

Chapter 100 Plagiarism Accusation

This was an exciting moment. Everyone was looking forward to the official beginning of the press conference.

Radiating confidence, Annabel walked up the stage majestically. The spotlight was on her now.

"Good day, ladies and gentlemen! On behalf of Benton Group, I'd like to welcome you all to the launch of the Ice and Fire jewelry!" Annabel cleared her throat and said into the microphone.

A thunderous applause came from the audience. Heather, who was seated somewhere in the crowd, didn't look pleased like the rest of the guests. Her eyes sparkled with envy as she stared at the elegant woman on the stage.

It had taken her some time to convince her brother to bring her to this conference. She came with the sole purpose of dealing with Annabel once she got the chance.

"Bitch, I'll teach you a lesson tonight," Heather

muttered to herself, gnashing her teeth. 2

After the clapping subsided, Annabel continued, "The Ice and Fire jewelry series is a grand series done by Benton Group in the third quarter. As the name depicts, the theme for this collection is ice and fire. You all must be wondering what that means and why we chose that theme. Not to worry. You will soon find out. Let's take a look at the promotional film."

Annabel signaled the technical staff.

In the promotional film, Margo, in a white dress and the new Ice and Fire jewelry series, walked gracefully toward Rory.

Under the milky white light, the jewelry shone brightly, making Margo look like a pure ice fairy.

But once the light became warmer and dim, the light from the jewelry changed from white to red—almost like a blazing fire.

It changed how Margo looked. From being an ice fairy, she became the queen of fire, who looked dazzling and bold at the same time.

The guests gasped in awe as their eyes were glued to the screen.

Some began to praise it. "Wow, it's so beautiful! I

have never seen anything like it."

"Well, I have!" someone suddenly uttered with uncertainty. "Isn't this the same as the Let Yourself Go jewelry series?"

Many people immediately began to whisper.

"Oh, I can see the striking resemblance. It's really the Love Jewelry's Let Yourself Go design. Why did Benton Group use the same design?"

"Oh, my! Does that mean they plagiarized?"

"This is unbelievable! Benton Group stole someone else's work? How shameful!"

Once the promotional film ended, a reporter stood up and asked boldly, "While I admit that the concept of the Ice and Fire series is amazing, I can't help but notice that it's the same idea as Love Jewelry's Let Yourself Go series. It seems Benton Group stole that idea. What do you have to say about this?"

Annabel cast a cold glance at the reporter—a woman who looked like she was in her early twenties.

Only experienced senior reporters were sent to cover press conferences held by top companies like Benton Group. But here this young woman

was, in the midst of many senior reporters from other media houses. Something smelled fishy.

Perhaps Love Jewelry had a hand in this.

In the face of this brewing antagonism, Annabel still smiled calmly. "First and foremost, I'd like to remind you to mind your language. If you continue to make malicious and unfounded accusations about Benton Group, we will have to take legal action against you and your employer."

The reporter had come prepared. "Oh, pardon me. I didn't mean to offend you. I just asked the question that was on the mind of every other reporter here. Why is the Ice and Fire series the same as the series by Love Jewelry? Can you answer that, please?"

With a graceful smile, Annabel said, "As you all know, the Let Yourself Go series was only launched two days ago. The samples of the Ice and Fire series were produced earlier than that."

"What are you trying to say? Do you have proof that the Ice and Fire series was designed earlier than Let Yourself Go?" the reporter inquired aggressively.

Annabel said, "Benton Group's promotional film

was shot three days ago, and the samples were completed a week ago. Many of those involved in this project can prove it, including the male model you just watched in the promotional film."

"Yes, I can prove it." Rory stood up from the high table. He took the microphone before him and spoke seriously. "I was invited to be the model for the advertisement a week ago. At that time, Annabel showed me the samples for the series. Mr. Brett McCoy was also present then."

Rory was a popular actor, so his words were credible. The opinions of the audience gradually changed in favor of Benton Group.

Annabel continued, "It goes without saying that the samples were completed more than a week ago. Since many of you are conversant with how things work in the jewelry industry, you should know that it takes at least two weeks for a design to be produced into a sample. Love Jewelry pushed out their latest series only two days ago without an early announcement. How could Benton Group have copied them in just two days?"

"Annabel is right." Brett also stood up. "I can also prove that Ice and Fire was already in the works and ready long before Let Yourself Go. More than

two weeks ago, Annabel showed me the design for the new series."

With a dismissive flick of her wrist, Annabel said seriously, "Benton Group wasn't built yesterday. The company is known for its uniqueness and top-notch quality every time. We would never steal or copy anyone's work!"

"Don't you think you are being too absolute?" The reporter didn't back down. "It's common knowledge that Brett McCoy is a partner of Benton Group and that the Ice and Fire series was done in collaboration with him. I'm afraid his words aren't credible. As for Rory Kelly, it has been reported that he grew up with Rupert Benton. They are close, so it's not surprising that he wants to help his friend's company."

After pausing to let the doubts of the others grow again, the reporter continued, "It's obvious the two of them are favoring Benton Group. Even a blind man can see that your company stole Love Jewelry's design. Aren't you going to own up to it?"

"Watch your mouth!" Annabel fired with a deep frown. "Since you are so adamant, you should watch the video provided by the cops."

The drowning incident at Lover Lake happened on the same day as the shoot for the advertisement.

After Cathy called the cops, they interviewed some people, including Margo.

Margo was wearing the Ice and Fire jewelry, so it was shown in the police's recording.

Once the video finished playing, Annabel turned to the reporter and flashed her a sarcastic smile.

"What do you have to say now? You aren't going to say that the cops are favoring Benton Group, are you?"

The reporter was rendered speechless.

"There's nothing left to be said about this matter. I'd leave it to everyone to make their judgment. Those who have eyes and brains will know what is right," Annabel uttered, smiling faintly.

Another reporter sprang up and asked, "Now that it has been proven that Ice and Fire was done before the Let Yourself Go series, is that to say that Love Jewelry stole your company's design? What are you going to do about that?"

"It's not a given, but we can't rule out the possibility. Benton Group will investigate before taking any action," Annabel responded.

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"My design was published in a fashion magazine two months ago!" An angry female voice came from the door of the room. 1

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