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"Janet!" Ethan was stunned to see her there. He immediately hung up the phone and ran after her. In that split second, he had seen the sad expression on her face. She looked as if she had just suffered a terrible blow out of the blue. "Jonet!" Ethon was stunned to see her there. He immediately hung up the phone and ran after her. In that split second, he had seen the sad expression on her face. She looked as if she had just suffered a terrible blow out of the blue.

Jonet turned a deaf ear to him. She quickly made her way to the elevator while keeping her head down, so no one would see the tears that were already streaming down her cheeks.

Although Ethon walked as quickly as he could, he couldn't catch up with the elevator before the doors shut. He pressed the button several times, but the doors didn't open. The elevator had already gone up.

It was obvious to Ethon that his wife had misunderstood the whole situation this time. He wanted to speak to her before things got out of hand.

In a haste, he took another elevator and went home. But when he got in, he saw that Jonet had already locked herself up in her room again. The entire house was as quiet as a grave. The dim moonlight fell on the windowsill. It seemed as if nothing had happened.

"Jonet, please open the door. I need to talk to you." Ethon knocked on the wooden door heavily with his clenched fist.

He pressed his ear against the door. But he didn't hear anything from the other side.

Afterward, he turned the doorknob again, but the door was still locked from the inside.

"Jonet, please believe me. I'm not unfaithful. I don't have any relationship with Choris. We only talked about her work on the phone earlier. Open the door so we can talk this through." The occurrences of the past few days hinted Ethon that Jonet hated lies. However, it seemed like a well-intentioned lie was better now than telling the truth. He didn't like to lie to her, but he had no other choice at this moment. "Janet!" Ethan was stunned to see her there. He immediately hung up the phone and ran after her. In that split second, he had seen the sad expression on her face. She looked as if she had just suffered a terrible blow out of the blue. "Janet!" Ethan was stunned to see her there. He immediately hung up the phone and ran after her. In that split second, he had seen the sad expression on her face. She looked as if she had just suffered a terrible blow out of the blue.

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In a hasta, ha took anothar alavator and want homa. But whan ha got in, ha saw that Janat had alraady lockad harsalf up in har room again. Tha antira housa was as quiat as a grava. Tha dim moonlight fall on tha windowsill. It saamad as if nothing had happenad.

“Janat, plaasa opan tha door. I naad to talk to you.” Ethan knockad on tha woodan door haavily with his clanchad fist.

Ha prassad his aar against tha door. But ha didn’t haar anything from tha othar sida.

Aftarward, ha turnad tha doorknob again, but tha door was still lockad from tha insida.

“Janat, plaasa baliava ma. I’m not unfaithful. I don’t hava any ralationship with Charis. Wa only talkad about har work on tha phona aarliar. Opan tha door so wa can talk this through.” Tha occurancas of tha past faw days hintad Ethan that Janat hatad lias. Howavar, it saamad lika a wall-intantionad lia was battar now than talling tha truth. Ha didn’t lika to lia to har, but ha had no othar choica at this momant.

There wes still no sound from the room, so Ethen wesn’t sure if Jenet heerd him or not.

“Jenet, I know you ere eweake. Pleese open the door. Pleese,” he seid in e pleading voice.

Never hed he begged anyone like this before. For Jenet, he wes reedy to set eside his pride end beg profusely.

Ethen knocked end begged e few more times, but he got no response.

He leened egeinst the door helplessly. His figure cest e shedow over the living room.

By midnight, Jenet still didn’t sey e word, nor did she open the door.

Ethen knew better then to leeve this time. The metter would only escelete if he did, so he just ley on the sofe ell night.

Time passed by quickly. Soon, the bright sunlight peeped through the curteins end reflected in the living room.

Ethen hedn’t slept e wink throughout the night. His mind hed been teeming with severel thoughts. He stood up from the sofe end stretched. Afterwerd, he put on en epron end prepered breekfest. He hesiteted for e while, but he mustered the couege to knock on Jenet’s bedroom door egein. “Good morning, Jenet. I’ve mede breekfest. Do you went to heve some?”

A deefening silence wes the only response he got. Ethen peused end glenced et the clock on the well. It wes elreedy nine o’clock in the morning.

There was still no sound from the room, so Ethan wasn’t sure if Janet heard him or not.

Todey wes e workdey. Jenet wes very punctuel. She never liked to go lete to work. No metter how tired she wes, she elways woke up eerly end rushed to work. Ethen knew she would be lete if she didn’t come out of the room now.

‘I didn’t receive eny leeve epplicetion from Jenet. This meens she didn’t intend on teking e dey off. Whet could be keeping her inside? Does she reelly plen to ignore me?’ he pondered.

Worry set in at this moment. His eyes darkened and he took a deep breath. Afterward, he knocked on the door heavier than before. He asked loudly, "Janet, why aren't you up yet? Is there anything wrong?"

Again, Janet didn't respond to him even after he knocked severely.

