled by this, but she didn't regret her decision. It didn't matter who Serpent's agent was; Dragon Eye would have to compete against that brand regardless.

Alice didn't regret her decision to give up on Lucy and pick Sophia's team instead. She was confident about her own judgement. As she was caught up in her thoughts, she didn't realize when Daniel had appeared outside her study. He leaned against the doorframe as he sipped on a cup of tea. "You were clearly going for Lucy at first; why did you change your mind in the end?" Could it be because of me? he wondered. However, he couldn't bring himself to ask that last question.

Alice didn't seem surprised to see Daniel; she looked like she had been expecting his arrival. She didn't even take a second glance at him. Instead, she leaned back in her rattan chair while eyeing the budding plants outside her window with a rather tired gaze. "Lucy's team is definitely more capable and mature, but she's only experienced with handling high-end brands. That was why I gave up on her in the end," Alice muttered quietly. "Lucile has more talents in her team. They have the Fletchers, the Mitchells, the Winstons, and even some other families; networking won't be a problem for them. More importantly, Lucile is familiar with the key factors that drive low-end markets—bombarding consumers, pestering them, and creating opportunities in regions that seem like there aren't any opportunities. That is exactly what I'm looking for. High-end products thrive in a seller's market while low-end products deal with a buyer's market, and I need agents like her to handle sales in a buyer's market. She's someone who's capable of seeking opportunities to promote her own products, and she's able to lower her ego and pride in order to achieve her target! This is something that Lucy will never be able to accomplish, because she takes pride in placing herself up on a pedestal. All of the people in her team aren't prepared to lower their ego and pride, and this will be extremely detrimental to Dragon Eye's sales."

Daniel nodded in agreement. When a brand had its own consumer market and fame, people who purchased it would feel lucky, and those who used it would gain confidence about themselves—the brand itself served as an icon of status and power in society. Not everyone could afford a handphone that was worth tens of thousands, after all. Dragon Eye phones each had their unique serial number engraved on the phone, so there was only one of each in the whole world. It was a phone, but it was also a luxury product.

The low-end Dragon Eye phone, on the other hand, was nothing more than a phone. They couldn't just wait for customers to purchase them; they had to find ways to attract customers to come to them. They therefore needed a thick-skinned sales team that would do their all in order to boost the sales of the phones—for example, a sales team like Plum Technology. Although they knew that Alice didn't want to give them a chance, they still gave their all in fighting for the position. They used all their connections to pester and swamp Alice in order to convince her to choose them. If Sophia could apply the same amount of effort and passion she had for the competition into the sales for Dragon Eye phones, the sales would definitely show impressive results.

As for Sophia being a threat... If Sophia truly managed to boost the sales of Dragon Eye, Alice would ultimately benefit from the success as the lead engineer and developer of the project. Sophia was nothing more than a regional agent, so she wouldn't pose much of a threat to Alice.

"I'm just trying things out for now. If things work out, I'm planning to develop a second generation of Dragon Eye low-end phones. However, if things don't work out..." Alice's words came to a halt in the middle of her sentence. Daniel could hear the exhaustion in her voice.

Alice wanted to take a rest where she sat in front of the window, but she unexpectedly fell asleep. When she woke up, she found a blanket on top of her. The dogs were barking downstairs, so she assumed that Sophia had got home.

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Sophia burst through the door like an excited husky as she had finally succeeded in becoming the agent for Dragon Eye. "Dad, did you see the news? Dad, I'm now the agent for Dragon Eye! Am I impressive or what?!"

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Cooper's hair was tied into small braids as he gave Sophia a forceful smile. "You're so amazing, my darling. However, just becoming their agent doesn't mean anything—you'll have to find ways to boost the sales of the phone in order to truly accomplish something!" Although Cooper acted as if he was allowing Sophia the freedom to do whatever she wished, he still secretly kept an eye on her. "Oh, by the way, Serpent just announced their new Cethosian agent today. You should take a look at it," he said.

Sophia lifted Carmen into her arms and spun the young girl around before she quickly washed up and went back to her own room. The minute she turned the news on, she saw the report about Lucy signing an agreement with Serpent to be their exclusive agent in Cethos. Serpent was indeed the leading company in the global mid- to low-end phone markets; it was also the most popular imported phone in Cethos. Now that Lucy was working with Serpent, this combination would definitely be the largest competitor that Sophia—as the new agent of Dragon Eye—would have to go against. Sophia's team was now the only licensed agent of Dragon Eye's low-end phones in the whole of Cethos, after all.

Soon, Plum Technology met up with Alice to sign the official documents. After this was done, Sophia immediately launched her agency's business. She started her own project team and formed a number of work departments; she ended up taking a few floors in the entire office building. The job as Dragon Eye's agent became one of the core focuses of Plum Technology, and Sophia began to recruit new members for her company. They would often have meetings that went on until midnight, and the team quickly bonded with one another.

