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"Don't worry. I will take care of it," Linda's mom said firmly.

Hearing the promise of Linda's mom, the waitress was relieved a little. She nodded and left.

Linda's mom finally let out a sigh of relief. She returned to the dining room.

As soon as she entered, she felt that there was something wrong in the room.

It was obvious that Ethan and Karen were still mad at each other because of their dispute earlier.

Linda's mom tried to ease up the tension. She said with a smile, "It's all good. Let's chat and have fun! So Paula, do you know that Linda has a performance opportunity coming up? She will be singing solo. She loves to sing ever since she's a child, so it is a great opportunity for her."

Linda's mom was truly happy about Linda's opportunity.

To see progress on Linda's career was one of the happiest things for Linda's mom.

However, she didn't seem to know that neither Karen nor Paula was interested in it at all.

Karen sneered and said with disdain, "What's so great about it? Just a performance. Do you know how many singers out there? Do you really think your daughter can make a name for herself?"

Karen's words made the face of Linda's mom turn red. She just wanted to share a piece of good news, but Linda's mom didn't expect to be scolded.

Paula didn't care about Linda's achievement as well. She said sarcastically, "I've told you before. You should make Linda go to work after high school. If she could work hard, she may be a manager or something by now. She persists in learning to sing. Does she know what kind of a family she's coming from? Dreaming about becoming a celebrity, what a ridiculous thought!"

Paula's words killed all the joys of Linda's mom.

Both Linda and her mom were discouraged and frustrated.

Ethan was angry upon hearing Paula's words. He replied, "Excuse me, how do you know that Linda won't succeed in singing, and her name won't become a household name? In my opinion, she has the talent to become a famous singer one day!"

Ethan wasn't bragging about Linda. He was serious about every word he said.

He firmly believed that Linda would make a name for herself one day.

Ethan had witnessed every effort of Linda, and he also knew how talented Linda was at music.

Ethan had made a decision. As long as Linda was determined to pursue a career in singing, he would do anything to help her.

But Paula and the other two didn't take Ethan's words seriously. They thought it was one of Ethan's many ridiculous bluffing that day.

"Except that you have a talkable mouth, you know nothing at all!" Karen sneered, "To tell you the truth. Several of my friends are all in art. I don't see any of them make it out there. With what Linda's got, she thinks she is better than them? Don't take it the hard way, but I doubt she can even find a job! Graduated from Buckeye University won't make a difference either!"

Karen then looked at Roy and said proudly, "Look at our Roy. Although he wasn't graduated from a famous university, he has achieved something through his hard work!"

"Yes!" Paula quickly added, "Be realistic! Roy is a very realistic and practical man. Don't you know he knows a lot of people back to his hometown and in Buckeye?"

Before Paula could finish her words, someone knocked on the door and interrupted her.

"Who is it? Come in." Paula said impatiently, "It's so disappointing. I haven't finished yet."

At the moment Paula finished the last words, the door was pushed open. A young man in a dark brown suit came in. He was wearing a head of shiny hair.

He smiled politely and said, "Folks, welcome to the Empire Hotel. I am the floor manager, Marcus Gilbert."

After Marcus finished speaking, he slightly bowed. Marcus was polite and humble.

He only received Pablo's notice that morning that a very important customer would be dining on his floor.

After some consideration, Marcus decided to greet the customer in person.

The notice was from Pablo directly, so Marcus had to pay extra attention to the service to this customer. He also hoped that he could take the opportunity to know some powerful people.

Marcus was looking forward to this meeting.

Just as Marcus standing straight and getting ready to look around the room, he heard a familiar voice, "Marcus? Why are you... Why are you here?"

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Marcus was surprised at what he heard. He looked toward the person who said that to him.

It was Roy, who spoke those words in astonishment. At this moment, he had stood up, looking surprised and happy.

Marcus was also surprised. At the first sight of Roy, he thought he saw it wrong. Marcus narrowed his eyes and pushed his pair of glasses to check again. He realized that it was indeed Roy Rupert.

