

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

Chapter 411

Speaking of this, Renee hesitated for a moment, then shook her head. "I don't think Ms. Lane needs a lot of care from us. It's just that she's very competitive, so she can be very stubborn most of the time."

"Then why do you still trust her?"

Renee met Matthew's gaze, thought for a moment, and replied, "Because she's the young lady and I'm her subordinate, so it's my job to support and trust her decision unconditionally. It's just that simple."

Matthew remained silent for a moment, "Perhaps really don't know her as well as you do."

"It's because we have different perspectives, Mr. Lane. You're the young lady's elder brother, while I'm her subordinate. We're totally different identity-wise." After saying so, Renee stopped talking and lowered her head. "There are still some tasks that I have to attend to. I shall take my leave. now."

"Alright."

After Renee left, Matthew sighed and looked at the photo of him and Hesper on the desk— After a while, he stretched out his hand and stroked Hesper's face in the photo.

"You little liar."

Hesper sneezed.

"Mommy, did you catch a cold? Are you feeling unwell?"

Renfrew looked at Hesper worriedly on the phone screen, and Hesper rubbed the tip of her nose.

'It's probably because of the large temperature difference between day and night recently and how I'm going out to watch fashion exhibitions all the time. That must be why I've caught a cold.'

"It's nothing serious, I'll remember to take medicine."

Sitting in front of the computer, Renfrew wore a pair of anti-blue light glasses on the bridge of his nose. He looked a little mature, but at this age, even a frown seemed adorable.

“Don’t frown. It makes you look ugly.” Hesper smiled.

Renfrew said seriously, “Catching a cold isn’t a trivial matter, so you mustn’t ignore your health. Otherwise, I’ll be sad!”

“Okay, okay, I understand. I’ll take a good rest.”

Hearing what Hesper said, Renfrew nodded in satisfaction. “Mommy, how are you doing recently? I’m studying very hard... It’s just that I can’t go to kindergarten even when school reopens a few days later. Daddy has hired a new teacher, and he’ll come over to teach me in a few more days. It’s said that he’s a very competent hacker.”

“Attending Kindergarten doesn’t suit you too well. Perhaps the path in front of you is the one you

should take.” Hesper’s eyes narrowed with her smile. “You can do whatever you want and learn whatever you like. If you don’t like learning about hacking or other computer skills and don’t want to learn them anymore, I’ll support you all the way.”

Renfrew adjusted his glasses. “Got it, Mommy. But I’ll study hard.”

Renfrew went on talking about a lot of things that happened recently, and Hesper listened to everything patiently and would sometimes ask a few questions, but it was Renfrew who was talking most of the time.

Ever since Myriade left, Hesper felt that Renfrew had become a lot more taciturn. Hence, she felt a lot more at ease when she heard him rambling on about recent events and sharing them with

her.

“Mommy, you must work as hard as I do so that you can pick me up and take me away.”

Having said that, Renfrew paused for a split second, then moved close to the screen with teary eyes. “I really want to go home with you.”

Looking at Renfrew’s appearance, Hesper’s heart melted. She nodded and made a promise to her precious son. “Yes, I’ll definitely work hard, and I’ll surely bring you home... So, please wait for Mommy, okay?”

“Okay.”

Hesper hung up the call, feeling a little more relaxed after all the tension that 013 had brought into her life these days. She then went to the bathroom to wash her face,

returned to the room, and continued to finish the draft that she was working on previously.

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Hesper was now holding the draft of a commercial manuscript. Since Pennleigh ran into her in Fredonia, he had been persuading her to collaborate with his studio. Pennleigh thought that she was a very innovative designer, as she had always had her own ideas in design, especially when it came to including some oriental elements in them.

In the previous competition, even Hesper did not dare to take risks with this design element. After all, among all internationally recognized designs, there were too few that had oriental elements, and the recognition of Halwanese people was very low too.

“Why don’t you give it a try? There might not be many precedents that came before you, but perhaps you might be the future.”

When Pennleigh, a man that had a pure foreigner’s look, said these words, Hesper could not help but feel a little weird.

But there was no doubt that she thought Pennleigh was right; design should not have boundaries. But even she got caught up by this statement before this, forgetting the original intention of fashion design.

