

He Stole My Ticket, I Flew Private: Revenge Served Sky_High Novel

Chapter 51 Nicolas stood at the floor to ceiling window, his cigarette burned down to the filter. Looking down, he could see the glittering lights of New York at night. He took a deep drag, then dialed another number. The other picked up immediately, as if always on standby. "Matt, check her whereabouts." Yes, sir. Matt was efficient. Within ten minutes, he called back: "Miss Rachel hasn't left the Leroix house since returning. They've increased security-even the back door has 24-hour guards." Nicolas narrowed his eyes and crushed out the cigarette.

He remembered Rachel's figure as she left, wearing loose clothes that made her look tiny, promising him she'd be back. "Should I send someone to bring Miss Rachel back?" Matt asked. "No." Nicolas's voice was cold. "Hold position for now." Matt hesitated: "But Miss Rachel..." "David won't hurt his own daughter," Nicolas said icily, "at least not yet." "Look into the Leroix family's recent activities, especially Arthur and Sophie." Matt nodded: "Already on it. Arthur hasn't been up to much lately.

Sophie..." he paused, "registered for Maëlys's studio selection." Nicolas's fingers drummed slowly, his expression unreadable: "As expected." "Need me to do anything?" Matt asked. "Keep monitoring the Leroix house, especially Rachel's room. Also," he paused, "check if they've purchased any medical supplies recently." A flash of surprise crossed Matt's eyes: "You think Miss Rachel's been hurt?" "Just being cautious," Nicolas walked to the bar, pouring himself a whiskey. "David won't hurt her, but Arthur and Sophie are wildcards." After hanging up, Nicolas stood by the window.

He remembered something Rachel had once said: "Sometimes I feel like the Leroix family is a golden cage, and I'm just a bird with clipped wings." He raised his glass to the moonlight. Not a bird. An eagle. Wait a little longer, Rachel. Soon, you'll be able to fly free. Rachel's room was on the east side of the second floor, rarely visited by others, giving her plenty of time to work. Only three days left until submission deadline. She'd spent these days at the Leroix house without leaving her room, perfecting her designs every day.

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After her escape attempt, David had posted several guards outside her room to watch her. Knowing she couldn't get out, he'd stopped confining her and let her move around freely-as long as she didn't leave the mansion. But Rachel didn't want to go out anyway. She locked herself in her room daily, working on her designs. 06-42 Un conte "Knock knock- The sound made Rachel's hand slip, her pencil leaving a long mark across the

paper. She didn't look up, continuing to refine details on her design. "Rachel, it's Mom." Joanne's voice came from outside. "I made you some chicken soup.

Open the door." Rachel kept drawing, not lifting her head: "I'm not hungry." "You haven't left your room in three days, sweetheart." Joanne's voice carried mild reproach. "How can your body handle this?" Rachel put down her pencil, stretching her stiff neck: "Mom, I'm really busy." "Being busy doesn't mean you should damage your health." Joanne kept trying to persuade her. "Just leave it outside." "You stubborn child..." Joanne sighed. "Mom knows you're upset, but you need to understand..." "Understand what?" Rachel suddenly stood up, walking to the door, her voice cold.

"Understand why you always favor Sophie? Or understand why you're giving her my designs?" Rachel Joanne's voice carried panic. "How can you say that? Everything we do is for your own good..." "For my own good?" Rachel laughed bitterly. "Then why have you never asked what I want? It's always Sophie first." Joanne's voice suddenly rose: "You're the Leroix heiress-what don't you have? Sophie isn't blood family, so we need to treat her better to make up for that!" She spoke with emotion.

Hearing silence inside, she tried again tentatively: "Rachel, I heard you also want to enter this competition. Since your sister already registered, maybe you..." She didn't finish, but Rachel knew what she meant. Rachel looked down at her design, her voice carrying unknown emotion: "That's exactly why I have to compete." Silence outside for a few seconds, then Joanne's voice returned, this time pleading: "Rachel, can't you think about the family? Sophie needs this opportunity, she..." "What about me?" Rachel's voice trembled.

"Am I supposed to hide in the shadows forever?" "You..." Joanne seemed choked up. "How can you think that? You're the older sister, you should..." "Should give way to my little sister, right?" Rachel smiled bitterly. "Haven't I given up enough my whole life?" A sigh came from outside: "Rachel, open the door. Let's talk properly." Rachel looked at her shadow under the door crack, suddenly remembering childhood-whenver she and Sophie fought, Joanne would stand outside like this, trying to persuade her. Back then she'd still open the door, still cry in her mother's arms. But now...

"Mom, I'm tired." She said softly. "Please go back." Another silence outside, then footsteps gradually fading away. Rachel sat back down and picked up her pencil again. But just as the tip touched paper, her door was violently pushed open. She looked up to see Arthur standing furiously in the doorway, his business suit unable to hide the malice in his eyes. "Rachel!" He strode in, snatching the pencil from her hand. "Is this how you treat Mom?" Rachel blinked, confused: "What's gotten into you now?" "Playing dumb?" Arthur sneered.

"Mom's eyes were red from crying when she left here, and you're still acting innocent?" Red eyes? Rachel was stunned. She hadn't said anything harsh, had she? How was Joanne crying again? Her crying skills were just like Sophie's Tears on command. Sometimes Rachel felt like Joanne and Sophie were more like actual mother and

daughter. She didn't want to deal with Arthur's nonsense. Standing up, she reached for the pencil he'd taken: "If you want to throw a tantrum, do it somewhere else." "Shut up!" Arthur cut her off.

"Right now, immediately, go apologize to Mom!" Rachel felt a tight pain in her chest: "All I did was not drink soup. Is that such a big deal?" Arthur grabbed her wrist: "Why are you always so thoughtless? Mom making you soup shows she cares! Do you think you're so important now that you can ignore your family?"

Chapter 52 Rachel felt sharp pain shoot through her wrist as she tried to struggle, only to find she couldn't break free: "Arthur, let go of me!" "Let go?" Arthur sneered "Do you know how much Mom's hurting inside? She's worried sick about you, and this is how you repay her?" Arthur dragged her Ane door. "You're going to apologize to Mom right now!" Rachel stumbled as he pulled her, her design sketches scattering across the floor. At Joanne's bedroom door, Arthur violently jerked Rachel's wrist, throwing her whole body against the door.

Rachel braced herself with her hands to keep from hitting her head. Since she couldn't escape anyway, she steadied herself, took a deep breath, and knocked on the door. "Come in." Joanne's voice came from inside. Rachel pushed open the door to see Joanne sitting at her vanity, her eyes indeed red and swollen. She'd actually been crying? Rachel suddenly felt uncomfortable inside. That hadn't been her intention with those words. Honestly, deep down she'd still harbored some hope that Joanne might come to understand her situation, but obviously that was impossible.

But she hadn't expected Joanne to actually cry, which left her somewhat at a loss. Seeing her standing motionless in the doorway, Arthur coughed loudly as a reminder. Rachel walked a few steps inside and called out to Joanne. Joanne turned around, a flash of surprise in her eyes, then wiped away the remaining tears: "Rachel? Come in, sweetie." Her voice was thick with congestion. The room's aromatherapy scent was heavy-Sophie's favorite rose oil, giving Rachel a headache. "Aren't you going to apologize?" Arthur pushed her hard, shoving her directly in front of Joanne.

