

THE SUBSTITUTE WIFE MY POOR HUSBAND IS A BILLIONAIRE

Chapter 560: Passed Out

Later that evening, Janet went to the Michelin–starred restaurant Ethan had booked.

Wearing just a simple T–shirt and jeans, Janet stood out like a sore thumb in the fancy restaurant. Sitting opposite her was a calm man with a cold temperament. He propped his chin on his palm and watched helplessly as the woman tinkered with her iPad.

"Is your work really that urgent?"

Seeing the dark circles under Janet's eyes, Ethan felt tired for her. It had been half an hour since Janet sat down. She had been on her iPad that whole time, tirelessly working on her design drafts. Janet broke off a piece of a cookie and popped it into her mouth.

"We just received two big orders. Plus, we're launching another line this coming fashion week. Everyone's been so busy lately. In fact, Elizabeth's still in the office." Ethan frowned slightly and plucked the iPad from her hands.

"Can you take a look at me for one second? You can continue working after dinner. I won't take up too much of your time, I promise."

With the iPad taken away from her, Janet looked at him sheepishly.

"Sorry, honey. I've just been so busy at work lately. When my schedule frees up, how about we go on a trip?"

"So you're aware that you've been neglecting me?" Ethan grumbled.

Realizing he was whining like a child, he coughed in embarrassment and cut the steak for Janet.

"Let's eat first."

Janet put on a charming smile and ate the steak that Ethan had cut into bite-size pieces for her. As she chewed, she looked around the restaurant, deep in thought.

"This restaurant's design is pretty simple but elegant. The color scheme will look good on clothes, I think."

"Why's your mind still on work?" Ethan felt both helpless and amused.

"Please pay attention to your husband, whom you've neglected for so many days."

From under the table, Janet gently touched Ethan's thigh and smiled innocently.

"But I've never neglected you in bed."

With his chin resting on his palm, Ethan's eyebrows shot up. The more he got to know Janet, the more he felt that she was two different people in and out of bed. Her eyes sparkling, Janet continued, "It's really inspiring to work with Draco. He makes me enjoy being a workaholic. And when you're doing something you're passionate about, you'll really forget everything else."

"Good evening. It's a special night for couples. Tonight, we're giving out complimentary drinks to the couples dining here. Please enjoy."

Just then, a waiter approached with two glasses of drinks and some dessert.

Staring at Ethan's glass, Janet commented, "Your drink is prettier than mine. Yours looks glittery somehow."

"Then let's exchange,"

Ethan suggested with a smile. He handed Janet his glass, and the latter marveled at it for a long time.

The color of this glass of drink was like a mix of blue and purple, like the Milky Way galaxy, shining and beautiful. She took a sip and her eyes widened in surprise.

"It's delicious! Would you like to have a taste?"

Looking at the colorful girly drink, Ethan wasn't interested at all. He proceeded to eat his steak and said, "I can't drink. I have to drive later."

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After dinner, Janet went back to the studio to continue working.

The deadline was fast approaching. She had been working tirelessly for a few more days.

One night, Elizabeth showed the rest of her design drawings to Janet.

After a while, she frowned and said, "You don't look well, Janet. Do you want to take a break?"

"Just a little sleepy. I'll have another cup of coffee later and I'm sure I'll be fine." Janet shook her head and smiled.

"Anyway, are these drawings done? I'll go through them later."

Seeing that Janet was completely immersed in work, Elizabeth didn't say anything more.

Anyway, after tonight, they would finally have some days off. She set down the drawings and turned to leave.

Suddenly, she heard a loud thud from behind her. Elizabeth immediately turned around and found that Janet had passed out and fallen to the ground.

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Chapter 561: Her Heart Stopped



"Janet!"

Seeing Janet unconscious on the ground, Elizabeth hurried back to help her up. Only then did she realize just how pale Janet's face had become. She anxiously wiped the sweat off Janet's forehead and said, "Answer me if you can hear me, Janet!"

But Janet didn't respond.

In a panic, Elizabeth held Janet's wrist to feel her pulse. She even unbuttoned Janet's shirt and lowered her head to listen for a heartbeat.

"What on earth..."

Elizabeth was scared out of her wits. Her eyes were full of shock and all the color drained from her face. She couldn't feel a pulse, nor could she hear Janet's heartbeat! She stood up and looked around in a panic. It was already the wee hours of the morning.

Most of the other colleagues had already gone home.

The whole office was dark, save for Draco's office.

"Mr. Wesley, are you there?" Elizabeth shouted urgently.

"Janet has fainted. We have to take her to the hospital right now!"

As soon as Draco opened the door, he saw Janet on the ground.

Eyes widened, he ran to her side, asking Elizabeth, "What happened?"

"I don't know exactly." Elizabeth shook her head.

"She was fine one second, and the next, she passed out."

"Let's see if we can revive her. Maybe it's because she has been working non-stop."

Although Draco had never studied medicine, he had received training on CPR before, so he immediately began to treat Janet. He grabbed a cushion from the nearest chair and put it under Janet's head.

Then he lay her body flat on the ground.

Disregarding everything, he unbuttoned Janet's shirt, crossed his hands over her chest and tried to revive her.

After hesitating for a few seconds, Elizabeth said falteringly, "Mr. Wesley, do you think I should do it?"

Draco didn't answer.

He was too focused on giving Janet CPR.

Without pausing to look at Elizabeth, he said, "This is not the time to worry about social conduct. Go get the office building's AED equipment and call 911. If this doesn't work, we'll have no choice but to wait for the ambulance."

Just now, Draco couldn't hear Janet's heartbeat. It seemed that she was in a temporary coma.

The only thing he could do now was to give her CPR as best as he could.

Elizabeth was usually a calm and collected woman, but right now, she was in a state of sheer panic.

Without saying anything, she ran downstairs to get the AED and handed it to Draco. Then she called 911.

Draco switched on the AED and stared at Janet's bra hesitantly.

After weighing his options, he took off her bra for her. He had to.

Holding his breath, he concentrated on the procedure and quickly pressed the two paddles against Janet's chest.

"1, 2, 3...Clear!"

But seconds passed and Janet still wasn't breathing and her lips started to turn a deathly shade of blue. Sweat started to form on his forehead.

Draco gritted his teeth and repeated the procedure.

This time, he finally got results. Janet's heart started and she gasped for breath. While her life wasn't in fatal danger anymore, she was still unconscious. Draco's clothes were soaked in cold sweat.

Fortunately, about ten minutes later, the ambulance arrived.

Draco hoisted Janet up and helped her get on the ambulance.

At the headquarters of the Larson Group's Barnes branch. It was already past midnight when Ethan's meeting ended. He was about to go home when he received a call.

"Mr. Larson, you have to come to the hospital. Janet's in critical danger."

Ethan instantly recognized Draco's voice.

"I'll be right there."

Without a minute to lose, Ethan rushed to the hospital Draco mentioned.

When he arrived, there was already a small crowd of people standing by the door to the emergency room.

Beal and Johanna had also rushed there as soon as Draco called.

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Chapter 562: History Of Heart Disease



"What's going on? Is Janet okay? Draco Wesley, we demand an explanation right this instant!"

Beal wasn't as gentle and collected as he usually was.

His eyes were cold and dead serious.

"We let our daughter work in your studio for experience—not for her to end up in a hospital!"

Both Beal and Johanna knew that Janet had been working overtime these past few days.

With his eyes lowered, Draco felt a little guilty.

When he was about to speak, the doctor: came out of the emergency room and interrupted him.

"This is a hospital. Please mind your manners. Plus, this young man here actually did a great job. You should be thanking him. If he hadn't given your daughter first aid in time she wouldn't have made it here alive. There are very few cases in which people who suffer from a cardiac arrest are successfully revived. If he had given her CPR immediately, she would've died."

The doctor glanced at Beal and explained the situation.

Johanna didn't care about the trivialities in that moment. She rushed to the doctor and asked, "How is she now? Is she going to make it?"

"She's undergoing a few tests right now, but we do know that her heart stopped because of over-palpitation. We've hooked her onto an IV line, so she should recover in a while. You can see her later."

The doctor smiled and shook his head wryly.

"She came close, but you don't have to worry anymore. She's going to make it. But I must ask—does your daughter have a history of heart complications?"

She had to pay more attention to her health. She

shouldn't work overtime too often. Although this kind of thing rarely happens twice, it would be even more dangerous if it does happen again. Please be careful."

Hearing this, Ethan couldn't help but frown tightly.

"She has no history of heart disease. If she had, she would've told me."

The doctor was confused for a few seconds.

"How about her family? Do you two or any of her relatives suffer from a heart condition?"

Johanna shook her head adamantly.

"We're all healthy. I've never heard of anyone in my family who had a heart condition."

The doctor frowned and mulled over this new bit of information.

"Maybe it's because your daughter worked too hard and her heart stopped because of excessive fatigue. I'll check on her again. If she really has no heart problem, then there's no need for any further treatment. She just needs more rest and less stress."

Then, having answered all their questions, the doctor left.

In the ward, when Janet finally peeled her eyes open, she saw everyone staring at her.

Confused, her mind went blank.

"What's going on?"

Seeing her wake up, Johanna and Beal breathed a sigh of relief.

"You promised me you wouldn't work overtime anymore and would pay more attention to your health. You broke your promise!"

As Johanna spoke, her voice broke and she burst into tears.

"You worked too hard and fainted at the studio. The doctor said that you were lucky you received CPR in time, or you would've died. You should thank Draco for saving your life."

Janet's face was still a little pale. She turned to look at Draco with difficulty.

"Thank you, Mr. Wesley."

Draco shook his head briefly.

"It's nothing."

Johanna wiped her tears away and put on a brave smile.

"I'm sorry about what we said just now, Mr. Wesley. Please forgive us. We're just too worried about our daughter. After Janet is discharged from the hospital, we'd love to have you over for dinner."

Taking a glance at Janet, who was looking back at him encouragingly, Draco didn't refuse.

Now that Janet was awake and out of danger, everyone felt as though a huge burden had been lifted off of their shoulders.

Janet didn't know why she had fainted out of the blue.

Although she was still a little weak, she actually felt better now. She thought that maybe it was just hypoglycemia.

She would be fine if she paced herself at work in the future.

Only Ethan kept silent the whole time.

Sitting on the sofa, he looked so gloomy that nobody dared to approach him. He stared straight at Janet, and nobody knew what he was thinking.

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Chapter 563: Poisoned



"Ethan, what's on your mind?"

Janet looked at her gloomy husband questioningly.

Ethan was sitting quietly on the sofa with furrowed brows and a deep-set frown.

"Anything wrong?"

Janet pursed her lips worriedly.

"Nothing. It's just work. I rushed here straight from work when I heard you were in the hospital," Ethan answered perfunctorily.

"You should go back then. I'll be fine here." Janet smiled.

Just then, the door to the ward swung open.

"Janet! Are you feeling better?"

Garrett strode in with several bags of tonics.

Seeing so many people in the ward, he stopped in his tracks and said sorry.

Bearing gifts, he walked over to Ethan on the sofa.

Garrett's sharp eyes picked up on Ethan's gloominess instantly. He lowered his voice and asked, "What's wrong?"

I was in bed, and then looked back at Ethan.

"Janet's fine. What's with the long face?" Ethan didn't answer.

His cold eyes swept across the people in the ward.

In a low voice, he said to Garret, "Let's talk outside."

As he spoke, he stood up and headed for the door.

Once outside, he took out his phone and called Frank "You haven't contacted me in months. I thought you've forgotten all about me."

Frank's tone was flat and blunt.

Perhaps he was still angry that Garrett and Ethan hadn't called him since they moved to Barnes.

"I'll ask my assistant to book you a flight. I need you to come to Barnes right away."

Without saying anything more, he hung up before Frank could respond. Overhearing Ethan's conversation just now, Garrett realized the gravity of the situation.

"Is Janet sick?"

"No." Ethan shook his head. His eyes were as dark and cloudy as the night sky.

"The murderer from twenty years ago has resurfaced."

After saying that, he went back to the ward and gave some instructions to the attending medical staff.

"Please draw some of her blood and save it for testing."

Everyone looked at Ethan in confusion.

Janet also frowned and asked, "Why? What's wrong?"

Ethan didn't go into any details. He simply walked over to her bedside and stroked her hair gently.

"There's something I just want to check."

Frank landed in Bames around midnight, and Ethan came to pick him up personally.

"What's up? You sounded really serious on the phone earlier," Frank asked.

Ethan handed Janet's blood sample to him and said, "Check if there's anything suspicious. Can you get any test equipment you need."

Frank took the blood sample, confused, but didn't ask more questions.

A few days later, Frank called Ethan with the results. His voice sounded surprised.

"Whose blood did you give me? There are trace amounts of poison in it. Whoever owns this blood was poisoned."

When Ethan received Frank's phone call, he was at home with Janet.

When he heard what Frank had to say, his expression hardened.

"Wait," he said to Frank in a low voice.

