

Spare Wife 111

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Voice Recorder

The first show was scheduled for the next day. Abigail took the dress to her room for final checks to prevent unforeseen circumstances. When she opened her room door, she was startled to find Sean sitting there.

He had returned to his company two days ago, so she assumed he wouldn't be back so soon. His sudden appearance in her room rattled her already tense nerves.

"You seem surprised to see me," he remarked casually as he put down her notebook.

Abigail used the notebook to doodle patterns for the dress, often finding inspiration at random moments. She hadn't expected Sean to go through her notebook, especially when he had previously shown little interest in her work. "I heard you went back to work. Of course, I'm surprised to see you in my room," she replied, quickly coming up with an excuse. She composed herself and held her dress up a little, then she went into the room and closed the door.

He glanced at the dress in her hands. "Is Luna having you check the dress instead of working on it herself?"

"She wants me to check the details. She's exhausted after working on it all day," she explained.

He then turned his attention to her notebook. "Nice patterns. Did Luna ask you to learn this as well?"

Abigail hung the dress on a hanger, feeling slightly offended by Sean's comment. Her mind was already weary from a long day's work, and she couldn't figure out why Sean would ask her that. "Yep. What do you think? Do I have enough talent to be a designer?"

"Not bad," he acknowledged. "Many people don't have talent, but hard work can compensate."

She grunted and changed the subject. "A stranger pricked me last time. Have you found out who did it?"

"We did. I'll handle it," Sean calmly assured Abigail.

She involuntarily looked at him with a hint of subtle mockery flickering in her eyes. However, he seemed oblivious to it. She looked away, pretending to be interested in the dress, but her thoughts were elsewhere. She muttered, He's going to sweep it under the rug because it's related to someone named 'Palmer.' She held the dress, finding the situation amusing and pathetic, and thought, If he refuses to tell me, I will ask Luna to investigate.

"After you're done, make sure to get some rest. You're working harder than any assistant," he advised before leaving the room.

The door was closed, and Abigail was still stunned. She had expected Sean to stay longer, but it was just a brief visit. She entered the bathroom and splashed her face with cold water. When she looked at her reflection, she frowned. She appeared vacant and worn; even she was repulsed by her appearance, let alone that man.

After a shower and some adjustments to the dress, she sewed a few patches to perfect the details.

An urgent knock on her door roused her from her groggy state the following day. It wasn't even seven o'clock yet, and she knew the show, if today, wouldn't start so early.

Approaching the door, Abigail was about to inquire about the visitor's identity when Luna whispered, "Open up. It's me, Luna."

Abigail quickly opened the door, greeted by a pale Luna, which instantly alarmed her. "What's wrong? Did you stay up all night?"

"No, I got some sleep, but I found this in the couch crevices this morning. Someone must have hidden it while we weren't looking." Luna showed the voice recorder and squeezed into Abigail's room.

Abigail took the recorder and examined it closely. "Did you turn it off, or did it run out of battery?"

"I turned it off. I checked the model, and it saves its file in a cloud system. We need a passcode to access the files," Luna whispered.

Abigail's heart skipped a beat. She swiftly grabbed her phone to scan the voice recorder, and it directed her to an online shopping page. After inspecting the recorder's details, Abigail frowned.

"The recorder's battery can be recharged. It can work all day and last for a week."

She turned on the recorder, which still had two-thirds of its battery life. "Judging by the power

usage, Joan must have secretly placed it here when she joined the livestreaming team, specifically when she sat down and asked you questions."

Over the past two days, they had discussed their secrets at length, and Joan had likely gained access to the voice recordings through the cloud storage.

"No wonder she wasn't concerned when we mentioned altering our clothes. This must be her plan.

She thinks she can win first prize by exposing us," Luna grabbed her hair, her voice laced with anger.

"It's possible," Abigail responded solemnly.

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She's Alana

When Sean received the files from Cameron at six in the morning, he wasted no time over the past two days gathering all the information he could. He opened the picture he had taken of Abigail's notebook and meticulously laid out all the drafts Cameron had collected. She had sketched a multitude of patterns. Sean meticulously compared them to the patterns in Alana's designs.

When he came across the same stork design, Sean placed his phone on the draft and examined it closely. The shading used by Abigail on the stork was strikingly similar to Alana's style. He knew that shading was a critical aspect of an artist's talent, and no matter how gifted Abigail was, she couldn't replicate the essence of Alana's art in such a short time.

He concentrated tirelessly, searching for similarities between Alana's and Abigail's designs. As time ticked by, he held up the final design. He scrutinized it to compare it to the ones in Abigail's notebook.

The design had an unmistakable smudge and was adorned with intricate rose designs. He recalled taking a picture of a rose drawing in Abigail's notebook the previous night, and it bore the same shading technique as the final draft. Even though the final design had transformed the roses into a 3D representation, the core design remained unchanged.

Sean couldn't tear his eyes away from the draft. He overlapped them all, and then, clutching his phone tightly, he got up.

Cameron quickly followed Sean, expecting him to seek out Abigail. However, Sean headed for the elevator instead. Just as they reached the elevator, they ran into Joan, who came out from the other elevator.

