

The Mbahsb 101

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 101

As Ethan's hand slid under her dress and touched her panties, he felt something like a sanitary napkin.

His hands stilled; he jerked up his head and looked at her.

"Are you on your period?"

Janet leaned against his arm, gasping for breath. Her face turned scarlet. "I told you to wait," she said, looking away.

Ethan did some mental math and realized it was indeed time for her period.

He sighed and stepped back, wrapping the quilt around Janet. "When will you..."

"In three days."

Ethan stroked her hair. Then, he buried his head in her chest and took a deep breath. "You smell good."

A few minutes later, Ethan stood up and kissed the corner of her lips. His bloodshot eyes bore an unreadable emotion.

"All right." He swallowed and cleared his throat. "Go to bed early. I'm going to shower."

It was not easy to contain the desire surging through his veins.

Ethan had been tired of waiting for Janet to let him make love to her. Now that she didn't resist his advances, his hopes and desires had reached their peak. Unfortunately, he couldn't continue because Janet was on her period. Ethan could feel his blood rushing southward. It felt as if he were about to explode and burst into a ball of flame.

He clumsily stood up, grabbing his jacket.

Janet was wrapped in the quilt, revealing nothing but her flawless face. Her watery eyes met Ethan's. She pursed her lips that still tingled after all the kisses. "Okay, sleep early. Good night."

Her pristine beauty could easily arouse men's desire to protect and take care of her.

Ethan leaned forward and kissed her lips. "No wonder you were very cooperative today," he whispered, chuckling. "I won't let go of you next time."

With that, he went to the bathroom and took a cold shower until his raging hormones subsided. After making sure Ethan was inside the bathroom, Janet sneaked back to her bedroom with her legs still shaking and heart beating like crazy.

On Monday morning, Ethan went to work with a grumpy look on her face. The ferocity of his gaze and his tense aura frightened the senior executives of the Larson Group.

After the meeting, Garrett walked up to him and asked, "How's it going, bro?"

Ethan's jaw tightened, and his brows furrowed as he looked at Garrett. "Stop gossiping, will you?"

“No, I won’t. I want to know what’s going on with you.” Garrett had a keen eye for detail.

He could tell at a glance that something was wrong with Ethan.

After a lot of persuasion, Ethan finally told him what happened last night. Hearing that, Garrett couldn’t stop laughing.

“Oh, God! It looks like you have absolutely no talent for pursuing women. Who would use such an old trick? No wonder you got exposed. But fortunately, everything is good now.”

Ethan scowled at Garrett, ignoring his ridicule.

Meanwhile, after work, Janet went to the supermarket to buy groceries.

Ethan was a strong man.

He had a good appetite and ate a lot.

Janet had to get a lot of food. Otherwise, Ethan would empty the fridge in a day.

Janet peeked out of the bus window. The entire city was sparkling with light. It was late summer and early autumn. The green ginkgo leaves on either side of the road had turned yellow.

Janet admired the surroundings with a satisfied smile on her face. Just as the bus passed a high-end club, her eyes widened.

Bernie, Fiona, and Jocelyn were standing at the entrance of the club. All three were dressed well as if they were attending a party.

Just then, the bus trundled to a halt. Janet immediately grabbed her grocery bag and ran out of the bus.

The Lind family hadn’t paid the money they owed her as promised, saying they couldn’t afford it; but now they could afford to come to have fun at an opulent club.

Janet clutched the groceries and walked toward them.

She was worried about Hannah’s medical expenses. Considering they were in a posh place, Janet felt that Bernie and Fiona wouldn’t create a scene. Therefore, she decided to seize the opportunity to get back all the money they owed her.

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At that moment, Fiona was smoothing her clothes. As soon as she was about to enter the club with her husband and daughter, Janet stopped her.

“Since you can afford to have fun in such a high-end club, I’m sure you must have the money to pay me back as well.” Janet’s loud voice caught everyone’s attention.

The smile on Fiona’s face dropped in an instant. She quickly strutted toward Janet and said, “What a coincidence, Janet! What are you doing here? What nonsense are you saying? How can a grown daughter still ask her parents for money?”