"Mom." She called out somewhat uncomfortably. The room fell quiet as they all waited for her to say the rest. But she swallowed hard and still couldn't get the words out. Joanne pulled out a tissue, unable to stop herself from tearing up again. Arthur couldn't stand watching anymore. He knew Rachel's personality-stubborn and hard-headed. Getting her to back down first would be harder than reaching the sky, so he decided to help her out. "Mom, Rachel realizes she was wrong.

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She came here specifically to apologize to you because she saw how upset you were." He then pushed Rachel's back, urging her to hurry up. But Rachel stood there like a wooden statue, frozen and motionless. Joanne sighed and picked up the family photo on her vanity-all five of them together. She gently touched the people in it, her gaze

tender, as if remembering something from long ago. "Rachel, look, this was taken when Sophie first came to our family." Rachel followed her gaze to what was indeed a photo from her high school days.

Sophie had just been brought to the Lerois family, and worried she might feel like an outsider, they'd proactively suggested taking a family portrait to give Sophie more security. In the photo, Sophie stood in the center, Joanne holding her in her arms, with David on the left, then Arthur, and Rachel at the very edge. "Time flies-you've all grown up so much." Rachel withdrew her gaze indifferently. She had no interest in these things; looking too long would only stir up pain.

But Joanne seemed completely absorbed, apparently remembering something amusing as she smiled: "Do you remember when Sophie first arrived? She was like a frightened little animal. Curious about everything but so scared at the same time. When I looked at her then, my heart just ached for this child. I thought to myself that I had to be especially good to her." "Thankfully, we raised Sophie well. She's grown into such a graceful young woman now." "Look how excellent Sophie is," Joanne gently wiped the photo frame with her fingertip.

"She's been more sensible than you since childhood, more filial than you, more..." "More like your real daughter?" Rachel couldn't listen anymore and cut her off, her voice hoarse. "So you indulge her stealing my designs and ruining my life?" "How can you think that?" "How dare you talk to Mom like that?" Two voices spoke simultaneously. "You never know how to give way to your sister!" Joanne suddenly screamed, looking at her with eyes full of disappointment: "Sophie's biological father died because of you-you owe her! Besides, Sophie's younger than you.

What's wrong with letting her have things?" Rachel's gaze flickered. What was she saying? Sophie's father died because of her? "Ha, haha..." She laughed, but then sniffled, swallowing down all her emotions. "I've explained this so many times-it really was an accident! And I warned Uncle, but he insisted on staying in the car!" SLAP- A palm landed squarely on Rachel's face. Joanne glared at her, her nails leaving a scratch on Rachel's cheek. "How can you say something so heartless?" Joanne shouted.

"I've taught you gratitude since childhood-did your conscience get fed to the dogs?" The slap was quite hard. Rachel's face was knocked to the side, a few strands of hair falling loose, her ears ringing so she could barely hear what Joanne was shouting. Suddenly, her neck was grabbed from behind. Arthur lifted her up slightly like picking up a kitten. "Apologize." Rachel didn't move. "I said apologize!" His voice grew louder. Rachel raised her hand to touch the corner of her mouth, feeling something warm. "I'm sorry." She said. "Lauder Arthur commanded again.

"I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry! Is that enough? Are we done? Rachel didn't know where she found the strength, but she suddenly broke free from Arthur's restraint and said "I'm sorry" several times in succession to Joanne, even bowing directly to her. Joanne was startled, then suddenly rushed over to hug her: "Okay, okay, you're both

my daughters... How could Mommy not feel heartbroken?" Rachel stiffly endured the embrace. Even though Joarme's arms were warm, she felt cold and trembling all over.

"Mont, I'm going back to my room now." She calmly detached Joams and quietly stepped back. Before Joanne could react, she escaped like she was fleeing. Arthur watched her retreating figure without stopping her. From the moment she apologized, he'd had an indescribable feeling-she was the one apologizing, but he was the one feeling terrible. Rachel hurried toward her room, but froze in place the moment she pushed open the door- Her desk was completely empty, not even a single draft paper left behind.

Chapter 53. Rachel's heart sank. She walked closer in disbelief the desk was truly empty! Where were her designs? They couldn't just vanish into thin air! Wait something was missing... Saphie! A flash of realization hit her brain. She had a strong intuition-it had to be Sophie! Her body reacted faster than her mind, her legs already carrying her out of the room toward Sophie's bedroom. When Rachel kicked open Sophie's door, Sophie was adjusting her earrings in front of a ring light. After finishing, she looked at her phone and started greeting her audience: "Hi everyone!

It's Sophie, long time no see! I've missed you all too~" "Today's livestream is mainly to update you on my recent plans. I wonder if you've heard about Ms. Maëlys returning to the country? That's right, I've also registered for the studio selection competition! I think this is not only a challenge for me, but also my way of proving myself." Sophie continued chatting enthusiastically with her audience, completely oblivious to Rachel in the doorway. Due to Sophie's popularity, the Instagram Live quickly filled with viewers.

【Girl looks gorgeous today!】 IOMG, I've heard of Maelys!

She was developing her career abroad before and now she's coming back to build her own studio! Can't believe our girl entered the selection!】 【Sophie will definitely make it!】 [With Sophie's talent, isn't this a sure thing?】 The comments were buzzing, and Sophie's eyes lit up with satisfaction. "As you all probably know, this selection has two parts-first the preliminaries, then ten finalists compete live!" As soon as she finished speaking, the comments exploded again. 【Can someone explain what kind of prestige this has?】 [It's basically selecting the top tier people in the art world.] [Wow!

So excited to see Sophie perform!】 [Am I the only one wondering if Sophie's nervous? How's the prep going?】 Seeing the growing curiosity in the comments, Sophie smugly covered her mouth, then casually glanced to the side, spotting Rachel in the doorway. "Oh my! Sister's here too!" She acted like she'd just noticed Rachel at the door, asking with surprise: "Sister, why are you just standing there without saying anything? Come in!" She stood up, took Rachel's arm, and half-dragged her in front of the phone, exposing her to the livestream.

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"Welcome sister to my livestream!" Rachel had been on trending topics before, so people recognized her. Since she'd last shown her skills on a livestream, her reputation had improved significantly, and netizens weren't being toxic when they saw her. (Sophie even brought her sister for interaction!) Rich family sisters bonding!] But what everyone really cared about were Sophie's designs. Seeing more and more questions in the comments, Sophie knew the time had come. Today, I also want everyone to witness this! My design is complete, and I'm showing it here today!" The comments went wild: [What?

Just showing it directly like this?】 (No! Sophie, be careful of plagiarism!) [Impossible, if someone plagiarizes after it's shown, they'd be truly brainless.] [Quick quick quick! Can't wait anymore!] The comments were boiling with excitement, but Rachel had a bad feeling. She instinctively looked at Sophie, watching her pull out a design from behind her. The moment she saw the draft, Rachel gasped That was her design! "This is the design I'm submitting for competition. What do you all think?" Rachel stared at the "Thornbird" design, cold sweat streaming down.