Since then, Hesper had often been receiving some orders from Pennleigh. The studio’s quotation was not cheap, but it also showed her that her designs were indeed being accepted.

After all, Pennleigh was an entrepreneur, and so was she, so none of them would take on an order that would not make money.

“Come to my studio this weekend, and let’s go over the contract in details. It just doesn’t sound right for you to keep taking orders from me this way.” Pennleigh’s voice sounded helpless through the phone. “Aren’t you afraid that I’ll run away with your money and design draft?”

“Why would you do so? Plus, it’s Eustoma that we’re talking about. How many people would actually kill just to get the chance to be deceived by you?”

Pennleigh acted like a younger brother most of the time, so Hesper could not help but joke around with him. “Okay, then let’s make it this coming Saturday. School has already started for me, so my schedule may not be as flexible as before, just so you know.”

“Yeah, it’s fine by me. Just come here on Saturday. I’ll send you the address... And do you need me to come pick you up?”

“No, there’s no need for you to worry about me. I’ll get there by myself.” Hesper put her pen down and smiled. The light reflected on the tip of her eyelashes flickered. “I should remind you that I’m an adult, Mr. Pisano.”

After officially signing a contract with Eustoma, Hesper felt more at ease.

Although Hesper felt that Pennleigh would not deceive her through their previous collaborative route, it was obviously safer for her to hold on to a contract that would hold both parties accountable legally. No matter how close her relationship with Pennleigh was, she must still be on guard against him.

Hesper followed Pennleigh into the studio and listened to him explain to her the company’s main division of labor and the allocation of workstations.

“Everyone in the design department has their own office, Pennleigh claimed. “Although Eustoma is only a private studio, it’s been developing fairly well over the years. I like to win some designers over with this trait.”

Hesper smiled and nodded. “I guess I’m one of them now.”

“Yes... If you want to come and work here in the studio, this would be your office.”

All the offices in Eustoma were independent glass rooms. One side of Hesper’s office was made up of a gigantic French window facing the sun, so the room had good lighting. Just looking at it would make any person feel content.

“Thank you.”

“No, I’m the boss, so it’s my responsibility to look after the rights and benefits of my employees.” Pennleigh waved his hands in slight embarrassment. “We’ll be having a meeting later to announce your association with us from now on. Before that, you can get acquainted with your office and colleagues.”

“Great.”

“Good morning, Andris.” When Evon stepped into the company, he realized that the atmosphere in the studio seemed a little different that day.

Andris caught up to Evon and whispered to him, “Mr. Pisano just brought in a young lady who seems to be a new designer.”

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“Isn’t that normal?”

Evon had already gotten used to Pennleigh signing contracts with a few designers over the years. Although he had been losing some business because of this, it was rather harmless.

“But the designer is Halwanese. Director Sergeant has shown me some of her designs before. It’s just... They look petty. Don’t know where she found the courage to put those works out for others to refer to.”

Hesper had just put her belongings away and come out of her office when she heard these remarks.

“Guys...” Hesper stepped forward and stopped Andris and Evon. “Excuse me, the Halwanese designer that you were just talking about... It’s me, isn’t it?”

Evon had not been taking this matter seriously at first, but Hesper’s behavior seemed a little rude to him,

“You don’t really understand oriental culture, so it’s only natural for you to not understand the charm of oriental elements in fashion design.” Hesper seldom argued with others, but she still uttered each and every one of the following words with great emphasis. “If you can’t show my designs any respect, then I don’t think you’re in any position of commenting about them.”

A burst of applause came from the side.

The three of them looked over at the same time, only to see Pennleigh standing in the corridor. None of them knew how long he had been there.

“River is right,” Pennleigh said. “Our aesthetics shouldn’t be confined to only one idea. What our company seeks are sparks formed through the collisions of different cultures. Instead of making irresponsible remarks here, I’d prefer to see you guys speak up with your works. It just so happens that I was looking for you. Now that you’re all here, I’ll make the announcement.

“This is River A., a new designer that our company just hired. She has a very unique understanding of how to integrate oriental elements into her designs, which are very ingenious too. So, we’ll be working together from now on.”

When she heard what Pennleigh had to say, Hesper instantly knew that he was trying to provide her with a smooth withdrawal from the heated argument that she had just made. Her originally irritated expression softened, and she nodded to the two of them.

