

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love Chapter 341 - 345

Soon, the contestant ranked third was done with her explanation and it was Natalie's turn.

Natalie went up to the stage and accepted the small baton from the third-placed designer. Flashing a smile at the audience, she began to explain, "My design concept is very simple actually. As we all know, ethnic minority garments have one thing in common, which is embroidery. Besides having skills, color plays the most important role..."

Seeing how graceful and sophisticated Natalie looked on stage, Jasmine's eyes turned red from jealousy and her hands which were resting on her thighs balled into fists, wrinkling the fabric in the process.

She knew that if she was the one on stage, she wouldn't be able to describe the design concept so meticulously like Natalie did even if the design was her own.

And this was the difference between them. Natalie's brilliance only served to amplify Jasmine's incompetence.

Natalie spoke on stage for nearly ten minutes before finally wrapping it up.

Alfred was the first to applaud her for giving a riveting and elaborate description, especially impressed by some of the intricate details.

"Very impressive, Nat!" Alfred looked at Natalie with eyes that gleamed with adoration and admiration.

Natalie bowed her head to hide her shy smile. "Thank you, Alfred. I appreciate it."

"Don't thank me. Your talent and designing skills deserve such praise. There are not many local designers who can fight their way onto the international stage. I'm getting up in years now, so our country's fashion industry will have to rely on your generation to thrive. Good luck!" Alfred patted her shoulder with a hopeful and optimistic gaze.

Natalie nodded firmly and couldn't stop herself from embracing this elderly man who had devoted his life to develop the country's fashion industry. "Don't worry, Alfred. I won't let you down."

"I believe in you." Alfred returned her hug.

Shane watched this scene while turning the pen in his hand.

Not just Alfred, but even he himself believed that Natalie would one day become the top fashion designer in the country.

Natalie released Alfred and turned around to fix her gaze on Jasmine below the stage. Her eyes gleamed as she offered the latter a meaningful smile. "Ms. Jasmine, it's your turn now."

Under the audience's expectant gazes and Natalie's urging, Jasmine was put in a tight spot. Gritting her teeth together, she had no choice but to wheel herself up.

All of a sudden, her expression changed drastically and she doubled over, holding her belly as she cried out in pain.

Both the crowd at the scene and those watching the live stream were shocked by this turn of events. A barrage of comments popped up on the live stream, asking what was wrong. Even Natalie was stunned.

Under the orders of Alfred and the branch president of the Designer Association, Liam went over and crouched by Jasmine's side, asking worriedly, "Ms. Jasmine, are you alright?"

Jasmine discreetly pinched her injured leg and the excruciating pain made her face pale instantly. Cold sweat beaded on her forehead and her breathing turned uneven as she croaked, "My... My stomach hurts."

"Your stomach hurts?" Liam instinctively looked at her stomach.

Jasmine nodded weakly. "It's like something is twisting my insides. I can't take it anymore. It hurts so much!"

She let out a scream and abruptly lost consciousness.

Mayhem descended upon the crowd and the live stream feed. Natalie's jaw fell open in shock when Jasmine fainted.

Shane was probably the only one who remained unfazed as he stared at an unconscious Jasmine in the live stream, his eyes narrowing with suspicion.

Jasmine's current state reminded him of what happened at the hospital some time ago.

At that time, he had just declared that he was calling off the engagement when Jasmine fainted out of the blue. This scene looked awfully similar.

"Quick. Send her to the infirmary!" the branch president urged Liam.

The Design Association wouldn't be able to bear the responsibility if something serious were to happen.

Liam seemed to have realized this as well, immediately obeying his orders and pushing Jasmine out of the conference room.

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The podium was right next to the doors to the conference room.

When Liam pushed Jasmine past the podium, Natalie noticed Jasmine's lashes flutter subtly.

Realization dawned on her. Jasmine is pretending to be unconscious!

Natalie released a sardonic laugh. I really have underestimated her shamelessness.