Joan hurried over to Sean, but she hesitated momentarily when she noticed the stack of drafts he held. "Where are you going, Sean? The show starts today, and I'm feeling nervous. Can we chat for a bit?" She glanced at the drafts in his hand, and when she realized they were Alana's work, her eyes darkened.

Sean pressed a button on the elevator panel. "I'm short on time, Joan. You have a busy schedule, too. Head to the dressing room." The elevator doors slid open, and Sean stepped inside before she could say anything.

Cameron noticed the look in Sean's eyes and knew he had a role to play. So, he prevented her from entering the elevator with Sean. "Miss Palmer, allow me to escort you to the dressing room. We can't be late for the show."

Joan wanted to convey her concerns about the impending failure of the show, but their planned drama with Nina had not yet begun, so she forced a smile. "Of course. Sorry for troubling you. I'm nervous."

Cameron said, "It's alright."

It was nearly eight, and the backstage area was bustling with activity. The crew members were inspecting the runway, others were fine-tuning the live-stream setup, and the remainder were busy dressing the models.

Kevin entered the scene, looking suave. However, the moment he stepped out, Sean, who had been waiting patiently, grabbed his collar and pushed him back into the room.

Kevin grumbled, "I just ironed my suit, Sean. Let me go!"

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Alana's Scandal

Kevin found the question rather peculiar. The only plausible reason for a wife to believe her husband was dead was if he failed to contribute or fulfill his responsibilities. He suspected that Sean's involvement with Joan might be the cause. He looked at Sean and cautiously inquired, "Did you f*ck Joan too much?"

"Are you crazy?" Sean shot Kevin an incredulous look.

Kevin sat up straight. "Abigail is obviously displeased with you. She wouldn't even tell you she's Alana. You're a failure of a husband."

Sean looked at Kevin coldly and admitted, "I know. I don't even know if the mourning period for her husband is over."

Kevin felt the chill in the air emanating from Sean, making him shiver. He huddled closer and moved away slightly. "What now? She won't reveal her true profession, and we can't confront her with these drafts to force the truth out. What if she has a valid reason for her actions?"

Sean had no immediate response. He thought he knew Abigail, but at that moment, he reflected on their past and realized there had always been a veil between them.

Kevin proposed a somewhat absurd idea. "What if you pretend you know nothing and maintain this secret indefinitely, as I'm doing?"

Sean looked at him coldly. "How can I demand an explanation for her claiming I was dead?"

Kevin almost choked on his own words. Anything he said at that moment would only worsen

matters for Abigail. "I'll try to expose her then. I have her designs and the contract Luna signed.

This should be easy to resolve," he suggested.

"I need to find out why she didn't want to tell me," Sean said solemnly.

Kevin hesitated briefly. "Maybe it has something to do with Miss Palmer."

Sean shot him a sideways glance. "Joan hasn't been back for long. She's been using the Alana alias in this industry for a while."

Kevin conceded that Sean had a point and nodded. "True. So what's our plan now?"

"Is that the only question you have?" Sean replied calmly.

After hesitating, Kevin said, "I don't mind if Abigail keeps it a secret. I'm fine with it as long as everyone remains in the dark, and it doesn't affect the show."

Sean remembered when Kevin informed him that Abigail was serving tea or something. He had no clue what was going through her mind. She could have confronted him but remained silent instead, preferring to endure unfair treatment rather than reveal her true identity. Suddenly, he asked, "Do you know why she won't tell me anything?"

Kevin noticed the confusion and dejection in Sean's eyes. He understood how Sean felt. Sean and Abigail were a couple, married. Yet, she kept such a significant secret and wouldn't reveal it to him. She might have had many more secrets.

Kevin recalled all the times she interacted with Sean, and a realization dawned on him. "I think she doesn't like you. Have you been mistreating her in your marriage?"

"She doesn't like me?" Sean was taken aback. He had believed that Abigail married him because she liked him. He was forced into the marriage, yet she still married him despite knowing he had no feelings for her.

Kevin was speechless about how dense this man was.

"How'd you know she doesn't like me?" Sean asked.

"Abigail's always distant to everyone, including you. She's interacted with you a lot of times, but she never blushed. Not even once," Kevin said truthfully.

Sean couldn't help but think, That's not true. She blushes when we're having intimacy and is not distant in private.

Kevin was about to speak again, but someone knocked on the door. Sean checked the time. It was a few minutes past eight, and he thought it was probably someone from the production team.

An impatient Kevin approached the door and opened it to find Cameron waiting outside. He asked,

"What's going on?"

Cameron entered the room and closed the door behind him. "Something big happens."

"Spit it out," Kevin urged. He hadn't yet formulated his thoughts about whether Abigail liked Sean.

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Cameron glanced at the frosty Sean. "There's a scandal circulating on the internet regarding Alana. They claim she's not the real creator of the designs. They say she doesn't even know how to make clothes. What's more, they have both audio and video evidence."

Kevin couldn't believe his ears. He asked, "What? They're saying Alana can't even design clothes, and there's evidence to back it up?"