As the sole agent in Cethos, their first step would be to advertise their brand. They sought out dealers and distributors before starting up after-sales service centers and warehouses all across the country. Soon enough, the headquarters sent the phones over to them. However, they weren't allowed to launch it immediately as they had to go according to the schedule of the global launch. Sophia paid out of her own pocket to get one phone for each of her staff, so that they could run an internal test on the phone to find its unique qualities and selling points that would allow them to advertise in a more efficient manner.

During that period of time, Sophia was overwhelmed with work. She spent all of her energy on the initial advertising for Dragon Eye, and she would often sleep in the office as she couldn't find the time to go home. Now, the most crucial issue they faced was the issue of popularity. Although Dragon Eye had been famous for decades on the international market and was the oldest brand in the whole world, it still wasn't as well known in Cethos. Furthermore, since it used to only sell high-end products, it was popular with celebrities. However, when it came to the general public, Serpent was still the preferred brand by a large margin.

The endorsement jobs that Nicholas and Michael received had boosted the fame of Dragon Eye in Cethos a little, but it still wasn't well-known enough for it to achieve the sales that they were hoping for. When a brand lacked popularity, there'd be fewer businesses that would collaborate with it, and it would be hard for them to develop a network of retail sellers and after-sales service centers. This would subsequently reduce their sales. Serpent, on the other hand, owned a number of exclusive Serpent stores even in the smallest towns to the west of Cethos. Dragon Eye simply lacked fame in the general market.

When Sophia felt like she was drowning in work, she would take a look at the portrait of her family with Michael and Carmen in it. All of her hard work was for the sake of their future. The Michel Family was losing their patience, and they were probably going to bring up the matter of changing Carmen's surname soon. If Sophia could just gain a little more power, she would have more speaking power within the Michel Family in the future!

The idea of that drove Sophia to flip her laptop open again before she continued drafting her marketing plan. A few of Dragon Eye's selling points included, firstly, a stylish, trendy design. Backed by the fame of the Michel Group, one could always purchase the low-end Dragon Eye phone if they couldn't afford the high-end one. This point itself would satisfy many young individuals and trend-followers. The next few points: the phones were sturdy; they had an efficient operating system; they were manufactured with great precision; and they were made with high-quality materials—all of these were important features that would have to be pointed out.

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It was late at night when Michael gave Sophia a video call. She was still busy drafting her plans. Once the call got through, Sophia saw Michael cuddling with Carmen. Both father and daughter had their cheeks pressed against each other as they edged closer to the screen. They resembled each other. Michael had vanished into his own world recently as he had been busy with his own schedules. The filming for 'Doctor Invincible 2' was about to begin soon, and there were a series of follow-ups that came after that. 'The Winter Breakthrough' was in its promotion phase, and the production crew of 'I Am the Village Chief 2' strongly requested for him to return to the show as a cameo. His schedule was completely packed.

"Mommy! I've just had my lunch!" Carmen cried out excitedly. Michael had brought Carmen overseas for a few minor roles in various productions, so they were in a different time zone.

Just the sight of Carmen's adorable face seemed to have erased all the troubles in Sophia's mind. Sophia perked her lips to kiss her daughter through the screen. "Darling, tell me all about your day! What did you do?"

Carmen began to talk about the shooting they had that morning. She played a minor role in a magical fairy-tale movie, and the production crew absolutely loved her. "It wasn't a tiring job; she only had to film for one day. We're going to the next production tomorrow, and it'll be a two- or three-day filming session. We'll come back right after that," Michael said.

"Okay," Sophia muttered in a tired voice.

"You should go to bed earlier, darling," Michael said.

Sophia felt her insides turning warm after hearing how he called her 'darling'. But she then reminded herself that they were now divorced. A divorce is better, really. This way, the Michel Group won't trouble Michael anymore since we're no longer together. But Carmen...

After ending the call, Michael lowered his phone and turned to Carmen. "You get some rest, kiddo. Don't go running around. I'll just go out to make a call."

Carmen nodded obediently. The film she appeared in today was a story about three good friends who ended up in an enchanted forest after they followed the instructions of a magical fairy. In the forest, the three friends successfully saved the princess from the hands of an evil monster. Carmen played the role of the magical fairy, and although it was only for a day, she got to dress up in a fairy's outfit. It made her look like an actual, pretty little fairy.

Michael felt reluctant to leave his daughter alone even for a second, but he had no choice but to step out for the call as Hale was anxiously waiting for him. After her father left, Carmen ate some jelly while the babysitter took care of her and a hairdresser came up to tidy her hair and clothes. Carmen didn't have to put any makeup on her face since she was still young.

