

Chapter 96 Plagiarized

Annabel should have expected this result.

If it was that easy, Rupert would have found Candy years ago.

But why was she so difficult to find? What happened to Candy after she fell off that cliff?

Regardless if Candy was alive or dead, there would have been some clues, some evidence that she had existed.

How could she disappear completely like this?

Annabel couldn't figure it out, and she had no more leads to follow. She would have to put it aside for the time being.

Over the next few days, Annabel immersed herself in work and soon finished the Ice and Fire shoot.

A press conference would be held a few days later, and the Ice and Fire collection would officially be launched.

Annabel was confident that she could make Ice and Fire instantly popular, thus making Benton Group the leading jeweler in the industry.

But two days before the press conference, an accident happened.

Annabel was at work early that morning, making final preparations for the press conference, when a news alert popped up on her phone and drew her attention.

Love Jewelry was about to launch a new collection with a creative feature: Let Yourself Go.

Let Yourself Go?

Annabel clicked to read the main article.

"Love Jewelry, this country's leading jeweler, has hired Marilyn Diaz, a world-famous jewelry designer. This collaboration has produced an incredible new collection, Let Yourself Go, which is set to launch. All of the pieces change color depending on the light they are exposed to, allowing women to express themselves as never before. Imagine showing up to any party and dazzling people with your color-changing gems."

Annabel quickly browsed the rest of the news about the upcoming launch of Let Yourself Go. The jewelry was similar to her design, and the gems also changed color according to the color of light shone on them.

It was Annabel's idea, and the biggest promotional feature of the Ice and Fire collection.

Unfortunately, the public didn't know this. In order to create a sensation, Benton Group had kept the color-changing gems a secret. The plan had been for Annabel to reveal that feature at the press conference to announce the launch of Ice and Fire.

But now, someone had launched it first. 1

Obviously, Love Jewelry had stolen her design.

They were the leading jeweler domestically, and therefore well-known. They had enjoyed a comfortable monopoly in their industry that ended when Benton Group arrived.

Annabel was sure that if the launch of Ice and Fire went as planned, it would put Benton Group ahead of Love Jewelry.

There was a lot at stake, so Annabel wasn't terribly surprised by Love Jewelry's plagiarism.

What did catch her off guard was the fact that someone as renowned as Marilyn would do such a thing.

Just then, Rupert called. "Come to my office."

Annabel agreed.

After the night when everything had been made clear with Rupert, she was much more comfortable facing him again.

"Did you see today's news about Love Jewelry?" Rupert asked in a deep voice as he leaned back in his chair.

"Yes, I did," Annabel said with a nod.

Rupert frowned. "How did this happen?"

Annabel pursed her lips and said, "If I told you that Marilyn plagiarized my design, would you believe me?"

"Yes, I would," Rupert replied with hesitation. 4

He trusted her unconditionally, which warmed Annabel's heart. 2

"But the current situation is a problem for Benton Group." Rupert tapped his knuckles on the table, filling the room with an inexplicable sense of oppression.

"I know." Annabel rubbed the spot between her eyebrows. "Love Jewelry launched this design online as their own. When our press conference happens two days from now, everyone will think we're the ones who plagiarized."

It didn't matter that Love Jewelry had only released

a few design drawings and descriptions of their new collection's features because their announcement preempted Benton Group's. It was only natural for the public to assume that the company who announced a new product first was the original designer.

This had obviously been planned as a strike at Benton Group.

However, there was one thing that Annabel didn't understand. How did Marilyn get her design idea? Was there a spy in Benton Group?

Rupert had the same thought. He smiled and said, "I'll do my best to find out how and why your design was stolen, but the press conference needs to be postponed."

The press conference needed to wait until there was solid evidence.

If it happened before then, the reputation of Benton Group would be damaged.

"There's no need to postpone," Annabel said indifferently.

Rupert gave Annabel a surprised look.

Annabel smiled. "If you trust me, don't postpone the press conference."

Again, Rupert replied without hesitation, "Then you will be in charge of the press conference."

"No problem," Annabel said, pursing her lips.

The moment she left the CEO's office, she spotted Bernice coming toward her with an aggressive look.

"Annabel, you plagiarized?" Bernice scolded Annabel rudely.

"Did you witness this?" Annabel asked coldly.

Bernice slammed a newspaper on the table. "Look, your Ice and Fire is a copy of Marilyn's design."

Annabel glanced over the newspaper. It was the same as the article she had read on her phone.

Even Bernice thought she was the one who had plagiarized.

"I didn't plagiarize," Annabel said.

"Annabel, the truth is in front of you. Why are you arguing? Do you understand how much trouble you've brought this company?" Bernice raised her voice in the hopes that more people would hear and spread the word. ②

As the director of the design department, her previous design had been harshly criticized by

Annabel, causing her to lose face in front of Rupert.

Annabel even ignored the design department's work and went straight to Brett with the Ice and Fire design, which also thrilled Rupert.

Annabel was an outsider, so how could she be exceptionally capable?

It turned out that she plagiarized Marilyn's work.

"I don't know if the company is in trouble, but I think you may be in trouble," Annabel said with an ironic smile.

Bernice was stunned. "What trouble am I in?"

"You're the director of the design department, but you can't tell the originals from the plagiarized versions. Doesn't that make you feel ashamed?" Annabel replied, still smiling.