Without wasting time, Ethan took a snap gun and pried the lock open. He then rushed into the room after opening the door.

Janet was still in bed. Her forehead was covered in sweat. She looked sick.

Ethan dug her out of the blanket and held her in his arms. He brushed her hair off her cheeks. It was then he saw that her face was pale.

"Janet, do you feel sick?" He looked at her worriedly.

Janet knitted her eyebrows and mumbled something inaudibly. It was as if she was having a nightmare.

Ethan put his hand on her forehead. She was burning up. Her high temperature proved that she was down with fever.

Today was a workday. Janet was very punctual. She never liked to go late to work. No matter how tired she was, she always woke up early and rushed to work. Ethan knew she would be late if she didn't come out of the room now.

'I didn't receive any leave application from Janet. This means she didn't intend on taking a day off. What could be keeping her inside? Does she really plan to ignore me?' he pondered.

Worry set in at this moment. His eyes darkened and he took a deep breath. Afterward, he knocked on the door heavier than before. He asked loudly, "Janet, why aren't you up yet? Is there anything wrong?"

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Ethan quickly took out a coat from the wardrobe and helped Janet put it on. He then carried her in his arms and was about to go to the hospital.

It was at this moment Janet woke up. Her vision was blurry, so she rubbed her eyes hard. The light in the room was just too bright and it shone in her eyes. She couldn't see Ethan's face clearly, but she could make out his outline.

Janet frowned and she wanted to say something, but her throat was too dry. Her body was weak at this moment. More so, she felt dizzy and there was a sharp pain in her head. It was as if someone had hit her temple with a blunt weapon.

Although she couldn't remember what Ethan had said outside her door last night, she knew for sure that he had just made the usual silly explanation.

Last night was the height of it all for Janet. She had never been that angry before. She couldn't help but think that her marriage with Ethan would be hanging by a thread soon. What happened made her so sad that she didn't know what to do.

Janet had run directly into her room, locked the door, and thrown herself on the bed. The memories of her miserable childhood flooded her mind at that moment. She recalled how the Lind family had maltreated her and how she ended up getting married to Ethan.

'God, why do I have to suffer every time? My childhood had been terrible. The Linds treated me like an outcast for many years. I never had a stable place to call home until I got married to Ethan. But my little happiness is about to be taken away now that Charis is back. Why do I have such ill-luck?'

Janet had thought about her predicament and questioned God for so long that she didn't know when she dozed off. All she remembered was that the wind had been so strong that it rustled the leaves on the trees.

She had fallen asleep without covering herself with the blanket. In the middle of the night, she woke up because of the cold. Her nose was stuffy and her mouth was dry. She felt so dizzy and her eyes hurt from crying too much. Judging by the dehydration and her stuffy nose, Janet knew she had caught a cold. She wanted to go out to drink hot water or take some medicine from the cabinet.

But when she was about to open the door, she hesitated. Something told her that Ethan was on the other side of the door. She didn't want to see him because she knew he would pester her to give him a listening ear.

Talking things out wasn't on her mind at that time, so she laid back on the bed. She decided to cover herself with the blanket and continue to sleep. She thought she would recover from the cold by tomorrow if she sweated all night.

But her expectation was just a pipe dream. She got the opposite of what she had expected. The simple cold seemed to develop into a fever by the time she woke up.

Janet was still mad at Ethan. She hit his chest weakly because she didn't want to be in his arms. She managed to get off him even though her legs felt wobbly.

Ethan slapped his forehead frustratedly. He then grabbed her wrists and pulled her close. "Please, don't be stubborn now. I have to take you to the hospital."

In the blink of an eye, he carried her on his shoulder, wrapped both of his strong arms around her waist, and took her out of the room.

Like a child who was about to throw a tantrum, Janet resisted with all her strength. But he was too strong for her. She had no choice but to give up after a while. In this way, Ethan took her out of the house.

When he got to the roadside, he quickly hailed a taxi and told the driver the name of a private hospital.

Ethan didn't let go of Janet even after they got into the car. With his arms wrapped around her, he began to talk to her.

"How do you feel, Janet? Do you feel very feverish?" He gently wiped the beads of sweat on her forehead with his soft fingers. There were worry lines on his forehead, but a glint of tenderness shone in his eyes.

Ethan's jaw formed a beautiful arc as he lowered his head. All of a sudden, he stared deeply into Janet's eyes as his dark eyes continued to glisten. He then gave her a warm kiss on the top of her nose. The high bridge of his nose rested just above her forehead at this time.

A warm feeling filled Janet's heart immediately. She didn't know how to react to his kiss, so she closed her tired eyes again. She also didn't want to look at him while he stared at her like that.

The ride to the hospital took only a few minutes.

Carrying his wife in his strong arms, Ethan rushed to the inpatient department and went through the necessary procedures. He then took her to the assigned ward and laid her carefully on the bed.