"Roy? Why are you here?" Marcus forgot about the manners of a manager and cried out loud.

According to the rules, the manager of the Empire Hotel should treat every customer with etiquette, even if it was someone the manager knew.

However, Roy didn't care about the rules. He pushed the chair aside and walked straight to Marcus, laughing out loud.

"Marcus, I didn't expect that we would meet at a place like this?" Roy said with a smile, "Look at you. Looking sharp with the suit! You looked even younger than the time when we were at school."

Hearing this, Marcus laughed. He patted Roy on the shoulder and said, "Not at all. Roy, you looked so mature now, like a man! I still remember what our class queen said to you when you tried to date her. She said you looked at a child, not mature enough for her. You are so different now!"

Marcus' words made Roy embarrassed. He quickly glanced at Karen, scaring that she would be angry.

Karen's expression did change a little after hearing Marcus' words. She sized up Marcus and whispered to Roy, "Who is he? You know each other long? You do have a lot of friends!"

Karen was insinuating. She wasn't happy about what she had heard, and she planned to interrogate Roy about the class queen once they got to their hotel.

Because Roy had never mentioned this class queen before.

Roy sensed Karen's true meaning. He scratched his head and said, "Karen, let me make the introduction. This is Marcus Gilbert. He was my classmate back in college."

He then said to Marcus, "Marcus, this is my wife, Karen. That is my mother-in-law, Paula."

As a floor manager, Marcus had great social skills. After hearing the introduction, he quickly gave Karen a warm welcome, "Hello, Karen. Nice to meet you. I'm six months younger than Roy, so you can just call me Marcus. Paula, nice to meet you. You look so young. Did anyone say you and Karen look like sisters?"

Marcus was really good at pleasing people. His words made Paula extremely happy, and she couldn't stop smiling.

Karen was also very happy hearing Marcus's nice words.

"Nice to meet you, Marcus," Karen smiled and asked, "Are you working here?"

Marcus nodded modestly and said, "Yes. I am the floor manager. I'm in charge of the floor we are on."

"Wow, Marcus, good for you! You have made it to the floor manager of the Empire Hotel when you are not thirty yet. I bet your future will be bright!" Roy wasn't stingy on his compliment on Marcus.

After a moment of chitchatting, Marcus suddenly realized that another three people were sitting on the other side of the table.

Marcus thought Ethan looked familiar, but he couldn't remember where he saw Ethan before. He asked Roy, "Roy, who are those?"

Roy took a look at Ethan, Linda, and her mom, thinking that their appearances were so much worse than which of himself and the other two.

Roy thought they were poor relatives. If they were in Roy's hometown at the moment, he wouldn't want to tell people that they were his relatives.

But everyone was sitting at the same table, so it was impossible to say he didn't know them.

However, Roy did not want to look bad in front of his friend. He chuckled and said, "Some relatives from hometown. Oh... How long have you been here?"

Roy didn't want to introduce Ethan, Linda, and her mom to Marcus, so he changed the topic.

Marcus could tell Roy's reluctance. However, it made him more curious about who Ethan was.

Ethan often came to the Empire Hotel, and many people had seen him before. A lot of them knew how much Pablo was trying to appease Ethan.

But Marcus forgot about it at the moment. He just said some polite things to Roy.

At this time, a waiter came in and told Marcus that some customers wanted to see him. Marcus then left the room.

However, just after Marcus left the room, he remembered something. Marcus was

stunned. His head suddenly cleared about one thing, and his face distorted.

He muttered to himself, "That... is... is him?"

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Marcus suddenly remembered that he once saw Pablo accompanied a man going downstairs.

And Pablo was very humble to that man.

That man was no other than Ethan!

Marcus then recalled what Pablo had specifically told him. Pablo said that there would be a very important person who would host guests on his floor.

Suddenly, Marcus connected all the dots. Ethan was that very important person, and Roy, Karen, and Paula were his guests.

