

Tess went into her room, feeling on top of the world.

*This is turning out to be a pretty good day.*

Her heart slumped when she saw her mom sitting on the bed, sobbing into her hands.

“Mom, what’s wrong?”

She sat down next to her and put an arm around her. Her mom sniffled and lifted her head. “I can’t...can’t find my...” Her sentence was cut off by more sobs.

“What, Mom? Can’t find what?”

In response, she held out her left hand. Tess looked at it and realized that she wasn’t wearing her wedding ring.

“I’ve looked everywhere!” her mom cried.

Tess suddenly remembered the conversations she’d overheard about missing items.

*This can’t be a coincidence, she thought. Not when it happens to my mother.*

She stood up and put her hands on her hips. “Mom, you need to report this.”

She shook her head. “Oh, no, Tess. It’s not like that. I’m just clumsy. I probably dropped it somewhere in here.”

“No, Mom. You’re not the only one. I’ve heard other people talk about their stuff going missing. Someone is behind this.”

Tess could tell her mother was having trouble believing her, so she went over to the phone in the room and pressed the help button.

“Tess, wait.”

But it was too late, the phone was already ringing.

“This is the help desk. How may I assist you?”

“I’d like to report a robbery,” Tess said, resolutely.

The man on the line was silent for a moment. “I’m sorry. Did you say a robbery?”

“Yes. My mother’s wedding ring was stolen, and I know other people have had things stolen, too.”

“Are you sure about this?”

“Have the captain make an announcement for everyone who has had something stolen to report it. I have a feeling quite a few people will. Whoever is doing this is moving fast and needs to be stopped.”

The man cleared his throat. “Young lady, what you are suggesting is very serious. If this is a joke, you will be in trouble.”

“I’m not suggesting anything! I’m telling you exactly what’s happening!”

“Even if you are telling the truth, you have no right to tell me how to handle the situation.”

“You should be glad that I’m informing you of the situation before it gets out of hand.”

Tess knew she shouldn’t have been talking to the man like that, but she couldn’t help herself. She needed him to do something about this.

“I will investigate your claim. In the meantime, try not to worry. I’m sure your mother’s ring will show up.”

*Yeah, in the hands of a thief!*

“Thank you, sir,” she said, trying hard to be polite. She figured he was just saying what she wanted to hear in order to shut her up, but it didn’t matter. She had done her part. She hung up the phone, and her mother just stared at her.

“They’re handling it,” Tess said with air quotes.

Her mother gave her a weak smile.