

The Mocked Miss's Hidden Crowns – Chapter 26 |

"You... you seriously don't know what to do?" Nancy winced, cold sweat breaking out on her forehead. She'd cramped up before, but never like this. The pain was almost unbearable.

"Come here. I'll show you." Charlotte's long lashes fluttered as she stepped closer, all innocent eyes and quiet obedience. She took Nancy's hand just like she was told and gave it a sharp twist.

"Aaah!"

The snap of bone echoed through the air.

Charlotte twisted again. Another scream. Louder this time.

Tears welled in Nancy's eyes as she shot Charlotte a death glare. "Let go! Charlotte, do you even know how to help someone?"

Charlotte let go, tucking her hands into her pockets, looking completely unbothered. "Nope. Not a clue."

"You" Nancy clutched her now red and swollen hand, furious and at a loss for words. Idiot. All these years, Charlotte's face just kept getting prettier, but her brain never caught up.

Finally, the noise died down. The saleswoman swooped over, ready to kick them out. "What is this, a soap opera? If you can't afford anything, then get lost."

Nancy's eyes flicked to Charlotte's calm, flawless face. Suddenly, a thought lit up her mind. She lifted her chin and called out, "Can't afford it? Do you even know who this is? This is Charlotte, from the Main family."

Charlotte Main? The saleswoman's expression changed. Was this the same Charlotte who always came in with Elizabeth?

A chill ran down the saleswoman's spine. Oh no. If that was true, why did she look so plain, dressed like she belonged on the street?

Nancy didn't let up. "Bring out your best stuff. Let Charlotte pick whatever she wants."

The saleswoman hesitated, watching Charlotte. Elizabeth was a VIP here. Offend Charlotte and you offend Elizabeth. That was trouble she couldn't afford.

"Ms. Main, please, right this way." The saleswoman straightened her back, quickly unhooked the velvet rope, and gestured for them to enter like she was

welcoming royalty.

Charlotte stood still, but Nancy looped her arm through hers and dragged her toward the high-end racks.

Charlotte glanced at Nancy, catching the calculating glint in her eyes. Fragments of old memories flashed through Charlotte's mind.

Back in seventh grade, Nancy and Olivia wanted new dresses, but their allowance wasn't enough. They'd snuck money from home, bought three dresses and shoved one into Charlottes bag to make it look like she was in on it.

When the theft got discovered, Nancy and Olivia didn't hesitate. They both pointed at Charlotte, saying she was the thief.

Olivia always played the sweet, obedient girl. The adults loved her. Steven didn't even ask questions. He just assumed Charlotte was guilty and demanded she confess.

When she refused, he locked her in a dark room for a day and a night.

After that, the whole school heard

about it. No one wanted her around. They called her "thief Charlotte" behind her back, poured water

her chair, ruined her homework yanked her hair. Nancy eveno whispered threats that if Charlotte ever spoke up, some thug would mess up her face for good.

It took Charlotte a while to realize that some people are just mean to the core. Her mom always talked about kindness, but being nice never changed anyone. It didn't protect her either.

"Wow, these 1-Kiss clothes are gorgeous. Every single piece is a masterpiece." Nancy was too busy drooling over the racks of dresses to notice Charlotte's silence. Even her aching hand was forgotten for the moment.

"Charlotte, what do you think of this one?" Nancy held a dress up against herself, twirling a little.

Charlotte glanced at her, but Nancy didn't wait for an answer. "Forget it. What would a country bumpkin like you know about fashion anyway? She grabbed another dress face lighting up. "Now this is what call a dress. I have to try it on."

Nancy rushed into the fitting room. She slipped into the dress, then snuck a

peek at

the price tag. Her eyes nearly popped out of her head.

"One, two, three... seriously? Six zeros?"

It was insanely expensive, but it looked amazing.

Nancy spun in front of the mirror, not wanting to take it off. She didn't have the money, but Charlotte's family did. And that idiot was always so easy to trick.

The Mocked Miss's Hidden Crowns – Chapter 27 |

Nancy took a deep breath and stepped out of the fitting room with her decision already made. She grabbed a long black dress off the rack and held it up against Charlotte's frame. "Charlotte, this one is perfect for you. Just get it."

Charlotte stared at the dress in her hands. Black lace, a high slit, way too mature for her. She didn't say a word.

