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Avery smirked. "You can't underestimate my big sister too much. She's got a lot of tricks up her sleeve, and they're going to get married sooner or later. You better seize the chance while you still have it, Idania. I'll even help out if you need me to."

"No thanks." Idania rolled her eyes, ignoring Avery's quip. "I know what I should do. I'm Tobias' biggest weakness. I know he's still not over me. You wanna know why he hasn't changed his phone number all these years? It's because he's been waiting for me to get back in touch with him."

On stage, Skylar was enjoying a mini meet-and-greet with her fans. Every candid picture captured of her could be used as the cover of a glamour magazine.

"I heard that you've liked this brand ever since you were a student, Skylar!" the host said. "How did you feel when they approached you to become a spokesperson for the brand?"

The woman on stage's smile stiffened for the briefest moment. This host had not done their homework: she had been too broke to afford to buy Gucci knockoffs as a student, let alone buy any original items from the brand.

"I was very excited when I found out!" she replied instead. "Gucci has always been one of my favorite brands. It's just that it was out of my league when I was a student, you know? I couldn't afford it back then, so I made it my goal to one day be able to afford it. I remember telling myself that when I grew up, I had to buy some clothes from the brand for myself."

"Fortunately, our prices are all very reasonable, and your dream was easily achieved, no?"

Skylar laughed awkwardly, her mouth suddenly dry. Gucci's prices were the farthest thing from "reasonable."

At that remark, Avery rolled her eyes. "What a joke. She couldn't even afford to buy a pair of Anta shoes back then, let alone Gucci ones."

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"I couldn't afford to buy Gucci back then either," Idania commented absentmindedly. "Everything branded I owned were gifts from Tobias. I think he has some sort of obsession with poor girls, and that's why he's so infatuated with Skylar. He wants to use her as a replacement for me."

Avery kept mum, unsure of how to respond to that comment. Sure, Idania was very confident, but... When was Idania finally going to steal Tobias away from Skylar?

Skylar would be much easier to deal with without that man supporting her, and it would be much easier for Avery to steal everything away from Skylar and make her pay the price for insulting her.

After being notified that Skylar was scheduled to make an appearance at one of his affiliated shopping malls, Tobias took some time out of his schedule to go and visit her.

He was taken aback when he saw swarms of fans crowding the mall to the point where they were hindering business for the other shops on the premises.

"Since when did Skylar become so popular?" he asked Susan. "Did these people all come to see her?"

"Empyrean Sword has absolutely exploded in popularity," Susan laughed. "Even the little boy living next door to me called Skylar a 'pretty lady.' Weren't you aware of this before, Mr. Ford?"

Tobias wasn't. When he scanned over the crowd, he noticed that it was made up of mostly men, their gazes trained on his girlfriend on stage.

He and Susan did their best to push through the crowd and get a spot as near the stage as possible.

"Skylar has really gotten much prettier from when I last saw her in a big, loose shirt at her school dormitory," Susan remarked. "Royal Entertainment did a great job cleaning her up."

Tobias preferred the Skylar from back then. Now, there was a constant, nagging feeling of fear that she was growing further and further away from him.

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Skylar was halfway through the mini meet-and-greet with her fans, and her cheeks were starting to cramp from the smile she was forcing.

Suddenly, a large figure lunged towards her.

Before she realized what was happening, someone wrapped their arms around her, and she screamed.

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A bulky, bald man had broken past the security line and picked her up as easily as he would pick up a baby chick. He pressed his puckered lips onto Skylar's face.

In the midst of all this chaos, Avery nearly doubled over with laughter. "See? I told you there'd be a good show today! Tobias must be fuming over his girlfriend getting forcibly kissed by someone like that in front of so many people!"

"You're such a tease, Avery." Idania hid her chuckle behind a hand. "You can't do this next time."

"Look at her face! It's all contorted with disgust! She looks horrendous," howled Avery, wiping her tears away with one hand.

Elsewhere, Tobias was watching everything happen with a dark expression on his face.

Chills ran down Susan's spine when she felt a murderous aura emanate off of him.

All she could do was pray for Skylar's wellbeing. The woman was a victim in this situation, but there was no way Tobias was going to let her off the hook so easily.

Skylar, still in shock, watched as the overweight man was dragged off the stage by several bodyguards. Taking several deep breaths to calm herself down, she took a tissue and wiped her face, but her smile from before was no longer present.

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She took a sip of her water and swallowed her disgust back down. God, I want to go home and take a shower. I want to forget that all of this ever happened.

However, she put on a bright smile and saw the event through until the very end.

Afterward, she was escorted back into her car with the help of several additional security guards. She couldn't find the strength in her to muster even a glance at any of her fans, no matter how hard they were trying to get her attention.

Once the car doors were closed, the first thing Skylar did was pull out a pack of wet tissues and rub her face fiercely.