"The inspiration for this design comes from my sister. As you all know, sister went to prison and suffered a lot, but she still isn't afraid of difficulties and maintains a strong, upward spirit!

So I named this piece 'Thornbird,' hoping sister will overcome all obstacles and ride the waves!" Comments scrolled frantically: 【OMG, love it love it, such great meaning!】 [Sophie is so good to her sister!] [So jealous of having such a sister!] [With such beautiful meaning, everything will succeed!] "Sister, do you think this design is good?" While Rachel was stunned, Sophie suddenly leaned close to her ear. Rachel trembled all over from extreme anger. This was her design! This was inspiration gained through three years in prison, memories of the past, and hope for her future!

She wanted to tell herself through this piece that no matter how many thorns there were, she had to bravely push through! But now, it had become Sophie's work! "Sister, don't you like it?" Sophie asked again. Then she leaned close to Rachel's ear in an extremely intimate pose and said: "You'd better watch what you say. I'm livestreaming. Think carefully about what you should and shouldn't say, or you'll get burned, and the Leroux family won't help you." The two were extremely close together. To outsiders, the sisters were just whispering, but Sophie was actually making vicious threats.

Rachel felt all her blood freeze. She didn't know what to say or do. If she could choose, she wanted to beat Sophie up. Beat up everyone in the Leroux family But the constantly scrolling comments reminded her-she couldn't. "Oh right everyone doesn't know yet, right? Sister also registered for this selection! How about sister shows her work too?" Sophie's body moved slightly away, about a fist's distance from Rachel, like they were good sisters. This immediately caught netizens' attention.

They remembered Rachel's design from last time-being able to create jewelry with deep meaning in such a short time was truly impressive! Hearing that Rachel had also

registered, they were thrilled, all commenting: Where's Rachel's design?】 【Show us quickly!】 (Sophie already showed hers, sister should show some sincerity too!) "Sister, want to show your competition piece?" Sophie lightly pushed Rachel's stiff body, her voice carrying undisguised amusement: "Just like when we were kids helping each other with homework, giving each other feedback.

How about it?" Her suggestion ignited netizens' gossipy nature, all urging Rachel to show her design. But Rachel remained motionless. She clenched her fists, turning to look at the draft Sophie held, her eyes bloodshot. Her design was in Sophie's hands! And the perpetrator was now looking at her provocatively, certain she had no evidence! Seeing her continued stillness, the comments began showing doubt: 【What's up with Rachel? Can't she produce a design?】 【Probably feels it's not as good as Sophie's, so she's embarrassed to show it. Human nature~】

Chapter 54 Sophie's fingertips trembled slightly, the livestream filter casting an eerie pallor over her already pale face. Sophie looked at Rachel's state with satisfaction, smirking. She held up the "Thornbird" design to the camera, quietly waiting for Rachel's reaction. "Sister's design concepts are always so... unique." She leaned close to Rachel's ear, whispering: "But turning prison memories into jewelry design-isn't that kinda dark?" When she tilted her head, malicious glints flickered in her eyes.

The comments flooded in: [Can Rachel actually deliver or what?] [Did she even design anything?1 [Maybe she just doesn't wanna show it before the competition?】 【Sophie can show hers, why can't she? Stop being so dramatic!】 Rachel's breathing became ragged, her fingers digging into her palms until her nails nearly drew blood. She stared at the design in Sophie's hands-the work she'd poured countless sleepless nights into, her blood, sweat, and tears. Every line, every gemstone placement was something she'd obsessed over and perfected.

ཇ་ཉི་ལོ་ལྷན་ཞུ་ཞུ་ And now Sophie was flaunting her work on camera, even using that fake-ass smile to taunt her! "Sister, why aren't you saying anything?" Sophie's voice stayed sickeningly sweet, with just a hint of innocent confusion. Suddenly, like she'd just had a lightbulb moment, she looked at the screen and said earnestly: "Everyone, please be patient. Sister might just need more time to prepare." "Sister was valedictorian in college-why don't you critique my work?" She looked at Rachel like she'd already won. But Rachel stayed silent for what felt like forever.

Sophie wasn't stressed, just let out a soft laugh: "Does sister think my design sucks or something? That's why you won't comment? It's cool, you can just say it. I can handle criticism." Rachel's throat felt completely blocked. She opened her mouth but nothing came out. She knew if she told the truth now, Sophie would just flip it around, claim she was jealous and making shit up. And the viewers? They'd never believe her. The doubt in the comments kept growing: [Is Rachel feeling guilty? Why won't she speak up?] [Bet she doesn't even have a design.

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All that hype and she's got nothing.] 【Sophie's design is fire, Rachel must be feeling some type of way, lmao!】 Sophie read the comments with a victorious grin. She casually waved the design, putting on this concerned act: "Sister, if you're really not ready, that's totally fine. We can wait. You're my sister-I'd never embarrass you." Rachel's chest was rising and falling like crazy. She finally snapped, her voice shaking: "Sophie, that design you're holding is mine!" The moment those words left her mouth, the livestream went dead silent for a heat.

Then the comments absolutely exploded: [Wait, what? What is Rachel even saying? Her design?) ILMADOO is she so jealous she's lost her mind? How could Sophie's design be hers?] [Does Rachel have hair damage? How can she even say that?] Sophie's face didn't show an ounce of panic. She just blinked innocently, putting on this hurt and confused expression: "Sister, how can you say that? This is something I worked my ass off to design. How can you claim it's yours?" Rachel's eyes were practically shooting fire.

She whipped around, pointing at the design: "That's the piece I stayed up for days working on! Every single stroke was drawn by my hand! Sophie, you stole my design!" Sophie just stared at her calmly, completely unbothered. She sighed softly, her tone dripping with fake disappointment: "Sister, I know you've always had issues with me, but I never thought you'd actually try to frame me like this. I designed this piece all by myself.

If you don't believe me, I can show you the process documentation." Sophie pulled out a tablet, opening a folder packed with different versions and modification records. She pointed the screen at the camera, smiling sweetly: "Everyone can see-these are all my design process records. Every single edit is timestamped." The comments went ballistic: [Holy shit, Sophie is incredible! She kept such detailed records!] 【Rachel is so shameless!

Actually trying to frame Sophie for theft!] [This chick is disgusting, jealousy is a disease!] Rachel stared at the screen records, feeling like she'd been dropped in ice water. How the hell did she get all this? Since being locked up at the Leroix house, Rachel had no electronics-just pen and paper. So where did Sophie get all this digital stuff? She stared hard at Sophie's screen. If Sophie could match every single one of her design steps, there was only one explanation-she'd been under surveillance this entire time! "Sophie, you..." Her voice was shaking so bad she could barely speak.

"You planned this whole thing, didn't you?" Sophie kept that innocent look, gently shaking her head: "Sister, I honestly have no clue what you're talking about. If you really think this is your work, then prove it. But if you can't, don't go around making false accusations-it's not good for either of us." Rachel's mind went completely blank. She was trapped. No evidence meant she couldn't prove jack shit. And Sophie had covered all her bases, even faking design records that looked legit.