"Trust me, you'll look amazing," Nancy said, not even waiting for a response. She handed both dresses to the store manager and lowered her voice. "Could you ring these up together with the one I'm wearing? Just put it all on Elizabeth's account."

The saleswoman's brows drew together. She pressed her lips tight, looking like she'd just tasted something sour. Was this girl for real?

Sure, Elizabeth had a store account, but these dresses were from the premium collection. Together, they cost nearly three million yuan.

"I'll need to call Elizabeth and confirm," the saleswoman said, shooting Charlotte a look that barely hid her disdain. She couldn't remember anyone named Charlotte from the Main family. Was this girl just pretending?

The moment she heard about the call, Nancy got jumpy. She clung to Charlotte's arm, her voice turning sweet. "Charlotte, we've been friends forever. You just got back in town. Isn't it fair for you to buy me a dress as a welcome gift?"

Charlotte lifted her head, her pale face calm, eyes meeting Nancy's with quiet patience. "It's not unfair," she said softly.

Nancy's eyes brightened, a smile forming, but Charlotte kept going.

"But I don't have any money."

Nancy almost choked. "But your dad does!" She circled Charlotte, pushing harder. "Just put it on your mom's account. Your dad can transfer the money

later."

Charlotte stayed quiet.

Nancy's voice rose in frustration. "Charlotte, are we even friends? Remember when you got bullied? I was the one who stood up for you."

Charlotte just looked at her, eyes cold as ice, not saying a word.

"But I really am broke. I can't afford it," Charlotte said quietly.

Nancy's patience snapped. "Come on, it's just a dress! Your family is loaded. What's the big deal about spending a little on me?"

"If your dad won't give you the money, can't you figure something out? Sneak a credit card out of his wallet or something. With one card, you could buy way more than these two dresses. You could probably buy the whole store."

She waved at the saleswoman. "Stop wasting time. Let's get this paid for."

Nancy turned to check her reflection in the mirror, still admiring herself. Suddenly there was a loud tearing sound.

Everyone froze. Nancy's pink silk dress had split open across the back, the rip stretching wide.

Nancy and the saleswoman stared in shock.

Charlotte was already sitting on the sofa, playing with her fingers, watching the scene with amused interest.

"Miss, you've damaged the dress. This one costs one point five million yuan. You'll need to pay for it," the saleswoman said.

One point five million.

Nancy's smile vanished. Her face went ghostly pale. She stammered, "What kind of cheap dress is this? Did you make it out of tissue paper? It tore just like that. Pay? Are you trying to scam me?"

The saleswoman had had enough.

She raised her voice. "You know your

own size, right? Your body was about to burst out of We have

cameras in here. It's obvious you broke the dress. If you don't pay, we'll have to call the police.

The police? Nancy's heart pounded. She was still in her last year of high school, final exams coming up soon. There was no way she could risk getting the police involved. Her family was just average. Her parents would never buy

her a dress that
expensive.

She stood frozen, knees shaking, panic rising.

Then she remembered Charlotte.

Nancy scanned the room and spotted Charlotte lounging in the seating area, watching everything unfold.

The Mocked Miss's Hidden Crowns – Chapter 28 |

Charlotte lounged on the sofa with a lazy grace, milk in one hand and her phone in the other. She didn't just look relaxed, she radiated an icy confidence that made the whole room feel colder.

Nancy rushed over, practically sliding to her knees at Charlotte's feet. "Thief—no, Charlotte, please. I need your help. Can you lend me a million and a half?"

Charlotte took her last sip and tossed the empty bottle into the trash, nailing the shot without even looking. Her lashes flicked up as she glanced at Nancy. "If you need a hundred and fifty bucks, I might be able to manage. But a million and a half? No way, I don't have that kind of money."

The second Nancy realized Charlotte wouldn't help, her expression twisted.

"Charlotte, if you hadn't dragged me here to try on clothes, I never would've put on this stupid dress. If I hadn't worn it, it wouldn't be ruined. This is totally your fault." Nancy's voice got louder, desperate to push the blame onto Charlotte.

Charlotte didn't even look bothered. She lifted her head, eyes half-lidded.

"You're the one who pulled me in here. You insisted on trying it on. I haven't said a word this whole time. How is this my problem?"

"Charlotte!" Nancy was about to burst. Back in the day, Charlotte would've jumped to do whatever she asked.