Ever since Janet was discharged from the hospital, she had been given a short holiday so that she could properly recuperate at home.

Janet didn't think there was anything seriously wrong with her.

Still, she was glad to have some time off to keep Ethan company.

"Stay put in bed, honey," Ethan said to Janet gently.

"I'll be right back."

After tucking her in, Ethan stood up and left the room, making sure to close the door behind him. He went downstairs and continued his conversation with Frank on the phone.

"What kind of poison are we talking about?"

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Chapter 564: Murderer Resurfaced



"It's a very dangerous and rare kind of poison that can cause heart palpitation, which later leads to a sudden cardiac arrest," Frank answered seriously.

"It takes time for it to take effect, with an incubation period of around one or two days once it enters the human body." Ethan's expression darkened. Frank didn't know what was on his mind because Ethan kept silent.

"Who owns the blood?" Frank asked again.

"If it's someone close to you, you'd better have a few more tests done. If the poison is still in their system, their life may still be in danger."

"Keep the sample and the test results safe," Ethan said in a dangerously low voice.

Frank didn't ask any more questions.

Judging from Ethan's slightly trembling voice, he realized the gravity of the situation and fell silent. He hadn't seen Ethan like this in a long time.

Ethan hung up the phone without another word.

Just then, he heard footsteps coming from the stairs. Janet came downstairs wrapped in a blanket.

Just now, she saw how Ethan's expression changed after receiving the phone call. She was a little worried, so she came out to check on him.

After hanging up, Ethan stood there motionlessly, his eyes as dark as night.

Janet looked at him worriedly, not knowing what was going on in his mind.

"Honey, what's wrong?" she asked with concern.

Just now, she had heard the word "poison" from Ethan's mouth.

Ethan's eyes widened as he slowly looked up at Janet by the stairs. He put on a faint smile and calmly walked over to her. He wrapped the blanket around her more tightly and said in a gentle voice, "Let's go to the hospital later so that they can run more tests."

"But I'm perfectly healthy," Janet protested.

"Can you tell me what's going on? Why'd you ask the doctor to take my blood sample?" Ethan looked at her and sighed.

"I asked Frank to run tests on your blood. My mother died from a sudden cardiac arrest, and she had no prior history of heart disease. Before she died, she told me to be wary of Elissa. At the time, we were regarded as Elissa's enemies. Although I was young back then, even I knew that she wanted to have me and my mother killed. One day, my mother was working outside when my neighbor suddenly rushed in to tell me that she had died on the street. The

forensic experts and police did not find anything suspicious about her death and chalked it up to natural causes."

"Do you think Elissa was behind your mother's sudden death?" Ethan nodded grimly.

"Yes. I've been secretly investigating the truth about my mother's death all these years. So when I heard what the doctor said about your condition, I suspected that someone was trying to murder you and immediately called Frank over to have him test your blood. Sure enough, he told me that you had been poisoned."

His tone grew more and more grave.

"All these years, I had done everything in my power to find out how Elissa had my mother killed, but I never came close. I didn't expect that someone had poisoned her to cause her sudden cardiac

arrest. Nor did I expect that Elissa would try to do the exact same thing again after so many years."

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Chapter 565: The Way Execute A Poisoning



Even in her wildest dreams, Janet had never expected to find out that Elissa was so cruel and merciless.

"So according to you, Elissa is the one responsible for poisoning me? But what motive did she have to do that? I barely know that woman at all. Killing me wouldn't benefit her in any way."

Janet was wholly taken aback by what she had been told.

At the same time, however, she felt that it would be highly unusual for Elissa to have any desire to poison her.

All it would have done was expose her, which, in all honesty, was somewhat stupid in the grand scheme of things. Ethan said with absolute certainty, "I think that I must have been her prime target. Perhaps you became the victim purely by accident."

In the past, Elissa had tried to murder him on numerous occasions. However, she was yet to succeed. She probably just wanted to take another shot at it now. However, he was no longer the Ethan he used to be.

After that, Ethan took Janet to the hospital for two more thorough check-ups. They didn't leave until Ethan was absolutely certain and convinced that she was fine.

Janet sat in the car, watching the passing scenery flash by, when she asked, "Ethan, do you remember we went to a Michelin star restaurant for dinner a few days ago? We haven't had a chance to have dinner together lately, except for that night. Do you think that was when I was poisoned? She wanted to poison you. I could have eaten the food that was originally meant for you by mistake, so I inadvertently became victim."

The Michelin star restaurant left a long-lasting and deep impression on Janet. It had an amazing ambience, delicately balanced cuisine and delicious wine.

When Ethan heard her words, the restaurant also popped into his mind.

Recently, Janet had become very busy with her work, so they seldom spent time together.

During that time, Sean was the person who was responsible for bringing Ethan his food to his office.

Sean was his right-hand man so he was certain that the safety and quality of the food he brought him was guaranteed.

If anyone did want to poison Ethan, they would have to take the chance while he was out eating at a restaurant.

Last time Ethan ate out, he had dined with Janet at that three star Michelin restaurant.

"True. It must have happened at the restaurant," he conceded after some thought.

His sixth sense told him that something was amiss. He immediately instructed the driver, "Take us straight to Iris."

Outside the Iris restaurant, Janet got out of the car and saw the 'closed' sign on the door of the restaurant. She had an even more peculiar feeling about the place.

"I passed by here yesterday and it was still open. Why did they suddenly close for no reason?"

Ethan snorted and called the security of the Larson Group.

After a while, three minibuses arrived at the door of the restaurant. More than a dozen bodyguards got out of the minibuses and waited for Ethan's order.

"Break down the door."

Ethan then took Janet back into the car and waited leisurely. The restaurant was now closed. This was a clear indication that something was indeed wrong.

A dozen of bodyguards smashed the door of the restaurant in a few minutes, and then found the restaurant manager. One of the bodyguards grabbed the manager by the collar and dragged him to Ethan.

The startled manager asked in a trembling voice, "Sir, what can I do for you? Let's be civil and talk it out, shall we?" Ethan didn't like people playing dumb with him. He raised his chin slightly and said, "Get all your waiters here."

Ethan remembered the waiter who brought them the complimentary drinks that day. The manager didn't dare to refuse his request, so he summoned all the employees to the front.

Ethan soon recognized two familiar faces among the crowd. He made a beckoning gesture with his finger, and the bodyguards immediately understood his command.

They directly took the two waiters away. In less than a day, the two waiters fessed up. They had received a woman's money and put something in Ethan's glass that day.

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Chapter 566: The Truth About Sylvia's Death



After the collapse of the cinema in Barnes, Patrick warned Elissa and took away most of her power over Lester Silk Fabric. She dared not to act rashly and had been lying low since then. But Elissa was so anxious to get Ethan out

of the picture. He was a huge threat to her, and the sooner she could get rid of him, the better.

Ethan had been a threat to her ever since he was born, like his mother, whom Elissa had viewed as her arch enemy. And she knew that if Ethan found out that she was behind this, he wouldn't let her go. She couldn't just sit still any longer, waiting for Ethan to take his revenge. She had to do something. From that day on, Elissa had been spending all her time thinking about how to eliminate Ethan once and for all. It wasn't until Ritchie mentioned it in passing that an idea finally occurred to her.

"How did Ethan's mom die anyway? From some kind of heart condition, right? Maybe Ethan has it, too. I heard that heart conditions are genetic."

"You idiot, Sylvia didn't have—"

Just as Elissa was about to roll her eyes, she abruptly fell silent and her eyes lit up. She knew exactly how Sylvia died.

Twenty years ago, she got her hands on a newly developed poison by chance.

When ingested by a human, the poison could cause palpitation and consequently, sudden cardiac arrest after two or three days.

Moreover, it was difficult to trace and therefore made for the best murder weapon.

And this is the very poison she used to murder Sylvia.

As expected, her death was chalked up to natural causes, and nobody suspected foul play.

Recalling this, Elissa wondered if she could use the same trick on Ethan. Because of the heavy workload these days, there had been many cases of cardiac arrest caused by stress.

As the CEO of the flourishing Larson Group, Ethan was always neck deep in work.

Elissa was sure that if he suddenly died from cardiac arrest, no one would suspect it was a murder.

Thinking of this, Elissa bought another vial of the very same poison she used to kill Sylvia.

Although Elissa had lost her power over the family business, she still had a lot of money of her own. So she hired someone to follow Ethan.

When she found out that he had made a reservation in a restaurant, she bribed two waiters to spike his wine.

When everything was set in place, Elissa returned to Seacisco. She waited confidently for the news of Ethan's death.

Unexpectedly, that news never came; instead, it was Janet who suffered from a sudden cardiac arrest— and she had survived, nonetheless! How could this have happened? Hearing the news, Elissa grew increasingly flustered.

Since Ethan was alive, it meant that he would definitely look into this incident.

Moreover, his mother had died from a similar instance. He might get suspicious and eventually trace it back to her.

Elissa immediately contacted the owner of the restaurant and managed to get him to agree to suspend their business for a few days.

At least, she had to do something to cover her tracks.

Despite all her effort, Elissa wasn't able to get rid of the waiters that had been bought off by her.

When she rushed over to Barnes, she was too late.

The two waiters had been taken away by Ethan.

Worried that she'd be caught, Elissa flew back to Seacisco right away. She didn't know how things went, but Ethan was a resourceful man.

Now that he had the witnesses, Elissa knew he'd find a lot of evidence that'd point to her.

Elissa was so flustered that she didn't dare to leave her home for the next few days.

One day, a servant knocked on the door urgently.

"Mrs. Lester, we have received an indictment for you."

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Chapter 567: Two Cases



Ethan had been very busy these days.

Seeing him go out so early and come back so late every day, Janet started to wonder what he was up to exactly.

Ethan was indeed very busy, but he didn't tell Janet why right away.

When he found the evidence that Janet was poisoned, he hired the best private detective in Seacisco.

"What? A twenty-year-old case? The streets have been torn down and rebuilt and houses have been demolished and reconstructed; the world has changed a lot. This is going to be complicated, to say the least."

This private detective used to be a journalist for Seaciscso's famous Gossip Weekly. He was well-informed and resourceful.

"Be that as it may, I believe in you." Ethan pulled out a newspaper from that year and slid it across the table.

"I want the information of everyone who had had contact with this woman and Elissa Lester." He had to dig deeper into the death of his mother. This had to be a lead. Time passed. It took the detective a lot of effort and resources to find the people related to the case Ethan brought up.

Most of the witnesses had either aged or died over the years, while the rest had moved away. However, there was still a glimmer of hope. Most of the people who had had contact with Elissa still lived in Seacisco. They relied on the Lester family to make a living.

Everyone covered up for Elissa, trying hard to conceal the truth. It probably never crossed their mind that Sylvia's death would be investigated again after twenty years.

The detective gathered all the information he could find and passed it on to Ethan, who then found the man who had sold Elissa the poison.

Now that the evidence was stacked up against Elissa, Ethan sued her under two charges: murder and attempted murder.

Afraid that things might go awry, he put the best lawyers of the Larson Group in charge of the case.

The indictment instantly became a sensation.

Two major cases, the poisoning of Janet and the death of Sylvia, was enough to draw in the attention of the public.

It didn't take long before the news reached Patrick's ears. It wasn't the first time Elissa had humiliated him. He felt both shocked and angry, but at the same time, he began to worry about the stock price of Lester Silk Fabric.

Although Ethan was his bastard son, he still carried the Lester family name. He didn't think it was right for Ethan to humiliate the whole family just because he hated Elissa.

Patrick was so angry that he personally went to Barnes to see Ethan on the day he found out about the news.

"Ethan Lester! You really have the gall, don't you?" Patrick spat aggressively.

"Your wife killed my mother, and now, in trying to kill me, she almost killed my wife," Ethan said calmly.

"Let's settle the old and new grudges together. I'm telling you—I won't give her the chance to get away with her crimes."

Patrick's eyes went as wide as saucers. He knew about Sylvia's sudden death, but he didn't think too much about it.

After all, Sylvia was just some woman he had a one night stand with.

Moreover, he needed Elissa and her family's support, so he had to turn a blind eye to the fact that Elissa hated Sylvia to the core. Now that he thought about it, he found it highly possible that Elissa had killed Sylvia.

And he also knew that Elissa wanted to kill Ethan, too.

After all, she had already tried once. Ethan had enough evidence to prove it. The man was no longer the loser he used to be. He had the Larson Group, and Patrick couldn't do anything about it.

Seeing the hesitation in Patrick's eyes, Ethan sneered coldly.

"Since you have nothing else to say, get out. Now!"

Patrick clenched his fists and stormed off angrily. He had already warned that damned woman, but Elissa didn't take him seriously at all.

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Chapter 568: The Police



In the Lester family home, Seacisco. Elissa was so anxious that she kept smoking non-stop. The whole living room was shrouded in a cloud of smoke.

When Ritchie heard the news, he called Elissa and tried to comfort her.