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Critical Point

Cameron handed his phone to Sean, and Kevin couldn't help but feel a little annoyed. Kevin muttered, "Hey, I'm right beside you. Can't I see the news first?"

Cameron approached Sean and played the video, and then Kevin huddled closer to Sean. The title was explosive.

'Shocking news. The famous designer is actually an exploiter? Assistant creates actual designs and clothing.'

The video showed Abigail exiting Luna's room with a half-finished dress. Astonishingly, the dress was completed by the following day when it was returned to Luna's room. Abigail repeated this process for three consecutive days. The video ended with a black screen, but the sounds of a sewing machine continued in the background.

As the sewing machine fell silent, Abigail's voice began to speak. "There are still many unfinished details. I'll take this back to my room and work on it. You get some rest."

"It's late. We have two days to finish this. What's the hurry?" Luna's voice questioned, clearly recorded while being near the device.

It was evident from the varying volumes of their voices that Luna wasn't beside the sewing machine. Abigail, who finished the dress, was close to the sewing machine. Their conversation continued.

"I can't afford to waste time. Can you take over if something stops me from finishing my design?"

"I should've paid more attention in class. Now, I can't help, and you have to deal with this alone. You might have to buy the designs and hire someone to make the dress."

"We'll live comfortably once we finish this and win the prize."

The voices in the video were unmistakably Abigail's and Luna's, and video evidence supported it.

Luna slammed her phone onto the table, causing the screen to crack. She glared at Abigail, fuming. "This editing is outrageous. They've cut out all the crucial details. This is defamation! It's libel!"

Abigail had an icy look on her face. "If they can prove that Alana is a scam and a con artist, the production team can terminate our contracts. I told you they wouldn't reveal our identities. They opted for a smear campaign instead."

Luna seethed with anger. "I can't believe they installed a camera and a voice recorder."

Abigail analyzed the angle from which the video was shot. "Nina's clever. She must have hidden the camera in the peephole."

Luna asked skeptically, "How do you know?"

"Rough guess. It's probably installed in the direction facing her room. Since no one noticed it, she must've taken down the peephole and replaced it with a camera." Abigail turned off the video.

Luna approached the door, lifted the cover of the peephole, and scrutinized it closely. She extended her finger, tapping the peephole's glass until it popped out. She opened the door and examined the crystal that had fallen. Her brow furrowed, and she picked it up before carefully reinserting it into the peephole. After reattaching the crystal, she returned to the room. She reported, "The hotel did all the renovations but left the peepholes untouched. They're all old models."

Abigail wasn't surprised. She knew there were always oversights, and peepholes were easy to miss among all the hotel details.

"What now?" Luna asked

Abigail said, "We'll tell the truth and come clean. I can improvise a design explanation on the spot. Alternatively, we can stall until our team returns with something. Then, the real show begins."

Luna approached the coffee table and clasped her hands in prayer. "Please, my foolish brother, give me a sign before the showdown. God, don't let those witches escape justice."

A knock on the door startled them. Luna hastily stashed her phone in Abigail's bag, and they switched phones.

Abigail opened the door to find Joan, the other designers, and the models outside. They wore expressions ranging from disdain to curiosity to schadenfreude.

Victor squeezed through the crowd, voicing his support. "I trust you ladies. I'm sure they're spreading false accusations."

Nina stepped forward with urgency. "Who are these 'they' you're talking about? Tell me."

Joan appeared disappointed, with red rims around her eyes. "I can't believe my favorite designer is

a fraud.”

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Sean Calms Things Down

Luna scoffed. “You dare to call yourself my fan? You publicly defamed my assistant and baselessly accused her of obtaining the competition’s theme ahead of others. And now, you’ve fabricated this evidence to pressure me into confessing to something I never did. I’ve never encountered a so-called fan like you before.”

Nina said, “I think what happened last time wasn’t slander either. You do have a capable assistant, after all.” She gave Abigail a knowing glance.

Abigail responded coolly, “Would you care to elaborate on my competence? I don’t recall having any special privileges to access the competition’s theme ahead of others.”

Without a direct answer, Nina simply smiled and crossed her arms, saying, “I think everyone understands what I’m implying.”

“Miss Lowery, you and Miss Palmer have slandered us once but twice now. If the truth comes out and proves our innocence, both of you should consider leaving the industry. And you, Miss Palmer, you’ve also defamed Alana twice. If we establish our innocence, you owe her an apology,” Abigail said firmly, her voice carrying a quiet but undeniable authority.

Joan sneered dismissively. “This is none of your concern, you insignificant assistant.”

Abigail regarded her coldly, asserting, “Seeing someone like you wearing Alana’s creations is an insult to her. That’s the reason for my criticism. Do you have a problem with that?”

The majority of the audience in the live stream seemed to side with Joan and Nina.

‘Alana is being so stubborn. They have both audio and video evidence. How can she remain so arrogant?’

‘The previous live streams have made it obvious. The designs Alana showcased were already prepared, and she rarely demonstrated any actual work on camera.’