Janet frowned. She hated Fiona’s hypocrisy, so her voice grew a decibel louder.

“Oh, cut the crap and give me my money. What? Are you trying to deny it? If that’s the case, I will tell everyone the truth about how this marriage is a hoax.”

Bernie and Fiona attached great importance to their reputation. The truth would tear their facade and reveal their true faces. It would be a huge blow on their image.

“All right, Janet. That’s enough. Let’s stop arguing. Some people have returned the money they owed us. How about I give you one hundred thousand first?” Bernie looked around and saw the people watching him. He wanted to deal with Janet as soon as possible and return to his business.

He took out a bank card from his pocket and placed it on Janet’s palm. “There is one hundred thousand in this card. I’ll send the pin number to you later.”

Janet silently took the card. Bernie was better than Fiona. He was at least an honest man.

Ever since Janet was a child, her adoptive father had been neutral toward her. He neither cared for her nor tortured her in any way. He didn’t hate Janet as much as Fiona and Jocelyn did. But he was too weak that he listened to the two women’s every word, and never bothered to stop them when they bullied Janet.

Janet looked at the card and nodded. “Okay.”

“Well, you better leave now. I will give you the rest of the money soon.” Bernie smiled apologetically.

The one hundred thousand was more than all the money they had given Janet before. Janet looked at Fiona and saw that she was appalled by what her husband had done. She sensed that getting more money today was impossible, so she finally left.

Fiona’s eyes blazed with rage as she watched Janet leave. “Are you crazy?” she growled, pinching her husband’s arm. “The wires have come loose in your head! One hundred thousand? Are you kidding me? Why did you give her so much money?”

Bernie sighed and tried to persuade her, “What’s the matter with you? You promised to give Janet money before. One hundred thousand is far from enough.”

Fiona was burning with anger. Her husband’s words infuriated her. “That’s not true.” She leered. “Janet is our adopted daughter. We adopted her when she was little. We have fed her and supported her all these years. Marrying Ethan would be her way of repaying us for everything we have done for her. How could she demand money from us? You’re too kindhearted.”

“Yes, Dad. Why did you give that bitch money? You have no idea how badly she bullied me at the banquet last time!” Jocelyn gnashed her teeth as she saw Janet’s receding figure.

Looking at the indignant mother and daughter in front of him, Bernie shook his head and walked into the club without saying anything.

Fiona followed him inside. The more she thought about it, the angrier she became.

She felt she had to end this. Otherwise, Janet would continue to ask her for money.

Fiona glanced at her phone. Just then, an idea occurred to her. She pursed her lips and dialed a number.

“Good evening, doctor. I’m Fiona Lind. Is there a patient named Hannah Stone in your hospital who needs a liver transplant? Yes, that’s her name. As we talked before, doctor, your promotion is kind of in my hands. Now I’m in trouble, and I need your help. Could you do me a favor?”

Moments later, Fiona hung up the phone and took a sip of the black tea. Her red nail polish dazzled under the lights.

“Mom, why are you grinning happily?” Jocelyn quickly descended the stairs and stood beside her mother, eyeing her with curiosity.

A faint smile stretched across Fiona’s lips. “Well, good news. I have connections with a few people in the hospital. I secretly asked someone to give the suitable liver they had allocated for Hannah to someone else. Let’s see how long the old woman can hold on.”

Jocelyn was putting on lipstick, looking at herself in the mirror. “That’s great, Mom. That old bat should have died a long time ago. She has been relying on our money to survive. She is already in her eighties. It’s time for her to die.”

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Janet put a call through to the hospital as soon as she got home.

She didn’t have all the money yet for Hannah’s medical bills, but it was good news that the hospital had found the perfect match liver.

Money was hard to come by these days. Janet had barely had time to work for it. From her calculations, the money she had wouldn’t be enough, but she still wanted to communicate with the hospital. She wanted to inquire if the operation could be carried out and she would pay the balance later.

