

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love Chapter 221 - 225

"Which means this Mr. Smith should be from out of town," Joyce said as she scratched her chin thoughtfully.

Natalie merely shrugged. "Who cares where he is from. It's got nothing to do with us anyway. Let's go."

"Yes, let's go find that b*tch Jasmine," Joyce said as she helped Natalie to her feet.

As they passed the first row of seats, a man dressed as a bodyguard came up to them and stopped them in their tracks. "May I know if the two of you are in charge of Studio Nouveau?"

"And you are?" Joyce stepped up protectively to shield Natalie behind her as she regarded the man with wariness.

The man continued with a straight face. "I work for Mr. Smith. I've been sent to extend an invitation for you to meet with him."

"Meet with us?" Joyce and Natalie exchanged looks.

Natalie furrowed. "May I ask what is the purpose of this meeting?"

"To discuss matters concerning the bidding exercise. This way please, ladies." The man's gesture and body language suggested that declining was not an option.

Joyce looked worriedly at Natalie. "What now, Nat? Should we go, or should we not?"

Her friend lowered her eyes and paused. "We'll go. It doesn't look like he is giving us a choice."

"But what if this Mr. Smith means to do us harm?" Joyce said as she hugged her arms.

Natalie laughed, "This is a public place. I doubt he would be so bold as to try anything here."

"You may be right about that. Let's go then," Joyce reluctantly agreed and assisted Natalie as they followed the bodyguard up to the second floor.

When they entered the private room, Natalie saw a young man seated on the couch. He was average-looking, dressed in an ordinary suit, and was unremarkable in every way imaginable. How could someone so distinctively average be the Mr. Smith that won the bidding exercise?

The young man smiled as he got to his feet. It was as though he had read Natalie's thoughts. "Greetings, I'm Mr. Smith's secretary. You may call me Plumlee."

"Secretary?" Joyce blustered as she pointed at him. "So you are not Mr. Smith?"

"Mr. Smith had to leave on short notice, so he had tasked me to receive you," Plumlee replied.

Natalie nodded. "I see. In that case, may we know why were we brought here?"

"There's no hurry. Please have a seat." He replied as he pointed to the couch across from him.

Joyce went on to assist Natalie over to the couch.

The secretary went on to explain as he poured them some tea. "This is our situation. We are from out of town and are unknowns in J City. It was through sheer luck that we managed to clinch the project. This is why we are seeking a partner that could help us design and produce the pieces for the winter fashion show."

"Oh that's great. Let me tell you something, our Nat..."

Joyce wanted to put Natalie's name forward but was stopped by Natalie herself.

"My apologies, my friend here is a little excitable." Natalie smiled.

Plumlee waved off her concern. "It's fine. Don't worry about it."

She loosened her hold on Joyce before she asked, "I don't have a problem collaborating, but I'm interested to know why we were chosen. We are a new studio without much credentials."

You saw for yourself that we were out in the very first round of bidding. In any case, you should have better options for partnership with than ourselves in J City.”

It points to reason that one should look to established firms and studios, as newer ones lack both credibility and reliability.

For this mysterious Mr. Smith to pass on all of those companies and come to them directly made her question his motives.

Plumlee had picked up on her doubts, and that only served to pile on his own pressure.

It was no wonder that Silas had reminded him to tread very carefully around this very discerning Ms. Smith prior to his departure, so as to avoid giving the game away.

The secretary drew a deep breath and raised his cup of tea to his lips. He recollected himself before replying. “The reason why we chose Studio Nouveau is because of Ms. Smith. My boss is very impressed with the Project Rebirth designs for Thompson Group. We would like to have something similar which could enable us to gain a foothold in J City.”

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love Chapter 222

Satisfied with the explanation, Natalie did not think much more of it. She was very keen on this collaboration as well.

The prize of this bidding exercise was a project no lesser in scale than Project Rebirth, and as Joyce put it, something that had the potential to help put their fledgling studio on the map.

Now that what she took for a missed opportunity had come back around, she really hoped to be able to make the most of it.

With that in mind, Natalie nudged Joyce with her elbow and exchanged a knowing look with her before turning back to the secretary. “Mr. Plumlee, may I know how do you intend to share the proceeds?”

“Mr. Smith had mentioned that if you are both willing, we can split it thirty and seventy, with the seventy percent going towards Studio Nouveau.”

"That much?" His answer had Joyce up on her feet.

Natalie was equally surprised to receive such a generous offer.

Plumlee's smile was cool and collected. "Mr. Smith stated that you would be putting forward the design, materials, and handling production while we would only be contributing the project and publicity in the latter stages. As you would be doing the bulk of the work, you are deserving of more share of the proceeds."

