

Bogus Billionaire by Shining Riviera (Caroline Evans)

Chapter 101

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Caroline kept thinking about Kirk's words, which had left her hanging. If it weren't for the fact that she'd received some news about the contest, she would've forgotten that the results were going to be announced soon.

This contest was especially grand. It was the first time these major brands came together to organize a packaging design contest of such a huge scale, after all,

The announcement venue was as spectacular as an award ceremony.

Gwen took in the sight of the tables full of desserts and clucked her tongue in satisfaction. "As expected of an event organized by such big brands, even the desserts here are from well-known manufacturers."

Caroline tossed her a sideways glance. "Since when were you so interested in food?"

With a guilty face worthy of a convict, Gwen tried to explain herself. "We've been going *out* for food all the time these days. I've become a

foodie."

Caroline didn't doubt what Gwen said. She simply walked around and found a seat for herself while Gwen sat beside her.

Those who had come for the event today had been shortlisted as the top hundred in the contest. The organizers had all owed each of

them to bring two relatives along with them.

Caroline had wanted to bring Kirk along, but he hadn't returned yet. In the end, she could only bring Gwen along with her.

Sitting next to her, Gwen said, “I heard that besides getting money as a reward, the one who wins first place will receive a special prize. Do you know what it is?”

Caroline’s focus wasn’t on the prizes. She’d just joined the contest to gain experience. “I hope that it’s a position for a job.” she answered

Gwen casually.

She wasn’t putting her hopes on it, though. After all, it wasn’t like the organizers could read her mind.

Gwen stroked her chin thoughtfully. “Carol, are you the breadwinner of your family now?”

The tips of Caroline’s ears turned red. “What are you talking about? I’ve left the Evans family. It’s only natural that I have to make a living.”

Her reaction made Gwen laugh. “Then why are you blushing?”

Caroline couldn’t bear the embarrassment and shifted the topic. “Alright, that’s enough. They’re going to announce the results soon. I’m a

bundle of nerves now.”

“What’s there to be nervous about?” Gwen had full faith in Caroline. “I’m positive that you’re going to win first place.”

Smiling, Caroline was about to reply when a ruckus broke out in the crowd.

Curious, she and Gwen turned in that direction, only to see Layla in a wheelch air. She was being pushed into the venue by a care worker.

Gwen’s expression shifted almost immediately. “Layla? Why is she here?” She furrowed her brows. “Don’t tell me she participated in the

contest too.”

As Gwen spoke, the care worker had already pushed Layla to Caroline’s side. Lots of people around them had already recognized Caroline and they all looked *on*, eager *to* enjoy a good show.

“Caroline.” Layla had a pale countenance, but her smile was bright. “You never expected to meet me here, right?”

Caroline tucked a strand of hair behind her ear, blatantly ignoring Layla as she did so.

Still, Layla appeared to be unbothered by this. “Everything will change after tonight. All the glory and honor that could be yours will become mine. You’ll meet your doom very soon!”

Furious, Gwen rushed forward and interrupted her. “Mind your words!”

Holding Gwen back, Caroline turned to face Layla coolly and said. “Have you received the summons from the court?”

Her words made Layla’s face turn as pale as a she

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Caroline found it strange too, but she busied herself with calming Gwen down. She didn’t put much thought into it.

Soon, the host walked up to the stage, and everyone fell silent. After delivering a speech, he said, “Next, let us invite Venusta’s CEO to come on the stage and announce the contestant who won fifth place!”

A man about 40 years old with a balding crown walked up the stage and announced. “In fifth place, we have Lucy Quill.”

The audience applauded.

Gwen inched closer to Caroline and whispered into her ear. “They’re turning it into an award ceremony.”

Caroline smiled and kept her eyes focused on the stage. She’d be lying if she said that she wasn’t nervous. This contest was especially significant to her.

In no time, the person who'd won third place was making her way down the stage. Caroline's heart palpitated wildly.

"We're left with the second and first places now," whispered Gwen as she gripped Caroline's hands. "Carol, I'm sure you'll win this!"

She'd barely managed to finish her sentence when the CEO of Belya, one of the other brands, announced it in his sonorous voice. "Caroline Evans!"

Caroline beamed. This was the first time her design had been made public. Getting second place gave her the confidence and acknowledgment she'd never known she needed.

She walked up to the stage to receive the trophy. This journey, albeit short, felt like a thousand miles to her. Everything felt so surreal, even when she went up the stage and took the trophy from Belya's CEO's hands.

"Alright. It's time to announce our champion!" The host's voice was bright and clear. "Let us have Laureil's CEO, Ms. Layn, on stage to give away the prize."

The crowd applauded once again, this time even louder.

Caroline watched as Ms. Layn walked up the stage and got into position with a smile playing on her lips.