“Hello, I’m the relative of the patient that needs a liver transplant. Her name is Hannah Stone. I want to make an inquiry. A perfect match liver has been found for her, right? How soon can she get the transplant?” Holding her phone pressed to her ear with one hand, Janet put all the food she had bought into the fridge with the other.

“Did you say Hannah Stone? Please wait for a moment. I need to check our database. Oh, I’m so sorry, ma’am. We were just about to call you. A few minutes ago, we received a call from our superior. The liver can’t be used for her anymore. The patient who wanted to be euthanized and donate the liver has decided to continue treatment instead. Since there’s no matching donor, you would have to wait.”

The vegetable Janet was holding fell to the floor as soon as she heard this news.

It was a bolt out of the blue for her. She suddenly froze like a statue.

“Why did the patient have a change of heart? How come? Why? No, no... I didn’t mean... But...” The shock was too much that Janet could barely think straight, let alone speak coherently.

Although she badly wanted the liver to be donated to Hannah, she couldn’t decide the potential donor’s life and death.

“Is there any other matching livers?” she asked anxiously.

"I'm sorry, ma'am. We understand how you feel. However, there's nothing we can do to help you now. Your relative isn't the only patient waiting in line for a liver transplant. You will be contacted when another perfect donor comes forward. Have a great day," the nurse said and then hung up the phone.

Janet's legs suddenly felt wobbly. The next second, she slumped to the floor.

A painful lump went up to her throat. She wanted to break down in tears, but something plagued her mind. A voice in her head told her that there was more to the incident than the hospital was telling her. Something smelled fishy.

She rushed out and went straight to the hospital.

"Doctor, please can I meet the patient who previously wanted to donate a liver to Hannah Stone?" Janet asked the doctor nervously.

"Ma'am, I'm sorry. It's illegal to reveal any information of our patients or a potential donor who had a change of heart. The patient has every right to decide to continue receiving treatment. We have no right to interfere. I can't be of help to you. Please you need to leave now. I've other people to attend to."

The doctor stared at Janet with a serious expression on his face. When she didn't move an inch, he called on a nurse to escort her out of his office.

Even after she was escorted out, she was still unwilling to give up. She held the nurse's hand in the corridor. "Please is there really no other way? My relative has been waiting for a liver transplant for a long time. Her health is deteriorating by the second. She can't wait any longer. Please save her life."

Janet pleaded in a quavering voice. The nurse wriggled her arm from Janet's firm grip. Instead of answering her question, she simply told her to go home and continue waiting. She then went about her work.

A heavy weight suddenly fell on Janet. She was anxious, confused, and helpless all at this time. She leaned against the wall and stared blankly for a long time. Several patients passed by. A patient, who had overheard her conversation with the nurse moved close to her and shook his head sympathetically. "Young lady, you should go back home. There's no point wasting time here. I have seen a lot of cases like yours. Believe me when I say that they are just lying to you by saying that the donor decided to continue treatment instead. They must have given the perfect match liver to someone else with money or connections."

The tears Janet had been trying to hold back streamed down her cheeks immediately she heard this. She became even more distressed.

"What do you think I should do now?" she murmured, sobbing helplessly.

"From my experience, such a negative turn of events frequently happens when the patient or family members have enemies with power. Do you have an enemy? Or have you offended anyone recently, young lady?" With an infusion bottle in his hand, the patient sighed and added, "Well, I think you might offend someone."

Something suddenly dawned on Janet as she stared at the man's back.

She had offended someone today.

It was Fiona.

Not only was her adopted mother her sworn enemy, but she was also the person she had quarreled with recently. However, she didn't expect her to act so quickly. She had only gone to ask them for money a few hours ago.

It was pretty obvious that Fiona had secretly pulled the strings to prevent the transplant because she didn't want to give her money.

Janet's blood boiled at this moment. She gritted her teeth and really wanted to fight her adopted mother to the death.

'Hannah's health is rapidly declining. There's no guarantee that she would still be alive by the time another donor comes forward. Fiona has crossed the line. Since that family has refused to keep their end of the bargain, I won't keep their secret about this marriage anymore!' she thought, clenching her fists in fury.

