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Janet gave a nod, then walked cautiously into the dressing room.

To her surprise, her clothes that were in there were missing.

She took careful steps out, then said to the assistant and Nina, "My clothes are gone."

"What?" The assistant was considerably more shocked than before. If Janet's clothes were gone, how was she supposed to go on stage?

There weren't many backstage workers—only a few staff and teachers. Yet, Janet's clothes had gone missing.

It seemed like this was a premeditated attack.

Janet's lips twitched. Not bad. It's only my second day in school but someone is already out to get me. Who could I have possibly offended?

Just when the assistant and Nina were flustered and panicked, Robert's voice sounded from the broadcasting room. "Welcome to Woodsbury University's opening ceremony. Here, I would like to..."

"What do we do?" Nina frowned. "If we go to the warehouse now to get another one, we won't make it back in time."

The assistant pinched her fingers. "It'll take fifteen minutes for us to get to the warehouse. We only have ten minutes to spare. I'm afraid it'll be too late."

Many media personnel were present, and Robert had invited a number of television stations. Everyone wanted to see the top scorer of the national college entrance exams. Not to mention, there were thousands of students in the audience. If Janet delayed the event because of her wardrobe malfunction, it would undoubtedly cause a ruckus offstage.

"In previous years, there had been no precedent cases of someone showing up late. If you start now, I'm afraid you'll be everyone's topic of discussion."

Robert had given her special instructions to take care of the new student. That was the only reason she was aiding her so patiently right now. If it were someone else, she wouldn't have bothered.

However, now that such a scheme was discovered, this year's new campus belle might end up becoming the new joke.

"Miss Hogan, are there any sewing machines here?" Janet asked coolly.

"Sewing machines?" Nina shook her head. "There's none here!" Only the design school had some, and it would be too late even if they rushed there now.

No matter the case, it seemed like something embarrassing was bound to happen during this year's opening ceremony.

What about a needle and thread?" Janet lifted a brow. "I'm sure you have them somewhere."

Nina froze for a moment. "I think we do. I'll go find them."

With that, Nina began to search the area.

Standing to one side, the assistant asked in confusion, "Miss Jackson, do you mean to sew the dress yourself?"

There wasn't enough time to mend the split at the waistline, let alone sew it up without leaving traces of thread. Unless she was a professional designer or seamstress, it would turn out rather unsightly.

Janet's eyebrows twitched slightly as she spoke in a bold but wicked voice. "I'll have to try. It's better than going out naked, right?"

Hearing Janet's reasoning, the assistant nodded, then began to busy herself with finding the needle and thread with Nina.

Meanwhile, it had been several minutes since Robert finished giving his opening speech, but Janet was nowhere to be seen.

The principal had an unpleasant look on his face. After a certain amount of time had passed, he could wait no longer and asked one of the teachers to look for Janet.

Many of the students in the crowd began to sense that something was amiss. Usually, after the principal was done delivering his speech, the next speaker would come on stage to talk.

Today, however, after nearly ten minutes, the next speaker was still missing.

Seated in the audience, Abby was beginning to feel anxious. Craning her neck, she frowned. "What's with Janet today? Why isn't she here yet?"

The Beasts found it strange as well. Their boss was usually punctual and was rarely late, not to mention the fact that this was a large-scale event.

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Gordon held Abby's hand and reassured her, "Don't worry. She might come out in a bit."

Summer, who was with the other medical students, was also on edge. She asked Sharon in a puzzled tone, "Could it be that Janet had forgotten her speech?"

Sharon shook her head with uncertainty. "I don't think so. Back in the classroom, she didn't look nervous. Even if she forgot her speech, she wouldn't be like this."

Besides, Janet was the nation's top scorer, so memorizing the speech was of little difficulty to her.

Madelaine, who was a freshman in the performance arts school, had her lips curled up in a slight smile. Who knew that Lynette had the wits to actually pull this off? It seems like in the future, she will be a strong opponent against Janet. She's rather obedient too!

With every passing second, the students' voices became louder and louder.

Many of those voices belonged to the girls.

"New campus belle? She's clearly a joke! She doesn't even know how to be punctual!"

