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The Lester family lived in a luxurious mansion built at the foot of a mountain.

The trees were dense. Flowers and shrubs were trimmed and sculpted into various shapes in the garden.

A plump woman in her forties was directing servants as they decorated the living room. She was wearing a tight black velvet dress.

Nora's 80th birthday was in two days. Patrick had invited many guests from rich and powerful families in Seacisco and was planning to go all out for his mother's birthday party.

"Replace all the flowers with peonies. Nora likes peonies. And the tablecloth here must be bright red—dark red or scarlet are forbidden." Elissa then looked at the curtain and frowned again.

She had a pretty face, and with some makeup, she could look even more dignified. However, there was a small black mole under her lip, which made her look a little mean.

The servants could only listen to her demands and changed everything to her liking.

After a while, a young man went downstairs, yawning. Still in pajamas, he scratched the back of his head and said impatiently, "What the hell are you doing? I had just fallen asleep when you woke me up!"

When she saw her dear son coming downstairs, Elissa looked to the servants gloomily and said, "Alright, you can leave first. Finish this after dinner."

Then she looked at Ritchie and warned, "You'd better behave yourself. You didn't get up until dinner is almost ready. Be careful or else your father will scold you again."

Ritchie stretched and yawned lazily. Then, he picked up an apple from the fruit bowl and grumbled, "I'm just pissed off by the Larson Group. They're the reason why my sleeping schedule is messed up. By the way, I went to see Ethan a few days ago. What the hell! I set up a trap for Janet as well as caused Ethan a lot of trouble. But the guy had taken care of everything!"

Ritchie didn't even know how Ethan had made it.

Thinking of this, he suddenly looked at Elissa and narrowed his eyes. "Mom, did Ethan do well while I was abroad?"

Ritchie was starting to suspect that Ethan was no longer the loser he could bully and trample on.

Hearing her son's question, Elissa snorted arrogantly, "I don't have the time to even think about that loser. Nor do I really care. Besides, how could he do a good job in anything? The Lester family cut him off, didn't we?"

"Don't you know that old saying— that we should look at others with new eyes after some time has passed?" And a few years had passed. Now, it was hard for Ritchie to see through Ethan.

"Hmm..." Elissa thought about it for a while. All of a sudden, she felt that she had to be on her guard. She had been afraid of Ethan before, and now it seemed she had good reason to be scared.

“Then we have to pay closer attention to Ethan. Nora’s birthday is coming. A few days ago, she said that she hadn’t seen Ethan in a long time and wanted to invite him to the birthday party. I’ve already told your father to tell Ethan. We can use this party as an opportunity to test the water.”

Ritchie touched his chin and smiled. “That’s good. I’ve been thinking about teaching that brat a lesson. Mom, let’s humiliate that bastard at the birthday party and see how he’ll react.”

Elissa sneered but said nothing. She hadn’t seen the illegitimate son of the Lester family in a long time.

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Nora’s birthday finally rolled around.

As the matriarch of the Lester family, Nora naturally had a prominent social standing in Seacisco, and her eightieth birthday garnered the attendance of high-profile personalities in the city.

In addition to the younger generation of the Lester family, practically half of the entire upper crust had come to wish her well.

Ethan was invited, too, and he decided to take Janet with him. They drove to the outskirts of the city and through winding roads that led to a manor sitting at the foot of a mountain. Already, a long line of luxury cars snaked from the entrance of the venue and past the driveway.

It was a shocking sight for Janet.

For a brief moment, she expected to step out of the car and onto a red carpet leading inside the manor.

It finally dawned on her just why everyone looked up to the Lester family. Based on what she had seen so far, they might very well be a prestigious clan from legends of old.

“Watch your steps now,” Ethan said, offering his hand to Janet as he helped her out of the car. He was dressed in a sleek, all-black suit that complimented his elegant bearing perfectly.

Janet held on to Ethan’s arm as they glided into the manor.

A huge chandelier hung over the main hall, its countless crystals glimmering in the bright light. All around, people garbed in exquisite evening attire loitered and engaged in light conversations.

As they waded their way through the hall, Janet realized that dozens of sharp eyes were fixed on her. No, to be exact, they were fixed on Ethan, following his every move.

