

## The Mbahsb 131

### The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 131

Today Ethan was dressed in a formal, elegant suit. His black hair was combed to perfection, revealing his flawless face and accentuating his deep-set eyes that exuded a majestic aura every time he looked at others.

Unlike his usual slovenly self, Ethan looked mature and noble, as if he were a whole new person today.

Ethan stopped for a second, took off his double-buttoned vest, and draped it on his arm. He ruffled his black hair, letting a few strands fall between his thick eyebrows. "I have to accompany my boss to receive an important client today," he said nonchalantly. "So I wore formal clothes. These are my friends. I asked them to help me when I received your call."

Ethan had a meeting with his foreign partners today, so he had dressed extra formally. But since he had come in a hurry to Janet's rescue, he didn't have the time to change.

Ethan's so-called 'friends' were all trembling with fear. They nodded and bowed respectfully before Janet.

"Hello! Nice to meet you!"

"Our buddy here always praises you. He thinks the world of you."

Everyone tried to play along. After all, it was a good opportunity to get a hike.

"Hello, everyone. Thank you for helping us. How about I treat you to dinner?" Janet's face turned red.

She felt awkward to meet Ethan's friends like this. After all, the slap mark was still visible on her face.

She stole a glance at Ethan, her eyes gleaming with admiration.

She didn't expect him to have so many friends and connections.

Ethan draped his arm around Janet's shoulder and smiled. "Well, that's enough. She is shy. You guys better drop Hannah back to her home first and then hire someone to take care of her."

"I don't think it's a good idea. It will cost a lot of money." Janet frowned, tugging at the corner of Ethan's shirt.

"Well, would you rest assured if Hannah stays in the countryside all by herself?" he asked, cocking his head to the side. "Besides, it won't cost much to hire a help to do household chores. Let's discuss this further after Hannah recovers."

Janet had no choice but to agree.

By the time they got home, it was getting dark.

Janet sat on the sofa, hugging her knees, as she watched the sun sink into the horizon. Her face was coated with ointment, and the swelling had alleviated a bit.

The sound of running water reverberated from the bathroom.

"I have run a bath for you. Go and take a bath first. It will make you feel better." Ethan walked out of the bathroom. His sleeves were rolled up, revealing his strong forearms.

Janet nodded and got up from the sofa. Her face bore no expression.

"What's wrong?" Ethan checked her pulse and pressed the back of his hand on her forehead. "Do you sense any discomfort? You don't look good."

He sensed something was wrong.

Janet shook her head. "Ethan..." She took a deep breath and cleared her throat, finally summoning the courage to speak.

"Can you accompany me to the bathroom?"

she asked in a feeble voice.

The traumatic incident had shaken her up. Janet was still frightened. Ethan was the only person she trusted; his presence made her feel safe and secure. She wanted him by her side at all times.

"I don't think it's a good idea. It will cost a lot of money." Janet frowned, tugging at the corner of Ethan's shirt.

Ethan nodded. "Sure."

The bathroom was covered with steam, and a thin layer of mist sat on the glass.

As Janet removed her dress, the sound of the zipper sliding sounded louder than usual. She cast a sidelong glance at the man beside her.

Ethan's gaze fell on the closed door. His towering frame made the bathroom seem small and cramped.

Hearing the spluttering of water as Janet stepped into the bathtub, Ethan turned his head and sighed.

Janet was submerged in the foamy water. A thick layer of bubbles floated on the surface, revealing nothing but her flawless face. Her rosy cheeks and pitiful eyes somehow made her look more innocent than ever. She managed to effortlessly arouse his desire.

Ethan's mouth became dry as passion coursed through his veins. He took deep breaths to control himself.

Janet had seen him like this before. Ethan had the same look on his face every time he kissed her.

"I'll be at the door. Call me if you need anything." Ethan smiled and gently patted her cheek before turning around to leave.

Janet looked sad and miserable, so Ethan decided to let her go today.

Just as Ethan turned out to leave, he felt a feeble grip on his hand.

He turned around and saw Janet looking at him with expectant eyes.

"Don't go..."

A hint of panic flashed in her eyes. She didn't want to stay alone in the bathroom.

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Janet was almost in tears, looking aggrieved and helpless.

Ethan couldn't leave her alone after looking at the pitiful sight of her.

"Are you sure you want me to stay? Well, you know I'm not a gentleman."

