

Glosée
LOOK LOOK
LOO LOOK

RUNWAY

OF REVENGE

MAGIC
EINE LIEBES-
ERKLÄRUNG AN
MODE
MAKE-UP
KUNST
& SEXY
ACCESSOIRES
SINNliche
DESSOUS
LA TOURNÉE
LOOKS
FÜR DEN
HERBST



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RUNWAY OF REVENGE

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TO THOSE WHO INSPIRED ME TO SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY



Foreword

In an increasingly complex global future, the "Hemamala Upahara" book project, led by Mahamaya Girls' College, stands as a turning point in girls' education. Over a decade, it has successfully nurtured thousands of children to become young authors.

This year, by collaborating with other schools, we aimed to provide students with a wealth of new experiences. The goal was to develop multi-faceted skills, including communication, values, and creative growth. As a result, children have written books that pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who brought the Sacred Tooth Relic—the supreme symbol of the Buddhist world—to the Hill Country (Kandy).

I extend my gratitude to everyone involved, including the students who contributed their creativity and the teachers who guided them.

Shashikala Senadhira

Principal

Mahamaya Girls' College

CHAPTER 01

“Woow... this is great” Isabella exclaimed applying a layer of lip balm on her lips.

“It is glossy too. I love the smell of it” Serena commented while scribbling a design on her sketch pad.

“It is better than the one I bought earlier” Isabella said while examining her reflection on the mirror. The dressing table was a mess with scattered jewelries, uncapped lipsticks, perfume bottles and different kind of hair pins. But Isabella loved how messy it was. The air was filled with the faint peachy scent of her lip balm. Serena was drawing her usual sketches among a pile of fabric pieces and sequins. The room was decorated with posters of models and celebrities in latest runways. Even a single glance inside their room reveals their one and only obsession- Fashion.

“Lucie, do you wanna try this?” Isabella asked from Lucia who was making herself busy with her commerce project.

“Sorry Belly... I’m busy you see” Lucia said glancing briefly at Isabella.

“Ah yes of course”

“I bet making up is much more enjoyable than doing math” Serena commented sarcastically.

“But I’m enjoying this.”

“You pretend like you do”

“Nah I do” Lucia said unbothered by Serena’s words.

“If you had to choose between fashion and math, what would you choose?” Serena teased.

“Even a fashion brand needs to be managed with brain”

“But industry without fashion is nothing”

“Don’t you guys have something else to talk about? Everything matters. So let Lucie do her thing” Isabella interrupted annoyed by the conversation. Lucia had been a brighter student of the management faculty of Wexford university while Isabella and

Serena were studying in the faculty of arts and design. They met at Wexford in their freshman year and decided to room together.

“I guess we need some posters of Pythagoras” Serena laughed and left the room.

CHAPTER 02

She applied a layer of her customized crimson coloured lipstick. Her hair was done in waves a bit curly at the end, adding a gorgeous look and exposing her swanlike neck. A necklace with engraved pearls rested on her neck. Her big grey eyes looking determined in the mirror, examining her flawless look. Her curvy body was hugged by their latest masterpiece, awaiting to be revealed that night.

“Gonna slay” she muttered to herself.

...

Her studio was a mess with thousands of fabric swatches, sequins and pictures of designs hanging on the walls. The mannequins were half done. Sketched papers were scattered everywhere; failed designs as one can assume. But not every failure is an end. That’s what exactly she is going to prove that night; to herself and to the world. Imagination is not something that everyone possesses. Even if they did, not everyone can be skilled enough to take advantage of it. Being gifted with both, she is going to be recognized for who she is.

...

Being the chief executive of a rising brand, she has proven that beauty without brain is nothing more than an empty and a shallow term on the dictionary. In spite of being amidst paparazzi, she preferred solitude which has led the identity of their brand to be exclusive rather than ordinary. She, being the silent reinforcement behind the rising success of them, is determined and unwavering where their future is concerned. Right now, hopefully waiting for the biggest event of the year to be unfolded, her brain ran through all the possibilities while staring at both the live streaming perfection and back stage chaos.

CHAPTER 03

“For over six years this brand has defined obsession, elegance and artistry. Tonight, the legacy continues... *Glosée*” The sound of applause filled the room while *Glosée* dominated the runway.

