

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love Chapter 16 - 20

She shot a death glare at Natalie before leaving the banquet without a word.

In the meantime, Alfred led Natalie and Shane to his private lounge.

“Alfred, this is a present from Mercede. She wished you a happy birthday.” Natalie handed the gift over to Alfred. Actually, today was not only an ordinary banquet but Alfred’s birthday banquet. She was one of the few who knew it was his birthday.

“Please pass on my thanks to her and send her my regards.” Alfred unwrapped the gift in front of Natalie. It was a Brown Betty teapot handmade by Mercede. Although it was not of great value, he couldn’t help but let out a heartfelt smile when his eyes met Mercede’s signature engraved at the bottom of the teapot.

He put the gift aside and turned to face Shane, picking up their conversation interrupted by the commotion just now. “Shane, as you can see, I am past my prime. With regards to what you’ve said just now, I think I can’t be of much help.”

Shane was tonight’s biggest donor. Instead of becoming a partner of the Moore family’s project, he was here to invite Alfred to become the chief designer of Thompson Group’s latest project – Project Rebirth.

He was a stickler for perfection when it came to his work. The only two fashion designer he had in mind was Alfred and Mercede. Since the latter was currently residing overseas, Alfred was the only one he could turn to. Hence, he fell into silence when Alfred turned his request down.

“Actually, I have a person in mind.” Alfred suddenly shifted his eyes to Natalie. “What do you think about Nat? She is a creative young lady.”

In a befuddled state, Natalie stood rooted to the spot.

Shane followed Alfred's gaze, casting his eyes at Natalie, the lady whom he had only met twice. He was hesitant because he wouldn't simply entrust his project to someone whom he barely knew.

"Why don't you let her work in your company for a month? You can assess her ability during this period of probation. If you think she is not competent enough, you can then ask her mentor to work for you." Alfred proposed smilingly, his eyes revealing his trust in Natalie.

The job referral came like a bolt from the blue. Natalie had the odd feeling that Alfred was selling her and her mentor out so that he wouldn't need to work.

But at the same time, Shane's interest was piqued when he saw Alfred having such confidence in Natalie's capability. He nodded his agreement and said, "Alright."

Hearing that, Natalie was at a loss for words. Hey... Shouldn't you guys at least ask for my opinion?

"You can report to work tomorrow." Shane rose to his feet and gave her a gilded name card.

Before she could even say anything, he had turned and left the lounge. "Alfred?" She was clueless as she looked at Alfred questioningly.

With a faint smile, Alfred cleared her doubts. "Your mentor and I are of the opinion that it is time for you to gain some hands-on experience."

Natalie then kept the name card and nodded at him. She understood Alfred made the job arrangement for her own good. "I got it, Alfred. Thank you for doing all this for me."

When she was abroad, she managed to make a name for herself with the support of her mentor. Now that she was back in the country, she was a newcomer to the fashion industry since no one knew she was Mina – the well-known fashion designer and Mercede's student.

She was in desperate need of an opportunity to stand out and build her reputation. Hence, she was determined not to let Mercede and Alfred down.

Alfred was glad as he nodded. "Good. Now you should go back and make your preparations. From now on, you can only count on yourself."

Following that, Natalie bowed to him respectfully before she left.

It was midnight when she was finally back at her apartment. She gently pushed open the bedroom door and couldn't help smiling at the sight of her children sleeping in bed.

Joyce was standing beside Natalie, looking at the children lovingly. "Aww, they're sound asleep."

"Thanks for your help today, Joyce," Natalie said as she closed the door.

"Hey, I'm Aunt Joyce, after all. I'm more than willing to take care of them. But why are you back so late today?" Joyce was curious.

Natalie yawned as she walked toward the couch in the living room. "Ugh, I got into trouble at the banquet today. I've wasted some of my time to deal with the issue before I got to meet Alfred."

"Trouble?" Joyce was worried, so she asked anxiously, "What trouble? Was everything alright?"

"Yes, everything's been taken care of. And... guess what? I have a piece of good news!" Natalie sat on the couch and then took Shane's name card out of her purse, handing it over to Joyce.

"Oh my God!" Joyce couldn't help exclaiming, "Nat, how did you get Mr. Shane's name card?"

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Thompson Group was one of the biggest luxury goods companies in the world. It specialized in supplying high-end luxury products such as perfumes, jewelry, cosmetics, shoes, handbags, and so much more.

Strangely, only until this year that it decided to set foot in the fashion industry. However, the newly established fashion company – Thompson Clothing became the least profitable subsidiary under Thomson Group due to a lack of talented fashion designers.

