

## A Spoonful of Sugar: Don't Beg for Love By Oopsie Daisy

### Chapter 281

On the side of things, Celine seemed much more relaxed. Her only relative was the mother that she had back at home, so this theme was too simple for her.

The difficulty of this round was not the relationship that the participants had with their mothers; after all, everyone had a mother. The difficulty was in how the designer channeled the emotions that she had into her design without making the design look too clichéd. This was the main challenge.

After all, the clothing that everyone could imagine their mothers wearing would come in darker colors. There would also be large and bright-colored patterns, and they would not look too protruding or beautiful, but they would definitely be very stain-resistant.

The contestants had two days to come up with their design, and three more days to produce the clothing, so the time limit was relatively lenient, and they could choose any material from the material library. Hesper and Celine did not waste any time; they immediately went to the material library and picked up a few things that they might need according to the design that they had in their imagination-

Celine did not forget how she was robbed of materials by Michelle back during the competition organized by Duval Group.

Although there was no need to fight over materials this time around, it would still be difficult for someone -as talented as her to come up with something if she did not have the right material to work with, so

ensuring that she had something in hand was the top priority.

The contestants were not prohibited from interacting with each other during this round. So after returning to their room, Celine wanted to ask Hesper if she had any ideas in mind, but after all, this round was all about individual design, so she did not know if it would be inappropriate for her to ask her about it so directly.

Hesper naturally noticed Celine's gaze and was a little confused by it. "What's the matter...? Are you hungry?"

Celine felt a little helpless, and Hesper saw the helplessness in her expression and knew that she might have said something dumb.

'I was so focused on thinking about how to start drawing the draft, so I wasn't putting much thought into the words that I just blabbered.'

Seeing Hesper's response, Celine's worries faded away, and she could not help but chuckle. "I only wanted to ask you if you've come up with some ideas, but I think that might be a little inappropriate."

Hesper nodded while replying, "Actually, I still don't have any good ideas yet, but I guess my concept should be very distinct from yours, so I don't think I'll be in a position to exchange ideas with you."

As soon as Hesper said so, the commenting section had already blown up before Celine could say anything in response.

"That's funny, if you don't want to share your thoughts, just tell her that you don't want to share them. Why make excuses to make yourself look good?"

"Can this be regarded as the start of the end of their sisterhood? Celine, oh Celine, as soon as her interests are dragged into the equation, your sister won't tell you sh\*t anymore."

"Celine actually asked the question... This is still a competition, girl~ Do you really think that you can

show all the cards in your hands to your opponent just like that? I don't even know if I should blame her for her naivety or blame Hesper for being too scheming."

Celine did not expect Hesper would reply to her question with such an answer, but she also did not feel that Hesper was deliberately hiding something from her. After getting along with her all this while, she knew that Hesper was not such a person.

Hesper did not have anything to hide, so thinking that her avoidance might affect her relationship with Celine, she explained generously, "I'm an orphan and I've never seen my mother. I really don't know what I can do now to come up with a design."

As soon as Hesper explained herself, not only Celine but also the comment section became dead silent. instantly.

"Nooo, this round isn't just difficult for Hesper, it's on an insane level for her..."

"Those \*sshholes who just badmouthed Hesper, don't you think it's time for you to come out and apologize?"

Celine did not intend to poke someone else's pain point, so she was stunned for a few seconds when she heard Hesper's explanation, then she felt a little guilty. "I'm so sorry. I didn't know that... Actually, you don't have to tell me. I know you're not someone that would hide your ideas out of selfishness."

Hesper smiled and shook her head. "It's okay, it's not like I really care about these sort of things at all." Thinking of Matthew, Grandpa Arthur, and Grandpa Ernest, Hesper only

felt that she had been shown a lot of support, so she sounded very confident. "I now have family members who genuinely love me."

## Chapter 282

Although Hesper said so, everyone in the comment section still felt sorry for Hesper.

"At first I thought Hesper was the kind of lady whose family was very rich and had been spoiled since she was a kid... It turns out that I've been preconceiving, so I don't mind apologizing to her. I'm sorry, Hesper." "However, Hesper is really optimistic, and she didn't use this trait of hers to earn popularity. She just wanted to clear things up with Celine. Based on this alone, I think she's a good person."

"Uh, not having a mother doesn't mean that her family is poor, does it? Hesper doesn't look like a woman that came from a poor family at all. Do you know how much her hoody costs?"

"Dude, don't you know that ladies can also earn a lot of money? Why must she rely on her family for money?"

