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'Maybe it's because of the incident at the Michelin restaurant?'

Louis' words changed Willow's expression.

Fortunately, Larissa did not say anything, which made her calm down a little.

The price on the screen stopped at \$266,000,000!

And the last person to tender a bid was Madam Nera from the Peach Room.

Maisie was surprised and curiously looked at the distinguished guest of the Peach Room. The person who was sitting at the window turned out to be Madam Nera!

The price that had stopped rose again to \$282,000,000 abruptly!

The audience was astounded.

The auctioneer was stunned for a moment and then slowly said, "Congratulations to the distinguished guests from the Stork Room located on the second floor..."

Maisie turned her head and looked at Helios. "Mr. Boucher, you..."

Helios gave off a faint smile. "A brilliant masterpiece is worth the price."

Madam Nera frowned when she looked at the person who was sitting in the Stork Room.

'It turns out to be that kiddo from the Bouchers?'

"The value has gone up again!"

When Maisie heard the voice coming from downstairs, she turned her head and looked at the screen. The \$ 282,000,000 had suddenly become \$313,000,000.

'Who in the world is so freaking rich!?'

"Congratulations to the distinguished guests from the Peach...."

"Congratulations to the distinguished guests from the Stork..."

“Congratulations to the distinguished...”

The auctioneer was stunned by the ever-increasing prices on the screen. She stopped announcing it in the end and just stood there, watching as the number kept growing.

The price on the screen had become \$470,000,000 in such a short period of time.

The buyers in the audience did not even bother to look at it anymore. There was no way that they could beat the capitalists on the second floor when it came to spending money.

Maisie grabbed Helios as cold sweat beads were starting to form on her forehead. “Forget it, Mr. Boucher. You don’t have to bid anymore.”

She had a faint idea of who was the guest in the Bamboo Room.

‘Who else could it be apart from him!?’

Helios already knew who was the guest in the Bamboo Room and sneered when he saw Maisie’s nervous look. “It’s okay. I’m only bidding for fun. He doesn’t need the money anyway.”

Maisie was rendered speechless. ‘A best friend who would set up his friend... This fella really knows how to be Nolan’s best friend.’

The thin lips of the man sitting in the Bamboo Room were tightly pressed until the person under the stage rang the bell and announced, “Congratulations to the VIP from the Bamboo Room for successfully bidding the second Peacock’s Pride!”

Another round of applause came from the audience.

The highest price-\$470,000,000-struck for the night. Maisie had done it, but she could not feel happy!

There was a knock on the door of the Stork Room.

The bodyguard opened the door. As expected, it was Quincy who was standing outside the door. Quincy took a glance at Helios and smiled slightly at Maisie. “Ms. Vanderbilt, Mr. Goldmann is waiting for you.”

Maisie followed Quincy to the Bamboo Room and really saw Nolan sitting on a soft cushion with his legs crossed, looking at her.

His brows were slightly creased while his thin lips were slightly opened. “Have you gotten together with Helios?”

'Not only did this woman not tell me anything about coming to an auction house, but she also went into Helios' private room. They've only met each other for that one time, and that b*stard already can't get his filthy mind off her!' 3

'Gotten together with him? Why does this sound a little strange?'

Maisie scoffed. "Mr. Goldmann, you really worry too much. I don't plan to be torn apart by the fans of the best actor."

Nolan stretched out his hand, pulled her into his arms, sat her down, placed his palm on her waist, and pinched her chin gently with the other hand. "You don't have to wait for his fans to tear you apart. I'll tear you apart first." 2

Maisie was rendered speechless.

Nolan looked at her. "Your objective for tonight has been achieved." "Yes, thanks to you, Mr. Goldmann, who spent \$470,000,000 to bid for my jewelry." Maisie pushed him away lightly Nolan's eyes narrowed slightly, and he held her back and pulled her waist closer to him. "How are you going to thank me?"

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His breath lingered at the tip of her nose, and she felt that the hand on her waist was getting warmer and warmer. Thus, she subconsciously jumped away from him as far as possible. "I wasn't the one who begged you to bid, so why should I thank you?"

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"Sometimes, I really dislike the things that come out of your mouth."

"Then don't kiss me."

Nolan did not expect that she would say so. He frowned and pinched her chin. "You're the one who's asking for it."

He sealed her lips with his immediately.

Maisie resisted a little in his arms, but she was suddenly crushed tightly by him. He then lowered his voice and stared at her passionately and greedily. "Don't move around. Do you want this to turn into something even deeper?"

Maisie did not say a single word.

"Mr. Goldman." Quincy's voice came from outside the door.

Maisie quickly got up and away from him.

This man is really too contemptible!

Quincy pushed the door, came in, and said, "Mr. Goldman, Madam Nera from the Peach Room invites you and Ms. Vanderbilt... to go over to her room."