Shortly after, a young man who was dressed in a clean white gown and a light blue mask came in. He seemed to be a doctor in this hospital. He was tall and thin, with charming eyebrows and eyes. There was a very light red mole under one of his eyes. He looked very gentle and delicate, but something about him made people afraid of him. The mole wasn't scary, so it was hard to pinpoint what exactly made him terrifying.

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Janet opened her eyes and looked around at this time.

The hospital was a top-notch one that had a beautiful environment and was equipped with advanced medical equipment. All the wards were single rooms. Janet didn't need anyone to tell her that it would cost a lot to receive treatment here.

She didn't like the thought because she didn't have much money. Despite not having any serious expenses now, she was still poor.

'No, I can't stay in this hospital. How am I going to pay the bill? Ethan isn't well-to-do, so who will pay? Besides, I'm not seriously ill. There's no need for me to be hospitalized. I'll be fine once I take some cold medicines.'

With this thought in mind, Janet decided to leave. She tugged at her husband's sleeve and whispered, "Ethan, why didn't you take me to an ordinary hospital? From the look of things, receiving treatment here will cost an arm. Although I don't have any financial pressure on me, I can't afford to squander so much money. Let's figure out how to leave here."

Janet spoke in a whisper because she didn't want the doctor who had just come in to hear. She knew that it would be inappropriate to leave now that she had been admitted into the ward.

Ethan looked at her affectionately and rubbed her head slowly. He then said, "Don't worry, Janet. It won't cost that much. Besides, the doctor here is my friend. He will give me a huge discount. Just allow him to treat you, okay?"

"Is he really your friend?" Janet gave him a suspicious look. She didn't believe what he had just said. After all, doctors in such high-end private hospitals were definitely not ordinary people.

When she saw that Ethan nodded with genuineness in his eyes, she had a vague feeling that his connections were too high for someone of his status. It seemed that he knew many people from almost all walks of life and they were always higher than him.

'I have to admit that this husband of mine seems to be a capable man. He has such strong connections, but he's just an ordinary part-time worker. Why is that so? Something is not adding up!'

Janet was a little confused, but she couldn't think too much because of her illness. She was suffering from a splitting headache and her mind was a mess. Now, she decided not to argue or speak for the time being.

"I'll leave her to you, Frank. I need to get something. Won't be long. Take care of her, alright?" Ethan patted the doctor on the back, glanced at Janet, and left.

Frank Watson put on a displeased frown on his face while he examined Janet. He didn't even ask her any questions like normal doctors usually did.

"Erm... Sir, please what's wrong with me?" Janet stammered. Frank's first response came in form of a glare. Janet's heart almost jumped to her throat at the sight of this. It seemed like the doctor was angry with her for asking that question and that she needed to say her last prayer at this moment. She swallowed hard and averted her eyes fearfully.

"Nothing extraordinary is wrong with you. You just caught a cold. I'll prescribe some medicine for you," replied Frank casually while writing something on his clipboard.

Janet's lips were sealed as he put her on a drip. Afterward, he took his instruments and walked out of the ward. He coincidentally met Ethan in the corridor.

With a bowl of porridge in his hand, Ethan asked worriedly, "How is she? Is she seriously ill?"

Frank took off his mask. He had a handsome face, but his skin was pale and morbid as if he hadn't been exposed to the sun for a long time.

"She just caught a cold. It doesn't matter if it's serious or not. She will get better once she takes some antibiotics. That aside, why did you bring her here for me to attend to her? Do you know how busy I am with my research?" Frank grumbled.

The anxious message he had earlier received from Ethan had put him on edge. He thought the situation was serious so he abandoned his research and rushed over.

Ethan raised his eyebrows and retorted, "Cut the crap, dude. Just do your job. Your research can wait until my wife is cured. Besides, I specially asked for you because I believe you are more capable than the other doctors. Don't let me down."

These flattering words mixed with a conspicuous tinge of audacity annoyed Frank so much that he rolled his eyes at him. He would have fought Ethan if he had enough strength to defeat him.

"It's said that prevention is better than cure. Since you are so concerned about your wife's health, you should take care of her so she doesn't fall sick in the first place. Don't interrupt my research again, or we are going to have serious issues." Frank took a glance at the porridge in Ethan's hand. He then turned around and left.

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Ethan just chuckled as he looked at Frank's receding figure. After a while, he opened the door of the ward and said to Janet, "The doctor said you would have to stay here for a day so he can monitor your conditions."

In defiance, Janet turned her head away and said, "I don't want to stay here just because of this minor illness. I will be fine after taking some medicine and drips. Just take me home."

Ethan simply shook his head to indicate he would do no such thing.

He walked to the bedside and pulled out the over-bed table. He set down the bowl of porridge which had chopped green onions and eggs on the surface. "You haven't eaten anything since last night. The medications won't work on an empty stomach. Have some porridge."

Stirring the hot porridge mildly, he added pleadingly, "Please, don't be angry anymore."