She unfolded the small card in her hands and said. "The first winner of the first Novitius Contest for packaging design is Layla Evans!"

"Let's have Layla Evans up on stage!"

Confetti started spilling everywhere. As the crowd erupted in applause, Caroline saw the care worker pushing Layla in her wheelchair up

the stage.

With her eyes narrowed, Caroline watched Layla take the prize. Layla was given the chance to give a speech since she'd won first place.

"I'd like to thank the organizers and all the brands for sponsoring this contest. I'm grateful that I was given this chance to participate in this Novilius Contest, and I'd like to thank my family for always supporting me. Special thanks to my cousin ..."

Her voice trailed off, and her head snapped in Caroline's direction to wave at her.

Caroline's face had no expression. The crowd's reaction was the total opposite of hers, though. They were thrilled.

All this time, the public knew that Layla and Caroline were rivals in love. They had fought over the same man, which was precisely the type of gossip everybody enjoyed.

Layla continued. "Caroline's designs have always been unique. If it weren't for her guidance, I wouldn't have gotten first place this time. Thank you, Caroline."

It sounded as if Layla was thanking Caroline. However, if anyone listened carefully to her words, they'd know that she was mocking the latter. Caroline, who'd insisted on giving Layla advice, had gotten second place instead of first place.

Despite that, Layla spoke as if it came from her heart. She sounded so sincere that no one could pick on her for it.

The host was someone who enjoyed gossiping. With a microphone in hand, she walked off the stage and approached Caroline. "What a surprise that the first and second places this time are won by these two sisters."

She held the microphone near Caroline's lips and said, "Your cousin just won first place. Is there anything you'd like to say?"

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A chill ran down Gwen's spine. She started to worry for Caroline.

However, Caroline seemed as if she were unaware of the predicament she was in. Her tone was relaxed and sincere when she said. "Of course, I'm happy that she's won with the skills she has."

The smile on Layla's face faltered. Nobody besides herself knew exactly how she'd gotten first place.

After hearing what Caroline said, the crowd started applauding once again.

The way she spoke was sincere and magnanimous. Compared to Layla, Caroline was straightforward and big-hearted. Naturally, she deserved some praise and respect from them.

After giving out the awards, the top live contestants and the CEOs of the sponsoring brands took a group photo together.

Layla Intentionally waved the trophy in her hands beside Caroline to irk her. Her efforts were in vain because Caroline wasn't affected in the least and simply looked at the camera.

Multiple clicks sounded from the camera. The photographer took a great many shots in a row. After the photography session, everyone else started leaving the stage.

Layla called Caroline to stop, and the latter turned around.

Pushing her wheelchair to move in Caroline's direction, Layla looked up at her and said, "I told you. The one who has the last laugh is the true winner. And you, Caroline, have lost."

Caroline glanced at the trophy on Layla's lap and bent to whisper into her ear. "Layla, you and I both know your skills. You might've succeeded in fooling the others, but it doesn't work on me."

When they were young, Caroline had always done Layla's homework for art class for her.

Sure, Layla could claim that she'd now taken away the glory that was supposed to be Caroline's.

No matter what, Caroline was the only one who knew how much effort she'd put in to become an eligible wife for Eddy. She couldn't even count the number of times her fingers had peeled off and bled after practicing the piano for too long.

The higher one climbed without proper effort, the harder one would fall.

Layla paled at Caroline's words, and she tried to stay calm by taking deep breaths.

A moment later, she sneered. "You might think that I'm not good enough, but the judges think I'm fine. What can you do to change that? It's like you *and* Eddy. You like him so much, but I'm the one he loves."

Caroline shook her head slowly. She failed to understand why Layla still thought she could provoke her by putting Eddy in the picture. She would have succeeded in the past, but it was simply impossible now.

"Yeah, yeah. He loves you so much that he'd die for you. He shows his love for you by wanting to marry you and letting you get run over by a car the next day." Although Caroline spoke slowly, her voice was bright and clear.

It angered Layla even more. If it hadn't been for the people around them, she would've strangled Caroline to death. 1

With heightened spirits, Caroline walked down from the stage. Gwen approached her and peeked at Layla, who was behind her. "What did you two talk about?"

"Nothing much," said Caroline casually as she passed her trophy to Gwen. "Is this pretty?"

Gwen took the trophy from Caroline and mumbled, "Yeah, it is, but it's a shame that Layla got first place. Even someone with her skills could win the contest. There's definitely something fishy going on behind this."

Still, Caroline didn't seem to be bothered at all. "These brands might have nothing to do with the Morrisons, but no one in Easton would risk offending them. All Layla needed to do was make a call, and she would have easily gotten first place."

Regardless, Gwen was still immensely upset. "It's so unfair. You should be the one to win this contest."