Thinking of this, Marcus was stunned and curious.

He muttered to himself, "What has Roy been doing these years? How did he make a connection to such a big shot?"

But Marcus also noticed that something didn't feel right in the room.

Roy wasn't so friendly to Ethan. Marcus was curious about what was going on.

However, Marcus couldn't care that much. He thought that Roy had known a big shot like Ethan, so he was definitely doing very good for himself. Marcus told himself that he should be more respectful to Roy.

Roy was his college classmate, and he might become handy one day.

"Roy has a relationship with Ethan, and Ethan is significant in Pablo's eyes," Marcus kept calculating.

He suddenly made another revelation, "The reason Roy was reluctant to introduce Ethan is that he was trying to hide Ethan's identity!"

As an employee, Marcus familiar with such demand from powerful people.

Some big shots didn't like to expose their true identities. Maybe Ethan was one of them.

After Marcus thought he had everything figured out, he was excited and anxious.

He looked at the waitress, who called him out, asking, "What do those customers want? Are they in any hurry? If not, help me stall them for a while. I'll come over later."

Before the waitress could answer, Marcus continued, "All right, you go."

Then Marcus totally ignored the waitress and went back to Ethan's room.

Being left behind, the waitress was confused.

Meanwhile, in the room.

As soon as Marcus left, Karen pushed Roy and asked, "Well done, Roy. Tell me, who is the class queen? Is she beautiful? Are you guys still in touch?"

Roy didn't know how to answer Karen's series of questions. He just awkwardly wiped the cold sweat on his forehead and gave Karen some perfunctory answers.

Ethan was amazed by the scene.

He had thought that Roy was a tough guy. But it turned out Roy was afraid of his wife.

But Ethan's laugh was caught by Karen.

Roy was her husband, and Karen could laugh at Roy as much as she wanted, but she would never allow somebody else laughed at him.

"Hey, what are you laughing at? Is there anything funny? What right do you have to laugh at us?" Linda questioned Ethan sharply.

Ethan didn't seem to care. He replied with a smile, "What's wrong with me laughing? Did I laugh at you? This is my face, and no one can tell me if I can laugh or not!"

Hearing Ethan dared to talk back, Karen was furious. She shouted in anger, "All talks, no action! The floor manager is my Roy's college friend. Who do you know? Temps and janitors?"

Ethan looked indifferent. He replied, "People like you can only see things from your kind of lens. How do you know the manager doesn't know me? Maybe even the owner of the Empire Hotel would have to be very humble to me."

"Bullsh*t! I'll see you..."

Before Karen could finish her words, someone knocked on the door. Marcus carefully walked in without waiting for the reply.

"Haha, I'm really sorry to disturb you all..." Marcus looked at Ethan with an obsequious smile and continued, "Well... I hope I didn't disturb you."

Seeing Marcus returned, Roy asked nicely, "Not at all. Don't be a stranger. Come in!"

Marcus realized the room felt tense. He said in a hurry, "I see you guys are in the middle of something. I don't need to come in. I'll say something in the doorway."

Marcus looked at Ethan and smiled humbly, "It's nothing serious. We haven't seen each other for a long time. I'd like to treat you all to a banquet. Would you like to do me a favor to accept the invitation?"

Roy was a little confused when he heard Marcus' words.

Marcus was in a much better position than Roy's. Marcus was the floor manager of

the Empire Hotel, and he could know a lot of powerful people in Buckeye. Roy didn't understand why Marcus would be so humble all of a sudden.

Besides, Marcus' salary would be thirty thousand dollars per month at least. Roy thought he was much lower than Marcus, but why Marcus wanted to treat him to a banquet?

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Karen and Paula were as confused as Roy was.

All of them were surprised when they heard Marcus' words.

In fact, before Marcus bringing up about treating them to a banquet, they were thinking of buying Marcus dinner.

In Roy's eyes, giving some time to Marcus, he could be the manager of the hotel very soon. At that time, Marcus would be an upper-middle-class person in Buckeye.

