

Chapter 24 The Truth

"Performance? Why would I jeopardize my own future to do that?" Jenna sobbed, her voice shaky with emotion. "Madisyn, I know you hold a grudge against me. Even as a judge, you couldn't resist the urge to sabotage me!"

A voice from the crowd chimed in, bolstering Jenna's claim, "Yeah... the surveillance footage shows Madisyn was the last person near the dress."

Another spectator added fuel to the fire. "Being a judge doesn't absolve her of suspicion, right?"

Murmurs of agreement spread.

"And really, how did she even become a judge at her age? Maybe she's threatened by Jenna's talent and wanted to undermine her. This is terrifying, to think a judge would act out of such fear and jealousy."

The crowd's initial shock turned back to suspicion, fueled by Jenna's emotional plea and the evidence right in front of them.

They also began to question how Madisyn became a judge.

Their gazes shifted towards Madisyn, mingling curiosity with scorn, as they reconsidered her role and integrity.

The secretary, at a loss for words, stood silently, her concern for the future of the dance community growing heavier by the moment.

Jenna, fueled by a mix of anger and desperation, confronted Madisyn directly. "Madisyn, you owe me an explanation today!"

Supporting cries came from the crowd. "Yeah, we need an explanation! Just because you're a judge doesn't give you the right to sabotage a contestant's dress!"

Madisyn responded with a slow, sarcastic clap. "Jenna, what a performance

you're giving. Alright, let's clear this up.'

She gestured towards the dress Jenna clutched. "If I really cut your dress, it should have my fingerprints. Let's have it tested."

Jenna's confidence wavered momentarily.

She hadn't anticipated Madisyn to propose such a practical solution.

Scrambling to maintain her narrative, she retorted, "You're just trying to delay things; I still have to get ready to compete!"

Madisyn shot back with a sneer, "Didn't you already have your competition dress prepared?"

The atmosphere shifted palpably as the crowd's confusion deepened, their eyes turning toward Jenna, whose heart raced with apprehension.

Her voice wavered as she asserted, "What are you talking about? This was the dress I was supposed to compete in!"

"Is that so?" Madisyn responded, her tone laced with skepticism. She turned to the event staff and added, "Could you check her locker in the dressing room, please?"

Jenna, sensing her control slipping, protested. "No, you can't just search my locker!"

Madisyn's reply was frosty, "The lockers are for your use but remain the property of the competition organizers. You need to get your facts straight, Jenna."

Seizing the moment to clarify the situation, the secretary commanded, "Go check!"

A staff member quickly complied and soon returned, presenting a stunning deep blue gown that shimmered with exquisite detailing.

The gown, significantly more beautiful than the one Jenna claimed was damaged, elicited gasps from the crowd.

"It's gorgeous!"

"What a beautiful dress!"

"So, this one is Jenna's intended competition dress?" someone whispered.

The question resonated throughout the crowd, laden with implications.

Sensing the change in atmosphere and the judgmental glances, Jenna hastily explained, "No, this was just a backup, in case something went wrong during the competition!"

Madisyn couldn't help but let out a mocking laugh. "Clearly, anyone can see which dress is better. If I were truly out to sabotage your dress, wouldn't I target the better one? Jenna, your tactics lack finesse. You might want to hone your skills before attempting such theatrics again!"

The secretary then chimed in, reinforcing Madisyn's position, "As a judge, it's perfectly normal for Madisyn to inspect the contestants' preparations. Moreover, I advise some here to abandon their petty maneuvers. Even with ten more years of practice, you couldn't match Madisyn's caliber. She has no need to stoop to such levels. Sabotage your dress? Preposterous!"

This was Trevor's secretary, a person renowned for her astuteness and insight.

Her firm support of Madisyn shifted the crowd's perspective dramatically.

Could Madisyn actually be as exceptional as she said?

If that was the case, there was no conceivable reason for her to target Jenna, especially not the less significant dress.

Those in the crowd who had initially sided with Jenna now bore expressions of disappointment. They realized they might have been manipulated into supporting a cause based on deceit.

"So it appears that Madisyn is truly a remarkable dancer. The National Dance Association is known for its fairness, especially in selecting judges."

"Yeah, if that's the case, she had no reason to sabotage Jenna's dress."

"I think Jenna's been playing us. She used the damaged dress to frame Madisyn, but her real plan was to use the deep blue gown for the competition!"

Jenna's complexion flushed a deep red, as if the crowd's realization was a physical blow. She trembled, attempting to muster a defense. "No, it's not like that..."

But the secretary's endorsement of Madisyn had solidified the crowd's opinion, and their expressions hardened into ones of disappointment and disdain.

Jenna felt a cold isolation envelop her as if she had plunged into an icy abyss.