Elissa and Ritchie were standing in a far corner of the room, their disdainful gazes also locked on Ethan.

Soon, the guests began whispering among themselves, though they didn’t really bother to keep their voices hushed.

“Isn’t he the illegitimate son?”

“Oh, the son of that dead woman from the Larson family?”

When Janet heard these words, she sneaked a sideways glance at Ethan. To her relief, he didn’t appear to care about the chatter. If anything, he ignored everyone else and ushered her in another direction.

Taking his cue from him, Janet mustered her courage and did her best to hold her head high. Ethan led her to an inner room, where a radiant old woman was sitting on a wheelchair.

“Grandma,” Ethan greeted with a polite smile.

“Hmm, it’s good to see that you are here.” Nora nodded briefly at him before turning her attention to Janet.

Ethan put an arm around Janet’s shoulders and pulled her forward. “This is my wife, Janet.”

Janet acknowledged the old woman by calling her Grandma, then offered her well wishes.

“You look so beautiful,” Nora crooned, seemingly in high spirits. She nodded wistfully and sighed. “You got married in the blink of an eye, huh? That’s good. I’m relieved.”

Elissa watched the interaction from a distance. Not wanting Ethan to steal any limelight that wasn’t meant for him, she signaled at Ritchie.

“Grandma,” Ritchie called as he ambled toward them. “It’s been so long since I’ve seen Ethan. Can you give us some time to talk in private?” He slung an arm over Ethan’s shoulder and grinned at him, as though they were close brothers who had been apart for quite some time.

Nora shot Ethan a tentative look and said nothing.

“I’ll come and talk to you again later, Grandma,” Ethan said in a cold, clipped voice. He followed Ritchie to the side, his face darkening with every step he took.

The Lester had an extensive family tree, and most of the younger generation were present in the event. The moment they saw Ritchie pull Ethan aside, they flocked to them, bombarding Ethan with inane greetings that ranged from tepid pleasantries to sarcastic comments.

“Ethan, long time no see!”

“Say, what do you do now?”

“How is your life, huh? Do you have a job? Or perhaps, would you like me to recommend you for a job opening somewhere?”

Someone even reached out and tugged at Ethan’s suit. “Where the hell did you get this? Wow, the fabric feels as cheap as it looks. Didn’t you know that these synthetic fibers are bound to harm your skin?”

The thing was, although Ethan looked decent enough for high society, he still stuck out like a sore thumb among the other guests who had lived their lives in endless luxury.

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“What are they doing?” Nora said indignantly, “Didn’t I already tell them not to pick on Ethan? Why didn’t they listen to me?”

Elissa immediately made her way up to Nora and blocked her line of sight. "I'm sure they are only catching up. There's nothing wrong with that, right? Would you like to see some of your gifts? There's a painting and I'm sure you'd love it. It took Patrick a great deal of effort to find it."

As she said this, she exchanged glances with Ritchie, grabbed hold of Nora's wheelchair, and was about to take her up the stairs.

Seeing that Ethan was flanked on all sides by a group of men in suits and leather shoes and that the men were doing everything in their power to humiliate him, Janet was pissed off. She pursed her lips tightly, wanting to stand up for Ethan.

Just as she was about to walk to Ethan's side, her wrist was grabbed tightly by someone. "Janet! What are you doing here?"

Janet turned around and discovered that it was Kaya.

Kaya was wearing a Chanel dress, with her short hair braided and a pearl hairband on her head. She seemed to have some work done recently. Janet observed that her eyelids, which used to be single-folded and unique, were now double-folded. She decked out from head to toe in luxury brands, like any wealthy lady.

If it weren't for the way she addressed her, which sounded gentle but tinged with sarcasm, Janet would have trouble realizing it was her.

"What's wrong?" Glancing over in Ethan's direction, Janet didn't have time to make small talk with her.

Now it dawned on Janet that after Kaya ruined her works by "accidentally" pouring coffee on her computer, she was completely disgusted by Tiffany and repulsed by all their colleagues. After that, she didn't think she could continue being employed under the Larson Group, which was why she resigned.

Janet had no idea why Kaya was here.