Ethan's Adam's apple bobbed, and his jaw tightened. He lifted her in his arms and pressed her against the cold wall.

Caught off guard, Janet yelped in shock. She didn't stand a chance to react.

Although he seemed gentle, the ferocity of his kiss reflected his desire. He thrust his tongue into her mouth, prying it open. Then, he massaged his tongue against hers, making Janet moan with pleasure.

"Hmm... Ethan, I... I can't breathe..." Janet moved her head back, trying to wriggle out of his grip. Her breathing faltered as a subtle blush painted her cheeks.

"Don't you want it?" Ethan asked, rubbing his nose against hers. His dark eyes dazzled with desire. He gulped and gently bit her chin. "If you are afraid, stop seducing me and behave yourself."

Janet's face turned a shade pinker. However, she refused to let go of him. "My... My period is over..."

Ethan's eyes widened with astonishment. He picked up the towel beside him and wrapped it around Janet's delicate body. His breathing came out in short pants. "No, this isn't right. You better have your bath. I'll wait outside."

He felt that Janet's fear had driven her to say something like that. Ethan didn't want to take advantage of her vulnerability.

Just as Ethan was about to leave, Janet leaned forward and hugged him from behind. The bath towel slipped to the floor.

"Please don't go..." She whimpered as tears filled her eyes.

Janet felt she had lost her mind. She had allowed her desire to cloud her reasoning and logic.

However, she wasn't acting upon her fear. The incident today only made her realize how much she liked Ethan and relied on him.

It was the first time Janet had initiated getting close with him.

Ethan had been trying hard to hold back his lust and desire all this while.

Although he couldn't wait anymore, he still tried his best to restrain his emotions and asked, "You have always stopped me from getting intimate with you. Why do you want it now? What happened?"

"Nothing... I... I just think that you are a good man, and consummate our marriage doesn't seem like a bad idea." Janet's face burned with embarrassment. She had never openly admitted her feelings to a man before.

It was more or less a confession of love.

“I’m afraid you’ll regret it.” Ethan cupped her cheek and planted a soft kiss on it. “But there’s no time for regrets because you initiated this,” he whispered, his hot breath blowing on her skin.

“I won’t regret it.” Janet trembled under his touch.

Just as Ethan was about to leave, Janet leaned forward and hugged him from behind. The bath towel slipped to the floor.

Their bodies rubbed against each other. The proximity made her shy.

Hearing that, Ethan couldn’t wait any longer. He lifted Janet and carried her to the bathtub.

Ethan took off his clothes in one swift motion and hovered above Janet, resting his hands on either side of the bathtub. His strong muscles flexed with every movement. His chiseled chest was pressed against her body.

Janet felt hot all over. She was so shy that she didn’t dare to meet his eyes.

At that moment, Janet realized how much she wanted Ethan. After all, she couldn’t take her eyes off his perfect figure. She could feel the lust coursing through her veins.

Ethan held her in his arms and kissed her gently. The kiss gradually deepened as he sucked her lips and drew circles against them with his tongue.

Their naked bodies were intertwined in the bathtub. The bubbles scattered out as they got more passionate and aggressive.

Janet sensed that Ethan couldn’t wait any longer, for his erection rubbed against her abdomen. Ethan’s heavy-lidded eyes turned red as he stared at her. “Tell me if it hurts,” he whispered, pecking on her lips.

Janet’s eyeballs rolled up, and her eyelashes fluttered. She bit her lip and buried her face in his strong shoulder. She was nervous yet curious as she felt his huge cock rubbing against her.

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Suddenly, the sound of a phone ringing interrupted them.

“Fuck!” With eyes as cold as ice, Ethan cursed in a low voice. He was just inches away from achieving his goal, but the phone call got in his way.

“Don’t you want to answer that?” The ringing phone jolted Janet back to reality. She raised her head to peer at him curiously.

But instead of answering her right away, Ethan kissed her earlobe, sucking at it and nibbling it. His hand reached up to cup and squeeze her breast, and he said fiercely, “Not really.”

Ever since he had moved in with Janet, he had become hot tempered.

Janet snorted and rolled her eyes.

After a while, the phone stopped ringing and the bathroom fell silent.

Ethan eagerly went back to kissing her lips passionately. He ordered in a hoarse voice, "Spread out your legs."

But before Janet could oblige, the phone rang again, echoing against the bathroom tiles. It kept ringing incessantly, without any signs of stopping.

