

Chapter 34 Accusing Susan Of Theft

"I'm sorry," the individual who bumped into Susan quickly apologized before moving on.

Madisyn scowled, ready to confront the person, but Susan pulled at her sleeve. "It's okay. It was an accident," Susan reassured her.

Madisyn then decided not to pursue it further.

As they sat down to eat, Madisyn noticed something protruding from Susan's pocket and squinted. "What's in your pocket?"

"Nothing," Susan answered, blinking innocently.

When Madisyn retrieved a ring from her pocket, Susan was visibly shocked.

"This isn't mine," Susan exclaimed, panicked.

Madisyn quickly pocketed the ring, scanning the hall as she devised a quick plan. "Of course it's not. Just wait here," she directed.

Madisyn stepped away briefly and then came back.

"What did you do? Where's the ring?" Susan inquired, curious.

"You'll see," Madisyn responded, just as a scream pierced the hall. "My ring is gone!"

It was Josie.

Josie appeared distraught, her voice cracking with emotion. "No! That ring is a family heirloom from my grandmother!"

"Oh no, I know that ring. It's extremely valuable. How could it just vanish?"

"I have taken it off to wash my hands in the restroom and forgot to put it back on. When I returned to retrieve it, it was missing," Josie explained, her

eyes welling up.

The other guests started helping her search, but the ring remained missing.

Suddenly, Josie's gaze fell on Susan.

"Everyone here is affluent and respected. I can't imagine any of them stealing, but Madisyn's friend... Well, she looks quite ordinary," she said, drawing everyone's gaze toward Susan.

Susan's clothing was noticeably simpler than that of the others present.

Taken aback by the accusation, Susan quickly responded, "I didn't take it! I never even saw it!"

"I saw you go into the restroom!" one woman said. "How could you possibly not have seen it? You must be lying!"

"Please, just give back my ring!" Josie pleaded, moving closer to Susan with a look of urgency in her eyes. "If you had taken anything else, I would forgive it for Madisyn's sake, but that ring belonged to my grandmother. I can't lose it!"

"I didn't take it!" Susan asserted, her face flushing with frustration.

Madisyn's demeanor became icy. "Do you have any proof she took it?"

"She's the only one from an ordinary family here. Nobody else would have touched my ring," Josie replied, her logic seeming sound to her. "It's understandable that she might be drawn to such a lovely, valuable ring, but now that she's been caught, she should just return it! But don't worry! For your sake, Madisyn, I won't press charges!"

Josie's words effectively labeled Susan as a thief.

The other guests started scrutinizing Susan more closely; their expressions were judgmental.

"Yes. She's the only one who could have done it."

"I can't believe Miss Johns's friend would do such a thing!"

"People are often judged by the company they keep. Was Miss Johns like this before?"

The crowd murmured, as the elite typically scorned thieves.

They had recently admired Madisyn's grace, but now their views had shifted, some even feeling repelled.

Kristine intervened, trying to diffuse the situation gently. "Madisyn, I understand you don't want your friend humiliated, but Josie said she won't hold your friend accountable. Let's have your friend return the ring. Now that you're part of the Johns family, you'll be able to support your friend better in the future so she won't do such things again."

"I didn't do it!" Susan cried out, tears welling in her eyes. "Just because my clothes are plain, you assume I'm a thief?"

Kristine sighed, appearing somewhat helpless, and suggested to Josie, "Maybe we should handle this after the party?"

Josie hesitated but ultimately agreed. "Alright."

The guests, observing the interaction, appreciated Kristine's approach. "Kristine is so tactful."

"Kristine has always been considerate. She's trying to save Madisyn from embarrassment. It shows the difference between growing up in the countryside and a wealthy family."

Madisyn inwardly rolled her eyes at Kristine's manipulative tactics. With just a few words, Kristine had managed to have everyone believe Susan was a thief.

Glenn noticed the disturbance and approached to find out what was happening.

Kristine quickly briefed him on the situation.

Madisyn addressed her sharply, "Kristine, why the rush to accuse my friend of theft?"

Kristine explained in anxiety, "Madisyn, please don't get me wrong. I didn't say that. Let's just address this after the banquet so it doesn't disrupt your celebration."

"I'm telling you, she didn't take Josie's ring!" Madisyn said emphatically.

Josie, frustrated by Madisyn's staunch defense, thought Madisyn lacked proper social grace despite her efforts to maintain decorum.

"Well, let's search her then. If we don't find the ring, I'll apologize myself!" Josie asserted. "But if we do, I'll have no choice but to involve the police!"



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