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"Let's find somewhere else for them to stay, Ethan," Linda grabbed Ethan's arm and pleaded, "Any ordinary hotel will do. I don't want you to spend too much on them."

In fact, the expense wasn't the thing that bothered Linda. She just didn't want her relatives to be treated too well.

However, Ethan thought Linda was concerned for him and didn't want him to spend too much money.

"It's okay," Ethan chuckled. "Don't worry. I can afford a couple of days' hotel expenses."

In Ethan's eyes, he needed to treat Linda's relatives well.

For one thing, Ethan genuinely wanted to be good to Linda and treat Linda's things more important than his own.

For another thing, Ethan wanted to make a good impression on Linda's relatives and prove to them he was a good boyfriend to Linda.

However, Linda didn't want her relatives to have such a great time here. She really wanted to tell Ethan about all the hard times they put her mom and herself, though.

As kind and generous as Linda was, how could she hold such a huge grudge if they hadn't behaved so horribly to Linda's family?

But Linda couldn't tell Ethan. She knew Ethan well. If Ethan knew about the history between her relatives and Linda, his anger would make him behave recklessly.

And one thing Linda firmly believed. Ethan would definitely pay back all her debts if he found out about them.

Linda didn't want that to happen.

She didn't want to own Ethan too much, or she wouldn't be able to repay Ethan for the rest of her life.

Another thing that worried Linda was the well-being of Ethan. Linda's relatives were greedy people. She was afraid they might be up for no good to Ethan when they found out how rich Ethan was.

Those relatives of Linda were mercenary and stony-hearted. Nothing

would stand in the way between them and the money, nor family or humanity.

If they saw Ethan was a target for milking money, no one could imagine how far and how terrible they would go.

Linda was afraid to bring bad things into Ethan's life.

If such things did happen, Linda would owe Ethan even more. She didn't want things to go that way.

So Linda had to stop Ethan from putting her relatives in one of those fancy hotels. Otherwise, they would definitely figure out that Ethan was a rich person.

Linda shook her head and said, "Ethan, do you listen to me or not? Do you really want me to be upset?"

Linda couldn't find a better excuse to persuade Ethan, and that's the only way she got.

Ethan was surprised at how determined Linda was at stopping her relatives from staying at a better place. He asked, "Linda, what's got into you? What's wrong with booking a good hotel for your relatives? What are you upset about?"

Linda had hoped Ethan not to ask any questions, for she didn't have the answer.

Linda hesitated for a long time and then said in a tough tone of voice, "What's wrong with you? Is it so hard to listen to me for once? If you still insist, I'll walk away."

Linda then put on an angry appearance and was about to leave.

Ethan was stunned at Linda's reaction.

He didn't understand why Linda suddenly got angry. Ethan didn't think he had done anything wrong.

What he had done was to book the best hotel for Linda's relatives.

And the reason he did that was for Linda to look good among her relatives.

Ethan sighed. He couldn't figure out what Linda was thinking.

"Is she worried that I'm spending too much money?"

Thinking of this, Ethan laughed.

How much a night in the best room in the Empire Hotel?

Nine thousand and eight hundred dollars.

And how many people were coming? Ethan thought it couldn't possibly be more than a hundred people. If that's the case, Ethan had to buy out the entire hotel!

Even so, according to what Ethan had, he could easily pay for them to stay there for a year.

Ethan smiled and tried to comfort Linda, "Don't worry. It won't cost me too much. I know you don't want me to spend too much. But they are your relatives. I don't care how much I will spend on them."

Linda was touched by Ethan's words, especially the last sentence.

But what Ethan guessed was wrong. Linda wasn't worried about how much money Ethan could spend.

So Linda didn't say anything to Ethan.

Pablo had been watching how things would develop. When he heard Ethan talking about payment, Pablo suddenly stood up and said with a smile on his face, "Young Master Ethan, you don't need to worry about the expenses. How could I charge you? You are humiliating me by paying for our services. Don't worry. When the relatives of Miss Linda's come down here, I'll get them the best room with the best services, free of charge."

Pablo really excelled at the art of speaking. His words made Ethan feel very comfortable. It was not about money. It was about the state of superiority Pablo bestowed on Ethan through his words.

Moreover, Ethan thought that Pablo's words would stop Linda from worrying.

Ethan looked at Linda with a smile and said, "Linda, are you still worried? Mr. Owen has promised..."

However, before Ethan could finish his words, Linda frowned and pushed his hands away, "No, Ethan, not that. Just tell me if you'll put them into a fancy hotel or an ordinary one. If you insist on putting them into the fancy hotel, I thank you for your generosity, but I don't need your help anymore."

Linda then stared at Ethan with a serious face, waiting for his answer.

However, Ethan was completely dumbfounded.

"What's going on? What does she mean?"

"Linda, what... what are you talking about? Tell me, you... I..." Ethan didn't understand why Linda reacted so dramatically.

Without getting an answer, Linda's face dropped. She turned to leave.

Ethan was anxious. He grabbed Linda and said, "Linda, don't go!"

"You don't even listen to me. I have to go." Linda pulled back her hand without looking back at Ethan.

Ethan was scared. He ran over and stood in front of Linda. After taking a look at Pablo in hesitation, Ethan said to Linda, "Okay, I listen to you. I'm saying yes to whatever you are asking!"

Ethan didn't understand why Linda was so upset about which hotel her relatives would stay in. But he ran out of ideas only to agree with Linda for the time being.