It seemed that the person on the other end of the line was very anxious. There must've been something important he needed to talk about.

Ethan was so angry that he almost pushed Janet away. He stood up, got out of the bathtub, and picked up the phone.

"What is it? Spit it out!" Ethan barked into the receiver.

The man on the other end of the line was one of the subordinates he had ordered to investigate the whole kidnap thing. Ethan's furious voice sent shivers down his spine.

"Sir... Here... Here's the thing... After interrogating the driver, he confessed that it was Fiona Lind who paid him to rape Janet."

"I see."

After hanging up, Ethan turned around and saw that Janet had already climbed out of the tub. She had wrapped a bath towel around her slim body tightly.

"What happened? It sounded serious. You should probably deal with it first." For his sake, Janet didn't think they should continue today.

"That driver was hired to hurt you," he said gruffly. Ethan wrapped his arms around her slim waist. He looked down at her red, swollen lips and whispered, "And Fiona's the one behind all of this."

Before Janet could react, Ethan pressed his lips against hers fiercely. She parted her lips to let him in, enduring the man's passion. Their warm tongues intertwined, filling the bathroom with hot steam.

"Wait, wait... Fiona?" Janet mumbled incoherently, still in a daze from Ethan's kiss. She was shocked at the mention of this name.

"What is it? Spit it out!" Ethan barked into the receiver.

Although Fiona had never treated her well, Janet didn't expect her to stoop to this level of viciousness.

Clenching her fists, her nails dug into her palms. Janet couldn't help but feel a mix of anger and disappointment.

"She must really hate me."

Ethan cupped her face in his palms and kissed her. Janet had just taken a bath, and her body smelled sweet and fresh. "What do you want to do?"

Janet shook her head, at a loss. "I guess I want to see her, face to face."

Ethan didn't object. He pinched her chin and said, "Let me take a shower first. Wait for me outside."

“Didn’t you just take a bath?” After all, they were both in the bathtub just now.

With a helpless sigh, Ethan leaned against the wall and gestured downwards playfully. “Do you think I can go out like this?”

Janet’s eyes followed the direction of his gesture. When she saw what he meant, she immediately looked away as though she had been burnt.

“Okay, okay. I... I’ll wait for you outside.” With a face as red as a tomato, she scurried out of the bathroom as quickly as possible and slammed the door shut behind her.

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After getting dressed, Ethan took Janet to the Lind family’s villa. Behind them, his men dragged the driver with them.

“Who’s there?” The same arrogant servant was the one who answered the door.

It seemed that every living creature from the Lind family household—even the dogs they raised—would bully Janet whenever they crossed paths.

This servant however, was the sort who would bully the weak and submit to the strong. So as soon as she opened the door and saw the men in black standing at the door behind Janet and Ethan, her mouth snapped shut and she didn’t dare to insult Janet.

“Oh, uh... Come on in.”

At this time, Fiona was leisurely painting her nails while a soap opera blared from the TV in the background. She seemed quite happy and was humming a cheery tune under her breath.

Just a few days ago, she had found a rapist who had just been released from prison. She offered him a huge sum of money to pretend to be a taxi driver to lure Janet into her trap.

Such a desperado was greedy for money, and moreover, he had a criminal record. Fiona figured that he was definitely the right guy to teach that damned bitch a lesson. Then Fiona would help the man escape. No one would know that she was the mastermind behind this.

She got a message from the man earlier that he had Janet. But hours passed and Fiona still hadn’t gotten any more feedback from the driver, so she felt a little uneasy.

“Oh, relax, Fiona. You just need to wait a little bit longer.” She comforted herself and proceeded to paint her nails a bright red.

Suddenly, she heard a ruckus from the vestibule of the villa.

“What the hell are you doing? Keep it down over there! Or else I’ll deduct your salary this month!” Fiona glanced at the door with disdain.

But her angry shouts was met with a nervous voice. The servant announced, “Mrs. Lind, Janet... she’s here.”

Before Fiona could react, Janet and Ethan strode in, followed by several burly men. They dragged in the driver she had hired with them.

When Fiona's eyes landed on the driver kneeling on the ground, her body went stiff, as though she had been struck by lightning.

All color had drained from the man's face, and his lips were cracked and bleeding. It was clear that he had been tortured senselessly.

"Why the hell did you let them in?!" Fiona yelled at the servant in a panic.

Wide-eyed, the servant didn't dare to answer. Fiona took a deep breath and feigned a sense of calm. "What's the meaning of this, Janet?"