Kaya let go of her hand and crossed her arms in a proud manner. "I'm a part of the Lester family now so why shouldn't I be here?"

Janet asked impatiently, "Are you the help here?"

"What? No! Who the hell are you calling the help? I happened to marry into the Lester family not too long ago, to Mrs. Nora Lester's niece's son. His name is..."

Janet kept on watching Ethan and didn't pay attention to Kaya's words.

She could recall that Kaya came from an ordinary family. How in the world did she manage to marry into the Lester family?

Kaya discovered that Janet was not listening to what she was saying at all. She looked in the direction of her gaze, sneered, and lifted her chin in an arrogant manner. "Is that your husband?"

Janet nodded. She, in fact, wanted to go find Ethan, but Kaya had gotten in her way.

Finally, she stared Kaya down and said in a cold voice, "What on earth do you want?"

Kaya was now very smug. She kept right on talking, "Why did you decide to marry that bastard? I heard that he's actually poor and that he can't even get a decent job. Life must be very hard for you. No wonder you have to work so hard. If you don't, you might even starve. That's why I think every woman should marry a rich man. See? Work is a thing of the past for me."

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"It's really none of your business. Stop sticking your nose in other people's business!" Kaya's words were harsh but Janet knew it wasn't the right time to argue with her. She planned on getting rid of Kaya away as soon as possible.

But how could Kaya let go of Janet so easily? Kaya still held a deep-seated grudge against her. How could she let go of such a great opportunity to get back at Janet now?

"Hey, don't leave now! I'm right, aren't I?" It's apparent that you don't in fact live a good life, Janet," Kaya said, continuing to pester her and grabbing her wrist to stop her from leaving.

Meanwhile, several well-dressed playboys still surrounded Ethan and mocked him ruthlessly. One insult after another flowed freely.

Suddenly, a passing guest accidentally broke a bottle of La Romanee-Conti wine. The guest looked around and ordered, "Waiter, have this cleaned up."

Ritchie shoved Ethan aggressively and said, "Are you deaf or something? He told you to clean up, waiter!"

Ethan shot a frigid glance at Ritchie. His sharp and threatening look made all the young men around shudder.

Another person stepped forward to diffuse the situation. In a persuasive voice, he said, "Mr. Lester, let this go."

After all, the blood of the Lester family ran through Ethan's veins. Although he was well aware that Ethan was an illegitimate child, how could they let him work as a lowly servant?

Ritchie turned a deaf ear to the persuasive words and remarked with a wry smirk, "The work Ethan does on a regular basis is quite similar to this in any case. I heard that his job was unloading goods in a convenience store. That's right! Ethan is well suited for this kind of cheap, physical labor."

"Hahaha, Ritchie has hit the nail on the head! He calls a spade a spade!" the others echoed and burst into laughter with renewed vigor.

When Ritchie noticed that Ethan didn't move, he pushed him roughly on the shoulder and shouted, "Hey! Ethan, I ordered you to clean this mess up. Are you really ignoring my instruction?"

Just then, an old man donned in a tunic came over with his walking stick in hand. With a cough, he said, "Excuse me, boys. Please give way for me to pass. I have to go to the bathroom."

Ritchie was overcome by rage because someone had the audacity to interrupt him. He turned his head with a dark, forbidding expression on his face, and was astounded to see that it was none other than Curt Benton who had the gall to interrupt him.

Curt was a distinguished guest invited by the Lester family. He was a key person in the business circle.

After a momentary pause, Ritchie nodded respectfully, and said to the others, "Make way for Mr. Benton. And who put this couch right here to block the way? Move it this instant."

Everyone made way for Curt.

"This way, Mr. Benton," Ritchie said. It was clear that he wanted to assist Curt.

Curt, however, managed to dodge his help at the right moment. He threw a cursory glance of displeasure in Ritchie's direction and said, "Thank you, Mr. Lester. But you are the noble young master from a strong family. How can I bother you?"

The color drained from Ritchie's face and he looked frighteningly furious.

The business area into which the Lester family had recently decided they wanted to expand fell under the jurisdiction of Curt. The reason they had specifically invited Curt this time was not only because they wanted to celebrate Nora's birthday but also because they wanted to obtain cooperation with Curt.