Finally, Linda seemed to be satisfied, and her face relaxed a lot. She said softly to Ethan, "I'm sorry, Ethan. I didn't mean to throw a tantrum at you, but there are things that I'm not ready to tell you. Please listen to me for this once. Thank you so much!"

After the words, Linda made an apologetic expression to Ethan and walked out of the room.

Looking at Linda's leaving, Ethan was speechless. He smiled at Pablo in embarrassment as if saying he didn't understand what's going on either.

"Then... Young Master Ethan, what should we do next?" Pablo asked tentatively.

Ethan scratched his head. He didn't have any idea.

After a moment of thought, Ethan said, "How about this, Mr. Owen, could you put the rooms of Cloud Covert Manor in the reservation, and I'll let you know what to do with the rooms later?"

Pablo nodded and said, "Got it, Young Master Ethan. I'll reserve the rooms for you no matter you mentioned it or not. Don't worry. I'll take care of the things with the hotel. You go to catch up with Miss Linda."

Pablo switched to a much more relaxed face. He said to Ethan with a smile, "Young girls, they sometimes get upset for no reason. Don't worry."

You catch up with her and say something nice. She'll be fine very soon."

Hearing this, Ethan smiled at Pablo and shook his head, helplessly, "The wisdom does come with age. Well, I'll go first. Mr. Owen, thank you so much for all your help!"

Pablo nodded and watched Ethan leave.

After stepping out of the room, Ethan rushed downstairs to run after Linda. But Linda wasn't running away. She was sitting on the steps outside of the hotel.

"Linda, are you okay?" Ethan walked over. Seeing Linda sitting alone, holding her shoulders, Ethan's heart almost broke.

Linda was sobbing. Hearing Ethan's voice, she wiped the tears off her face and stood up. Still facing Ethan with her back, Linda said, "I'm fine."

"How can you be fine? Are you crying?" When Ethan walked in front of Linda, he saw Linda's eyes were red, and there were tears in the corner of her eyes.

"What's wrong?" Seeing Linda crying, Ethan felt pity for her. He asked in concern, "Linda, I know something is bothering you. Please tell me what it is!"

"Nothing," Linda composed herself and squeezed out a smile at Ethan, "I'm not lying to you. I'm fine."

Ethan knew Linda wasn't fine, and things were bothering her. But Ethan also knew if Linda didn't want to tell him. Nothing he could do to change her mind.

Ethan sighed. He looked at Linda and said with deep affection, "Linda, if you have something on your mind or meet with some difficulties, I hope you can tell me."

Ethan wiped the tears from Linda's eyes with his hand and continued, "We should trust each other and support each other no matter what happens. So don't be afraid, because whatever happens, you will always have me standing behind you. Wherever and whenever, I'll always be your strongest support."

Ethan then gently held Linda in his arms.

Buried in Ethan's arms, Linda felt the warmth and security she never felt before.

Before Ethan, struggling with living with her mom, what Linda felt mostly were fear and anxiety.

Linda and her mom only had each other. Sometimes they could hardly feed themselves.

During those times, Linda felt she was in a fight with the rest of the world. She had been put in defense of everything around her.

And Linda would never imagine that she would be able to find someone she could rely on.

But she was in his arms that day.

Linda raised her head and looked at Ethan affectionately. For the first time, she felt that the gap between Ethan and herself was closing.

Linda gently bit her lips. She prayed in her heart that she could be with Ethan forever...

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The two left the Empire Hotel and did not rush back to campus.

Ethan took Linda to have a hot pot and then went shopping.

Both Linda and Ethan had a great time together that day.

When he went back to campus in the evening, Ethan's phone suddenly rang. It was from Maggie.

Ethan picked up the phone, "Hello, Maggie, what's up?"

Ethan asked Maggie directly without small talks.

He heard that his father was working on several major investments in Buckeye, and Maggie was busy working on them.

Ethan appreciated and admired Maggie for all the hard works she had been doing.

In fact, the investments were meant for Ethan as a foundation to build up his career. So it should be Ethan who was working on the investments.

But at the moment, Maggie was the one doing all the work. With her original assignment of charging all of the Norman Family's business in Buckeye, she was hectic than ever.

Moreover, Ethan had heard from Maggie that one son of the Norman Family from overseas would visit Buckeye. Maggie was also responsible for the reception and settlement.

In a nutshell, Maggie was doing the workload of several people at the moment.

Ethan had wanted to share some works with Maggie, but he gave up the idea after some thought.

It wasn't because he didn't want to work. Ethan thought that he knew nothing about business and management.

And with his position, he would be in the leader position once he was to be involved with the business. If that's the case, he not only wasn't able to help but would create a lot of trouble for Maggie.

So Ethan thought that he'd better sit it out and left the business to Maggie to handle.

But Ethan planned to occasionally take part in business operation and management so he could learn from Maggie.

Ethan hoped he could eventually master the skills of business management so he could be a capable boss.

"Yes, I have something to discuss with you," Maggie asked, "Is it a good time? I can call you later if you are not available to talk right now."

"I can talk," Ethan smiled and asked, "What's the matter?"

Maggie said, "I mentioned before that Mr. Norman would allocate to you a sum of money from his personal fund. It's the start-up fund for your own business. The money is in your account right now. According to Mr. Norman, you should register a business license first and then figure out how you'd like to invest the fund."

Ethan remembered that Maggie had mentioned this to him, and according to Maggie, the fund would be billions.

Ethan was excited. He asked, "Maggie, how much money my dad has given me?"

Ethan was very curious about the amount.

It was the money for his investment. To Ethan, the amount was a measurement of how much his father cared about him.

