

Chapter 22

"What's going on here?" A deep voice rings throughout the store, drawing everyone's attention to the man who just joined us.

At the sight of the man who appeared, everyone falls silent. The guards straighten, and the manager rushes forward to meet him halfway. "Sir, this woman stole one of our pieces and refuses to cooperate with our investigation."

The man looks around as if searching for someone. "Which one is the culprit?"

"That woman, sir," the guard answers, pointing a finger at me.

The man sighs, slipping his hands into the pockets of his pants. I'm not blind to the fact that Sasha suddenly looks more cautious, tucking her loose hair behind her ears and fixing her top as if trying to make an impression on the new person in the room.

She steps forward. "I saw her stealing those rings with my own eyes. Your guards can't find them in her purse, but that doesn't mean she doesn't have them hidden somewhere on her. You should search her."

The man frowns, glancing from her to the security guards. "Was she caught red-handed?"

The guards and the manager look at each other, but the manager speaks on everyone's behalf. "I'm sorry to say, sir, but none of our staff saw the woman stealing anything. However, the rings are

indeed missing. Maybe the woman is smarter and has done this before. Maybe that's why she refuses to be checked."

The man crosses his arms and stares at the manager. "So, you're saying that no one saw her stealing, but you still believe that she did? Interesting."

The manager swallows, suddenly looking very uneasy. "Sir, it's not about belief. It's just, you know, for precaution. Besides, Miss Clarkson is confident she saw everything with her own eyes. We can't just ignore it. She's one of our high-profile customers. Why would she lie about something like this?"

"Of course," the man says, nodding slowly, taking his time. "So, let me get this straight: you're also saying that high-profile customers can get away with whatever they want around here? And because they are rich, they are always right. Is that it?"

This time, the manager looks like he's about to piss himself. He opens and closes his mouth several times, but nothing comes out. Not just that, Sasha looks equally horrified, and the other guards seem to be having a hard time understanding what's going on.

"I... I... am... this... it's not..."

The manager stutters, struggling to form a coherent sentence.

The man waves the stuttering manager off and then turns to face me. "I deeply apologize for the grave incompetence of my staff. What happened today could have been handled much better. But it seems like I have entrusted this establishment to a bunch of incompetents, which I deeply regret now."



"What the hell are you apologizing for?" Sasha can't keep it in anymore and lashes out. "She's a thief, and you're believing her and not me? Do you even know who I am? Do you know who my dad is? He will be hearing about this, and trust me, you will be so fired after he's done with you."

The man looks completely unaffected. He turns to the guards instead. "Please, escort this woman out."

"What the hell?" Sasha squeals, disbelief in her eyes.

The guards jump at the order, but before they can touch her, he speaks again.

"Oh, and make sure to search her for the missing rings. And if she doesn't cooperate, feel free to call the cops."

The guards follow his order to a T, dragging Sasha out of the store, making sure she doesn't cause a scene anymore.

Then, he turns to the manager. "And you. You're fired."

"What?" the manager yells in panic.

"You heard me. Now get the hell out before I call security and have them throw you out on your ass."

"But why me? What did I do?" the manager wails. "It wasn't my fault! That bitch over there," he points at me, "is the real thief. She is the one who should be punished, not me. I'm doing my job here."

The man arches his brow. "Job? I didn't see you do anything other

than humiliate and threaten a customer. Is that what you call a job? That's how you take care of business in this company?"

Then he turns to the crowd. "Everyone, please go back to what you were doing. We apologize for the inconvenience caused today. And if someone needs any compensation for the wasted time and inconvenience caused to you today, please talk to the front desk for compensation. For everyone else, your items will be mailed to you free of charge within the next couple of days."

The crowd, still stunned by what just transpired, looks from one man to another, unsure. Then, finally, some start to shuffle, slowly picking up their things and leaving the store.

The moment we are alone, the manager falls on his knees. "Please, sir. You can't do this. This is my career, my life. You don't know how much this job means to me. I have a daughter and she's not well, and I can't lose this job. Please, give me another chance. Please. I beg of you. Please. You don't know what you're doing."

"Get the hell up, you idiot," the man snaps, not an ounce of emotion on his face.

"You don't understand," the manager begs.

"No, you don't understand." The man takes a step forward, looking angrier than before. "You think I don't know what you have been doing behind my back? How you've been taking advantage of your position and stealing from the inventory to sell it at the other store? I have had my staff keeping an eye on you for a long time. Today, they gave me the proof I needed. The only reason you got off easy is because your daughter is actually sick, and you had no other way to

pay her hospital bill.”

The man’s eyes widen in realization.

“I have already spoken with your daughter’s doctor. Your hospital bills will be settled. In exchange, you will quit today and never work for me or any of my companies again. If you don’t quit, I’ll have you fired from all the stores in this country and blacklist you. Your career will be over.”

The manager stumbles up and stares at him. “I’ll leave right now, sir.”

The manager doesn’t say another word, but his face is full of misery as he runs away like the wind.

Then the man turns to me and shakes his head. “I’m really sorry for all that nonsense. It should not have happened. But enough of that.” A smile finally graces his lips as he opens his arms for me. “My little monster! Come here and give your brother a hug!”

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