“This is Andris Delacroix, a veteran designer working for our company.”

“And this is Evon Etienne, the current chief designer of our company.”

Seeing that Pennleigh wanted smooth things out for the three of them, the two reluctantly nodded to Hesper.

During the meeting, Hesper could clearly feel that foreign designers had a lot of misunderstanding when it came to the integration of oriental elements in designs, and she also realized that Halwanest had not done enough publicity in this aspect.

Pennleigh felt a little embarrassed. In fact, he had lived in Halwanest more than in any other country. Although he was not Halwanese, he was not much different from a true Halwanese.

Hesper raised her eyebrows. "Since everyone here thinks that Halwanest's design elements don't belong in the field, I'll use my own means to prove to all of you that your view is wrong."

Whenever Hesper made up her mind to achieve something, no matter how difficult it was, she would make sure that she accomplished it.

The courses at Fredonia University were relatively open, so Hesper had more time to think about new designs. This aspect of the university was actually much freer than when she was studying at Genecity University.

Renfrew also found out that Hesper seemed to be working all the time recently as if she wanted to prove something to someone, so he had been very obedient every day. He would video call Hesper from time to time, and the two would work together without interfering with each other.

Hesper was drawing her design drafts seriously, while Renfrew was running his codes on the

other end of the call.

Perhaps because she had been suppressing a lot of ideas before this, there were too many new designs that Hesper could come up with. Apart from that, she actually managed to make each of them look good in the limited time.

'Even if they can't understand the connotation of these designs, I'll move them with the appeal.'

Except for Andris and Evon, everyone else's impression of Hesper had been getting better and better as time went by. After all, this Halwanese girl was very hardworking and talented.

"River, can you help me out with this part of my design?"

"Can you take a look at this? Isn't it a little too overwhelming for me to incorporate this flower

here?"

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A month later, everyone in the studio had become very close to Hesper. She had been willing to help others go through their drawings too, as it was conducive to the expansion of her own ideas.

Andris and Evon walked into the office together from outside, and when they saw Hesper surrounded by a huge crowd, both of them felt a little uncomfortable.

“Who would think that her catalog is edgy when compared with ours?” Andris sneered. “I don’t understand why they all ask for her advice. It’d only worsen their design.”

As the chief designer, Evon had always been the center of attention in the studio before Hesper came to Eustoma. Something like this, where everyone ignored him when he walked into the office area, had never happened to him before.

Not noticing Evon’s silence, Andris walked up to everyone and exclaimed loudly, “What are you all doing here in a crowd? Go back to your respective office. The communal space isn’t built for you to chatter!”

Andris’s words held a lot of weight in the company, so everyone dispersed in embarrassment. However, Hesper did not leave in a hurry. She tidied up the drafts on the desk in an orderly manner and met Evon’s gaze from afar.

“Mr. Etienne, you don’t seem to like me very much.”

Evon raised his eyebrows and said disdainfully, “I don’t? Excuse you, but who are you to talk to me about my likes and dislikes?”

Hesper smiled and nodded. “Alright, Mr. Etienne. I do hope you can keep that contempt and arrogance of yours forever.”

“It’s finally time to get off work!” Hesper rubbed her stinging eyes and carefully lifted the dress on the desk.

There had always been a unique competitive relationship between every single designer in Eustoma. Because private customization could never compete with companies that mass-produced fashion-related clothing and accessories, the demand was rather small, so the opportunity would only fall into the hands of those who fought for it. Therefore, the studio had come up with an auction-like procedure for its employees to bid for the projects.

This was Hesper’s first bidding session since she started working for Eustoma. And Pennleigh had also hinted to her that this order was an excellent opportunity for her to introduce herself to the market, so she had been preparing this design very meticulously. She even stitched all the embroidery on the clothes by hand, one thread at a time, and she had managed to embroider it after burning several nights’ worth of midnight oil during her spare time.

“Wow, this looks way too beautiful!” The model working with Hesper was amazed when she saw her design.

Her voice sounded rather loud, so half of the people backstage glanced in her direction when they heard that. Andris and Evon were among those people.

Hesper’s design was indeed extremely eye-catching.