Ethan wanted to see what his worth in his father's eyes.

Deep down, Ethan already had a prediction. He had assumed the number to be two to three billion dollars at most.

It was a lot of money for most of the people. Many people wouldn't be able to see that much money for their entire life. But Ethan could have them just for a start-up fund.

Maggie said calmly as if nothing serious, "Eight billion."

"Eight..." Ethan was surprised at the number he was hearing, "How much? Did you just say eight billion?"

Ethan was dumbfounded upon hearing the amount.

Why should Ethan care about starting his own business when he had eight billion dollars? Most people couldn't have that much money for their entire life.

And Mr. Norman had given Ethan two billion dollars before. With the eight billion dollars this time, Ethan had ten billion dollars in his bank

account.

Most people couldn't earn ten billion dollars in their entire life, and what Ethan had done was finding out who his father was.

"Really? Maggie!" Ethan couldn't believe his ears. He thought maybe Maggie was kidding him.

But Ethan knew Maggie wouldn't joke about something as serious as this. He also didn't think Maggie looked like someone good at telling jokes.

"Of course, it's true!" Maggie said affirmatively, "And... I think Mr. Norman is thinking of letting you build a business empire in Buckeye. So my guessing is that the eight billion dollars are just an early-stage fund."

Maggie paused. She seemed to hesitate about something.

After a long time, Maggie said, "Young Master Ethan, there's something I can't tell you without Mr. Norman's permission. But one thing I can tell you is that don't underestimate the potential of Buckeye. Maybe it's only a third-tier city, but the city is not as simple as it seems. Anyway, let's meet and talk when we have time. I'll handle the license and company location, and I'll keep you posted."

Hearing this, Ethan nodded, "All right then. Thank you, Maggie."

Maggie smiled, which was rare, "Not a big deal. Those are the jobs assigned by Mr. Norman, and they are my responsibilities anymore. I'll leave you to what you were doing. Talk to you later."

Ethan was perturbed after the phone call.

For one thing, Ethan was surprised at how much money his dad had trusted him with.

For another thing, Maggie was hiding many things during their conversation. It seemed that Ethan's father and Maggie were planning on something about Ethan without telling him.

"What on earth are they hiding from me? Why is Buckeye not like what it seems?" Ethan wondered.

Maggie's words made Ethan curious.

Seeing that Ethan was lost in thoughts, Linda frowned. She asked, "Ethan, what's wrong? Whose call was that?"

Ethan came to his senses and smiled, "It's from Maggie."

"It's so late. Did she need something from you?"

Ethan nodded, "She told me that my dad had transferred the fund for me to start my own business."

Hearing this, Linda smiled happily. "That's wonderful. Why don't you look excited? How much your dad has given you?"

Ethan looked at Linda, and his face turned red, "Eight..."

"Eight hundred thousand dollars?" Maggie didn't see a confirmed expression from Ethan. She took a sip of water to calm her nerves, "Eight million dollar? That much?"

Ethan shook his head with a bitter smile, "No, eight billion dollars!"

"Puff... "

Linda spat out a mouthful of water and looked at Ethan with an extremely complicated expression. She was stunned. Linda stammered, "Eight...how much? Eight... eight billion?"

Linda was shocked. She stared at Ethan for a long time as if her soul had escaped from her body.

Linda's reaction scared Ethan. He patted Linda on the back and asked nervously, "What's wrong with you, Linda? Are you okay?"

The pat on the back brought Linda back to reality. She asked in disbelief, "Ethan, are you kidding me? Eight billion dollars? Do you still need to start your own business? You can have a great life just by doing nothing!"

Linda hoped Ethan could say that he was telling a joke.

But instead, Ethan looked more serious.

"I'm telling the truth," Ethan looked at Linda and said, "Linda, my father really gave me eight billion dollars."

Linda was stunned and perturbed. She couldn't believe that the money Ethan's father gave him would be counted in the unit of billion.

It was way beyond Linda's wildest dream.

Linda couldn't help but wonder about Ethan's identity.

Linda only knew that Ethan's father was wealthy. As for how rich and how the family got to where it was, Linda knew nothing about them.

Linda once thought Ethan's father might be just an ordinary business

owner. He might be rich, but his asset couldn't be more than a couple of hundreds of millions.

But Linda realized that she was wrong. Ethan's father couldn't give everything to Ethan just for him to start his own business.

Lina had never been so curious about Ethan's identity. She sized Ethan up and down. After a moment of hesitation, Linda asked, "Ethan, who is your father?"

Hearing the question, Ethan fell into silence.

He had promised his father that he would never tell outsiders about his father.

However, Ethan didn't see Linda as an outsider. He thought it shouldn't be a problem telling Linda about his identity. After all, Linda was the love of his life.

At this time, they sat in the campus stadium. The outside street was just on the other side of the stadium wall.

On the street, there was a huge billboard.

Staring at his father's face on the billboard, Ethan asked Linda with a serious look on his face, "Linda, can you guess who my father is?"

Linda frowned. The answers she could think of were a couple of the richest people within the country.

Examining Ethan's face, Linda didn't think any of her answers were right. Linda shook her head and asked curiously, "I don't know. Ethan, who is your father?"

Ethan smiled and pointed at the person on the billboard, saying seriously, "My father is Eric Norman."

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Linda looked toward where Ethan was pointing and saw Eric Norman's image on the billboard.

She was stunned. Even after a long while, Linda still looked surprised.

"For real? Ethan...your dad...your dad is Eric Norman?" Linda stammered.