"Your boss is such an understanding man!" Joyce exclaimed as she grinned from ear to ear.

"You are too kind." The young man smiled broadly before he turned to Natalie. "Do you have anything else you wish to clarify? If not, we could schedule a date to finalize the contract."

"I think I'm good." Natalie shook her head.

"Excellent. How about tomorrow morning? I'll bring the contract over to your office." Plumlee stood up and extended a hand to her.

Natalie was about to shake on it to seal the deal when the door to the room opened. In stepped the bodyguard from before with a dour look. "Mr. Plumlee, there's a Ms. Jasmine outside who said that she has matters pertaining to the bidding that she would like to discuss."

"Frick, it's that shameless Jasmine Smith looking to stick a foot in." Joyce was absolutely livid.

Natalie brows knotted as well.

The smile vanished from Plumlee's face. "Send her away. Tell her that we have already agreed to collaborate with another party."

Mr. Shane was specific in wanting to work with Studio Nouveau, and would not make exceptions even for his own fiancée. His subordinates knew that he had no feelings for her.

Plumlee was certain that his boss would not mind at all if he shooed off the person outside.

"Understood. I'll get on it," the bodyguard replied.

But when the bodyguard went back to the door, Jasmine squeezed past him and barged into the room. "Mr. Smith, my name is..."

She stopped mid-sentence and her expression soured upon spotting Natalie and Joyce. "What are you two doing here?"

"Same reason as yourself. Seeking collaboration with Mr. Smith." Joyce had the sequence of events flipped on purpose.

Natalie chuckled but did not expose her.

Plumlee looked like he was about to say something before he was interrupted by the vibration on his cellphone. He held his tongue after checking his messages.

"Seeking collaboration with Mr. Smith? You?" Jasmine's lips curled as she fingered at Joyce, and then at Natalie.

Joyce looked like she was about to hit someone. "What about us?"

"Isn't it obvious? As if you don't know yourselves. How could this puny studio of yours be of any use to Mr. Smith?" Jasmine heckled.

Joyce's fingers tightened around themselves.

Natalie held her friend and shook her own head at her. She then turned to regard Jasmine frostily. "What about you? What can you do?"

"I certainly have much more to offer. My studio has established itself in J City for five years. We have strong connections in the industry, no shortage of design talent, and the support of several fabric suppliers behind us. These are precisely what you lack," Jasmine sneered.

Joyce snorted. "I don't find your inability to convert your studio into a firm after five years to be anything worth bragging about."

"You..." Jasmine's face stiffened as she looked to raise a hand.

Sensing the impropriety of such actions under the circumstances, she quickly reined herself in.

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love Chapter 223

"I'm not getting into this with you. Buzz off." With that, Jasmine shoved Natalie out of the way as she made her approach towards Plumlee.

Her half-sister stumbled and would have lurched over if not for Joyce's timely intervention.

"Are you blind, Jasmine Smith? Can't you see Nat standing there?" Joyce bellowed as she glared at Jasmine.

Jasmine glanced at Natalie. "Who told her to put herself in the way?"

"Why you little..."

"Alright Joyce, there's no need for us to argue with the likes of her." Natalie patted the back of Joyce's hand to calm her.

Shane, who had been observing somberly through the surveillance cameras away from the booth, barked out. "Have Niall get rid of that woman."

"Understood," Silas replied before he sent out another message.

Plumlee felt even more assured after reading the message from Silas. He straightened his tie and was about to speak, but Jasmine got in before him. "Hello Mr. Smith, I'm the representative of Jasminum. I understand that you are from out of town, and are looking for a partner to fulfill the objectives of this bidding exercise. I..."

"Haha!" A guffaw that rang out cut short her rehearsed speech.

Jasmine froze before she shot a look at Joyce and Natalie. "What are you laughing about?"

Natalie merely shrugged.

Joyce wiped a tear off the corner of her eye. "Sweet mama. You nearly had me in stitches. How do you expect to work with Mr. Smith when you couldn't even tell you got the wrong person?"

"Whatever do you mean?" Jasmine was dumbfounded.

The wrong person?

Unless...

Jasmine proceeded to question Plumlee shrilly, "You are not Mr. Smith!"

"I'm his secretary," Plumlee replied with a smile.

Jasmine howled with fists clenched. "Why didn't you say so sooner?"

She was upset that he had caused her to embarrass herself in front of the other two women.

Plumlee did a struggle in his own defense. "Dear Miss, it's not that I didn't want to. What else was I to do after being twice interrupted by yourself?"