The tantalizing aroma soon hit Janet's nose. Her stomach instantly began to rumble loudly. Her salivary glands also became hyperactive. She hadn't had anything for dinner last night, nor breakfast this morning. As a result, she was so hungry now.

Despite her hunger, she didn't have the appetite to eat anything. Her lack of appetite wasn't because of her illness. It was due to her bad mood.

"I have no appetite. Just put it there." After pointing at the top of the drawer beside her, Janet turned sideways and closed her eyes.

Ethan sensed her mood, so he didn't force her. He just lifted his black pants slightly and sat on the edge of the bed. He helplessly stared at her pale face for a long time. Sadness was written all over his face as he watched her quietly. The nurse who had just administered some medicine to Janet tidied up her tray. While at it, she stole glances at Ethan. As she walked out, she thought, 'This patient is giving

this man the cold shoulder. She's lucky that such a gentle and handsome man cares for her. I honestly feel pity for him.'

The sun was shining outside. Its rays gleamed on trees and the lush grass. The scenery was so beautiful like the ones that could only be seen in movies.

Janet's eyes slowly peeled open and she looked at Ethan subconsciously. He happened to be staring intently at her at this time.

The room was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop. Their long stares made each other slightly uncomfortable.

When Ethan realized that Janet wasn't going to break the silence, he sighed and uttered, "You have to believe me, Janet. My call with Charis didn't mean anything else. I just wanted to warn her against sowing a seed of discord between us. That's all."

Hearing these words, Janet snorted and looked out of the window. "I don't want to hear it, Ethan. It's your fault that she can't get over you."

"I've made it clear to Charis that I can't be with her, but she's still stubborn. I really wish I can take drastic measures to cut her off. However, I can't do anything to her because she's the daughter of the Turner family and has such a high position in the Larson Group. The only thing I can do is to continue warning her." Ethan was telling the truth.

His hands were practically tied concerning this matter. Even with the identity of Brandon, he couldn't do anything to Charis. They had known each other for a long time and even started their own business together. Thus, he couldn't sever ties with her just like that.

Although Ethan didn't dare to tell Janet this, he felt that Charis was a capable and mature woman. He tried to look past the fact that she was into him. As a businesswoman, she was decisive in dealing with things and always made decisions for the benefit of everyone. She didn't seem to be a bad person to him.

It wasn't until this moment that Janet looked back at him.

'Ethan has a point there. He's only the illegitimate child of his father and has no social status. He doesn't have the power to go against someone that important. Even if he tried, it would cause a great rift between him and his family,' she pondered reasonably.

"I understand where you are coming from, but it's just that I feel you aren't honest with me at all." Janet looked dispirited.

The feelings she had for Ethan was getting stronger and stronger by the day. She wanted to get close to him. But it seemed like every time she tried, he would try his best to drift away from her. And she didn't like that.

"Janet, the time is not right. Please wait a little longer. When everything is settled, I'll gladly tell you whatever you want to know." Ethan's face was gloomy, and his eyebrows were slightly furrowed. He seemed to be extremely hesitant, but his tone was also very serious.

Janet saw that a thousand unsaid things swirled in his eyes. She also knew that he was serious about this promise.

She nodded her head and finally looked at him. With tears welling up in her eyes, she said, "Ethan, I'll wait."

Now that she was calm, she began to think of the recent happenings. She knew that Charis had deliberately talked about Ethan to make her jealous. It occurred to her that she would only be fulfilling Charis' greatest desire if she fell out with Ethan.

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Ethan leaned over and whispered in her ear, "We're good then, right?"

His deep voice made Janet shiver, and goose bumps rose on her skin.

She narrowed her eyes at him. "Don't push your luck."

"Well, what more would it take? I've been out in the cold for days, and it's been so long since I last kissed you." Ethan's gaze fixed on her lips as he said this. He braced his arms on either side of her waist, careful not to touch the infusion tube attached to her hand.

Janet stiffened as he tried to draw closer. If she just let him off after a bout of flirting, he might think she was an easy woman.

"There's something I want to ask you," she said, her tone chilly. "Did Charis ever have a boyfriend while she was abroad?"

Considering her background, Charis was more than worthy of a match with the most outstanding man any city had to offer. There was a distinctly huge gap between her social status and Ethan's, so why was she so devoted to him?

This question was burning a hole in the back of Janet's mind, but she didn't want to ask Ethan directly for fear of hurting his self-esteem.

Ethan blew out a small sigh and pulled back. It appeared that he wouldn't be able to kiss his wife this time, either. "We didn't stay in contact after she left, so I never really had a way of knowing."

Janet seemed to relax at that, but she didn't seem particularly pleased at all. She glanced at the fruits sitting on the side table and pouted. "I'd like to eat some fruit."

Ethan followed the direction of her gaze and smiled. "Anything for you, honey."

As he said so, he was already walking towards the table. He picked up an apple and the paring knife that came with the fruits. Janet wasn't entirely mollified just yet, and he was more than happy to attend to her needs, no matter how trifling they were.