Ethan nodded and said, "Yes, my dad is Eric Norman, the richest man who's now living overseas."

Hearing Ethan's confirmation, Linda was perturbed.

She could never imagine that Ethan's dad was such a rich and famous person.

In Buckeye, Everyone knew Eric Norman, from the elderlies to toddlers.

But most of the people only knew that Eric was a very successful businessman originally from Buckeye. No one knew what Eric was before he left Buckeye.

Rumor had it that the Norman Family was the descendants of Wansan Norman, the richest person in the 14th century. Most of them had immigrated overseas to escape a disaster that could lead to family extermination.

Eric Norman belonged to the family that stayed behind, and he was the direct descendant of Wansan Norman.

The Norman Family had made a fortune for themselves overseas, but they didn't have a proper descendent to inherit their family empire.

So they searched out Eric Norman and asked him came over to take over the Norman Family empire.

But all of those were just hearsays. Only the core family members of the Norman Family knew the real story.

There were many versions of Eric's life story. Some of them were nonsensical fairytales that were created to attract attention.

For example, someone said that Eric was born with a superpower, so he was invited to take over the family business.

Stories like this didn't hold credits. They were only served as gossips for people's entertainment.

Any news about Eric Norman would be viral in Buckeye. Especially after learning that the Norman Family would make huge investments here, Eric Norman had become a name that's on everyone's lips.

And Eric Norman's face started appearing on all kinds of billboards and

commercials.

The chambers of commerce and private companies in Buckeye were all prepared to welcome Eric Norman.

Everyone knew that the wealth of the Norman Family could compete with a small country. If they could form business partnerships with the family, they could have a lot of business opportunities.

Most of the business projects of the Norman Family were huge. Anyone involved could gain large profits.

Therefore, in Buckeye, Eric Norman was the synonym of the God of Fortune.

Many people were counting on Eric Norman to provide them with fortune and fame.

Linda couldn't believe that Ethan's dad was that legend that everyone was talking about. The news scared her.

"You sure, Ethan?" Linda asked in surprise, "Why... why didn't you tell me this before? And why have I never heard you talk about your dad?"

It was difficult for Linda to process the news.

Linda was getting very curious about Ethan's story.

Ethan could see that Linda wanted to know more. Because he already saw Linda as part of the family, Ethan decided to tell her the whole story of himself.

Ethan said, "The reason that I didn't tell you is that I have promised my dad that I wouldn't tell anyone."

Ethan held Linda's hand and continued, "I've only found out about my true identity not long ago. I didn't know Eric Norman was my dad, and I didn't even know my dad was still alive."

"Ah?" Linda cried out in surprise, "How is this possible? You...You didn't know who your dad was? Did you really think he was dead?"

Ethan nodded and began to tell Linda about his life story.

Ethan only had his mom as far as he could remember. They were living in poverty in their hometown in the countryside.

Ethan's mom had been telling Ethan that his dad had died before he was born. And Ethan could tell from his mom's eyes every time she mentioned his dad that she hated him.

So Ethan had firmly believed that his dad had passed away a long ago. Also, he used his mom's last name, Humphrey.

Ethan then sighed and continued, "It was not until that day that my dad called me!"

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Ethan also told Linda how he was humiliated by Tina, how Eric tracked him down, and how he got two billion dollars from Eric.

"Ah? Just after one phone call and your dad gave you two billion dollars?" Linda was shocked. She couldn't believe how casual rich people handled money.

Ethan smiled and explained, "I think he had ways to make sure I'm really his son. Probably because he knows that my mom still hates him, he told me not to tell her about him."

"But does your mom know that your dad is Eric Norman, the richest foreigner with Chinese heritage?" Linda asked curiously.

Ethan scratched his head. He wasn't sure about the answer. But considering that Eric's face and name were everywhere in the town, Ethan guessed that his mom should have known a little even she had been living in a small town the whole time.

Anyhow, Ethan still didn't know how his mom thought about Eric.

And Ethan hadn't figured out a way to tell his mom the thing between Eric and himself.

His mom hated Eric so much. How could Ethan do to mitigate their intense relationship and convince his mom to take Eric back again?

Ethan had a lot going on in his mind. He didn't know what he was going to do.

Seeing that Ethan was in a daze, Linda added, "Ethan, have you had an idea of how to invest the eight billion dollars? It's an astronomical amount of money. Please use them wisely and build your future with them."

Linda smiled and continued, "Your starting point is much higher than many people, so you must achieve better. But don't feel stressed and don't worry. I will always be your strongest support!"

Linda then held Ethan tightly.

The news came too sudden. At this moment, Linda still felt as if she was in a dream.

Suddenly, her boyfriend was the son of the richest foreigner with Chinese heritage, and he himself owned ten billion dollars.

Linda understood that the more you had, the greater your responsibility would be.

For Ethan, eight billion dollars meant greater expectation from Eric.

Eric's huge desire to see Ethan being a successful businessman gave Ethan

enormous pressure.

Most people would be stressed out when facing an investment of hundreds of thousands of dollars, let alone there was eight million in Ethan's hands.

Linda could understand Ethan's hardship. She wanted to stand by his side to support him.

After a while of thinking, Linda asked, "Ethan, do you think your current major is helpful to your career? Civil engineering doesn't look like something relevant to conduct business. Have you thought about changing majors?"

Ethan was surprised at Linda's question, "Change majors?"

Ethan had never thought of it.

"Yes, you can change to something that leans toward business or management. I think it would be more helpful to you if you want to be a businessman."

Linda's words made sense to Ethan. He scratched his head, thinking about the suggestion.