"Perhaps she's been pursued by so many people that she's forgotten her place!"

"She's so haughty. How dare she let Mr. Goldstein wait this long?"

"Exactly. Janet Jackson is the first person to ever be late to deliver a speech!"

"I bet she's forgotten her speech. The top scorer in the college entrance exams? So much for that."

"Even if she's forgotten her speech, she could always read from her script. Her lack of appearance now is a matter of attitude!"

"I think that she's doing this on purpose to attract the school's attention!"

At this moment, the boys began to speak up for Janet.

"You're all just jealous. You're jealous that the campus belle is beautiful and talented!"

"That's right. It's not like she's being late on purpose. For all we know, something might have happened to her!"

"The campus belle already has a great reputation. She doesn't have to make a late appearance to increase her popularity!"

The girls retaliated while the boys continued to defend her. The two groups contradicted each other like fire and water.

On stage, Robert listened to the quarreling until his head began to buzz.

Finally, the teacher who went backstage to find Janet hurried over to pass a message.

Panting, she leaned into the principal's ear and reported, "Mr. Goldstein, Miss Jackson is having a wardrobe malfunction!" Upon hearing that, Robert broke out in a cold sweat.

What were they supposed to do now that there's a sudden problem with the outfit?

More and more doubts were surfacing in the crowd, and Robert's face was turning darker by the second.

The teacher who went to check on Janet suggested, "Mr. Goldstein, how about we cancel today's speech and postpone it to next semester?"

A wardrobe malfunction was a huge problem. Many media outlets had come to the school today, so if there was anything wrong with Janet's outfit, her reputation would be ruined.

To make matters worse, he would have to face Mason!

He thought that choosing Janet to go on stage was the right choice. He did not expect the plan to be disrupted by external factors.

"Sir, you have to say something!" The teacher by his side implored him to announce the cancellation of tonight's speech.

After hesitating for a couple of seconds, Robert picked up the microphone and began in a calm and unhurried tone, "Regarding today's opening ceremony, I'd like to officially announce the can—"

Just when he was about to say the word 'cancellation', he was interrupted by a voice coming from backstage. The cold, clear voice reverberated onto the stage. "There's no need to cancel."

At that, thousands of students swept their gaze to the entrance in unison.

"I'm coming!" Lifting her skirt, Janet ambled up onto the stage.

Robert was stunned. He looked like he wanted to help her with the dress, but Janet held up her hand to stop him. She said calmly, "It's all right. I can do it."

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The people in the audience were dumbfounded. Mr. Goldstein was actually going to help her? Does Mr. Goldstein respect her that much?

Everyone offstage was watching Janet's impassive expression, waiting for her to provide them with an explanation.

Janet stood nonchalantly in the middle of the stage, her whole demeanor exuding indolence. She adjusted the position of the microphone; her movements were considerably slow.

Looking at Janet, who was empty-handed, they couldn't help but be doubtful.

"She's really going to speak without a script?"

"Do you think she was late because she was reviewing her script?"

"But there are thousands of words in a speech! It's not easy to memorize it all!"

"She's not going to give an impromptu speech, is she? After all, speakers in the past have always brought their scripts on stage."

"I wonder what kind of a bad idea she came up with."

While the audience was deep in discussion, Lynette and Madelaine, who were both in the performance arts school, were the only ones who were shocked and incapable of staying calm.

Lynette's brows furrowed as she felt puzzled.

She had loosened all the threads around the waistline of the dress. By right, Janet should be naked the moment she stepped up on stage!

So, why was she still standing on the stage completely unscathed?

Moreover, the style of this dress was not the same as what Lynette saw yesterday!

It seemed like there were additional embroidery patterns around the waist.

Has it been altered somehow?

But, how did Janet do it in such a short time?

Did she ask someone from the fashion design school to alter it for her?

But, all the students are gathered here today; there was no way she could've left the school.

Lynette grew even more confused, and many questions began to pop up in her mind.

Initially, she wanted to pull a prank on Janet, but she unexpectedly stumbled upon the dress and had made some adjustments to make it look 'nicer'.