To avoid explaining her design concept, she even went as far as pretending to faint. How revolting!

After Jasmine was sent to the infirmary, the branch president stopped the live stream and announced the results of this competition round.

The crowd gradually dispersed and soon, there were only a few people left in the huge conference room.

Alfred was sorting out the four selected design drawings when Natalie approached him.

Alfred smiled at her. "Nat, you came just at the right time. Are you interested in selling your design?"

"Sure." Natalie nodded.

Yes, please. I'm short of money.

But even if she wasn't short of money, she would still sell her design because her studio was going on the path of promoting a more affordable range of clothing at the moment and couldn't even be considered an accessible luxury brand. Hence, her studio simply did not have the ability to carry such a top-quality and luxurious design.

"How about selling it to me then? You know I'm a huge fan of national customs and that I've studied it for most of my life. In fact, I've practically learned everything there is to know about it, so I've currently switched to studying the elements of ethnic minority clothing and coincidentally, I'm lacking this particular type of design." Alfred picked up Natalie's design drawing.

Natalie chuckled softly. "Of course, I'll sell it to you."

"That's great! Don't worry. I won't pay you a penny less than what you deserve." Alfred put down the design and picked up Jasmine's.

Natalie pursed her lips. "Alfred, are you planning to buy Jasmine's design as well?"

"Yes. It just so happens that I'm attending an ancestral ceremony next month, so I'm planning to use this design and make it into a garment. It'll be the perfect gift." Alfred stroked his beard.

Natalie twisted her fingers together and cautiously said, "Alfred, with all due respect, you can't buy that design because it's doesn't belong to Jasmine. She stole it from another designer."

"Oh?" The warm smile on Alfred's face instantly faded and a stern expression slipped into its place. "Is what you're saying true?"

Natalie nodded solemnly and clarified, "It's the complete truth. Jasmine has a long history of plagiarism. Many designers in our circle more or less know about her underhanded ways. Besides, she has already been plagiarizing since the beginning of the competition. None of those works belong to her."

Alfred narrowed his eyes a fraction.

Of course, he trusted her. After all, no one would dare to casually throw around such a serious accusation.

At the same time, he still had some doubts. "You said Jasmine plagiarized during the previous few rounds, and I believe you. But how could she have plagiarized during this round? I only announced the theme before the competition. How could she have possibly found a design that fit this theme within such a short frame of time? As you well know, the contestants weren't allowed to touch any electronic devices during the competition."

"What if I told you that Jasmine already knew the theme a long time ago?" Natalie's gaze on him was steady.

Alfred's expression darkened and his forehead creased in perplexity. "How's that possible? How could she have known beforehand?"

Natalie sighed and forced herself to say, "It was Isabelle."

"What?" Alfred's eyes widened in disbelief.

Natalie steeled herself and recounted the phone call she had heard in the emergency stairwell.

Alfred's hand tightened around his walking cane and his face turned frighteningly stormy, obviously infuriated.

He suddenly recalled that two days ago, Isabelle had indeed asked him about the competition's theme. At that time, he didn't think much of it and revealed it to her.

In actual fact, she was fishing for information so that she could leak it to Jasmine, all just to suppress Natalie. What a wonderful granddaughter I have!

“Alfred, calm down. Getting mad isn’t worth it if means affecting your health.” Seeing the wrath on Alfred’s face, Natalie gently stroked his chest to soothe him.

Alfred’s anger was completely understandable, given that he was betrayed by his own granddaughter whom he had always doted on. Although Isabelle had achieved her goal, it was at the expense of her grandfather’s reputation, which was something she never considered.

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Jasmine can’t conceal her history of plagiarism forever. There will be a day when she’s exposed. Even Isabelle will be labeled as an accomplice. When that time comes, what would others think of Alfred? Would they think he deliberately divulged the theme to his granddaughter and asked her to subdue the other contestants?