"Mom, don't worry. Ethan's just a lowly bastard. What could he possibly do to us?"

"Grow up, Ritchie! We're not facing Ethan Lester now. We're facing Brandon Larson, the CEO of the Larson Group. He could destroy us with a snap of his fingers!"

Elissa cried.

Ritchie still didn't think it was a big deal.

"We have dad on our side, remember? He'll help us."

Speaking of the devil, Patrick arrived. Elissa overheard the servant answering the door and greeting respectfully, "Mr. Lester."

"I have to go. Your father's back."

Elissa immediately put the phone away.

Quickly extinguishing the cigarette in her hand, she stuffed the butt under the sofa cushion. She quickly calmed herself down and put on a calm smile. She walked over to take Patrick's coat and asked gently, "Have you had dinner yet?"

Patrick cast a glance at her and shrugged off his coat.

There was no trace of anger on his face.

Elissa took the heavy coat and sighed with relief.

Just when she thought she had dodged a bullet, Patrick suddenly slapped her across the face hard.

The blow made Elissa scream and fall to her knees.

Patrick undid the cuffs on his sleeves, his chest heaving violently.

His face livid, he demanded, "What the hell have you done?"

Elissa was in a panic. She cradled her swollen cheek and glared at Patrick defiantly.

"What have I done? Patrick Lester! How many times have you hit me now?"

"You're still going to try to hide it from me?" Patrick roared angrily.

"Ethan has sued you! He has enough evidence to put you behind bars for good!"

Elissa gnashed her teeth and glared at Patrick ferociously.

Knowing that she couldn't deny it anymore, she let it all out in howls.

"I did it for you and the Lester family! Ethan hates us and has always been our enemy! I wanted to get rid of him for the sake of the whole family!"

"You're still trying to make excuses for your unforgivable actions?!"

Patrick was so angry that his face contorted and turned purple. He wanted to beat the life out of this vicious woman.

"I warned you not to do anything to him again. I gave you one more chance and you went behind my back! Now that he has evidence against you, I can't help you. I refuse, to help you!"

Elissa was shell-shocked. She looked at Patrick in disbelief, and struggled to stand on her feet.

"What was that supposed to mean? Are you saying you're going to abandon me? Patrick, have you forgotten how my family has helped you? You owe me!"

Patrick looked down at her coldly.

"I refuse to have a murderer as a wife. I want a divorce. You brought this upon yourself."

At the mention of the word "divorce", all the color drained from Elissa's face. She fell to the ground as if she had been struck by lightning.


Without an ounce of sympathy, Patrick left her lying on the ground. A few minutes later, a servant suddenly rushed over and screamed, "Ma'am! The police are at the door!"

Elissa wanted to run away, but she couldn't. She could do nothing but burst into tears. At last, two policemen took her away.

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Chapter 569: Seth Returned





Ritchie was away on a business trip to another city. Since his last phone call with his mother, he had put the matter out of his mind. He thought it was not a big deal and nothing would happen.

However, when he finally returned home, he looked around the place but didn't see Elissa. He asked the servant curiously, "Where is my mother? She should be playing cards with the other wealthy ladies at home at this time."

The servant faltered, "Mrs. Lester... She was arrested by the police two days ago."

"Does my dad know about this?" Ritchie was flabbergasted.

"Didn't he stop them?"

The servant didn't know the details and simply said, "Sir, you will have to ask Mr. Lester yourself. I don't have the answers."

Ritchie rushed to Patrick, who was busy in the middle of a meeting. His secretary and assistant tried to stop Ritchie from barging in.

In a fit of rage, he pushed them aside and stormed into the board room.

"Dad, aren't you going to do something about Mom? You just stood there and watched Ethan put her in jail?" Ritchie said, enraged.

Patrick's face darkened. He had made up his mind and wouldn't falter in his resolve. He said, "There is no room for discussion about this. If you don't want me to get angry, you better get out of my sight right this instant."

Ritchie clenched his teeth in fury. When he was just about to say something, Patrick's secretary entered the office and whispered something covertly in Patrick's ear.

"Sir, Mr. Seth Lester has returned. He is waiting for you in your office."

Ritchie managed to overhear the whisper and was quite pleasantly surprised by the information.

"Seth has returned?"

Seth would be much helpful than him.

Patrick had always held Seth in much higher regard than him.

Upon hearing this, Patrick's face darkened. He announced the end of the meeting and went back to his office.

At that moment, there was a man in a smart brown suit sitting in Patrick's office.

The man was in his thirties and looked like he belonged to the circle of the business elite.

Like a refined gentleman, he smiled at the assistant who brought him coffee and thanked her with a certain sort of charm.

After the assistant left, he picked up the cup of coffee and raised his gaze. He saw Patrick, who came in with Ritchie behind him.

"Dad, Ritchie."

Seth put down the cup, crossed his legs and observed them carefully.

Seth had lived in Sugden for many years.

Since he got married, he had seldom come back to Seacisco for anything.

"Did you come back for your Mom?"

Patrick got straight to the point and took a seat on the couch next to him.

Seth's relationship with Elissa was not as close as that of Ritchie's.

However, no matter what, Elissa was still his mother and he couldn't sit back and do nothing about her imprisonment.

However, he knew that Patrick was a cold and ruthless man.

Under such circumstances, he knew there was nothing he could say to change Patrick's mind.

He and Ritchie had to help their mother out of jail by themselves.

"No, Dad. I always respect your decisions. I came back mainly to see you. I haven't seen you for a long time. I thought we should have a small get together."

Seth remained calm. He didn't make any mention about Elissa.

"I'm busy these days. I'm divorcing your mother, and I need to go to the lawyer's office later,"

Patrick unbuttoned his suit buttons and looked exhausted.

"I have a meeting scheduled to start quite soon. You two catch up."

After saying that, Patrick left. Seeing that Patrick had left, Ritchie became anxious.

"Seth, why didn't you say anything about Mom? If you don't care about her at all, why did you even bother coming back here?"

Seth signaled his brother to calm down and said, "Don't worry. Dad doesn't intend to do anything, but it seems he won't stop us from trying to get Mom out of jail."

As he played with the ring on his ring finger, Seth's eyes turned cold. He frowned and said, "Before I came back, I investigated the matter in great detail. Ethan has collected all the evidence he needs to convict Mom. The Larson Group is equally as powerful as the Lester Group. He has all the

evidence and we don't even have Dad's support. The odds are against us so this might be tricky."

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Chapter 570: Avenged Your Mother



In the courthouse of Seacisco. It didn't take long before the jury came to a conclusion. The evidence given by Ethan was clear, concise, and in a word, damning.

Because the two families involved were equally powerful, the case could only be presented with evidence.

In the end, the judge confirmed the authenticity of the evidence Ethan had put out.

Ethan won the trial.

Elissa was rendered guilty of the two charges, the intentional homicide twenty years ago and the recent attempted murder.

When the verdict was announced, Seth raised his eyebrows and looked at Ethan. They hadn't seen each other in years, and in Seth's eyes, Ethan had changed a lot.

Ethan noticed the man's gaze and turned to look straight at him. The two locked eyes.

Seth smiled politely at him, but the smile was somewhat unfathomable. He nodded at Ethan, turned around, and then left.

The second he walked out of the courthouse, Ritchie couldn't hold it in any longer and exploded.

"Fuck!"

His nostrils flared as he roared, "Dad really didn't help! Mom stayed loyal to him for years and she only tried to get rid of Ethan for our family's sake. If Dad did something, things might've turned out differently!"

"Calm down. Someone could hear you."

Seth put his hand on Ritchie's shoulder and warned him in a low voice.

Ritchie had always had a bad temper, ever since he was a child.

Ritchie had no choice but to clamp his mouth shut.

Seth talked to the lawyer in a hushed voice for a while. He was still calm. He had never seen Ethan as a threat and never understood why Elissa was so wary of him.

Even if he did view Ethan as a threat, he never would've resorted to murder.

Killing someone was such a despicable way to deal with them.

As a businessman, he always defeated his enemies by means of business.

Now that Elissa's crimes had been exposed, she had to face the consequences.

But now, Seth finally saw Ethan in a different light.

Over the years, while living in Sugden, he had heard stories of the legendary Brandon Larson, but he had never met him in person.

So it came as a complete shock when he found out that Brandon Larson was actually Ethan.

Seth was older than Ritchie and Ethan, so he went to a different school. He had only remembered seeing Ethan twice when he was still a young schoolboy.

At the time, he had thought Ethan was just a shy introvert.

It seemed that he had severely underestimated his youngest brother.

This was the first time that Seth really saw what Ethan was capable of.

On the day the verdict came out, Ethan took the verdict to Sylvia's grave.

The cemetery was overgrown with thick grass, and it was quiet.

The air was thick with the scent of flowers and pine trees.

Ethan stood in front of his mother's grave solemnly.

All of a sudden, he pulled out his lighter, lit the document in his hand, and burned it to dust. He didn't say a word until the paper was nothing but ashes, floating with the wind.

Standing next to him, Janet didn't know what to say to comfort him. She put her hand on his back and said gently, "You've finally avenged your mother."


Ethan ran his fingers over the words engraved on the tombstone, and his eyes landed on the black and white photo on the tombstone. He withdrew his gaze from the gentle woman in the photo and looked into the distance silently.

After a long time, he said, "I'm not done yet."

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Chapter 571: Put You Behind Bars





On the way back home from the cemetery, Janet could tell that Ethan's mind was elsewhere. He seemed to be planning something elaborate. He leaned quietly against the car window, absentmindedly looking at the passing scenery.

As soon as they entered the house, they heard the phone in the living room ringing nonstop. Ethan shrugged off his coat and trotted over to the telephone to answer it. He still didn't say anything, as if he was expecting the call.

After a while, it seemed that the person on the other end of the phone had finished speaking, and Ethan hung up, still without saying a word.

"Who was that? Why didn't you say anything?" Janet asked in confusion.

"Wrong number?"

"Patrick's asking us to meet him in the Hancock Club in Barnes," Ethan said in a low voice, his expression darkening.

Janet approached him and held his arm comfortingly.

"Do you want to see him?" she asked gently. Ethan smiled coldly.

"He came just in time. Of course I want to see him."

"Okay, we'll go see him then."

With closed eyes, Janet reached for his hand and rubbed her cheek against it.

At the Hancock Club, Barnes.

The private room was decorated simply but it looked quite quaint.

A delicate crystal chandelier hung on the ceiling, and smoke of the burning incense wafted in the air, mixed with the fragrance of tea. However, no matter how comfortable the room was, it couldn't ease the tension in the air.

Patrick and Seth sat on one side, while Ethan and Janet sat on the other.

A silence fell over the room and nobody spoke for a long time.

Finally, Patrick broke the silence. He coughed and looked around cautiously. Then he looked at Seth unhappily and asked, "Where is Ritchie?"

"He has been quite hot-tempered lately, so I asked him to stay at home," Seth answered calmly.

Patrick didn't mind.

After all, Ritchie would've ruined everything if he came. He adjusted his mood and turned to look at Ethan sincerely.

"I wanted to see you so that we could clear our past misunderstandings. I know that you've suffered at the hands of the Lester family ever since you were a child. But from now on, I promise you, nothing like that will ever happen again. I had no idea that Elissa killed your mother, but now that you've put her behind bars and I'm going to divorce her, everything should be cleared up. Are you going to reunite with the Lester family?"

Upon hearing this, Seth's eyes turned cold for a moment, but he soon regained his composure.

Ethan quietly looked into Patrick's eyes for a moment before bursting into laughter. But his eyes were devoid of warmth, and there was indescribable disgust in his voice.

"I'm impressed. How'd you manage to do that, Mr. Lester? You made it look as though you're not part of this." Patrick's expression darkened. He slammed his fist on the table and roared, "What the hell's that supposed to mean?"

Ethan, on the other hand, unhurriedly took a sip of his tea.

"Have you already forgotten all about it? Or are you that shameless that you could just dismiss your past crimes?"

Patrick narrowed his eyes at him.

"Ethan, don't push your luck."

Ethan turned a deaf ear to him and continued in a bone-chillingly cold voice, "You raped my mother. In order to save yourself from a scandal, you told everyone that it was my mother who seduced you. And Elissa believed in your lie. That's why she killed her! You're the reason why all of this happened. You're just as guilty as Elissa!"

Instantly, all the color drained from Patrick's face and the confidence in his voice suddenly disappeared.

"What...What do you want?" he stammered.

Ethan didn't answer right away and the room fell into dead silence. It was clear to all that Ethan was in control. He smiled and said simply, "I want to bring the Lester family down, and I won't stop until you're behind bars with Elissa."

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Chapter 572: Competition



"Say that again, I dare you!"

Patrick roared, standing up from his chair. He pointed a trembling finger at Ethan and shouted, "I'm your father! How dare you talk to me like that!"

Before coming here, Patrick had thought that Ethan was satisfied now that he had put Elissa in jail.