Charlotte just shrugged, sinking deeper into the sofa. "Doesn't matter. I don't have the money." She unlocked her phone and started scrolling through the news, tuning out Nancy completely.

With no way to pay for the ruined dress, the store clerk picked up the phone and called the police.

It didn't take long for officers to arrive. The commotion drew a crowd, and soon people were gathering outside to see what was going on.

Once they heard the story, the whispers started.

"She ruined the dress and thought she could just walk away? Shameless."

"It's not just shameless, it's pathetic. So many girls these days want to show off in designer brands they can't afford."

"She showed up here looking like that, tried on a dress worth over a million, and now she's in trouble. Serves her right."

All the attention made Nancy's face go pale, and she collapsed to her knees.

"Charlotte, we've been friends for years. You can't just stand there and watch me go down like this."

Charlotte sighed, giving Nancy a look like she was scolding a small child.

"What am I supposed to do? Just now you told me to steal my dad's money..."

"Stealing is illegal. We can't do that."

She looked so innocent, like she was the poster child for good citizenship.

Nancy gaped at her, lost for words. Was Charlotte seriously pretending to be a saint right now?

One of the officers overheard and his face darkened. "Not only do you try to get a free dress, you want to drag someone else into it too?"

"You look pretty young. What, didn't even finish high school? The education system really failed you."

"Take her to the station."

"No! I don't want to go!" Nancy

fought against them, her voice rising in panic. "Charlotte, just wait. Sooner or later karma's coming for you. I'll make sure of it." :

The officers dragged her out as she struggled, and the crowd's cameras caught every second. Within

minutes, the whole thing was online and people everywhere were talking about it.

Karma, huh?

Charlotte wiped her hand where Nancy had grabbed her, a soft, amused smile playing on her lips.

Funny. She believed in karma too.

...

No sooner had Nancy been taken away than Olivia and her mother finally showed

up, a little late to the scene.

"You just "

Olivia stared at Charlotte, who was
still sitting coolly on the sofa,
completely unfazed. Olivia could
barely find her words
She'd run m

Nancy earlier and casually mentioned that Charlotte was here, hoping Nancy
would take her down
a peg. Back in school, Nancy had bullied her all the time.
She never imagined things would end like this.

The Mocked Miss's Hidden Crowns – Chapter 29 |

"Nancy is your friend. If you don't want to help her, fine, but how could you just
stand by and let them call the police?"

Charlotte looked up, her eyes clear and bright with a hint of frost on her
perfect face. Olivia shrank back, unsettled by the chill in Charlotte's gaze.

"I know her, but she's not my friend."

"She broke something in the store and refused to pay for it. The staff had
every right to call the police."

Charlotte dropped her phone into her bag and spoke softly, a faint, unreadable
smile on her lips. "Isn't she your friend too? If you can't tell right from wrong
and insist on defending her, why don't you just pay off her debt? It's only, what,
over a million dollars?"

Olivia sucked in a sharp breath, her cheeks burning. Over a million? How was
that her problem?

She was used to the spotlight, always competing and hustling, her face
popping up on TV, social media, everywhere.

"Wait, isn't that Olivia?"

Someone in the crowd recognized her. Olivia quickly smoothed her hair and
pulled out her best fake sweet smile. She had a reputation as a socialite to
protect.

"She's hilarious. All bossy when accusing someone else, but the moment it's
about her, she turns into a scared little turtle."

The mockery around her made Olivia's smile freeze on her face.

"I just heard that woman say Charlotte is the Main family's real daughter."

The gossip spread like wildfire.

"I thought the Main family only had one daughter. If Charlotte is the real one, then Who's Olivia?"

"Olivia's just the stepdaughter. Her mom brought her into the Main family when she got married," someone explained.

"No wonder Charlotte's got that whole graceful vibe going on."

Now everyone was staring at Charlotte. She was dressed simply, no makeup, but her features were stunning and her presence impossible to ignore. She sat silently on the couch, looking like she'd stepped out of a painting.

"So why is Olivia dripping in designer brands, and Charlotte's dressed like that?"

The crowd kept whispering, their eyes sharp and judgmental.

Olivia caught fragments of their words. Gold-digger. Stepmother. Ugly rumors swirling.

"What are they even talking about?"

"Olivia!"

Elizabeth grabbed Olivia's hand and walked over to Charlotte, putting on a smile that almost looked loving as she raised her voice can someone bring out the most expensive dress in the store? Let Charlotte try it on."