The comments turned vicious: [Rachel is pathetic, no evidence but still trying to frame Sophie, gross!] [This person doesn't deserve to compete, just GTFO!] [Poor Sophie, imagine having a sister like that!] Rachel's vision started going dark. Her whole world was crashing down. She'd always thought if she just worked hard enough, was good enough, she could make it in this family. But now she realized she never stood a chance against Sophie.

Sophie hadn't just solen het werk do'd completely naked her reputation "Sister, if your're done with your fantium, tel's get back to the livestream." Sophie's voice slayer sig swert, like nothing had happened. "Everyone's waiting to see my other designs." Rachel took several deep breaths, fighting the urge to deck her. She stared at Sophie's skinny neck and asked: "Sophie, wanna make a bet?"

Chapter 55 "Sophie, you wanna bet or what?" Her voice had this steel edge that even made Sophie do a double take. "Bet on what?" "If still make it into the selection, you quit the jewelry world for good. If I don't, I drop the Leroix name and you get to be the real heiress. Sound fair?" Sophie clearly hadn't seen this coming. Her smile faltered for a hot second, eyes darting around. This deal was way too tempting! But... She glanced at the livestream viewer count. Shit, with all these people watching, if she said yes, her whole sweet innocent act would be toast!

Her lips moved like she wanted to say something, but all that came out was this awkward laugh: "Sister, why are you being so extra? Neither of us controls how the competition goes. Why make it all dramatic?" Rachel just stared at her, smile on her lips but eyes like ice. She knew Sophie wouldn't take the bet. Because Sophie felt guilty as hell, knowing damn well that design wasn't hers. The livestream comments absolutely exploded: [Rachel's lost her damn mind! Actually trying to bet against Sophie?] Does she think she's gonna win for sure?

Girl's delusional!] 【Sophie, just ignore this jealous bitch!】 Sophie scrolled through the comments, her smile slowly returning to normal. Less than three days till submission deadline-no way in hell Rachel could whip up something new! So when crunch time came, Rachel would just have to pack her shit and leave. She shook her head with this fake helpless look: "Sister, since you're so sure of yourself, I guess we'll see what happens. But competitions are about actual talent-hope you can deliver some real work." Rachel didn't bother responding.

She just shot Sophie one final cold look and bounced from the livestream. No point sticking around. Trading insults with keyboard warriors was just a waste of time. The bet had already shaken Sophie up, and Rachel had bigger fish to fry. Back in her room, Rachel immediately started checking every corner like she was on a mission. Bingo-she found a tiny camera wedged between some books, pointed right at her desk. Rachel's mouth curved into this satisfied smirk, eyes going cold. She'd figured Sophie would plant some spy shit in her room, just hadn't expected her to be so obvious about it.

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She left the camera alone, acting like she hadn't spotted it while moving around the room. This little gadget might actually come in handy later. About two hours passed before Sophie finally wrapped up her livestream and stepped out. The second she left her room, Rachel's voice boomed from down the hall: "Sophie! Get over here, we need to talk" Rachel basically never initiated contact with her. She could probably count on one hand how many times Rachel had actually sought her out. No clue what this was about, but probably... the whole design theft thing?

Did she really think a heart-to-heart would change anything? What an idiot. Sophie smirked and sirolled toward Rachel's room. Rachel was counting the seconds. Right on cue, Sophie pushed open the door with that plastic smile: "Sister, what's up?" Instead of answering, Rachel walked straight up to her, eyebrow raised: "You really think you've got this locked down?" Sophie's smile flickered but hounced right back: "Sister, I have no idea what you're talking about." Rachel didn't waste more words. She suddenly grabbed Sophie's wrist, yanked hard, and shoved her straight toward the window.

Sophie wasn't ready for it. Her body flew backward, crashed through the window, and went tumbling from the second floor. "AHHHHH-" Of all the scenarios Sophie had mapped out, Rachel actually getting physical wasn't one of them! How the hell? Her whole plan was for Rachel to lose her shit emotionally, then Sophie would take a dive and frame her. Rachel would be screwed no matter what she said! She'd been all ready to watch Rachel's world burn! But Rachel had literally just yeeted her out a window! Everything went slow-mo as she fell.

Sophie could clearly see the smug-ass smile on Rachel's face. After pulling that move, Rachel just stood by the window, calmly watching Sophie eat dirt on the lawn below. Zero guilt. If anything, she felt pretty damn satisfied. You don't mess with me, I don't mess with you. Sophie had been pushing her buttons for way too long-couldn't blame Rachel for finally pushing back! The second floor wasn't high enough to kill anyone, so Sophie wouldn't be seriously hurt, but it would definitely get Arthur and Joanne running. Sure enough, panicked voices and footsteps started coming from downstairs.

"Sophie! What happened? How did you fall?" Joanne sounded absolutely frantic. "Get a doctor! NOW!" Arthur was freaking out too. Rachel watched the chaos unfold below. Perfect timing! She quickly grabbed her stuff and slipped out of the room. The hallway was completely empty-everyone had rushed to Sophie's "accident." Two guards were still posted at the front entrance. Rachel hesitated for like half a second, then walked up looking all stressed: "What the hell are you guys still doing here?"

Sophie just took a dive from the second floor and you're just standing around?" The guards looked at each other confused. "But... Mr. Leroix told us to keep an eye on you." Rachel shot them this angry look: "Are you kidding me right now? Sophie needs to get to a hospital-if something happens to her because you idiots were too slow, that's on you!" That got them panicking real quick. Everyone knew Sophie was the family's golden child. If anything serious happened to her, their asses would be One of them

asked frantically "Miss Rachel, how bad is Miss Sophie hurt?" How should I kons? Do check?

Rachel swapped "And you! Yeah, you! Go start the cart Move it, stop wasting timer The guarts looked at each other and split up one ran toward Sophie, the other headed for the garage. Rachel watched them disappear and let out a breath she didn't know she was holding. She pushed open the front door and made her exit. But she u barely made it two steps when hands grabbed her from behind, dragging her into the shadows behind the building. Rachel's stomach dropped as she tried to fight back, but whoever had her was way stronger. Chill out: A familiar low voice spoke right in her ear. Nicolas

Chapter 56 Rachel turned to fare Nicolas, feeling this weird mix of emotions. Her eyes searched his cold, sharp features, trying to read something in his expression. But Nicolas looked completely detached, like none of this had anything to do with him. "You were you waiting here for me this whole time?" Nicolas looked down at the woman in front of him, releasing his grip as she turned around: "No." He glanced away casually, keeping his answer short. Rachel's heart sank a little, but she quickly recovered her composure.

Matt stood beside them, watching these two awkward people, and couldn't help but clear his throat: "Ahem... Miss Rachel, ever since you were under house arrest at the Leroix place, the boss had me and the team staking out nearby. Orders were to grab you the second you came out. Lucky timing too-the boss just happened to drop by to check, and boom, you showed up. Guess you and the boss really are..." Before he could finish, Nicolas shut him down with one look.