The dress she was currently wearing, however, looked like haute couture—it looked like it was worth several million dollars.

Madelaine found the whole situation to be odd as well. Didn't Lynette say that she had already settled it?

But, why is Janet standing safe and sound on the stage wearing that dress?

Could it be that the school had given Janet a spare dress?

"Quiet down!" Robert ordered into the microphone, trying to control the scene.

As soon as he spoke, the audience actually stopped to listen to what he had to say.

To their surprise, Robert simply stepped toward Janet and mumbled through his lips, "Miss Jackson, didn't you bring a script?"

Although the principal was whispering, his microphone wasn't turned off, so his voice could still be heard by the students offstage.

Janet leaned into the microphone and said calmly, "I threw it away."

At that, the students erupted into turmoil once again.

"She's really doing it without a script! And she's acting so indifferent! It seems like she's really sure of herself."

"How awesome! She looks really confident!"

"I heard that she wrote the speech on her own. Miss Hogan wanted to give her one, but she refused on the spot."

"What? Does she think that her speech is better than Miss Hogan's?"

"Wow. My only response to her courage is pure admiration."

"But, since she's capable of delivering a speech on stage without a script, why was she late? And why isn't she giving an explanation?"

"Let's not jump to conclusions just yet. We'll see what she has to say."

The students began to quiet down, and thousands of eyes focused on Janet.

Wearing high heels, her small feet were arched. With one foot on tiptoe, she looked listless but cheeky.

When the audience ceased their chatter and fell silent, Janet adjusted the microphone. Then, her cold voice rang out. "Can I start my speech now?"

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After saying that, she turned to face the principal, who gave her a nod.

"Regarding my delayed arrival on stage, I'll explain after I'm done. Now, please quiet down and allow me to begin my speech!" The hint of a smile appeared on Janet's lips. In a voice that was strangely pleasant and without its usual coldness, she began, "A very good morning to all the leaders, teachers, and students. I am Janet Jackson, and I am the speaker in charge of this segment..."

"I am delighted to be admitted into my university of choice, and I would like to thank Mr. Goldstein of Woodsbury University for personally inviting me..."

Robert, who was seated below the stage, was nervous at first, but when he heard Janet say this, he gradually relaxed.

He took a few steps back, then patted Nina on the shoulder before asking, "Will Janet perform well?"

Nina nodded uncertainly. "Perhaps. I offered to give her my speech, but she refused!"

With a look of disbelief on his face, Robert froze.

Janet really wrote her own speech?

"So, what's wrong with her dress? Isn't the one she's wearing right now given by the school?" Robert was confused. They claimed that there was a wardrobe malfunction, but now, she appeared to be wearing the original dress.

Nina frowned, not knowing how to explain it to him. In the end, she said, "Wait for her explanation. I don't really know what to tell you."

Upon hearing this, Robert could only nod in response. He then shifted his attention back to Janet.

Janet's voice was gentle, and she wasn't urgent nor slow when she spoke. Clearly, she had a good grasp of the right speed and tone in which to deliver a speech.

Watching Janet, Nina was a little surprised. It was as if Janet was used to giving speeches; Nina couldn't find a single flaw in her performance today. In addition, Nina found that the contents of her speech were slightly better than what she wrote.

Nina was incredulous. In just one night, Janet had actually written such a wonderful speech!

Moreover, the issue with the dress didn't distract her at all. Her attention was wholly focused on the speech at hand.

Nina had to admit that her mentality and ability to come up with a solution on the spot made Nina feel a tad inferior!

Meanwhile, the students who had been bustling with activity earlier were currently taken aback by the contents of Janet's speech as well.

Her speech was methodically arranged, and she spoke in a powerful but relaxed manner. Her articulation was precise, and the contents were simple and easy to understand. Even a professional speaker couldn't be on par with her.

As time passed, Janet neared the end of her speech. "Thank you. I am Janet Jackson, a triple major in medicine, chemistry, and physics. This is the end of my speech!"

The last sentence was a perfect ending to her speech. Only a master like her was qualified to say that she was a triple major.

The students in the audience couldn't help but wonder, "Is it over already?"

"D*mn, that's it?"