‘Yeah, I used to think she worked faster than the other designers, but it’s clear now that she had the drafts ready beforehand. I wonder which unfortunate designer she bought those drafts from.’

Alana’s fans must be feeling quite disgusted.’

‘Her assistant probably hooked up with Sean. Didn’t you guys hear what Nina said? Sean seems to be in on it. She must have used her connections to cheat her way through the competition.’

The live stream had reached its highest viewership at that moment. Numerous prominent streamers shared it, making it a trend at the top.

When Kevin saw the video, he immediately showed it to Sean. "They're claiming Abigail cheated her way through the competition."

"Are you still wrapped up in this drama?" Sean asked with a cold gaze.

Kevin quickly responded, "I'll instruct the websites to take down these allegations."

Sean's gaze sharpened. "Are you daft? The livestream is ongoing, and you're talking about websites?!" He shot Kevin a stern look before standing up.

"Oh, right," Kevin snapped out of it, knocking his head lightly. He then called the show's director.

Cameron followed Sean anxiously. "Are you going to help them, sir?"

"Your task now is to locate the original video and analyze it," Sean instructed, and he left the room.

With Kevin finishing his call, he instructed Cameron, "True. See if the video is edited. If it is, then we can prove their innocence." Professional agencies could find out if a video was edited. If they could prove that the video was fake, they could prove the ladies' innocence.

Cameron quickly went to work. Kevin walked around, watching the video. When he came to the scene, the crowd was still arguing. He then looked in the direction of Nina's room.

Sean was standing behind the crowd as well. He noticed Kevin squinting at Nina's room, and he approached him. "Did you see something?"

"Someone brought their own camera onto the set," Kevin informed him.

A staff member overheard

Graham, Mr. Stewart!"

Conversation and turned around, trembling with fear. "Mr.

The shout silenced the director, who was arguing with Nina.

Soon, everyone's attention shifted to Sean and Kevin. Kevin cleared his throat, ready to step forward, but Sean acted before him.

Joan looked at Sean and said, "I invited Alana to join this show because I admired her designs. I can't believe she's a fraud."

Luna responded calmly, "Do you have any evidence to support that claim?"

Joan insisted, "The video clearly shows that she bought someone else's designs."

Sean met her gaze. "We're yet to confirm the authenticity of the video. Why is everyone here?

Trying to play judge and jury before we can ascertain the truth?"

Even if Abigail and Luna were deceiving, that was a matter for the production team to handle. These designers and models should remain in their rooms and await the outcome.

Kevin added, "You're all participants in this show, nothing more. You don't have the authority to decide Alana and her assistant's fate."

A sense of discomfort settled over the room. Sean turned his attention to Abigail, who remained remarkably composed, making him wonder if she had anticipated his support.

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Still Defending Her

Damian glanced at Victor before speaking up, "Miss Palmer and Miss Lowery suggested that we unite to remove con artists like Ms. Quinn and Ms. Smith from the show." This was Damian's revealing his stance to Luna and Abigail.

of way

Sean turned his attention to Luna and inquired, "What's your response to this, Luna?"

"I'm here to assert that the video is entirely fabricated. You're skilled at discerning the truth, Mr. Graham, aren't you? You invited me, and though I initially declined, you threatened me to sign the contract. Now, my reputation is at stake. I demand an explanation." Luna maintained her composure, her gaze sharp and unwavering.

Sean narrowed his eyes. Despite knowing Alana's involvement in the show, he believed Luna was overly assertive. He wondered whether she and Abigail had planned this confrontation. He asked,

"What action do you propose we take?"

Luna exchanged glances with Abigail, who stepped forward, exuding a tranquil demeanor. "I am speaking on behalf of my employer. First, once the truth is ascertained, we request that Joan Palmer switch places with Nina's model. Alana will not design for those who defame her. Comply, or face consequences."

Joan grew indignant, retorting, "How dare you? Do you have any idea who you're talking to?"

Abigail looked at her sternly, stating, "Secondly, Joan Palmer must humbly apologize to Alana. If not, she must create an apology video and share it online, confessing her slanderous actions."

Joan turned to Sean, her eyes welling up. She seemed aggrieved, uttering, "She's just an assistant, Sean. She can't do this to me."

"She can because she's my assistant. Who do you think you are, a nobody, a flash in the pan?"

Perhaps others can't do this to you, but she can. She's my assistant." Luna erupted in fury. She wasn't backing down, even if her enemy was Sean.

Kevin noticed Sean's icy demeanor and smiled. "We will thoroughly investigate the matter to determine if Alana indeed purchased the designs or if this is a case of slander. We will ensure a fair competition. If you're not involved, please return to your rooms."

Joan had never felt so humiliated since getting involved with Sean. Tears welled up in her eyes.

Abigail glanced at Sean coldly. Seeing her expression, Sean remained silent and looked at Kevin.

Kevin approached Joan, offering his handkerchief to wipe her tears. "You should not have intervened. The production team would have handled everything. Come with me." He led Joan away.

Abigail knew Sean had signaled Kevin to do this. He wanted to ensure Joan could leave without further damage. She clenched her fists, shooting a meaningful glance at Luna.