Maisie and Nolan walked out of the Bamboo Room and ran into the Lucas family and Willow in the corridor.

When Willow saw that Nolan was still holding Maisie's hand, her eyes could not help but turn gloomy.

'D*mn it! I originally wanted to ruin this b*tch's reputation, but who would have thought that she would be able to dodge such a huge bullet again!?'

Maisie was also wearing a masquerade mask. She did not wear any high heels tonight. She was five foot four in height and looked like a tiny kitten while she was standing beside Nolan, who was six foot one in height.

"Madam Lucas and Mr. Lucas are here too." Nolan spoke indifferently.

Larissa took a glance at the young lady beside him and smiled gracefully. "This must be Mr. Goldmann's girlfriend."

Nolan looked at Maisie and answered, "She's my fiancée." Maisie was startled. She wanted to shake his hand away, but Nolan tightened his grasp.

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"My fiancée and I have something to attend to, so we'll take our leave first." Nolan gave off a faint smile and took Maisie away.

Louis' hands were clenched in his pockets, and his eyes were dimmed as he turned his head to take another look at Nolan.

He suddenly recalled the appearances of the kids.

"They resemble Mr. Goldmann so much.'

Quincy took a peek at them and wondered deep down as he saw Willow tagging along with them. 'This

woman actually became so close with Mr. Lucas as soon as she ascertained that she couldn't be together with Mr. Goldmann?'

In addition to Madam Nera, Kennedy was also in the Peach Room. When Madam Nera saw the two walking in, she put down the teacup in her hand, looked at Maisie, and snorted. "I've always been curious about what you said the other day, but I really didn't expect you to be the genius jewelry designer, Zora."

"Why didn't you tell me directly that you're Zora?"

'I wouldn't have realized her identity if it hadn't been for Kennedy'

Maisie removed the mask that she had prepared for the masquerade and walked toward Madam Nera with a smile. "Madam Nera, you wouldn't believe me either, even if I were to explain it the other day."

Madam Nera paused and curled her lips. "You're right. If you couldn't show me some real tricks, I really wouldn't believe that you're Zora."

The corners of Nolan's lips were raised slightly. "It seems that Madam Nera likes the Peacock's Pride designed by my fiancée."

Maisie glared at him.

'Fiancée!? Nothing has been confirmed apart from the kids! "You're quite good at concealing yourself, huh?" Madam Nera laughed admiringly.

'Not only did she not mention her identity as the world-renowned designer Zora that day, but she also did not talk about her relationship with Nolan. Since she's able to convince me with her sincere attitude, this young lady isn't any ordinary woman. No wonder Kennedy is willing to assist her.'

"However, you won," Madam Nera said while looking at her.

Maisie was helpless and said in a complaining tone, "My people bid for the item, so how can that be considered a success?"

'Her people?' Nolan squinted. 'Did she just acknowledge me?'

Madam Nera shook her head with a serious expression. "Even if Mr. Goldmann didn't bid it, I'd bid it myself. It's not the price but your sincerity that has moved me. At least, you've made everyone witness the charm of tanzanite."

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Probably because Madam Nera had underestimated Maisie before this, the former felt rather embarrassed because she had almost made a bad judgment.

However, she still had to maintain her reputation, so she said proudly, "So, get Kennedy to come over tomorrow to renew the contract. I'll share my tanzanite supply chain with you, but in return, don't let me down."

Maisie laughed. "Yes, Madam Nera."

Nolan stared at Maisie, who Madam Nera deeply appreciated.

'Although this woman likes to play tricks, she was able to obtain Madam Nera's recognition without any assistance from anyone. It's difficult to dislike her independent and tough temperament.'

However, Nolan also felt very defeated and frustrated deep down because his woman did not want to rely on him!

#Zora Outclassed New Designer Willow Vanderbilt#

After the two identical auction items had been announced at the Summerton Auction Hall last night, Zora and Willow had successfully secured themselves a spot on Google Trends.

It was apparent to the eyes as soon as the netizens looked at the comparison between the two pieces of jewelry. Thus, everyone online started questioning and mocking Willow's act of plagiarizing Zora's design, which did not turn out too well.

Some netizens even uploaded pictures of gothic-style masterpieces that Willow had put forward before this. The details of all the designs looked very similar to those vintage jewelry designs that Zora had come up with while she was abroad. There were only minor changes in the design language.

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#SoutherWood#: Willow really did plagiarize in order to get famous, didn't she?

#Peppa's Hammer#: Zora's design doesn't have a dominant design language. Through her design language, embellishments have always been finishing touches that would shock the public visually all the time. Her designs have always looked very comfortable, non-conflicting, and simple.

#Sh*tsackNetizen#: I believe that all designers have their own style. It's just that Zora is more famous. It doesn't necessarily mean that Willow has plagiarized her designs.