Although Hesper told her that it was okay, Celine still felt that she had poked Hesper in a place that hurt the most, so every time she walked out of the cubicle and saw Hesper, she would feel a little awkward and embarrassed.

Hesper naturally noticed it, but she really did not care if she had a mother or not.

She had once thought about searching for her biological parents later on in life and also naively thought that maybe she got lost or was abducted back then, and her parents were also anxiously looking for her.

But when she went back to the orphanage to ask the dean about her parents, the dean told her very clearly that she was left at the entrance of the orphanage years ago.

Back then, many parents had done so, because they had given birth to kids and were unable to raise them. They would leave their kids at the gate of the orphanage so that at least the children would survive, and they would not have the pressure of having to raise the children.

Hesper was not the first one, nor was she a special one.

After knowing this, Hesper did not want to look for her parents anymore. Regardless of whether they were related by blood or not, it still meant that the family did not need her anymore, since they had abandoned

her back then.

Hesper had always been very rational; she did not feel too sad when she found out about the story of her life and just accepted the fact agreeably.

“There’s no need to feel guilty about what happened earlier. I really don’t feel bad about it.” When it was time to grab dinner, Hesper finally caught up to Celine who had been avoiding her all this while, dragged her along, and sat her down. “If you keep avoiding me, rumors of us falling out with each other will start to spread.”

After hearing this, Celine quickly waved her hands, and said to the camera, “Hesper and I are still very close friends.”

Looking at how Celine reacted, Hesper could not help but burst into laughter, and then said, “I’ve made two simple dishes tonight, so you don’t have to order takeaways. Just go back to work after eating.”

It was claimed that there were two simple dishes, but there was meat, vegetables, and soup, and all of them looked delicious.

Celine had tasted Hesper’s cooking early on in the competition; she could always feel the warmth of home cooked meals whenever she ate them. It also took her a long time before she realized it. “Our

schedule is already very compact, so how would you still have the time to cook?”

The time I use to cook is the time I use to think.”

Hesper wanted to say that she did not need her brain to be operating while she cooked, but in the end, she only scratched her head. “It’s fine, it didn’t take long either.”

“My God, what kind of gorgeous simpleton is she?) I really like Hesper a lot!”

I feel that Hesper is obviously a belle, but she’s someone very taciturn and isn’t very domineering at the same time. She won’t ever take the initiative to destroy someone else unless the other party challenges her and steps on her limits first”

“I love the contrast and cuteness!”

“She sounds like a pushover... I wonder how this beauty survived to this age and became so talented.”

Hesper and Celine had a quick meal and continued to work on their own designs after returning to their

room.

Chapter 283

Five days had passed in the blink of an eye, and it was time for the presentation.

The model that Hesper got was indeed the same person from last time. Hesper only found out when she was trying on clothes for her that the models could actually choose

the designer that they wished to work with, so the rules for the models were relatively free in this regard.

Therefore, this model was still in charge of showcasing the designs produced by team 345 this time

around.

“You can call me Yelena from now on. It’s my Halwanese name.”

Yelena did not speak fluent Halwanese, but fortunately, Hesper had no trouble communicating with her so that was one of the reasons why she wanted to work with team 345.

It had always taken her a long time just to communicate with the designers that she had worked with in the past. Although she had been learning Halwanese very seriously all this while, it was not a one-off process after all. Sometimes, it could only be an extremely simple matter, but things could get really troublesome when there were to be any miscommunications.

Hesper welcomed all sorts of comments and positive criticisms as she watched Yelena put on her design.

Although mannequins and dress forms had always been provided to her and other students when they were completing projects on campus, they could not be compared with the real deal.

Being able to feel the vitality and energy flowing through in her design had always been Hesper’s ultimate

pursuit.

This dress looks so pretty, but I remember that the theme for this round of competition was ‘Mother’. Wouldn’t such a bright fabric be a little inappropriate?” Yelena was a little worried. Although she did not know much about fashion design, she knew that the rose-red color might not fit the role of a mother too. well culturally.

Hesper gave it a good, long thought, but still shook her head in the end. “This is what a mother feels like in my imagination.”

“Alright.”

Yelena and Hesper exchanged a few more details, then Yelena went to Celine’s room to try on the other dress

Ernest and Wendy were already sitting on the couch. They were already well-prepared for the show to start at this instance.

Yann had come in early and projected the phone's display onto the television for the two of them. Even though there was a big television at home, the two elderly had been watching the broadcast through a tiny cell phone screen. How sad could that be?