Luna quickly approached and held Abigail's hand, guiding her into their room.

The director instructed everyone to return to their rooms. Still in a state of distress, he approached Kevin. "What about the runway?"

"It's proceeding as planned. The show starts at two. We still have time," Kevin replied solemnly. He had chosen that time slot anticipating potential issues, and his prediction proved accurate.

Once everyone had left, Sean entered Luna's room. He looked at Luna and asked, "What if I insist that you design Joan's attire and forbid her from apologizing to you?" he demanded, his voice as cold as a winter breeze, enough to set anyone on edge.

Luna glanced at Abigail, seeking her support. Abigail remained silent, prompting Luna to consider her options before meeting Sean's icy gaze. "Then, I'm quitting the show. Sue me. Sue L.Moon. You can get up to your dirty tricks and stop anyone from doing business with us."

Abigail overheard this. She said, "We need to talk, Sean. Privately." She walked toward the door.

Sean followed Abigail out without even looking at Luna.

Once the duo went outside, Luna stumbled back and collapsed on the couch, realizing her legs shook uncontrollably.

After entering her room, Abigail closed the door. Sean wanted to ask why she had concealed her true identity, but he struggled to find the words, unsure where to begin.

She looked at him and took a deep breath. Eventually, she said, "Luna is not a scam artist, Sean. I can vouch for that with my name."

He met her gaze and responded calmly, "I trust you. However, Joan is also a victim here. She's not the sharpest person, and it's understandable that she would sever ties with Alana swiftly to avoid being implicated in the scandal."

She frowned, retorting, "You're still defending her? You know what she's attempting. Or are you suggesting you can turn a blind eye to her actions?"

"I've defended you too. If I hadn't helped you when she found out something was wrong with the draft the first time, you think you could've gotten out of the mess?" he countered.

Abigail's eyes turned icy as she stared at Sean, her lips tightly pursed.

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So You Know How to Cajole

Sean couldn't help but notice the change in Abigail's eyes. It triggered the memory of something Kevin had confided in him earlier—that Abigail didn't like him. The thought knitted his brows in concern.

The look in her eyes turned into that of apathy. "If she won't make a public apology online, we're not designing anything for her, and we'll destroy the ones we've made for her. Trust me."

"Do you have to go to such lengths? I—"

She cut him off shrilly. "I don't want to hear any explanations. L.Moon's success hinges on Alana's reputation. What Joan's doing is tantamount to ruining someone's livelihood. It's almost like murder in a way, do you get it?"

He asked, "Are you mad because I'm defending her? Is that why you're going after her?"

She replied coldly, "I couldn't care less if there were rumors of a scandal involving you and Joan staying at any hotel."

Sean took a deep breath, his eyes locked on Abigail. He asked, "Are you willing to say anything just because she won't apologize? Is L.Moon that important for you?"

"You think she's innocent? Fine. Once I uncover the truth, let's see how you can defend her." She avoided answering his question, turning her gaze toward the window. She didn't want to talk to him anymore, realizing he was just a flaming heap of disappointment.

"Do you still want to resolve this, Abigail?" he asked.

She turned around, her frustration evident as she snapped, "Don't threaten me. What else can you do besides threatening me? Why does the set have hidden cameras? Why is there a voice recorder? Why can she edit the video and slander Alana?"

Abigail's eyes blazed with anger as she walked closer to Sean. She enunciated sharply, "You resorted to underhanded tactics just to get Alana on your show. So, you better protect her. She owes you nothing, and you expect her to sit quietly when her reputation is on the line?"

He knew she was mad, and he pulled her into his embrace. "We're already looking into it. Why are you so mad?"

She was still livid, so when he hugged her, she froze momentarily and shoved him away. "Let me go!"

He gently patted her back and, for once, adopted a persuasive tone. "This is the production team's oversight. I've dispatched my team to locate the original video. I'll prove your innocence." He could

understand why she was so mad. She was Alana, after all. Of course, she was aggrieved after being slandered.

Abigail struggled to break free, but Sean held her close to his chest. "Alright, calm down. You have a show to attend," he continued.

She felt her throat tighten. She clutched his clothing and exhaled. "I don't care. Joan can't be our model. We're replacing her with Nina."

"I made a promise to her, so I can't change her out," he said calmly. Still, she tried to break free again, and he looked at her. "In exchange for her being your model this time, you can name any request.

"Fine. Then make an apology video and post it online," she said, reining in her anger. "For both her slander attempts at Alana."

Sean looked into Abigail's eyes and nodded. "Fine. I'll talk to her."

"And I want fairness this time. Anyone involved in the smear campaign must be removed from the show," she insisted.

"Of course," he agreed.

She looked at him and thought, He can do anything just for Joan's future. Then, she mocked, "Joan means a lot to you, doesn't she?" She smiled sardonically as she pushed Sean away.

"Why are you bringing that up again?" He frowned.

Abigail shoved him away and sneered. "Still playing dumb, I see. Forget it. Focus on your job. We have nothing more to discuss."