Matt knew that look way too well-it clearly said "say one more word and I'm docking your pay!" Matt immediately zipped it, giving Rachel a polite smile when she looked over curiously. Rachel caught the weird vibe between them and could guess what was up, but seeing Nicolas's cold, distant attitude, she suddenly felt like messing with him. She looked at Nicolas with this teasing expression: "Oh? So why exactly are you here?" Nicolas looked away, gazing into the distance, his voice staying flat: "Just passing by." Rachel's mouth twitched slightly. She felt kinda helpless.

This guy was so damn stubborn! Passing by? That excuse was way too lame. But she didn't push it-if he didn't want to tell her, pressing wouldn't help anyway. The atmosphere between them got a bit weird, this indescribable tension filling the air that made Matt, the third wheel, suddenly feel like his scalp was crawling. If he'd known the boss was coming, he wouldn't have shown up. "Let's go, we need to get out of here," Rachel said quietly. This wasn't a safe place to hang around.

She'd escaped during the chaos, and once the Leroix family realized what happened, they'd definitely send people after her. She didn't want to get caught before making it very far. "Alright." Nicolas nodded. Since she was already out, there was no point sticking around. Rachel carefully peeked out, looking toward the Leroix mansion's entrance. No activity there yet. She and Nicolas were currently hiding behind a tall

fountain that perfectly concealed their figures. They moved out from the fountain's shadow one after the other.

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Rachel followed behind Nicolas, her gaze unconsciously settling on his silhouette. He was tall and imposing, broad shoulders tapering to a narrow waist, his stride confident-like he could handle anything that came his way. Rachel suddenly felt this inexplicable sense of security, like as long as she stayed behind him, she didn't need to worry about anything. But that feeling of safety didn't last long.

When they reached the side of the fountain, Rachel caught sight of something in her peripheral vision—all the Leroix family members frantically loading Sophie into a car, preparing to rush her to the hospital. Arthur and Joanne's faces were written with anxiety, especially Arthur—his expression was terrifyingly dark, like he might explode any second. Rachel's steps altered slightly. Complex emotions swirling inside her. Her previous actions had definitely pissed off Arthur big time.

He was currently worried sick about Sophie and probably didn't have time to think about her, but that would change soon enough. This was the first time she'd seen Arthur look so furious. She didn't want to imagine what would happen if he found her. "Stop looking." Nicolas's voice came from ahead. Suddenly, everything went dark as she fell into warm arms. Nicolas had turned around and pulled Rachel tight against his chest. She was so petite that he easily enveloped her completely, blocking her view entirely. With their significant height difference, Rachel was completely hidden.

When Arthur came out with Sophie, he naturally spotted the people by the fountain, but from his angle, he only saw a man with his back turned and Matt standing to the side. The distance was a bit far, so he couldn't make out Matt's face clearly—just thought those two figures looked somewhat familiar, but couldn't place them. He only glanced briefly before hurrying away. Sophie was hurt badly and needed to get to the hospital fast. After the Leroix family's car drove off, Nicolas finally released Rachel. They walked to their car, and Rachel didn't ask questions, quickly sliding inside.

The car slowly pulled away from the Leroix mansion. Rachel looked through the window at the gradually disappearing buildings, suddenly feeling this indescribable sense of relief. "Thank you," Rachel said suddenly, her voice somewhat hoarse. "Mm." Nicolas gave a quiet response, then turned his attention back to the road. Meanwhile, at the hospital, Arthur and Joanne waited anxiously outside the emergency room. Sophie had been in the ER for a while now, but no doctor had come out yet. Arthur's expression was terrifyingly dark, his fists clenched tight like he might explode any moment.

That damn Rachel! He would never forgive her! Minor squabbles were one thing, but this time she'd actually pushed Sophie off the second floor! Thank god the second floor wasn't that high, or Sophie could've died! Damn it! He punched the wall outside the ER, his hand throbbing with pain. Joanne's face also looked grim. She gently pulled down

Arthur's hand, suppressing her anger as she said quietly: "Arthur, don't panic yet. Let's wait for Sophie to come out." Arthur snorted coldly without saying more, but the fury in his eyes hadn't diminished one bit.

After a while, the ER door opened and the doctor emerged. Joanne immediately rushed over, asking urgently: "Doctor, how's my daughter?" Chapter 56 The doctor removed his mask, speaking calmly: "The patient is fine, just some mild concussion and scrapes. A few days of rest and she'll be good as new." Hearing the doctor's words, Joanne breathed a sigh of relief. But when Arthur heard "concussion," he couldn't hold back his rage anymore. Without looking back, he ordered the bodyguard beside him: "Go bring Rachel here!

I want to see what the hell she thinks she's doing!" The bodyguard nodded and quickly left the hospital. But soon after, the bodyguard came running back, panic on his face: "Mr. Leroix, Miss Rachel... she's gone." "What?" Arthur's face instantly turned iron-gray. "What do you mean gone?"

Chapter 57 The bodyguard lowered his head, voice trembling "Miss Rachel isn't at home or at the hospital. Asked everyone-nobody's seen her." Arthur was furious. He pulled out his phone to call Rachel, but halfway through dialing realized her phone had been confiscated. He shoved the phone back in his pocket: "Can't watch one person!" Joanne's face also looked grim, but she tried to stay patient, clinging to one last possibility: "Arthur, don't panic yet. Maybe Rachel just didn't make it here in time. Should we wait a bit longer?" "Didn't make it here?" Arthur laughed coldly.

"After pushing Sophie off a building, she should've been here immediately to beg forgiveness! Instead she's got time to wander around outside-shows she doesn't have an ounce of conscience left." Joanne said nothing more. Arthur was right-Rachel was getting more and more out of control. Just then, another bodyguard rushed over, whispering to Arthur: "Mr. Leroix, we just questioned the guards at the entrance. They said...

Miss Rachel told them Miss Sophie had fallen and they needed to rush over to help." Arthur's face instantly turned ashen: "And then?" The bodyguard lowered his head, voice shaking: "Then... they came to help, and Miss Rachel... disappeared." Arthur's fists clenched so tight his knuckles went white. He suddenly realized he might have underestimated Rachel. She hadn't just pushed Sophie-she'd used the chaos to escape! "Find her! No matter what it takes, bring her back to me!" Arthur roared. The bodyguards didn't dare delay, quickly leaving the hospital to search for Rachel everywhere.

Meanwhile, Rachel was already safe in Nicolas's apartment. She sat on the couch, unconsciously fidgeting with the hem of her clothes. "You helped me get away, but if my brother finds out..." her voice was hesitant, carrying a hint of unease. "Him?" Nicolas laughed coldly, his tone full of disdain. "Just stay here and relax. He'll never find this place." Hearing Nicolas say this, Rachel felt relieved. Nicolas was who he was-if he said

it, he meant it. But... Arthur wasn't someone to mess with either. If he really wanted to find her, he'd turn the whole city upside down until he did.

Rachel bit her lip, frowning: "I don't want to drag you into this." Nicolas finally turned around, his gaze settling on her, something unreadable flickering in those deep eyes. He walked slowly toward her, looking down at her from above: "You think I'm afraid of Arthur?" Rachel looked up to meet his gaze, her heart suddenly racing. Nicolas's stare was too sharp. She instinctively lowered her head, denying: "That's not what I meant..."

