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Janet's actions bewitched Ethan.

After the reception, she had changed into a silk slip dress, which outlined her figure perfectly.

Unable to hold himself back any longer, Ethan scooped her up and carried her to the bed, kissing her deeply.

The room was quiet, and the lights were dim. On the bed was a blurry entanglement of limbs.

Blushing furiously, Janet wanted to close her eyes, but in the end, they stayed open. She wanted to see just how much Ethan would lose control of himself.

Sure enough, her husband was out of control. After all, he had restrained himself for what seemed like an eternity.

The bed initially had a heart-shaped flower petal arrangement, but now, it was a complete mess as the man and woman kissed each other with reckless abandon.

The kiss lasted for a long time. Janet lost track of the time, fully immersed in Ethan's presence. His breath grew short as he reached for the hem of her dress, planting kisses from her lips to her neck to her waist, and finally in between her thighs...

Janet felt her legs being parted and her lace underwear was rolled to her ankles by the man. The man's warm breath tickled her exposed pussy, his wet, soft tongue drawing circles on her labia.

"Ethan..." Janet arched her back subconsciously and her voice sounded different—it was thick with desire.

"Hmm... I'm here." Ethan got up and held her legs, propping them on his waist. His fingers reached between her thighs and parted her labia. The moment his finger entered, it was enveloped in soft flesh.

"You are not wet enough. Spread your legs a little more."

Ethan took off his clothes. The muscles on his back were defined yet smooth, chiseled to perfection. He returned to the area between Janet's thighs. His finger moved in and out slowly, until transparent liquid flowed out with his finger. Ethan brought the wet fingers to his lips and sucked it.

With her toes curled up, Janet stared at the ceiling, gasping with every move Ethan made.

Then she felt something hard rubbing against the entrance of her pussy.

"Ah... Ethan..." Janet trembled all over. She wanted to look up, but was held down by the man's powerful arms.

Ethan's eyes were full of desire and his hair was plastered to his forehead with sweat. Janet looked at him in a daze. Grabbing her chin, he whispered, "Don't be afraid. I'm here."

Then he pressed his lips against hers passionately.

His hard penis was slowly slipped into her body. When it met a thin film, Ethan took a slight breath and gently broke through it.

The pain made Janet wince and curl up, and she held Ethan even tighter.

Her bra was unclasped from behind by the man, and tossed to the floor together with her dress.

The naked man and woman were entangled on the bed, the woman's legs wrapped around the man's waist.

Ethan gently kissed Janet's lips. He didn't thrust until she stopped trembling.

Then, the huge, hot penis was thrust all the way inside the woman. Janet forgot how to breathe. When the tip of the penis reached the deepest part of her pussy, she gasped.

Ethan took his sweet time, kissing her neck and slowly thrusting back and forth. The thick liquid mixed with blood stained the white sheet.

Gradually, the pain dissipated, and Janet also felt a strange pleasure as the penis rubbed against her vagina. She couldn't help but pant, biting her lower lip.

Ethan bit and sucked at the skin on her shoulders and collarbone, leaving a trail of red marks.

Janet put her arms around his shoulders and wrapped her legs around his waist tightly, goading him to push inside her further.

Ethan's lips made their way back to hers and their tongues intertwined. His lower body paused for a few seconds, and then he thrust inside her with all his strength.

The pain mixed with pleasure was electrifying. With bated breath, Janet couldn't help but gasp.

After a while, Ethan changed positions and turned the woman to his side. He propped her long leg on his shoulder and continued to thrust.

They didn't stop making love until the sun started to rise in the horizon.

Exhausted, the two fell asleep in each other's arms atop the disheveled bed.

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It was already bright outside when Janet woke up the next morning.

She was sore all over, and her limbs felt like they might fall apart any second.

When did she fall asleep last night?

The last thing she remembered was Ethan on top of her.

The man was an absolute beast in bed.

"Oh!" Janet blushed as memories of their lovemaking flashed in her head. She burrowed back under the sheets.

But then the door opened, and she couldn't help but peek over the edge of the quilt.

Ethan sauntered in carrying a breakfast tray. He was clad in black pajama bottoms and nothing else.

Janet's eyes immediately went to his broad shoulders and his muscular torso. She could almost feel the warmth of his strong, hard chest under her fingertips.

Ethan set the tray down on the table and padded over to the bed. He leaned over Janet and gently swept his thumb over her brow. "Hello, Mrs. Larson. Do you need more sleep? It's already well past noon. If you want to keep sleeping, we can take our private plane later."

He had booked flights to Europe for their honeymoon trip.

Janet stretched her arms and reached for Ethan's shoulder. The afterglow from last night left a rosy hue on her skin.

She perked up at his teasing words, and poked his arm jokingly. "It's all your fault. You're the reason why I'm so exhausted."

They shared a chuckle and cuddled for a moment before she asked, "Don't you need to go to the company? Won't the Larson Group fall without your supervision?"

In fact, she hadn't expected a honeymoon trip.

"I took a week off," Ethan said, looking unbothered as he pulled her closer and rubbed her shoulders.

Hearing this, Janet shot up in bed and grinned. "Then, I'll go pack and get ready right away."

She had always wanted to travel with Ethan, but they never found the time.

Before she could scramble out of the covers, he pulled her back into his embrace. "Let me carry you to the bathroom," he whispered and nipped her earlobe.

She probably had no idea how irresistible she looked when she just woke up.