Sean was about to respond when a knock interrupted him. He frowned but opened the door nonetheless. It was Kevin, and Sean impatiently asked, "What do you want?"

"Still arguing, I see?" Kevin appeared curious, having heard the heated exchange from outside. He was worried they might split up.

Sean responded coldly, "Just get to the point."

Abigail approached from behind and pushed Sean out of the room, slamming the door shut. Kevin stood there in shock, staring at the closed door. He turned to Sean, who was frowning with pursed lips. Kevin asked, "Is she angry?"

"Yes, she is. I failed to cajole her," Sean admitted, thinking she might be jealous.

Kevin mumbled, "Maybe Joan shouldn't have led that crusade this morning. This has nothing to do with the models or designers. Can't believe they were trying to call the shots on our behalf."

Sean looked at him coolly and returned to his room, with Kevin quickly following.

“The internet is suspecting Alana. If Abigail finds evidence of their innocence, this won’t be easy to resolve. After all, Luna did impersonate Alana. How can we spin this narrative?”

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Clarification

Abigail returned to Luna’s room with a gloomy expression and found her sitting on the couch, lost in thought. Upon hearing the door close, Luna snapped out of her reverie and immediately looked at Abigail, asking, “What did he say?”

“He said that we should make Joan apologize and continue as planned, but I don’t want to let it go so easily,” Abigail said as she sat down beside Luna with a cold look in her clear eyes.

Luna looked at her, her gaze turning icy as well. “Do you wish to confront Joan? Won’t Sean blame us for this?”

“Luna, don’t you think it’s because we’ve been afraid of this situation that Sean and Joan have been able to manipulate us? Being patient and accommodating hasn’t solved the problem,” Abigail said calmly.

Luna gradually calmed down and replied in a low voice, “You’re right.”

Abigail continued, “Let’s wait for the results from the production team first. Once they’re out, we can plan our next move, but be prepared for the possibility of losing both money and reputation.”

Luna’s breath caught at the mention of losing everything. “It was Joan who pushed us to join the show in the first place, and she’s the one causing us trouble now.”

“Luck doesn’t always favor one person,” Abigail said coldly.

After returning to her room, she took out the phone that Luna had slipped into her bag and saw the latest message. Immediately, she unlocked it with her password. As she read the text, her eyes widened in astonishment.

At 10.00PM, Cameron returned with the original video footage while Kevin was also investigating in secret.

Cameron handed the original video to Sean and said respectfully, “When Halopedia Entertainment received this original video, it had already been edited.”

“How did they receive it?” Sean asked, his voice devoid of emotion as he stared at the original video on his phone.

Cameron pursed his lips and replied, “Someone sent it to them via email, but when I checked, I found that the sender’s email had been deleted on the same day it was active. I asked some experts,

but they said there was no way to trace the sender after the email had been erased.”

“They’ve covered their tracks quite well,” Sean said with a cold smile. Afterward, he called Kevin, who quickly answered. “How’s your side progressing?” he asked with a hint of coldness.

Kevin hurriedly replied, “The prime suspects now are Nina and Damian. He claims that he couldn’t sleep three nights ago due to work and sat in the garden all night. Then, he encountered Nina sneakily returning from the garden at 4.00AM.”

Sean frowned. “Why is it Damian again?”

“Damian told me a little secret. He said that he arranged with Luna to deliberately create a competitive atmosphere to use their absolute strength to eliminate Nina in the first round, as Luna believed that Nina’s design and character were subpar,” Kevin said in a lowered voice.

“Where are you that you can’t speak loudly?” Sean asked while sounding impatient.

Kevin cleared his throat. “I’m creating an atmosphere.”

“Go on,” Sean said while restraining his impatience.

“Nina claimed she couldn’t sleep either, but I checked some hidden cameras, and it was clear she had a specific target that night. It wasn’t insomnia. She left the hotel and went straight to the northeast corner of the garden,” Kevin reported, and a rustling sounded on his end.

“You went to the northeast corner of the garden?” Sean immediately noticed.

“Yes. The garden is watered every day, and the soil is moist. If someone had been there, they would’ve left footprints,” Kevin replied with a grin.

He was quite clever at critical moments.

Sean made a noncommittal sound.

“Damian really spent the entire night in the garden. He left the hotel aimlessly after 10.00PM and sat in the garden with a pavilion all night.”

Sean nodded, but his thoughts began to wander. Did Abigail ever have insomnia all night when she couldn’t come up with a design idea?

After three years of marriage, he rarely paid attention to her. Now that he wanted to get to know her better, he did not know where to start.

Kevin’s voice suddenly grew louder. “There are indeed footprints near the iron railing!”

“Do you know what to do next?” Sean asked coldly.

Kevin chuckled. “Of course. You can trust me with this, Sean. I’ll make sure to clear Abigail’s name.”

Sean ended the call and told Cameron, “As soon as we get the video analysis results, have the PR

team write a statement and post it on Instagram to clear Alana’s name.”

“Yes,” Cameron replied quickly.