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"I'm just worried about you." Before she could finish speaking, Nicolas suddenly leaned down, bracing his hands on either side of the couch, completely enveloping her in his shadow. Rachel's heartbeat suddenly accelerated, her breathing becoming rapid. Her fingers gripped the edge of the couch, tightening slightly. "Worried about me?" Nicolas's voice was low, those few words seeming to please him, a hint of satisfaction in his eyes.

He lowered his body slightly, stopping when he was just inches away from Rachel, his voice carrying an irresistible pressure: "Rachel, since when did you become so timid?" Rachel's throat felt blocked, unable to make a sound. Her gaze unconsciously fell to Nicolas's lips, her heart pounding wildly in her chest like a drum. Nicolas's breath was so close, carrying a faint tobacco scent mixed with a cold, crisp fragrance that made it almost impossible for her to think Chapter 57 "... she opened her mouth, momentarily unable to answer his question When had she become timid?

The old Rachel had been tearless, New York's famous "troublemaker." So back then, she hadn't thought chasing after Jason was embarrassing-being brave in love seemed noble. But the daily torment she'd endured in prison reminded her that people couldn't be too bold, that she needed to learn to keep her head down. So she'd become afraid, cautious about everything. Nicolas's gaze remained locked on her, as if waiting for her answer. His breath lightly brushed her cheek, carrying a hint of burning warmth.

"Rachel," Nicolas lifted his hand to grasp her chin, gently lifting it to force her to meet his eyes, "just do what you want. I've got your back." His voice was low, with an indescribable appeal. Rachel's breathing hitched, her heartbeat nearly stopping. Her ears gradually flushed red, her heart beating so fast it felt like it might burst from her chest. Nicolas's eyes darkened slightly, something unreadable flashing in their depths. Rachel's lashes trembled slightly, a watery gleam appearing in her eyes.

Her lips parted slightly as if she wanted to say something, but in the end she just bit her lower lip softly without making a sound. Nicolas's gaze fell on her lips, his eyes growing even deeper. This woman! Did she have any idea how seductive she looked right now! "Nicolas..." she called his name again, her voice carrying a tremor. Nicolas's eyes darkened, and he finally couldn't hold back, lowering his head to kiss her lips. Rachel's pupils contracted sharply, her whole body freezing in place. Nicolas's kiss wasn't gentle-it even carried a hint of roughness and possessiveness.

His lips pressed tightly against hers, as if trying to steal away all her breath. Rachel's fingers unconsciously gripped his shirt, fingertips trembling slightly. Nicolas's kiss gradually deepened, his tongue prying open her lips and teeth, wantonly plundering her breath. Rachel's mind went completely blank, all her thoughts scattered by this kiss. Her body gradually went soft, nearly melting in his arms. Nicolas's arms tightly embraced her waist, pulling her entire body into his embrace. His kiss remained domineering and forceful, as if he wanted to devour her completely.

Rachel's breathing became rapid, her chest rising and falling dramatically, as if she might suffocate at any moment. "Nicolas..." she murmured softly, her voice carrying a tenderness and dependence she hadn't even noticed herself. Nicolas's eyes darkened as he finally released her lips, but his arms still held her waist tightly. He pressed his forehead against hers, breathing somewhat labored: "Even if the sky falls in New York, it doesn't matter. I only want to see that reckless Rachel from before." Rachel's lashes trembled slightly, a watery gleam appearing in her eyes.

Her fingers unconsciously tightened on his shirt, her voice so low it was barely audible: "I know..." Nicolas's gaze gradually became consumed with desire, his eyes full of madness. He looked at the woman's watery eyes, his fingers gently caressing her cheek: "Do you know that I never easily let go of prey that comes right to my mouth?" Rachel's heartbeat suddenly accelerated, her breathing becoming rapid. "Nicolas She seemed to realise what Nicholas intended to do, instinctively calling his name. But the man wouldn't let her go, kissing her lips again.

This time, his kiss was gentle and lingering, completely different from before.

Chapter 58 Hospital. Sophie lay on the hospital bed, her face pale as paper, her forehead wrapped in white gauze, looking especially fragile. Her eyes were red-rimmed-she'd clearly been crying, "Mom, it really hurts... How could sister do this to me?" Joanne held her close, heartbroken: "My poor Sophie, why do you have to suffer so much..." The two cried softly together while Arthur stood beside the bed, his expression terrifyingly dark. His eyes were grim as he stared at the bandages on Sophie's head, his voice barely containing his rage: "Sophie, don't worry. I'll make sure you get justice.

"When I find Rachel, I'll never forgive her!" Joanne sat bedside, gently stroking Sophie's hand, her voice choked with emotion: "Don't be scared, Sophie. Mommy's here. Your sister... she's gone too far! How could she do something like this?" Sophie's tears finally spilled over as she sobbed: "I don't know why sister would do this... I just wanted us to get along, but she... she actually pushed me... I was so scared..." Her voice grew smaller and smaller, eventually dissolving into whimpers.

Arthur and Joanne's expressions grew even grimmer, especially Arthur-a flash of murderous intent crossed his eyes. That Rachel-looked like she wanted to go back to prison. Just then, the hospital room door opened and David hurried in. His face was equally dark-he'd obviously rushed back from the office. The moment he entered and

saw Sophie lying there, his brow furrowed deeply: "Sophie, how are you doing?" Seeing David, Sophie cried even harder. She sobbed: "Dad, it hurts so much... Sister... she pushed me..." David's face instantly turned ashen.

He turned to Arthur, asking coldly: "What the hell happened? How could Rachel lay a hand on Sophie?" Arthur replied: "She didn't just push Sophie-she used the chaos to escape! I've already sent people to find her." His eyes flashed with cruelty, his voice ice-cold: "Don't worry, I'll definitely find Rachel and make her pay for what she did. She dared touch Sophie-she can't blame me for not going easy on her!" Sophie heard Arthur's words and felt a flash of satisfaction, quickly concealed. She grabbed Arthur's sleeve through her tears: "Arthur, don't blame sister..."

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she was probably just acting on impulse... I don't want you fighting because of me..." He walked to the bedside, gently patting Sophie's hand, his voice carrying a hint of tenderness: "Sophie, don't be afraid. With me here, nobody can bully you. Since Rachel dared to hurt you, she can't blame me for not caring about family ties." Sophie cried even harder, nodding slightly, her voice barely audible: "Arthur, thank you..." His gaze fell on Sophie's pale face, a strong protective instinct surging in his chest.

Did Rachel even understand why they'd brought Sophie into the Leroix family in the first place? It was to atone! Sophie's biological father had died in an accident involving Rachel-didn't her conscience hurt at all? After all these years, didn't she feel anything? Regardless, nobody could hurt Sophie. And Rachel had actually dared to lay hands on Sophie-this was crossing his absolute bottom line. "Dad, I've already had people investigate Rachel's whereabouts. As long as she's still in this city, I'll definitely find her," Arthur said.