His deft fingers went to work on the apple. Soon enough, a long, winding strip of apple peel was dangling from his hands.

Janet watched him in silence. This charming man was just so damn good at everything he did.

Ethan sliced the peeled apples and put them in a plate, carrying it back to the hospital bed. "You should eat some porridge, too. It should have cooled down to the perfect temperature by now."

A blush crept into Janet's cheeks. In a bid to hide it, she huffed and reached for the plate of apple slices, only for Ethan to pull back and hold it high above her head. "Won't you call me honey first?"

"Forget it, then! You can eat those yourself!" Janet shot him a glare before scoffing and turning away.

Ethan's lips stretched into a knowing smile.

He placed the plate on her lap, then reached out and squeezed her burning ear lobe. Before she could tell him off for it, he had already stolen a peck on one of her rosy cheeks. "I was just teasing. You can't even take a joke, my grumpy little wife. Take your time. I'll be outside, so just holler if you need anything."

And then he was striding across the room and out into the corridor outside, closing the door behind him.

Ethan was so infuriatingly smooth, and he could always drive her to a loss without much effort.

Janet looked down at the plate on her lap and began to eat. He was treating her so well. If she had to be honest, she didn't have the heart to make things more difficult for him.

Luckily, Janet wasn't seriously ill. Her fever broke on the same day, and she was discharged the next morning, all cleared to return to work.

The moment she was back in the office, she tried to come up with the most ideal way to deal with Kent. Janet didn't have to ponder too long, however, because Tiffany soon sent her a notice saying that Perkins Bank had changed their representative. Kent was no longer the person in charge of the project.

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Ethan wasn't particularly concerned that Kent was working with Janet at first. But when he saw that Kent had asked her out with an obviously ulterior motive, he decided to secretly pull some strings so Kent would get into trouble and he would be busy sorting out the issue for the time being instead of harassing Janet.

"Kent has been replaced by someone else. You can rest assured now." Garrett had come to report the latest developments to Ethan. He asked, "Why don't you just cancel the project once and for all? You would be able to avoid any more trouble that way, right?"

"There would be no need for that. I just want to stop Janet from contacting him. Also, I don't want to destroy her project. She's really investing her all in it. Creating trouble for Kent would see to it that he wouldn't have time to keep in contact with Janet." Ethan browsed through the document in his hands. His legs were crossed and he looked so serious. A few minutes later, he picked up a pen and appended his signature on the document quickly.

Garrett collected the document and got ready to leave. He said, "I think you should deal with this matter as soon as possible. It would put a stop to the incessant quarrels between you and your wife. By the way, have you guys made up?"

"Yes, we have. She's no longer angry with me for now. Please keep an eye on Charis for me. She seems to be up to something. If she does anything suspicious, don't hesitate to inform me." Ethan had hesitated for a while before he made that statement. He didn't want to say it, but he thought it wise to do so.

Garrett understood exactly what he meant. With a slight frown, he questioned, “Why do you want me to keep tabs on her? Is there a misunderstanding? Charis is not that kind of woman.”

They went back a long way, so Garrett subconsciously put in a good word for Charis. It seemed like she could do no wrong in his eyes.

Ethan shot him a glare without uttering another word.

This sent a shiver down Garrett’s spine. Taking the cue, he spun on his heel and went out. He thought, ‘Jeez! Ethan was so scary just now. Anyway, it’s between him and Charis. I had better bridle my tongue next time.’

It took Janet a week to finish the design of the new uniform for the employees of the Perkins Bank. The project had been proposed by Kent in order to get close to Janet. It was not difficult.

Tiffany went with Janet to the Perkins Bank to finalize things. On the way, she said, “Lind, I think you could become a project leader in the nearest future.”

She always had an eye for talent. Her comment just now wasn’t intended for flattery. She indeed saw that Janet had great potential.

“Really? This is my first independent project.” Janet was stunned by the praise she had just gotten. It was surprising because becoming a project leader wasn’t a piece of cake. No one in the design department had ever attained that level within a short time.

“So what if it’s your first? Believe me when I say that it wouldn’t be a problem. It’s rare for a new designer to successfully take on a project alone. You are a rare breed. Something tells me that the management won’t slack on you.” Tiffany continued to shower praises on Janet as she drove.

Meanwhile, Charis received a call from Kent.

“What’s the Larson Group up to? Why does it seem like you are deliberately attacking the Perkins family? Are you asking for war?” Kent fumed immediately after the line connected.

“Hey, take it easy with the allegations. I didn’t make any trouble for you. I advise that you look for Brandon,” Charis explained calmly.

She had gotten wind of how trouble had suddenly started for Kent and how he had to divert his attention to solving it while Janet continued with the project. She also knew that Brandon was intentionally protecting Janet.

“Damn it!” Kent cursed from the other end of the line.