“I’m alright.” Alfred took in a deep breath. He suppressed the rage in his heart and forcing a smile onto his face, but he failed to hide his sorrow.

“Nat, you told me this to protect my reputation, didn’t you?” Alfred leveled his gaze with Natalie’s.

Natalie hummed in response. “Yes. During the previous round, Jasmine plagiarized my mentor’s work, so I’m going to make her pay no matter what. I’m planning to wait until the finals to expose her, but once it’s revealed, both Isabelle and your reputation will be affected. I don’t wish for that to happen.”

Thus, the reason she had told him was to give Alfred a chance to remove Isabelle from this matter altogether as well as clean up all traces of contact she had with Jasmine.

This way, even if she exposed Jasmine and the latter wanted to drag Isabelle down with her, there wouldn’t be any evidence of Isabelle’s involvement. Outsiders wouldn’t believe her and would naturally assume that she had somehow found out about Alfred’s theme and was trying to frame his granddaughter to destroy his reputation after being exposed.

Alfred was a shrewd person, so of course he knew that Natalie had his welfare at heart. He gratefully patted the back of her hand and said, “Thank you, Nat. I’m forever indebted to you. You can come to me anytime if you face difficulties in the future. I will help you the best I can. As for Isabelle, I will deal with her accordingly.”

Having said that, he turned and walked out of the conference room with the help of his cane.

After he left, Natalie did not stay either. Checking the time, she departed from the Design Association immediately after.

But before she left, she went to the infirmary to see if Jasmine was still feigning illness.

However, when she arrived at the infirmary, Jasmine was nowhere to be seen. According to the doctor, she had been taken away by Susan.

At night, Natalie returned to the apartment with her two children. Just after taking off her shoes, her received a notification of a payment transfer from Alfred on her phone. It was the copyright fee for her design, totaling up to two million, which was at least double the amount of what she was expecting.

Because ethnic minority fashion occupied only a small section of the domestic market, it basically had zero commercial value internationally. Hence, no matter how brilliant the design was, it could only be sold for one million at most.

But Alfred had given her two million, which was probably as a token of his gratitude to her for telling him the truth.

With that thought in mind, a smile graced Natalie's lips as she tucked her phone away. "Connor, look after your sister while I take a shower."

"Okay, Mommy." Connor nodded obediently.

Natalie ruffled her children's hair, then put down her bag and went to her room to grab her pajamas before taking a shower.

The twins sat on the carpeted floor in the living room and played with their Lego blocks.

Right then, the doorbell rang.

Connor's first reaction was to glance at the direction of the bathroom. "Mommy, someone's here!"

There was no response, only the sound of running water.

Connor surmised that Natalie probably couldn't hear him. Hence, he climbed to his feet and went to the door.

The doorbell was still ringing incessantly when Connor tiptoed to peer at the intercom. Upon seeing that the person outside was Shane, his eyes lit up and he immediately opened the door.

"Mr. Shane." Connor tilted his head up to greet the man in an adorable voice.

Shane looked down at the little boy with his brows raised slightly.

No wonder the door was opened so quickly today. It's actually her son.

He followed Connor into the house and looked around, instantly spotting Sharon sitting on the carpet. When he couldn't find Natalie, he asked, "Where's your mommy?"

Connor pointed to the direction of the bathroom. "Mommy's taking a shower."

Shane instinctively looked toward the bathroom, his eyes darkened when he heard the sound of running water.

"Mr. Shane, are you looking for Mommy?" Connor plopped down onto the carpeted floor again.

Shane put down the document folder in his hand and lowered himself onto the sofa. "Yes. There's something I need to discuss with her."

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"Just wait for a moment, Mr. Shane. Mommy will be done very soon," Connor reassured in an adult-like manner.

Shane chuckled deeply. "Sure."

Suddenly, Sharon got to her feet and padded toward him. "Mr. Shane, can I ask you for a favor?"

She raised her cute index finger and stared at Shane with an imploring gaze.