“Now presenting on the runway... Isabella Cruz, showcasing the latest creation of *Glosée*” Isabella Cruz, the face of *Glosée*, enchanted the whole audience of spectators. Her soft curves with the bold contrast of the piece attracted everyone reminding why *Glosée* is the greatest of all time.

“Presenting the visionary behind tonight’s collection- Serena Laurent, the designer whose obsession shapes *Glosée* bringing uniqueness” Serena walked after the models taking credit of her creativity. Her blond curly hair brushed her shoulder while she flashed a bright smile towards the audience taking bows.

“And Lucia Delgado, the chief executive of *Glosée* for her unwavering determination and strength” Everyone whispered as Lucia had never been in public.

The after party included many significant figures of the industry of fashion turning the night into *Glosée*’s triumph. Isabella and Serena were in the spotlight interacting with the people who admired their fashion. Everyone praised them for making *Glosée* outstanding.

“I really love the latest piece. It is so unique” Senior stylist from *Velour couture* praised Serena.

“It screams *Glosée*. I’m literally so obsessed.” Creative director of *etoile* added.

“By the way I’m wondering how you manage all those things. You didn’t have a single loss in past six years”

“That’s Lucia. Our executive. We are really nothing without her, right?” Isabella added rolling the glass of wine on her fingers looking at Serena who was trying to hide the uneasiness growing within her and getting visible on her face.

“Um yeah she is...” Serena added.

“I’d love to meet that genius” Sophia Klein, the PR manager of *Haus Klein* said in admiration.

“Yeah, you obviously can. I can talk to her if you want” Isabella said.

“Yes please. We are planning to collaborate for the upcoming seasonal collection. So, we are exploring several capsule collections from outstanding brands.” Sophia explained.

“Wow it is gonna be so lit. Having lots of unique pieces together...” the senior stylist of *Velour couture* was already having reveries about the very event.

“So you are not gonna stop creating right?” director inquired from Serena, teasingly.

“Of course not” Serena laughed. “We will do much better next time”

“I expect the best piece from you, you know?”

“Think of it as it is done” Serena said determined.

“We trust you”

CHAPTER 04

The sky touching buildings were visible in the horizon. The morning sun had risen brightly illuminating the whole city. In her office in the 4th floor of the main headquarters of *Glosée*, Lucia Delgado was sipping her café con leche with toast with tomatoes and olive; an inevitable habit she inherits from being Spanish. She had moved to New York for her higher studies at Wexford where she met Isabella and Serena. She liked them though their interests had been slightly different. Though she had not been a fashion maniac, she agreed to join with them to start their journey in fashion industry.

“Hi Kai” she answered the clamoring buzz of the phone.

“Saw my new updates?” Kai’s voice came lighthearted through the phone.

“Hold on” She opened her Instagram to find the new posts of Kai about the remarkable night of *Glosée*.

“Not just fashion, but vision. Lucia Delgado makes it happen #*Glosée*”

Kai Harper had been an old friend of Lucia whom she met in a designing project that she reluctantly went with Isabella. He is a social media influencer and a fashion journalist who is running a digital magazine named *Runway Journal*. He liked Lucia more than Isabella and Serena for he loved the vibrant media personality of her.

“Bruh...” Lucia laughed. “You need to stop this”

“Why?”

“This is hilarious. What would people think?”

“That you are so inspiring?” He teased.

“Nah, Lucia Delgado dismisses her friends.”

Kai chuckled.

“People love it. They like you. You just need some public press conferences.”

“And what?”

“Not gonna lie. You’d be more famous than Isabella.”

‘I have no Intention of taking her place. I love being like this.’ She rubbed her temples, a faint smile on her face.

“But you-“

“I know I should do a Tik Tok, just like you”

“Ha ha very funny... you are not getting it Lucie”

“Ain’t no way you get my point either”

Knock Knock

“Guess I have a guest”

“See you”

“See You too”

“Come in”

...

“This is a great idea” Lucia said to Sophia Klein, the PR manager of *Haus Klein*, who was sitting in front of her.

“We came up with several ideas but I guess this is the best”

“Yeah it is. How many brands exactly will be there?”

“Twenty? I don’t know. Yours is the first one I invited. I saw your latest capsule collection. And to be honest it was great”

“You were on the event last night, were you?”

“How can I miss such an event? By the way you weren’t there”

“I’m neither the designer nor the model” Lucia smiled.

