

## Chapter 27 Strange Picture

Heather stared at Annabel with a corner of her lips raised. In her eyes, it was impossible for a poor girl like Annabel to bring a decent gift or anything at all for Bruce.

She wanted to paint herself as the only woman qualified enough to be Rupert's wife.

It had gotten to her that Bruce was the one who got Rupert and Annabel engaged. She wanted to seize this opportunity to change Bruce's mind. ①

She had been sucking up to Erica for a long time, and it worked. However, Rupert was still cold and distant to her.

Erica informed her that Rupert stayed engaged to Annabel just to please his grandfather.

As a result, Heather figured that she had to work extra hard to leave a good impression on Bruce while also pulling Annabel down, so she could become the new Mrs. Benton soon.

"I didn't prepare any gift." Strangely, there was no panic on Annabel's face.

Disdain flashed through Heather's eyes. She knew that this hillbilly came empty-handed.

Annabel was so rude and uncultured in front of Bruce. It

appeared she would be kicked out very soon.

To her greatest surprise, Annabel took out a painting from her bag and said with a bright smile, "This is Monet's work, *Woman with a Parasol*. My grandpa asked me to give it to you."

Bruce's eyes lit up as soon as he saw the painting. He said happily, "This is nice. Thank Leonard for me."

Heather's mouth was agape as she stared at the painting. The figure in the painting was lifelike. It looked like a masterpiece worth millions.

Compared to the painting, Heather's gift was nothing.

Bruce was a lover of paintings. He smiled from ear to ear as he looked at the painting with bright eyes.

How was this possible? How did a pauper like Annabel get such a precious painting? It looked real, but was it fake? Yes, it must be a fake! At the thought of this, Heather blurted out, "Annabel, don't you think it's insulting to gift Bruce a fake painting?"

A fake painting?

Annabel's eyebrows furrowed instantly. The painting was a real, not fake at all. ①

Heather only made that assumption because she thought Annabel was from a poor family.

"Heather, are you doubting Bruce's ability to detect an

original painting from a fake?" Annabel fired back sarcastically with a faint smile.

Heather's cheeks turned red in embarrassment. "That's not what I meant. Everyone knows that Monet's pieces are invaluable. How did you get this painting?"

"What? Are you insinuating that I stole the painting?" Annabel uttered in a cold voice.

Rupert, who had been silent, spoke up. "The painting is original."

Questions swirled in his mind as he looked at Annabel.

Wasn't she from a poor family in the countryside? How come her grandfather was able to get a hold of such a priceless piece of art? Ⓢ

Suspicion had been growing in Rupert's mind these past few days. He couldn't brush off the feeling that Annabel wasn't that simple. Ⓜ

Despite Rupert's confirmation, Heather didn't back down. "But—"

"The painting is original, but I can't say the same for your dress," Annabel cut Heather off. She shook her head dramatically and added, "It's so fake!"

"What nonsense are you talking about?" Heather was offended. "My dress was designed by an international designer, Leo. You won't know who that is because you

know nothing about fashion. How dare you say my dress is fake?"

Annabel let out a chuckle. No one else knew Leo like she did.

The dress Heather was wearing was exquisite. However, Annabel noticed right off the bat that it was just an expensive counterfeit.

She had made this design, and she knew only two dresses were released for sale.

A famous star bought one of them while the other was purchased by a princess of Etrada Kingdom

Heather was neither of these two women, so she was wearing a fake.

Judging from the way Heather was so bold, Annabel sensed that she didn't know she had bought a fake one.

"Contrary to what you think, I know about Leo and this dress. It might interest you to know that Leo always puts a heart-shaped mark on the hem of each dress. How about you check if your dress has this mark?" Annabel suggested with a smirk.

The heart-shaped mark was a signature that she used for all the clothing she designed under the name, Leo. Anika was in charge of the sewing, and no one could have copied the mark.

"What heart-shaped mark? I've never heard of it. Stop talking nonsense!" Heather didn't believe her at all. What could this bumpkin know about fashion? She felt that Annabel was just trying to get on her nerves.

Annabel whipped out her phone, tapped on the screen, then said, "You should check the hottest fashion news today."

"The hottest fashion news?" Heather was confused.

"Leo launched a new series named Elsa today. The heart-shaped mark was introduced in the post." A smile tugged at the corners of Annabel's lips as she spoke.

The timing was just right.

The launching of the new series, Elsa, became the hottest fashion topic online.

The post introduced the design concept of Leo in detail, including the heart-shaped mark.

Suspiciously, Heather took out her phone and saw the news.

Sure enough, Anika stated that every dress produced by Leo Studio had a heart-shaped mark to distinguish them from counterfeits. ①

Heather's dress had none.

Her face turned pale, then red. She was livid. The dress had cost her a fortune, but it was fake. She got

embarrassed in front of Rupert.

Even Erica looked at her skeptically.

How could Heather have such a terrible judgment?

Heather was short of words as she glared at Annabel, who seemed so happy now.

How did Annabel know so much?

Rupert suddenly approached Annabel and whispered in her ear, "How did you know that?"

As a businessman who collaborated with fashion companies, he knew about Leo Studio. They had never mentioned anything about the mark until this morning.

How did Annabel know about it?

"Well, I just heard it from my friend," Annabel lied, shrugging indifferently.

Rupert squinted at her. His instincts told him she was lying. He was just hearing about the heart-shaped mark. Why did Annabel's so-called friend know about it even before it was announced?

"I'm famished. Jaxen, tell the cook to set the table for lunch!" Erica changed the subject to help Heather out.

Jaxen looked at his boss for approval. He then did as he was told after receiving a nod from Bruce.

Annabel sat down at the table. She was casually looking around when she caught sight of a photo on a small table

by the corner.

It was a picture of Bruce holding a white dog.

The dog looked familiar.

Annabel turned to Rupert and whispered, "Is the dog in the photo your grandpa's?"

Following the line of her vision, Rupert's eyes fell on the photo.

A hint of sadness appeared on his handsome face. "The dog was my grandmother's. Its name is Dolly. Two years ago, she passed away, and Dolly ran away from home."

Rupert had hired some people to search every nook and cranny of the city for Dolly, but the dog was nowhere to be found. He knew that Dolly's disappearance made his grandfather sad.

"I see," Annabel said thoughtfully.