Little did he know that Ethan was coming for him next.

Ignoring Patrick's shouts, Ethan took Janet's hand and together, they left.

When Seth and Patrick were alone in the private room, Seth stood up and poured his father a cup of tea.

With a gentle smile on his face, he said, "Don't worry, Dad. Ethan's not thinking straight. He'll come around after he calms down."

Patrick, on the other hand, was still seething with rage. He hadn't been threatened like this in a long time. He was so angry that, when Seth handed him the cup of tea, he threw it against the wall, smashing it to smithereens.

"He should never have been allowed into the Lester family!"

Seth glanced at the shards of porcelain on the floor, and some of the tea even splashed onto his trousers. He plucked up a tissue, wiped the stains on his trousers, and sat back down calmly.

Today, he had seen Ethan's yet another side. He didn't expect him to be so bold.

Patrick had always been a strict father, and even Seth himself was a little afraid of him, but Ethan dared to challenge—and even threatened—Patrick.

But what surprised Seth the most was the fact that Patrick had invited Ethan back into the Lester family.

This somehow made him want to compete with Ethan.

Ever since he was born, Seth had always been the most outstanding child in the Lester family. He had grown proud because of this.

The fact that Patrick wanted to ask Ethan back to the Lester family upset him a little. He had always been the excellent child, and now there was Ethan, founder of the Larson Group and respected by all in the business world.

Ethan had exceeded him. He had lost the lawsuit to Ethan, and now, Ethan had turned against the whole Lester family.

Narrowing his eyes, Seth took a sip of his tea without saying a word. He would like to see the lengths Ethan would go to to bring the Lester family down.

It didn't take long for Janet to recover completely after being discharged from the hospital. So she was back to work in no time.

"Janet, you should take more time off."

Everyone had been trying to persuade her to rest some more.

Although she didn't suffer from a cardiac arrest because of working for too long, they still worried about her health.

"The project is almost finished. You should take more days off. We can handle it on our own," Elizabeth said to her.

But Janet was itching to get back to work. She whispered to Elizabeth reassuringly, "Don't worry. I won't work overtime anymore. Mr. Wesley won't allow it. Even if I wanted to, there are surveillance cameras here."

Happy to be back at work, the days passed by quickly.

Soon, it was weekend. Since Janet couldn't work overtime anymore, she decided to go shopping with Laney.

"I heard that Garrett hasn't been seeing anyone recently," Janet commented, fishing for any news about Garrett.

As Laney's friend, she cared a lot about her love life.

At the mention of Garrett's name, Laney didn't know what to say. She averted her gaze and awkwardly scratched the back of her head.

"Why're you telling me? I don't know him that well."

Janet glanced at her friend curiously, only to see that Laney's face had turned as red as a tomato.

"Excuse me!"

Suddenly, a young man tried to squeeze past them in a hurry, bumping into Laney

"Oh, I'm sorry. Did I hurt you just now, miss?" The man quickly caught Laney by the shoulder and looked at her with concern.

"No, I'm fine."

Laney stood firm and was about to leave, but the young man suddenly stopped her.

Surprise was written all over the man's face. He pointed at her ear and cried, "You have those elf ears! Are you Laney Garcia?"

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Chapter 573: Greg



Janet's eyebrows shot up in wonder and she looked at Laney's ears closely. She hadn't noticed it before, but now that she looked at it, Laney's ears did look like that of an elf's.

Laney covered her ears and blushed.

"Who are you? It's rude to shout, you know," she said with a frown.

It had been a long time since someone pointed out her elf ears.

The young man was grinning from ear to ear, baring his pearly whites. He raised his hand to part the short hair on his forehead and pointed at the nearly invisible scar above his eyebrows.

"It's me, Greg! Greg Torres! Don't you remember me? We often fought when we were children. This is the 'souvenir' you gave me."

Staring at the scar, Laney gradually recalled the past.

"Greg? You were so small and skinny back then, but now you're so tall that I didn't even recognize you! What brings you here?"

Laney's parents had died when she was still a child. She was often bullied back then, and she eventually learned how to fight back to defend herself.

Fast forward to the present, she had turned her fighting skills into a career and became a hit woman.

Greg was one of the children who used to bully her. He was the one who started calling her "elf-ears", thanks to her elf-life ears.

Later, after learning how to fight, Laney beat up all the children who had bullied her, instilling fear in them.

Since then, they stopped bullying her.

As for Greg, he had always been impressed with her ever since she had defeated him.

In the end, they shook hands and became friends! Later, Laney left her hometown and pursued a career as a personal bodyguard. She had never seen the kids from her childhood ever again.

Greg scratched the back of his head and smiled shyly.

"Well, we were still kids when you left. I grew up. We both did."

With a playful smile, Laney punched him on the arm and nodded in approval.

"Looks like you've been working out, Greg!"

Greg coughed violently because Laney did not pull her punch.

Fortunately, he had enough muscle to cushion the blow somewhat. He rubbed the sore spot on his arm and smiled, "And you're still as strong as before."

"I never stopped training. Let's spar sometime," Laney suggested confidently, raising her chin.

Fighting was what she did best.

Greg was stunned for a few seconds. Then he burst into laughter.

"You haven't changed one bit! You've always loved to fight. Hey, how about we find a place to catch up? It's been years since we last saw each other."

Of course, Laney was interested. She looked at Janet and asked, "Janet, what do you say?"

"Fine by me. I happen to know a nice bar nearby. Let's go there."

In the bar, the three sat down to chat.

After ordering three pints of beer, Greg took a sip from his and studied Laney's face.

Finally, he sighed wistfully.

"Laney, you look exactly the same as you were before. You know what? When we were young, I thought you were so cool and really looked up to you. I heard that you've become one of the top-notch bodyguards now. Why am I not surprised?"

Laney just smiled.

Hearing Greg retell the tales of their childhood, she felt nostalgic and sentimental.

"It was really fun when we were kids. You boys were all taller and stronger than me at the time. I practiced hard every day so that I could beat your asses."

Greg shook his head helplessly and chuckled. He clinked glasses with Laney and the two caught up with each other happily.

It was already dark out by the time they stood up to part ways.

Before leaving, Greg handed his phone to Laney and said, "Can I have your number? I don't want to lose contact with you again."

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Chapter 574: Coming At Her



Laney smiled and put her number on Greg's phone. Since then, Greg had been calling and texting her almost on a daily basis.

"I haven't been around much since I moved to Barnes. Do you know any scenic spots here? If you do, can you show me around some time? I'll pay you for your time!" The extroverted Greg was good at conversing.

When speaking to him, one could always feel at ease. Laney hadn't been in the city for long, so she answered him honestly.

"I've only been here a month. I've never been anywhere except home and work."

After thinking for a while, Greg suddenly suggested, "Then let's get familiar with the city together. I can go with you everywhere."

Laney didn't find such a proposal strange. She viewed Greg as a friend, so she agreed readily.

"Sure. My schedule's been pretty free lately anyway."

And so the two of them went and visited several famous tourist spots in Barnes. It was a sunny day in April.

Standing by the river, one could see the vast endlessness of the cloudless blue sky. As the summer breeze washed over them, the two felt really relaxed.

"Did you see those two stone lions at the gate of the museum? They looked just like the ones at the training grounds we used to go to. I remember that you used to like climbing on top of it and barking orders at us like a commander." It seemed that Greg really missed the good old days.

Whenever he talked about the past, he'd wear a dreamy, wistful smile. It was so long ago that Laney had forgotten all about it.

"Are they still there? I haven't been back in so long!"

With a sad smile, Greg shook his head.

"I haven't been back either. I moved away after high school. We can go back sometime if you want."

"I'll think about it."

It was just a small talk, and Laney currently had no plans to go back and visit her childhood home.

After sharing several meals, Greg and Laney quickly became close. Although sometimes they only met once a week or so, every time they met, Greg would bring her a gift.

"Check this out—it's from Singapore."

Laney would accept his gifts and thank him. She asked curiously, "I called you two days ago, but no one answered the phone. Were you busy?"

When Greg got busy, Laney often couldn't get through to him.

"I'm sorry I missed your call. Business has been hectic lately. I need to meet clients from all over the world, so I often go on business trips," Greg explained apologetically.

"But since you've brought it up, I won't turn off my phone again from now on."

The reason why Laney asked this question was out of curiosity, not out of anger or frustration.

Hearing Greg's resolution, she felt a bit at a loss.

"No, no. You don't have to do that for me. I was just asking."

"Relax. I just don't want to miss any of your calls. You don't know how happy I was when I heard that you were looking for me," Greg said, smiling at her dotingly.

Laney smiled awkwardly and averted her gaze.

Damn it! Greg must've misunderstood her.

Ever since that fateful meeting, Greg had been coming at Laney. He kept asking her out for dinners and movies.

"I like you and want to see you more often. If you don't feel comfortable, just tell me and I'll stop. If not, I will keep doing this until you start to like me back," Greg said frankly.

Laney was stunned.

As no one had ever pursued her like this, the straight confession of his love caught her completely off guard. She didn't have many friends.

The only one she could talk to about this was Janet.

When Janet heard about it, she was also taken aback. She didn't expect that Greg, whom she had only met once, would chase after Laney so soon.

"Well, what do you think of him?"

"I don't find him annoying, but I'm not sure if I like him or not. To me, he's still my childhood playmate. I don't know if I should start a relationship with him," Laney told her friend, sticking out her lower lip.

"If you aren't sure whether you like him or not, don't accept him just because he likes you. Otherwise, you might regret it someday," Janet advised.

Somehow, Garrett caught wind that Greg had been pursuing Laney.

One day, he waited at the door of her apartment for a long time until she finally came back.

"What took you so long? Were you on a date?" Garrett asked unhappily.

Ignoring him, Laney said flatly, "It's none of your business."

Then she headed towards the door.

"I'm just telling you to be careful. That man might be onto something,"

Garrett shouted after her.

"You don't know much about him. You can't just trust him."

Laney stopped in her tracks to glare at Garrett.

"You have no right to say that about my friend!"

After saying that, she turned around and proceeded to unlock her door. With her back to Garrett, she couldn't help but smile faintly.

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Chapter 575: Give Us A Try



Laney didn't reciprocate Greg's feelings; instead, she gradually put some distance between them.

At some point, she simply refused all his invitations.

Greg seemed to realize that this was her way of rejecting him, so he stopped coming at her.

Laney thought this matter was finally over.

However, a few days later, on a stormy night, Laney suddenly received a call. It was from Greg. She could hear the sound of the rain in the background, and Greg sounded weak.

"Laney, I want to see you. Please."

Laney sat up in bed and asked, "Where are you?"

She had heard the sound of a car from both her phone and outside her window. She immediately got up from bed, trotted over to the window, and looked down.

Sure enough, standing in front of her apartment building with an umbrella was none other than Greg himself.

Laney quickly put on a coat and rushed to him.

"Do you think you're in a movie? Stop being so dramatic.

Even if you get sick from standing here all night, I won't feel sorry for you!"

Greg staggered towards her, and he looked listless, unlike before.

"I just wanted to see you. I drank a lot of beer today, and all I could think about is you."

Laney gritted her teeth and said firmly, "Greg, I don't like you that way. I only think of you as a friend."

Greg ran his fingers through his wet hair and murmured, "So, you don't hate me? Are you saying I just need to try harder?"

The thought seemed to excite him.

He quickly handed the umbrella to her and cried, "Then I'll try harder, Laney!"

With a big smile on his face, he rushed back to his car and drove away.

Laney was at a loss for words. She could only sigh heavily and went back to her apartment with his umbrella.

Ever since she moved into her new apartment, she hadn't bought any home goods.

It just so happened that she had almost run out of food, so after getting off work one evening, she decided to go to the supermarket.

There seemed to be a sale today, because the supermarket was crowded with people.

Amidst the crowd, Laney saw Garrett and a beautiful girl beside him. It only took one look at the girl for Laney to realize that she was Garrett's type.

"You should eat more vegetables. I know you work overtime a lot, so you need healthier food."

The girl held a bundle of leafy greens in front of Garrett. "You know I don't have time to cook. I'm just here to buy some vitamins," Garrett said gently.

Laney rolled her eyes and sneered. She somehow felt cheated.

Just when she was beginning to think that Garrett had really changed, she was wrong. He was just trying to fool everyone.

Laney left the supermarket with nothing but anger. She was inexplicably annoyed.

Just a few days ago, Garrett tried talking her out of getting into a relationship with someone else.

Yet here he was now, dating another girl himself.

"Laney?"

Laney was in a fit of anger when she suddenly heard someone call her name. It was Greg. When Greg saw her, he quickly sprinted across the road.

With a bunch of flowers in one hand and a bag of groceries in the other, he said sheepishly, "I bought you some food. I thought that you've been so busy, you might not have the time to get some groceries. And while I was at the supermarket, I saw these tulips. I noticed you usually wear floral patterns, so I figured you might like these."

Laney had been feeling angry, but now, her anger slowly dissipated.