Taking a seat beside Joyce, Natalie poured herself a cup of water. "Alfred recommended me to Mr. Shane. He wanted me to participate in the Project Rebirth project."

"That's great!" Joyce clapped her hands in excitement. "I believe you can definitely nail the job with your talent. By then, Thompson Clothing will be generating more revenue, and you will rise to fame! Not only that, but we can also promote Desire after you become famous. That's killing three birds with one stone!"

"But I will need to leave Desire to you for the time being while I work in Thompson Group."

"Don't you worry about that. You can always count on me!" Joyce patted her chest confidently, giving her reassurance.

The two of them took some time to discuss their upcoming plans. After Joyce left, Natalie took her shower before climbing into bed.

The next day, she hailed a cab to Thompson Group after sending the children to kindergarten.

Standing at the office building's entrance, she took the name card out of her pocket and dialed the number printed on it.

The call went through in no time.

"Hello?"

Natalie was a little nervous upon hearing the man's cold voice. She discreetly took a deep breath to recollect herself before she responded, "Mr. Shane, I've arrived at the Thompson Group."

"Okay. Please wait a minute. I will send someone to pick you up." His reply was curt.

Before she had even realized it, Shane had ended the call. With that, she had no choice but to wait on the spot.

A few minutes later, a man in his business suit came into sight. He sized her up for a moment and asked, "Are you Ms. Smith?"

"Yes, I am."

The man adjusted his rimless glasses. "Hello, Ms. Smith. I am Mr. Shane's assistant, Silas Campbell. Mr. Shane has sent me to pick you up."

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Campbell." Natalie gave a slight nod.

Silas returned her greeting with a polite smile. Then, he gestured her to enter. "Ms. Smith, please follow me."

"Alright." She took her stuff and followed suit.

As soon as Silas brought her to the CEO's office, he left to prepare for coffee. Meanwhile, she was left standing alone in front of the man who exuded an overbearing aura.

Sitting behind his desk, Shane put the design drawings aside before fixing his eyes on her. "I got these from Alfred. He said these are some of your best designs. To be honest, I'm quite disappointed because your light luxury design style is very much aimed at a niche market, which is not what we wanted. The concept of Project Rebirth is all about luxury and high-end fashion targeting high-end consumers."

Natalie's heart sank at that instant. Does he mean to say that I'm not qualified?

"But..." He spoke again.

Her heart skipped a beat while a glint of hope appeared in her eyes. She balled her hands into fists, trying to calm her anxiety. "Please go ahead, Mr. Shane."

"But from your designs, I can tell that you have a great sense of style and aesthetic ability. For the upcoming month, you need to provide me with ten sketches for the project. If I approve of your design, I will let you hold the position as the project's chief designer." After that, he placed a document in front of her.

Natalie took a glance at the words "Project Rebirth Details" printed on the front page. Unable to believe her own ears, she asked again to confirm with him, "Mr. Shane, is this for real? You will let me become the chief designer once you approve of my design?"

Shane noticed a determined glint shining in her eyes. Raising his brow, he reassured her, "I am a man of my word."

She grabbed the document while uttering confidently, "Great! I will definitely become the chief designer!"

Shane was dazed, and his eyes darkened upon seeing her bright and confident smile.

Right then, Silas entered the office, bringing her a cup of coffee.

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Natalie took a sip of it before telling them she could start working straight away.

Then, Shane waved his hand dismissively. "Bring her to the design department. Let Jasmine take care of her."

Jasmine? She was slightly bewildered. Don't tell me it's Jasmine Smith whom he is talking about.

She followed Silas to the design department with a feeling of doubt. The latter gave a knock on the door of the supervisor's office. The next moment, the door flung open, and a familiar face came into sight.

Natalie's lips twitched the moment she saw Jasmine. Well, what do you know... Jasmine's really the design supervisor!

Yet Jasmine didn't notice Natalie standing behind Silas. She tucked her hair behind her ears while asking anticipately, "Mr. Campbell, what brings you here? Is Shane asking for me?"

Disregarding her question, Silas stepped aside to introduce Natalie. "Ms. Jasmine, Mr. Shane asked me to bring you our new designer, so I'll leave her to you."

She furrowed her brow in disappointment at that. "Designer?"

As she finally spared a glance at Natalie, her face changed drastically. "You?!"

"Hello, Ms. Jasmine." Natalie greeted her calmly.

Seeing that Natalie was right in front of her, Jasmine's eyes twitched as restlessness crept around her heart. What is she doing here?