Ethan was a sophomore at the time. He was not sure if it was still possible to change majors.

"Well, I'll think about it," Ethan smiled at Linda. He stood up and said, "It's pretty late. Let me walk you back."

They were walking toward the dorm.

Two days later, at the expressway toll gate of Buckeye City.

Ethan and Linda had been waiting nearby. They kept looking at the cars coming through the gate.

Before coming here, Ethan had asked Linda how many people were coming.

But Linda didn't know either. She had called her aunt to ask but was scolded.

Her aunt told her with a righteous tone of voice, "Why do you care how many of us are coming? You are afraid that there are too many of us? What have you become? You and your mom have been staying in our places and eating our food for so many years. Have we even said anything? You are a college student, right? So you think you are so superior to all of us? I'm telling you, going to college won't make you a successful person!"

Linda was confused at her aunt's reaction. She just asked a simple harmless question.

Linda was surprised at how aggressive her aunt had become after these years.

She quickly explained, "No, aunt, that's not what I mean. I just need the number to book hotel rooms. You think too much..."

But Linda was interrupted rudely, "Knock it off. I know what you mean. You can't fool me!"

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"I'm telling you. We have our own agendas, and we've made a deal with your mom. So you have to accept our agendas no matter what. Or we'll give you hard times!" Linda's aunt shouted on the phone.

"You wanna know how many of us? A hundred thousand people! You wanna book hotel rooms? Book every single hotel room in Buckeye!"

The rude and nonsensical language upset Linda. She asked the question out of the good invention, but her aunt twisted it and blamed her for being ungrateful.

After the phone call, Linda was in deep anxiety.

Linda was clear that her relatives wanted to take away their house in her hometown. And they wouldn't leave until they got what they wanted.

What's their agenda could possibly be other than taking possession of the house?

It was not the first time for these relatives to covet this house.

Linda's grandfather wrote down in his will that the house would be given to Linda's mom.

One reason was that Linda's grandfather was deeply touched by the love for him of Linda's mom. The other reason was that he was pitiful for the poor living situation of hers.

Even though Linda was very young, she could still remember how sick and feeble her grandfather had been.

All her aunts and uncles tried to avoid taking care of him. The aunt on the phone, and her husband even went missing.

When Linda's grandfather was staying in the hospital for a whole month, these two never visited him, and no one could get a hold of them by phone calls.

It was the time Linda's grandfather was short of money for an operation that he desperately needed.

Linda still remembered how this aunt told everyone that they didn't want to continue the treatment for Linda's grandfather.

Linda's mom decided to sell her small apartment to pay for the operation for Linda's grandfather.

That's the apartment Linda's parents bought together when they got married.

After Linda's dad left them behind, the apartment was the only thing they had.

Because Linda's mom sold the apartment and got enough money for the operation

for Linda's grandfather, his life was saved.

Since then, Linda's grandfather had known the real characters of his sons and daughters.

Touched by the heart of Linda's mom, and also for gratitude, Linda's grandfather left the house to Linda's mom.

Linda's aunts and uncles had tried very hard to stop it. If it weren't for the lawyer's intervention, they wouldn't have left Linda's mom in peace.

Ever since then, they saw Linda's mom as the enemy.

By the time Linda's mom was seriously sick, Linda's aunts and uncles showed up in their lives again when they were at the end of their rope.

Linda's relatives first lent Linda's mom some money, later held the money as a hostage, and forced Linda's mom to give up the house.

It was the scheme of Linda's aunts and uncles. They knew there's no way Linda's mom could pay them back. So the house was Linda's mom's only solution.

It wasn't that Linda and her mom didn't know about their scheme, but Linda and her mom had run out of options.

The reason that Linda's relatives came to Buckeye was to collect the house.

Therefore, Linda had been perturbed ever since she arrived at the toll gate.

She didn't know how to face what was going to happen in the following days.

"What are you thinking about?" Ethan suddenly patted Linda on the shoulder and asked, "Linda, why do I feel that you don't look well?"

Linda forced a smile and shook her head, saying, "No, I'm fine..."

Ethan frowned. He had noticed that something was wrong with Linda.

From the moment Linda had told Ethan about her relatives' visit, Ethan felt that Linda started to act strangely. She looked like she was expecting something bad to happen.

Ethan had asked Linda about it, but Linda refused to tell him.

Waiting for Linda's relatives, Ethan thought to himself, "I'm going to find out very soon why Linda looks upset."

At this moment, a white Audi sedan drove through the toll gate.

The car drove towards Linda and Ethan and pulled over near them.

The car door opened, and a slender leg stepped out first.

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The person who stepped out of the car was a female in a summer dress.

She was in her early twenties and well-dressed.

The sunglasses on her face made her looked fashionable.

It was just that...

The woman had a very plain face. The fashionable items on her just made her looked odd.

She wasn't tall, and the high heels she was wearing made her body appeared non-proportional.

After getting out of the car, she took a look at Linda and Ethan and then looked around, without saying a word.

Stepping out of the driver's seat was a sleeky looking man in his thirties. The grey-brown suit on him made him looked a little better.

As soon as he got out, he looked at Linda lustfully.

"Karen, Roy, welcome," Linda greeted them. Ever since they stepped out of the car, none of them had said anything.

The man just looked at Linda weirdly.

Linda had no choice but to greet them first. There was a forced smile on Linda's face.

Hearing Linda's greeting, Karen took a look at Linda's clothes and let out a scornful sneer.

"Not bad, still remember me," she sneered, "I've come all the way. Why are you just standing there?"