Janet glared at Fiona murderously. Her chest heaved violently from anger. Pointing a finger at the driver, she shouted, "He admitted to everything. You hired him to rape me!"

Fiona's eyes went as wide as saucers and she pretended to be innocent. "What nonsense are you talking about? I don't even know this man! What evidence do you have? If you keep this up, I'll sue you for defamation!"

"Do whatever you want," Janet said fearlessly, her eyes flashing dangerously. "I don't need to show you any evidence. Go ahead and call the police. They'll find the evidence and convict you for me."

Suddenly, she heard a ruckus from the vestibule of the villa.

Bernie was idly flipping through a newspaper on the balcony when he heard the commotion in the living room. Confused, he went in to see what was going on. "What are you talking about, Janet? Fiona is a sweet, kind-hearted woman who doesn't even have the heart to kill a cockroach. How could she do such an evil thing?"

"Is that so? Do you really believe that she's kind?" Janet sneered, her voice riddled with icy disdain. "How ironic! A woman who can't kill a cockroach is cruel enough to try to kill me. You should really open your damn eyes and look at the woman in front of you carefully. Well, if you're not going to admit to your crimes, I'll just call the police."

As she spoke, Janet pulled out her phone and started dialing 911.

Fiona was so frightened that her face turned deathly pale and her posture grew unsteady.

She knew what she had done more than anyone else. Unfortunately for her, the driver had been caught and forced into admitting everything. If the police came to investigate and the truth was brought to light, she would definitely be sentenced to jail.

And by then, everything would be over.

Fiona's arrogance vanished. She had no choice but to beg for mercy. She fell to her knees and grabbed Janet's arm, crying and begging her desperately.

"Janet, I was wrong! I must've been out of my mind at the time! Please let me go this time for the sake of our family bond! We adopted you and took you in after all!"

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Bernie was shocked compared to the rest of the people present.

He sprang up from the sofa and pointed his trembling finger at Fiona. "What the hell are you saying? Did you really do it?"

He didn't expect that Fiona would do such a thing. His anger reached its pinnacle. "Fiona!" he bellowed, pounding the table. "How could you do such a thing?"

The Lind family members were decent people with good values.

Bernie had married Fiona only because she was gentle and obedient.

Fiona wiped her tears and sniffled loudly. "Bernie, I know I made a mistake. I was too disappointed in Janet that I lost my mind. I was just thinking about apologizing to her now."

"That's unbelievable! Do you think I'm dumb enough to believe you? You've been humming a happy tune all afternoon. You were even denying it when Janet showed up here to accuse you. What the hell is wrong with you?"

Bernie frowned. The wrinkles on his forehead grew more prominent, making him look ten years older.

His wife suddenly seemed like a stranger to him. He didn't think Fiona would be such a ruthless person.

"You know I married you because I thought you were a kind, virtuous woman. When we first adopted Janet, I knew you were angry and you had suffered a lot because we couldn't have a child of our own. I felt sorry for you and never argued with you. I just wanted to make it up for you. You... I didn't expect you to be such a ruthless person!"

"Now that Fiona has admitted the truth, let the police handle it," Janet said in an indifferent voice as her cold eyes flitted to Fiona.

Bernie was taken aback for a moment. His anger was replaced with terror.

"No, Janet. If Fiona gets arrested, it will ruin our Lind family's reputation. Can you please forgive her one last time? After all, she is your foster mother. I agree we didn't treat you well in the past, but I promise such a thing would never happen again."

Bernie stood in front of Fiona, hoping to convince Janet.

Regardless of how bad Fiona was, the woman was his wife. He couldn't watch her go to jail. Her arrest would also ruin the Lind family's reputation once and for all.

Janet crossed her arms over her chest and sneered. Ever since Janet was a child, Bernie had always been a coward. He was never harsh toward Janet but he didn't stop his wife from ill-treating her either. He never stood up for Janet even though he knew Fiona was heartless toward her.

"Now that Fiona has admitted the truth, let the police handle it," Janet said in an indifferent voice as her cold eyes flitted to Fiona.



“That’s enough!” Janet snapped, glaring at the two people begging and crying for mercy. “Do you think attempted rape is a forgivable crime? It’s not a trivial thing to forget. Don’t you think it’s unfair for you to ask such a thing?”