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Janet's face reddened with rage. She wiped the tears on her face and left the hospital.

It was dark outside. The colorful neon lights cast a soft glow on her face.

Hearing the squeak of the door, Ethan stood up and looked outside. He heaved a sigh of relief and put the phone down.

When Ethan returned home, he saw the fridge was open, groceries on the floor and Janet nowhere to be found. He knew Janet wasn't lethargic, so he sensed something had happened to her.

"Is everything all right? Where have you been?"

Janet lowered her head and shook her head silently.

Ethan quickly walked to her and took her bag. Seeing that she was still silent, he tucked a loose strand of hair behind her ear and examined her face. Janet's eyes were swollen, and the tip of her nose had turned red. It was obvious she had cried.

Ethan frowned; his heart tightened in his chest. "Who bullied you?" he asked tenderly even though his body was tense with anger.

Someone had bullied his beloved wife, and he couldn't watch her cry.

"No one. I..."

"Don't try to fool me." Ethan hooked his fingers under her chin, forcing her to look at him. Although he looked like a towering mountain before her, the tenderness of his gaze revealed how much he cared for her.

As soon as her gaze met his, Janet threw herself in his arms.

"What's wrong?" Ethan's body stiffened. He gently rubbed her back, trying to calm her down.

Janet sniffed and shook her head.

Ethan's manly scent consumed her at once, making her feel safe and secure. She had never met anyone who smelled both aggressive and comforting at the same time.

His mere presence lured women like moths to a flame.

She nestled her face in the crook of his neck and asked in a muffled voice, "Can you accompany me to the Lind family's house?" Things had gone out of hand, and she made up her mind to put an end to everything.

Ethan looked at her and frowned.

He didn't know what was going on.

He followed Janet as she dragged him into the villa.

This time, Janet had made up her mind to reveal the truth.

The maid wasn't as arrogant as she usually was, mainly because Ethan accompanied Janet.

Seeing Ethan and Janet had come together, Bernie and Fiona didn't dare to shut the door on their faces or come up with some excuse.

"Why are you here at this hour, dear?" Fiona asked, pretending to be calm. She didn't expect Janet to bring Ethan with her.

"I'm here to deal with our previous debts!" Janet snapped coldly.

She decided to get straight to the point and break the truth. Janet looked at Ethan, her eyes glinting with confidence.

"Ethan, I'm sorry. My adoptive parents and I have deceived you. I'm not Jocelyn Lind. I'm Janet Lind, an orphan. The Lind family adopted me when I was a child. I married you as my younger sister's substitute."

She took a deep breath and pointed at Jocelyn, who was staring at her with wide eyes. "She is Jocelyn Lind. You have seen her before. She has insulted me in public several times in the past. She's the woman you were supposed to marry."

Bernie and Fiona turned pale with fright.

They didn't expect Janet would do such a thing. The unexpected turn of events caught them off guard. They didn't know what to do.

"What nonsense! What do you mean by a substitute? It's not true. Don't blabber shit! I guess you're drunk. Go home and rest." Janet had torn her facade in an instant. She quickly darted forward and stopped Janet before she uttered another word.

Just then, Ethan grabbed Fiona's hand and stopped her.

His face bore an unfathomable expression.

Ethan always had an inkling that something was wrong, and he was initially stunned after hearing the truth. Then on second thought, everything started to make sense.

“Why did you marry me as a substitute?” He looked down at Janet, staring into her eyes as if penetrating her thoughts.

The air suddenly turned cold.

Janet averted his gaze and looked away. After a moment’s hesitation, she took a deep breath and told him the truth.

“For the money. I was in desperate need of money to pay the medical expense for someone who raised me.”

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It was already late at night. There were no buses, and only a few taxis were available.

Ethan and Janet slowly walked back along the quiet road.

Janet hadn’t stopped crying ever since they left the Lind family’s house.

Ethan took off his jacket and wrapped it around Janet, holding her in his arms. He was now wearing only a white T-shirt that clung to his chiseled body.