A soft smile appeared on **Caroline's** lips, and she took out her phone to message Kirk. She wanted to know when he'd come back.

She clicked on the notification entitled “Novitius Contest Champlon Announced.” The post was published on its official page, and it shared the top five winners’ designs with the public.

Caroline scanned through the post, and her gaze fell on the design in the center of the compilation of designs. It was the first design she’d come up with and the name at the bottom of the picture was none other than “Layla Evans.”

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Caroline clicked on the comments section to see rows of compliments.

“Wow! Layla’s design is so pretty! When will the brands use this design for their packaging? I’m definitely going to buy more!”

“I only focus on the ingredients of the products, but this design is simply gorgeous. If they use her design, I’d be the first to grab one!”

“Back then, I thought that the Evans family only had one daughter, Caroline. Who knew that they had another one called Layla? She even won the first prize, yet Caroline only got second. It seems to me that Layla is better than Caroline.”

“Eddy Morrison’s taste says it all.”

“Yep, we’re so far behind compared to her. Eddy Morrison’s choice could never go wrong! Even though the Morrisons haven’t made an official announcement about their relationship yet, we’ve seen pictures of him going out to meet Layla.”

“The thing is that Layla completed this design even though she’s sick! Caroline can’t even be compared to a patient. She must’ve gone mad from thinking about Eddy Morrison all day, every day.”

The comments made Gwen so furious that she started rolling up her sleeves. She looked as if she were ready to battle the people who’d made the comments.

Noticing this, Caroline laughed and put a hand on her arm to calm her down. “Don’t worry. A good show will begin very soon.”

At the hospital, Eddy glanced at the trophy on Layla’s lap and gave her a thumbs up. “Awesome! You won first place!”

Layla smiled, embarrassed at his praise. “Do you have a reward for me then?”

“What kind of reward do you want?” 1

Bowing her head, Layla muttered, “I want you to congratulate me on Twitter.”

“That simple?”

“Yep.”

“Sure!” Eddy agreed. He took a photo of her with the trophy and started editing the picture.

“This is a happy occasion. It’s only natural that I congratulate you. Besides, you’ll get the chance to work at my second uncle’s company after this.”

Layla blinked several times at him as she tried to digest this piece of information. “What does this contest have to do with him

By now, Eddy was done editing his post and had uploaded it online.

“It’s confidential, but telling you about it isn’t that big of a deal. Anyway, he’ll make an official announcement about it tonight. He bought those brands, and the contest was held to create momentum by capturing the attention of the public before the merger.

Eddy continued, “Besides the prize money, there’s another special reward too. You know that, right?”

Layla was so astonished that she couldn’t say anything in response. All she could do was nod.

“The reward is for the winner to join the company as their design manager after the merger.”

“A design manager?” Once again, Layla was so shocked that she couldn’t utter another word,

To be the design manager of the company after the merger and that too, at a company owned by Eddy’s second uncle!

Layla imagined herself standing on a stage with a global audience. “This isn’t a joke, right?” She exclaimed.

“Of course not!” Eddy laughed.

“But you can’t tell anyone about it yet. You’ll have to wait until the official announcement is made.”

By now, Layla was so thrilled that her fingers had started trembling. She’d never expected a simple contest to benefit her this much! She’d be the jewel of the Evans family in the future!

After the announcement of the contest results, she and Gwen had gone to a restaurant for food and ordered some wine to go with it

They hadn’t drunk much, but the amount of alcohol Caroline had consumed was enough to make **her** a little woozy

Slowly, she made her way upstairs to get ready to go to bed. As she was brushing her teeth, she heard a car honk and then the sound of hurried footsteps.

“Caroline

The door to the bathroom was shoved open.

With her toothbrush still in her mouth, she cocked her head to one side to **see** Kirk panting in the doorway.

He was wearing a black suit, and he looked very smart in it. The first few buttons on his collar were unbuttoned, and the open collar revealed his collarbones beneath

Caroline smiled sluggishly at him. “You’re back”

Kirk watched her, concerned. The first thing he’d found out after he’d gotten off the plane was that Caroline had come in second place in

the contest

He'd taken one look at the design that had won first place and instantly knew **what** had happened.

After that, he'd rushed home from the airport right away. He was in such a hurry that he'd forgotten to change his clothes.

Caroline continued brushing her teeth. She noticed Kirk still standing by the door and tossed him **a** bright smile. "Why didn't you tell me that you were coming home? I have something to ask you."

She approached him, and Kirk caught the scent **of** wine on her

"You're drunk?" He asked

"Nope. I'm pretty much sober."