Many reporters gathered at the entrance of Vaenna Jewelry, and Willow had been hiding in her office and did not dare to go out.

She trembled out of wrath upon seeing that most of the online posts and comments questioned her plagiarism act.

Leila looked out of the window, saw that the reporters had refused to leave, and walked to Willow hurriedly. "Willie, we don't have to be afraid of anything. No matter what, the designs' sketches are in our possession. We can post a clarification on Twitter and Facebook now."

'All of Freddy's design sketches are in my possession. As long as I publish all of them and then pay Freddy more money to speak up on Willie's behalf, why should we be afraid of the public's opinion?'

Willow felt that this was indeed a way. However, her social media accounts had been blocked, so she

could only use Vaenna's official accounts to release a statement.

Willow uploaded the sketches to prove that she was not involved in any plagiarism. She also denied everything that had something to do with the incident from last night's auction and claimed that she was the first designer to release the design, denying that she had copied Zora's work.

The statement implied that the latter was the one that should be suspected of plagiarism.

At the Blackgold Group, on the 16th floor...

When Maisie saw the statement that was posted through Vaenna's official Twitter and Facebook account, she knew that it was Willow's doing.

It just so happened that her Soul Studio would be officially listed today, so she released all the products that were designed using retro, gothic designs concept on Soul Studio's webpage.

On Twitter....

#Soul Jewelry Studio Official#: @Vaenna Jewelry Official, During the period in which my jewelry studio got listed, I discovered that your company has been using my studio's original manuscripts to create new design sketches. I didn't want to escalate the matter, but I realized that I still couldn't tolerate plagiarism at the end of the day. Please check the photos for my studio's registration date and the date when all the manuscripts were created.

As soon as this Twitter post was published, all netizens were in an uproar. Some questioned that Soul Jewelry Studio was trying to use this incident as a stepping stone to catapult themselves into fame, some questioned Willow's plagiarism, while some others questioned that this was a PR trick that both companies were using to create hype online. All sorts of comments could be seen on all social media platforms.

And Willow, who was sitting in front of the computer, was astonished.

'Soul Jewelry Studio? What kind of studio is that!?'

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'How could they have manuscripts that look exactly like Freddy's!? And the date when the manuscripts were created is earlier than those Freddy gave me!

"Willie, what the hell is going on?" Leila started acting fidgety.

Willow quickly took out her cell phone to call Freddy but could not reach him because his cell phone had been turned off.

She was stupefied at that moment.

'It must be Freddy's doing!'

She immediately issued a clarification, pushed all the blame on Freddy, and claimed that Freddy Fuller was one of Hailey & Co. Jewelry's designers.

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However, Hailey & Co. Jewelry posted a statement on Twitter within a few hours.

#Hailey & Co. Jewelry Official#: Hailey & Co. Jewelry doesn't have a designer whose name is Freddy Fuller, and we've never cooperated with @Vaenna Jewelry. A gentle reminder, all companies should remember to keep their eyes wide open and get to the bottom of all collaboration details before they enter a collaboration with other companies.

Hailey & Co. Jewelry's official post turned Willow and Vaenna Jewelry into a laughingstock in an instant.

The netizens ridiculed that Vaenna had been deceived and even laughed at Willow's decision to manufacture jewelry based on stolen designs from another company. Some even made Willow's selfie into

emojis and memes,

For one whole morning, Willow had been ridiculed by groups and groups of netizens and got squeezed into Google Trends' top search results.

#Willow's Talents are Stolen#

Just when Willow was sweeping all the documents and decorations off her desk exasperatedly after reading all those posts and comments, Stephen appeared outside the office with a sulky expression.

Leila trembled and then quickly walked up to Stephen. "Dear, don't trust those comments on the Internet,"

Stephen slapped Leila, and she staggered to the side. She then covered her cheek and looked at him in a daze.

"Take a look at the daughter that you've brought up. I'm extremely disappointed with the both of you." 1

Seeing that her mother was slapped, Willow immediately looked at her father's expression, and it was only natural that she was very scared. "Dad, I'm sorry, it's all my fault."

Willow ran up to Stephen, knelt to the floor, and cried. "You can hit me! I'm the one who cannot withdraw myself from the obsession. That's the reason I was conned by that person and did such things. So please don't hit Mom."

Willow was good at putting her tears into good use and also putting herself in a vulnerable position.

Seeing that Willow was kneeling on the floor, crying her eyes out, and begging himself, he wavered. Even though Stephen was truly enraged by Willow's actions, he was still a soft-hearted man.

'I was the one who pampered and spoiled her so much back then that I've turned her into someone like this.'

He took a deep breath. "You don't have to come to the company anymore in the future. I realize that I can't trust you to manage the company."