Silas's eyes flickered upon noticing Jasmine's abnormality. "Ms. Jasmine, do you know Ms. Smith?"

"No." She immediately denied it. Realizing that she was a bit overreacting, she quickly added, "I don't know her, but I met her at Mr. Moore's banquet yesterday. That's why I'm a little surprised when I see her here." She discreetly shot Natalie a glare, warning her not to expose her.

Natalie found Jasmine's act funny as she didn't want to have anything to do with her either.

Jasmine, on the other hand, thought she had successfully threatened Natalie when the latter remained silent.

"Well, Ms. Jasmine, I'd better not keep Mr. Shane waiting. I'll be going now." Taking a glance at his watch, Silas spoke up and was prepared to leave.

Jasmine nodded smilingly. "Goodbye, Mr. Campbell."

As soon as Silas vanished from sight, the smile on her face disappeared. She dragged Natalie into her office and questioned harshly, "Just what... do you think you're doing here?"

Natalie pried her hand off while replying calmly, "Calm down, I'm just here to work."

"Work?" Jasmine narrowed her eyes, looking at Natalie dubiously. "If you are here to work, why didn't you report yourself to the human resource department? Instead, Mr. Campbell was the one who sent you here under the order of Shane. How did you know Shane?" The question had been bothering her since yesterday.

"I don't think I need to answer your question. Ms. Jasmine, I'm here to work. Please bring me to my desk," Natalie glanced at her impassively and said.

Hearing her response, Jasmine sneered, "You're not even answering my question, so why should I listen to you?"

"Do you mean to say that you're not going to help me out?"

"So what?" Since there was no director in the design department, Jasmine could do whatever she wanted because she currently held the highest position as the design supervisor.

"I got it." Natalie let out a sigh and then made her way to the door. "Since you're not helping me out, I better go find Mr. Shane."

“Don’t you dare!”

Nonetheless, Natalie didn’t slow down her pace, making it clear that she was not blustering.

Jasmine clenched her teeth. “Fine! I’ll bring you to your desk, but I hope you won’t regret it.” With that, she briskly walked out of her office, leading Natalie to the main office.

She clapped her hands to get the others’ attention. “Everyone, I need a few minutes. Let me introduce to you our new colleague.” Pushing Natalie forward, she continued, “Her name is Natalie Smith. Ms. Smith is a college dropout, but for some reason, she will be joining the design department. Anyway, I hope all of you can get along with each other.”

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Everyone started giving Natalie the side-eye upon hearing Jasmine’s words; none of them were welcoming. She understood Jasmine was trying to put her in the line of fire by implying that she got the job through a backdoor approach. That way, she would quit the job voluntarily when she couldn’t stand being ostracized by other colleagues.

Her anger spiked the moment she saw Jasmine’s smirk. But before she could even say anything, Jasmine’s assistant came running in, gabbling in panic, “Jasmine, something bad has happened!”

Jasmine had just put Natalie on the spot, so she was displeased being interrupted by Penny. Pulling a long face, she asked impatiently, “What’s the rush? What’s going on?”

With her hands on her knees, Penny took a moment gasping for air before she explained, “T-the warehouse... The s-shelf in the warehouse collapsed!”

“What did you say? The shelf collapsed?!” Jasmine grabbed hold of her assistant’s collar.

“Yes.”

“What about the fabrics?” Jasmine started to panic.

Penny swallowed dryly before answering, "Hundreds of bolts of fabrics and textiles are now scattered on the floor. We can't distinguish the fabrics now because the labels are all detached."

"Damn it!" Jasmine shoved Penny away and started running toward the warehouse. Now she had no time to bother about Natalie.

All the other designers followed suit to check it out.

Soon, Natalie was the only one left in the office. She pondered for a moment while holding the project document and eventually decided to follow them to the warehouse.

When she reached the warehouse, Jasmine was roaring angrily at the designers. "Don't just stand there doing nothing! Put the fabrics back onto the shelves accordingly. The contracting party will be here to collect them soon."

"But Ms. Jasmine, these are all Grade-F fabrics and some of the most expensive textiles. We are not familiar with them. How can we possibly identify all of them?" One of the designers voiced his concern.

With a gloomy expression, Jasmine pointed at the person as she uttered, "I don't care how you guys are going to do it. You only have one hour. If you don't manage to put them back in order in time, all of you will receive punishment."

Natalie couldn't help furrowing her brows when she heard Jasmine threatening the designers. It was understandable that Jasmine wanted to put everything back in order, but she had put the designers in a difficult situation since they knew little about the fabrics. It was an impossible task to sort them out within an hour.