Chapter 8 David nodded: "When you find her, bring her straight back, I want to see what the hell she thinks she's doing!" He was getting a headache-this daughter never gave him a moment's peace. He'd already confiscated her phone and posted guards to watch her, yet she still tried to escape! Even hurt someone to get away Locked like she really needed to be taught a lesson. Sophie listened to their conversation, lifting her red, swollen eyes. She gently tugged on Arthur's sleeve, her voice weak "Arthur, don't be too angry... Sister..."

she was probably just confused..." Arthur saw her still pleading for Rachel even in this condition and felt both heartbroken and guilty. He felt like no amount of compensation would be enough for Sophie-she was just too understanding. He gently patted her hand, his voice tender: "Sophie, stop defending her. Since she dared hurt you, she can't blame me for not being polite." While they plotted Rachel's punishment, Rachel herself was completely unaware. At the apartment. Rachel sat in Nicolas's study, gripping a pencil as she focused intently on sketching lines on paper.

Her brow was slightly furrowed, exhaustion showing in her eyes, but her hands never stopped moving. Sunlight streamed through the curtains onto her profile, casting a soft halo that made her features look especially genty. On the paper, an exquisite jewelry design was gradually taking shape. This was her last chance. She had to finish this design in three days to submit it before the competition deadline. The preliminary round only required online submission of sketches, which would be voted on by netizens. All entries were anonymous, meaning voters wouldn't know whose work they were choosing.

So in a sense, Sophie had... cheated. But what did that matter? Given how favored she was in the Leroix family, Arthur would definitely handle it for her. The netizens would select the top ten, who would advance to finals. Finals would be live competition, though officials hadn't announced the format. Maëlys's intention was not to reveal it beforehand-to test designers' ability to think on their feet. The study door opened quietly as Nicolas entered. His footsteps were light as he sat beside Rachel with a plate of cut fruit.

Rachel didn't look up, still focused on drawing, until Nicolas's voice sounded in her ear: "Eat something." Rachel's hand paused slightly. She'd just looked up at him when a piece of cut apple appeared at her lips. She instinctively opened her mouth and ate it. "Is there enough time?" Rachel was momentarily confused before realizing Nicolas was asking about timing: "Should be fine. It's tight, but three days is enough." Sometimes she really wondered about Nicolas's thought process-always so random. "For Maelys, I could go talk to her..." "No." Rachel roughly guessed what Nicolas meant.

He'd said he had some connection with Maelys, so he might try to get her to extend the deadline. "Okay." Nicolas didn't say more, just put another apple piece in Rachel's mouth. Rachel suddenly thought of something, leaning over curiously. "How do you know Maelys anyway? Nicolas raised an eyebrow at her: "Jealous?"

Chapter 59 Rachel's face went bright red. What the hell! She was just curious, not jealous! "We went to high school together." Seeing her face flush, Nicolas stopped messing with her. Hearing this, Rachel blinked awkwardly. He and Maelys were high school classmates! She never would've guessed they had that connection. While she was processing this, a fruit plate suddenly appeared in her hands-Nicolas had shoved it at her. "Finish all of it. You need the vitamins." "...Fine." Sometimes she really thought Nicolas lived like some kind of android, following strict protocols for everything.

Nicolas didn't go far. After leaving the room, he dug up a contact he hadn't used in forever. The phone rang forever before anyone picked up. Just as he was about to have Matt track down Maëlys's current number, a somewhat androgynous voice came through: "Nicolas?" "Yeah, it's me." Maelys's soft laugh came through the phone: "Well damn, Nicolas Rothschild actually calling me. What's the emergency?" "Coffee shop downstairs at Rothschild Tower. You free to grab a drink, hotshot designer?" The café. Maelys showed up fifteen minutes early, ordering a latte and chilling by herself.

She hated cutting things close, always arriving early to handle any curveballs. Even though she and Nicolas were classmates, he'd always been this quiet, brooding type in school. After graduation they barely kept in touch. She'd seen him at a few alumni things early on, but later he just stopped showing up. Only saw him in business magazines now. Footsteps approached while she was thinking. Maëlys looked up-yep, Nicolas. He walked over with that confident stride and sat down without asking. Maëlys raised an eyebrow, tone playful: "Well look who it is! Long time no see, old friend.

What brings you to my humble presence?" Nicolas ignored her teasing, cutting straight to the chase: "That design Sophie flashed on her livestream? Rachel drew it." Maëlys nearly choked on her latte. She'd heard bits about the Leroix family drama-how they supposedly spoiled their adopted daughter while treating their biological one like garbage. Plus, Sophie's livestream design reveal had been all over social media. No way she'd missed that. She'd actually been pretty impressed with the piece, never imagining it was Rachel's work. But... "What's that got to do with you?"

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Since when do you care about jewelry design?" A server wandered over asking what Nicolas wanted to drink. "I'm good, thanks. After that, radio silence from Nicolas. Mastys shrugged. Typical-when Mr. Mysterious didn't want to talk, you couldn't drag words out of him with a crowbar. No point pushing. But Nicolas had reached out to her, so she should throw him a bone. Head of Rothschild Corp and all. Banking a favor with him could pay off big time later. She couldn't read his angle, so she took a guess: "Ah, gotcha. Easy fix-just boot Sophie from the competition.

I know some judges, one word from me and she's toast." Nicolas shot her this ice-cold look, voice firm. "No." Maëlys's smile faltered. Had she read this wrong? "Let Sophie keep competing." She sipped her coffee, then got this knowing look: "Ohhh, I see what's happening here..." She dragged out her words, eyes twinkling with mischief: "Nicolas, are you actually-" "Nope." He shut her down before she could finish. Maëlys blinked. Could this guy just speak in complete sentences for once? Still the same old habit from school-wouldn't waste a single word! But... this was Nicolas Rothschild.

Getting on his good side meant serious connections down the road. Right now her eyes showed pure career ambition, zero interest in gossip. "Alright, you're the boss. What's the play?" she said, biting back her frustration. Nicolas's expression stayed completely flat: "Just kicking her out would be too easy. Let her climb higher first-makes the fall so much sweeter." Maëlys stared at him. Nicolas hated Sophie? So this wasn't about helping her-this was about destroying her? Only one person could make Nicolas go to these lengths.... Rachel. The pieces started clicking together.

She burst out laughing: "Holy shit, that's brilliant! Nicolas, when did you get so... human?" Nicolas didn't answer, just gave her another cold stare before standing up. As he headed for the door, he flagged down the server: "Put her coffee on my tab." Maëlys didn't argue, accepting the gesture. As he was leaving, she called out: "Nicolas, you

sure you don't want to step in? Rachel's completely on her own right now. The Leroix family's gonna come for her hard." Nicolas paused without turning around, voice low and steady: "She doesn't need anyone fighting her battles.

She'll handle her own revenge." Something complex flickered in Maëlys's eyes. She sighed quietly: "Nicolas, you've really changed." Nicolas didn't look back just said flatly: "Maybe I have " And with that, he was gone, leaving Madlys alone with her thoughts.. Sho hung around the eate a bit longer, planning to savor the downtime before heading out. Then her phone rang. Berakastant, Vivian. "Maalys, the Leroix family somehow got my number and they're begging us not to disqualify Sophie. I was gonna blow them off, but they're being super persisteny." "I know," Maelys said casually.