Karen's words confused Linda.

Linda and Ethan were here to take them to the hotel. So what's wrong with Linda standing there?

Seeing Linda's confused face, Karen showed a hatred of expression and muttered, "What's wrong with you? Don't you even know anything? What's the use of going to college?"

She then shouted, "Why are you still standing there? Get me something to drink! I want iced pineapple juice. It's so hot here. What a lousy place Buckeye is!"

While speaking, Karen kept fanning herself by her hand, even though it wouldn't make her feel any cooler.

Her words surprised Linda.

It was the expressway toll gate and no gas station in sight. Where could Linda find a bottle of cold juice for her?

Linda looked at Ethan awkwardly and said to the woman, "Karen, there's no one sells juice here. If you could hold a little longer, I'll buy you the juice when we get to the downtown."

Anyone would know you couldn't buy drinks in between of an expressway.

Ethan tried to help Linda out. He said with a smile, "We need to drive on the expressway until we get to the downtown. I know a place, and they sell great juice. I'll show you the place when we are there..."

Ethan was trying to be nice to them. Without knowing Linda's fight with her relatives, Ethan just wanted to treat Linda's relatives like his own.

Karen cut Ethan off. She sized Ethan up and asked, "Who are you? Did I let you speak? I want to drink pineapple juice. Do you have problems with that?"

Ethan was stunned. He didn't understand why the woman talked like that when he was trying to be nice.

Ethan would've lost his temper if she weren't Linda's cousin.

Ethan couldn't stand a person without manner.

But he put it up for the sake of Linda.

Ethan forced a smile, trying to resolve the embarrassing situation. He said, "I take it you are Linda's cousin? Nice to meet you. I am Ethan Humphrey, Linda's boyfriend. Welcome to Buckeye..."

Ethan was interrupted again.

Karen looked at Ethan with ridicule in her eyes.

"Oh, the boyfriend. Linda, I feel disappointed. With a face like that, I thought, at least, you should hook up with a rich kid. But why a hillbilly?"

The woman then started to laugh and laughed hard. Her husband also joined her.

At this time, the back seat's car door was pushed open, and another woman's voice was heard.

Chapter 167

"What takes you guys so long? D*mn, do you know what time it is?" A woman in her forties got out of the back seat of the car. She was rounded and wore a blue dress. The woman looked unfriendly.

She glared at Linda with hostility and scolded, "Linda, what's wrong with you? We traveled all the way down here, and this is how you are treating us? What are you thinking?"

This woman was Linda's aunt. Her name was Paula Grecic.

Linda tried to explain, " No, aunt, I'm actually..."

She was interrupted by her cousin. Karen said with a snicker, "Stop your excuse! Mon, you know what? She got herself a boyfriend, and he's from the countryside! You were so right back then. Do you still remember the bet we were having? I said Linda could hook up some rich kid in the city because of her slut face, but you said she could only get a hillbilly at most. You were so right!"

Karen was loud. She didn't care how her words could make Linda feel.

Hearing the insulting words, Linda's face turned red. She gnashed her teeth, feeling terrible. Linda wanted to correct them.

But in the end, she gave up.

Linda decided to let them be, and she also worried that they would keep pestering Ethan once they knew how wealthy Ethan really was.

Linda glanced at Ethan, only to find that Ethan's face was also not good.

He was angry.

Ethan wanted to do anything to protect Linda, and he wouldn't want to say anything against her. How could he stand watching other people insulting and humiliating Linda?

If it weren't that they were Linda's relatives, Ethan would have lashed out a long time ago.

Ethan looked at Linda. He was observing Linda's reaction to decide if he was going to keep pushing down his anger.

Linda chose to be silent, so Ethan did the same.

Seeing Linda and Ethan's silence, Paula and her daughter were getting complacent.

Paula sneered and said, "Him? Haha, I could tell how far Linda could go when she

was only three years old!"

Paula laughed disdainfully and continued, "Look at her dad and mom! Her dad bailed right after he knocked her mom up. Her stupid mother still thought that her dad loved her, so she gave birth to that b*stard. She is still waiting for that guy to come back up to this day!"

"Is it even possible?" Paula said in a strange tone, "I heard that the guy was from a rich family. And her mom was just a plaything for him. Something to toss away when the thrill is gone."

Paula's words shattered Linda's last bit of dignity.

Tears burst out of Linda's eyes. She screamed, "Shut up! You've gone way too far!"

Linda glared at Paula, anger boiling in her heart.

"I'll make it clear. If you want to stay in Buckeye for a couple of days for fun, please stay. If you think Buckeye is too low-level for your taste, go back to where you come from!"

After saying that, Linda turned around and walked away.

She walked toward the Volkswagen parked near her. Pablo sent it to pick up her relatives.

Linda stepped into the car and cried.

Linda was angry. How could Paula say those insulting words when they just met.

Linda still remembered the days when she lived in her hometown. Linda and her mom used to live under similar insults and humiliations every day.

She had thought that when she got into college and had a successful career, those people would no longer dare to treat her like this.

But she didn't know no matter what she would become, she would always be inferior in their eyes, and they would always yell at her and insult her like a slave.

Thinking of this, Linda couldn't help but clench her fists, and she cried harder.

Hearing Paula's extremely humiliating words and seeing Linda was crying in the car, Ethan was furious.

Chapter 168

Ethan cast an angry glance at Paula. He couldn't believe that as a senior, Paula could say such vulgar words.

What kind of monsters Linda had as relatives?