"Right on," Joyce added, "you just barged in, made no attempt to clarify the situation, and now you are blaming it on everyone else. You don't even have the inclination to reflect on your own mistake. Who would dare collaborate with someone like that."

Plumlee nodded in agreement. "Ms. Rivers is right. We are sorry Miss, we won't be able to work with you."

"Why not?" Jasmine frowned hard in discontent.

Plumlee pointed to Natalie. "It's because we've decided to work with Ms. Natalie."

"What?" Jasmine raised her pitch as she glared at Natalie.

Natalie looked back, but with a smile.

This smile occurred to Jasmine as a form of grandstanding and provocation.

Her face bunched up as she gripped the clutch in her hand. She then turned to leave in a huff.

No way was she going to let things slide. She was determined to make Natalie understand the consequences of crossing her.

Jasmine also swore to make that Mr. Smith rue his decision this day.

“See that sour face of hers, Nat? It’s hideous!” Joyce quipped as her eyes trailed in the direction of Jasmine’s exit.

“That’s enough. We know what she’s like, so let’s just ignore her.” Natalie placed down her cup and stood up. She then regarded Plumlee with a smile. “Mr. Plumlee. I think we should take our leave now. We look forward to seeing you at our studio tomorrow.”

“Will do. Let me see you out.” The young man moved ahead and held the door for them.

Joyce held Natalie as she trudged out towards the infirmary to have her leg examined.

When they reached the lobby, the two of them found that Jasmine was still around. She was making a call in front of an elevator.

She appeared spooked when she saw them coming and quickly put her phone away.

In response, Joyce narrowed her eyes. “Hmm, hanging up the moment you saw us coming. Did something prick your conscience?”

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love Chapter 224

“It’s none of your damn business!” Jasmine hollered.

Just at this moment, the elevator door opened. Jasmine put a foot forward and prepared to enter.

Joyce’s face darkened as she halted Jasmine. “Hold it right there!”

The other woman instinctively stopped and turned around. “What do you want?”

“What do I want? To settle the score, that’s what!” Joyce sneered while she helped Natalie to the side. “Stay here, Nat.”

Natalie understood her friend's intent. She grunted and put a hand to the wall to support herself.

After ensuring Natalie was comfortable, Joyce let go and advanced towards Jasmine before sending a backhand across the latter's cheek.

The resounding smack had Jasmine momentarily stunned before she brought up a hand to cradle her own face. She then stared with her eyes wide open. "You dare hit me?"

Natalie did not expect Joyce to go in so strongly. The crispness of the resultant sound was telling of how much force she put behind it.

"You betcha. If you dared to grease the floor outside the restroom to trip up Nat, why wouldn't I dare to hit you." Joyce snarled. She shook off her own hand as she felt the sting of that blow herself as well.

A hint of alarm flashed across Jasmine's eyes but it settled just as quickly. "What proof do you have of this accusation?"

"The evidence is in her bag!" Natalie exclaimed as she fingered at the clutch Jasmine was holding.

Joyce was spurred into action. She snatched the bag from Jasmine's hands before the unsuspecting woman could react.

"What do you think you are doing? Give it back!" Jasmine's expression changed as she screeched.

Joyce ignored her as she unzipped the clutch and emptied out its contents.

"This is it." Joyce bent over to retrieve a small bottle from the floor and dangled it in front of Jasmine. "This is the evidence. What have you got to say for yourself?"

Jasmine's pupils dilated as her face turned pallid. She then reached out to try and grab the bottle.

Joyce spun and deftly avoided her charge. "You want this? Not a chance!"

"Curse you!" Jasmine's face flushed at being toyed with. She gritted her teeth as she lunged herself at Joyce's face.

"Watch out, Joyce!" Natalie shouted to warn her friend as she could tell that Jasmine was enraged and on the attack.

"Relax. She can't beat me!" Joyce smiled confidently as she tossed the bottle of essential oil towards Natalie before rolling up her sleeves to engage Jasmine.

The two women became tangled in a heap as they scratched at each other's faces and pulled at the other's hair. Natalie watched on with breath abated.

When she saw the bloodied streaks left behind on Joyce's face by Jasmine's sharp claws, she panicked. "Joyce, stop fighting with her!"

"Uh, uh. If I don't floor this b*tch today, I'll stop calling myself Joyce Rivers!" Joyce replied as she fought on doggedly with bloodshot eyes.

Natalie was worried Joyce would get seriously hurt so she moved away from the wall in an attempt to break up the two brawling women.

She lost her balance and fell forward the moment she lifted a foot.

As the ground rushed up forebodingly towards her, an arm reached around and caught her by the waist before bringing her back to safety.

