

## Chapter 101 So-called Proof

The sudden voice made all heads turn to the door of the room.

A woman dressed in a well-ironed suit and heels walked in. Her curly blond hair bounced as she walked.

Annabel squinted at her.

This woman must be Marilyn Diaz, the new chief designer hired by Love Jewelry—the so-called designer of the Let Yourself Go series.

Marilyn walked up the stage in an imposing manner. She snatched a microphone from a reporter and shouted, "It's ridiculous that Annabel Hewitt here accused Love Jewelry of plagiarism. We have never stolen or copied anyone's work, not even that of Benton Group." <sup>1</sup>

Her shout caused an uproar in the room. The reporters began to discuss excitedly.

Press conferences were usually boring, so it was interesting to witness this drama for a change.

A satisfied smile tugged at the corners of Marilyn's

lips as she watched the rowdy audience. To add fuel to the fire, she uttered in a much louder voice, "Miss Hewitt, you just said that the Ice and Fire series was done a month ago and even got two men to testify to that, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did," Annabel replied, folding her arms; keen to see what this woman was up to.

With a smug smile, Marilyn said, "In that case, I'm certain that you stole my design for Let Yourself Go!"

The troublesome young reporter asked Marilyn, "Do you have evidence to back your claim?"

Marilyn sneered, "I actually finished the design for Let Yourself Go two months ago. Since Benton Group came up with Ice and Fire a month ago, isn't it obvious who the plagiarist is?"

"But as far as I know, Let Yourself Go was only announced in the media two days ago. How can you prove that Benton Group copied your work?" the reporter inquired further.

Marilyn waved the magazine in her hand and said, "As I said earlier, my design was published in a fashion magazine just days after I was done with it. I recently signed a contract with Love Jewelry,

so Let Yourself Go was realized just two days ago."

Annabel watched as Marilyn and the reporter echoed each other.

Her suspicion was confirmed; Love Jewelry sent their minions to cause a disruption here and sabotage the success of Benton Group's new series.

Marilyn also showed up, bringing the so-called evidence to prove that Benton Group plagiarized.

Annabel was going to allow her to enjoy the attention for a while.

While all this was happening, Heather was smiling from ear to ear.

The plan she had made was supposed to be set in motion during the celebration dinner in the evening. However, it was thrilling to watch things go downhill for Annabel during the press conference.

Her greatest enemy was being disgraced at such a crucial moment. 2

This was sure to cause a lot of trouble for Benton Group.

Heather believed that Rupert wouldn't tolerate such a big mistake. After all, he valued the

business more than anything.

He would fire Annabel at the very least.

Heather still had a big surprise for Annabel up her sleeve. She was confident that she would be able to get rid of her tonight.

Heather chuckled as she watched the exciting live drama.

The reporter asked Marilyn respectfully, "Can you show us this fashion magazine?"

"Of course!" Marilyn smiled.

She opened the fashion magazine for all to see.

It was called Storm. Annabel had never heard of it before.

There was indeed a publication of a design similar to Let Yourself Go.

It was also stated that it could change colors under the lighting of the environment.

"There you have it, guys! Ice and Fire is a copy of my design!" Marilyn's eyes turned cold as she looked at Annabel provocatively. "It's a criminal offense to steal someone else's idea. I demand that Benton Group apologize, destroy all the Ice and Fire products, and also pay me fifty million

dollars as compensation!"

A tumult of surprised shouts broke out in the room immediately.

Fifty million wasn't a big deal for a company like Benton Group, but its public image was.

For many decades, the company had been in a good light. It had never been accused of any slight misappropriation, let alone something as serious as plagiarism.

However, it was indisputable to the guests and reporters here.

The magazine Marilyn presented proved beyond reasonable doubt that her design came out first before Ice and Fire was conceived. 3

Annabel couldn't help but look at the platform.

Rupert was seated there with his legs crossed leisurely as if he wasn't disturbed by the drama going on at all.

He suddenly gave a bright smile.

His eyes sparkled with trust and confidence. He believed that Annabel could handle the situation well. 2

Seeing this, Annabel smiled back and turned to

look at Marilyn. "Where was this magazine published? I have never heard of Storm, let alone seen one before now."

Marilyn pursed her lips and said in a contemptuous tone, "It shows how unexposed you are! For your information, this magazine is published in France. You haven't been there, so that explains why you don't know it."

"Oh. So, the country of publication is France!" Annabel nodded her head, pretending to be impressed. "As far as I know, France is a francophone country. Why is Storm in English?"

Marilyn was taken aback, but she managed to say, "English is widely spoken in France too. Besides, this particular edition was published for the English-speaking audience!"

Annabel took the magazine, raised it high, and asked, "Has anyone ever seen or heard about this magazine before now?"

Many of the guests here were top players in the fashion and jewelry industry.

The people who fell under this category exchanged awkward glances. None of them had seen or heard of Storm before.

"Marilyn, a respected designer like you should be able to get a spot at an internationally known magazine. Why did you choose a magazine no one else has heard of? The origin of this magazine is questionable, so it's impossible to trust its authenticity. I'm afraid you can't use this as proof that Benton Group stole your design," Annabel said with a bit of irony in her tone.

The reporters nodded, agreeing with her.

Top fashion magazines always published works from respectable designers and brands. It made no sense that Marilyn chose an unknown magazine when she was spoiled for choice.

Marilyn's expression changed. "The design is mine, so I have every right to choose where it's published. Stop trying to fool the public. Admit your wrongs and apologize to me for stealing my design this minute!"

"I'm afraid you are the one to apologize!" Annabel's eyes suddenly darkened. "You are the thief! Let Yourself Go is a carbon copy of Ice and Fire. Stop playing the victim when you are not!" 