

## Chapter 56

[Vivienne]

"What the hell happened?"

Before I can even process it, I'm on my knees, scrambling to pick up the sheets to see if there's anything salvageable. But it's clearly a lost cause. The ink has seeped into the sheets, completely swallowing up my designs.

Kimberly, on the other hand, looks like she's about to pass out from guilt. "I'm so, so, so sorry, Vivienne. I didn't know the tech team left all their junk here. I just turned on the fan to dry my hair, and... oh, God. The ink got knocked over and... shit... I'm so sorry. I'll make it up to you, I promise."

Make it up to me? How the hell is she going to make it up to me? The designs were supposed to reach the workshop by tomorrow morning, and I've been busting my ass on these for an entire week. This isn't some office prank I can laugh off. This is serious shit, and I'm left standing here, completely screwed.

"I don't know, Kim. I don't think anything is left to be fixed." Tears well up in my eyes, but I hold them back, not wanting to give others the satisfaction of knowing how easily something like this can break me.

I've come too far to finally have some semblance of normality in my life, and now this setback is making me want to scream.

But I can't even do that. Kim is the only person in the entire office, aside from my brother, who genuinely appreciates me and my work. I can't be mean to her over this.

But I can't even do that. Kim is the only person in the entire office, aside from my brother, who genuinely appreciates me and my work. I can't be mean to her over this.

So, I pull myself together and swallow back the lump in my throat.

"You know what, it's okay, Kim. Really. You're my team leader, and it's my responsibility to make sure you don't lose face."

Kim looks relieved. "But I feel so bad. Do you think you'll be able to have something ready in time? Maybe if we work all night, we can come up with something. I'll even help. You can be the designer, and I'll be your assistant. What do you say, partner?"

I sigh, my shoulders dropping. It's not that I don't understand that she's trying to cheer me up and make things right. But what she's not seeing is the fact that it's perfectly impossible to make fifty designs in one night.

I should have taken a backup. Why the hell didn't I do it?

"What's going on here?" The stern, cold voice startles me out of my misery, and I glance up to see my brother standing at the door with a deep frown on his face.

"Harvey!" Kim exclaims, and before I can say something, she runs to my brother and breaks into an explanation. "Harvey, this is all my fault. Please, don't be mad at Vivienne. She did her work. It was I who messed up big time. I take full responsibility for this. Vivienne shouldn't suffer because of my mistake. I swear, Harvey. I'm really sorry for the inconvenience."



I can't help but frown at Kim's dramatic explanation. Why is she being so extra?

Harvey stares at me and then at Kim. "Well, in that case, I believe you will have no problem spending the night and recreating the designs in your free time, right, Kim?"

Kim's face visibly pales, and if I'm not wrong, her jaw drops a little. She exchanges a look with me, before looking at my brother and then back at me.

"But Harvey... we... we are in the middle of a deadline," she stutters.

"That's what I said. The designs are to be submitted by tomorrow. You'd better start working right away."

Someone outside the cabin chuckles. "Yeah, Kim. What's the hesitation? Suddenly scared of a little hard work?"

Kim's eyes narrow, and she shoots a glare towards the doorway. "I'm not scared of anything. I just think we need to be realistic about what we can accomplish."

Claire chuckles. "Don't tell me the great Kimberly Jackson is giving up on something."

Harvey's jaw tightens. "If you've got the time to be standing in the hallway, gossiping like a bunch of teenage girls, then you might as well be putting in some extra hours to get the job done."

"What?"

Claire's eyes widen. She clearly did not think this plan through. She probably assumed she could stir some drama and get off scot-free. But nope, it didn't go that way.

Harvey turns to face her. "You heard me, McNamara. Now, unless you have an explanation for your behavior, I suggest you go get started on your work. All of you. That goes for all the staff still standing in the hallway eavesdropping on the conversation."

As soon as those words come out of his mouth, everyone outside the cabin rushes back to their seats.

Then, my brother turns to me. "Ms. Sinclair, my office. Now!"

I follow Harvey without a word, and when we are alone, I can't stop myself.

"What the hell was that? There was no need to be so hard on everyone."

Harvey sinks into his chair and then turns his laptop around so I can see the screen.

