

# Between Fall and Grace

A psychological portrait of a moment

The light in the department store was bright and even, as if it wanted to expose every mistake. The saleswoman stood behind the counter, looking at the girl being held in the aisle in front of her. Ten years old, hoodie, jeans—the usual outfit. In front of her stood four small bottles of nail polish, which she had just taken out of her pockets, almost as if by accident.

The girl narrowed her eyes slightly, as if she already knew what was coming. Her body was tense, not because of the security guard's grip, but because of what would follow. The man behind her was calm and professional. His hands rested firmly on her shoulders without seeming harsh. For him, it was routine, a finished case that only needed to be processed.

Off to the side stood two customers. They watched the scene without hesitation, with that quiet certainty that comes quickly when one is not involved but can still assign blame. Their looks said everything.

The saleswoman sensed this attitude, and at the same time something else that didn't fit. The small bottles on the counter no longer seemed like desirable objects. This was not a planned theft, there was no real gain. It was a moment in which someone tested how far they could go before the world reacted.

The girl had nothing left to hide. The act lay openly between them. There was no defiance in her face, no excuse—only quiet despair and the waiting for the inevitable. It wasn't the man's grip that frightened her, but the certainty that something was about to happen that she could no longer influence.

The saleswoman picked up one of the bottles, tapped it softly and rhythmically against the glass counter, watching the child closely. The expression on the girl's face revealed more than any explanation. This was not theft out of need, not a plan, but a moment in which an impulse had been stronger than anything else.

The security guard waited for a response. The customers waited for confirmation of their assumptions. The girl waited for the punishment she had already accepted internally.

The saleswoman stopped tapping. For a moment everything fell silent, as if the clear structure of the place had reversed. Then she said calmly, almost casually, "That's enough."

The security guard hesitated—a barely visible break in routine—then released the girl's shoulders. There was no protest, only a brief look that showed this decision lay outside his usual process.

The girl stood still. It took a moment before she understood that nothing more would follow. No grip, no words, no immediate consequence. She looked at the saleswoman, uncertain,

as if that were the real disturbance. Then she slowly stepped back from the counter, turned, and walked away.

The door opened automatically, letting in a brief draft of cool air before closing again. The light continued to illuminate the colorful bottles and jars on the shelves.

On the counter lay four small bottles of nail polish. Hardly worth mentioning. And yet heavy enough to stop everything for a moment.

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Explore the accompanying photograph for this piece, along with many more striking, evocative, and artistically distinctive images from this and other series, in the web album at [www.BioMechMaidens.com](http://www.BioMechMaidens.com).

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