

Ex Convict 73

Chapter 73

It had been a long time since Grace got two days in a row off, and on a weekend, no less. Normally, she was working overtime and taking whichever shifts she was assigned.

Since Grace finally got some rare time off, Lina took her shopping.

The two of them had not gone shopping for a long time. Grace because she lacked the time and the money, and Lina because Grace's erratic schedule made planning a shopping trip almost impossible.

When they strolled around the mall, Grace felt as if she had momentarily returned to the past when, before the accident, she had been carefree.

She'd taken so many things for granted.

Money, time. Friendships. Her freedom.

Now, she appreciated each moment.

Her life might not be so beautiful or easy or glamorous, but she was appreciative of every minute.

Even in her best days before, when she'd graduated at the top of her class, landed Sean and her future had seemed so bright... she had not been so mindful of those things.

Lina elbowed her side. "All right, this has been going on for months now. Spill. What's the deal with Jay? How much do you know about him now?"

Before Grace could even answer, Lina was talking...

"Where is he from, where's his hometown? What kind of people are in his family? You know a lot of people can seem nice before they swindle someone."

Right. This could be one big cat fishing trick.

"Lina, if Jay was looking for someone to scam, he could find someone who actually had something to take. I'm poor. I have a dead end job. I've neither money nor much going on with my career."

Lina waved that away. "Tell me about his family."

Grace considered saying that she didn't know anything, but that would just make her friend pry more. "I only know that his father has already passed away, and his mother seems to have left him. He didn't tell me anything else, and I didn't ask." Grace shrugged.

"Are you dumb? That's all you know? You should at least know what he used to do!" Lina said.

Grace smiled faintly. "Why would I need to find out what he used to do? In the past, I thought I knew everything about Sean – everything from his family background to the schools he

attended. I even remembered his license plate and ID numbers very clearly. But in the end, what did it matter? I still couldn't see him for who he really was."

"Fair." Lina bit her lip. "Sorry."

"What's there to be sorry about?" Grace laughed. "It's nothing for you to fuss about, anyway. I know you're worried about me, but I really don't care about any of that anymore. Besides, if he doesn't want to tell me and I persist in asking, he may just make up some stories to conceal the truth, and I wouldn't be able to tell, so what's the point of asking?"

That was one truth that Grace didn't really want to dwell on.

She might put forth a good front for Lina, and even for Jay.

But she knew he had his secrets.

She knew he had a whole life before she entered it.

Did it hurt that he didn't want to share things with her? It did. But she understood him, and she recognized a kindred soul that was suffering. Who was she to force him to share his pain?

"Let's not talk about this. Come, let's go and get some new clothes." Grace didn't actually intend to buy anything, but it seemed a good enough excuse to get Lina to change the subject.

"The boss of our design research institute has asked me to wear formal clothes when I meet clients," Lina complained as she pulled Grace into a big designer store.

Grace paused. She couldn't afford the clothes in here and she didn't want Lina to try and purchase something for her.

"Oh, just relax already. I won't force you to buy anything. And I promise not to buy it for you if you're going to have a freakout."

Grace arched her brow. "I do not freak out."

Lina pointed at her. "Tell that to your face. You already have that one eyebrow arching up." Lina laughed. "I know that look!"

Grace chuckled and gave in. Besides, it didn't cost anything to try some clothes on. She could pretend and then claim they didn't fit and put them back on the racks.

The two women briefly parted as Lina made her way to the formal section of the store. Grace stayed by the entry.

She could feel that the lady in the store was looking at her. The cheap clothes on her body looked completely out of place inside this shop.

That familiar sense of shame came back.

She told herself to not think like this. To not feel like this.

She'd done nothing wrong and she had every bit as much right to look around a store as anyone else.

“Hey, look who it is! Why would someone like you come here? It’s simply lowering the grade of this entire establishment!” A

voice sounded out from the inside of the store.

Grace looked up and saw two familiar figures.

One of them was Lily, and the other one was Zoe Stevens, Sean’s little sister.

The two women wore expensive luxury brand clothes and carried famous high-end handbags. There was no mistaking their looks of contempt.

In particular, Zoe’s nose went up in the air and her lips curled in an ugly snarl. There had been a time when she would’ve said that she’d like Zoe Stevens. But to see her now, it was as if the young woman wished her dead.

When the staff at the counter saw Zoe and Lily, they immediately greeted them enthusiastically. “Miss Atkinson, Miss Stevens, a new batch of clothes has recently arrived! Come, let us bring the Fall lines out for you.” The manager, a man in his thirties, snapped his fingers. “Champagne for the ladies! Please take a look to see if there are any clothes that you like. Some of them came straight from the Milan Fashion Show.”

“Sure, why not,” Zoe said before smiling at Grace with malice. She accepted a flute of Champagne. “Grace, do you want to try on clothes as well? Oh, wait, I think with your current salary, even if you were to save up for a year, you wouldn’t be able to afford the things here. How could a mere sanitation worker dare to enter here?”

When the other staff members heard the words “sanitation worker,” they all looked at Grace in surprise, and their gazes also started to fill with contempt.

Grace’s face heated with embarrassment.

“What’s wrong with sanitation workers?” Lina asked. She had been checking out the clothes on the shelves at the other end of the store. When she noticed the commotion, she rushed to Zoe and said, “Which law states that sanitation workers are not allowed to enter this shop to look at clothes?”

“But can she even afford them?” Zoe said disdainfully, “Grace is just a street cleaner, but you want to come to this store to check out the clothes? You just want to make trouble, don’t you?”

As she spoke, she looked at the staff next to her. “Shouldn’t those who deliberately make trouble in the store be ‘asked’ to leave?”

Zoe was a frequent visitor here. The staff usually fawned on this young lady of the Stevens Family, so the supervisor immediately walked over to Grace and Lina and said, “If you’re not planning on buying anything, then you need to leave. Now.”