And Roy wanted to befriend people like Marcus. He thought he could get a leg up this way.

So Marcus's suggestion made him flustered.

"Is... is this good?" Roy scratched his head and said with an awkward smile, "I should be the one treating you."

Marcus took a look at Ethan awkwardly and said with a smile, "There's nothing wrong with it. Please don't argue with me on this. It's only a meal. I can even pay for the expense while you are here in Buckeye. We are friends, right? Let's not argue about the trivial."

After Marcus finished his words, he quickly looked at Ethan again.

He said those words for Ethan to hear.

Marcus thought if he acted as if Roy and he were good buddies, Ethan would have a good impression of him.

"Marcus, my buddy! I'll go!" Roy didn't know Marcus' real intention. He accepted the invitation happily.

Roy didn't know why Marcus wanted to treat him, but he was happy anyway because Marcus's invitation gave him a sense of superiority.

He thought maybe Marcu was charmed by something about him, or Marcu saw his potentials.

Thinking of those, Roy was feeling smug.

After hearing a positive answer, Marcus was relieved.

His real purpose of approaching Roy was nothing more than to get in touch with Ethan. Marcus was clear how powerful and influential Ethan could be.

He remembered how Pablo, the owner of the Empire Hotel, was extremely humble in front of Ethan.

If Marcus was too rush and blunt toward Ethan, making Ethan annoyed, his plan would disserve his purpose.

Therefore, building a connection with Ethan required a long-term effort. The good thing about Marcus was that he had patience.

He thought that Roy was his edge.

Giving him enough time, Marcus had the confidence that he would be Ethan's acquaintance one day.

And when the time came, even Pablo had to think highly of him.

Marcus used to think that it would be an amazing thing to be the restaurant manager of the Empire Hotel one day.

But from then on, he believed that he could have a more ambitious goal. With the help of Ethan, he could achieve something grander.

"Well, it's settled then!" Marcus smiled with satisfaction. He nodded with a smile at Ethan, notifying his exit. Marcus then left the room.

Ethan had a poker face the whole time. He thought Marcus should be humble and respectful toward him.

Anyone working in the Empire Hotel who had a sense of who Ethan was was very humble and respectful toward Ethan every time he was here.

Marcus's attitude wasn't even good compared with the others'.

However, Ethan didn't pay too much attention to things like that.

In Ethan's eyes, Marcus was just a random person that didn't require Ethan's special attention.

After Marcus had left, Linda's three relatives couldn't calm themselves down for a long time.

"Look!" Paula exclaimed excitedly, "I've told you how great Roy was. Look at it yourself. His friend is the floor manager of the Empire Hotel, and he just invited Roy to a banquet! I'm so proud of my Roy!"

"Of course. In my opinion, that Marcus probably wants to work for you!" Karen said happily, "It's a good thing that Marcus could be part of your gang! If one day he becomes the general manager of the entire Empire Hotel, we will get quite an advantage!"

Losing herself in her fantasy, Karen was hysterical all by herself.

She then turned to look at Ethan. Karen giggled, "Someone is still so stubborn. Look at how people treat my husband!"

"Boring!"

Ethan didn't even care to look at Karen and the other two. He found them ridiculously boring.

Why make such a big fuss! Marcus merely invited them to a meal.

Ethan thought that he wouldn't be this happy even if Pablo invited him to eat at the Empire Hotel every day.

At this moment, someone knocked on the door again. The waitress from earlier walked in, following by a couple of waiters who were holding platters.

The waitress looked at Ethan nervously. She then looked at Linda's mom and said with a smile, "Excuse me, your orders are ready."

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As soon as it was announced that the dishes were ready, Paula was the most excited one.

She had thought that it would be extravagant for her to enjoy an ordinary meal in the Empire Hotel.

But she was escalated when she heard that Ethan was going to order the one point two million dollars set.

"I bet a king couldn't afford a one point two million dollars meal!" Paula thought happily.