“Don’t you want to ask me something?” Janet sniffed and looked up at him. The pool of tears in her eyes sparkled under the dim streetlight.

“Well, I have a lot to ask. I just don’t know where to begin.” Ethan wiped the tears from the corner of her eyes with his thumb. His calm, resonant voice made her cry harder.

Ethan couldn’t watch her break down before him.

Crying was one thing he didn’t like about Janet. He wanted to make sure she didn’t shed a tear again.

“When I was one year old, Bernie and Fiona adopted me. But a year later, Jocelyn was born. Since they had a daughter of their own, they stopped caring about me. Hannah was a maid in the Lind family. She was the one who raised me. I was living with Hannah in the countryside before I grew up and came to the city. Bernie and Fiona gave Hannah some money every month. However, that was not enough to meet our expenses. They didn’t bother increasing the monthly allowance. Hannah bought things for me with her money. She doesn’t have any family, and I have been taking care of her. She is all I have. Now, to make things worse, Fiona has secretly intercepted the liver for Hannah’s transplant. I don’t know how long it will take to find another donor. I don’t know how she is going to manage.”

Janet sniffed, gasping for breath. Ethan pulled out a tissue from his pocket and handed it to her. Seeing Janet hitching with sobs, he pulled her into his arms.

“So you told me about your deal with them in a fit of anger?” Ethan asked softly, his chin resting on her head.

He felt sorry for her.

He had thought that Janet was an optimistic carefree woman but didn’t think she shouldered a lot of burden and responsibilities on her own.

“It was because they broke their promise.” Leaning against his strong chest, Janet frowned and complained like a child.

Her answer amused Ethan. He hailed a taxi and pulled her inside.

Janet hugged him tighter and pressed her face against the crook of his neck. “Don’t worry!” Ethan stroked her hair. “I have a lot of friends. I’ll help you figure something.”

Janet’s head became hot and heavy after all the crying. She felt sleepy. Ethan’s embrace comforted her. She rubbed her cheek against his chest and snuggled up to him.

Silence fell. The ride was quiet, except for the whooshing of the wind.

“I’ve lying to you the whole time. Aren’t you mad at me?” Janet asked, interlacing her fingers with his.

‘How could every part of his body look beautiful?’ She looked at the blue veins running across his muscular hand in awe.

Ethan let her play with his hand as he watched her intently. The flickering light cast a soft glow on his face.

He put his other arm around her shoulder and sighed. “When I found out that you deceived me, I was furious. But later, I was simply glad that I didn’t marry Jocelyn. Fortunately, it was you”

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His every word felt like fireworks exploding in her ears.

Her heart stuttered in her chest. She began to sob uncontrollably. The pain was unbearable.

Her vice-like grip wrinkled Ethan’s T-shirt that was soaked in her tears.

“It’s okay. I’m here. It’s over now, Janet.” Ethan hurriedly took out a tissue and wiped her tears. He peppered kisses across her cheek and lips to comfort her.

Janet looked at him through her teary eyes, and her nose had turned red. She was so vulnerable at the moment that she shrank in his arms.

She wrapped her arms around Ethan’s neck and cried, “What do I do now, Ethan? I have severed all ties with my adoptive parents, and Hannah is in fatal danger now. I feel like I have no one in this world. Nobody wants me.”

Janet felt abandoned and helpless. Living in a world without any hope or anyone to hold on to was tragic.

Janet wasn’t an optimistic person. She always pretended to be strong and happy to protect herself from the world.

“You still have me. I’ll always be with you.” Ethan pulled her closer into his arms. He meant every word he said.

Janet pressed her face closer against his neck and continued to sob silently. She clung to him for dear life.

She didn't know how and since when she started trusting Ethan. But at the moment, the man was her savior.

He continued to stroke her back comfortingly.

After crying out her emotions, Janet leaned against Ethan's chest, wrapping her arms around his waist. She felt sleepy.

As she closed her eyes, Ethan pulled the jacket tighter, covering Janet's neck, and kissed the top of her head. "Forget everything and sleep."