Accordingly, they couldn't afford to offend Curt the slightest bit.

Ritchie could clearly hear the sarcastic undertone in Curt's comment but all he could do was bottle up his anger. He nodded and bowed reverentially. He looked at the huge pool of red wine before him and impatiently clicked his tongue at Ethan. "Ethan, do you want me to teach you a lesson before you clean up this mess?"

Ritchie's loud tone attracted Curt's attention.

Ethan?

Curt turned to look at the tall, well-postured man who Ritchie had addressed and was dumbstruck. He then smiled at Ethan and said, "You brat, what are you doing here?"

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Ethan had met Curt Benton on a hike five years ago.

At the time, Curt had a sudden stroke halfway up the mountain, and it was Ethan who carried him down the trail and drove him to the nearest hospital.

Since then, the two had kept in touch, and soon realized that they had a lot in common. Needless to say, they had become very good friends.

Curt was also among the few who knew Ethan's real identity as Brandon Larson. He had been doing business for decades, after all, and was quite well-informed about the business of his peers, both public and private.

Ethan reached out and shook hands with his old friend. "I'm here for my grandmother's birthday party."

He winked at Curt then, silently telling the latter not to say anything regarding Brandon Larson.

Being a shrewd man, Curt instantly understood the subtle message. He refrained from asking more questions and just said, "I haven't seen you for a long time, you brat!"

He hobbled closer to Ethan and glanced at the wine spilled on the floor. "Find a servant to clean this up, or it might ruin Mr. Lester's shoes."

Curt's assistant nodded and waved a staff over to relay the instructions.

"Now," Curt said, turning to Ethan. "Let's go and talk about the good old days. You brat, did you ever realize we haven't spoken in over half a year? Are you avoiding me because I'm too old to be doing what you cool young ones are into these days? Anyway, do you remember those stocks that you said had huge potential? Well, I bought a bunch and ended up making a lot of profit." The man who was always aloof and distant to others was now gushing like a teenager.

Ethan couldn't help but chuckle. "All right, all right. Let's sit over there and catch up."

It was all the encouragement Curt needed. He grabbed the younger man's hand and guided him over to a nearby table.

Ritchie and his goons watched it all unfold, dumbfounded at what they were seeing. They couldn't do anything about it, though; they didn't want to make a fuss and paint themselves in a bad light. Still, they would pause and stare at Curt and Ethan every so often.

After all, a good number of the guests had come for a chance opportunity to make Curt's acquaintance. Who would have thought that Ethan was actually good friends with the man?

"What the hell is going on here?" Ritchie asked his assistant through gritted teeth. "Why would that punk know someone like Curt Benton?"

But his employee was just as clueless as everyone else. "I know, right? And they seem to be close, too."

Ritchie whacked him at the back of the head. "I see that, you idiot. I'm not blind! I'm asking you how it came about!"

Meanwhile, Kaya was still pestering Janet and was about to say something when she caught sight of Ethan and Curt chatting jovially to one side. She gasped, her eyes wide as saucers. "Your husband knows Mr. Benton?"

"I'm not entirely sure..." Janet said tentatively. Though she looked calm, she was also confused.

She didn't really know who Curt Benton was, but judging by everybody's reaction, she surmised that he must be someone important. In any case, this was probably for the best. Surely, with Curt Benton on their side, no one would dare to bully them anymore.

Kaya's jaw dropped. She had just mocked Janet for marrying a loser, yet that exact same man was now speaking with the most prestigious guest at the party. She flushed with embarrassment and let go of Janet's hand like it was a lump of hot coal.

The event officially began shortly after, and the guests were asked to be seated. One by one, delectable dishes were brought out and served.

Janet sat next to Ethan, of course, with Curt on his other side. The two men were still deep in conversation, though Ethan made a point of holding Janet's hand under the table.

Left with nothing better to do, Janet began to eat.

Now and then, she would catch words about their discussion, which seemed to revolve around stocks and the stock market. Once or twice, she heard mention of the Wall Street. They occasionally switched to French, to Janet's utter surprise. From what she could tell, Ethan was very fluent at the language.

The rest of their dialogue didn't concern Janet, so she decided to focus on her dinner and let them do their thing.