She vaguely registered Kate going on and on angrily about how the security guards at the mall were all useless. She rambled about the consequences that could have occurred if the man had been holding a knife, and so on and so on.

"These are some things you'll have to get used to as a celebrity," she comforted Skylar. "Don't dwell on it too much or develop any sort of trauma because of this, okay?"

It was too late for that; the memory of that man rushing towards her flashed in Skylar's mind whenever she closed her eyes. "That was sickening. How could so many security guards fail to stop just one person? I swear I'm never coming back here. God, I think his body odor transferred onto me."

Kate furrowed her eyebrows. "Do you know whose mall this is?"

"Who cares? I don't want to come back here."

"It's a mall registered under the Ford Group. Tobias is the big boss of this place. Don't be too stubborn, alright? Besides, photos of the incident are already on the internet, and that guy should have already been arrested."

Skylar did a double-take. It was just her luck that Tobias was somehow involved in this mess as well.

"The Ford Group has nothing to do with me. It will never have anything to do with me," she huffed. "I'm going to go home and scrub at my skin until I'm completely exfoliated. Maybe I should take a bath as well..."

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Kate knew Skylar was a smart girl who usually saw the big picture. That was why she was surprised to learn that the latter was not considering marrying into the Ford family.

After all, marrying Tobias was the dream of countless female celebrities.

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She tried to give Skylar some advice. Besides, the incident was likely only going to make headlines for today; it would quickly be forgotten by the public sooner or later. When people searched up pictures of the incident, the gorgeous candid pictures her fans took of her would likely also appear in the search results.

All of the security workers stationed at the event that day were called to the Ford Group headquarters.

With their lowly positions, they would usually never be able to take a single step into this building if it weren't for the company having specifically requested their presence there.

All the security guards stood in one line in the conference room, completely clueless as to why they'd been summoned. After a moment, the door to the room suddenly opened.

All eyes instantly focused on the person standing in the doorway, whom the security detail leader immediately recognized as Tobias.

He stepped forward and bowed clumsily. "Good morning, Mr. Ford!"

Tobias had a scarily gloomy look on his face as he took a seat at the head of the table while everyone else remained standing, waiting with baited breaths for what he had to say.

"Why was no one able to stop that man from rushing onto stage today?" Tobias spoke up, his tone as cold as ice. "Why was this incident allowed to happen?"

The leader didn't understand why Tobias would suddenly bring this up.

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Lots of celebrities made appearances at the mall, and similar incidents with other crazy fans were common occurrences. What was so different this time that they had all been ordered here?

The leader gave Tobias a brief overview of the situation at the mall, begrudgingly admitting that he had made some mistakes that led to the incident.

Tobias was quiet for a minute before he said, "All of you don't need to come back to work tomorrow. If you can't handle a sudden emergency like this, you might as well not get the chance to handle it at all. The Ford Group doesn't need useless guards like you lot."

He had been suppressing his anger throughout the drive to his company, repeatedly reminding himself to not get angry at Skylar. None of this was her fault.

Upon hearing that they were all getting fired, the group of security guards broke out into a panic, hurriedly explaining how much they needed the job and how they had to support their families.

Unfortunately for them, there wasn't a shred of empathy left in Tobias' heart; he didn't want to see them for a second longer.

Back at home, Avery was watching the video of the accident at the mall over and over again, laughing to herself. Her mind was filled with various schemes and plots to get back at Skylar from her hiding spot within the shadows.

Hayden also took a look at the video, reminding Avery, "You have to be careful not to rock the boat. If you slip up and mess things up, that'll be on you."

"Since when did you become such a coward, Hayden?" She nudged him with her elbow. "This is all a necessary part of my big plan. Dad and Mom wouldn't have ended up this way if it weren't for Avery, and neither would I have ended up jobless. You're the man of the family; you should be standing up for us!"

"I don't need you to tell me that. You remember Skylar's teen cousin, don't you?" A smirk appeared on Hayden's face. "He's in his rebellious phase, and I spotted him skipping school to bet on racecars. Not only did he lose all his pocket money, but he even borrowed money from other people to continue betting... He ended up losing several thousand in one night."

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Avery was lost in thought for a moment. She knew Skylar's uncle and aunt were greedy little snakes; if anything happened to their darling son, they would most definitely drag Skylar into their mess and make her pay back the money he'd lost.

Regardless of how popular Skylar had gotten, she was still the Watts' family's cash cow. Skylar was apparently also quite close with Kevin.

No one would have expected Kevin, with his studious personality and innocent appearance, to become addicted to gambling at such a young age.

If Skylar didn't get involved soon, the media might dig up this story and accuse her of abandoning her family when they were in need, causing irreversible damage to her reputation.

Avery and Hayden both shared a knowing, meaningful look.

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