When Janet woke up again, it was already midnight. She was lying on the bed in her room. It looked like Ethan had carried her into the house.

A nightmare woke her up.

She wanted to close her eyes and sleep again but couldn't.

Her mind was filled with thoughts about Hannah. She tossed and turned on the bed all night.

The next morning, Janet walked out of the room. Her eyes were bloodshot and puffy.

After she called her company and took a leave of absence, Janet went to the bathroom to brush her teeth. She planned to go to the hospital to see if they had found another suitable liver for Hannah.

"Your phone is ringing." Ethan knocked on the bathroom door and came in with Janet's phone. A frown lined his forehead when he saw Janet's tired eyes.

Janet answered the phone and quickly turned her head. She looked haggard today and didn't want Ethan to see her in this state.

"Hello, Miss Lind? I'm a nurse from the municipal hospital. I'm calling to tell you that the liver that was originally assigned for Hannah Stone is available again. The liver transplantation operation will be performed as scheduled."

"Oh, okay, okay. That's great!" At first, Janet was overjoyed. But later, she remembered what they had done earlier. "Didn't you say the patient decided to continue with his treatment? What happened now?"

She wondered which corrupt doctor in the hospital had secretly colluded with Fiona.

"Well..." The nurse sounded embarrassed. She cleared her throat and said, "Well, I just called to inform you that the surgery will be performed as planned."

Janet hung up the phone and breathed a sigh of relief. After a moment's thought, she turned to look at Ethan. "How did you make it?"

Ethan rubbed the back of his neck nonchalantly. "Well, I know a few people working in the hospital."

Janet examined his face. Ethan's eyes were droopy, and his hair was a mess. He was leaning against the sink, brushing his teeth.

Somehow, Janet sensed something was wrong. She didn't believe him.

After all, she believed Ethan was just a common man. How could he know more influential people than Fiona did?

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But soon, Janet forgot about everything as excitement bubbled up in her heart.

She was so happy that she didn't bother probing how it all happened.

"Aren't you going to work today?" Ethan asked in a muffled voice as he wiped his face with a cotton towel.

"No, I have taken the day off. I planned to go to the hospital, but that seems unnecessary now."

Clenching a rubber band between her teeth, Janet casually coiled up her chestnut curly hair into a bun. After that, she smoothed her unruly bangs in front of the mirror, tucking long strands of hair behind her ear. She looked like a college student. However, the dark rims around her eyes made her look haggard.

"All right. Then, sleep well at home."

Ethan playfully ruffled her hair and lowered his head to meet her eyes. Their faces were inches apart.

The next moment, the darkness consumed Janet as he pecked on her lips. "I'm going to work." With that, he left.

Janet touched her lips in a daze. By the time she returned to her senses, the door was closed, and the apartment returned to silence.

After breakfast, Janet slumped on the sofa and watched TV. It was humid and dark outside. The cloudy sky showed signs of a rainstorm.

Janet didn't know when she fell asleep.

When she woke up, the light in the living room was off, and a football match was playing on the TV.

Ethan was sitting on the sofa beside her. The dim light from the TV cast sharp shadows on his face, making his features look sharper. He was leaning comfortably against the sofa, sending messages on his phone.

"Why didn't you wake me up?" Janet rubbed her eyes. A gray blanket slipped down from her shoulders.

"I thought you would wake up any time." Ethan smiled and handed a glass of warm milk to her. "Drink this and go to your room. It would be more comfortable for you to sleep there."

Janet took the milk and drank it obediently.

The room fell silent again.

"By the way, thank you for helping me last night. Did your hand get hurt when you smashed the wine bottle?" She had been busy worrying about Hannah that she almost forgot what happened in the Lind family house. Holding the glass, she studied Ethan's face.

His expression remained the same throughout. He put down his phone and took a sip of beer. "It's okay. We are husband and wife," he said, his eyes still fixed on the TV. "You don't have to thank me."