Willow was stunned. She then lowered her head while biting her lips bitterly.

'So what if I don't have Vaenna? I still hold the identity of the daughter of the de Armas!'

In the end, Stephen came forward to apologize and assume all accountability.

Maisie's eyes gradually dimmed when she saw the video of her father coming out to apologize to the public on Willow's behalf.

Although she now knew more about the past between her mother and father, she would still feel sad when she thought about the fact that she had become an irrelevant existence to the Vanderbilts. 'However, thinking of today's incident, Father would most probably not allow Willow to manage Vaenna ever again.'

'Although Father might not consider handing Vaenna to Willow in the future, it's obvious that Leila and Grandma still have their eyes on Vaenna.'

"What are you thinking about?" A voice came from behind her.

Maisie was so frightened that she trembled, turned her head, and rubbed her lips against his cold lips while doing so.

Nolan was standing behind her, leaning over, and propping his upper body against the desk, so the distance between the both of them was very close. It seemed that this was the scene that he had been waiting for, and he was very satisfied with the outcome.

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"Are you taking advantage of me?"

Maisie's eyelashes twitched, and she moved away from him subconsciously to create distance. "Do you think that you're taking less advantage of me?"

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Nolan's gaze landed on her computer's monitor, which happened to be showing the video of Stephen's apology.

He frowned and placed his hands on her shoulders.

But when his fingertips touched her skin, she trembled from head to toe as if an electric current traveled through her body.

The man stood behind her and kneaded her shoulders gently for her. Anyone would definitely suffer from a jaw-drop if they were to witness this scene.

The exceptionally regal Mr. Goldmann would actually give someone else a massage?

Nolan suddenly suggested indifferently, 'Do you want me to accompany you back to the Vanderbilt manor for a meal?'

'I'm sorry, but the Vanderbilts don't welcome me. You should go to Willow if you're looking for a free meal – Ugh!'

'It hurts! This dbag is actually giving it all he has!

Nolan leaned over and approached her ear. 'I know that you're jealous of Willow, but I've never taken the initiative to go back to the Vanderbilt manor with Willow before this. Judging solely on this, you've already won.'

"Hehe, then who was the person who left me on the road the other night?"
Maisie chuckled.

Nolan pressed his lips together tightly, turned her chair abruptly, propped his arms on the armrests of the chair, and circled her in front of him. "I'll let you leave me on the road for a while so that you'll be able to vent your spleen. What do you think?"

Maisie looked up at Nolan.

'Am I seeing this right? Why would Nolan... Why would he change his attitude just to please me, and he's even begging for forgiveness?'

This domineering and unreasonable man seemed to have gotten closer to her.

Just when she was staring at him in a daze, the man's soft lips approached her face in an instant and they were already covering her own lips in a matter of a split second.

Maisie was taken aback. She lifted her hand to block him but could not push him away.

His breath surrounded her, but she seemed to have gotten used to this and started to respond to his kiss

Nolan retracted his gaze and supported the back of her head as the kiss intensified. He wanted more...

"Zee..." Kennedy suddenly opened the door and rushed in.

Maisie returned to her senses instantly, pushed away Nolan, and turned her chair around immediately.

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Kennedy realized that he had entered at a bad time and said, "I'll come again later."

He went out again and closed the door.

Nolan was not afraid of what would happen if Kennedy discovered them. He glanced at the woman's flushed ear and brushed his lips with his fingertips as a

hint of triumph gradually surfaced in his eyes. "If you want to go back to the Vanderbilt manor to see your father at any time, call me."

Seeing Nolan's departing figure, Maisie became more and more apprehensive.

'Did I get possessed by some spirits just now? Not only did I not resist him, but I was also very involved...'

Her eyes dimmed gradually.

'Habit is a terrible thing. I can't get used to that...'

At the Lucas family's mansion...

Larissa held a blue-eyed Persian cat, sat on the couch, and started grooming it.

She watched as the housekeeper brought Willow in while Willow was carrying a gift box in her hand.

She only raised her eyelids. "There's no need to bring any gifts in the future."

Willow bit her lips lightly and smiled. "I don't feel too good about coming here to visit you empty handedly."

Larissa lifted her head and glanced at Willow with a nonchalant expression. "There are quite a lot of rumors about you on the Internet recently."

"Aunty, the rumors aren't real, I... I was deceived by someone else." Today, Willow had come to the Lucas family's mansion to explain and clarify herself.

'Father hates me completely now. He even took Vaenna's management rights away from me. I can only try my best to please Madam Lucas to find myself more opportunities!

Larissa carried the cat in her arms and handed it to the housekeeper. She then squatted down to feed the cat as soon as the housekeeper took the cat from her.

After that, she picked up a cup of coffee on the table. "You look and feel so different from your mother that I sometimes wonder if you're her daughter at all."