She took out her phone **and** opened WhatsApp. "Look, this is my father, he called me useless, And here, my mom said she was disappointed in me. She said her efforts had all gone down the drain. This is-

There were over 99 unopened messages. Most of it **was** from the Evans family, and all of them were complimenting Layla and scoffing **at** Caroline

Scrolling through them, Kirk made a mental note of their names, blocked them and deleted all of their chats.

Caroline watched him as he did so and giggled. "That's not necessary. I'm not upset. They showed me their true faces **through** these chats,

Kirk **simply** hugged her and said nothing

A moment later, he could feel the warmth seeping through his shirt, In a route d voice, Caroline said, 'I'm not sad in the least. Layla stole my design and got first place. If I share my draft with the pubuk, I can prove that she's a thief."

Caroline sniffed. "I don't feel anything, even though everyone's congratulating her. But why, Eddy, why

Kirk's hand, which had been stroking her head, froze abruptly. Caroline's voice was soft as she complained to **him**, so he couldn't make out the words after that

When he looked down at her, he saw that her **eyes** were shut tight and her eye lashes **were** wel

His heart turned into a jumbled mess

She'd liked Eddy for eight years and still couldn't let go of him.

After a while, he slowly lifted her up and gently placed her on the bed. He then planted a tizz on her vehead

Suddenly, her phone lit up on the bedside table. He turned to take a look at it and saw that it was a message ham tady It read, "Congratulations on getting second place"

On the other hand, Eddy regretted it the moment he'd sent the message. He wanted to unsend it, but it was too late.

He'd only realized that Caroline had gotten second place when he'd been scrolling through the contest's official page just now. His eyes turned as wide as saucers when he saw her design.

He'd never thought that she could come up with such a brilliant design! He'd only known her as someone who just knew how to cook and do household chores.

From an outsider's point of view, he thought that her design was better than L ayla's.

The two women didn't have any experience in the field, so it was hard to compare them. Still, the concept and philosophy behind Caroline's design were impressive.

Sometimes, this was what captured the consumers' hearts and made them willing to spend more.

A few minutes later, he'd still gotten no reply from her. He was worried that she would overthink his message, so he sent her another one.

"I didn't mean to congratulate you. I'm just bored."

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An hour later, Charles arrived downstairs in a hurry. He stood before Kirk and greeted him

respectfully, saying, “Mr. Morrison.”

Kirk tossed **the** USB flash drive **over** to Charles, **who** inserted the flash drive into his computer and

opened it, only **to** find only one file.

He clicked on it to find the winning design draft as well as several unfinished sketches. From these sketches, he could see

in the room, Caroline was fast asleep on the bed. Through the partially opened curtains, the

moonlight shone into the room, outlining her beautiful face

Her expression was already relaxed, no longer as tense as it had been an hour ago.

Kirk laid down beside her and held her in his arms. Caroline shuffled in his arms, making herself

comfortable before going to sleep again.

Kirk relaxed his tense body, inhaling Caroline's feminine scent, he fell into a deep sleep, getting

rid of his weariness for the past few days.

As Caroline slept, she seemed to hum something. When she woke up, she found herself

in Kirk's arms.

She suddenly glanced underneath the covers and only calmed down after seeing that they both

still had their clothes on. However, her face was still flushed.

Their bodies were glued together.

Caroline could hear Kirk's strong heartbeat thumping in her ears and feel his firm muscles with her

bands. She could even feel his scent filling her nostrils.

She tried to move, but then legs were tangled together. The mutants moved a single inch in

Caroline looked up at Kirk, biting **her** lip. Kirk's eyes were shut tightly and there were dark

Caroline couldn't **bear to** see **him** exhausted, so she nestled herself in his **arms**, not daring **to move**.

Kirk's **lips** curled up into a slight smile, but Caroline **didn't** know, puzzled.

Kirk explained, "These **are** Caroline's sketches. Every time she finishes one, she'll upload it to her

laptop."

Charles opened the last sketch, which happened to be the final draft. It was precisely the same as Layla's. He understood the situation immediately.

"So... the winner copied Mrs. Morrison's design? No... the brushwork is the same. This is the

original draft!"

So, Layla had stolen Caroline's work and submitted it as her own!

Kirk's gaze was stormy. It was hard to tell what he was feeling **at** the moment.

"Investigate what's going on. Contact the PR department to find the best plan to minimize the damage."

"Yes, sir," Charles replied.

After Charles left, Kirk closed his eyes wearily. He hadn't rested for a single moment since he'd

gotten off the plane more than five hours ago.

Thinking of Caroline, he opened his eyes again. He was about to go upstairs when his phone rang.

Kirk glanced at his phone; it was an unknown number. Ignoring it, he put the phone back in his pocket and went to the second floor.

After he'd left Easton, he'd been thinking about Caroline every day, wishing to get on the plane **and** return to her. Jude was already ready. Once he finished things here, he could have **Caroline meet** his parents.