"What the hell is this now?"

"Just watch. I think it's time you knew who's on your side or not."

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[Vivienne]

At first, I don't understand what Harvey meant by what he just said.

But then, I decide to see what he's trying to show me before saying anything more. I grab the laptop and press play.

A video starts playing, and when I see what's in it, my eyes widen as a mix of anger and confusion rushes through me.

In the video, it's clear as day: Kim walks into her cabin, tosses my designs on the floor, and then pours an entire bottle of ink over the papers, making sure every single page is soaked. And then, when she's done, she tosses the bottle away and screams.

"What the hell?" I mutter to myself, replaying the video and growing even more confused. I stand up straight, staring at the screen. "I don't understand. Is she for real?"

Harvey's eyes soften. "I know you worked hard on those designs, Viv, and I feel terrible for not being able to provide you with a healthy environment where you can work and grow. This... I never expect this to happen, I swear."

"Hey," I say as I walk around the table and lean against it, facing him. "Are you kidding me? Working here is literally the dream of thousands of budding designers who want to make a name for themselves in this business. I love working here. I love knowing that if there's one person who would never baby me in a professional setting, it's you. I

know that when you praise my work, it comes from a genuine place, and if there was someone else in my place, you'd do the same. And I can't ask for more. Sure, there's some office politics going on here, but where is it not? It's literally everywhere, and you know that better than I do."

He shakes his head, frowning. "I know you can handle yourself, Viv, but this... this is beyond just office politics. This is sabotage. And I can't have people like that working in my company."

"That's your decision to make," I tell him. "But as far as I'm concerned, I think I'm done playing nice. This has gone too far, and it's fair to say that I'm pissed."

Harvey grins at that. "Attagirl," he says with pride. "I'll be honest with you. I have been dying to see this side of you come out and kick some ass. Remember your school days? The bullies who always tried to push you around and make you cry? Remember what you did to them when they went too far and crossed the line?"

I do. I remember everything, and it surprises me how much I changed myself over the years, just to appease a man. I was never the one to take anyone's shit, never the one to stay silent when things got shitty. I used to stand up for myself and make my voice heard, even if it meant getting in trouble with everyone else.

And now that I think about. This whole thing seems deliberate.

I frown, tipping my head to the side. "How come you have cameras installed in Kim's cabin? Have you been keeping an eye on her for some reason?"

He sighs, taking the laptop back. "No, not really. The cameras were recently installed after a few of our designs were leaked to Goldmine Fashions. I wanted to figure out who was behind it, so I had a talk with my security head and decided to set up some cameras. We focused on key areas where sensitive work might be at risk."

He pauses, looking at me with a serious expression. "This morning, when I heard another design had gone missing, I had to dig into the footage. Jason and I spent hours going through it, and that's how I caught the footage of her ruining your designs."

"But that doesn't mean she's also behind the leak, right?"

"I can't say for sure. All I can say is that there's enough suspicion against Kim, and until we can confirm she isn't guilty, we need to keep an eye on her."

For some reason, it all starts to make sense. The way Kim deliberately destroyed my designs, it's clear she's capable of malicious behavior.

But the big question is, how far is she willing to take this? If she is behind the leak to Goldmine Fashions, then how on earth did she manage to pass the information to them? Did someone approach her and offer a deal, or did she reach out to Goldmine on her own? And if that's the case, then what else is she planning to do to sabotage our work?

A sudden thought pops into my mind.

"Harvey, why don't you let me investigate this matter? If someone is

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deliberately leaking our designs, then it's important we find out who the mole is. If Kim is the one doing this, I'd be happy to prove it. In fact, I can keep an eye on her and do my best to keep my guard up. What do you say, brother? Think you can trust me with this one?"


My brother's lips stretch into a small smile. "I trust you with my life, little one. But are you sure about this? You do know what you're getting yourself into, right?"

Maybe I do. Maybe I don't.

But one thing is crystal clear: my brother needs my help, and I'm ready to step up and tackle this head-on.

I meet his gaze with a determined smile. "I do. I know exactly what I'm getting myself into."



Diti Koshy  Author

*Happy Rakshabandhan to all my Indian readers :)*

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