“I see... you weren’t asked to come...?”

“Yeah, I’m not complaining. I had lots of work to do”

“You obviously have. If not how can you build a brand...” Sophia smiled in admiration.

“So, you can contact us and inform about further details.”

“I’m so excited Ms. Delgado. May I call you Lucia?”

“Yes please”

“Imagine having all the masterpieces in the same event.”

“But there’s one thing...”

“What might it be?”

“I offer my pieces if you promise that there won’t be no plagiarism”

“Of course not. It is our duty”

“That’s a relief” Lucia sighed.

“Why do you worry so much. You haven’t had a fall down in your entire six years of past”

“Preparation is better than being in trouble, you know”

“Yeah...” Sophia nodded. “There will be a press conference in two hours. So I’m supposed to go there”

“Yeah thank you for coming-“

“Ah I follow your official site. I watch your every conference”

“It is not ‘official’. A one of my friend runs it”

“Oh. You should get some credits you know? I rarely see you online”

“Don’t worry about me... I’m fine” Lucia smiled.

“See you then”

“See you”

CHAPTER 05

“Hey Lucie” Isabella hugged Lucia tightly.

“Hey Belle... well done yesterday”

“Thank you girly.”

“I watched it live”

“But I’m really upset you were not there”

“I wish I was.” Lucia managed a small smile.

“A big event is going to be there you know.” Lucia said examining her friend.

“You mean the Klein’s?”

“Oh you already know?”

“I met her at the after party yesterday. We both met. Didn’t Serena tell you?” Isabella raised an eyebrow, questionably.

“Ah...She probably forgot about that” Lucia said trying to shrug the alienated feeling creeping in.

“She was supposed to say that. I was going to tell you but she-” *told me that she’d tell you herself*

“Never mind Belle. Now you told me and that’s fine. She’s probably busy with some work”

“You know what Lucie...” Isabella looked out of the window towards the horizon.

“Hmm...”

“I feel like we are getting apart. We’ve been through a lot and yet we were together. But now...”

“I don’t think anything has changed. We are still that chaotic trio who loves their dream-”

“Lucie I’m not seeking for an escapism you see... I know us and when something is wrong, I can feel it as much as you do” Isabella’s tone was almost broken. Lucia also had been concealing the inevitable change she was feeling. The very thought of

being apart from their usual, old selves led her to hide all the changes and live like they were still close to each other. But now they were more than some young teenagers dreaming big in their freshman years. They had grown more complex and complicated. Though they could not exactly pin point the specific change, they felt it too emotionally to ignore the impacts of it.

“People change Belle” Lucia said after the silence stretched between them.

“But we were together at the end of the day”

“She will change. She’s just too excited”

“I hope so” Moisture gathered at the corner of Isabella’s eyes. Her mascara was half blurred.

“Wipe your face Belle, you look ridiculous” Lucia chuckled.

“Power of your Glosée cosmetics.” Isabella mocked while wiping her eyes with a tissue.

CHAPTER 06

“Hello. This is designer Serena Laurent from Glosée” Serena tapped restlessly on the desk while waiting for the call to be picked up.

“Good evening...”

“Can I contact Ms. Klein? Regarding the seasonal collection.”

“Yes, you can. Please give us a minute”

“Okay-

She hung up the call and slipped the phone to the desk as footsteps reached the doorstep. It was loud enough to recognize whose feet it was. Isabella opened the door examining Serena in her uncomfortable position. Her familiar warmth had faded replaced with a gaze which almost felt unknown to Serena.

“Did I disturb you?” Isabella took a seat in front of Serena.

“Ah no. that’s fine. Wasn’t a big deal.”

“Did you talk with Lucia?”

“Couldn’t contact her. She was probably busy.”

“She said the same about you”

“What?”

“That you might’ve been busy that you couldn’t tell her about the Klein’s event.”

A shadow passed Serena’s face while she couldn’t utter a response. Awkward seconds of silence stretched.

“You didn’t call her, did you?”

“What are you doing Serena?” Isabella said again when Serena was silent.

“Doing what?” Serena whispered. Her eyes have grown narrower.

“This is the time we should be together. This had been our dream and we are on the verge of becoming that. if being success brings this. Then I might not want it.”