When it was close to midnight, Sean received the restored video footage from Cameron. The video was also synthesized During the editing process using artificial intelligence. Through professional techniques, the AI–synthesized part was separated and spliced together with the original video before creating a new video.

The official account of the program released a clarification video at midnight. A comparison video was attached and mentioned the authoritative team responsible for the analysis.

Even so, some netizens remained skeptical.

‘What does this analysis prove? It shows that the audio part was synthesized, but what about the video? Miss Quinn brought the unfinished clothes to her room, and the next day, they were completed!

‘How do you explain the distance and proximity of the audio in the video? Miss Quinn was the one operating the sewing machine, so isn’t it impossible for Alana not to know how to use a sewing machine?’

[Chapter 119](#)

Everything Is Arranged

The top comment that eventually rose to the forefront among netizens posts was–Alana must design live on the broadcast to prove her abilities. Only then will everyone be convinced. Otherwise, Alana doesn’t deserve the prize at all!

Upon seeing that the netizens were still causing a commotion, the director turned to Kevin for advice.

Kevin, holding a pair of women’s shoes and measuring them, listened to the director’s words and replied with indifference, “Let them make noise. The runway show at 2.00PM will continue. Now, go have lunch and let the models start their makeup without delay.”

The director checked the time; it was almost 100PM. He wiped the sweat from his forehead and said, “Mr. Stewart, we’re going to trend on the news today if we continue like this.

“Do what I say, and stop the chit–chat! Oh, and tell Nina not to prepare anymore. Kevin put down the ruler and picked up a wet towel to wipe his hands.

The director, who looked world–weary, left Kevin’s room.

After Abigail and Luna finished their lunch, Kevin brought Nina to their room. He knocked on the door, and Abigail got up to open it. He smiled and looked at her. "Miss Quinn, I've brought someone here to make amends."

Nina, whom he had pulled inside, had a pale face and drooping shoulders. She had none of the arrogance she had displayed in the morning.

A camera followed them inside.

With a defeated look, Nina gazed at Luna and stammered, "Al... Alana, I didn't mean to. I was misled when I bought the camera, put it in the peephole of my door, and recorded you. I edited the video to frame you. Her words seemed prepared in advance.

Upon Abigail's signal, Luna spoke, "I saw that you were about to sell the latest Mila bag on your second-hand trading account. That bag is so exclusive. You can't buy it with just money; you need connections, right?"

Kevin's smile froze for a moment as he did not understand why Luna brought this up.

Nina's face turned even paler as she quickly exclaimed, "You invaded my private information?!"

"It seems to be true. I asked around about the latest model of the Mila bag and the person who got it firsthand. I don't know about the others, but I do know a Mr. Graham. How about it? Do you know him?" Luna raised her chin and continued to inquire.

Kevin took out his phone and quickly sent a message to Sean. He originally intended to edit the shots taken with the camera when he suddenly found a mobile phone live-streaming in the room after hearing Luna's words.

Abigail saw his reaction and asked calmly, "Informing Mr. Graham about this? Who did Mr. Graham buy the bag for?"

Nina's face was as white as a sheet of paper, and she was on the verge of tears when she turned to look at Kevin. "Mr. Stewart--"

Luna's gaze turned cold as she said, "Are you taking the fall for someone else? You don't have to say 1. it. I already knew. If you don't want your design career to be ruined from now on, I suggest you tell the truth!"

This plan was devised by Abigail from the moment they realized something was amiss this morning. They started digging into the private information of both Joan and Nina. Abigail never believed that Nina would willingly take such a big risk to do Joan's bidding. It must have been Joan who promised Nina substantial rewards by leveraging her relationship with Sean that made Nina take such a risk.

Without digging deeper, Abigail would not have realized that Nina, a person with an annual income of just over 15,000, could afford the latest limited-edition Mila bag. Hence, she immediately suspected that it was Sean who bought it for Joan.

Joan provided surveillance cameras and recording pens to Nina as a favor, prompting her to take risks and use them to falsely accuse L.Moon and Alana.

Seeing the live broadcast on the phone, Kevin put down his phone and said, “Miss Smith, why are you doing this?”

A staff member noticed the live broadcast and tried to disconnect it. Abigail immediately stepped forward and pushed the staff away. “What are you trying to do? Are you afraid that the dirty dealings in the program will be exposed?”

Luna looked at Kevin and said sarcastically, “Mr. Stewart, do you remember what you said when you signed the contract with East Joy Talent? You said this program would not disappoint me, but what has it turned out to be?”

He forced a smile. “I’m actively investigating this matter, and the program team is on your side to clear your names.”

“I just want to know if Nina was involved with our models, especially Joan, in this matter,” Abigail piped up. She had already made up her mind not to let Joan wear the clothes she designed.

If Sean wanted to protect Joan, she would take drastic measures.

Nina clenched her lips tightly and remained silent. Then, Luna walked over to a nearby couch, crossed her legs, and said with a sly smile, “Miss Lowery, no one can help you out of this today. Think it over yourself. If you speak up, L.Moon can perhaps overlook past grievances and give you a chance for employment, allowing you to shine in the design field. If you don’t speak up, who knows what the future holds?”