Ernest looked at the television screen and was awed by how fast technology had been developing. He was thinking about giving Yann a raise.

Yann, who had always been working extremely hard every day to do her job well, and had always been thankful for never being punished, finally felt the loveliness and cuteness of her employer for the first time.

It was time for her to do some chores and run errands around the mansion, but she had been specially summoned into the living room to watch a live broadcast with Ernest and Wendy so that if anything were to happen to the equipment or broadcast, she would be there to help fix it at any time.

Deep down, I really think Ms. Lane looks breathtakingly beautiful.'

Yann often read the news about Lane Holdings' competition, and every time she saw any update regarding Hesper, the comment section below would always be loaded with compliments.

"Mr. Duval must have been blinded back then!"

"Oh, it's started."

Hearing Ernest's voice, Yann came back to her senses and watched the live broadcast on the television-

Hesper and Celine were sitting in an inconspicuous corner at the back, and the order of presentation was drawn backstage through a lottery machine. Hesper got the number 17, which was relatively late, while Celine would be the fifth candidate to present her dress.

Suddenly, there was a faint commotion coming from behind the audience and crowd, so Hesper turned her head sensitively and saw Roberto entering the auditorium with the judges from previous episodes.

"Mr. Sanchez? I thought Mr. Sanchez wasn't one of the judges for this round?"

Hesper was very surprised too. Matthew had not mentioned it to her before she came here, so she had no idea that Roberto would be here today.

She lowered her head and took a quick look at her attire. Fortunately, there was nothing wrong with it. They were all Lane Holdings' latest products, so wearing them could be regarded as free publicity for the

company.

## Chapter 284

“Our distinguished guest, Mr. Sanchez, has arrived at our tournament without any prior notice.

Contestants, are you feeling a little nervous now?!” The host’s excited voice sounded, and everyone came back to their senses,

Hesper looked at herself nervously, worried that something might look wrong with her.

‘Oh my God, I’m not only nervous but also shocked.’

Roberto had always been relatively kind. He was born in Fredonia and grew up amidst the country’s unique romantic atmosphere, which made his emerald eyes look exceptionally gentle. At this time, he looked at the designers sitting in the auditorium, and even his eyes were beaming with delight.

“I believe that every one of you will perform well, so don’t be nervous.”

After saying a few words, Roberto left the stage to the host.

Celine was also a little excited. Roberto was a legendary mission of the fashion design field that all designers wished to overcome and complete at least once in their lifetimes. When it was originally reported that Roberto was going to collaborate with Lane Holdings, many people did not believe it at first, but Roberto was really there today.

“Perhaps the president of Lane Holdings knows Roberto? Both of them should belong to the same social class, right?”

The two ladies sitting in the front row were discussing, and the other quickly answered, “Don’t you know that contestant number 3 is Shawn Lane? He’s one of the Lanes. I heard that he’s very close with the president of Lane Holdings, so he knows everything about the company!”

“Ah? Are you telling me that some shady deals are going on here? If he knows what every round of the competition is about, he can prepare in advance... I thought the Lane Holdings’ tournament was a fair and square one. I didn’t expect someone to be building a plot here.”

“Hey, just how naïve can you be? If you were to ask me, Hesper and Michelle are both going to be turned into stepping stones at the end of the tournament. Lane Holdings might even have organized this tournament only to push their personal favorite into the limelight.”

“I see...”

They were sitting not far away, so both Celine and Hesper heard their conversation. Celine blinked and said nothing, but Hesper's mind was flooded with questions in an instant.

'Since when did Matthew have such a relative and friend?'

'It's impossible for Matthew to tell others about the details of the competition that even I don't know about... If I'm not mistaken, the Shawn Lane that they mentioned is a total fraud.'

Before Hesper went to Emperion and joined the Lanes as Rachael Lane, she had memorized the whole family tree of the Lanes. She was sure that she did not see such a name on the diagram.

In order to search for contestant number 3 in the crowd, Hesper looked around for a while before locating the man.

'He doesn't look too old, but the lie that he's been spreading around is very well made up, and it's only spread among a very small group of people. If it wasn't for what I heard from the two ladies earlier, I might not ever know about this information even after going through the whole competition.'

On the other side of the auditorium, it was already dress number 5's turn to step onto the catwalk.

Contestant number 5 was Celine, so Hesper immediately shifted her gaze back onto the runway.

