

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love

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The person who caught her was none other than her partner and jewelry designer, Annette Jennings.

"It's me," said Annette, putting down her hands.

Lacey Jones, the designer who had wanted to lay a finger on Natalie's and Lina's stuff, snorted. "What's the matter? Are you going to report me?"

Smiling, Annette replied, "It looks like you admit to it. Don't worry. I'm not going to report you. We're partners, after all. If I report you and you end up getting kicked out of the competition, I'll lose my partner and won't be able to continue competing anyway. It won't do me any good to report you."

"That what do you want?" Lacey pursed her lips.

She had already known that Annette would not report her, so she had breathed a sigh of relief when she saw that it was Annette who had caught her.

"I don't want anything. I'm just hoping that you'll include me in your plans," said Annette.

Lacey was shocked. "You've lost it. Have you thought about the consequences? If I do it on my own and get caught, you'll get off scot-free. At most, you won't be allowed to compete. But if we're both caught, you'll—"

"I know. I haven't lost it. I just want to stop Lina from advancing any further in this competition," Annette interrupted with a flash of hatred in her eyes.

Lacey looked at Annette curiously. "Do you have a beef with Natalie's partner?"

Annette balled her hands into fists and hissed through clenched teeth, "That wretched woman stole a large part of my resources in a previous jewelry competition. The suppliers had approached me first. However, they changed their mind after seeing her work and chose to work with her instead. It was utterly humiliating. How could I not hate her after that?"

Lacey could empathize with Annette. "That does warrant a grudge."

I'd feel the same way if someone snatched away my resources.

"But that's only one of the reasons why I hate her. The main reason is that she's an uncouth woman who doesn't have the necessary understanding and respect for jewelry design. She should be content with getting into the finals. How dare she even think of winning? She should know her place and not try to get her grubby hands on what's ours," Annette spat out, her face contorting with rage.

Lacey's eyes gleamed. "I can't believe that we're on the same page. That's what I think too! Natalie has no right to come here to gain fame and glory, let alone stop us from winning."

"That's why we should work together. Julian is an idiot for trying to do it all on her own. She's just presenting her head on a silver platter," Annette remarked in a voice dripping with disdain.

Lacey looked Annette in the eye and held out her hand. "Here's to a happy partnership."

After exchanging smiles, one of them stood in front of the chair and blocked it from view while the other knelt behind the chair and got to work.

Meanwhile, Natalie, Lina, and Sally sat on a couch in the room next door. All three of them were looking at a computer screen with grave expressions.

Lacey and Annette's conversation, as well as their every action, was being recorded.

Unbeknownst to others, they had installed spy cameras in the dressing room the previous day.

After talking to Shane a few days ago, Natalie realized that there would surely still be some ill-intentioned people who would not give up and try to sabotage her even though they had seen what had happened to unethical Julian.

Hence, she had gotten someone to install the spy cameras, then put on an act in the dressing room with Sally and Lina before leaving.

The dress and jewelry she had deliberately left on the chair would serve as bait for those who wanted to ruin her chances in the competition.

And voila, I was right! But I didn't expect that Lacey and Annette would be the ones who'd try to sabotage me.

"That's it. I can't bear to watch this any longer. I'm going to catch them red-handed right now!" An enraged Lina rose to her feet and headed straight for the door.

Natalie called out, "There's no rush. The show is going to start soon. You'll only be wasting time if you go over there now. Let's wait until after the show. Besides, we have the whole thing caught on camera. What's there to be afraid of?"

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"She's right," Sally said, nodding.

Lina turned around and returned to her seat reluctantly.

Natalie unzipped the garment bag containing the actual dress meant for the runway. "All right, we'll start doing Sal's makeup now. Lina, you're in charge of doing her hair."

Lina nodded. "Okay."

While they went about with their preparations, Annette and Lacey glanced at their watches over in the dressing room.

“There are only fifteen minutes left before the show starts, but they’re not back yet. Aren’t they going to come and get their dress?” Lacey sounded a little worried as she looked at the time.

Annette sipped her coffee calmly. “It doesn’t matter. Even if they don’t return before the show, that’s good news for us too. If they’re late, they’ll get disqualified just the same!”