Perhaps it was because she had just been hurt that even the slightest gesture of care from someone would make her feel warm.

"Why'd you get me all these things?"

Greg scratched the back of his head and said awkwardly, "Because I like you."

Overhearing this, the passers-by gathered around them and started to encourage Laney.

"Miss, this young man has been waiting here for over an hour. He really cares about you."

Laney looked up into Greg's hopeful eyes and thought about the smile on Garrett's face when he was with that girl just now.

Without thinking, she blurted, "I am willing to give us a try."

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Chapter 576: Take Him Out



It was Laney's first time to be in a relationship, and Greg definitely took the lead, while she passively catered to his requests.

Perhaps it was because she didn't really have romantic feelings for Greg that she didn't find it as sweet as it should have been.

One weekend, Greg invited her to a popular cafe.

Greg happily ordered some delicious-looking brownies and colorful macarons.

Laney liked healthy foods with low sugar content over sweets, so she only took a few bites out of politeness.

Greg, on the other hand, seemed to be quite the sweet tooth. He enthusiastically snapped some photos of the Instagram-worthy desserts before munching on them.

While Greg ate, Laney absentmindedly looked out the window and watched as couples passed by, hand in hand.

They all seemed very happy together. It wasn't until Greg waved his hand in front of her that she came to her senses.

"Laney, there's something I wanted to ask. How about I move in with you? I mean, I just think it'd be wonderful to come home to you after work," Greg suddenly suggested.

"Okay," Laney answered flatly.

Since they were in a relationship now, she didn't find it too big of a deal to start living in together.

The following day, Greg moved his stuff to her place.

Greg was a good boyfriend in all aspects, but sometimes, Laney couldn't help but feel that he was too clingy. He would follow her everywhere and even accompany her to work.

She couldn't catch a break.

"Don't you need to go to work?"

Laney looked at Greg, who was following her to work, with a hint of impatience.

Greg scratched his head awkwardly.

"I'll go to work after I drop you off. Don't worry about me. I work flexible hours."

Laney crossed her arms over her chest and narrowed her eyes at him. She had noticed that Greg seemed to be observing something just now.

Ever since he moved in, he had never done anything that would make her feel uncomfortable.

As a result, they didn't look like a couple at all.

The most intimate thing they had ever done so far was to hold hands.

Greg had told her that he had a business, but Laney didn't think he looked like a businessman. He had always been wary of his surroundings everywhere they went.

"What were you looking at just now? Is someone following us?"

Perhaps it was because of the nature of Laney's work that she was sensitive when it came to things like this. Greg broke into a wide grin.

"Cars. We were crossing the road just now."

Then he reached out and stroked her hair gently.

"You seem suspicious of me. I'm your boyfriend. Don't you trust me?"

A few days later, Laney was watching a movie with Greg at home when they suddenly heard a knock on the door.

"Have you ordered takeout?" Laney asked, standing up to open the door.

"No? Who would visit us at this time then?"

However, as soon as the door was opened, a group of armed men rushed in.

"What the hell are you doing?"

Laney was on guard in an instant.

"Where is that bastard? Fuck! Greg's been hiding in a woman's house?!"

One of the men said loudly, "Greg has offended our boss and we've been ordered to take him out!"

Greg was so frightened that he threw the remote control in his hand away and hid behind Laney, shouting, "Laney, you have to protect me!"

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Chapter 577: Knight In Shining Armor



Laney instantly knew that something was off, but she didn't have the time to figure it out.

"This is my home.No matter what kind of feud you have—solve it somewhere else."

Laney clenched her fists and spoke clearly and concisely.

"Cut the crap, bitch! Greg's your boyfriend, so what?"

To his peers, he barked, "Get him!"

In the blink of an eye, the rest of the thugs surged forward.

Laney and Greg were outnumbered.

Worse yet, those men were armed.She couldn't defeat them all by herself.

Moreover, with Greg hiding behind her, she couldn't make a run for it.She grabbed Greg's collar and yanked him towards the French window in the living room.

The men closed in on them.

To buy some time, Laney picked up a chair and hurled it at them. She shouted at Greg, "Jump out the window! I'll cover you!"

Greg craned his neck and looked out the window.

Instantly, his face turned pale. They were on the third floor.

Although the ground below was covered in grass, there was still a possibility he'd die if he jumped.

"I—I can't! We're too high!"

Greg's voice was shaky.

Laney was busy fighting off these strong men with her bare hands, but she knew she wasn't going to last.

"I'm going to jump without you. If they kill you, I'm not coming back to identify your corpse!"

Greg was still hesitating when Laney gritted her teeth and pushed him from behind.

"Why are you just standing there?!"

Greg let out an ear-piercing scream as the two jumped out of the window together. They landed on the lawn and rolled. The fall seemed to have knocked all the air out of Greg, because he lay on the grass, unmoving. It wasn't until Laney yanked him to his feet that he was able to stand.

"Run! It's only a matter of time before those men catch up!"

Laney was sweating profusely from the fight, but she didn't have the time to care. She grabbed Greg by the arm and ran.

Soon, the men caught up to them, cornering them in an alley.

Laney had no choice but to fight. She gritted her teeth and started attacking the men.

The men weren't just ordinary thugs.

They obviously had formal training before.

Fortunately, Laney was a skilled fighter.

In a few minutes, she managed to knock down three men.

But soon, she was backed into a corner. She glanced at Greg, who was behind her. She wanted to ask him for help.

Perhaps together, the two of them would stand a chance.

However, what she saw rendered her speechless.

Greg was cowering behind her, shaking like a leaf.

Laney's heart sank. She knew she couldn't count on him.

Just as she was about to lose hope, a voice sounded from the entrance to the alley.

"A group of men bullying a lone woman. Oh, the humanity!"

Standing at the entrance of the alley with a baseball bat on his shoulder, Garrett clicked his tongue in disappointment. He had taken off his glasses and looked a lot less gentle than usual.

"So this is your knight in shining armor?"

The men all looked at Garrett and burst into laughter. Then they rushed towards him.

Laney was shocked. She shouted at him anxiously, "What the hell are you doing here? They will kill you!"

"I'm here for you!"

Swinging the baseball bat in his hand, Garrett fought the men off.

Laney joined in the fight, and soon, they stood back to back.

"Don't worry. I've called reinforcements!"

Garrett shouted to her amidst the hubbub.

Garrett had tried to call Laney after finding out that Greg had moved into her apartment, but nobody answered his call.

Worried, he went to check on her and saw these men attacking her.

Before getting out of his car, he had called his men over.

Garrett tried to fight off these thugs to the best of his abilities, but they were trained fighters after all.

One man managed to land a blow directly on his back during the fight.

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Chapter 578: A Coward



Garrett couldn't help but cry out in pain.

Upon hearing this, Laney's face turned pale with fright.

"You're not a trained fighter! Get out of here while you still can!"

Garrett spat out a mouthful of blood and glanced at Greg behind him.

Then he asked Laney, "Really? You want me to hide behind you like that wuss?"

But Garrett didn't have the time to keep mocking Greg.

The situation was getting more and more critical.

Laney was out of breath after several rounds of fighting. She knew she wouldn't be able to last much longer.

At that moment, she could see blood stains on Garrett's wrinkled shirt as he stood firm in front of her.

Stunned for a few seconds, Laney gritted her teeth and struggled to stand up again.

However, before she could rush into the fight, Garrett put his hand on her shoulder and said gently, "Get behind me."

"What?"

Laney looked up at him in disbelief. However, Garrett was standing against the light, so she couldn't see his face clearly.

"Stay back. I'll handle things from here."

Garrett pushed her back.

Then, swinging the baseball bat wildly, he rushed towards the men in front of them.

Just then, the sound of a revving engine suddenly came from the entrance to the alley.

A refitted truck stormed in, and dozens of men immediately got out.

"Mr. Harding!"

Instantly, the thugs' faces fell. Before they could make a run for it, Garrett's men swarmed in and started beating up the thugs.

Knowing they were outmatched, the thugs 'quickly scrambled.

Seeing that they were safe now, Laney immediately went to support Garrett, who looked like he was about to collapse.

"I'm taking you to the hospital."

"No need. I'm fine. Let's deal with your problem first," Garrett said calmly, wincing slightly in pain.

Then, he turned to look at the man that was still hiding in the corner.

Greg was so scared that his legs were shaking and he couldn't stand up.

Garrett walked over and pointed at him with the baseball bat, blood dripping from the tip.

"You knew that someone was hunting you yet you asked to stay at Laney's place. Why?"

Greg was too shell-shocked to say a word.

Seeing this, Garrett pointed at the guards behind him and said, "If you don't start talking, you'll end up like the men who came after you just now."

"No! Okay, okay! I'll tell you everything!"

Greg fell to his knees and started babbling, "I borrowed money from them last year but I couldn't pay it back in time. The loan sharks have been chasing after me for a whole year, and I have nowhere to hide. Coincidentally, I ran into Laney in the street. Laney was always a good fighter. Moreover, I heard that she's a professional bodyguard now, so... So I thought that if she became my girlfriend, she could protect me from those men."

Garrett was speechless. He poked Greg's head with the baseball bat and said with disdain, "You are such a coward! You expected a woman to protect you?"

Laney was also stunned. She shrugged and said, "No wonder."

She hadn't felt anything when she was dating Greg, and Greg had never asked for anything from her except to hold hands occasionally.

Somehow, now that she knew Greg's real intentions, she felt relieved.

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Chapter 579: Interrogation



Garrett pointed squarely at Greg's nose, filled with loathing, and said, "What a wuss! When Laney was with me, I wanted to do everything for her.

And you had the gall to expect her to protect you? You could have hired a bodyguard, but no, instead, you thought, maybe you should find a girlfriend who could protect you for no cost so you could save a few bucks?"

Laney stood beside Garrett listening to him berate Greg.

A satisfied smile stretched across her face.

Garrett couldn't calm himself down even one iota.

He turned around and stared at Laney.

After a while, he asked in utter disbelief, "So is this your type of man?"

Laney immediately stopped smiling and said in a frigid tone, "No."

Garrett couldn't bring himself to believe it.

He looked at Greg, who was still trembling in the corner, and didn't know how Laney could ever rather be with such a coward than him, a handsome and rich man who loved her truly and deeply.

At least, he would never hide behind Laney when they were caught in danger.

"Then why were you with him?"

Garrett fixed his eyes on Laney. She was simply mortified. She scratched her nose awkwardly and stuttered, "I...I..."

She hesitated in providing him with an answer because she thought it was an immature reason to reveal to Garrett.

Her juvenile reasoning for agreeing to be Greg's girlfriend was simply because she had been angry with Garrett.

She avoided the question and said in deflection, "Don't yell at me here. It's none of your business."

After saying that, she turned on her heel and left.

Garrett knew that there must be a reason behind her agreement to date Greg.

He caught up with her, grabbed her wrist and asked, "When did you become his girlfriend? If I hadn't overheard Janet's words, would I have known about this at all?"

Laney shook off his hand and said, "We just started dating four days ago. Can you stop pestering me about this?"

After thinking for a while about what had happened four days ago, he asked, "Where had you been four days ago? What happened?"

"Alright then, it's none of my business. If you don't tell me, I'll find it out myself."

As soon as Garrett finished speaking, he was about to leave.

Laney could do nothing about it. She knew that if he was determined to investigate the whole thing, he would definitely find something.

In that case, she thought she'd better tell him herself.

Laney then stopped him.

"Fine! I will tell you the truth! I was at the supermarket the other day and saw you with your new girlfriend. On the same day, he came to me and asked me to be his girlfriend. I wasn't thinking clearly, so I agreed. That's it. Don't investigate the matter."

After listening to her words, Garrett was momentarily stunned before understanding dawned upon him. He touched his jaw, lowered his head and looked at her. He couldn't help smiling.

"Did you agree to be his girlfriend to get back at me? Because you were jealous?"

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Chapter 580: We Are Worlds Apart



Laney couldn't hide it anymore. She raised her head and blurted, "Yes! Laugh at me if you want! You've been in countless relationships; why couldn't I? Now that you know the truth, you must feel really good about yourself, right?"

After baring her heart, Laney turned around and started to walk away. She should never have trusted this playboy! Garrett was stunned for a few seconds. Then, he broke into a goofy grin. He had finally gotten this tough woman to fall in love with him! He trotted to catch up to Laney and said sincerely, "I'm serious about you, Laney. This isn't a game to me."

"Serious'? Serious enough to date another woman while waiting for me to come around? I'm sorry, but that doesn't sound very serious to me." Laney

glanced at him and sneered. With a slight frown, Garrett walked in front of her to block her way.

“That woman you saw –she isn’t my girlfriend, silly. She’s my cousin. We’ve been close ever since we were kids. The day you saw us in the supermarket, she had come to visit me and found out that I had nothing in the fridge, so we went to buy some groceries. I had no idea you’d see us there.”