Looking at Celine's relaxed appearance, Hesper knew that this round was just a walk in the park for her. Celine's design ideas had always been very strong and plump and her hands-on ability was top-notch too, so Hesper had never worried about her at all.

Sure enough, none of the designs of the first four contestants actually gave Roberto the urge to open his mouth to comment, but when it was Celine's turn, she got some tiny suggestions from him.

After being told that she had scored the highest score so far, Celine, who had always kept a very low profile, felt the limelight being fixed on her for the very first time. And when she went back to her seat and sat down right next to Hesper, she still looked a little shy.

"There's still much to be corrected..." Roberto's suggestion from minutes ago really hit the nail on the head, and Celine had never felt that she was so clearly aware of her own shortcomings before.

"You're superb!" Hesper grasped Celine's hands, and her slightly playful look was coincidentally recorded by one of the cameras.

Roberto saw Hesper's vivid expression through the live broadcast that was being projected on one of the walls in the auditorium and thought of his meeting with Nathaniel where he brought his fiancée up.

'So this is the legendary Ms. Rivera. I must say, she's considered a very gorgeous lady even by Fredonian. aesthetics.'

Chapter 285

With Celine's masterpiece going before them, the next few designers' dresses seemed a little unsatisfactory.

The number Michelle drew was 16, which was right ahead of Hesper.

It had to be said that Michelle had also improved by a huge margin recently. Winning the championship in Duval Group's competition had given her a lot more opportunities to get in touch with famous designer brands, so she had been making rapid progress during this period.

But being talented and having insight were still two completely different things. Although Michelle had made great progress recently, her final score still did not surpass Celine's, and she was ranked second. The design of the next designer made her model feel a little puzzled, but this designer still insisted that the color that she's chosen to use represents mothers the best, so what will the final work of designer number 17 look like?"

The host deliberately phrased his sentence in this way. After all, Hesper was also one of the most popular designers that the tournament had to offer at this moment, so saying so would surely push the discussion surrounding Hesper even higher.

Sure enough, in only a few seconds, Hesper's popularity skyrocketed and the numbers even broke her personal record in the comment section.

"To be honest, although Hesper has been performing like a goddess in the previous rounds, I really don't have high hopes for her this time around... She hasn't even seen her mother, so how can she come up

with a design convincing enough to win?"

“Geez, I’m so anxious that I can’t even think straight! She has to design something she’s never felt before. Doesn’t that mean that everything that we’re about to see all came from her imagination and her imagination only?”

“Duh~ Even her model questioned her design, so it’s probably over for her this time around.”

“She’s just not good enough for the competition, so what’s there to say? She lacks the imagination.”

“I pray for the mothers of those d\*ckheads who are making sarcastic remarks. Remember that karma’s a b

\*tch...”

Hesper did not feel nervous at all. As for Celine, she had not asked Hesper about the progression of her design these few days, but it seemed that Hesper did not look very anxious.

However, when she turned her head and faced the runway in the next second, the first thing that caught her eye was the model walking out in a red dress.

The whole dress was red in color, and it looked as bright as the roses that bloomed during the most beautiful summer days, and there were only a few small flower patterns that were embroidered on the waist and chest areas. As for the back, it was hollow, and the red and white silk intertwined and draped over the shoulders as if they were scars.

The camera turned to Roberto, and everyone saw that Roberto was frowning, but it was unclear whether he was pondering or dissatisfied.

“Holy... Mother of God! It’s such a striking color... Has Hesper ever thought about what her mother looks like?”

Seeing the model on the stage walk by, the designer who was usually very close to Michelle could not help but feel a little disdainful and turn to Michelle. “I feel that Hesper’s design is really ordinary. It seems

that that professor of yours who used to show favor toward her is truly blind.”

Michelle felt that Hesper would never give up so easily, so she stared at the dress on the model meticulously, feeling a little perplexed. “I don’t think it’ll be as simple as it looks.”

The conversation between the two was recorded by their respective microphones. Although they could not hear themselves on the spot, the audience could hear it clearly during the live broadcast.

“I have nothing to say about the person who’s sitting next to Michelle.”

The doubts coming from other people in the audience did not affect Hesper’s emotions. And when the model stopped beside her, it meant that the briefing and scoring section would begin.

Before the other judges could speak up, Roberto spoke. “Contestant number 17, can you elaborate more on your understanding of the word ‘mother’?”