“That’s true,” Lacey answered, nodding.

At that moment, the door to the dressing room opened, and one of the staff walked in. “Sorry to interrupt, but Ms. Natalie sent me. Her model took a tumble and is now at the infirmary, so she sent me to take her dress and jewelry to the infirmary. They’ll be doing the model’s makeup there. May I know where her things are?”

Upon hearing that, Annette and Lacey exchanged glances.

Lacey bit her lip and said in a frustrated tone, “They’re not late!”

Annette scoffed. “So what? Don’t forget that even if they’re not late, they’ll place last if their model messes up on the runway, and they’ll end up getting eliminated.”

“Right. You’re right,” Lacey said with a smile. Then, pointing to the chair in front of her, she said to the staff, “Her things are here.”

“Great. Sorry for interrupting!” the staff said with a smile and left after taking the bag.

Suddenly, Tina called out, “Wait!”

The staff stopped and looked at her questioningly.

Tina went over and said softly, “Tell Natalie and her friends that there might be something wrong with the dress.”

The staff’s eyes glinted with realization. Then she smiled and nodded. “I understand. I’ll be on my way then.”

“Of course,” Tina replied, stepping aside.

As Tina walked back to where she was sitting, Annette grabbed her arm. “What did you say to her just now?”

Tina cast a sidelong glance at Annette’s hand, then shook her off expressionlessly. “Nothing.”

Annette opened her mouth to protest, but Lacey pulled her aside. “Forget it. Stop asking her about it. We’ll only risk exposing ourselves if we ask too many questions.”

“Do you think she doesn’t suspect us?” Annette retorted with contempt.

Lacey stared at her, stunned. “Do you mean that she...”

“When we were tampering with the dress, I noticed that she kept looking over at us several times. I suspect that she knows what we did.” Annette narrowed her eyes.

Annette’s answer made Lacey feel anxious. “What should we do?”

“There’s only one thing to do, and that’s to teach her a lesson. But not now. We’ll wait until after the show,” Annette replied with a darkened expression.

Lacey nodded. “I suppose that’s the only way.”

She gazed at Tina, and an apologetic look flashed across her eyes.

I never intended to harm Tina, since she’s much less skilled than me. But Natalie is a different story. Her talent is comparable to mine. I’d even say she’s way better than me. She’s also much younger. Most importantly, her husband isn’t just a random nobody.

He has the power to influence the competition organizer. If she gets him to pull some strings, the rest of us won’t stand a chance of winning. Because of her capabilities and background, I have to take her down. I have to stop her from using the resources she has to win. I believe that others would target her for the same reasons.

Over in the room next door, the staff handed the bag to Natalie.

Just as Natalie was about to thank her, the staff repeated what Tina had said.

Natalie smiled. "All right, got it. Thanks for your help."

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"You're welcome." The staff bowed slightly, then turned and left.

Natalie closed the door behind her.

Taking the bag from Natalie, Lina said, "I heard what she said. Tina's a good person. I wonder what those two did to the contents of this bag."

One of them stood in front of the chair and blocked it from view, so we couldn't see what they were doing.

"We'll know once we take a look," Sally piped up as she walked over. Her makeup was all done, and she had put on the actual dress and jewelry. She stretched out a hand to reach into the bag.

Natalie quickly stopped her. "Wait!"

Sally withdrew her hand instinctively. "What's the matter?"

Lina was also staring at Natalie.

Natalie pursed her lips. "Annette and Lacey may be targeting Lina and me, but the person who's supposed to wear the dress and jewelry is Sally. If they dropped some poisonous insects into the bag or sprayed something that would cause skin irritation, you won't be able to walk on the runway if you touched it."

When Lina heard that, she widened her eyes and nodded slowly. "She has a point. Don't touch it, Sal. They tampered with the dress and jewelry in this bag because they thought that's what you're going to wear. I'm sure they intended to prevent you from walking the runway or for something to happen to you on the runway. If that happened, Natalie and I wouldn't be able to get high marks, and we'd get eliminated."

"They're simply too wicked!" Sally fumed.

Natalie massaged her temples. "All right, now's not the time to get angry. Lina, it's almost time. Take Sal backstage and get ready for the show. I'm going to take this to Shane and ask him to have someone take a look at it."