"Let her stay in the competition." "Got it." Vivian seemed confused by the decision but didn't question it. She hung up to call the Leroix family back. Then she drafted a statement for the company social media, basically saying that while contestants weren't supposed to leak their work early, Sophie's design was so good they'd make a one-time exception. The internet immediately lost its mind. Sophie's haters had been gearing up to celebrate her disqualification, but suddenly there was this special exemption.

They went absolutely feral on their keyboards Meanwhile her stans went into full defense mode. The usual bullshit: "Sophie's just that talented, stop being salty losers!" Somehow the drama spiraled into dragging Rachel too. Matt caught wind of it and frantically killed the trending hashtags. While the internet burned itself down, Rachel-the other person at the center of it all-had no clue. She submitted her design with literally seconds to spare before the deadline. The moment she hit confirm, it felt like all her energy got sucked out of her body. She collapsed face-first onto the bed.

Chapter 60 Arthur hadn't expected Maelys to agree so quickly But since she dul, it was the test he wanted. After making comtart, his breathed a sigh of relief and immediately shared the good news with Sophie. Sophie let out an excited squeal: "Thank you, Arthur! If you hadn't pleaded for me, I probably would've been disqualified for real. It's all iny fault... I was too impulsive" Arthur fondly ruffled Sophie's hair, smiling: "Sophie, no more impulsive moves like that, okay?" Sophie nodded eagerly, but something felt off: "Arthur, we don't even know Maëlys that well.

Why did she agree so quickly?" That was what puzzled Arthur too. "Isn't it obvious? Sophie's work was so amazing it totally won her over," Joanne chimed in from her spot in the hospital room, providing the answer to their confusion. "But that was sister's design..." Sophie felt a bit guilty. "What sister this, sister that-whatever Rachel designed is yours. We're all family, no need to split hairs," Joanne laughed it off. "Besides, it was originally designed for Sophie anyway." Hearing this, Sophie felt a bit more at ease.

Right, it was originally designed for her, so she could use it guilt-free. Sophie smiled softly, asking with apparent concern: "Arthur, you still haven't found sister after all this time?" Mentioning this made Arthur's blood pressure spike. He'd practically turned the entire city upside down, but Rachel had vanished like she'd evaporated into thin air!

He'd also checked every surveillance camera he could find from that day, but there was no trace of Rachel anywhere-like she'd disappeared into thin air! Seeing his state, Sophie could guess what happened.

She sighed worriedly: "Sigh, sister's really something, disappearing without a trace and making mom and dad so worried." "Forget about her!" Arthur got angry just thinking about Rachel. "If only she were half as well-behaved as Sophie." Sophie twisted her fingers together, feeling a bit embarrassed. Arthur didn't stay much longer. He was juggling work stuff and the urgent search for Rachel, so he left soon after. After he was gone, only Sophie and Joanne remained. Sophie's phone buzzed a few times.

She glanced at the content briefly before flipping it face-down, then smiled sweetly at Joanne: "Mom, I'm really craving Marco's pasta." Then she seemed to regret it: "But it's so far away... never mind." Hearing this, Joanne couldn't bear to let her suffer such disappointment and quickly said: "I'll go get it for you. Just wait here, sweetie." "Thank you, Mom." Sophie's sweet words had Joanne completely charmed. After she left, the hospital room returned to quiet. A while later, the door opened and a woman with smoky blue waves strutted in, swaying her hips.

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Chapter no "Baby girl, miss me?" Yvonne plopped down next to Sophie. Sophie shifted away slightly in disgust: "You changed your hair color again?" Yvonne raised an eyebrow with a smile, twirling a strand of hair around her finger: "Min hum=" Oh honey, the last time we met was before your old man kicked the bucket. That old bastard finally croaked and we didn't even get to celebrate properly, then you go and get yourself all banged up!" She reached for the bandage on Sophie's head, but Sophie dodged away. "Your psycho sister again?" Sophie rolled her eyes.

"Need you ask?" Yvonne pouted: "She's already left the Leroix family, so now it's all yours. Once you get into Maelys's studio and smoothly marry faxon, you'll have career and love locked down. One little Rachel isn't even competition anymore." This hit Sophie right in her sweet spot, and she smiled with satisfaction. Actually, she was already looking forward to it. But Rachel remained a thorn in her side. "Help me find Rachel. I can't shake this uneasy feeling." "Her? She can't stir up any real trouble.

Probably dead in some ditch somewhere," Yvonne didn't take it seriously at all, but seeing Sophie's displeased expression, she agreed anyway: "Fine, fine, but I can only try. If your precious brother can't manage it, what makes you think I have that kind of power?" Sophie nodded. She hadn't really expected Yvonne to find anything anyway-it was just for peace of mind. "I wonder if Rachel even submitted a design." "Ha," Yvonne laughed mockingly, "how could she? There's no way she could finish something decent in such a short time, okay? Just sit back and wait for first place!" She was right.

Yvonne's words were like a reassuring pill, putting Sophie more at ease. They timed their chat carefully, and Yvonne left before Joanne returned, perfectly avoiding her.

Maelys's team worked efficiently-just three hours later, all competition entries were published online. All works were anonymous, so nobody knew who the real authors were. Except for Sophie. Her earlier livestream shenanigans had sparked intense online debate.

The comments section was severely polarized-one side questioned the competition's fairness, arguing that her early reveal violated the rules, while the other side consisted of Sophie's fans desperately trying to whitewash the situation. Some people went straight to the official social media to voice their complaints: "Is there any fairness left in this competition? Sophie's work was revealed early-clearly the organizers are giving her special treatment." "Looks like the winner was predetermined.

Everyone else is just there for show." "This world is just one giant soap opera and we're all background characters." But Maelys remained completely composed. Even though netizens were practically burning down Instagram, she didn't make a peep. Vivian was running around in circles, practically ready to get on her knees: "Boss, what do we do?" Maelys trimmed her freshly cut nails, admiring them with satisfaction for a few seconds: "No rush. If Mr.

Rothschild isn't worried, why should we be Despite the constant criticism, Sophie's massive fanbase kept her vote count way ahead, holding steady at first place. Sophie's fans rallied to vote for her, with comments everywhere praising "Sophie's designs are always the best!" Their campaigning was actually effective-casual viewers who saw it also joined the voting bandwagon. Meanwhile, Rachel was constantly monitoring the online discussion. Her "Thornbird" piece was getting massive attention. "Thornbird" was a brooch featuring a bird with outstretched wings ready to take flight.

The bird's body had flowing, elegant lines, with sharp thorns extending from the tail, wrapping around the bird's body and piercing through its chest. The thorns were set with black diamonds or black onyx, while the bird's body featured gradient sapphires from deep blue to light blue, symbolizing life's journey from suffering to transcendence. The eye was set with a ruby, like the bleeding heart of the thornbird. The overall effect was tragic yet beautiful. This piece's vote count was far ahead of the rest.