Chapter 286

Being the opportunity to speak to Roberto directly, Hesper felt a little nervous. Fortunately, she was able to hide her emotions well after dealing with all those tasks that were related to Lane Holdings over the years, so she managed to respond calmly

“I think a mother is an existence that provides and nurtures. It’s a blessing when she’s able to be by her child’s side, but it might also be a curse in other cases when the woman can’t be with her baby.”

Haberta’s interpreter had not had the chance to start interpreting yet, but Hesper had already finished answering Roberto’s question in fluent Fredonian.

Everyone else was a little confused until the interpreter wiped the sweat from his forehead and started interpreting what the two had just said

Hearing Hesper’s fluent and authentic Fredonian, Roberto was a little surprised. He nodded and asked, “Then why am I seeing so much misery that a mother faces in your design?”

This time Hesper did not answer the question in Fredonian, so the interpreter interpreted the sentence, thanking God inwardly that Hesper did not continue to add any more burden onto his shoulders.

Now let's talk about your design First, the carnations that you've embroidered only on the waist and chest should represent the seats that a lady will get when she's on her way to becoming a mother, which contrasts with the red that represents the enthusiasm and passion that most ladies grow up with. Then there are those large scars on the back What is it then?"

Roberto's voice sounded very calm. And after the interpretation, all the designers sitting in the audience were speechless.

They were sitting far away from the dress, and because of its bright colors, they despised Hesper's designs, but they did not expect it to have such a deep underlying meaning.

Hesper could not say that she once wanted to protect Renfrew with her life. She also could not say that Renfrew was someone who she must safeguard and took care of no matter what. And she must also refrain herself from telling the whole world that Renfrew was also the only person in this world who she would deem more important than her own life.

After thinking for a while, Hesper's lips curled.

"Because I'm a mother myself. I think if I were to be put in a tough position, I would be willing to give my child everything that I have every time. And I believe all mothers are the same."

Celine's eyes widened, and if she were to turn her head at this moment, she would see the jaws of everyone around her on the ground.

"What did Hesper just say? Is she saying that she has a child?"

Roberto was also taken aback. 'Nathaniel and Hesper have actually given birth to kids?'

But there was no doubt that Hesper's answer had already earned her a perfect score. Roberto high score, and it was only natural for the other judges to give her high scores too.

gave

her a

In the end, Hesper's score surpassed Celine's and won first place.

Just as everyone was still astounded by the news, Celine was the first person to recover from her trance.

“It’s no wonder Hesper said that her thoughts will be different from the other designers. After all the awkward moments that I’ve caused and gone through in the past five days, it turns out that this round’s

needs to do in book at the theme from her personal print of view. 5w does it even need to empathize with any mother in Hue world

At this moment, the comment section had already been flooded with comments

Mommy my waifu turns out to be someone else’s wifey

“Mammu, my wathi turns out to be someone else’s wifey

HAHAHA gure plaas don’t make me laugh that holy crap, what Hesper just said is really ser Aren’t she and Michelle mamming? Hay to she a mother now?”

Alchette was completely stunned. Finally, she did not expect Hesper to have a child, and wonder, she did not expect Hesper to share her life with the whole world

At the end of the day, mynty participant in this tournament still needs to uphold and maintain their popularity. Otherwise everyone wouldn’t be finding ways to outshine each other during the live broadcast. With what Hesper hugs just do do to the world, I can’t imagine how many people who are supporting her because of her pretty face will stop doing so. Is she not afraid at all?

The competition ended soon, and Hesper won first place in this round with a huge gap in the final score. But the astonishing news that she announced tonight had caused more ripples than her achievements. The

news had started so many discussions on forums and social media that she even made it into Twitter and Google Trends top 10 topics list

By this time, Hesper had already gotten home and was ready to grab a good night’s sleep

She had not been able to sleep too well all this while, so she felt that her body was about to reach its upper limit. So although she was eager to get back to work, her rationality still held her back and forced her to take a good rest so that she would not suffer from a burnout

Chapter 287

Matthew watched the live broadcast too and could not help but feel a little helpless.

This is the Hesper that I know. No matter what it is, as long as she can get it by herself through the right way, she’ll never turn to other means. Relatively speaking, Lane Holdings’ competition is a fair one, so no matter how popular a participant is, it’s

useless if the person doesn't have the ability. And Hesper has directly cut off all possibility of her relying on her good looks to earn popularity in the tournament.'

Renfrew watched the live broadcast with Rickard too. His allergic reactions and symptoms had completely subsided, so he could be discharged and go home after the final physical examination.