Shane met her gaze and made sure to soften his tone. "Go ahead."

"Can you come for my parent-teacher meeting tomorrow as my dad?" Sharon played with the hem of her blouse with a shy blush creeping up her cheeks.

Both Connor and Shane were taken aback by her request.

Even Natalie who was just emerged from the shower was surprised. "Sharon, why didn't you tell me about your parent-teacher meeting?"

Not bothering to ask Shane when he had arrived, she walked over in her pajamas and her hair wrapped in a towel, then gently pulled Sharon toward her.

Shane caught a whiff of the pleasant scent coming from her body, squinting his eyes as his Adam's apple bobbed.

Sharon hung her head low and said in a small voice, "Because Mommy is still busy with the competition tomorrow and won't have time to come for the meeting, so I didn't say anything about it."

Connor stroked his chin and his eyes lit up with realization. "No wonder she was so down the entire way home."

Natalie parted her lips in an attempt to comfort her daughter, but no words came.

She's right. I still have to go for the competition tomorrow and there's no way I can leave.

But I can't miss her parent-teacher meeting either...

Feeling conflicted, Natalie gnawed on her bottom lip. Then, she squatted down and cupped Sharon's little face. "Darling, tell you what, I'll skip the competition tomorrow and accompany you..."

"No!" Shane interrupted her and stood up from the sofa. "Tomorrow's the semi-finals and it is of key importance. You cannot pull out from the competition. Once you do, you won't be able to participate in any international competitions. Isn't it your dream to be internationally famous? Well, this is your first step of realizing that dream."

Natalie stood up as well. "I know, but the parent-teacher meeting is equally important."

Because the twins don't have a father, I vowed to spend as much time as I can with them and not miss any important occasions.

I can't break my promise!

"Parent-teacher meetings are indeed important, but you don't have to be the one who goes. Sharon has asked me to go. Besides, I was the one who attended the family event at the playground the other time. Their teachers know me, so don't worry about it and just focus on the competition." Shane caressed Sharon's head while looking at Natalie.

Connor nodded in complete agreement. "Yeah, Mommy. Just go for your competition tomorrow. Mr. Shane and I will go with Sharon."

"But..." Natalie curled her fists restlessly, wanting to say something.

However, Shane cut off her words once again. "If you attend the parent-teacher meeting tomorrow and miss the competition, you'll be filled with regret for the rest of your life."

"Mr. Shane is right. You should focus on the competition, Mommy. I won't be mad." Sharon tugged on the corner of Natalie's shirt with a broad grin on her face.

Faced with her two sensible children coupled with Shane's assurance, Natalie's lips twitched inconspicuously, but in the end, she chose to relent.

She sighed softly before bowing respectfully to Shane. "Alright then. I'll leave the kids in your care tomorrow, Mr. Shane. Sorry for the trouble."

"It's no big deal." Shane waved his hand to make light of the matter.

Connor tugged Sharon to his side and declared, "Mommy, Mr. Shane said he has something to discuss with you, so Sharon and I will go back to our rooms first."

With that, the twins turned around and scuttled away.

Only Natalie and Shane were left in the living room. Natalie poured him a glass of water and queried, "What can I do for you, Mr. Shane?"

Shane accepted the glass from her and took a sip from it before instructing, "Go change your clothes and dry your hair first. Then, we'll talk."

"Huh?" Natalie looked down at herself and felt her face heat up.

Even though her pajamas weren't exposing, because of its silk fabric, it was slightly transparent under the lighting, causing the outline of her bra to be vaguely visible.

Oh my God. I looked like this the entire time he is here?

"Sorry. I'll go get changed now." Natalie lifted her lips into an awkward smile before darting toward her room like her tail was on fire.

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Watching how fast she fled and shut the door behind her, a chuckle escaped Shane's lips and he drank another sip of his water.

Approximately ten minutes later, Natalie came out after changing her clothes and blow-drying her hair.