He had heard of the mysterious CEO of the Larson Group—Brandon. Although he had never met him in person before, he knew that such a man wasn’t to be trifled with. Now, he could only curse him to vent his anger.

"I'm sorry for going off on you. Please, I need you to do me a favor. Can you find a way to ask Janet out?" Despite all that was happening to him, Kent didn't want to give up. He was obsessed with Janet. He hadn't seen her for some days, but he couldn't stop thinking about her.

Charis was naturally a stubborn woman, but she didn't dare to act rashly recently. Ethan had warned her seriously, so she had to tread with caution in dealing with Kent. "I would love to help you, but I don't have time for now. As you know, I just got back into the country. I have a lot of things to do at work. Please, don't call me from now onwards. I will get into trouble if word gets out that I'm linked with you."

Charis hung up the phone as soon as she finished speaking. She decided it was high time she reduced the way she kept in contact with Kent.

To create a rift between Ethan and Janet, she had incited Kent to chase after Janet. But he failed. On her part, she had also failed to make Ethan dislike his wife. Every part of her big plan failed woefully.

Charis couldn't help feeling dejected.

After she got off work, she went to a restaurant for dinner. She had just finished making her order when a familiar face appeared in front of her.

This familiar face belonged to Luke Turner, her father. He was here to have dinner with a younger woman.

Charis rested her chin on her hand and stared at her father's new girlfriend, who was very beautiful. Luke was totally into women who were more than half his age.

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Even though Luke was married and had a wife, he hooked up with every woman he saw and changed girlfriends often.

Such things were common in wealthy families. Considering her mother didn't mind it, Charis didn't seem to care about her father's affairs either.

After all, Luke had been a good father, and Charis liked him. He had never said no to her and always got what she wanted.

Noticing that Jocelyn was constantly looking back, Luke smiled and stroked her flawless face. "What are you staring at? It looks like you want to say something but are hesitant for some reason."

"Mr. Turner, does that woman know you?" Jocelyn asked gently.

Luke turned around. The smile on his face froze when he saw Charis. He quickly averted his gaze and stood up. "Let's go and say hi to her."

Before Jocelyn could react, Luke dragged her toward Charis.

Charis arched an eyebrow and looked at Jocelyn before a slow smile emerged on her face. "Good choice, Dad," she joked.

Jocelyn was taken aback for a moment. She had never been with a married man before. Besides, Luke's daughter was about the same age as her. She lowered her head in embarrassment. Regardless of how thick-skinned she was, meeting the daughter of the man she dated was still awkward.

Luke smiled and waved his hand at Charis. "That's my daughter, Charis. She has just returned from abroad. And this is Jocelyn Lind."

Charis looked at Jocelyn and smiled. "Hello, Miss Lind."

"Have you placed the order? Considering we all are here today, why don't we have a meal together?" Luke offered, smiling. Judging from his expression, Jocelyn could tell Luke adored his daughter. He unbuttoned his collar, loosened his tie, and sat down.

Seeing that Luke had already sat down, Jocelyn had no choice but to sit next to him.

"I see your last name is Lind. You just remind me of this a girl in our company; her name is Janet Lind." Charis was a smooth talker. There wouldn't be even a moment of awkward silence with her.

After a short pause, Jocelyn forced a smile at her. "She used to be my sister. But my parents kicked her out of the Lind family."

Jocelyn's words seemed to pique Charis's interest. "Really? Well, there were some bad rumors about her in our company. Can you tell me more about her?"

Jocelyn went on and on about Janet. She poured her heart out, exaggerating her shortcomings.

Upon hearing that, Charis concluded that Jocelyn hated Janet with a vengeance. Besides, Jocelyn didn't seem like a smart woman. Therefore, Charis felt it might be easy to exploit her.

"Really? Well, I didn't know Janet was such a person. In fact, I liked her before. I'm quite surprised to know what she is capable of doing." Charis shook her head, faking disappointment.

"You better be careful around Janet. She is a vindictive woman." Jocelyn held Charis's hand concernedly as if she were a loving stepmother.

Charis suppressed her laughter and nodded at Jocelyn. "Don't worry. I'm superior to her. She can't harm me in any way."

"Oh, yeah. I'm stupid. How can I compare you with Janet? You're Mr. Turner's daughter, after all. You must certainly be more capable than my good-for-nothing sister." Jocelyn smiled sheepishly. She was happy that Luke's daughter liked her.

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Luke took Jocelyn to a hotel after saying goodbye to Charis.

Jocelyn was his new girlfriend, who he used to satisfy his sexual desires when he deemed fit. She was very submissive to him, and this made him happy.

Jocelyn had incited Luke to pull some strings to get Fiona out of prison.

The Linds had gone bankrupt, so they couldn't afford to live at their former luxurious villa anymore. With the money Luke gave her, Jocelyn rented a small villa for her parents. It wasn't as big and luxurious as their previous house. However, it was still more extravagant than the rented apartments in ordinary buildings.