Renfrew's eyes lit up when he saw Hesper. "Mommy looks so beautiful!"

Rickard nodded and stared at Hesper on the screen.

'She looks completely different from the president of Lane Holdings who bosses other people around. I think because she's doing what she likes, it looks like she's glistening from all angles. She's always been an excellent woman, but it actually took me so many years to realize this.'

Looking at Hesper's design, Renfrew looked at Rickard with a hazy idea. "Is Mommy saying that she loves me very much?"

"Yes."

Rickard thought of the past, the night when Hesper jumped off the building.

Although Hesper did not say anything on stage, Rickard knew very clearly that this dress was inspired by that incident.

'She must've suffered a lot of pain. She's gone through so much suffering and torture over and over again, and she's poured all those agonies into this dress.'

Renfrew was exhilarated when he got the affirmation, while Rickard lowered his head and patted him on his tiny head. "Your mommy... She really loves you more than anyone else in this world."

'Her love for Renfrew is hundreds of folds or even thousands of folds larger than anyone else's.'

After a good night's rest, Hesper finally felt fully recharged again.

Hesper did not feel proud or happy because she had won first place in the third round of the tournament. She knew that she must take each step extra cautiously and more seriously from now onward. She also knew that she had won this round with her own ability, so she was still very confident with her skills.

What she wanted to know more about now was the participant named Shawn Lane who emerged out of

nowhere.

Hesper started paying attention to Shawn's ranking in this round and realized that he was ranked in the first half of all the contestants. There was nothing too outstanding about his work, but he would not be eliminated either.

Because there were very few men in this batch of designers, there were indeed some discussions that talked about him on the Internet, but in comparison, they did not cause many ripples online.

"Shawn?"

When Matthew heard the name, he felt a little familiar, so he responded truthfully, "I seem to have heard it somewhere."

Hearing what Matthew said, Hesper became a little curious.

"I originally thought that that fella is just a fake, but now it seems that there are secrets hidden

somewhere in the middle of this matter? Matthew seems to know him, but I've never seen him anywhere near the Lanes...

If I'm not mistaken, he seems to be Uncle Theo's illegitimate son."

"What?"

'The Lanes' family tree has a lot of branches, and there have been too many people who appeared at the Lane Manor's doorsteps, wanting to schmooze their way into the family, but I've more or less met and gotten to know all those who have been taken in and regarded as part of the family. However, as for illegitimate children... Heck, that's not a small number.'

"I see, I know now. But still, the person who's spreading the rumors about him is too outrageous."

Chapter 287

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If I’m not mistaken, he seems to be Uncle Theo’s illegitimate son.”

“What?”

‘The Lanes’ family tree has a lot of branches, and there have been too many people who appeared at the Lane Manor’s doorsteps, wanting to schmooze their way into the family, but I’ve more or less met and gotten to know all those who have been taken in and regarded as part of the family. However, as for illegitimate children... Heck, that’s not a small number.”

“I see, I know now. But still, the person who’s spreading the rumors about him is too outrageous.”

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Matthew shook his head T not very familiar with this lad either vehe same Ume to look into his background frat Doen he know you?

Reaper returned to the Lanes in a rather conspicuous manner, and all the extended Families below her were watching her very carefully all this white This, it was normal for Hesper to not know Shawn, but f was definitely odd for Shawn to not know Hespoi

7 don’t know about that either Hesper shook hol head

If she had not heard someone talking about it, she would not even have noticed Shawn’s existence t addition to that, the two of them had not met each other at all during the competition, so Hesper really had no idea whether Shawn knew her identity or not

“Okay, I got it You should also find a way to see if he knows you in the next round Uncle Theo has been pretty obedient for the past two years Matthew frowned. “But if he’s indeed planning to lay his fingers DN you, I’ll definitely hunt them to the end of the world”

Wilfred, who was the uncle that had conspired against Hesper the most over the years, was still hiding in Emperion and dared not show up. But Hesper did not doubt Matthew's suspicion at all and gave off a grin. "Then I'll leave it all to you, Matt. By the way, I'm about to go out and buy some ingredients to make lunch. So, can I take your order now?"

Before the fourth round of the competition began, Hesper had to attend a more important event.

Arthur's seventieth birthday was this weekend, which was why Hesper had been rushing all her work. The seventieth birthday celebration was an extremely important affair, so no matter what, she had to go back and spend some time with her grandpa.

After working overtime with Matthew for a few days, the two of them finally managed to finish their work before Friday, and they felt exceptionally relaxed when they exited the company.