With Sean involved, there was no room for a proper discussion. Furthermore, Luna and Abigail had already decided on their exit strategy when they made use of him.

At first, Nina believed she had a winning hand by conspiring with Joan, but she did not expect the outcome to be like this.

At that moment, the door opened once again. Sean and Joan came in together, with the woman hiding behind the man, her eyes still slightly red.

[Chapter 120](#)

Making a Decision in Public

Sean walked in and first glanced at Abigail. Then, he turned to Joan behind him and said, “Speak for

yourself.”

She emerged from his back and glanced at Abigail and Luna before voicing, “Luna, I’m so sorry. I didn’t know about what Miss Lowery did. When I mentioned that bag, I saw that she really liked it, so I sold it to her at a lower price. I didn’t expect her to resell it at an original price…”

Nina bit her lip but did not say anything. Due to that, Abigail suspected that she might be trying to take the blame herself.

“Well… I really like the watch you’re wearing. Would you sell it to me at a lower price?” Luna suddenly smiled.

The watch on Joan’s wrist was a birthday gift from Sean, and she certainly would not sell it.

Joan bit her lip, tears immediately falling down her cheeks. She looked pitiful with her tearful eyes. “Luna, I said those things this morning because I was eager and hot-tempered. I apologize for what I said, but I promise you I had absolutely nothing to do with the video!”

Abigail stepped forward and questioned her, “Are you saying that the video was solely the work of Nina?”

Sean watched Abigail silently. He had never known she could completely turn the situation around in just a few hours. Was her compromise this morning just a tactical move or a test of his attitude?

Joan nodded repeatedly. “I truly had no involvement in this matter. I didn’t know what she interpreted from it when I mentioned the bag.”

Abigail’s eyes were cold and distant, making her seem aloof. “The recording pen is still with me. I’ve already posted the specifications of the recording pen on L.Moon’s official Instagram, and I’ve contacted the manufacturer for detailed discussions.”

Joan did not understand what Abigail meant but looked bewildered, her inner panic growing.

She continued, “The button battery in the recording pen is rechargeable, and if it works 24 hours a day, the pen can last for about a week. When Miss Smith discovered the recording pen, it still had nearly two-thirds of its battery life. So, if we divide a week into three parts, when do you think the recording pen was placed in her room?”

“Three days ago, Joan and the live broadcast team from the show entered Luna’s room for an interview. At that time, she was sitting right next to Lamal

I saw the performance data for the recording pen on L.Moon’s official Instagram and screenshots of their conversation with the pen’s official staff. They confirmed that it was the latest model. It’s fresh from the warehouse, indicating that it is brand new!

'So, based on the battery usage, we can determine it was Joan who placed it there! Why does she love lying so much? Seriously, she looked so pitiful when she came in!

Why did Sean buy such an expensive bag for her? I just don't understand. On one hand, she pretends to be a fan of Alana and wants to gain fame through her designs. On the other hand, she puts a recording pen in Alana's room and collaborates with another designer to create a fake video to smear her. What's her problem? Does she have some kind of psychological issue?

The netizens were furious,

Having been exposed in public, Joan could not help but bawl her eyes out as she trembled, Kevin stood on the side, his lips carrying a smile, but his expression showed some displeasure. What's the point of continuing with the fashion show now?

Luna's eyes were filled with a cold smile as she glanced at Sean, who was staring intently at Abigail. She spoke lazily, "Miss Quinn, please continue."

Abigail nodded slightly and walked to a nearby worktable before showcasing the finished dress to the netizens. Before the netizens could even exclaim at the exquisite design, they witnessed Abigail taking a pair of scissors and cutting the dress in half at the waist right in front of Sean.

She raised her chin and looked at him, stating, "Mr. Graham, my boss has made it clear. We won't allow someone who tarnishes Alana's reputation to wear her clothes because she's simply unworthy. Since this dress was made according to Joan's measurements, it's only right to destroy it."

Sean's hand clenched tightly without making a sound. Undoubtedly, Abigail was challenging him. openly.

"Furthermore, Joan has tarnished Miss Smith's reputation twice and even placed a recording device in Miss Smith's room to create a doctored video for malicious purposes. We demand that Joan issue an immediate public apology. Otherwise, L.Moon will take legal action against her!" She threw the dress on the ground and stepped on it. In all honesty, she would rather destroy the dress than let

Joan wear it.

At that moment, Joan's legs gave out as she sat on the floor.

"Lastly, L.Moon Studio announces its withdrawal from the program. We are willing to compensate for any breach of contract, and we hope that Mr. Graham and Mr. Stewart can understand Miss Smith's feelings of being slandered and allow her to take some time to recuperate," Abigail

concluded politely and nodded to everyone.

Luna stood up, took her luggage behind the couch, and smiled faintly at everyone. "I appreciate all of your care, but I've been deeply affected and cannot continue my creative work. Therefore, I'm withdrawing from this program. Your understanding is appreciated."

Meanwhile, Abigail took her phone, made a farewell gesture to the audience, and ended the livestream. Then, she walked over to Luna, who had been waiting for her.