“Everything has changed-

“You’ve changed” Isabella’s grey eyes lingered on Serena whose face spoke many things than her mouth did. Her expression was unfathomable.

“I don’t know what you are talking about-

“I’m done with this” Isabella stood and walked towards the door. Then paused

“I miss you Serena”

Something deep inside Serena’s chest tightened with the words of Isabella. She opened her mouth to speak then closed it. Isabella left the room leaving the atmosphere thick with emotions for Serena to solve herself.

Phone rang.

“Hello. This is the secretary of Ms. Sophia Klein.”

Serena hung the phone. And rested her head on her hands letting the breeze of hectic New York that was pouring through the window, soothe the burdens of the previous conversation. She sighed. She had never felt so much complicated working towards her goal. But this was not only her goal; it was their goal. Everything this far has been accomplished as she wished; as everyone wished. But she felt this uneasiness working with Isabella and Lucia. Though they had been together all along, a part of her knew that it would refrain her freedom of choosing her path and being independent limitlessly. Success for Serena was not only being at the top of the financial stability or being well recognized in the industry, but also choosing things according to her willingness. She loved being with her friends and being independent at the same time. But gradually, her desire for limitless independence governed her, weakening the idea of being with her friends forever and working towards everyone’s happiness. She was not the inevitable teenager at Wexford university. Undergoing years of hard work and burden to become success was also mean allowing the full potential of herself to become unquestionably her; she thought. So she was not ready to let her independency fade for the sake of everyone’s goal.

She reached for the phone and dialed the latest number on the list.

“Can I contact Ms. Klein?”

CHAPTER 07

“Yeah... I missed this” Isabella poured her fifth drink of the night. Already drunken, her cheeks were visibly flushed.

Serena and Lucia sat across the table looking at drunken Isabella. Their eyes met. Reluctant to linger, they looked away with a small hint of a smile; not friendly but sarcastic. The message was clear: “I came here because of Bella and not you”

“What’s up Seren?” Lucia broke the silence.

“Hey Lucie”

“I think this is our first time after six years”

“Could be. I Don’t count much”

“Couldn’t care much, right?”

“If you say so” she drank the rest of her drink, marking a delicate line in her throat. Her attitude didn’t give her the escapism, instead it made Lucia filled with annoyance.

“Hear me out Seren” she leaned across the table. “Can I ask you the reason behind this behavior”

“Hmm...”

“Are we on good talking terms?”

“We’re talking; you idiot” Luca suppressed a smile as she got to meet that insulting teenager again.

“You can’t insult your CEO; you see?” she teased.

“You could be the CEO to this whole building but not to me. You are still that... what did I call it? uh yeah Spanish Pythagoras.”

“Lucie, do you wanna try this?” Isabella asked from Lucia who was making herself busy with her commerce project.

“Sorry Belly... I’m busy you see” Lucia said glancing briefly at Isabella.

“Ah yes of course”

“I bet making up is much more enjoyable than doing math” Serena commented sarcastically.

“But I’m enjoying this.”

“You pretend like you do”

“Nah I don’t” Lucia said unbothered by Serena’s words.

“If you had to choose between fashion and math, what would you choose?” Serena teased.

“Even a fashion brand needs to be managed with brain”

“But industry without fashion is nothing”

“Don’t you guys have something else to talk about? Everything matters. So let Lucie do her thing” Isabella interrupted annoyed by the conversation.

“I guess we need some posters of Pythagoras” Serena laughed and left the room.

Lucia nodded her head in both sides. Serena’s laugh lingered in her head like evidence from a wound in the past that had already healed but still aches when it is poked.

“We’re getting out of the point Serene”

“Just say what you have to say. I’m sleepy.”

“We can’t be like this. I need us to work together not only as business partners, but also as best friends”

“We are friends Lucia... you need some rest. Go and sleep well. You’ve got dark circles under your eyes...uh use Glosée” Serena stood, gathering her stuff and nearly knocking on a glass as she went unconsciously, conscious.

Lucia sighed as their night didn’t reach the level of productive reconciliation she had expected. She looked at Isabella, who has passed out on the table murmuring unfathomable things into thin air.

CHAPTER 08

The press conference finally came to an end and Lucia walked amidst the unexpected paparazzi ignoring most of their questions. The press turned out to be great as the media was however announced about the schedule.

“What will be the brand you are collaborating with?”