Janet had always been grateful to them both. After all, they had adopted her. Even though Bernie and Fiona were mean to her, they had put a roof over her head. However, now, she had lost all respect for the two after hearing Bernie’s words

“Please, Janet. Think about us. You want money from us, don’t you? We’ll give you as much as you want if you don’t call the police.” Fiona said, hitching between her sobs.

Janet’s anger reached its pinnacle. She was fighting for her self-respect, but Bernie and Fiona were haggling with her, thinking she would do anything for money.

“Fine. I won’t call the police. In exchange, I don’t want you to mention adopting me ever again. Do you understand?” Janet closed her eyes and took a deep breath. “Besides, I’m going to sever all ties with you, formally. From now on, we have nothing to do with each other. You both mean nothing to me.”

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“What?! Why would you want to do that?” Fiona blurted, stomping her foot anxiously.

Although she hated Janet to her core, she never considered cutting ties with her.

After all, although Ethan was just an illegitimate child of the Lester family, it was still the fastest way for Fiona to forge a relationship with them. She had tirelessly wondered how to benefit from her adopted daughter’s husband.

However, Fiona hadn’t even seen Ethan’s two brothers since he married Janet.

This whole time, she had been waiting for an opportunity to introduce Jocelyn to his brothers. That way, Jocelyn would have a chance to marry into the Lester family.

This was Fiona’s elaborate plan, which was why she was shocked that Janet wanted to sever their relationship.

“You hired someone to rape me. Do you really think I’m an idiot and a pushover? Of course I want to cut all ties with you!” Janet was so angry that she laughed bitterly.

Fiona narrowed her eyes at Janet, wondering if she could still take advantage of her despite the odds.

But Janet didn’t want to waste time here anymore. “If you disagree to my terms, I’ll call the police. It’s as simple as that.”

Without waiting for a response, she turned around to leave.

Bernie stomped angrily and pointed at Fiona, nostrils flaring. “What the hell were you thinking? Now that things have come to this, severing ties should be the least of your worries! Why in God’s name are you hesitating?”

Fiona turned and whined in Bernie’s ear, “We’ve fed and clothed her for years. I can’t just let her go like this!”

If they severed ties, Fiona would no longer be able to dangle Janet on a string, using the fact that their family had taken her in to guilt her.

Bernie's face contorted in anger. He had no idea that Fiona was so shameless.

"Then go to jail! I don't give a damn, you hopeless woman!"

"Why, you—!" Fiona gritted her teeth and glared at Bernie angrily.

She was doing all of this for the sake of the Lind family after all. In this way, Jocelyn would find a good husband and that bitch Janet would never dare to talk to them like this ever again!

"Have you decided yet? If it'll help you choose faster, I'll call the police already." Without waiting for a response, Janet picked up her phone and unlocked it.

"No! Don't you dare call the police!" Fiona tried to yank the phone out of Janet's hands, but Janet dodged her advance deftly.

She was so anxious that she nearly bit her lip until it bled. Now that she was cornered, she had no choice but to submit. She buried her face in her hands and slumped onto the sofa, crying pathetically, "Fine! We'll cut all ties! Satisfied now? What an ungrateful child!"

After putting her phone down, Janet looked at her pitiful figure, unfazed. "Then let's go and get it done officially now."

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They immediately went to the Department of Civil Affairs to finalize the formalities.

When everything was settled and they were about to go their separate ways, Fiona cursed Janet under her breath. "We have painstakingly raised you for so many years. You are so heartless to cut ties with us."

People passing by all looked in the direction where Janet was standing.

"Me? Heartless? Okay, I'll go to the police station now." Janet shrugged indifferently.

Bernie's face contorted in anger. He had no idea that Fiona was so shameless.

If they kept pushing her like this, she was more than capable of defending herself.

"You, you...!" Fiona's nostrils flared uncontrollably. She was so angry that she pointed a finger at Janet in front of all the passers-by.

Bernie didn't want Fiona to cause them any more trouble than she already had, so he hurriedly dragged her into the car.

Only when the car drove away did Janet finally relax. Her shoulders drooped, as though she had no strength left in her anymore.

"It's good that you've finally gotten rid of them. Otherwise, the Lind family would keep on making things hard for you in the future," Ethan commented nonchalantly, slipping his arm around her slender waist.

Janet turned to him and buried her face in his chest. She muttered, "I just don't understand why she always hates me. I never did anything to her!"

"It's not your fault, okay?" Ethan rested his chin on the woman's forehead, and stroking her back gently. Their shadows overlapped on the ground.