"Compared to yesterday, I think the sun looks brighter today."

Hesper shook her head melancholily, and Matthew smiled when he saw her reaction. "Grandpa will surely be very happy to see you go back. Do some math. How long has it been since you came back to Genecity and haven't seen him?"

"It has indeed been a really long time..."

Hesper thought of how much kindness Arthur had been showing her and let off a faint sigh. "Actually, I still feel very guilty. I've been receiving so much love from Grandpa because I've taken over Rach's identity. Whenever I see Grandpa wanting to bring me the whole world, I always feel a little distressed deep down."

"Rach..." As soon as Rachael was mentioned, Matthew's gaze slightly dimmed, but he then shook his head and rubbed the top of Hesper's head. "Anyway, during these days when I couldn't find Rach, you're the one who's been staying by our side, and these moments have made genuine memories too. It's not that you're impersonating her, it's I who asked you to do so."

Hesper nodded, and then changed the subject. "The gift that I've prepared for Grandpa this time around must suit his taste more than what you've prepared, so just you wait."

"Oh, really?" Matthew chuckled, and his gaze was once again filled with tenderness. "I don't believe it!"

"Hey!"

In the evening, Rickard received a text from Hesper, saying that she was going back to Emperion that weekend to celebrate Elder Master Lane's birthday, so she would not be around to accompany Renfrew, asking him to explain it to Renfrew on her behalf.

Rickard replied to the message with an “Okay” then refunded the previously reserved tickets.

Renfrew just so happened to be writing programs and codes in Rickard’s study. Rickard had found out about Renfrew’s special talent some time ago and had been asking him to come into his study to complete the task that the unknown friend had given him.

Every hacker had his own special codings, and Rickard knew a thing or two about this field. However, he did not put much effort into developing his hacking skills back then, so he was not very proficient in it.

Renfrew was very fast when it came to creating programs, and sometimes he could even understand everything with only a single clue provided. Rickard never thought that his son would show such amazing talent at such a young age. In any case, he must find a way to thank that unknown friend.

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Ever since that incident, Rickard’s computer was hacked once. However, all the important files in his computer had special locks and encryptions. Even if the person who hacked into his computer was the best hacker in the world, it would still take a long time for them to crack it.

The other party only left a sentence on the desktop, promising that they would never hurt Renfrew. They also told Rickard to not interfere with their teaching and Renfrew’s study.

When Rickard came back to his senses, he showed Renfrew Hesper’s text message.

Although Renfrew was a little disappointed, he still nodded sensibly. “Okie dokie, Mommy is going somewhere to celebrate an elder’s birthday. I understand that! I’d be very sad too if Mommy couldn’t make it to my birthday party.”

“Good, good boy.”

Rickard patted his head. The father had become more and more proficient in getting more intimate with his son. “Then let’s go and visit Great-grandpa this weekend. He hasn’t seen you for quite a long time. He must miss you very much.”

“Okay!”

Back in Emperion, Hesper somehow felt as if a long time had passed when she once again stepped on Emperionian land.

Speaking of which, she had only left this city for a little more than half a year. The city where she had spent three years of her life had not changed much, it was still as prosperous as it had always been in the past.

However, perhaps because of the difference in her mood, everything just felt strange to her.

“I need to head back to the company first. Ask Renee to go back to the ancestral residence with you,” Matthew said as he fixed Hesper’s collar. The winter in Emperion was not as merciful as the winter in Genecity, so the temperature could go very low at any time. “And if Wilfred Lane is also there, you could just treat him like air.”

“Alright, alright, I know.” Hesper looked at her elder brother who still regarded her as a kid and felt a little helpless. “Be careful while you’re on your way to the company. The ground is all frozen.”

“Yeah, I will.”

When Hesper arrived at the ancestral residence, many cars were already there in the garage, so it was not difficult to tell that most of the guests must have arrived.

Wilfred’s car was parked on the side; Hesper was not surprised to see it there. Wilfred had always been very active when there was an opportunity for him to show his attentiveness toward his father, so it would be strange if he was late.

”””

go

back first, Ms. Lane. Call me if you need anything.”

It was not appropriate for Renee to stay there on such an occasion, so Hesper nodded. “Be careful on your way back.”

“Okay.”

Hesper walked out of the garage and met one of the servants. The servant’s eyes lit up, and she addressed her instantly then led Hesper into the manor.

Before Hesper could step into the living room, someone had already spotted her.

