

A black Bugatti slowly ground to a halt outside the yard.

The area was remote, with only a handful of shabby houses in sight. A luxury car was decidedly out of place in such a scene.

The man in the backseat put aside a stack of documents he had been perusing, then changed from his svelte, tailored suit to an old jacket.

Sean twisted around to look at his boss, who had been going through so much trouble traveling back and forth every day. "You used to come here only once or twice a year, Boss," Sean pointed out. "You have villas all over the city. You can just move into in one of them with your wife. Why do you bother going to this dump every single day?"

Ethan threw him a cold glance. "You've been awful talkative lately. Do you have so much time in your hands? If you have nothing better to do, you might as well clean up and tend to these other villas of mine."

Sean immediately shut up and looked away.

Ethan got out of the car. Once he was out of sight, Sean slapped his own cheek, muttering, "You blabbermouth. You spoke too much."

Ethan walked into the house and found Janet stretched out on the sofa, her eyes fixed on her laptop screen. She had cucumber slices plastered to her face, and one of her hands was holding a large tumbler with a straw peeking out of its rim.

"You're back? Have you eaten yet?" She had heard him arrive, yet she just couldn't bear to miss a second

of the TV series she was watching.

Ethan found her endearing. "I already had dinner with a friend," he said softly.

Noticing that her long, slender legs were bare, he quietly fetched the gray blanket from the sofa and draped it over them before plopping down next to her. "How did your job interview go?"

Janet perked up. She closed her laptop, then grabbed the cucumber pieces from her face and popped them into her mouth. "You won't believe what I'm about to say," she said seriously.

But Ethan already knew everything.

Chuckling under his breath, he leaned back and listened intently as Janet recounted the day's events.

"Maybe the company just values your talents," Ethan said lightly when she was done. "I saw your resume yesterday, and even I think that you have excellent skills."

Janet had been looking forward to his shocked face, so she was caught off-guard by his reaction. Ethan didn't seem the slightest bit surprised.

"Maybe," she murmured.

In the end, Janet brushed it off, thinking that the gravity of the situation might be beyond his understanding.

She opened her laptop again, meaning to carry on with her series. But then she paused at the last minute, and looked back at Ethan.

He was reading a magazine beside her, looking all

relaxed and unbothered. His jacket had faded into a dull yellow color, and his jeans were worn-out, but his face more than made up for his clothes. If she didn't know better, she would have even thought they were from vintage designer brands and he had dressed this way on purpose.

"Ethan," Janet said, her curiosity getting the better of her. "What on earth is it that you do?"

All she knew about him, apart from his name, was that he had this small house, a deceased mother, and the Lester family that had abandoned him for being a bastard child. When it came down to it, she knew virtually nothing at all.

Moreover, he always went out early in the morning and came home late in the evening. He often looked tired, too, which could mean that he was toiling rather hard throughout the day.

Ethan put down the magazine he was reading and picked up a different one from the coffee table. "I'm something of a part-time worker. I do odd jobs here and there."

He paused then, as if an idea had just occurred to him. He lifted his eyes and looked at Janet sharply. "I'm afraid I don't have a stable job. Do you think you'll grow to resent me for it?"

"Of course not," she replied without a second's hesitation. Janet didn't care about these things; she just happened to ask out of mild interest.

'I'm awfully poor and she's okay with it?'

Ethan was taken aback by her response. His eyes gradually softened. He cleared his throat and was about to tell her that he would work hard in order to

earn more in the future, but the woman beside him beat him to the punch. "In any case, we're nothing more than a couple in name. I didn't actually expect you to support me. Don't put too much pressure on yourself."

Ethan's grip tightened on the magazine.

"I see," he said after a while, his voice low and cold.

Janet peered at him, confused at the sudden shift in his mood.

It was he who had proposed a contractual marriage in the first place, and she had just said that she wouldn't take his circumstances against him. What was he so displeased about?

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