Despite the cold night, Kirk's blood boiled in **annoyance**. His phone was still ringing when **he'd**

He immediately blocked the number with a **frown**

Then everything was peaceful once again

On the other end of the line, when Brie realized that her phone number had been blocked, she

fumed angrily it was probably that bitch Caroline who'd blocked her

Brie had already investigated and found that Caroline had frequently contacted this number

Needless to say, this number was her husband's

Caroline probably blocked Brie's number because she was feeling guilty

She wouldn't let Caroline off so easily!

Kirk crept back into his room

Her memories **from** yesterday came back bit by bit. She only remembered that she'd cried, and she seemed to have mentioned Eddy.

She wasn't sad at all. However, for some reason, when she'd been in Kirk's arms, she hadn't been able to stop her tears from coming down, like a suffering child seeking solace.

She moved. Kirk trembled slightly, and he placed his hand on her waist.

Caroline looked up at him in surprise. “You’re awake?”

Kirk leisurely opened his eyes. His voice was relaxed when he said, “Yeah.”

Caroline didn’t dare to look at Kirk. She said, “I—I want to get up.”

Kirk rested his chin on Caroline’s shoulders. His voice was low and sleepy. “**You** had a question for me yesterday, right?”

“Ah!” Caroline seemed to remember saying that in her daze.

But... Now that Kirk was right in front of her, she didn’t know how to bring up her question.

Besides, she could feel his warm breath on her ears, disrupting her thoughts.

“Are you having trouble finding the words?” Kirk asked. He laced his fingers through Caroline’s, playing with them carefully.

Caroline’s heart was beating even faster. “No, I-”

“Ring!” The phone rang suddenly, startling Caroline and ruining the atmosphere.

“Get the phone.” Caroline pushed Kirk away, taking the opportunity to sneak into the bathroom.

The smile on Kirk’s face faded away as he picked up his phone. It was another unknown number, and it seemed that this number had sent him countless messages before.

Each message contained accusations of Caroline sleeping around with married men. There were **even** requests for him to keep his wife in line, saying that if something like this happened again, **they** would ruin Caroline.

Kirk **looked at** the threatening messages with a cold smile and answered the call.

Brie was a little caught off guard to see him answer her call, and she froze for a few moments before saying. “A—are you Caroline or her husband?”

Kirk walked to the balcony. He asked, “Is there something you need?”

His deep and magnetic voice shocked Brie. She hadn't expected Caroline's husband to have such a lovely voice! And... it sounded familiar.

There is Brie pulled herself away from her thoughts and said, "You must have seen the

messages I'd sent you. Don't you care about your wife fooling around?"

Kirk sneered, "Do you have anything else to say?"

Brie was speechless at his calm answer. "Don't you hate Caroline for cuckolding you?"

Kirk looked into the distance, asking, "You're Brie, right?"

Brie's expression shifted. "This is my best friend's number! How did he know it was me?" she thought.

"Don't mess with Caroline if you still want to live." After Kirk finished speaking, he hung up the phone.

Brie was still holding the phone in shock. She couldn't believe he'd threatened her, and that too, knowing full well who she was! Both Caroline and her husband were bastards

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After Caroline washed up, she went downstairs to make breakfast.

As she **put** the plates on the table, she was thinking about how to ask Kirk **wh**
at he'd meant **by** not wanting to be friends. However, when she looked up and saw him, her mind went blank.

Kirk had changed into a casual outfit, lacking his usual upper-class style. He looked more relaxed and carefree.

"What are we eating today?" he asked, pulling out a chair and sitting down at the table.

Caroline hurriedly looked away, her heart beating wildly like a deer in headlights. For a moment, she felt like they were acting like an old married couple.

She answered, "Pasta. Let me get some for you."

"I'll get it myself," Kirk responded, walking into the kitchen.

Caroline stood where she was, watching Kirk put some pasta on his plate with swift movements.

Then, he said, "We'll meet my dad in a few days."

Caroline was surprised. "Is your father that anxious to meet me?"

It might take several days to get to the bottom of the issue pertaining to Layla stealing her design.

Kirk paused. He was the one who was anxious, not Ivan. He asked, "Do you not want to go?"

"Of course not." Caroline had agreed to meet Kirk's father, so she wouldn't go back on her word. She explained, "But there's a small problem with the competition I joined, so I can't see him until it's resolved." (1

Kirk raised his eyebrows and replied, "Since it's a small problem, it can be handled quickly. We can go see him after it's done."

Caroline smiled wryly. Things weren't that easy.

She hadn't given the evidence to the organizers, and after she gave it to them, she'd still need to wait for them to investigate the situation.

It would take them at least a week to get to the bottom of things.