The moment Fiona noticed that Jocelyn was back home this day, she wiped her tears and concealed her sadness. Life in prison had taken a toll on her. She seemed to have aged ten years during her short time in prison. Unlike the beautiful woman she was before, her physical features looked like that of a grandmother. She had wrinkles on her skin. Her eyes were sunken into the sockets. There were also droopy bags underneath them. Worse still, her previous dark curly hair had lost its shine and was already mixed with a few white strands.

"How did things go with Mr. Turner today?" Fiona hurried to get Jocelyn's bag.

She had been in despair since the Lind family collapsed. Desperation more than anything drove her to teach Jocelyn all her cunning and seduction skills when she found out about her relationship with Luke. She saw Luke as their one-way ticket out of poverty, so she admonished her daughter not to let go of him no matter what.

As soon as Jocelyn got in, she kicked off her high-heeled shoes. She then collapsed on the sofa tiredly. In a disgusted tone, she complained, "How else would it have gone? I had to put up with that old man even though he was so annoying. He's so weak and bad in bed, but he was busy blabbing like a stallion and asking me if I was having a good time. I had to fake it the entire time."

Recounting the episode fueled Jocelyn's anger. She had never allowed such an elderly man to have sex with her before. Now she felt that she was only a little more valuable than the prostitutes who serviced men in nightclubs.

"Well, stop complaining. It's always like this at the beginning. You will get used to it gradually." Not minding her daughter's discomfort, Fiona decided to cajole her into staying with Luke. She moved closer and patted her comfortingly. She had eyes on something bigger. "You will be his wife in the future. Getting married to him would restore our dignity and give us a better life. So, just endure whatever he does for a while."

Fiona was a master in this kind of game. Excessive seduction was exactly how she had gotten Bernie to fall in love with her. Back then, Bernie had a fiancée who he had dated for a long time. But Fiona came along and snatched him away. If she hadn't, he would have been married to someone else.

Now, she was passing on her knowledge to Jocelyn who was already like her in so many ways. Fiona wanted Luke to get married to Jocelyn so she could be the new Mrs. Turner.

"Mom, how long would I have to put up with him? Being with that man isn't easy at all! By the way, I met his daughter today. She is about the same age as me. She looked beautiful and shrewd. I have a bad feeling about her. She's definitely a tough nut to crack." At this moment, Charis' face appeared in Jocelyn's mind. She was smiling a lot during their dinner together, but the smiles never reached her eyes.

Fiona waved her daughter's fears aside. Patting the back of her hand, she said, "Don't let that bother you, dearie. You should be happy about it. Since Luke took you to meet his daughter, it means he attaches great importance to you."

Jocelyn instantly had a banging headache when she heard her mother's words. Luke hadn't taken her to see his daughter. They had just met coincidentally. 'My mother has no idea how Luke is. I've been submissive to him for a long time, but I don't think dating him is worth my while. Although he's generous, he doesn't make any big promises, let alone guarantee that he would help me and my family. He's not like other sugar daddies who go the extra mile to make their girlfriends comfortable. Worse still, I can't see through him at all.'

In this perplexed state, Jocelyn recalled the conversation she had with Charis.

"Mom, it seems like Luke's daughter works in the same company as Janet. She doesn't like Janet either."

This news gladdened Fiona's heart. She clapped her hands and uttered, "That's great! You had better make friends with her. After all, it's said that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Talk to her about Janet. If you two can unite, you can defeat the common enemy while securing your future. You must seize this opportunity. Being her friend would also increase your chances of becoming Mrs. Turner soon!"

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Jocelyn intended to get along well with Charis, and the latter seemed to happily play along. After their meeting in the restaurant, Charis often took Jocelyn out for lunch and shopping.

"You don't have to save money for my dad. He is a wealthy man, after all. Besides, you are still young. Now is the time to enjoy life." Charis held Jocelyn's hand, took her into a luxury store, and brought several Birkin bags.

Jocelyn was used to squandering money and had always led a decadent life. She wanted to be humble and sweet before Charis. However, after hearing her statement, Jocelyn felt she had finally found a friend who shared the same view about life.

"You're right. Girls should pamper themselves. But Mr. Turner just thinks I'm wasting money." Jocelyn pouted.

"My father doesn't care about how much money I spend. He has never said no to me and has given me everything I want. He believes I deserve the best. I mean, that's what all fathers want for their daughters. But I know my father just fears that I might end up marrying a poor boy. If he thinks you spend too much money, I'll talk to him about it. After all, we are family. If you still feel awkward or embarrassed, consider me your best friend. Anyway, all my friends are abroad. I don't know anyone here. I liked you the moment I saw you. We clicked instantly." Charis grinned. As expected, Jocelyn fell for her sugar-coated remarks.

"Okay. We are best friends from now on." Jocelyn smiled. She trusted Charis with all her heart and shared everything with her.

The two walked around the mall. It took them all morning to shop and then they found a perfect French bistro for lunch.