“How do you feel about the last event of Glosée?”

“Is *Runway Journal* your official private site?”

“What?” Lucia was amused by the sudden question that she forgot she is being streamed online. Fortunately, the car arrived and she reached towards it when someone intruded,

“Can I take a minute?” Sophia Klein was smiling at her.

“Oh, hi yeah” Lucia stepped towards her and held her outstretched hand firmly.

“How’s the organizing going?”

“Everything’s at set. Several things need to be taken care of” Sophia said with a sense of relief.

“Contact me if you need any help”

“Oh yeah I will. By the way I wanted to confirm... should I be coordinating directly with your designer now?” Lucia looked at Sophia with a doubtful look. Looking at Lucia, Sophia realized that she was unaware of the fact that her designer had contacted Klein.

“Serena Laurent?” Lucia asked.

“Yes, your designer, right?”

“Yeah, she is” a determined look switched to Lucia’s face.

“Yeah, it’s fine I’ll just-

“We haven’t decided yet, you know?” a sense of authority filled her voice.

“Okay I’ll contact you later if you are free” Sophia added making sense of the situation.

“Yes, please do” They parted. Lucia realized that Serena had tried to redirect the control. A sense of fierce authority and ego filled her as she got into the car with precise movements.

“Congratulations!” She was bewildered to see Kai in the car.

“What on earth-

“Surprised? The conference, paparazzi, how do you feel?” he asked while eating a spoonful of cheesecake from a box of Crumbl.

“You did this? You revealed my schedule? How dare you Mr. Harper?”

“Breathe Lucie, this is what a typical CEO deals with. And now you are really feeling it. Not everyone can be a CEO of a rising brand.”

“I’m not the typical, you know?” she was breathing hard.

“Take it easy”

“Ahh... I asked you not to” she groaned, leaning back on her seat.

“So, how did it go?”

“It was fine as it usually is”

“But your plans are revealed and now everyone’s excited”

“Have you ever heard the saying that, do not say what you are going to do. Do it and talk about it?”

“Never heard of it”

“That’s what exactly I’m doing... I hope I’d be dead right now. So, I don’t see the press coverages tomorrow”

“Trust me, it won’t be that bad”

As Lucia walked towards her office. The usual calm and collectedness of the employees were nowhere to be seen. Everyone was going here and there whispering and laughing, scrolling through social media. As they noticed her Presence, some ignored and some just nodded with a smile appearing to be polite. She got into her office. Two minutes later, the rageful sound of footsteps reached the door and opened it without hesitation.

“Lucia Delgado... can you explain this?” Serena slammed her tablet on Lucia’s desk. Her voice echoed through the room. Her eyes shone with annoyance but deep inside Lucia could see the subtle hint of victory and triumph.

An Instagram post with over millions of likes was displaying on the screen.

“The famous influencer and the Ceo’s dating life revealed”

“Was Glosée’s popularity purely influenced by RUNWAY JOURNAL”

“Was Lucia pretending behind a mask of ego and independency?”

Lucia closed her eyes for a second. Her nightmare from the previous night had gotten into a reality which was even worse than she had imagined.

“Which part of it had annoyed you?” Lucia managed to utter.

“What do you mean Lucia? Do you need any of these to be explained? See what you have done” The impact of this on the brand was minimal. No one cares about the Ceo, but about the brand. None of these meant Glosée was anything less than anything. It was all about the private life of Lucia.

“Tell me which part annoys you? Me dating Kai?” Serena narrowed her eyes at Lucia’s question. For she herself didn’t think about what she actually cared about.

“It is our brand that is mentioned in these gossips Lucia” She managed to say.

“Do they tell the designs or products are not good?” Serena was silent.

“What if I say that I date Kai. Would you still get mad?” Lucia was on the verge of getting out of her limits. She had been trying to conquer the thought of Serena hating her, blaming it all on change and time. But now she realized that none of these had been the problem; the problem was inside her. She did not simply like Lucia. So, she

is not going to console herself leading her mind into an illusion. She had to face the truth.

“Be honest Seren. Just say you don’t want this, us working together. If you don’t mind whether I date him or not, why do you care so much? Do you wanna make me feel so down so that you can do... whatever you want?” she couldn’t even hear her own voice in her ears, for the truth was too bitter and inevitable that she could not hide it. Everything was too complicated so she had to release it.