Hearing this, Laney stopped in her tracks. For some reason, she felt as though a weight had been lifted off of her shoulders. Nonetheless, she still wanted to leave, but Garrett refused to step out of her way.

“Where do you want to go? Since I’ve made myself clear, you should give me an answer.” Garrett coughed awkwardly and then asked with one brow raised, “Were you jealous?”

Only in that moment did Laney realize that she actually had feelings for Garrett. Her face turned as red as a tomato and she quickly took a few steps back to put some distance between them. But her reaction already betrayed her feelings.

Seeing this, Garrett was overjoyed. He had always thought that he didn’t have a chance with Laney, but now, he was so glad to have been wrong. Laney didn’t say anything, and Garrett didn’t force her.

“Of course, you can be in a relationship with anyone, but not that loser,” Garrett continued in a gentle voice.

“So how about being in a relationship with me?”

“Not a chance,” Laney answered without skipping a beat. Her response was like pouring a bucket of cold water over Garrett. She didn’t even give it a thought! Was he that unattractive in her eyes?

“Why not? You like me, don’t you?” Laney pursed her lips and eyed him warily.

“If we were to get into a relationship, would you be doing it out of fun or would you want it to last?”

“I don’t want to just have fun with you, Laney. I know it sounds weird, because you’re really not my type. But my feelings for you are real—I’ve never felt this way about the other girls I’ve dated before.”

Garrett looked into Laney’s eyes sincerely and spoke in a serious tone. He added softly, “I want to protect you. I want you to be by my side for the rest of our days. I don’t care what the cost is. I want this to last long—no, I want this to last forever.”

Garrett had never considered getting married before. But now, looking at the tough woman in front of him, his heart softened. Laney looked up at him for a long time and finally sighed.

“That’s the problem. If you want to settle down, you should be with someone who’s from the same social status as you. We are worlds apart, Garrett. You should marry a lady from a rich family, not someone like me.”

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Chapter 581: His Answer



Chapter 834

With Rowan coming into the picture, Nicole finally understood White's intentions. 'Rowan virtually has everything, and all the arms dealers have some kind of connection with him. What is the point of sabotaging a few arms dealers? If I were White, I would cut the head off the snake. Once these arms dealers run out of weapons, they become toothless tigers. Zane's organization is no exception.' Nicole wasted no time in calling Preston.

"I need a favor from you." The next day, Nicole came to Preston and Edwin's company.

"What's up, Nicole? You're so early." Preston and Edwin were having breakfast.

"Do you want to have some?" Edwin asked.

"No thanks. You guys keep on and just listen."

"The attack was not accidental but premeditated and planned," Nicole seriously elaborated on her analysis.

"Premeditated? Planned?" Preston and Edwin were surprised.

"Yeah. All I need now are two helpers in this fight." Nicole looked at them.

"No problem. We both will absolutely cooperate with you. What do you want us to do?" Preston finished the last bite of his breakfast.

"From what I know of White, he will launch an attack against the firewall of arms dealers. The two of you are to defend against White's cyberattacks, and I will track him down." Nicole told them her plan.

"No problem, we will hold down the fort and not let him succeed this time." With Nicole's supervision, Preston became twice as confident. He was determined to give White a bloody nose this time.

"Don't take it lightly. White is a veteran and cunning." Nicole reminded him.

"We will be careful. But when will White attack?" Edwin asked the questions that were on everyone's minds.

"This is also the hardest thing to control. We don't know when White will strike, so there's only one way to deal with it: lie in wait." Nicole was not a god; there was no way to know when White would attack.

"Huh? Wouldn't that mean we will have to wait here for the entire day?" Edwin was put off by the thought of having to sit in front of the computer for the whole day.

"You two can take turns to rest. That would be better." Nicole thought of an idea for them.

"What about you? Who are you going to take turns with?" Preston looked at Nicole.

"I don't need to rest." Nicole would forget herself when she got serious. The two of them were stunned when they heard Nicole say that she did not need to rest. They silently sighed as they looked at her and could do nothing to help her. Time ticked by, and it was ten-forty in the morning. Nicole had been staring at the computer screen for over four hours.

Preston got up and poured Nicole a glass of water.

"Have some water, Nicole."

"I don't drink water when I work." Nicole did not want to visit the ladies' room and missed the best time to track down her opponent just because she drank too much water. The vulnerability was not always there, and timing was important; she could not afford to miss it for anything.

"Okay. But shouldn't you get up and stretch? You have been sitting here for four hours." Preston felt sorry for you. Nicole was not her sister, but she was

still his cousin. He was worried that her body could not stand sitting there for hours.

"It's alright. Mind your business, and don't make a mistake." Nicole reminded him solemnly and seriously.

"Okay, I will stay with you." Preston sat down, his eyes fixating on the computer screen, looking out for any unusual activity. After another hour, there was still nothing abnormal.

"Preston, you take a break. I'll keep watch." Edwin walked over to Preston and motioned for him to get up and rest.

"Okay. I will leave it to you. What do we eat at noon?" It looked like they would have to take lunch at the office.

"Ask Nicole." "What do you like for lunch, Nicole? I'll order it."

"Anything that can be eaten with one hand." Because she needed to free up a hand to deal with any unexpected situations.

"One hand?" It was the first time Preston had heard someone order food like this. He did not know whether to cry or laugh.

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Chapter 582: Getting Hammered



Greg shrank away from Laney, but he didn't make a move to leave. Seeing this, Laney flew into a fit of rage. She started rolling up her sleeves as she stomped towards him.

“Will you leave on your own or will I have to throw you out?”

Seeing the fierce look on her face, Greg was scared out of his wits and jumped up from the sofa at once. Then, without looking back, he ran out the door. With Greg gone, Laney’s apartment felt especially quiet. She sighed and turned to close the door. But before the door could click shut, someone from outside stuck their foot in the gap to stop it from closing. Laney thought that Greg had come back.

Gritting her teeth angrily, she swung the door open and was about to throw her fist at Greg’s face when she saw that it was Garrett standing at the door.

“Why are you here?” Laney frowned in surprise.

“Anyway, I’m sorry for leaving in a hurry just now. I wasn’t able to thank you properly yet.” Then, she bowed her head solemnly and said, “I’ve saved you once, but you’ve saved me twice. You are a Harding, one life of yours is certainly equal to two of mine. I suppose that makes us even.”

Garrett didn’t say anything. Laney straightened up and looked at him as she continued, “You seem fine. Plus, you came here so fast, so one of your men must’ve driven you here, right? So he can also drive you to the hospital. And if you don’t think I’m being sincere enough now, I can formally thank you another day. Now please excuse me for I have to go out.”

With that, she went back inside her apartment, grabbed her bag and keys, closed the door behind her, and left, ignoring the expression on Garrett’s face.

As Laney was walking away, Garrett followed her. Sensing this, Laney stopped in her tracks, but she didn’t look back. Her voice was full of impatience. “Are you planning to follow me everywhere? Don’t make me yell at you.”

Then, without giving Garrett a chance to respond, she bolted. Garrett wanted to chase after her, but stopped on a second thought. Laney kept on running,

regardless of not knowing where she was going. She only slowed down when she was sure that Garrett hadn't followed her. She took a deep, shaky breath, and a lump formed in her throat. She buried her face in her hands as tears began to roll down her cheeks uncontrollably. Was it strange that she felt so sad even though technically nothing had happened between them? .

When Janet received the phone call from Laney, she instantly sensed that something was wrong. Laney's voice was unusually calm. "Hey, Janet, are you free? Would you like to go out for a drink with me?"

"Sure. Just give me the address of the bar and I'll be there soon." Janet could tell that something was on Laney's mind. Being a devoted friend that she was, she said goodbye to Ethan, who had just stepped out of the shower, and went straight to the bar.

It was still early, so the bar was relatively quiet and the performers were still warming up onstage. Laney sat at the counter and ordered two bottles of whiskey. Eyeing the bottles, Janet felt that Laney was really going all out this time. One bottle of this brand alone was already quite expensive.

"This must've cost you a one months' salary, right?" Janet sighed warily. Even before she came here, she had already guessed that the issue must've had something to do with Garrett. Laney smiled bitterly as she poured herself a glass. Before Janet could stop her, she downed it all in one gulp.

It took half a bottle of alcohol before Laney finally opened up to Janet about what had happened that day. Janet stayed quiet and listened to the whole story without interrupting. She was well aware of the torture of being in a relationship with someone who was worlds away from her in terms of social status.

If the White family hadn't announced that she was their daughter, she doubted she'd have been able to handle the pressure of being with Brandon Larson. It

was really hard and really painful. 1 Unlike Ethan who came from a broken family, Garrett still had both his parents and he was loyal to his family.

It would've been difficult for him to choose between his family and Laney. "I think you did the right thing. At least walking away now is less painful than spending the rest of your life struggling."

After pouring herself a glass of whiskey, Janet clinked glasses with Laney and said with a grin, "Let's get hammered tonight."

Laney's face was already flushed by then. She was so drunk that she cried in a slurred voice, "Okay! Let's get hammered!"

Then, the two girls drank. As Laney put her glass down, tears welled up in her eyes again. Seeing this, Janet patted her on the back, not knowing how to comfort her friend. After all, she knew there was nothing she could say or do, for it was Laney's life and she had to make the choice herself.

The only thing Janet could do was drink with her in solidarity.

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Chapter 583: Getting Drunk



After finishing the entire bottle of liquor, Laney was totally plastered. She couldn't support herself and had to lean over the bar counter, muttering drunken gibberish.

"I don't need a man. I have friends. That's more than enough. Isn't it good to be single and free? Why would I want a man?" Listening to her drunken

ramblings, Janet didn't know how to respond. She carefully draped a coat over Laney's shoulders and patted her on the back. Then she caught a glimpse of the man sitting in a booth near them.

The dim light in the bar illuminated Garrett's face, exposing the complex emotions in his eyes. He was looking at Laney in pensive silence. After hesitating slightly, Janet nodded at Garrett in greeting. She had no idea he had followed Laney there. 1 Laney suddenly reached out and tugged Janet's sleeve.

"Hey, why'd you stop? Let's have another round. Didn't you say you'd get hammered with me?"

"Okay, okay. Let's drink." Janet turned around and continued to pour whiskey for Laney as if she hadn't seen Garrett. Perhaps Laney had sensed Janet's hesitation. She craned her neck and turned to look in the direction Janet was facing just now.

"What were you looking at just now? Did you see a hot guy? I want to see him, too!"

"I wasn't looking at anything. Come on, let's drink," Janet said quickly, wanting to stop her. But she was too late. Laney had already seen the man Janet was looking at just now.

Garrett stood out amongst the crowd. Maybe it was because the rest of the people in the bar were pretty bland-looking, or maybe it was simply because Garrett was outstandingly handsome that Laney's eyes were drawn to him almost instantly.

After the two locked eyes, Laney quickly withdrew her gaze. She staggered to her feet, picked up her things, and grabbed Janet's arm.

“I don’t want to drink anymore. Let’s go.” However, before they could leave, Garrett suddenly reached for Laney’s hand and said gently, “You’re drunk. Let me drive you home.”

But Laney pushed him away. Her legs were a little weak, so she staggered a little.

“I don’t need you to take me home. You already know that I’m drunk, so why do you still offer me a ride? What do you expect to happen, huh?” Janet hurried to Laney’s side and shook her head at Garrett.

“She doesn’t want to see you for now. Don’t worry. I’ll take her home.” Garrett didn’t try to insist. Janet hailed a taxi and then helped Laney in.

The second Laney got back to her apartment, she slumped over her bed, murmuring something incoherent. Janet was worried about Laney. After tucking her in, she texted Ethan, telling him that she would stay the night at Laney’s place.

The following morning, Laney woke up with a splitting headache. Her grumpy expression, coupled with her pale, chapped lips, made her look even more depressed.

“Laney, you don’t look so good. Do you want to go back to bed and sleep some more?” Janet had gone out to get breakfast. When she came back and saw the listless Laney, she was genuinely worried.

Laney rubbed her aching temples and said dismally, “No, I’m fine.”

Janet set a cup of coffee in front of Laney and said, “Time heals all wounds. Do you want to go on a vacation? Maybe what you need is a change of environment.” Laney sipped on her coffee and grimaced, still feeling the effects of the liquor.

“Do you have the time to go with me?” Janet smiled. “I can ask for a vacation leave. Besides, I haven’t been that busy lately.” Laney fell silent and proceeded to drink her coffee. Just then, Janet’s phone rang. Looking at the caller ID, she excused herself.

“I need to take this. Think about it, okay?” It was from Ethan. The second the call connected, he said in a low, melancholic voice, “Grandma’s sick. We have to go back to Seacisco today.”

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Chapter 584: Visit Nora



Janet had no choice but to rush to Seacisco with Ethan. While she was worried about Laney, Nora’s health was more important. On the plane back to Seacisco, Janet pondered over the situation.

“At your grandmother’s birthday party last year, she looked radiant and energetic. How could her health have declined so quickly?”