She had things planned out in her head. When the dishes were all set, she was going to show them off as much as she could.

Firstly, she was going to snap photos and sent them to the family group chat. Paula wanted to brag about her feast and made people envy her. She wanted to make a statement to those who looked down on her, and those who never get along with her, that Paula Grecic could afford a fancy banquet like that.

Paula couldn't wait to see all of her relatives dumbfounded by her extravagant feast.

She also planned to send those photos to her friend, who had been pretending to be nice to her but hated her secretly.

Because of her husband's passing, Paula's financial situation hadn't been as good as they were.

As a result, those her so-called friends frequently showed-off their high-end cosmetics, designer handbags, and expensive accessories, never caring about Paula's feelings.

She hated them to death.

However, she couldn't do anything about it. They were, in fact, much richer than she was.

But that day was different. Paula was so happy, believing that she could win her competition of wealth for once.

One point two million dollars meal was good enough for Paula to brag about it for the rest of her life.

Paula thought, "I'm going to wait and see what you all could say! No matter what fancy bags, cosmetics, and accessories you all have, none of them can make you look good comparing with my fancy feast!"

The more Paula thought about it, the more excited she became. She even took out her cell phone and stood by for her photoshoot.

Karen and Roy were also excited and curious about what a one point two million dollars meal could look like.

The cost of the meal was the same as which of an apartment at the center of Buckeye City! The feeling must be very extraordinary to eat such a feast.

Karen didn't want to care too much about the cost. She thought she was not the one who would pay the bill anyway. Karen just wanted to eat as much as possible and packed all the leftovers.

As for how Ethan could pay for them, Karen didn't care about it at all. All she wanted was to stuff herself full and take away whatever she could pack up.

Who cared about what would come to Ethan in the end?

Karen couldn't care less about the well-being of her cousin, Linda, let alone a total stranger.

At this time, Ethan was also a little excited.

After all, this was the most sumptuous meal he had ever had in his life so far. How could he not be excited?

Although one point two million dollars was a little expensive for a meal.

But Ethan didn't regret his decision. It was a gift for Linda. As long as Linda liked it, Ethan didn't care how much he might spend.

What Ethan also wanted to see was the expressions on the faces of Paula, Karen, and Roy when all the dishes were on the table.

"Didn't they look down on me the whole time? I'll show you what a rich person looks like!"

Ethan's face was glowing with excitement. He was anticipating the scene in which the dishes being served one by one...

However, the expression on the face of Linda's mom was rather unsightly.

She knew very well that Ethan's purpose of ordering the set was to make Paula and the other two embarrass themselves.

"But the silly kid hasn't known that I've switched the order."

Linda's mom sighed. She could almost see how Ethan would be treated later.

However, Linda's mom didn't think there was anything wrong with that.

In her mind, everyone in that room was a family. Teasing from a family was nothing serious, and it was so much better than wasting one point two million dollars.

Fifty-six dishes, they couldn't even finish one-tenth of them, even if all of the people stuff themselves to death.

So many leftovers, and all of them were so expensive. It was such a waste.

Linda's mom felt it was such a waste to throw away so many extravagant dishes. She asked herself, "Doesn't it also mean that we are throwing away Ethan's one point two million dollars?"

Linda's mom thought that Ethan was still young and naive, and she had to help steer the way for him at important decisions, in case he would regret his decision in the future.

"If he had to hate someone, hate me!" she thought.

Soon, the waiters set all the platters on the table.

Paula was already taking pictures. While taking pictures, she was counting the dishes. She kept sending pictures to the group chat.

"Haha, folks, look! I'm in the Empire Hotel now. Do you know what I'm sending? Those are the most extravagant meal set in Buckeye City. There will be fifty-six dishes, and they cost one point two million dollars! haha..."

As Paula spoke, she counted the dishes on the table. But She was stunned.

She asked the waitress, "You! Why are there only twelve dishes? When will the rest be ready?"