“Stop this Lucia!” Serena’s high-pitched tone filled the room. “Yes, I don’t like you. I didn’t and I probably won’t!” The tension hung in the air. Her voice was unknown to her own ears. Though she stopped talking, the presence of her voice and her harsh revealing remained echoing in the room; unspoken but too loud to be ignored. A second passed and the reality was settling too hard that it was uncomfortable. *Did I just say that?* She questioned herself. But if that’s what Lucia wants, yeah, she might have to reveal it.

Lucia could no longer use the defense mechanism in order to protect her affairs. Pain of betrayal shot through her at the sharp words of Serena. She could feel moist gather behind her eyes. A part of her conscience was willing to break down but her ego was not meant for breaking. She couldn’t let this woman bring her down when she had been the largest contributor of the brand. A part of her heart was invisibly broken but the rest was only aching, reluctant to let her whole heart shattered.

“I don’t mind whatever the social or mental status you are in. I need the brand to be graceful” Serena said as the tension was settling.

“I’m the Ceo and I manage all these things. Sorry for demeaning but you are the designer” In spite of being hurt, her voice filled with fierce authority and ego.

“I am... and the fashion is inspired by designs. You managed what we built.”

“So, you all are teaming up?” a hint of sarcasm was in her voice.

“She is my model, obviously”

“I have never dismissed anyone because we have been friends”

“Best friends don’t mean I had my freedom or I was happy here” Serena snapped.

“So you reluctantly worked until you can build a name?” The pain of betrayal in Lucia intensified with the reality which was still unfolding. And every revealing

truth shattered the hallucination Lucia had been build making the betrayal more intense and brutal.

“But I love this brand. I don’t mind whether you date him or not” Serena’s tone was much calmer than it had been a while ago.

“You love seeing me in disgrace, don’t you?” They shared a lingering gaze. Lucia’s voice was calm yet it contained all the unspoken emotions of being betrayed and disliked making her appears to be malicious. Serena was stunned as her thoughts were finally exposed. Anger filled through her veins almost pumping into her bloodstream, at the sight of Lucia who possesses the potential to turn her life from the brightest to darkest.

“Resign”

Adrenaline hit Lucia all at once. Her voice was slow and deliberate yet it was too loud in the quiet room.

Serena bit her lip as her fingers turned into fists, her nails digging deeper into her skin. She didn’t underestimate Lucia but she assumed it might happen. A sense of vengeance hit her while the cold breeze of the morning brushed her cheeks, leaving her speechless. Her mind ran through all the possibilities of how her life might be after being resigned. It is no doubt that she would not be employed after being fired from a rising company like Glosée. For the first time, she felt desperate. She wanted to take back all the words she had uttered. But a part of her was ready to face her future rather than being an adrenaline junkie in front of Lucia, for being unemployed was better than being humiliated by her.

At the same time, Lucia’s brain was working in its fullest. She did not want to be hurt twice because twice was not the way she governed things. And Serena though being speechless now, could not be trusted twice, for she revealed who she really is.

A minute of loud silence stretched between them. Finally, Lucia left the room. Serena sat on the chair as the door closed with a soft click, letting the tension fade away. “Thanks Jesus” she murmured, stroking her temples anxiously. After all, she knew Lucia. She knew that she had been forgiven by her. A sense of relief filled her. But the tempting question lingered in a far corner of her conscience;

Can Lucia be trusted?

CHAPTER 10

Lucia walked out of her office. The air was oddly satisfying as it was much lighter than the it had been in the office. The employees were staring at her but she ignored them completely as she was done with the things she had to deal in the morning. She passed through the corridor as a door opened and Isabella peeped from inside.

“Hey!”

...

“Should I say ‘congratulations’?”

“For what?” Lucia sat on the chair leaning back and resting her head on the headrest.

“For you and Kai”

“Me and Kai? Ah don’t tell me you actually believed those things online.”

“Why not?”

“We are not dating”

“Really? but these-

“Rumours”

“This is really frustrating” Lucia watched as Isabella pouted, muttering in disappointment.

“Bell...”

“Hmm”

“Are you really happy about this dating thing?”

“Of course. Who doesn’t you guys would make a perfect match”

Lucia chuckled. “I don’t know about that. But I have to tell you a story”

“Wait, we gotta tell Serena”

“It’s about her”

“Wh-

“We fought and I asked her to resign” Isabella raised her eyebrows in bewilderment.