As soon as Caroline **sat** down, she **got** a call **from** Gwen

Motherfucker I've never met someone as shameless as Layla" Gwen yelled S he was so angry

that her nostrils flared

'She made a post on Facebook saying that she accidentally broke one of your things some time

ago, and in retaliation, you hired a lawyer to sue her and put her in jail!

“That’s just utter bullshit! What is she trying to do by making a false claim? Sway everyone’s opinion of her?

Caroline frowned and opened Facebook on her phone. Sure enough, she saw Layla in the

headlines

She opened one of the articles, which accused Caroline of using a lawyer to bully Layla. Below the articles were hate comments directed at Caroline and sympathetic comments toward Layla.

Netizens believed that Caroline was jealous of Layla winning first place, so she’d found an excuse

to take revenge on Layla.

“Carol” Gwen realized something after she’d vented her anger.

She asked, “Why aren’t you saying anything? Don’t tell me you’re on Facebook. No, don’t look at the articles and comments! Those people don’t know the full story! They mindlessly believe everything they see.”

Caroline smiled and said, “I’ve already finished reading them. I’m okay. Go to work. Don’t worry about me.”

Gwen was still worried about her friend. She asked, “Are you sure you’re okay? Why don’t I take a day off to keep you company?”

“No, it’s okay,” Caroline replied while eating a mouthful of pasta.

“I know you. Your pleasures in life are earning money and meeting handsome men. You already gave that up **for** me once. I’ll feel terrible if you take a day off for me again.

“**Don’t** worry. This scandal isn’t my first. These nasty rumors and comments don’t bother me at all.”

Gwen relented and said, “Okay. I’ll **see you** after I get off work.”

Even though **she’d** ended the call, **she** was still worried about Caroline. **After** some hesitation, she called **Sean**. “Hello?”

Sean answered, “**Why** are you calling me? Are we going out for food?”

His words dumbfounded Gwen. She’d learned that **Sean** was a food enthusiast when he’d driven

her home last time. He was more familiar with **the** delicious food in Osbury than a local like her.

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Hence, Gwen had started going out **with** Sean for food whenever she was free. They were **just** going **for** food; **there** was nothing more **to it** than that.

“**No.**”

Sean smiled gracefully, asking, “What can I do for **you?**”

“Carol is getting hate online.” Gwen briefly told Sean the whole story.

“Didn’t Kirk just come back from a business trip? Ask him to stay home, keep Caroline company, and tell him not to fool around with someone else.” She didn’t want Caroline to get into even more

trouble.

Sean asked, “Since when has Kirk fooled around?”

“Don’t think I haven’t noticed. Carol has seen it with her own eyes.”

Gwen was annoyed. She liked handsome guys, but she only dated one at a time. She would never

two-time someone.

“When did this happen?” Sean asked. He didn’t know his friend was such a philanderer.

“When Caroline brought me supper that day.”

Gwen didn’t tell him who Kirk had been with that night. She continued, “I have to go. I’m having a

meeting. At any rate, just remember to tell him not to go anywhere!”

Sean rushed to call Kirk, but the line was busy. When he tried to call him again, Kirk had already

turned off his phone.

At Morrison Corporation’s private hospital, Layla read the nasty comments directed at Caroline, a

giddy smile spreading on her face.

“I didn’t expect things to go so well.” The nurse watched nearby, saying with a smile, “After letting **the** situation blow up for a while, I’m sure Mr. Strauss will **bend** under the public’s opinion and

withdraw the lawsuit.”

Layla smirked. “Too bad I can’t see the look on Caroline’s face.” It had **to** be an incredible sight.

When Layla saw the gifts all over her room, her smile became even brighter.

After **she’d** asked Eddy **to** make **a post** on **Twitter**, **everyone** in Osbury other than the big **four families** had come **to** give her **gifts**.

Everyone seemed **to** regard her as the future madam of the Morrison family.

Layla said, “Bring me **my** phone. I want to take some pictures.”

The nurse handed Layla her phone. Layla snapped several photos of the gifts in her room.

m and sent **them** to the family group chat. She even mentioned Caroline, **so** she would see them.

She texted, “Hey, Caroline. I have gotten so many gifts at once, and I don’t know what to do with them. Do **you** want to take some of them? Then, it wouldn’t take up so much space in my room.

Kirk had blocked most of Caroline’s relatives’ numbers, but he had forgotten to help Caroline leave the group chat.

Therefore, Caroline saw Layla’s message immediately. She was about to put her phone down, but more messages came in.

“Why are you giving them to a useless person like her, Layla? The Evans family spent so much money to educate her. But not only did she fail to become the Morrisons’ daughter-in-law, but she even married an ordinary man!”

“The reason why the Evans family hasn’t grown is because of her! Look at Layla. I remember she wasn’t good at drawing, but she created a beautiful packaging design in the competition! No one can be as good as her!”