Ethan decided to make them pay for the way they hurt Linda. No man could stand and watch his girlfriend being so furiously insulted, and do nothing.

However, Ethan was stopped by Paula's son-in-law before he could talk.

Roy also noticed that Paula's words had hurt Linda deeply.

They had frequently humiliated Linda in their hometown, but they were visiting guests at the moment.

They knew nothing and nobody in Buckeye. Moreover, Linda's boyfriend was with her.

Linda's cousin-in-law was more target-driven. He knew the goal was to get ownership of the house. So before they could do that, they couldn't afford to offend Linda and her mom way too much.

Otherwise, they would not only be unable to get the house but also wasted the money and time to come down to Buckeye.

Roy smiled at Ethan and said, "Hey, bro, don't mind them. My in-law just made a joke to Linda. Linda is young and inexperienced, so she may misunderstand my in-law. Relax, don't get angry. You go and tell her to calm down."

He then pretended to lecture Paula, "Mom, don't blame me for saying this. You need to be careful about how you tell a joke. You went way too far on Linda."

As he was speaking, Roy winked at Paula, signaling her that he was putting on an act for Ethan to see.

Roy was head-straight on their goal. Before getting the house, it was unwise to offend Linda and her mom. Roy wouldn't mind if he needed to kneel before Linda and her mom just to get what he was here for.

However, Paula was a little retarded. After hearing those words, she rolled her eyes at him.

She was about to speak when Karen interrupted her.

"Roy, who the f*ck do you think you are talking to? How dare you scold my mom?" Linda's cousin yelled at her husband, "What's wrong with my mom's words? Hurt your feelings watching Linda being humiliated? Whose husband are you?"

Karen was angry at her husband's language to Paula. She continued.

"You speak up for her? I know what you are up to. Like to watch her little beautiful sl*tty face? Tell me that in my face! Don't think I have no idea what you've been doing behind my back!"

"What a bunch of stupid teammates!"

Roy thought in his head.

"Did they forget to pack their brains to Buckeye?"

"And they just didn't understand why I winked at them?"

Feeling embarrassed, Roy glared at his wife.

Karen still didn't get Roy's intention. She sneered.

"I just want to insult that sl*t. You have problems with that? Then leave!"

Paula helped her daughter, "Roy, what's wrong with you? Why do you help an outsider?"

Roy was speechless. He was sure even Ethan could understand his motive, but why couldn't his wife and mother-in-law?

He hurried over and whispered something to Paula.

Finally, Paula understood Roy's intention. She smiled awkwardly at him.

"Yes, you're right. I was a little careless earlier," Paula said apologetically, "Well, I'll listen to you. I'll do whatever you say."

Roy just whispered his concern in Paula's ear.

After hearing Roy out, Paula realized that she had gone a little too far.

Paula didn't realize that they were not in their own place. And Linda had grown up, and she wasn't that little girl anymore, who daren't fight back when being bullied.

In the past, Paula could never believe that Linda could have the courage to scream at her the way she just did.

Paula had been with Linda since Linda was born, and Paula had been treating Linda terribly.

All Linda's relatives were used to insult and humiliate Linda.

No one had ever treated Linda and her mother as human beings.

Paula was used to the way she had been treating Linda, so she carried that attitude over even though the circumstances had changed at the moment.

Paula had noticed that Linda had changed, and Linda was no longer a helpless kid anymore.

So for getting the house, Paula had to change the way she treated Linda for the time being.

Chapter 169

Thinking of this, Paula immediately changed her face. She smiled at Ethan and said, "Kid, just now... I was joking with Linda. You... tell her not to mind, and... You get her out. I want to apologize to her..."

Paula's sudden change of attitude caught Ethan off guard.

He was about to yell at Paula, but with her showing apology, Ethan didn't know what to do with her anymore.

Ethan was reluctant to accept the apology.

Paula's words earlier were way too insulting.

If she would need to put on an apologetic act at the moment, why hadn't she been a little less rude earlier?

Ethan didn't buy any of their words, and was still infuriated.

However, he tried to calm himself down. After all, Paula was Linda's relative.

Although Paula had been extremely rude to Linda, Paula was trying to be polite at the moment. If Ethan refused to accept her apology and scolded her, it would cast a negative influence on Linda back to her hometown.

Ethan knew if he chose not to ease the tension with Paula, she would say bad things about Linda when she got back home, such as Linda being arrogant after having a boyfriend.

Thinking of this, Ethan couldn't help but sigh.

He decided to let it go. For the sake of Linda, Ethan had to push down his anger.

He took a look at Paula and shook his head. Without saying a word, Ethan got into the Volkswagen.

At this moment, Linda was still crying.

Linda's grievance wasn't only from Paula's humiliation earlier.

Paula's attitude brought back Linda's memories of how she was badly treated by her relatives back in her hometown.

When Ethan got in the car, Linda quickly wiped her tears and turned her head away from Ethan.

Ethan handed Linda some tissue for wiping her tears.

"It's all right. Don't cry," Ethan comforted her, "I know you feel terrible, but she is part of your family. Besides, they came all the way here. Let's just try to be nice to her for now?"

"But they..." Rushed by emotion, Linda almost told Ethan the story about the house and the debts, but she stopped in time. Linda still looked unwilling to forgive Paula.

Linda thought that she was no longer staying at their places, but why should she keep being bullied by them?

She was tired of Paula's abuse, and it made Linda feel horrible to let Paula keep doing that at the moment.

But she had a second thought when she saw Ethan's face.

Linda could tell Ethan had been pushing down his anger towards Paula and her families.