"I haven't heard enough!"

"She's a beautiful girl with a lovely voice, and she's talented. Plus, she even wrote her own speech! How amazing is she?"

"She's so awesome. I was holding my camera, but I was in a daze the whole time that I forgot to press the shutter!"

"Sh*t, I forgot to start mine too!"

"With that voice of hers, I'm pretty sure she could join the music school!"

"With her looks, she's suitable to be a performance arts student as well. Unfortunately, she's chosen three majors that require intelligence."

"She could obviously make a living off her looks, but she's still depending on her talent!"

Lynette—the actual performance arts student—bit her lip viciously. The blood in the veins on her arms pulsed harder as she listened to all the praises being sung about Janet around her, and her heart twisted unpleasantly.

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That was Janet's speech? What's there to be proud of? Isn't it just full of brags? And by specifically mentioning that she's a triple major, isn't that just asking for praise?

Lynette knew very well what Janet's intentions were. Only those who are blinded by her tricks would be deceived!

Alas, the feeling of being pursued by tons of people had been taken away by Janet as well.

Lynette was dissatisfied. That honor and those praises belonged to her.

She was Young Miss Shields, and she would not be a foil for others!

While Lynette was preoccupied with her thoughts, a cool voice sounded on stage.

She glanced up, only to see Janet with her lips curled up into a small smile and her eyebrows raised in a wicked manner. "Now, let me tell you all why I was late!"

As soon as she spoke, the audience held their breath, all waiting to hear Janet's explanation.

"The waistline of my dress was loosened, but it was in good condition when I got it last night. In the span of one night, someone had gotten their hands on it and messed with it!" Crossing her legs, she continued, "To be honest, I don't know who did it, and I don't want to find out either. It's tiring, really!"

Janet narrowed her phoenix eyes as she swept her gaze across everyone in the audience, including Madelaine, who had always been against her.

When Madelaine saw Janet's eyes land on her, she shrunk back into her seat. With widened eyes, she glared at Janet.

Deep down, she felt a little scared. How did Janet know to suspect her?

When Robert heard her announcement, he swallowed hard. His voice trembled as he asked, "Miss Jackson, why don't we investigate this matter?"

He squeezed his palms, feeling panicky. He didn't anticipate that something would happen to Mason's girl when it was just her second day.

If she were to complain, he wouldn't be able to explain the situation to Mason!

"No, it's fine!" Janet gave Robert a charming smile. "Is it even worth wasting time and resources on such people?" Janet tilted her head to one side, unable to conceal her domineering and wild behavior.

Offstage, Lynette clenched her fists. Her throat constricted, and she dared not look directly into Janet's eyes.

The audience couldn't help but feel on edge. Janet's tone and the way she held herself were extremely intimidating and arrogant.

"Is it fun to make a fool of me on my second day here?" Janet's legs were crossed lazily over each other. Her eyebrows were raised slightly, and darkness was pooling in her eyes.

The principal gulped, then picked up the microphone and turned toward Janet. "Miss Jackson, are we just going to let this go?"

In actual fact, he wanted to ask if she was going to complain to Mason.

That was what worried him most.

Staring straight at Madelaine, Janet chuckled. Then, her eyes darted around. "An investigation won't be necessary. I have my own suspicions anyway."

Madelaine had the sudden urge to stand up.

Janet's statement was obviously directed at her.

However, although she was involved in this matter, Lynette was the one who messed with her dress.

How could the blame be placed on Madelaine?

The more she thought about it, the angrier she got. She was so furious that she nearly had an outburst.

But, she couldn't possibly run up on stage now to say that it was Lynette's doing.

What a dilemma!

"Miss Jackson, you know who did it?" Nina stood up and exclaimed, "Who do you suspect? Tell us!"

Janet leaned forward and placed the microphone back in front of her, then left without saying another word.

Nina chased after her and went backstage.

Robert rushed over to manage the crowd. "The speech segment for the opening ceremony has ended. Next..."

When she finally caught up with Janet, Nina was puzzled. "Miss Jackson, who was it? Tell me. I'll make sure Mr. Goldstein holds them accountable!"