All of a sudden, a man dressed in a black robe appeared a distance away from Carmen, staring at her intently. The man in the robe was one of the helpers for the evil monster in the movie. All of the helpers wore black masks, and there were more than 10 helpers that were dressed in black robes. The man's face couldn't be seen at all as he was wearing a black mask himself. He stood just a distance away from Carmen as he gradually reached a hand out to point his finger toward her. The pair of eyes beneath the mask gazed at Carmen in a malicious, sinister manner. Once I get the kid, I'd be able to easily deal with those few security guards of hers. I can then bring her along and disappear into thin air. There's already a car waiting for us outside the filming location... Upon that thought, he gradually walked toward her. Carmen didn't sense the impending threat as she continued to enjoy her jelly. She scooped tiny pieces of jelly and placed it into her mouth, her round and smooth cheeks wobbling as she munched on it. She was waiting for her father to come back.

When Carmen saw the man dressed in a black robe walking toward her, she thoughtfully lifted her jelly up to him. "Do you want some jelly too, uncle? Here—you can have all of mine," she uttered in an adorable, childish tone. The man in the black robe froze on his spot. He gradually lowered his hands, which he had previously extended to reach for the child. He then tucked his hands behind his back. His fists were clenched so tightly that he nearly tore his own skin apart. "That's fine. You can have it. I don't like jelly," he muttered in a deep voice. "I just wanted to come over and take a look at you because I thought you looked really cute."

After finishing his sentence, the helper in a black robe immediately left the filming site. He stopped at a spot where there was no one else in sight and took his mask off to reveal his face. It was Quinton...

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Quinton found out about Carmen's participation in this production crew as a cameo a while ago, and he wanted to kidnap the little girl so that he would be able to force Sophia to return to him! He had done such illegal acts a countless number of times, and he thought that he would be able to complete it without feeling the weight of guilt on his shoulders. However, after he saw Carmen's sweet and innocent face, all he could think about was how Sophia had cried at the top of her lungs at him back then. "My little Carmen was only 4 pounds when she came out. She nearly died! And it was all your fault!!" He couldn't forget how Carmen had been nothing more than a small ball of flesh when she was first born. The little child even stopped breathing for a while.

That was the most impactful and horrifying memory etched in Quinton's mind. Now that Carmen was all grown up—now that she was healthy, cute, and able to run and fool around like a regular child—how could he have the heart to bring any harm upon her? After some hesitation, Quinton finally gave up as he simply couldn't bear to harm Carmen. After texting his men to inform them of the aborted mission, Quinton sat himself on the ground dejectedly. All I want is for Sophia to stay with me. Why is that so hard? Why... I was the one that showed up in her life first; how could Michael just barge in and take my spot? How could he? How?! If it weren't for him, I would have been the one receiving all the love and care. Sophia should've been in love with me, and Carmen should've been my daughter! It feels like Michael just invaded my entire life and snatched all of it away from me.

Right then, one of Quinton's men rushed over to speak to him. "Boss, how are we supposed to inform those at Bayside City in Cethos about this if we're aborting the mission?"

Quinton's face darkened. "I refuse to lay hands on a child. Tell that person I'm not doing the job, and that I will not allow anyone else to take the job. Anyone who dares to lay a finger on that child would be going against my orders!"

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Meanwhile, Sophia spent another whole night in her office at Bayside City. She only managed to get a short nap after the sun was up. At noon time, she scrambled out of her office to grab herself a meal. She then got Shae to make her a cup of coffee before she continued with her work. As it was the first time Dragon Eye was publicly selling their products in Cethos, there was no foundation set for the process. As long as they managed

to put up a stable framework on their first launch, their job would be much easier in the future.

However, Sophia's assistant entered her office and surprised her with the news that very afternoon—Stanley had called for a meeting. Something huge must have happened! Sophia finished the rest of her coffee before rushing over to the meeting room with her assistant. She listened to her assistant's summary as they walked there. Apparently, Nicholas, the spokesperson of Dragon Eye in Cethos, posted a tweet that day itself. He wrote about how he smashed his two-month-old Dragon Eye handphone by accident, and there was a photo of the broken screen included in the tweet. His caption was a simple one. 'It seems like all the statements of it being bulletproof is just an advertising strategy. I even got hacked by someone a few days ago, and I lost a lot of important data. Sigh.'

He had just denied the two greatest selling points of Dragon Eye phones: good quality and an impenetrable system. This was the first time a spokesperson had ever publicly questioned the quality of the products that he endorsed. Furthermore, since Nicholas was such a famous figure, there were soon a lot of netizens who expressed their suspicion about the low-end Dragon Eye phones. Most of the people had never used a high-end Dragon Eye phone or even seen one, so they were excited to see the low-end version. But now, the phone's quality was being questioned by its own spokesperson. This was the first in history!