"Okay." Lina nodded.

Thus, the three of them split up.

Carrying the bag, Natalie went to the lounge to look for Shane and the kids.

They had been secretly spying on the dressing room for the female models, so it would not have been convenient for Shane to be there. Hence, he could only wait in the lounge with Connor and Sharon.

Natalie hurried toward the lounge.

When she arrived, the bodyguard keeping watch outside the lounge opened the door for her at once.

The first thing she saw was the kids lying on the couch, fast asleep. Meanwhile, Shane and Silas were discussing something. Shane was seated while Silas stood next to him. As soon as they saw her enter, they stopped talking.

"Madam," Silas greeted with a nod.

Natalie smiled in response.

Shane got up and led her to where he was seated. "Why are you here? Isn't the show about to start?"

"We caught some people up to no good on the cameras," Natalie replied.

His eyes narrowed. "Who?"

"Annette and Lacey. They tampered with the dress and jewelry we deliberately left on a chair. However, due to the angle of the camera, we couldn't see what they did. We also didn't dare to take the things out of the bag just in case there was something poisonous. That's why I brought it here, thinking that you could get someone to run some tests on it."

With that, Natalie placed the bag on the table.

Shane looked at Silas, who nodded immediately. "Got it. I'll get someone to conduct some tests."

"Hold on," Natalie called out.

Silas halted in his tracks. "Is there anything else you need?"

"Why don't you send someone else to do it? The show is going to begin soon. It's Sal's first show since the two of you started dating, so I'm sure you don't want to miss it. Am I right?" Natalie glanced at the camera hanging around his neck with a half-smile.

Shane arched a brow. Ah, I see.

He had wondered why Silas had a camera with him, but since he rarely pried into the personal affairs of others, he did not think much about it.

Not expecting Natalie to see through him, Silas scratched his head shyly. His face even turned red.

Natalie chuckled lightly. "Get someone else to do the job, then go and watch the show. Sal will be the last one to go on, so you probably won't miss it."

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“Mr. Shane,” Silas said, looking toward Shane with a mixture of nervousness and hope.

Although she told me to get someone else to do it, Mr. Shane is still my boss. I need to get his permission first.

Shane took in the warning look Natalie shot at him and Silas’ hopeful gaze. Massaging his temples, he replied, “Do as she says.” Practically jumping with excitement, Silas thanked them profusely.

Natalie grinned. “All right. Hurry on your way then.”

“Right away!” Silas picked up the bag and left.

Natalie hugged Shane’s arm and chided gently, “I know you regard Mr. Campbell highly, but you have to consider his situation at times. He’s already thirty years old and has finally found a girlfriend. Even if you don’t give him more time off to nurture their budding relationship, you shouldn’t overwork him.”

“When have I ever done that?” Shane demanded, looking at her indignantly.

Silas is my subordinate. Isn’t it his duty to follow my orders?

Natalie knew Shane like the back of her hand, and she could tell what was running through his mind with just one glance. Smiling, she shook her head. “Look at you. I won’t talk about all the work you ask him to do during working hours. However, you also call him after working hours and ask him to do this and that! What’s worse, you get him to do work for you late at night! In this case, aren’t you overworking him?”

Shane could not find the words to respond.

It's true. Whenever I need anything, I'll call Silas regardless of the time and day. I've done it for so many years that I've gotten used to it. Moreover, Silas has never uttered a single complaint. That's why I never thought that I was doing anything wrong.

"So, you should try and let others do some things now and again. Don't pile everything onto Mr. Campbell. Besides, you said that you'd transfer him after a while. What's going to happen if he becomes the subsidiary company's CEO? Are you going to call and ask him to come back when you need something?" Natalie continued, giving him a smart tap on his forehead.

Shane grabbed her hand and pressed it to his lips. "All right. You're saying all this just because you hope that I'll give Sally and Silas more time to spend with each other, right?"

"You got me," Natalie admitted frankly with a laugh.

He wrapped his arms around her and pulled her onto his lap. "You made it so obvious, so how could I have missed it? Did Sally ask you to say all that?"