The priciest dress... That one was worth two million.

The other customers turned to stare, surprised. Wasn't Elizabeth supposed to treat Charlotte badly? This looked pretty generous.

"Elizabeth, is it this one?"

A shop assistant brought out a purple dress sparkling with tiny crystals.

Elizabeth held the dress up to Charlotte, glancing over her shoulder. The last customers were leaving, and the crowd at the door had scattered. Her smile disappeared.

"This dress doesn't really suit you. Let's look for something else."

She handed the dress straight to Olivia. "Now, this kind of glamorous dress is perfect for Olivia."

"You don't mind, do you, Charlotte?"

Olivia snatched the dress, shooting Charlotte a glare.

She'd waited six months for this dress, spent over a million just to be allowed to buy it. She was sure that if she wore it on stage at her next Competition, she'd outshine everyone.

Charlotte glanced up, cool and calm, her eyes lingering on the dress as her brows

lifted slightly.

The Mocked Miss's Hidden Crowns – Chapter 30 |

"I don't mind," Charlotte said.

Elizabeth gave a cold, knowing smile. She was certain Charlotte wouldn't dare speak up.

Charlotte dropped her gaze, pulled out her phone, and fired off a quick text.

Charlotte picked out her own clothes. Simple T-shirts, jeans, a windbreaker. All together, her choices didn't even come close to the price of one of Olivia's dresses.

At the register, Elizabeth glanced at Charlotte's pile and couldn't hide her look of disdain.

A country girl would always be a country girl. With those clothes, Charlotte would never belong with the glamorous crowd. Someday, if she was lucky, she might snag some tacky rich guy, but that was about it.

"Elizabeth, your total is..." The sales clerk started to ring them up, but before she could finish, a man who looked like the manager rushed over.

"I'm so sorry, Elizabeth. There's a problem with this dress. I can't let you take it today."

"What?" Olivia, who had been hugging the dress to her chest, instantly lost her smug look.

"I apologize, but five minutes ago, a mysterious customer bought this dress."

"We picked it out. Why should someone else get it?" Elizabeth's voice was icy, her expression annoyed.

"Yes, you picked it out, but the other customer paid in full before you did."

"Do you know who we are? We're super VIPs. We have priority. Who dares to steal my purchase?" Olivia jabbed her finger at the manager, her tone full of attitude. "This dress is mine. I'm taking it home today."

While all this was going on, Charlotte just took her bags, sat down on a

nearby sofa, rested her chin in her hand, and scrolled through her phone, barely paying attention.

The manager looked troubled. "You are a super VIP and do have priority. But the other customer has a Platinum Card."

Platinum? Olivia's eyes widened.

That was the legendary card,

personally signed by Tracing, the founder and chief designer of 1-Kiss. There was only one in the world

Whoever had it got first pick of every new collection, long before anything hit the boutiques.

Olivia was a die-hard 1-Kiss fan. She knew what the Platinum Card meant. VIP status was nothing compared to it.

Still, Olivia held on tight to the dress, refusing to let go.

"But..." the manager hesitated, then spoke respectfully, "the other customer said if Olivia really wants the dress, she's willing to let her have it."

Olivia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Of course," the manager replied with a polite smile. "All you need to do is pay an extra three million."

Five million. The number crashed down on Olivia like a ton of bricks. She'd barely convinced her dad to give her two million for the dress. There was no way she could ask for another three.

"If you're not willing to pay the difference, I'll need you to hand the dress back," the

manager said gently, taking the dress from Olivia's hands.

"Mom..." Olivia's voice trembled. Her eyes were red with frustration.

Elizabeth gripped her purse, looking helpless. Five million wasn't pocket change. Steven would never agree to this.

Before the manager could even start wrapping the dress up, his phone rang again. He listened his face shifting from surprise to disbelief. "Are you sure... you want me to cut it?" he asked, barely trusting what he was hearing.

"Yes, I understand."

He took the dress out, then told an assistant to bring scissors.

"Elizabeth, I'm truly sorry. The buyer said that since the dress was touched,

she thinks it's dirty and wants it destroyed right here."

As soon as he finished speaking, the beautiful dress was sliced open, a huge tear right down the middle.

The room fell silent.

Olivia's breath caught. Her face went from pale to furious. The dress she'd worked so hard to get... gone, cut up like it was nothing.