“How can you...”

“She’s not happy with us”

“Tell me the whole scenario.”

CHAPTER 11

A week passed.

“We should talk with Ms. Delgado, shouldn’t we?” Zara, the assistant designer of Glosée said.

“I think we should wait”

“There’s no waiting. The event is only a week away” Zara insisted. “Do you feel any familiarity or uniqueness between this piece and our previous ones?”

“Mm.. no. You are right”

“May I come in” Lucia peeped from outside, entering the studio.

“Oh Ms. Delgado. We were thinking of meeting you”

“Everything is fine, right?” Lucia asked examining the designs on the table.

“There’s a problem miss”

“Can you take a look at these” Zara showed a set of designs sent by Serena.

“We think our previous signature style is lacking.”

“We don’t think this would be appropriate for the event” Zara said reluctantly.

What had happened was clear to Lucia. Serena had been dealing with hesitation and anticipation that her stresses were clearly visible on her designs which lack the previous creativity it had characterized of.

“Let her present at the event” Lucia said while the other two looked at their faces exclaiming in unison;

“What!”

“Why don’t you also try?”

“Me?” Zara asked with anticipation. “I haven’t presented for events before.”

“Then this would be your debut event. Can I see some of your designs”

“mm yeah” Zara handed over some sketch pads.

“I think these would be great” Lucia said pointing at the pieces drawn.

“Thank you, Ms. Delgado”

“I trust you. Give it your best shot” Lucia headed towards the door.

“I promise” Zara said suppressing a broad smile.

“She’s so humble. I like her”

“I do too” Zara whispered.

“You are going to be busy this week Zara” the other one nudged her in her arms.

“I know”

“Wanna grab a drink to celebrate?”

“Of course”

CHAPTER 12

Days passed and finally a remarkable day in the calendar of New York fashion arrived. All the Ceos and the designers of the brands collaborating with Haus Klein were gathered at the red carpet for a short media interview. Sophia Klein and Elena Klein, the Ceo of Haus Klein, were at the spotlight.

“As the Ceo, how do you feel about tonight?” the interviewer asked from Elena.

“Tonight will be remarkable in our legacy as this is a reality of our dreams. And I express my gratitude to Sophia for managing these things while I was away” the interviewer turned the microphone towards Sophia.

“As Mrs. Klein stated, I’m also looking forward to see the rest of this wonderful night. And I’m grateful for all these chief executives and designers gathered here upon our invitation. I’m sure tonight will truly be amazing because look at all these geniuses gathered here... All these exquisite ideas will make tonight a perfection... and I’d like to thank all the Ceo and designers who have been coordinating, Adrian Cole from Veyra, Matteo Ricci from Ricci, Sofia Moretti from Moretti and Serena Laurent from Glosée.”

“Yes, thank you for sharing your ideas with us” The interviewer said as Sophia and Elena walked towards the arena. Next in line Lucia and Serena was waiting, representing Glosée.

“Glosée has been gaining a lot of attention recently... what does this collaboration means for your brand?”

“This is an important moment for us. we’ve always been about clarity in designs and direction, and this event allows us to present that on a larger scale.” Lucia spoke with a confident tone that it grabbed the attention of the spectators.

“What do you think had been the secret behind your rising recognition?”

“We are very intentional with where we place ourselves. It has been consistent, knowing who our roles and not drifting from it. And also, we’ve been precise. Glosée isn’t built on trends. It’s built on decisions. And we’ve been careful and deliberate about every one of them” the spectators responded with heightened attention, drawn by her calm authority and precision of the delivery.

“Were there any external negotiations conducted outside Glosée’s central leadership, during this collab?”

“All official external negotiations for Glosée are managed by me. If any communication occurred outside that structure, it would not reflect out authorized process.” An uneasiness grew in the crowd with the answer of Lucia.

“Serena Laurent, Sophia Klein mentioned your involvement was quite significant. How would you describe your contribution to this collaboration?” The interviewer turned to Serena.

“I’ve been involved in shaping the creative direction. For me, it’s vital that the design voice of Glosée remains strong and consistent throughout collaborations like this.”

“Would you say that your involvement goes beyond design work when it comes to shaping Glosée’s overall decision?” Excitement grew through the crowd at the question of the interviewer.