"Or course not! It was my own idea. They've had very little time to spend with each other since they started dating, so I thought I'd try and help them out," Natalie replied, leaning against his chest.

Shane pondered for a few seconds. "All right. I'll contact the HR department later and ask them to train some other assistants."

By doing so, there will be someone to take Silas' place once he gets transferred.

"You're the best, Darling!" Natalie put an arm around his neck and gave him a quick kiss.

Shane's eyes darkened. When Natalie started to move away, he raised his hand and placed it on the back of her head. Leaning even closer, he pried her lips open and deepened the kiss.

At the same time, Connor and Sharon woke up.

Seeing the scene before them, Sharon was about to call out when Connor quickly covered her mouth and whispered, "Hush, don't make a sound. Let's pretend to be asleep. If Mommy and Daddy

realize that we're awake, Mommy will get embarrassed and push Daddy away, and Daddy will blame us for it."

Sharon nodded immediately.

Connor lifted his hand off her mouth. Then they quietly lay back down on the couch and closed their eyes, pretending to be asleep.

They thought their movements were quiet and did not attract Shane's and Natalie's attention.

In truth, Shane and Natalie had noticed it at once.

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Just as Connor had said, Natalie blushed in embarrassment and tried to push Shane away.

However, Shane did not give her the chance to do so. Instead, he nipped at her earlobe and murmured, "Since the children are pretending not to have seen anything, we should respect their wishes by pretending that we haven't realized that they're awake and continue kissing."

Then he pressed his lips against hers once again.

Natalie was both amused and infuriated by his words.

Respect their wishes? What's that supposed to mean? It's clear that he's just addicted to kissing and doesn't want to let go of me. I can't believe he'd use the children as an excuse. How shameless!

Shane continued kissing her for quite some time and only let her go when she started feeling dizzy and out of breath.

Natalie pushed him away at once and climbed off his lap. She sat next to him and took out her phone to look at herself in the front camera.

Seeing her swollen lips, she could not stop herself from shooting him a withering glare. "My lips are all swollen now, and it's all your fault. How am I supposed to go out like this? Lina and the others are definitely going to make fun of me."

"So, let them," Shane answered nonchalantly with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Well, of course, you'd say that. They wouldn't dare to make fun of you." Natalie put down her cell phone huffily.

Shane caressed her bump gently as if he did not hear a word she said.

Suddenly, he felt a kick, and he froze in surprise.

Natalie smirked. "See! Even the baby agrees with me. That's why the baby kicked you."

After a momentary daze, Shane gazed lovingly at his hand that had just felt the baby's kick. "This little rascal is getting stronger."

"All right, I'm leaving now. The show is about to start, so I have to go and take a look. You stay here and watch the kids. Call me once the test results are out, okay?" Natalie stood up and smoothed her hair that Shane's large hands had mussed up.

"Go on then. I got it," Shane replied.

Natalie nodded and left the lounge.

When she arrived at the runway, she went to the seating area set aside for the designers and sat next to Lina. She looked around and asked, "Where are Annette and Lacey?"

"They said they're going to check on their models backstage, but I think they just want to keep an eye on Sal," Lina answered, rolling her eyes.

Natalie sneered. "They're really so worried. Oh, did anything happen when they saw that Sal's dress and jewelry were absolutely fine?"

Lina contemplated for a moment before shaking her head.
“Nope.”

“Hmm, that means they didn’t spoil the dress and jewelry but put something in them instead,” Natalie mused as she stroked her chin thoughtfully.

Lina grunted in acknowledgment. “That’s what I think too. Otherwise, they would’ve reacted when they saw Sal wearing them.”

“Whatever it is, they won’t get away with it,” Natalie replied coldly, her eyes narrowing.

Lina looked at her and asked, “Have we gotten the test results already?”

“No. I told Shane to call me once the results are out,” Natalie responded.

Lina turned back toward the runway. “Then let’s not bother about that for now and focus on the show. It’s almost Sal’s turn. Did you know that Mr. Campbell rushed over just now to ask why Sal hadn’t appeared yet? His impatient expression was so funny!”

As she recounted what happened, she could not help letting out a chuckle.

Natalie also laughed. “Well, it’s his first relationship in thirty years. You can’t blame him for being a little enthusiastic.”