“You’re absolutely right. Layla has such a big heart. She’s still thinking about Caroline, even after she sued her. Meanwhile, Caroline is finding a way to send Layla to jail just because she can’t handle a loss! They’re both relatives, so how on earth are they so different? Dan and Sarah, you’ve truly failed as parents.”

“Of course, the Evans family’s gossipers have to say something,” Caroline thought, silently looking at the mocking messages with a derisive smile.

Dan and Sarah didn’t say a single word throughout the discussion.

Caroline was about to give a reply when she saw a notification. She tapped on it and saw that the contest’s organizers had made a post on their official page.

“After thorough investigation, we found that the designer of the winning design of the Novitius Contest is Ms. Caroline Evans: On behalf of every major brand, we apologize to Ms. Caroline for making such a major mistake in thi

s competition. We would also like to apologize **to the audience**. **We're** still following **up** on **the** compensation. Remember **to** always support originality!"

Chapter 108

Chapter 108

As soon **as** **the** organizers announced this, it caused a media storm

*So, does **it** mean **that** Layla's design is actually Caroline's? Layla plagiarized Caroline's work?

"I don't think things are that simple. The organizers allegedly received the complete design process of one of Caroline's designs. It looked exactly like Layla's. Some people suspect that Layla stole Caroline's design and submitted it as her own.

"There's no way that's possible. Only an idiot would do that. At any rate, I don't believe it. Did

Caroline buy off the organizers? Hurry, Layla! Show some evidence to prove them wrong!"

"I also think that Caroline bought off the organizers. She must be jealous of Layla, so she bribed

them, telling them she's the original designer."

"Speaking as a design enthusiast, the concepts of the two designs are completely different. The

winning design emphasizes the packaging's aesthetic, while the runner-up's design focuses more

on marketing value, which is a more mature approach. A veteran clearly designed the second one.

There's no way they're made by the same person."

In response to the public's overwhelming doubt, the organizers posted Caroline's design sketches

as well as their time of completion.

They also announced the time of Layla's submission. From the times they posted, it was clear that

Caroline completed her sketches first and that Layla submitted her work later.

Before the public could raise any more questions, another important piece of news caught them

by surprise.

Kai Strauss, who'd been off the radar for several years, had updated his status. He hadn't written

about his wonderful retirement. Instead, he'd acknowledged his position as Caroline's lawyer.

"I'm Caroline Evans' attorney."

A simple sentence like that caused an uproar among the public.

"What kind of PR stunt is this? Hasn't Mr. Strauss retired? Even Morrison Corp couldn't hire him.

How did Caroline hire a lawyer like him?"

"I'm dumbfounded. What on earth did Caroline pay him? You better walk away from this, Mr. **Strauss**. Don't let her ruin **your** reputation!"

The netizens **were** still **having a** heated discussion **when** Kai published another post: a

surveillance footage. **The video** showed Layla visiting Caroline's home on June 19th.

Kai wrote, "On **June** 19th, **Ms Layla** Evans broke into my client's home, damaging and vandalizing

her **property**. **My** client has the right **to** investigate Layla's violation of the rules.

"I've also submitted her post containing her false claims to the cyber police. Ms. Layla Evans, you

should know that the law also extends to the internet.”

Below the post were photos taken by the police after Caroline’s apartment had been damaged. There were nine pictures in total. Whether it was intentional or not, the pinned image happened

to be a picture of a broken laptop.

The netizens began commenting again. “**So**... Caroline didn’t sue Layla because she was jealous of her. Layla was the one who foolishly broke into her house and trashed her place.”

“Wow. I’m just shocked. Since Layla caused a mess in Caroline’s house on June 19th and submitted her work the day after, she must have stolen Caroline’s draft. She feared someone would find out, so she broke Caroline’s laptop.”

“I agree. Layla must have thought that if she destroyed the laptop, Caroline wouldn’t have the design process of her sketches as proof. And then she acted recklessly. Well, who’s laughing now?”

“So, both the winning and runner-up designs are Caroline’s! She’s good!”

“Professionals have said that the first design didn’t emphasize the marketing values. But in less than a week, Caroline was able to make up for this flaw! Calling her a genius wouldn’t be an exaggeration!”

“Haha! I thought Caroline was just a lovey-dovey airhead. I never thought she would have such unique insights into design. I’m sorry, Caroline! I was wrong for calling you an airhead!”

The public’s opinion of the situation had changed so quickly that it caught Caroline off guard.

She’d thought the organizers would only investigate once she presented her evidence. She’d never **expect** things **to** be resolved in less than half a day.

