

Chapter 21 One-man Support

"This is my ring!" Heather let out a cry and looked at Annabel contemptuously. "You stole my ring! Now that it has been found in your purse, it's safe to say that you are nothing but a shameless thief. Are you still going to deny it?"

The strange appearance of the diamond ring in her purse didn't ruffle Annabel at all.

She had expected this to happen.

The moment the waiter testified against her, Annabel was sure that the ring was in her purse.

Someone had put it there when she wasn't looking.

The culprit was none other than Heather.

"Annabel, if you returned the ring to me and apologized to me just now, I could have let it go." From the corner of her eye, Heather saw the man she loved. She changed her arrogant tone to an extremely soft one just to paint herself as an understanding person.

"You are far too kind, Heather. A shameless thief like Annabel doesn't deserve to be let off the hook so easily. We'd better inform the police. Otherwise, she would continue to go about stealing people's valuables!" Bella

urged her friend.

"Well, you have a point there. Please call the police,"

Heather agreed, nodding thoughtfully.

"You deserve it, Annabel! Theft is an unacceptable crime.

You should go to jail to join other criminals!" Cathy piped up, her eyes glistening with smugness. It was obvious she was enjoying the show.

Despite it all, there was still no panic on Annabel's face.

She looked at them as if she wasn't being roasted.

They wanted to call the cops? That would be great!

It would be more interesting to expose Heather's scheme in front of the police.

"What's the matter?"

A familiar male voice suddenly jolted Annabel back to reality.

She turned her head and saw Rupert's tall and straight figure.

His tailored suit outlined his perfect figure. His face was as handsome as ever, and his eyes were sharp and deep.

The lights of the banquet hall coated him with a layer of golden hue. His aura was so intimidating that people wanted to bow to him.

"Mr. Benton!"

The crowd broke in half, making way for Rupert. He

walked steadily towards Annabel.

"Thank God you are here, Rupert. Annabel stole my diamond ring!" Heather complained, putting on a pitiful mask. "It was a gift from my grandpa for my birthday."

"You must be mistaken," Rupert uttered with a deep frown.

Huh?

Annabel was surprised. Was Rupert defending her? Strange!

"Rupert, don't be deceived by Annabel's innocent look!" Cathy yelled before Heather could say something. "Annabel stole the ring. Someone caught her red-handed. Also, the ring was found in her purse just now. Everyone saw it with their eyes. It's no mistake at all!"

"Yes, that's right. I didn't want to believe that Annabel stole my ring. After all, she's your fiancée. But..." Heather paused and moved closer to Rupert. "We all saw the ring in her purse. How could it have gotten there if Annabel hadn't taken it? The evidence is as clear as day. Rupert, you won't defend her, will you?"

Annabel still didn't get worked up as she watched Heather badmouth her. On the contrary, she reasoned that Heather would make a fortune if she decided to become an actress.

Still in doubt, Rupert turned to Annabel and asked, "Did

you steal the ring?"

"If I say no, will you trust me?" Annabel asked back, looking into his eyes.

"Yes, I trust you," Rupert blurted out without hesitation. He saw that she looked unfazed and had sincerity in her eyes, so he was willing to trust her even though everyone else was against her.

Annabel smiled brightly. It came as a surprise that Rupert trusted her in this situation.

"Rupert!" Cathy stamped her feet in anger. She didn't understand why her cousin saw something good in this bumpkin. Did Annabel give him a love portion?

"Make it clear, Annabel! How did the ring get into your purse if you didn't steal it?" Bella asked after getting Heather's wink.

Staring at Heather in the eye, Annabel said with a smile, "Someone put the ring in my purse just to frame me!"

Heather swallowed uneasily as her palms became sweaty. She then looked away awkwardly.

Did Annabel know what she did? Impossible!

Every part of her scheme was just perfect. Annabel was supposed to end up humiliated and in jail.

"Go and check the surveillance footage," Rupert ordered his assistant, Finley Wagner.

"Yes, sir." Finley nodded and hurried to the monitoring room.

Annabel's eyelashes fluttered. There were surveillance cameras installed in the banquet hall. The footage would unearth the truth about the matter.

However, Annabel couldn't help but wonder if they could get a hold of the footage. Heather had drafted this flawless scheme. Wouldn't she do everything to cover her tracks?

Sure enough, Finley returned bearing bad news. "Mr. Benton, the surveillance cameras in this hall are all broken."

"All of them? How can that be?" Rupert's eyes narrowed. This was indeed strange.

It was a five-star hotel. Brock booked the best hall, so the management must have equipped the hall to the teeth. Why then did all the cameras develop a fault at the same time?

An idea suddenly popped up in Annabel's mind. She cleared her throat and said, "Since there's no CCTV footage, I know another way we can get to the bottom of this. My fingerprints would be on the ring if I stole it. A forensic test should be carried out."

"What's the point of going that far, Annabel?" Heather asked. "I will let this slide for Rupert's sake as long as

you apologize."

An apology from Annabel would mean that she was guilty. She would be labeled a thief who owned up to her crime.

Worse still, Rupert would be very disappointed in her if she admitted it after he already declared his support for her.

To crown it all, Erica wouldn't fail to taunt her and kick her out before the three-month timespan elapsed.

On the flip side, Heather would be regarded as a woman who was kind-hearted enough to forgive a thief. Then she would walk her way into Rupert's heart without hassle.

"Are you saying you don't want to get to the root of the matter?" Annabel asked, squinting at Heather.

Those words made Heather sit on pins and needles. She gritted her teeth and uttered, "Far from it. I want to get to the root of the matter."

"Okay, then call the cops to come investigate." Annabel's face was void of any expression.

She hadn't touched the diamond ring, so she was sure her fingerprints weren't on it. She was going to be vindicated after the forensic test, for sure.

"Rupert, what do you think?" Brock looked at Rupert

questioningly. He wanted the young man's opinion since he was engaged to the accused.

Rupert acquiesced by making a phone call to the police chief, who arrived at the banquet hall with members of the forensic department in a matter of minutes.

"Good evening, Mr. Benton. This is the best forensic expert in the force," the chief said respectfully, pushing the expert forward. ①



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