“You’re right,” Lina replied, grinning from ear to ear.

Soon, the music blaring from the stage changed, and the lights dimmed. All that was left was a single spotlight shining down on the runway.

A silhouette emerged from the shadows and stood at the top of the illuminated runway, striking an elegant pose.

The gazes of the audience and critics fell upon the figure.

Then, the figure began to sashay down the runway in time with the music, her arms swinging in a relaxed manner as she made her way to the end of the runway.

The long dress swished with every step she took, mesmerizing everyone.

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The jewelry shone under the bright light, making Sally look like a goddess descended from heaven. Everyone could not take their eyes off her.

When Natalie saw the crowd's reaction and the judges' expression, she exchanged glances with Lina and was confident that they would advance to the finals.

Annette's and Lacey's expressions darkened.

They grew nervous when they saw that Sally was about to complete her catwalk without strange incidents.

"Hey, is the powder you brought fake?" Lacey whispered unhappily to Annette.

Annette frowned and replied, "I'm sure it's authentic because I've used it before. She should feel the effects of the power in ten minutes."

"It's been more than ten minutes, and Sally seems completely fine." Lacey stomped her foot impatiently.

Not only was Natalie and her team not late for the catwalk, but Sally even completed her catwalk without incident. Natalie and her team would surely obtain a high score for their performance.

It meant that Annette and Lacey's plan had failed.

Annette bit her lower lip hard. "How would I know that she wouldn't react to the powder? I have administered it. She either has high endurance, or the powder is not working."

"Hmph, you're useless. If I knew this would happen, I would have done it my way and cut their dress and jewelry," Lacey said furiously.

Her words angered Annette. "Cut them up? Do you think Natalie and the others wouldn't know if you cut their dress and jewelry in the dressing room? Once they investigate, do you think we can hide? At least my drug doesn't ruin their dress and jewelry. They wouldn't realize that I've done something to them. At most, they would think that Sally ate something bad and had an allergic reaction. Therefore, my way is still the safest option!"

"What's the use of it being the safest? Your plan is completely useless!" Lacey sneered.

Annette clenched her fists. "I don't want to waste my time talking to you."

Both of them began fighting each other.

And someone in the control room witnessed that scene.

Silas had instructed him earlier to spy on Annette and Lacey from the control room. It was to prevent them from leaving the surveillance range and escaping.

Once the competition was over, the organizer would detain Annette and Lacey.

Soon, the fashion show ended, and all the models came back on the runway for the curtain call.

The designers, too, came onto the runway and stood beside their models.

After the curtain call, the judges began their evaluation to determine who would proceed to the final round.

Only three groups would make it to the final round. They would choose the winners of the first, second, and third prizes from among these three finalists.

Therefore, this was the most vital stage for the participating designers.

Once they made it to the final round, it meant that they had secured at least the third prize. Even if the designer could not win the first prize, the third prize could garner worldwide recognition and glory.

The designers held their breaths in trepidation. They fear that they might not hear their results if they breathed too loud.

“Nat, I’m nervous.” Lina, who was holding Natalie’s hand, broke out in a cold sweat.

Natalie patted the back of Lina’s hand. “Don’t be nervous. I’m confident that we can proceed to the finals.”

Annette stood beside Natalie and heard what she said. She narrowed her eyes and looked down. It was hard to tell what she was thinking.

Lina smiled and said, “Yes, you’re right.”

She had seen the judges’ expressions during Sally’s catwalk. She believed that they would proceed to the final round.

Shortly after, the host stepped onto the runway with a name list of groups that made it to the final round.

Natalie and Lina were in Group Three.

Since the competition combined the clothing and jewelry section, they no longer grouped the designers into Team A and Team B. It was unnecessary to group them into two teams because only a few designers remained after the elimination.

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After Natalie and Lina partnered up, they drew the lot and were placed in Group Three. At this moment, the host announced that Group Three was among the groups that made it to the final round.

Even though Natalie and Lina had guessed that they would make it to the finals, they could not help but cheer and hug each other upon hearing the result.

In the dressing room, Shane was smiling as he watched the live stream. However, when he saw Natalie and Lina hugging each other, his smile froze. Suddenly, he felt annoyed with Lina.

