

Arielle lowered her gaze and schooled her expression into a calm mask. Then, she raised her dress and took a steady step down the stairs.

The crowd first saw an elegant foot clad in Jimmy Choo's heels.

The open-toe heel revealed her dainty toes and slender ankles. Under the soft illumination of the lights, her skin seemed exceptionally radiant.

A mere glance of her foot had the crowd's imagination running wild.

Even Shandie was dumbstruck. She instinctively observed the guests' reactions and noticed that some of the men were seconds away from drooling.

She looked at Vinson next, and his gaze was affixed to the striking foot as well.

Fear briefly gripped Shandie's heart, though she quickly reverted to her earlier anticipation of Arielle's downfall.

It's just a foot. Wait till Arielle makes her way down the steps. You'll all be appalled! Come on! Get on with it, Arielle! I hope that country bumpkin has a spectacular fall from those sky-high heels. It'll be even better if she rolls down the stairs!

To her surprise, Arielle walked quickly and stably with nary the slightest sign of stumbling.

Shandie had no idea that Arielle had once walked an international runway in a mask for a supermodel friend. Arielle was no stranger to heels fifteen centimeters tall. The Jimmy Choos she wore now

merely featured ten-centimeter-tall heels, which were a piece of cake to Arielle.

By now, Shandie could see Arielle's waist, which was extremely slender.

Long, slim arms settled on each side of Arielle's striking figure.

Shandie was bewildered. When has Arielle been this thin? Well, there's no use in being thin. With that ugly face of hers, men could only fall for her in the dark.

Alas, as Arielle's defined collarbones and slim neck came into view, Shandie's nails began digging more painfully into her clenched fists.

Finally, Arielle's face was revealed to the crowd.

It was as small as a man's hand and adorned with

flawless features. Her beauty was absolutely breathtaking.

Arielle's eyes, in particular, sparkled like a pair of priceless gems.

Oh my, she looks absolutely breathtaking!

The exclamation involuntarily surfaced in Shandie's mind.

Still, even those words could not capture the extent of Arielle's beauty.

This... is Arielle? How does she have such a beautiful face?

Shandie's expression twisted with indignant fury.

Why did I give Arielle such an expensive gown? It

perfectly complements her beauty!

Shock, frustration, and jealousy churned in Shandie's chest. She thought she would explode any second.

Meanwhile, her face had turned crimson with fury. Shandie turned toward the audience to gauge their reaction.

Everyone stared at Arielle as though they had been bewitched. Their gazes followed Arielle like a hawk.

Even the typically stoic Vinson seemed affected. Shandie could not decipher the expression on his face.

Is he dumbstruck? Even him?

Cindy was equally stunned. While she was always aware of her late elder sister's incomparable beauty,

Cindy had never expected Maureen's country bumpkin of a daughter to grow up into a knockout even more beautiful than her mother.

At this rate, Arielle's going to overshadow my daughter with her face alone! This won't do! I can't let her rob everything that belongs to my daughter and me!

Meanwhile, the first thing Arielle saw after descending the steps was her stepsister's expression.

Shandie's fury and jealousy were palpable. If not for the crowd, she most definitely would have lunged at Arielle.

Arielle pretended not to understand Shandie's expression and approached her stepsister with a bright smile. "Happy birthday, Shandie. What's wrong? You don't look too good. Are you feeling

unwell?”

Her voice was as lovely and soothing as a spring breeze. Sadly, it sounded just like the noise of a chainsaw to Shandie.

Shandie mustered every bit of self-control to maintain a normal expression on her face. “No, I'm quite well.”

“That's great. Oh right, this gown you've lent me is gorgeous. It's very fitting.”

Arielle purposely stressed the word “fitting.”

The word struck Shandie right where it hurt most. Shandie was immediately incensed.

Arielle said that on purpose!

“You...” Shandie had barely muttered a word when

she blacked out, fainting from sheer anger.

“Ah! Shandie!”

Shandie's fainting was out of Arielle's expectations as well. She instinctively stepped forward to help her, though she deliberately slowed her steps.

Consequently, Shandie fell to the ground with a heavy thud.

“Shannie!” Cindy immediately rushed onto the stage.

Despite her concern, she did not forget about Arielle. Cindy gauged Arielle's position on the stage and deliberately knocked the young woman with her shoulder.

Arielle happened to stand on the edge of the stage in ten-centimeter-tall heels.

She lost her balance after Cindy's shove and fell off the stage.

She quickly placed both hands around her head to minimize her injuries during the fall.

To Arielle's surprise, the pain she had expected never came at all. Instead, a strong hand held her back...

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