Natalie felt a sturdy chest against her back and recognized the familiar scent of peppermint on it. She did not have to look around to know who it belonged to.

Shane!

Shane furrowed as he regarded Natalie's shell-shocked face. He then asked in a low voice, "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine. Thanks for saving me." She shook off the urge to ask him why he was here as she looked anxiously towards the other two women in front of her. "Please make them stop, Mr. Shane!"

Shane acknowledged her and narrowed his eyes at Joyce and Jasmine. "Stop!"

When Jasmine heard him, she immediately put her hands down.

Seeing that her opponent had ceased her offensive, Joyce also followed suit. Nevertheless, she continued to jaw at her. "What now. Are you quitting on me? Conceding?"

Jasmine said nothing when she eyeballed her back. She then turned her attention towards Shane.

She was visibly upset to see Shane standing with Natalie, and even more furious to see his arm around her half-sister's waist. "What are you doing, Shane? Why are you holding her like that?"

Jasmine eyed Natalie with resentment.

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love Chapter 225

Natalie only realized then that Shane still had his arm around her, so she quickly freed herself using her own hands.

Bereft of his support, Natalie teetered unsteadily on one foot.

"Joyce." Natalie extended her hands towards her friend.

Joyce understood her and came forward to lend support.

Natalie then breathed a sigh of relief.

Seeing that she was okay, Shane withdrew the hand he had left hanging in the air into a fist before stuffing it into his own pocket.

Jasmine fronted him and raised a pair of teary eyes. "Explain yourself, Shane. Why were you holding her?"

He pressed his lips and answered rather impatiently. "Her foot was hurt."

"Even if it was, it's not your place to support her. You are my fiancé. What am I supposed to think when you put your hands on another woman in front of me?" Jasmine bit her lip in disgruntlement.

Shane furrowed, and was about to say something.

Then Joyce got in before him. "Hey, aren't you being a little too petty? Mr. Shane had already explained himself. Do you have to act as though they have somehow wronged you? Moreover, Nat's injury was of your doing. If your fiancé helped out, it should be considered atonement for your crimes!"

"You..."

Jasmine's eyes were aflame as she prepared to retort, but she was abruptly pulled aside by Shane. He lowered his sights towards Natalie's foot before lifting it up to meet her gaze. "Was it her?"

Natalie's lips parted slightly as she answered in the affirmative under her breath.

His mood took a hit as he turned sharply towards his own fiancée.

The color fell from Jasmine's face as she reflexively denied the allegations. "That's a lie. Don't listen to them, Shane."

"No, it's not. You were so determined to ensure that we fail in our bid that you smeared the floor outside the restroom with oil so that Natalie would get hurt. And this right here, is proof of your guilt!" Joyce took the bottle of essential oil over from Natalie and raised it for Shane to see.

He had seen the bottle before and was able to recognize it right away.

And this brand was Jasmine's favorite.

"Is this true?" He pursed his lips as he regarded Jasmine coldly.

Jasmine's heart pounded against her chest when Shane gets this way. She dared not look him in the eye. "Of... Of course not. I'm not the only one who uses essential oil. Who is to say that the oil used outside the restroom must surely be mine?"

"How about we send the sample to get tested?" Natalie's eyebrows were raised slightly when she spoke up.

Shane nodded. "That sounds fine. We could get it tested to see if the oil outside the restroom and the contents of this bottle matches."

"Brilliant idea!" Joyce's eyes lit up. "If we find a match, then you could no longer deny it, Jasmine."

When she heard them, Jasmine's legs went weak and she slumped seated onto the floor.

Her reaction was tantamount to an admission of her guilt.

Shane eyed her coldly. "You are incorrigible."

"Shane..." Jasmine shivered as she looked up at him.

He then narrowed his eyes. "Get out of here!"

Jasmine shuddered as she clambered to her feet. She picked up her clutch and exited through the elevator.

Joyce was not exactly pleased to see her just walk away. "Mr. Shane, are you going to just let her go? She hurt Nat. Aren't you going to punish her for it?"

Natalie looked to him as well.

Shane's look had regained some measure of warmth. "I will see to it that this matter will be handled to your satisfaction."

"In that case, we shall be looking forward to it." Joyce felt relief to hear his reassurances.

Natalie took a quick glance at her watch. "It's getting late. We should be going."

"Allow me to accompany you," Shane said as he lowered his gaze towards her foot.

Joyce jovially nodded before Natalie could respond. "Sure. Sure."

"Joyce!" Natalie furrowed as she shook her head. "We don't want to trouble you, Mr. Shane. We could go back on our own. Come on, Joyce."

"Oh..." Joyce then assisted her into the other waiting elevator.