She knew that Ethan endured all this for her.

Linda thought that she was the reason that Ethan had to go through the awful situation. She blamed herself for dragging him down.

In Linda's mind, Ethan had suffered too much for her, so she didn't have the right to complain about being treated badly.

Moreover, Linda also knew that her stubbornness would also bring a negative influence on Ethan.

According to Linda's understanding of Paula, if Ethan gave her even the slightest hard time, she would slander Ethan's name when she went back home.

Linda still had a couple of friends in her hometown. She didn't want Ethan to have a bad reputation among them.

"Let it go!"

Linda thought that she had been under their abuses for more than a decade. What harm it would cause if adding a couple of more days?

She could tell that she would never need to deal with them in a couple of days.

Linda promised herself that she must have a successful career and be better than all of her relatives so they couldn't insult and humiliate her anymore.

But for now, for the sake of Ethan, Linda must choose to push down her anger and endure their bad treatment for a couple of days more.

"All right!" Linda gave out a heavy sigh. Looking at Ethan affectionately, she lowered her voice, "I'm sorry, Ethan. I made you worried about me again. I'm really sorry you have to listen to their insulting language toward you."

Hearing Linda finally decided to forgive Paula for the time being, Ethan breathed a sigh of relief.

All Ethan wanted was for Linda to be well.

He chuckled and said, "Silly girl, what are you sorry for? They are them, and you are you. I know you are different from them. You are so kind and generous, but they..."

Ethan looked at the three people not far away from the car and smiled, "They are whatever they are. I don't care."

Linda nodded and said, "Well, let's get out of the car and talk things out with them. And I think we should go now. My mom just called me. She has left the hospital and is waiting in the hotel now."

Ethan nodded. "Okay..."

Paula, Roy, and his wife were discussing something in a low voice.

Roy told his wife his concern.

However, his wife didn't care about it. She insisted on being rude to Linda and her mom.

She said, "D*mn, treat her better? Does she deserve it? Look at her hillbilly boyfriend and that crappy car! Such a cheap car. Roy, what is it? Volkswagen Passat?"

Chapter 170

Roy glanced at the car Ethan hopped in and chuckled.

"He's just a poor college student. I bet the car is a rental. It would be great if he can afford a Passat in the future."

Roy then laughed with disdain.

"Crap!" Karen disdainfully mumbled. She looked at Roy's sedan and thought about how they paid for the car in full. It was three hundred and eighty thousand dollars.

After Roy bought the car, Paula and her daughter showed the car off in front of all of her families, and everyone envied them.

Although the car cost three hundred thousand dollars, which was a lower price for a luxury car, driving an Audi going places was still a flaunt of their wealth.

Comparing with her husband's car, Karen was full of ridicule and contempt for the car Ethan was driving.

Karen was complacent at what a luxury car her husband had.

She looked down on Ethan for he was driving an ordinary affordable car, and the car was probably a rental.

In her mind, the car marked her superior over Linda.

"Roy, I'm telling you. Don't follow their car. Ask them for the address, and we need to drive ahead of them," Karen said, "It's a shame to let such a crappy car to lead our way!"

Roy smiled without saying a word.

At this moment, Linda and Ethan stepped out of the Volkswagen.

Paula quickly walked to Linda with a fake smile, "Linda, why did you make such a big fuss? I was joking, and I didn't ask you to be so serious. It's your fault, so young but so tight!"

The way Paula apologize was to blame Linda for all the fault she had committed.

Before Linda could say anything, Roy cut in, "Let it go, Mom. Linda is still young. You just forgive her for once."

Roy then looked at Ethan with a cheeky grin on his face, saying, "Ethan, here we are in Buckeye! Where are we going next?"

Ethan didn't want to waste his time arguing with those unreasonable people. He replied, "You guys must be tired after all the traveling. We are going to the restaurant, and then I'll lead the way to the hotel you will be staying in. Let me know

if you guys want to go somewhere and have fun. I'll ask people to arrange that for you."

Hearing Ethan's generous offer, Karen snorted.

In her eyes, Ethan was a poor college student. But the way he talked as if he was rich. Karen found it ridiculous.

She thought Ethan was bluffing.

"Watch your tough when you are bragging. It would be very embarrassing for you when we want to go somewhere you are incapable of arranging," Karen said.

What she meant between the line was that Ethan, you were so poor, how can you afford to take us anywhere?

Ethan looked at her and said with a smile, "Just name the place you want to go, as long as it's somewhere on the planet earth."

Ethan looked at Karen with contempt.

He found Karen ridiculously ignorant.

With ten billion dollars under Ethan's belt, he could go anywhere on the earth.

Ethan was also supported by an omnipotent father.

However, Karen had no idea of who Ethan was. So Ethan's words sounded like a joke to her.

Not only to her, Paula and Roy were also laughed at Ethan's words.

The two were laughing hard.

Roy patted Ethan on the shoulder and said, "Young man, let me give you a piece of advice. Know yourself! Your words really made us laugh. You don't need to brag in front of us. We all know your financial situation just by looking at your appearance."

Paula added, "Linda's boyfriend, don't blame me for lecturing you. We are not fools, and we can see that you are very poor. You should learn from my son-in-law. He is only six or seven years older than you, but he owns a small restaurant. Look at his car over there, that's an Audi! You know, his apartment is ninety square meters big. It's huge!"

Paula looked at Ethan with a grin and continued, "Look at yourself. See the distance between you two? Young man, you should put your energy into working hard but not into talking. Is there anything useful in talking? No one is a fool, and we can all tell a lie from the truth."