“Daddy, Mommy made it to the final round.” Connor pumped his fist excitedly.

Although Sharon did not quite understand what was happening, she was happy to hear that Natalie made it to the final round.

Connor had told her that entering the final round meant that Natalie had won.

Therefore, Sharon was happy to hear that.

Shane pursed his lips and grunted to indicate that he heard Connor.

Connor looked at him in confusion. “Daddy, are you unhappy that Mommy made it to the final round?”

“No, I’m happy for her,” Shane said as he continued to look at the unpleasant scene of Natalie and Lina hugging each other.

Connor pursed his lips. “But you don’t seem happy at all.”

The designers who made it to the final round cheered excitedly on the runway. On the other hand, those who failed looked down dejectedly.

Annette and Lacey were among those who did not make it to the final round. They looked at the other cheering designers with twisted expressions and eyes red with jealousy.

When they saw Natalie and Lina, they were even more upset.

They had taken risks and even put their future career on the line to sabotage Natalie and Lina. However, they failed to disqualify Natalie and Lina in the end and got themselves eliminated from the competition instead.

This is outrageous!

Annette grew furious the more she thought about it. Unable to stand it anymore, she clenched her fists, stepped forward, and shouted loud and clear, "I can't accept it!"

Instantly, the whole venue fell silent. Everyone, including hundreds of live audience and people watching the live stream from all over the world, watched her curiously.

Meanwhile, the reporters on-site immediately focused their cameras on her and kept taking photos.

After all, the fact that someone had stepped out at this moment to question the judges' decision was a piece of shocking news.

"Oh? What can't you accept?" the host asked Annette disdainfully before lifting the microphone to her mouth. "Perhaps you can explain what you're unhappy about?"

Nearby, Lina whispered to Natalie, "Nat, I've seen people who asked for trouble, but I've never seen anyone wanting to ruin themselves so desperately."

Natalie smiled and said, "Since she wants to ruin herself this urgently, let's give it to her."

Natalie had planned to wait for the audience and the reporters to leave before calling the organizer to deal with Annette and Lacey.

But now, since Annette had stepped out to question the judges and humiliate the organizer, Natalie believed the organizer would not show her mercy. They would surely be glad to punish Annette and Lacey and reveal their ugly side to the world.

The host's cold attitude at this moment said it all.

"What can't I accept? Hmph, I can't accept the result." Annette puffed out her chest. "I think the result is unfair. There must be something shady involving the judges."

The audience gasped upon hearing what she said.

Below the runway, the judges all frowned and looked at Annette sternly.

The host's expression darkened, and he tightened his grip on the microphone. Reporters below the runway were frantic with excitement. They had the urge to run up the runway and shove their microphones in Annette's face to get her to reveal more.

"Ms. Jennings, why did you say that there's something shady going on among the judges? Do you know something?" a reporter asked loudly.

The other reporters stared at Annette, anticipating her answer.

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Lina nudged Natalie gently. "Nat, don't you think she's crazy? Why is she criticizing the judges? The judges are all top of their leagues. How is she going to survive in this industry after offending all of them?"

"Who knows what she's thinking." Natalie shrugged as she was clueless as well.

However, she believed that they would soon find out.

As expected, Annette turned to Natalie before revealing her answer.

Natalie frowned.

Why is she looking at me? Don't tell me that it has something to do with me.

Annette snatched the microphone from the host. "I knew something shady is going on because of what Ms. Smith just told me."

"Huh?" Natalie was shocked.

Indeed, she is dragging me into this. But when did I ever say something like that to her?

Natalie was not alone. Even Lina and Lacey were shocked too.

Lacey was shocked because Annette had hidden such vital information from her.

Lina, on the other hand, was shocked with disbelief.

"Nat, did you say something like that to her?" Lina pointed at Annette.

Natalie rolled her eyes. "How is that possible? I've never spoken to her."

"Then why did she call you out?" Lina blinked in bewilderment.

Natalie shrugged. "How would I know? Annette, I would like to know what is going on too. When did I tell you that there's something shady involving the judges?"

She received the microphone from the host and looked at Annette calmly. What Annette said did not faze her at all.