"Shouldn't you be working in the office? Why is everyone gathering here?" Just then, a cold voice rang out from outside the warehouse.

Natalie turned around to find Shane walking in her direction, his face devoid of expression. "Mr. Shane." She turned around and greeted him.

Shane gave her a slight nod as he walked into the warehouse. In no time, he found Jasmine in the middle of the crowd as the designers all gave way to him.

Jasmine was nervous upon seeing his cold expression. Pretending to be calm, she forced a smile and asked, "Shane, why are you here?"

"You're asking me why am I here?" He glanced at her coldly before casting his eyes over the fabrics on the floor. His face instantly grew grim. "Jasmine Smith, I remember telling you two days ago that the shelves were shaky and needed maintenance. Not only that, but I've also asked you to send the fabrics to the contracting party as soon as possible. Why didn't you do as I said?"

Jasmine kept her head down in the face of his anger. "I was too busy, so..."

"That is not an excuse!" He relentlessly gave her a roasting.

Clenching her fists, Jasmine felt resentment boiling in her heart. At the same time, she felt embarrassed being scolded in front of the designers, especially when Natalie was around.

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Since she couldn't direct her hatred at Shane, she shot daggers at Natalie instead.

Natalie was left dazed when Jasmine suddenly cast blame on her though she had done nothing wrong.

Shane, too, noticed Jasmine's subtle act but paid no heed to it. He immediately shifted his gaze to the designers and asked, "Can you guys put the fabrics back in place within one and a half hours?"

One of the designers replied, "I don't think it's possible because we have little knowledge about these fabrics. We might need to cross-refer to the pictures in the warehouse catalog to identify them. We need at least three hours." After all, it was not an easy feat to cross-refer to these large heaps of fabrics.

Even so, Shane was unsatisfied with the answer he got. "Can't you guys speed up?" The contracting party would be here within one and a half hours to collect the fabrics. Thus, he couldn't afford to let him wait for three hours.

Nobody dared to answer him.

Suddenly, Natalie raised her hand. "I can give it a try!" Her voice was surprisingly loud and clear in the silent warehouse.

At that moment, everyone turned around to look at her in disbelief. Jasmine was also seen rolling her eyes at Natalie.

In contrast, Shane's face was calm as before. "You mean you can do it within one and a half hours?"

"Of course, I can't do it alone. I need two helpers to give me a hand..."

"What a joke!" Jasmine interrupted her. Pointing her finger at Natalie, she mocked, "You're just a college dropout. I wonder if you could even tell the different elements of fashion designing. Now you're saying you can identify all these fabrics?"

Disregarding her sarcastic remarks, Natalie made her way toward Shane. Standing in front of him, she asked, "Mr. Shane, do you believe in me?"

"I'll leave it to you then." His reply was simple.

Before she even reacted, Jasmine raised her objection again. "Shane, you really believe in her?" She regarded him with incredulity.

He glanced at her coldly. "She is confident that she can do it, so why shouldn't I believe in her?"

Biting her lips, Jasmine was still reluctant to give in. "But she is a college dropout! All of the designers here are graduates from prestigious universities. Even they can't recognize all the fabrics, let alone her."

Shane turned to face Natalie. "Is that so?" It was hard for him to believe that a college dropout was capable of becoming Mercedes's student.

With a faint smile, Natalie explained calmly, "It's true. For some reason, I dropped out of college a few years ago. But I did get my degree from my university overseas. Oh, I forgot to mention, I graduated from Laurent Academy of Design."

Everyone gasped in shock.

Laurent Academy of Design was considered the top fashion design academy in the world. It only recruited three hundred students every year. All of those who were qualified were none other than the best of the best. They couldn't believe Natalie was one of the graduates.

The designers started to see her in a different light. In an instant, the derision in their eyes was replaced by admiration and maybe even a hint of jealousy.

Even Shane himself didn't expect her to be a graduate of Laurent Academy of Design. No wonder she could become Mercedes's student.

Suddenly, Jasmine yelled in an agitated state. "That's impossible! You can't be a graduate from Laurent Academy of Design!" She was reluctant to believe in it. It would be a slap in her face since she had claimed earlier that Natalie was a dropout.

"Nothing is impossible." Natalie fished out her phone. After a few taps, she showed the screen in front of Jasmine. "This is my graduation certificate. Ms. Jasmine, if you still have any doubts, you can always verify its validity with the school authority."

Jasmine stared intently at the screen as if she were going to burn a hole through it. Glowering at her, she growled, "You're telling this in front of everyone on purpose to humiliate me. I..."