It was a long white dress with elegant but not heavily decorated water sleeves. The sleeves were embroidered with unknown flowers using light blue silk thread, so they were still radiating faint light in the dim backstage atmosphere.

“What kind of flower is this? I don’t think I’ve ever seen it before...”

Hearing this, Hesper was a little surprised, but she explained with a smile, “These are Campanulas, also known as bellflowers or balloon flowers back in Halwanest. They’re also known as oriental Eustomas, which is the name of our studio, but they belong to a completely different order and genus. It’s used as a kind of traditional Halwanese medicine, and it also symbolizes eternal love; it’s just that it has a slightly sadder floriography in comparison.”

Andris’s eyes widened.

“Evon... I have to admit, she does have a little talent in design.

Evon squinted his eyes and took a glance at Hesper then at Andris, who was a little shy about approaching Hesper. The annoyance that he had suppressed at the bottom of his heart for a long

time burst out in an instant.

“If you like her so much, then go and kiss up to her.”

After saying so, he turned around and left the scene, Andris had already had enough of Evon’s temper and had long wished to part ways with him.

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“Guys, let’s take a break.” Pennleigh came over and clapped his hands. “There’s no need to be so nervous. It’s just another regular bidding; don’t worry too much. Oh, and River, can you come with me for a moment?”

“Sure.”

Evon watched as the two went away from the corner of the room and turned his head away. His gaze then landed on Hesper’s dress, which was hanging on a mannequin in another corner of the communal space, feeling a little jealous deep down.

“Did something happen?” Hesper followed Pennleigh and caught up to him with a puzzled expression. “You usually keep a distance from me in the studio to avoid arousing suspicion... Something must’ve gone wrong for you to look for me all of a sudden.”

Pennleigh looked a little helpless. “Mr. Sanchez wants me to convey a message to you. Have you not even taken a glimpse at your phone all this time? He couldn’t reach you, so he had to come to me.”

“Huh?” Hesper was really busy with her design before, so she did not have the time to look at her phone. She instantly lowered her head and saw that Roberto had sent her a lot of messages.

It was about their meeting with Stephen this weekend to get her face re-disguised. Before Hesper could finish reading the message, however, her model suddenly ran to her from not far away.

“River!”

“Slow down... What’s the matter?” Hesper turned her head around, saw the model’s distressed face, and immediately sensed that something had gone wrong.

Sure enough, the model caught up to her and said anxiously, “River, something happened to your

work!”

“What?”

Hesper and Pennleigh exchanged glances, then followed the model backstage, only to see that the gown that was in good condition a few minutes ago had been splashed with a large amount of ink, which spread from the back of the waist down to the hem of the dress. There was no room for any form of remediation.

Pennleigh took a step forward and frowned when he saw that the dress had been damaged to this extent. His expression turned cold. “What happened here? Who did this?”

Compared to Pennleigh’s reaction, Hesper was much calmer. She just stood on the spot and stared at the gown without saying a single word.

The person who did it had not even thought about showing her any mercy. The ink stains spread from the waistline to the bottom of the gown, covering one-third of the dress, including the flowers that Hesper embroidered. All the effort that she had invested into the dress during those long nights was flushed down the drain.

The culprit obviously knew where the most precious and labor-intensive part of her design was,

which is why he chose to ruin that part of the gown.

It's obvious he or she wants me out of the bidding session."

"What should we do now...?" The model could not help but feel anxious. After all, this appearance in front of the crowd was very important to her too. She had thought that Hesper's design was so gorgeous that it would definitely be favored by the management, but it seemed that it was over

now.

Hesper pondered for a moment then turned to look at Pennleigh. "Could you get me some black ink and brushes?"

Although Pennleigh did not know what she was going to do, he nodded.

Pennleigh was fast. After getting the ink and brush from him, Hesper did not say much but immediately took the dress off the mannequin and started painting on the skirt with the brush.

"This is nothing more than grandstanding," Evon said sarcastically.

Hearing that, Hesper only glared at him then ignored him to continue painting.

As time went by, a Halwanese painting gradually appeared out of the ink stains.

The model could not help but marvel at the landscape painting that appeared on the skirt at the end of the process. "You're so fabulous!"