When the reporters and the audience watching the live stream saw how calm Natalie was, none of them believed in Annette's accusation.

"You said it just now." Annette glared at Natalie.

Natalie frowned. "Just now?"

"Yes, everyone was nervous before the result came out, but you and Lina remained calm. You told Lina that you were sure that both of you would proceed to the final round. So let me ask you. No one knew the result then, but how did the both of you know that you would get through? There is only one obvious answer. Both of you knew that you would make it to the final round since the beginning because you bribed the judges." Annette pointed at the row of judges.

The judges could not help but laugh upon hearing Annette's explanation.

Natalie and Lina laughed too.

However, the reporters and Annette did not understand what was going on and wondered why they were laughing.

In the dressing room, Shane narrowed his eyes viciously and said, "I've never seen someone so stupid."

Connor nodded in agreement. "Yes, she didn't even bother to hide her stupidity and showed it to the world. What was she thinking?"

Sharon looked at her father and her brother in confusion.

"Ms. Smith, is what Ms. Jennings said true? Did you bribe the judges?" asked the reporter from before.

Natalie rolled her eyes at the reporter. "Do you think it is possible? Do you think I can afford to bribe sixteen top designers?"

Realization dawned upon everyone.

She's right. Natalie may be famous now, but she's just a rookie designer. How can a rookie designer afford to bribe a top designer, much less sixteen of them?

"I never said that you bribed all of them. But I'm sure you have bribed a few of them. Let's not forget about your mentor. She will definitely make sure that you make it to the final round. As for the other judges, from what I knew, they are your mentor's friends. Perhaps—"

"Shut up!" Natalie interrupted. "You can criticize me, but not my mentor and her peers. They are all our esteemed predecessors in this field. You have no right to criticize them."

The judges nodded with satisfaction upon hearing what Natalie said.

"Mercede, your student is quite impressive." The top designer beside Mercede praised Natalie.

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"Thank you for the compliment. She's all right," Mercede replied calmly and did not seem to think much about it.

However, one could not help but notice her flipping her hair delightedly.

"Since the judges accepted bribes, how is it wrong for me to criticize them?" Annette laughed in exasperation.

Natalie clenched her fists. "Do you have evidence that they accepted bribes?"

"What you said just now is the evidence." Annette pushed the ball back to Natalie's court.

The reporter from before asked, "Ms. Smith, can you explain what you said just now? How did you know that you would advance to the finals even before the host announced the result?"

"That's not a problem." Natalie glanced at Annette indifferently. "I said that we would make it to the finals because when our model presented our work, I noticed the judges' expressions. When they saw Lina and my design, they all nodded with approval. So I predicted that we would get to the final round."

"That's right. If you don't believe her, you can check the security footage and ask the judges," Lina said.

A reporter went to ask the judges.

One of the judges stood up and said, "Ms. Smith is right. When we saw their model coming onto the runway, we expressed approval and appreciation. We will not deny that. Now, Ms. Jennings, do you have anything else to say?"

The top designers all looked at Annette disdainfully.

Annette was embarrassed and furious. "You are all conspiring with each other. Don't you know that Natalie has a powerful husband? Even if she can't afford to bribe these top designers, her husband can bribe them for her."

Natalie was livid. Not only did Annette make baseless accusations against the top designers, but she had even dragged Shane into this.

She chuckled and said, "You are welcome to investigate my husband's financial record."

"You can investigate us too," the top designers said in unison.

Natalie gave them a grateful smile before saying to Annette with a stern expression, "Did you hear that? We welcome you to investigate us if you dare. I shall stop being a designer if you find something shady against me. Likewise, you will quit this industry if you find nothing. What do you think? Do you dare to investigate?"

Lina stepped out and announced, "Count me in."

Annette did not expect Natalie to up the stakes so high. She opened her mouth but was too flustered to say anything.

Everyone sneered, knowing that she did not dare to investigate based on her expression.

The audience finally understood what was going on. They knew that Annette was unhappy that she lost and had deliberately stirred up trouble to drag Natalie and the others down. In actuality, there was nothing shady concerning the judges.