“I focus on ensuring Glosée’s design vision is fully executed. In practice, that sometimes means being closely involved in how decisions translate into final output.”

“So would it be fair to say that your role at Glosée extends into decision making beyond the fashion process itself?”

“I... don’t see it as stepping outside the role. It’s more about... ensuring the brand is cohesive across all levels” subtle whispers grew through the crowd at the response of Serena.

“So do you-

“If we could just take one last question, please- we’re running short on time” The director of Klein’s rushed toward the interviewer and requested. The interviewer had to conclude interviewing Serena, making the crowd hang with suspicion. There were no final explanations, just brief shuffle of movements.

The runway was iconic with different unique pieces. The lights were on the model from Ricci who was wearing the signature piece of them.

“Next on the runway, model Isabella Cruz and Ivy Morgan presenting the designs of Serena Laurent and Zara Collins of Glosée”

The contrast of the two pieces gained immediate attention as a piece was lacking the signature style of Glosée while the other piece was a latest design of creativity. The spectators were bewildered. The piece by Serena was lacking the usual fashion sense of Glosée. It felt like it was representing the downfall of Glosée. The latest piece by Zara Collins was outstanding with a hint of new signature style of Glosée. Secretly, it was representing the unrevealed future of Glosée's fashion.

The visible contradiction was a surprise to Serena. She felt like her insecurities are finally getting exposed. Her downfall in the industry of fashion was clearly visible in her piece while the rising Of Glosée was clearly visible in Zara's piece. Lucia looked at Serena who was staring at the runway with an unfathomable expression. She smirked. It was a runway of rising and a runway of revenge at the same time.

CHAPTER 13

‘Were there internal disagreements in Glosée?’

‘Who is the real Ceo?’

‘Was Serena Laurent betraying?’

‘Whose designs are these’

“Secret game player and backbiter of Glose”

‘Will Glosée have a downfall?’

Social media platforms were filled with headlines about Serena and Glosée. Serena hesitated before knocking on the door of Lucia’s office.

“Come in” She hated being instructed by Lucia as much as she hated the news online. She walked towards Lucia’s desk, the intensity of her footsteps reflecting the anger growing inside her. Lucia turned her chair to meet the burning gaze of Serena. Her eyes were filled with anger and humiliation.

“I want to resign” She places her papers of resignation on the desk. The thud echoes in the room. But Lucia didn’t flinch, instead she took the pen and scribbled her signature. They looked at each other in silence. Serena’s jaw tightened.

“This isn’t about talent, Serena. It is about trust” being called Serena by Lucia when all she was used to hearing was ‘Seren’, was oddly nostalgic. She parted her lips to respond but closed. She walked towards the door before turning, when Lucia said;

“Good luck... wherever you go”

Serena took that in silence and nodded before closing the door. Lucia stared a second longer at where Serena had been, before looking at the resignation papers. Their freshman year in Wexford flashed in her mind like highlights from a movie clip. She was held back from the deep ache of nostalgia, wanting to live that carefree life all over again.

“It’s harder than I thought” She murmured to herself.

...

Serena stepped out of the building. The daylight and the cool breeze making her feel exposed and vulnerable. She'd lost something she can't rebuild. She glanced at the building one last time before getting into her white Porsche, a reminder of everything she had built with Glosée. But she didn't notice Lucia looking at her from the window of her office.

THE END

Afterword

With the approval of the Ministry of Education, this research-based project has empowered thousands of student authors for over ten years. Educationists recognize it as a program that significantly enhances the quality of school education.

In alignment with modern educational reforms, encouraging students to author a research work is a milestone in this journey. In this digital age of "Smart" technology, the modern school must demonstrate through research that books and technology should be used together. This is because the unique joy a child receives from a book cannot be replaced by anything else.

To prevent children from drifting away from books—which remain our primary educational tool and storehouse of human knowledge—Mahamaya Girls' College has spearheaded the "Hemamala Upahara" project for many years. Its primary objectives are to foster academic discipline, promote values, and pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who fulfilled a historic mission to empower women.

We express our gratitude to the Principal, teachers, parents, alumni of Mahamaya Girls' College, representatives of other schools, the Diyawadana Nilame, and the staff of the Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic) for their support.

Seneviratne Mahalekam

(Project Creator)