Janet pulled the blanket closer in her arms and looked at him. The light from the TV brightened her face. She drew circles on the rim of the glass, carefully choosing her words. "Now that you know I wasn't the one you had planned to marry, do you still want to be in a serious relationship with me as my husband?"

Ethan stopped drinking beer and turned his head. His eyes narrowed as he looked at her. "Why do you ask? Who else do you want to marry?" Janet's hair stood on end when she heard the threat in his tone.

She looked away and shook her head. "No. I didn't mean that."

Ethan was an excellent man, and she had no reason to stay away from him.

After a moment's thought, Ethan asked, "You always refused to consummate our wedding and be a real couple. Was it because you married me as a substitute? Were you planning on leaving me one day?"

Janet's mouth parted. She didn't know what to say. Ethan had observed her every move intently.

"Well, that was one of the reasons. But I didn't intend to leave without telling you the truth. I just wanted to wait for a proper timing to tell you everything so that we could decide what to do next." A blush flamed Janet's cheeks. She didn't know why they were talking about this all of a sudden.

"What about now?" Ethan grabbed her wrist. The warmth of his body seeped into her skin.

He pushed the blanket away and leaned closer to her.

His tall nose and chiseled jaw made him look manly.

Janet pulled the blanket closer to her as she felt her heart was about to leap out of her chest.

At such a close distance, she could see his drooping eyelashes. "I... I'm not ready yet. I have to pay for Hannah's surgery. There are still a lot of things for me to do. I have to finish the design for the company as well. And... and there are eggs in the fridge... well, we have to finish them as soon as we can. They have been in the fridge for almost two months."

Ethan arched his brows and listened to her rant about the most random thing to avoid the topic.

"How long do you think you can avoid it?"

Flustered, Janet cleared her throat and said, "You know what, Ethan. The money Bernie and Fiona give me won't even cover up to half of the surgery fee. I have to find a way to pay for it. Now, I think I have no choice but to borrow money from the bank even if the interest rates are high."

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Ethan slowly loosened his grip on Janet's wrist. His slender fingers trailed down her hand and interlaced her fingers.

He kissed her knuckles and smiled. "You have said a lot. Catch some breath now. Is your throat dry?"

Janet was taken aback; she stared at him with wide eyes. A blush crept onto her cheeks. She lowered her gaze, batting her eyelashes.

Ethan didn't say anything more. He stroked her palm and looked at her shy face. The smile lit up his face; he looked more handsome than ever.

Somehow, the lust in his eyes seemed appealing rather than annoying.

"Tell me something. Would you rather get a loan from a bank than ask me for help?"

"You are no better than I am. You have no money. Even if you have savings, I don't think it would be enough to pay for the surgery." Janet smiled and looked at him. Then, she drank the milk and placed the glass on the table.

Ethan was rendered speechless. Judging by Janet's impression of him, it was indeed unreasonable for him to offer the money for the surgery. It would garner her suspicion.

He frowned and said, "You should have at least asked me to find a way to help you. I could also ask around for money."

After a moment's thought, Janet looked at him intently. "I don't have the habit of depending on others. Hannah is old and weak. I have been solving all the problems myself without seeking anyone's help ever since I was a child. If I started depending on others, then it would become a habit. As time goes by, it would turn into a weakness. After all, you can only rely on yourself."

"That makes sense, in a way." Ethan nodded in understanding. He leaned against the sofa, his hair bouncing with every move. "Come here," he said, stretching out his hand.

Janet bit her bottom lip in embarrassment. But her body reacted on its own accord. She nestled in Ethan's arms and let out a weary sigh. Ethan pulled Janet closer to him and wrapped the blanket around them. "Are you cold? Do you want me to get a quilt from the bedroom?"

Outside the window, the streets were pitch dark. Only the dim lamps illuminated the road. The wind howled, and the raindrops pattered on the green leaves. It finally began to rain.

"No need." Janet nestled closer to him. The warmth of his body seeped into hers. It felt as if he were her own, cozy heater.

She leaned against Ethan's chest and inhaled his fresh, manly scent. A contented sigh escaped her lips. Suddenly, her eyes sprang open. She looked at him and asked. "Did you collect the clothes I washed today?"