People began scolding Annette on the internet. They criticized her for being a sore loser who resorted to defaming others and damaging their reputation out of spite. They also said that she was a talentless and vicious woman.

In short, her name became hated everywhere.

Even though Annette could not see the comments on the internet, she could see the hatred from the live audience's expressions.

At the moment, she desperately wished for the ground to swallow her whole.

"Looks like Ms. Jennings does not dare to investigate," Natalie said calmly.

Annette bit her lower lip and glared at Natalie hatefully. "Fine, I admit that you win. Can I leave now?"

She could not stand being on the stage anymore as the numerous pairs of eyes glaring at her made her feel uncomfortable.

Natalie gave a smile that did not reach her eyes. "Who said you can leave?"

Annette paused in her tracks and glared at Natalie viciously. "What do you want?"

“You slandered the top designers and me. Although we have proved ourselves to be innocent, you have not.” Natalie crossed her arms.

Annette sneered, “How am I not innocent? All I did was suspect that something was shady based on what you said. Since I’ve made a wrong guess, that doesn’t mean I’m guilty. One could only say that I was too rash.”

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“No, no, no. That’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about what you and Lacey did to my dress and Lina’s jewelry in the dressing room. You tried to humiliate our model on the runway and get us disqualified from the competition.” Natalie raised her voice and looked at Annette and Lacey.

Annette’s expression changed.

Lacey began to panic.

How could this happen? How did Natalie find out about this?

The judges and audience watching the live stream were all stunned.

Mercede stood up from among the judges and asked sternly, “Nat, is that true?”

Everyone wanted to know the answer to this question.

Meanwhile, the reporters focused their cameras on Natalie, Lina, Annette, and Lacey.

Natalie remained calm. She nodded and said, "It's true. I have the security footage here. Everyone can see for themselves. I'll leave it to the host."

"Sure." The host nodded and pressed his earpiece to speak to someone in the studio.

Soon, a projection screen was lowered onto the runway, and a video played.

The video showed Annette and Lacey entering a dressing room. One of them was keeping watch while the other did what had to be done.

Seeing this video, everyone knew that Natalie was telling the truth.

Annette's face went pale from fright. She did not bother to ask Natalie how she obtained the video but screamed, "Turn it off! Turn it off now!"

Annette's reaction proved that the video was real.

Lacey was not as bold as Annette. When she saw the video, she slumped onto the floor and muttered dumbly, "We're doomed. It's all over!"

"Why should we turn it off? Isn't this your grand plan? We should let everyone witness it. After all, this is your rare chance of glory that only comes once. Reporters, why are you standing there? Take all the pictures you can. This news is more than enough to meet your performance target!" Natalie shouted.

Her words triggered the reporters to act.

They quickly rushed to snap photos and bombarded Annette and Lacey with questions after questions.

There was nowhere for Annette and Lacey to hide.

Lina crossed her arms. "My goodness, the reporters here are crazier than the ones in our country."

Natalie smiled. "These reporters have ruined the careers of many international superstars. They do live up to their reputation."

"Yes, these two are doomed," Lina sneered as she looked at Annette and Lacey.

Lacey sat on the floor and covered her ears with her hands. She refused to listen to the outrageous questions thrown at her.

Annette, on the other hand, could not escape even if she wanted to. The reporters had gotten onto the runway and chased after her to question her.

Unable to stand it anymore, she turned around and chased the reporters like a mad person. "Go away! Leave me alone!"

However, her behavior did not deter the reporters. Instead, they became even more excited.

A young designer going mad was another potentially explosive news to them.

In the end, more and more reporters came onto the runway and surrounded Annette and Lacey.

Natalie, Lina, and the other designers and models were pushed to the side.

Shane frowned upon seeing this scene and made a quick phone call.

Upon receiving Shane's call, a team of bodyguards rushed to the scene and shielded Natalie behind them. They were protecting her from the reporters to prevent them from bumping into her and hurting the baby.

This media frenzy persisted for more than ten minutes before the organizer stepped in and put it to a stop.

After the reporters left, Annette and Lacey were finally free.

Lacey broke down. She sat dazed on the floor as though she had lost her soul. Her eyes seemed lifeless, and she did not move at all.

Annette was in a slightly better state, though she looked a little weary.