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Time stopped for no one, and life went on.

The following day, when Janet got to the office, she ran into Tiffany.

"Why did you ask for another leave yesterday?" Tiffany asked calmly, but her eyes looked at Janet sharply.

Janet shifted uncomfortably under her intense gaze. "I'm sorry. There was something I had to deal with at home."

Tiffany pursed her red lips. "No need to be so nervous, Lind. I'm not going to bite you. You didn't make it to yesterday's meeting so I just came to catch you up to speed. The design department will select a new batch of designers for promotion, and there are only three vacancies."

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As soon as Janet sat down at her desk, Gerda swiveled her chair around to face Janet. "Did you hear the news? The annual intermediate designer evaluation is about to begin. Everyone's been running around like headless chickens trying to prepare for it. By the way, why'd you go on leave again yesterday?"

"Something urgent came up at home." After taking a sip of water, Janet glanced around at the bustling office. "It seems everyone's excited."

"Of course everyone's excited. This is a good chance to be promoted. Besides, the fall-winter fashion week is approaching. Everyone is secretly competing with each other." Then, Gerda leaned over and whispered in her ear, "There are only three positions. All the new designers are itching to get a spot. I know of two who have been working here for a while now, and they both have performed excellently. I just know that they'll get the promotion—but as for the third position, it's hard to say who will get it."

"There's a lot of people in our department. The competition must be tough." Janet pressed her lips nervously, sensing that a fierce battle was about to begin.

While the battle had not yet begun per se, people were already loading their weapons.

"Well, what choice do we have? I know I'm way out of their league, so I'm pretty chill. After all, there are too many strong competitors this year. I feel like I'll just be cannon fodder out there." Gerda sighed bitterly. Then, she looked at Janet and her eyes lit up. "You and Kaya might have a chance."

"Kaya?" Janet blinked at her colleague questioningly.

"You know, Kaya Dixon—oh, right! She went abroad to study so you haven't met her yet." Gerda's eyes wandered towards the tea room and she pouted. "That's her."

Janet followed her gaze and saw a slender woman with short hair.

Kaya's eyes met hers. She strode towards Janet, high heels clicking against the floor, and she asked, "Are you Janet Lind? Nice to meet you. I'm Kaya Dixon."

"Hello." Janet smiled and shook hands with her politely.

"I heard that the company has a big upcoming project, and that many designers will need to participate. It's said that this will be used as a reference for the promotion. I'm looking forward to your performance," Kaya nodded and smiled at Janet with grace.

It seemed that Miss Dixon had already regarded her as a potential competitor.

"Oh, thanks. I also look forward to your designs." Janet secretly breathed a sigh of relief. To be honest, she didn't want to put too much pressure on herself.

Because of the upcoming evaluation, countless designers worked overtime, doing their best for the project.

"Kaya?" Janet blinked at her colleague questioningly.

Janet was busy taking care of Hannah recently, so she had spent less time and energy on work. So now, she did her best to keep up the pace and finish her work.

She hadn't been with the company for that long, but her outstanding performance had shone a spotlight on her. In the words of Gerda, the third position was between her and Kaya.

The night before the deadline of handing their designs, a lot of the designers were still working overtime.

Janet looked around and found that all her colleagues were bent over their desks, working hard.

She massaged her aching neck and found herself parched. Just as she stood up to go to the tea room, she found that Kaya was standing behind her.

"Do you want to take a break? Here, I just made some coffee. Want some?" As she spoke, Kaya subtly glanced at the laptop on Janet's desk.

However, Janet didn't notice and gratefully accepted Kaya's offer.

"Sure, thank you." Janet did feel like coffee would be a great pick-me-up.

"No problem. Is this your cup? Let me pour some for you." Smiling sweetly, Kaya picked up Janet's cup. Suddenly, she lost her grip on the kettle and it fell with a clatter, spilling coffee all over Janet's laptop.

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Janet's laptop screen instantly went black. A slight sizzling sound came from inside it, and it coughed out a puff of smoke. The air smelled of coffee and burnt metal.

Janet hurriedly tried to wipe the coffee off her laptop with some tissue, but it was too late. When she picked it up, the whole laptop was dripping with coffee and couldn't be turned on.

"Oh, my God! I'm so sorry! The coffee was so hot, and your cup was made of glass, so I dropped it accidentally!" Kaya's hands flew to her mouth and she kept apologizing.