Shane handed her the document folder on the coffee table.

Natalie looked down at the folder after taking it from it. "What is this?"

Shane crossed his legs and answered calmly, "Evidence of Jasmine's plagiarizing history."

Natalie's brows shot up and she looked down again to open the folder. Taking out the evidence inside, she skimmed through it and stuffed it back in before placing it on the coffee table again. Training her eyes on the man sitting across her, she asked, "Why are you giving this to me, Mr. Shane?"

"Don't you need it?" Shane propped his head on his hand.

Natalie smiled. "No, I don't. I've long since known that she's been plagiarizing and I already possess some evidence against her."

"I know you do. During yesterday's competition, she copied Ms. Daphne's work, and since Ms. Daphne is your mentor, you would've picked it up instantly and neither will you stand by doing nothing."

"Then, why did you still bring me evidence, Mr. Shane?" Natalie narrowed her eyes suspiciously at him, unable to read his thoughts.

Shane's gaze fell on the folder as he explained, "You didn't finish reading it. What I have isn't just evidence of her plagiarism from yesterday, but also of every design she has plagiarized since her debut, including her ethnic minority clothing design from today."

Hearing this, Natalie's eyes widened in surprise and she quickly picked up the folder to flip through the documents again.

After she was done reading, she sucked in a sharp breath.

Indeed, she had severely underestimated Jasmine. Jasmine had plagiarized more than she initially thought possible. Not to mention, Jasmine managed to find many popular works to plagiarize. What left Natalie completely dumbfounded was the design from earlier that day.

The design was of a gown belonging to an ethnic group's high priestess. The gown was passed down from ancient times, so there was no original design drawing and no way to find out who the designer was. Hence, Jasmine had no qualms copying it and claiming the design as her own.

It took Natalie a long time to recover from her shock. Putting down the folder, she tentatively asked, "Mr. Shane, are you giving me this in exchange for my help in doing something?"

Shane nodded. "I know you haven't exposed Jasmine yet because you're waiting for the right opportunity. And I want you to defeat her once and for all when that opportunity arises."

Natalie's eyes flashed dimly. "Why? I don't recall the two of you holding any grudges against each other. And if I remember correctly, she even saved your life before."

"I've long since paid off that debt." Shane pressed his lips together before continuing, "Yes, we don't exactly hold any grudges against each other, but she provoked me by selling Thompson Group's trade secrets."

"What?" Natalie's eyes widened to the size of saucer plates.

Shane massaged the space between his brows. "I only learned about it recently. In the past few years, Jasmine has already sold trade secrets several times. Even though it didn't cause too big of a damage to Thompson Group, we still suffered some losses."

"I see, but I still don't understand something, Mr. Shane. Since you have all this evidence, you can take action yourself. Why did you come to me?" Natalie tapped a finger on the folder with her gaze fixated on the man.

"You'll understand soon enough. Don't worry, I won't get you into any trouble." He rose to his feet and strode toward the door with no intention of explaining.

Natalie pursed her lips at that.

It was meaningless to continue probing when he was clearly unwilling to answer.

Natalie stood up as well and walked him out.

Standing outside the door, Shane turned and said, "I'll pick the twins up tomorrow morning."

"Okay." Natalie nodded.

With his gaze still locked on her face, he reminded, "Go to bed early. Goodnight."

"Goodnight." Natalie offered him a smile.

She thought he would go back to his apartment after that, but he didn't seem like he was going to leave any time soon as he stood motionless while staring intently at her.

Natalie fidgeted under his piercing gaze and shrank back a little. "Mr. Shane, is there anything else?"

Shane shook his head slightly. "No. Go ahead and close the door."

Finding his actions odd, Natalie's brows furrowed imperceptibly. Nonetheless, she obeyed him and closed the door.

Once the door was closed, she wasn't in a hurry to go back to her room. Instead, she opened the intercom to see what he was doing. However, all that she saw was his back and the apartment door swinging shut.