Nicholas' company, Glory Entertainment, soon made a public statement. They wanted to breach their end of the contract to terminate Nicholas' partnership with Dragon Eye. They stated that they would rather pay for the contract violation fees than endorse low-quality products that would only harm their own reputation. All of this happened so quickly that Sophia's team didn't even have the time to respond to it.

Nicholas' tweet and Glory Entertainment's statement came out almost at the same time. By the time Sophia's team came to their senses, the Internet was already flooded with all the negative comments from ghostwriters. The entire series of events occurred all at once, as if it had all been well-schemed. It seemed like Glory Entertainment was getting a little more confident now that they had gathered enough funds. Hah. Why isn't anyone talking about Sunny weight-loss tea anymore? Nicholas endorsed that drink, and someone died from consuming it. How dare they now talk about wanting to avoid endorsing products that would harm their reputation!

Stanley quickly gathered them for a meeting, where they all began to talk over one another to formulate a plan.

“We should get the after-sales department to contact Nicholas and take his phone for a quality check,” someone suggested.

“That’s useless. He did it on purpose. It’d be no use even if we took the phone in,” someone else said.

“We should get someone to boost the good comments first!” another one uttered.

“Contact Mr. Fields. We have to be prepared to go to court for the violation of our endorsement agreement and sue them for their act of slander,” someone added.

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Going to court was a lengthy process, and the time spent on it would provide Glory Entertainment with sufficient opportunity to utterly tarnish Dragon Eye’s reputation. They really gave it their all—they had successfully forced Sophia’s team into a corner. In the end, Sophia’s team came up with two sets of emergency measures. Plan A, they would skip the legal procedures and instead, privately contact Nicholas to convince him to restore the reputation of Dragon Eye. Otherwise, they would use their Plan B, which was a lot more brutal...

But Sophia immediately rejected their Plan A. Nicholas was clearly acting the way he did because of Sandra and Lucy’s orders. If they actually approached him privately, it would be giving him leverage against them—he could choose to magnify and complicate the entire issue to worsen the situation. Now that the phone’s quality was being questioned even before it was sold on the market, this was indeed a disaster to Dragon Eye, but it was also an opportunity in disguise. If they managed to seize this opportunity, it would become nothing but a free publicity act, which would further increase Dragon Eye’s fame. “I have an idea to deal with this. First, we’ll let the bullets come to us...”

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Finally, Plum Technology made a statement and took legal action, but they didn’t do anything else. Lawyers from both parties met up, and the agreement was dissolved. Plum Technology didn’t make a fuss out of it; they simply ended the contract after they received the violation fees. Both parties didn’t show any further disagreements on the matter; they didn’t even go to court. Nicholas’ company probably wouldn’t be able to afford it if they had to go to court.

As expected, Nicholas had already accepted the offer to be the spokesperson of Serpent, and he was just waiting for his contract with Dragon Eye to be ended. He proceeded to become the spokesperson for Serpent right after he posted all the negative reviews about Dragon Eye phones' quality. What a typical example of someone who uses others to his own benefit, Sophia thought. I'd never fancied Nicholas as an individual, and I'd always wanted to cut him off and get a new spokesperson. That was the perfect chance for us to do it.

Both the Serpent and Dragon Eye phones were placed together for side-by-side comparisons once again. Serpent was known to be the best on the market, and Dragon Eye was a brand-new competitor. However, Dragon Eye was utterly defeated by Serpent before it could even be sold on the market—all the ghostwriters flooded the comment and review sections with their negative criticisms. 10 marks was the full score for the products, and Dragon Eye phones received so many negative reviews that it went down to a score of 1.

Both Serpent and its spokesperson took the opportunity to advance themselves by stepping on Dragon Eye's reputation. Right then, Serpent had already begun their pre-order sales. Within 5 hours, there were already 6 million pre-orders made. This broke the record of Serpent's—or any other phone's—sales in Cethos.

6 million pre-orders within 5 hours was an impressive number that had left the industry stunned. Dragon Eye, on the other hand... didn't even have a spokesperson. The bulletproof mechanisms and the impenetrable systems that they had been so proud of were now denied by the public, and they hadn't even released their date for pre-orders to begin with. Plum Technology was a mess, and the office was panicking. Chaos was everywhere, and the workers didn't even have time to clean up their tables after finishing their lunch. This was the exact scene that Michael was greeted with once he got back to the country and visited the company.

Once the workers saw Michael, they all quickly spread the news. "Come and take a look, guys. The boss' 'wife' is here!"