“Let me see if the data in the hard disk can still be restored.” Angry but helpless, Janet didn’t know what else to say. She quickly took the laptop to the Technology Department downstairs.

The technical staff carefully pried out the hard disk from the laptop and inspected it. A brief moment later, they shook their heads and told Janet that it was completely soaked and was irreversibly damaged.

Standing beside Janet, Kaya apologized again. “I take full responsibility for this. I’ll buy you a new laptop, I promise.”

“This is a company laptop. It’s only right that you pay for it. But all my drawings were in this computer. Now the data is damaged beyond restoration. What are you going to do about that?” Janet’s tone was calm, but her eyes flashed dangerously.

Kaya lowered her eyes, unable to utter another word.

It turned out that the woman in front of her wouldn’t be as easy to bully as she thought.

“Why are you so angry? I already said sorry and that I’d take responsibility. Is it really necessary to be so aggressive?” Kaya pulled a long face, as though she was the one who was wronged.

Just then, Tiffany happened to pass by and overheard their conversation. She knocked on the glass door from outside.

“What’s going on? Go outside if you two want to fight. Don’t disturb your officemates.” Tiffany shot the two women an icy cold look.

Biting her lower lip, Kaya tried to defend herself. “Ms. Fisher, here’s what happened. I’ve been working overtime every day this week and I’m exhausted. On my break, I made myself some coffee and offered Miss Lind here some, but it was too hot that I accidentally dropped her cup. I spilled the coffee on Lind’s computer, but it was just an accident. I’ll take responsibility for it and buy her a new laptop.”

She especially stressed the fact that she had been working overtime for a week. Her voice dripped with sarcasm, which made Janet feel that something was wrong. It sounded like Kaya was implying that Janet hadn’t worked overtime for the past few days, unlike her.

Janet didn’t want to see Kaya in a bad light, but now it just didn’t seem like a mere coincidence.

“So what about my design drawings, which were stored in my laptop? How will you compensate me for that?” Janet looked at Kaya sharply.

“You need to redraw them yourself of course. How can I do that for you? Plus, I’ve already apologized to you.” Kaya raised her chin slightly, but there was no mistaking the indifference in her tone. She reasoned that Janet could do nothing to her.

In this stage of the competition, Kaya was most likely to be selected for the promotion. But she had heard from other designers that there was a promising newcomer in the company. It was said that this newcomer was a dark horse and would make for a strong competitor.

Kaya had to get rid of Janet as soon as possible, so she came up with this ploy.

Kaya's indifferent attitude annoyed Janet. "I don't have enough time to redo everything. How can I start over and finish on time when the deadline is tomorrow?"

"I can only take responsibility for the laptop. As for the rest, that's your problem." After saying that, Kaya turned around abruptly and was about to leave.

### **The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 139**

"Stop right there!" Janet grabbed Kaya's wrist and forced her to turn around, her eyes seething with anger. "You did it on purpose, didn't you? You came to my desk and offered me coffee so that you could deliberately damage my laptop to get rid of my designs!"

"How dare you accuse me of such a crime? Can you prove that I did it on purpose? Plus, I've already said sorry a hundred times. What more do you want from me?" Kaya whined as though it was Janet who was making things difficult for her.

"Well, that's it. It's late now. Dixon, you go back to your desk. Lind, come with me to my office." After shooting the two women one last icy glance, Tiffany turned around and entered her office.

"I'm really sorry for what happened. Let me treat you to dinner sometime so that I can make things up to you, okay?" Before going back to her desk, Kaya looked at Janet pitifully.

But this only made Janet feel sick. Kaya was such a hypocrite! If Tiffany weren't there, she would have slapped Kaya across the face.

In Tiffany's office.

"I know you're angry, Lind. And I also think that she did it on purpose. It doesn't look like an accident to me. But since we can't prove it, we can't do anything to her," Tiffany sat in her chair and coaxed Janet calmly.

As an experienced woman in design industry, she could see through this smokescreen at a glance.

"I just feel so wronged, you know? How could she do this to me? We don't even know each other before this!" Janet pursed her lips unhappily, her body trembling slightly from anger.

Tiffany sighed heavily. "I've heard about what kind of person Dixon was before. Anyway, you can take your laptop to the repair shop to see if it can still be repaired. Maybe you might be able to download the data on it, then you can still participate in the evaluation."

Tiffany also felt bad, because in her eyes, Janet was the most promising candidate for this promotion.