Charis learned from Jocelyn that Fiona was in jail because she had attempted to harm Janet. The Lind family had also fallen into a decline. Charis immediately guessed that Brandon had been Janet's secret guardian angel the entire time.

"By the way, you told me Janet is the reason why your mother is in jail. Do you think Janet is capable of pulling that off? Do you need my help to find out who is really behind all this?" Charis asked, pretending to sympathize with Jocelyn.

"Can you do that?" Jocelyn's eyes widened with excitement.

"Of course. It's no big deal. Our family has connections with several big shots in the city."

Charis feared that Brandon might find out about her plan, so she couldn't get directly involved in it. However, she could drive a wedge between Jocelyn and Janet, manipulating the former to ruin Janet's life. Helping Jocelyn was no big deal because Charis needed her to fulfill the plan.

A day later, Charis asked Jocelyn to meet with her again.

"Your family's problem has something to do with Brandon Larson, the CEO of the Larson Group." Charis handed all the evidence to Jocelyn.

"What? But why is he doing all this? We are not involved with him in any way." Although Jocelyn didn't know much about Brandon, she knew he was one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Seacisco.

Charis pursed her lips and pretended to think. "You got punished right after something happened to Janet. Do you think it's a coincidence?"

The frown on Jocelyn's forehead deepened. Knowing her plan was working, Charis continued. "Well, I don't think you know this. As a senior manager of the Larson Group, I heard that Brandon has been paying special attention to Janet. I don't know much about her, and it's immoral to gossip behind her back. But we have no choice but to probe the possibilities. Do you think Janet might have hooked up with Brandon? He is probably smitten by her, so he sent your mother to jail for trying to harm her."

Jocelyn clenched the teacup until her knuckles turned white. Her jaw tightened; she was seething with rage. "That slut is capable of doing it! You're right Charis. She must have slept with Brandon. That's why he had sent my mother to jail. He wanted to impress her! Or maybe it was she who asked him to do this for her!"

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"Gosh, Janet sounds like a horrible person." Charis scrunched her nose up in disgust. "How ungrateful she is! After all, the Lind family had adopted her. Your parents raised her. How could she hurt them? Is this how she repays their kindness? That's vindictive," she continued to provoke Jocelyn.

"That's not all the bad things that Janet has done. She was raised in the countryside, so she had developed all sorts of nasty habits. Our family is unfortunate to have adopted a vicious monster." Jocelyn's resentment toward Janet grew stronger. She wished to kill her right away.

"Calm down. Don't make any hasty decisions." Charis pretended to be calm and comforted her.

Jocelyn was seething with rage and was no longer in the mood to continue shopping. She hurriedly picked up her shopping bags and stood up. "No, I have to go back right now. I can't let go of Janet. She is a vicious bitch! I can't watch her live a happy life when we are suffering."

Charis was pleased with Jocelyn's reaction. The woman was fuming with rage and couldn't control her emotions.

"Then, about what happened today..." Charis worriedly held Jocelyn's hand. "Well, you know I work for the Larson Group. I hope you don't get me involved in this."

She didn't want to blatantly remind Jocelyn about it. However, she had to because the woman was foolish, and Charis feared she might expose her.

"Don't worry. I know what to do." Jocelyn left with a grumpy look on her face.

Leaning against the chair, Charis picked up the cup of black tea and took a sip, her gaze fixed on Jocelyn.

A slow smile emerged on her face as she realized the woman had taken the bait.

Jocelyn stormed into her villa. Fiona sensed something was wrong with her.

"What happened? Why do you look angry? Did you fight with Luke?" Fiona asked anxiously.

"No, I'm just a little tired. I want to go upstairs and sleep." Jocelyn ran upstairs. However, she stopped and looked down at Fiona. "Mom, why did you adopt Janet? Look how that bitch has done to our family."

"I didn't want to! It was all because of your deceased grandfather." Fiona sighed.

Unable to take it anymore, Jocelyn darted upstairs.

Just as she walked past Bernie's room, she saw him taking a nap. An idea popped up in her mind.

She secretly took Bernie's phone and sent a message to Janet, asking her to meet him.

She had typed a heartfelt message, stating that Bernie wanted to apologize to Janet on behalf of Fiona, and asked if she could meet him in a cafe.

Jocelyn couldn't think of any other idea. She and Fiona had fallen out with Janet. Only Bernie wasn't at odds with her, so she hoped Janet would agree to meet him.

Jocelyn gritted her teeth. Her anger and hatred toward Janet seemed to intensify with every passing day. Their family had witnessed a rapid downfall because of her.

It had been a couple of minutes since she had sent the message, but there was no reply from Janet. Thinking that she had planned to ignore the message, Jocelyn took the phone to write a more sincere message. However, just then, a message popped up on the screen.

It was a reply from Janet.

Jocelyn put the phone down, closed the door, and went out, her face a picture of pure rage.

She was determined to ruin Janet's life once and for all.