As Janet thought about the warm old lady, she couldn’t help but feel sorry for her. Although they hadn’t talked often, she could tell that Nora was the most sensible Lester. Ethan loosened his tie and leaned back in his seat. He held Janet’s hand and closed his eyes wearily.

“She’s getting old. It’s normal for old people to get sick. Besides, the Lester family has been facing a lot of problems recently, which couldn’t have been good for her health.” Janet nodded. Leaning against his shoulder, her eyelids

gradually grew heavy. She had been so busy looking after the drunk Laney through the night that she didn't get to sleep much.

Hearing the sound of her steadied breathing, Ethan opened his eyes and looked out the window.

Recently, the business world in Seacisco had gone into turmoil because Ethan had been openly attacking the Lester Group's businesses. Joining hands with the Whites had doubled the strength of the Larson Group. Not even Patrick's, Seth's, and Ritchie's combined strength could fight against them.

Moreover, the news that Elissa was a cold-blooded murderer had spread like wildfire, which had damaged the reputation of the Lester family. It didn't take long before the share price of their company plummeted. Ethan was only worried about how he'd explain all this to Nora.

In the Lester family home, after waiting for a long time, Patrick finally heard the sound of a car pulling to a stop outside. Soon, Ethan strode inside the house hand-in-hand with Janet. Patrick stood up and went straight to the stairs, gesturing at them to follow.

"Your Grandma has been waiting for you for a long time." Ethan followed Patrick up the stairs. When they were about to reach Nora's room, Patrick suddenly stopped and turned to warn his son seriously.

"Don't say anything that you shouldn't say in front of her. Your Grandma's health has been rapidly declining. We haven't even told her what you've been doing to us." . Ever since Ethan openly declared war on Patrick, Patrick completely resented him. If Nora hadn't asked specifically for Ethan to come back and see her, Patrick wouldn't have even called Ethan.

Ethan had nothing to say to Patrick, so he simply nodded. His attitude only served to make Patrick even angrier. He had to take a deep breath to calm down. Finally, he put on a fake smile and opened the door.

“Mom, look who’s here! It’s Ethan!” Nora was lying in bed, her face as pale as a ghost. Several nurses were standing by the bed. Her eyes had been closed, but when she heard that Ethan had come back, she slowly peeled them open and raised her hand at him with a smile.

“Ethan, you are home.” Ethan approached her and held her hand gently.

“Grandma, I heard that you wanted to see me.” Nora smiled. However, she was so weak that she fell asleep after exchanging a few words with Ethan. Upon seeing this, a lump formed in Janet’s throat. Although none of them said it out loud, they all knew that it would be unlikely for Nora to make a full recovery this time.


After Nora had fallen asleep, Ethan and Janet turned to leave. When they reached the stairway, Ritchie happened to come home drunk. He had just gone upstairs and leaned on the railing to support himself. When the three of them passed by each other, Ritchie suddenly sneered and cursed, “You damned bastard!”

Ethan looked at him coldly. The alcohol gave Ritchie unprecedented courage. He flew into a rage and grabbed Ethan by the collar. “Don’t you dare look at me! You shameless bastard! How dare you come back!”

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Chapter 585: Conflict





Ethan glowered at Ritchie, his eyes looking frigid, and said, one deliberate word at a time, “Why not? I’ll destroy this place sooner or later.”

“What the hell did you just say? How dare you stand up to me?” Ritchie’s eyes widened with indignant fury. The alcohol made his cheeks bright crimson. He loosened his grip on Ethan’s collar and looked around, seemingly looking for something. . Ethan straightened his collar. He did not want to lower himself to Ritchie’s scummy level. When he was about to go downstairs, he suddenly heard a roar from behind him.

“You go burn in hell!” Ritchie picked up a vase from the shelf in the corridor and smashed it against the wall. The glass scattered all over the ground like confetti. The other half of the vase was left intact in Ritchie’s hand but the edge was dangerously jagged.

All color drained from Janet’s face. She looked at Ethan and shouted in warning, “Honey, watch out!” With a sharp fragment of the vase held in his hand as a weapon, Ritchie rushed at Ethan and was about to plunge the makeshift dagger into him. Janet tried to stop him but failed dismally.

People in the living room downstairs didn’t really know what was happening initially, but when Janet had screamed, they were all startled. Everyone ran over in horror, but there was no time to stop Ritchie.

Ethan was quick on his feet and hastily retreated when he saw this. He shoved Ritchie away to avoid the sharp vase fragment that he was wielding. Ritchie had rushed forward too fast and because he was drunk, he wasn’t steady on his feet. When Ethan defensively shoved him away, he lost his balance. He stumbled and fell down the stairs before he could cry out for help. He rolled to the bottom of the stairs and lay there motionlessly.

“Ah! Mr. Ritchie!”

As the servants in the living room shouted, the servants upstairs also hastily ran downstairs.

“Help! Mr. Ritchie fell down the stairs!”

“He is bleeding profusely. He doesn’t look like he’s breathing!” Hearing the commotion, Patrick came out of Nora’s room with a long face.

“What’s wrong? Why is there such a ruckus out here? Mrs. Lester needs rest. Can’t you keep the noise levels to a decent volume?” A servant pursed her lips momentarily then cried out, “Sir, Mr. Ritchie was pushed down the stairs by Mr. Ethan!”

Patrick’s face turned pale with fright. He rushed downstairs to check on Ritchie, who was lying seemingly lifelessly on the ground. He held Ritchie up and asked desperately, “Ritchie, can you hear me?”

Ritchie’s eyes were closed and it was clear he had lost consciousness. Patrick shouted at the servants, “What are you waiting for? Call an ambulance!” The servants hurriedly made phone calls. Furiously, Patrick turned to Ethan who had just come downstairs. He raised his hand and wanted to slap Ethan.

“How could you do this to your own brother?!” Ethan grasped Patrick’s wrist and shook it off. He then said impatiently, “You’d better discipline your own son first.” Patrick trembled with anger, but he didn’t continue to fight with Ethan. He turned around and went to check on Ritchie’s condition again.

It was not until then that Janet came to her senses. She held Ethan’s arm and looked him up and down nervously.

“Honey, did you get hurt?” Looking at the father and son, Ethan patted Janet on the back of her hand and slightly shook his head. He walked away from the scene with Janet and phoned the police. Seeing the indifferent look on Ethan’s face, Patrick was enraged beyond words.

“How dare you?! Ritchie’s your brother! If anything happens to him, your grandmother won’t let you go, let alone me!” Ethan looked into his father’s eyes and said coldly, “He wanted to stab me. Everyone present can testify for me. If I hadn’t pushed him away, he would have fatally stabbed me. Besides, I don’t have a brother.”

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Chapter 586: Paralysis



A few minutes later, police cars and an ambulance pulled in front of the Lester family’s home. EMTs rushed in to carry Ritchie into the ambulance on a stretcher. Patrick also followed them into the back of the ambulance.

Before shutting the door behind him, he looked at Ethan sullenly, with unfathomable emotion brewing behind his eyes. The police immediately set out to check the surveillance footage.

Ethan had briefly explained that Ritchie attempted to kill him, so he had merely acted out of self– defense. It was not difficult to prove what he said.

Patrick was always wary that someone would try to break in and steal top secret documents from his home, so he had installed security cameras everywhere in the villa, except for the bedrooms. It was clear from the footage that Ritchie was about to stab Ethan with a fragment of the broken vase.

Ethan managed to dodge and pushed Ritchie away, which was how Ritchie tumbled down the stairs.

Ethan went to the police station to make his statement, and he was kept there for the time being.

Janet was worried sick. Before Ethan had left with the police, she asked, "Shall I call Garrett? I think Ritchie's seriously injured."

Ethan comforted her calmly.

"Go back to our house and get some rest. There's no need to call Garrett. I'll take care of it myself."

In Seacisco's best hospital, Patrick kept pacing back and forth restlessly in the corridor that led to the operating room. When Seth arrived and saw Patrick, he asked with concern, "Dad, how is he?"

Patrick rubbed his aching temples and murmured, "We won't know until the operation is over."

Seth helped Patrick to the bench. Then, he leaned against the wall, fidgeting with the ring on his finger agitatedly. Two hours later, the doctor came out of the emergency room and called Patrick and Seth into his office.

"The patient will live—"

"Wonderful!" Patrick exclaimed with a sigh of relief. The doctor pursed his lips and continued gravely, "The patient will live, but his neck was severely damaged, compromising the nerves in his spine. It's very likely that he will be paralyzed for life."

Patrick felt like he was riding an emotional roller-coaster. When he heard what the doctor had to say, he nearly passed out on the spot. Seth hurried to help his father, while asking the doctor politely, "Is there any treatment?" The doctor sighed.

“Currently, the local medical tech is limited, so I cannot promise anything for sure. But if it’s financially possible for you, I suggest you contact some foreign experts in this field.”

By the time Patrick came out of the doctor’s office, he seemed to have aged ten years. Although Ritchie was by no means an excellent son, he was still Patrick’s own flesh and blood after all. And now the poor boy was disabled.

Patrick felt caught between a rock and a hard place. If it were anyone else who had hurt Ritchie, he would’ve done everything in his power to put the assailant in jail. However, the assailant was none other than Ethan, who was also his son.

“Dad, are you going to let Ethan get away with this?” Seth asked, as though he could read his father’s mind. With a long face, Patrick said, “He’s also my son.”

“But Ethan has never treated me and Ritchie as his brothers. And Ritchie has suffered too much. If he finds out that you let this slide, he’ll only be sadder.”

As Seth spoke, there was a flash of resentment in his eyes.

He didn’t have any affection for Ethan, despite them being brothers. These days, the Lester family and the Larson Group had been battling fiercely. Deciding to take matters into his own hands, Seth immediately hired the best lawyers, preparing to sue Ethan.

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Chapter 587: Another Lawsuit



When Ethan was taken to the police station, Janet contacted his lawyer, prompting him to come as soon as possible.

“Sir, the Lester family is suing you.”

As soon as he arrived at the police station, the lawyer handed the file to Ethan. ! Ethan looked through it and sneered coldly.

“I didn’t expect them to take action so quickly.”

“Seth is the plaintiff. He’s suing you on behalf of his brother under the charge of intentional injury. The hospital has provided the prognosis, which points to Ritchie’s paralysis as a result of falling down the stairs.” The lawyer systematically handed the materials and photos to Ethan.

Ethan didn’t even bother to go through them and tossed all the papers on the table. In an almost leisurely tone, he simply said, “You know what to do.”

The lawyer understood immediately.

After gathering all the files, he bowed slightly and left to get to work In fact, a week ago, Ethan had called his lawyer to inform him that he would receive a lawsuit sometime soon, so the lawyer was already prepared for this moment.

After he left, Ethan kept silent. In fact, he had been expecting all of this. A week ago, Ethan secretly asked his subordinate, Luis, to take charge of a project and contact Ritchie.

Because the Larson Group was pulling some strings, the Lester Silk Fabric didn’t receive any orders in the past month.

At the chance of getting a new project, Ritchie accepted it without hesitation. He and Luis were in frequent contact because of this so called project and often shared meals to discuss the cooperation.

On the day of the accident, Ethan had instructed Luis to ask Ritchie out for dinner. Luis was good at getting people to drink, and that was precisely what

he did with Ritchie. After getting plastered, Ritchie decided to get a room in the hotel.

“Why not go home instead?” Luis put down his glass and squinted at Ritchie curiously.

“My brother said that Ethan’s coming home to see Grandma today. If I go home, all hell will break loose. The less trouble, the better.” As Ritchie rambled on drunkenly, he stood up to leave.

Luis smiled meaningfully.

“He’s just a bastard child. Why are you so afraid of him? If you don’t go back and teach him a lesson, he’ll probably think that you’re a coward.” The drunken Ritchie couldn’t stand such provocation. He kicked the chair nearby furiously and roared, “How could I be afraid of a bastard like him?”

Then, he stormed off angrily.

Seeing that Ritchie had fallen right into his trap, Luis texted Ethan to say that Ritchie was on his way back home. As expected, within half an hour, Ritchie stumbled into the Lester family villa, reeking of alcohol. Ethan then said those words on purpose to provoke Ritchie. Goaded by the alcohol and his anger, Ritchie attempted to kill Ethan but was instead pushed down the stairs by the latter.

After Seth filed the case against Ethan, his lawyer told him that this would be a tricky case to win. After all, there was surveillance footage that proved that Ritchie was the one who started the fight.

“Although Ritchie is indeed a reckless fool, he wouldn’t do such a stupid thing. Besides, I warned him beforehand not to come home because Ethan would be there. It just doesn’t add up...” Seth’s eyes

flashed. He knew that this couldn't be a mere coincidence. In his eyes, this seemed more like a setup. The lawyer smiled bitterly.