Posted by **Hamaaa**, ? Views, Released on October 7, 2023

Chapter 109

Carole looked up at Kirk, minutes looking at his tablet on the couch. Then she took another

where

looked at the design sketches in the organizer's post

"It was you, Caroline got up

When Kirk heard her voice, he looked up at her. He asked, "What's wrong?"

"You're the one who gave the evidence to the organizers overnight, right?" Caroline choked up, feeling emotional

"Yes," Kirk answered honestly

Having mixed feelings, Caroline asked, "And you asked Mr. Strauss to post those photos?"

Kirk silently looked at Caroline, confirming her claims.

Caroline didn't know what to say. She didn't know how to thank him for helping her. If it weren't for Brie standing between them, maybe she would reconsider their agreement.

Her phone rang, interrupting Caroline's thoughts. She glanced at it to see that Gwen was calling her.

Gwen was incoherent with excitement.

"Carol, did you already know this was going to happen?"

After her meeting, Gwen had rushed to log into her Facebook account, planning to fight against those online haters.

Unexpectedly, the tables had already turned by then. Gwen couldn't believe how fast the situation changed. She'd just been gone for a short meeting.

Caroline smiled merrily, secretly glancing at Kirk. She said, "No way, it's not like I can predict the situation's development."

Gwen asked, "But it's obvious that the PR team had something to do with this fast turnaround. Are you sure this isn't your handiwork, Carol?"

“Maybe for Mr. Strauss, but I don’t know any organizers. There’s no way I can do anything,” Caroline said

Gwen thought Caroline’s words made sense. She stroked her chin and giggled. “Carol, maybe someone in those brands’ companies has a crush on you, and they stood up for you when they saw

**** you been develt” Caroline teased with a smile.

Thee, she teed Gwen’s clamations of surprise Holy fuck! Carol, look! These m akeup brands

have merged”

Carole saw headline notifications from several social media platforms.

“A shocking new era for the cosmetics industry’ Several major makeup brand s have merged!”

“Breaking news! Theme Corporation acquired several major makeup brands a nd made them a subsidiary

According to inster sources, Thorne Corporation is a newly– established foreign investment company, and the boss is very likely to be Eddy Morrison’s second uncle.”

It took Caroline a long time to recover from her shock.

Eddy’s second uncle had actually bought several major makeup brands in such a short time. Not many people could match his heavy– handedness and grandeur.

“Hey Gwen saw the news as well She mused, “Maybe Eddy’s second uncle has a crush on you and helped you with the PR team”

Charter An

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Tirib Is this Caroline Evans?

I'm Jules Hawkins, the newly appointed CEO of Thorne Industries First, I hope you accept our

sincerest apologies for our major mistake during the judging process.”

The CEO himself had apologized to her Their standards were high.

“It's all good as long as the truth is out.”

“Thank you for your understanding,” Jules said in a charming voice.

“After some discussion, our company has unanimously decided that you're both the winner and

the runner—

up of this competition. So, you'll get the winnings and prizes for both places.

“Just as we'd announced, there's a special bonus for the winner: a lifetime contract as the design

director at our company Are you interested in our offer, Ms. Evans?”

Caroline's breath got caught.

All she wanted was a job, and this special bonus was exactly what she wanted! It was a big

coincidence.

She agreed happily. “Of course, joining your company would be an honor!”

Thorne Corporation was a merged enterprise with Eddy's second uncle at the helm. The company was

bound to thrive Caroline hadn't thought that it would be possible to join it.

Jules breathed a sigh of relief.

“If there's anything else we can do to make it up to you, please say **the** word”

Caroline smiled. “No, that's all right. I would like to thank you for getting to the bottom of this situation so quickly.”

Jules waited for Caroline to hang up the phone before putting the phone down

.

He'd been ordered to investigate the competition scandal at 3 am last night

After investigating the truth, every staff member in charge of the Novitius Contest and several

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After investigating the truth, every staff member in charge of the Novitius Contest and several

CEOs of significant makeup brands were all taught a lesson

It was clear how furious his **boss** was

Jules had looked into Caroline, only to find that she was the former fiancée of his boss' relative. No wonder his boss had lost his temper.

Hence, Jules had even dismissed the idea of asking his assistant to contact Caroline and handled

this himself.

At this time, after the announcement of the merger of several makeup brands, Thorne Corporation created an official blog.

Netizens waited for their first post in anticipation.

Several minutes later, Thorne Corporation made their first post. "We would like to welcome Ms. Caroline Evans to Thome Corporation as our design director!"

After that, they went offline, stunning everyone.

Logically speaking, when a new company was established, their first posts should be ones concerning the merger with other companies or sending their best wishes for this cooperation.

However, Thorne Corporation didn't mention the merger at all.

Instead, they were celebrating the recruitment of an employee. It was as if Caroline's recruitment was more important than the merger of several companies.