"Yes. I have folded and kept the clothes in your bedroom." Ethan moved his arm, pulling her closer to him, making her lean on his shoulder more comfortably.

Once the football game ended, Ethan picked up the remote control and switched to a horror movie. It was still pouring outside.

"You have to change your habit," Ethan said, breaking the silence. Janet was engrossed in the film. Hearing his voice, she turned and looked at him quizzically.

"What?"

“From now on, you have me. You don’t have to struggle on your own,” Ethan said softly, stroking her silky hair.

Janet looked out of the window without answering him.

“Don’t think about a loan for the time being. I’ll try to find a way to get the money. Listen to me. We still have a couple of days left. Let taking a loan from the bank be our last resort.” Ethan rubbed his fingers against her soft cheek and looked into her eyes. He wanted her to trust him.

Ethan’s handsome face made her dizzy. Janet finally nodded in agreement.

A faint smile stretched across Ethan’s lips. He cupped her cheeks and kissed her, slipping his tongue into her mouth.

They were a couple now.

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 110

The Lind family’s house was still clamorous after Ethan and Janet left.

The maid was cleaning the red stains on the carpet, listening to the three of them bicker.

Jocelyn lost her temper.

She sniffled loudly and burst into tears as if she had just broken up with her boyfriend. “How could Ethan do this to me? How could he compare me to that bitch? I’m in no way inferior to her! Mom, no one has ever humiliated me this way!”

Bernie was reading the newspaper, scowling with frustration. He couldn’t understand what his daughter was thinking. ‘What makes her think Ethan would like her? Besides, isn’t it a good thing he doesn’t like her?’ he thought. Since Ethan didn’t like her, he wouldn’t blame them for marrying him to Janet instead of Jocelyn. Bernie couldn’t understand why his daughter was making a fuss.

Fiona was also furious. She had been dreading this day, thinking Ethan would ruin their lives if he found the truth. However, the man showed completely no interest in Jocelyn, which infuriated them.

“Stop crying. Otherwise, your eyes will become puffy and bloodshot. You won’t be able to go out. Ethan is just a loser. He doesn’t deserve you.” Fiona patted Jocelyn’s back to comfort her.

But Jocelyn began to weep harder. Gritting her teeth, she picked up the teacup on the table and threw it on the floor. “But he doesn’t like me. He even compared me with that bitch. That’s the biggest humiliation of my life!”

Fiona’s heart clenched at the sight of the shattered remnants of the antique vases and cups on the floor. She had spent a lot of money on them, but Jocelyn smashed them in an instant.

“That’s a good thing. What would you have done if Ethan pestered you to marry him?” Fiona continued to persuade her daughter.

Hearing that made Jocelyn calm down a little. “Of course, I wouldn’t have agreed.” She sniffled loudly. “But I should be the one denying him and this proposal. I can’t believe he doesn’t want me.”

“Ethan is not a good man. I’ve asked you not to let his good looks deceive you. Keep my words in mind. Otherwise, sooner or later, you’ll fall for the wrong man and suffer.” Fiona poked Jocelyn’s temple with disappointment.

At that moment, Bernie’s phone rang.

Fiona picked up the phone and glanced at the screen. “Bernie, it’s a call from the company you have partnered with. Answer it now!” She nudged Bernie’s arm, who was about to doze off on the sofa.

“What’s the matter? Why have they called me at this hour?”

Bernie sat upright, clearing his throat.

“Hello, Mr. Walton. What’s up?”

The caller was the CEO of one of the Lind family’s partnering companies.

“Mr. Lind, the senior executives of our company have decided to terminate our cooperation with your company.”

Bernie sprang up from his seat in horror. “Wait, Mr. Walton. Why? What’s with the sudden decision? Are you not happy with our collaboration?”

Bernie wasn’t good at handling business. The company was barely holding on over the years as he struggled to retain the connections his father had built in the past.

This collaboration was crucial for business. Once they withdrew, the Lind family would face severe downfall.