"Even so, we don't have any evidence, and the fact remains that Ritchie tried to attack Ethan first. Don't worry. There are still a few days before the trial. We'll try our best to build our case." Seth doubted he would win, but he didn't want to give up so easily. However, Ethan didn't leave any trail of clues. Seth couldn't find a single shred of evidence to prove that this so-called "accident" was thought out.

At last, on the day of the trial, the jury arrived at a verdict that it was Ritchie who tried to attack Ethan with a sharp weapon, which was life-threatening to Ethan.

Thus, in an act of self-defense, Ethan pushed Ritchie away, causing the latter to fall down the stairs. Ethan's countermeasures didn't necessarily cross the line, and his actions were entirely justifiable. In a word, Ethan was announced to be not guilty.

"I'm not convinced." Seth stood up and talked back to the judge

"Then submit your request to the supreme court for a second trial."

After saying that, the judge left the courtroom. Outside the courtroom, Ethan happened to run into Seth. Still wearing his signature gentle smile on his face, Seth approached Ethan and whispered in a low voice, "What a perfect plan! Don't think that I can't see through your tricks, Ethan. Just wait and see."

Ethan hadn't had much contact with Seth since he was a child, but he never had a good impression of him. He always felt that Seth was a two-faced person.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

After saying that, Ethan walked past him without looking back. Seth did as the judge said and lodged an appeal for a retrial. However, the Supreme Court upheld the original verdict and denied his request.

In the end, Ritchie was forced to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair, while Ethan got away with it scot-free.

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Chapter 588: An Alliance



Patrick was well aware that Seth was competing with Ethan. In the business world of Seacisco, news that the Lester brothers had been fighting against each other had spread like wildfire, which put Patrick in a dilemma.. He refused to pick a side and simply hoped that his sons would stop fighting.

Ever since Seth and Ethan started fighting, Seth had come home less and less frequently.

One day, Patrick was surprised to bump into him at home.

"Are you still busy fighting the Larson Group?" Patrick asked grimly.

Seth shrugged off his coat and put it aside. There were dark circles under his eyes, but he still wore that same gentle smile, which made him look approachable.

"Dad, don't worry. I'll handle this."

But this only served to make Patrick feel even more worried.

"You have to be careful with Ethan. We all underestimated him before. He has already taken down Elissa and Ritchie. I have a feeling that he won't stop until our entire family is in ruins."

Frowning, Seth stood up and walked to the stairway. Before going upstairs, he glanced back at Patrick and said indifferently, "Dad, even if he really is on a warpath, you still underestimate the Lester family. We took root in Seacisco generations before Ethan was even born. You're just intimidated by Ethan. Go back to your room and get some rest while I teach that brat a lesson."

Patrick wanted to say something but stopped on a second thought. He knew that Seth was too prideful to listen to him.

The following day, Patrick went to Barnes again. He wanted to talk to Ethan.

When the receptionist informed Ethan that Patrick was waiting for him downstairs, Ethan calmly said, "Kick him out of the building."

He had nothing to say to Patrick.

In the battle against the Larson Group, Seth had lost several times. He was beginning to get frustrated.

Seth had never encountered any setbacks since he was a child.

After all, he was the most excellent Lester in his generation. He was always a step ahead of ordinary people.

But now, he was losing miserably to Ethan. He couldn't protect his family nor their business from Ethan's blows. As time went on, he began to have a sense of crisis.

If things went on like this, the Lester family's power would dwindle and they would soon be no match for Ethan.

At this rate, it was only a matter of time before Ethan destroyed them once and for all.

Moreover, the reason why Patrick was so afraid of Ethan was that the Larson Group was growing stronger and stronger every day.

As if that wasn't enough, Ethan also had the support of the White family, which made him unprecedentedly powerful. He wasn't sure they stood a chance against him if things went on like this.

Frowning, Seth racked his brains for a solution. He needed to find a way to instantly strengthen the Lester family in a short period of time—and the only way to do that was forge an alliance with another influential family through a marriage.

The union between the Larson Group and the legendary White family had affected half of the enterprises in Barnes and Seacisco, rendering Ethan nearly invincible.

But who among the Lesters could get married on such short notice? Unfortunately, the divorce procedures between Patrick and Elissa hadn't been completed yet.

Ritchie was single, but he was a disabled man now and there was no way any woman from a prominent family would agree to marry him.

Sinking into his leather chair, Seth lit a cigarette sullenly.

All of a sudden, he let out a cold sneer and stubbed out the cigarette in the ashtray.

Just then, his phone on the table suddenly started to ring. He ignored it and didn't pick it up until his phone buzzed again with a new message.

Glancing at the screen, he saw that it was the daughter of the Walker family, Julia.

"Seth, are you still in Seacisco? I want to see you."

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Chapter 589: To Be Ethan's Equal



I'm A Quadrillionaire chapter 537

After taking care of the thing with Mason, David drove back to Celia's house.

He planned to go back to South River Province today, but his plan did not consider the new developments.

'I can't just leave after doing that to Celia last night!

'I'd better stay with Celia for a few days before going back!'

He returned to Celia's home. He had left home a little late, went to work at Mason's place for a while, such that by now it was already noon.

After entering the house, he found that Celia was not up yet. Therefore, David went into the kitchen to cook.

Cooking was no difficulty for David, who had been independent since young, and soon a table of delicious food was prepared.

David went upstairs to get Celia for lunch. Upon entering Celia's room, he found that the girl was still sound asleep. He sat by Celia's bed and watched Celia as she slept soundly.

David could not help himself again.

He lay down quietly...

“Hmm? David, you’re back? I’m so sleepy! Let me sleep some more!” Celia murmured as she squinted at David.

“Go to sleep! Go to sleep!” David comforted her.

After a long time...

David and Celia were eating at the table.

Celia ate with her head down.

Her beautiful face was red.

David looked amused and wanted to tease her.

Therefore, he said, “Celia!”

“Hmm?” Celia looked up at David.

“Did you sleep well last night?” David asked.

“Huh? Yes! No! No! That’s not right! I... I don’t know!” Celia replied incoherently.

“Haha...” David could not help laughing when he saw Celia’s reaction.

“David! You... You... You... You’re mean!” Celia said with her beautiful face red.

“Alright! Alright! I’ll stop teasing you. Hurry and eat! Your bestie Lily is going to call later.”

“Okay!”

After they finished eating, David cleared the table and watched TV with Celia.

David sat on the couch while Celia sat next to him resting her head on his shoulder. David had one arm wrapped around Celia.

Although they had established a relationship some time ago, they were never this intimate.

After last night, they were as close as they could get.

Celia was a little shy.

However, David was her man now.

The two also shared the most intimate relationship.

She enjoyed leaning on David.

Neither of them was in the mood to watch TV.

Time passed slowly...

A ringtone brought them back to their senses.

Celia's phone rang.

It was from her best friend, Lily.

"Celia! We've already notified everyone. But should we go somewhere else? Is your boyfriend okay with it? The Great Wall Club has food and entertainment, but it's a bit expensive," Lily asked on the phone.

She casually mentioned the place yesterday, but it seemed a little hasty in hindsight.

The Great Wall Club was one of the top three clubs in Capital City, which gathered the members of Capital City's high society. A dozen guests would spend at least a million dollars there.

Besides, Celia had a boyfriend now, which was bound to raise a few eyebrows. If someone tried to piss David off, they could probably spend millions of dollars.

It would be a shame if he could not afford it.

They could afford millions of dollars, but it was still a lot of money.

"It's okay, Lily! The Great Wall Club it is! We'll be right there," replied Celia.

She knew how rich David was. He could even purchase The Great Wall Club, let alone spend

one night there. However, this was only if someone wanted to sell it.

“Really? Do you want me to make a reservation? I have friends who know someone there. It should be cheaper that way,” said Lily.

“We don’t need to change locations ! Just make the reservation ! We’re not familiar with the process,” Celia said confidently.

“Okay! I’ll call you later!” Lily hung up after that.

“David! Let’s go! They’re about to set out!” Celia said.

“Okay! But I’m not going to get hit, am I?”

“Why would you get hit?” Celia asked in confusion.

“I bet there are some guys among your friend group. They’ll think I’ve stolen the princess and won’t go easy on me!”

“What’s it got to do with them? I’m only friends with them! You’re my hubby!”

“Then call me Hubby!”

“No!” Celia said a little coyly.

They were lovey-dovey with each other for a while before heading out and driving to Longevity Club.

Celia got a call from Lily on the way. She had made reservations at Longevity Club’s dining immediately after the call-private room No.138.

The Great Wall Club

One of the top three clubs in Capital City.

T of T Faction, Stan was the one who had built it..

The Warner family was also one of Capital City’s top four prominent families.

Having such a powerful backer also made the Great Wall Club one of the top three clubs in Capital City

Each of the top three clubs in Capital City had their own characteristics, and each club targeted different groups.

The Great Wall Club focused on young people. Most of the people who came here were in their 20s and 30s, namely the second and third generations.

Wonder Club focused on middle-aged and old people, who were successful people over 50 years old. Most of its members were the parents of The Great Wall Club's members.

The Pretty Lady Club focused on Capital City's rich wives of all ages, but the women who could become its members were all either wealthy or aristocratic.

Of course, the division here was not absolute.

It only represented the majority of its guest.

After all, the purpose of the clubs was also to make money and build connections.

As long as you were capable, any of the clubs would welcome you.

By the time was about to arrive at The Great Wall Club. Private room No. 138 in The Great Wall Club's dining area was already occupied by more than ten people.

There were more women than men!

There were also seemingly two or three couples.

Celia's circle was mostly made up of girls. These men were either friends or boyfriends of her best friends.

She knew very little of them.

She had no interest in these men either.

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Chapter 590: Beach Vacation



Because the Lester family lived in Seacisco, in order to deal with them, Ethan now often stayed there, and so did Janet.

On the days Ethan didn't go to the office, he stayed in the study at home..it was as though he was always in a never-ending video conference.

Holding a tray with a cup of coffee and a plate of pastries, Janet knocked on the door lightly.

"Honey, may I come in?"

"Of course."

Ethan's voice was low.He was scolding his subordinates just now, and there was still a trace of anger in his eyes.

Ever since he declared war on the Lester family, he had been on edge every day, always on the verge of snapping.

Only when Janet was around did he have a smile on his face.

"The servant told me that you haven't had dinner.I make some chicken soup, and I can bring it to you later."

After setting the coffee on the table, Janet put a biscuit into Ethan's mouth and pouted.

"If this keeps up, your body will break down."

She tugged at Ethan's wrinkled shirt and narrowed her eyes at him disapprovingly.

Ethan looked back at her in silence.

Then he stood up, leaned his back against the desk, and pulled her into his arms.

Swallowing the biscuit, he then kissed her on the lips.

"I never told you off when you were working nonstop."

Janet almost rolled her eyes, but stopped when she saw that there seemed to be something off about Ethan. He looked restless, like a bloodthirsty beast out to hunt his prey..

"Honey, I'm worried about you."

Wrapping her arms on his neck, Janet started to kiss him back, deepening the kiss.

Soon. Ethan's palm slid from her waist to her buttocks. It wasn't until the both of them were out of breath that Ethan finally let Janet go.

He lowered his head, resting his forehead on hers.

"I'm fine. I'm going to succeed."

In his deep voice was a strange mix of calmness and madness.

Fearing that Ethan would fall into an irredeemable pit of hatred, Janet hugged him anxiously.

"Tomorrow is Saturday. Let's go out on a date, okay? We haven't hung out for a long time."

"But I have work..."

Ethan started to say. Janet pouted like a spoiled child.

"I don't care! You have to go out with me. The Larson Group won't be destroyed with you gone for one day."

In the end, Ethan had no choice but to go with Janet to the beach.

"Look! It's a beautiful day!" Janet exclaimed happily.

Wearing a bikini and a straw hat, she faced the beautiful sun and sea and took a deep breath.

Ethan raised his hand to block the dazzling sunlight.

Looking at the crowded beach, he couldn't help but frown.

"We should go to my private beach."

Janet sat down on a folding beach chair and sunbathed happily.

The wind was blowing, whipping at her hair.

"No, thanks. I like it here. The crowd is what makes this place so lively."

Ethan frowned unhappily, but he had no choice but to sit down with her.

It was already summer, which explained why the beach was crowded with tourists.

Adults lounged around and swam.

Children played in the sand and then they cried because the tide would wash away their sand castles.

Seeing the children wipe away their tears and proceed to build another sand castle, Ethan couldn't help but smile.

"Wow. Mr. Larson, the man who has been depressed for a week, is finally smiling." Cupping Ethan's cheeks, Janet made him look at her. Grinning from ear to ear, she kissed him hard on the lips and murmured, "It's a sight to behold."

The smile on Ethan's face became brighter. He did feel much more relaxed and his mood was nowhere near as heavy as it had been.

Later that afternoon, Janet was so tired that she threw herself onto the bed as soon as they returned to their hotel room. Ethan climbed on top of her and kissed her gently, but his hands moved fast.

In a matter of seconds, he took off her bikini.