The original embroidery was faintly reflected within the black strokes because of the special nature of the silk thread. Seeing this, the other designers were in awe, while Pennleigh, who did not expect that Hesper would resolve this crisis so easily, heaved a sigh of relief and nodded to her.

The model then changed into a dress on time and made a stunning appearance on the stage. Everyone was amazed by the design. While everyone else was staring at the runway, Hesper scanned the people around her and saw that Evon's expression looked extremely irritated.

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The bidding session ended successfully. Hesper's design and the magical touch on the dress really impressed the company's executives with the oriental elements that were included.

In the end, without a doubt, Hesper won first place in the bidding, and the order was given to Hesper.

Hesper had been working tirelessly for half a month, but finally, it was not in vain.

However, she did not feel exhilarated when she got the results but thankful.

'Luckily, I didn't lose control because of the sudden accident. This was what I learned and was trained to do the most when I was working In Lane Holdings, so no matter how flustered I am, I'll never lose my cool.'

"I was so anxious for you just now, but thank God everything turned out fine."

Pennleigh had always been an efficient man; he soon delivered the contract to Hesper's office." This contract is pretty special. Personally, I really hope that you can secure this order and gain a foothold in the studio."

"What's so special about it?" Hesper bowed her head. After all those years of working in Lane Holdings, skimming through a contract was all in a day's work for her.

After a while, she lifted her head. "The price is so high, and this contract includes a whole year's worth of orders. This is some big money."

These days while Hesper had been in the company, she had already learned a lot about the current industry prices and trends. Knowing that the price offered by this client was like giving money away, no wonder Pennleigh said that this was an extraordinary contract.

Pennleigh explained, "And this client has worked with us many times before too. She's of Halwanese descent, and in my impression, she's also a very easy-going and gentle lady."

"Okay, I won't worry about it." Hesper had gone through the contract just now; it was very rigorously written.

Probably because she had finished reviewing it and could not find any issues, she lowered her head and left her signature. "Thank you very much for this order. If not for you, no company would ever accept a student like me, who has not even graduated yet."

Even though she still had some savings in her hand, what Hesper wanted to do was not easy, and she had no source of income before, so her life would become more and more uneasy financially. Hence, it was very fortunate that she had met Pennleigh.

"There's no need to thank me. Your own catalog and ability have been your open sesame throughout this whole journey. All I've done is open the door and let you in."

Pennleigh felt a little embarrassed, and because of his fair skin complexion, it was easy for someone to notice the blush on his cheeks. “Anyway, congratulations.”

Aside from feeling happy, Hesper did not forget to track down the person who ruined her design.

“Although there was no surveillance backstage, it’ll only be a matter of time before we find out who’s responsible for the incident.” Hesper and Pennleigh had already asked the security team. before this, but because the bidding sessions had always been kept as secrets among all designers of the company, the surveillance cameras were turned off during that time.

Pennleigh assured her, “Don’t worry, I won’t let you go through this grievance for no reason.”

Hesper nodded.

Usually, there’s surveillance in that hall. They’ll only be turned off for a short period of time during the bidding session, which means that the person who splashed ink on my dress knew that the cameras would be down at this time, so they couldn’t be an outsider.”

Thinking of the expression that she had seen on Evon’s face, coupled with his cold glares and the things that he had done to paint a target on her back during her time in the company, Hesper came to the conclusion that Evon was the one who did it. But because she had no evidence, there was no way for her to expose him.

“I have faith that you’ll handle this matter properly.

Hesper knew that Pennleigh was not the kind of person who would sweep things under the carpet just to smooth things over in the office. Although she did not know his family personally, and she had never heard him mention his parents, she could tell that he had had an excellent upbringing since he was a child. Everything was either black or white in his books, so she did not want to say much about the matter.

“In order to celebrate my success in this bidding session, I plan to buy everyone dinner tonight.” Hesper changed the subject. “Although I haven’t joined the studio for long, everyone has still been taking good care of me... Will you come?”

Pennleigh smiled. “Of course.”

Having worked with her colleagues in the design department for a month, Hesper had not had the time to have a meal with them. She knew that she still needed to socialize with everyone else, although she did not know how much longer she would work in Eustoma.

After telling everyone about the meal, Hesper deliberately looked at Evon, who was still staying in the corner of the hall.