Ok look who’s here

Aunt Helen, you must be the one who misses me the most

Lander the attention of everyone present Hesper walked into the manor calmly The burgundy knitted dress looked retro and elegant, and the coat with fur collar added a hint of extravagance Grandpa, I’ve come home

Helen Lane, the youngest aunt that Hesper greeted, hurried forward and held Hesper’s hand. “Oh my, it’s only been half a year and you’ve lost so much weight? Are you struggling to adapt to the harsh environment in Genecity”

When Arthur saw Hesper, he was so delighted that his grin widened from ear to ear. He then grabbed Hesper's other hand and got her to sit down for a short chat

Hel, what's wrong with your memory? Don't you remember that Hesper actually grew up in Genecity since she was a child? So how could she not get used to the surroundings?"

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Hesper looked in the direction of the voice, saw Wilfred, and put on a flawless smile through the corners of her lips. "Uncle Will, It's been a long time. I still remember that you often gave me business advice when you

first arrived in Genecity, but it seems that you've grown father aloof recently as I don't hear from you anymore. I'm still waiting for your bits of advice."

Although she did not bring up a single word about Wilfred's grounding, every single word that escaped her mouth pierced through Wilfred's heart.

"What a sharp tongued b\*tch...'

Wilfred knew that he could not get the upper hand by letting his mouth run, so he waved his hand in embarrassment. "If it wasn't for Father's birthday, I don't think I'd ever get the chance to see you again. You probably just can't wait to get your share and leave the Lanes."

Hesper was naturally not going to let him have it his way and was about to retaliate, but Helen stood up and calmed everyone. "Alright, I don't care which of you is right here, but I do know that both of you are heartless. Today is Father's birthday, and both of you are trying to start the World War Three as if you're today's male and female lead?"

Arthur held Hesper's hand. Hesper turned her head around as soon as she heard him calling her and responded with a sweet tone, "Yes, Grandpa."

"Mm-hmm, good girl."

Having not seen Hesper for a few months, Arthur had been thinking about his granddaughter who had come home three years ago all day long. Seeing that Hesper was holding his hand and calling him grandpa, his soul was instantly filled with satisfaction.

Hesper chatted with Arthur about her recent life. She also complained that Matthew would not let her do a handful of things.

Arthur smiled and poked the tip of her nose. "I don't even need to think about it to know that Matthew won't bully you. I bet he's the one who's getting bullied by you when you two are staying in Genecity."

Hesper let off a guilty smile, and the conversation between the two of them went on without anybody

intervening.

Wilfred had known since long ago that as soon as Arthur saw Hesper, all rationality and seriousness that he had in him would be gone in an instant.

‘All he thinks about is his granddaughter.’

“Speaking of which, it’s been almost four years since Hesper came back home. Shouldn’t it be time for you to change your last name?”

Helen was the one who suggested the change, and Hesper glanced at her youngest aunt.

In the entire Lane family, apart from Arthur and Matthew, Helen was the only one among all the other relatives who accepted her the most. Ever since she came back to the Lanes, she was the only one who would talk to her about something more personal, unlike the other relatives who only thought of her as a hostile being.

But Hesper had always felt that Helen was not as easy-going as she looked on the surface.

‘Is there anyone in the Lanes who doesn’t scheme against the others? A person who calls for hatred might not necessarily be the worst of them all, and the happy-go-luckiest person in the room might also not be the purest of them all.’

Hesper took a glance at Arthur and hesitated a little, but not too much.

Hesper got her last name Rivera from the person who sponsored her expenditure in the orphanage back then, but she had never met that family. She only knew that the person was indeed the first benefactor that she had ever met in her life.

Orphanages had such a tradition where recipients of sponsors could choose to bear the last name of those who sponsored them. It was a way of expressing their gratitude and remembering the kindness that had been shown to them.

So the last name Rivera had never been very important to Hesper. However... She would never be able to express her gratitude to the couple who sponsored her back then in person in this lifetime.

Rachael Lane—that was the name of the real young lady of the Lanes. Hesper had seen the name as early as the day she agreed to play the role of Matthew’s sister and Arthur’s granddaughter and returned to the Lanes. At that time, Arthur had asked her if she wanted to use this name.

But Hesper knew deep down that she was not the real deal. She also knew that she had already taken so many things that did not belong to her, so she could not take the name too. That was why she declined the name, saying that it would be more convenient for her to use the name Hesper. That was why the matter had been put on hold until this day when Helen brought it up again.