"Okay, will do." Since her superior had said so, Janet had no choice but to swallow her grievance.

After leaving the office, Janet promptly took her laptop to the repair shop.

"It was soaked in coffee and the hard disk is damaged. I'm sorry but I can't retrieve the data for you." The technician at the shop took a quick look at the damaged laptop and shook his head. He tossed Janet's laptop aside and offered, "Are you considering getting a new one? All the second-hand computers here are cost-effective."

“Oh, no, thanks.” Although Janet had already expected the worst, she was still very depressed. She took back her laptop and left the shop dejectedly.

It took her a long time to finish this series of drafts. Now, even if she had to redraw it, it would take at least a day to finish everything.

But the work had to be submitted by tomorrow morning. It would be futile to even try since there were only several hours left before the deadline.

It was already 12:30 in the morning when Janet came back home with a cloud over her head.

She walked into the dark living room quietly.

Suddenly, the lights went on, illuminating the whole apartment suddenly.

Janet raised her hand to block the light and squinted.

Ethan was leaning against the wall near the door, with his arms crossed over his chest. Frowning slightly, his lips pursed into a straight line, and his dark, sharp eyes seemed to penetrate hers.

“Why are you so late?”

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“Well, I worked overtime today. There is a competition in our company,” she said, letting out a weary sigh. Janet was exhausted, both physically and mentally, so she went straight to her room.

Ethan’s heart sank as she didn’t bother to even look at him.

He didn’t wait all night just to hear something like this.

Ethan wrapped his arms around her waist from behind and rested his chin on her shoulder. “Spend some time with me,” he said, nestling his face in the crook of her neck.

Ethan wanted to kiss her and make out with her. He couldn’t let his wait end in vain. After all, he was a shrewd businessman.

“It’s already late. Aren’t you sleepy?” His warm, steady breath blowing against her skin made Janet restless. Her heart was crashing in her chest.

She turned around. Seeing Ethan’s handsome face, Janet stood on tiptoe and pecked him on the lips. A blush painted her cheeks. “Well, I had to submit my designs for the competition by tomorrow morning. Unfortunately, one of my colleagues splashed coffee on my laptop. I just don’t have anything to submit now because the laptop broke down. I’m actually very upset about it. Can we talk tomorrow?”

Ethan pursed his lips as he thought about it. “Did your colleague splash coffee on your laptop on purpose, or was it an accident?”

Janet didn’t want to talk about it. She felt annoyed to even think about Kaya.

“Her intentions don’t matter to me anymore. I have lost all my drawings, and it sucks. I put a lot of effort into it, you know.” Janet’s shoulders slumped with exhaustion. She had been busy all week designing for the project, but a cup of coffee had ruined all her efforts.

The expression on Janet's face answered Ethan's question.

"Oh, don't beat yourself about it. It doesn't matter if you don't get selected this time. After all, you had just joined the company." Ethan rubbed her hair comfortingly. Seeing the disappointment on her face, he kissed the corner of her lips. "There will be plenty of opportunities in the future."

"Hmm." Janet nodded. It was Kaya's arrogance that irked her, and she hated the woman for destroying her hard work.

However, Ethan's kisses made her forget all about her work problems. She was mesmerized by the man, who wrapped her with his love and warmth.

Ethan pressed her against the wall and kissed her until the two got breathless. "Since you can't submit the design tomorrow, sleep early tonight."

Janet's lips were numb, and the burning trails of his touches made her dizzy. Ethan somehow managed to wake up the wild side of her.

Janet went to bed, replaying the kisses in her head over and over again.

The next morning, Kaya went to Janet's table with breakfast.

However, Janet was still mad at her.

She scowled at her and looked away.

"I thought about what happened yesterday again. Sorry I might sound harsh last night, but I was simply angry and hurt that you misunderstood me. Anyway, I bought you this sandwich and chocolate. Let's just forget what happened yesterday, please."

Kaya placed an exquisite box of chocolates on Janet's desk. Although she sounded sincere, the complacency in her eyes was unmissable. "This brand is very expensive. I don't think you'd have tasted their chocolates before. They are delicious."

Although Kaya was smiling at her, Janet somehow felt the woman was disgusting and hypocritical.

Janet put the chocolate aside and ignored Kaya.

Just as she was about to sit down, the lights on the entire floor went off, and darkness engulfed them.

"Gosh, is it a power outage?" someone exclaimed.