It only took a single taste to get addicted to something, but once you reached that point, the matter of restraint became a constant battle. With that said, Ethan and Janet stayed in the bathroom for two hours.

Sure enough, they ended up taking their private jet and arrived in Europe at nine o'clock that evening.

The night sky over Paris was still a light shade of blue despite the hour, and the lights of the Eiffel Tower glimmered in the surface of the River Seine. It truly was the most romantic city on earth.

By the boulevard, a tall, striking man was busy snapping pictures of a smiling woman across the pavement.

Her eyes were clear and bright, lending a youthful charm to her petite frame.

"Aren't you done yet, Ethan?" Janet complained. She was growing tired of smiling for the camera.

Her husband, bless his heart, seemed to be enjoying his new gadget. He looked rather adorable in his knitted wool hat and his black wool overcoat as he fiddled with the lens.

Ethan had never taken photos of other people before, much less a woman. He never had any reason to. And so, he was understandably uneasy about this particular activity.

Fortunately, Janet appeared to be pleased with the pictures when he showed them to her.

“Oh, is that the Louvre?” Janet had turned toward the southern bank of the Seine, her eyes filled with awe as she stared at the magnificent building in the distance.

Back when she had been studying painting, her biggest dream was to explore this historical site.

Ethan silently watched her bask in wonder; then he brought her chilly fingers to his lips and kissed them. “Let’s go over there and have a look,” he said softly.

The winter wind was cold, and Janet shivered despite the layers she wore. Ethan reached out an arm around her shoulder and tucked her under his coat, and the two of them walked down the streets, talking and laughing.

Janet was still in high spirits when they retired for the night.

She lay back in bed with her arms spread as she recounted everything she had seen at the Louvre with unmistakable fondness. “I thought the Mona Lisa would be bigger. Her smile didn’t look as mysterious as the Internet hyped it to be.”

Ethan emerged from the shower and found her wriggling on the bed. Her slender and even legs were kicking randomly in the air, and her plump chest was heaving slightly, which was like a silent temptation.

His mouth suddenly felt dry, and he had to swallow a lump in his throat. All the blood in his body surged downward. Ethan gritted his teeth.

“There you are, honey,” Janet said, flashing him an inviting smile. “Come here, let’s look at the photos we took together.”

But Ethan wasn’t interested in the photos at all.

What he wanted to do right there and then was to rip off her clothes and keep her in bed for hours on end.

Without another thought, he walked to the bed and straddled her, pinning her down with his body.

“You’re too heavy,” Janet said innocently, though a knowing smile was dancing on her lips.

Ethan playfully bit her lower lip and growled. “I want you. Open your legs.”

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The Lester family broke into an uproar.

Brandon had invited all the influential, wealthy people in Seacisco to his wedding, except the Lester family.

When Elissa went to play cards with her friends, her fellow wealthy ladies mocked her, saying the Larson Group didn’t respect the Lester family.

Although Lester Silk Fabric and the Larson Group were rivals, Patrick still wanted to make peace and ensure the development of the two companies. If Lester Silk Fabric and the Larson Group joined hands, they would undoubtedly monopolize the economic lifeline of Seacisco.

However, Brandon's enigmatic personality irked him. Although the Lester family belonged to the wealthiest strata of society, they never interacted with Brandon. They didn't even know what he looked like.

"How come Brandon got married all of a sudden? I haven't even heard of him being in love with anyone before." Elisa grunted angrily and took a sip of the tea. Her nose scrunched up with disgust as the horrible taste spread in her mouth.

Ritchie slept all morning and finally woke up in the afternoon. He went downstairs, yawning, and turned on the TV in the living room.

"Why do you care about Brandon? Our Lester family is in no way inferior to him. His invitation means nothing to us."

Ritchie scoffed disdainfully as he sat on the sofa, cross-legged.

"You don't understand. Brandon has invited all the famous people in Seacisco except our Lester family. You have no idea how those bitches insulted me while playing cards. They want to defeat me in everything, so those ladies took the opportunity to mock me by talking about his wedding the whole time. It was horrible!" Elissa was fuming with rage.

She glanced at the entertainment news on the TV. Suddenly, her face turned pale, and her eyes almost popped out of their sockets.

Seeing the horror in his mother's eyes, Ritchie also turned to look at the TV.

"Mom? What happened? Damn it!"

They were broadcasting Brandon's wedding on TV. However, the couple getting married was the coward Ethan and his humble wife.

Just then, Patrick came downstairs. He was equally shocked. He stared at the TV with wide eyes.

"Oh my God! It's Ethan." Patrick couldn't believe his eyes.

He repeated the words over and over again as he stared at the TV.

No two people in the world would look this alike. Brandon was none other than Ethan.

No one would have thought that a loser like Ethan would establish a business empire like the Larson Group, which was as powerful as the Lester family, and become a successful CEO. Nobody had a clue about his secret life.

Elisa couldn't deal with the shock. She didn't know what to do. Unfortunately, Patrick was here; she couldn't even show her resentment. She turned around and winked at her son, secretly expressing her feelings.

Patrick picked up the newspaper on the table and unfolded it. A slow smile emerged on his face. "This boy amazes me."

Looking at Ethan's achievements, Patrick realized he was more smart and outstanding than his eldest son, Seth Lester, who was in charge of a branch company of the Lester family in a different city.

Patrick regretted kicking Ethan out of the family. It had been a hasty decision. If he had known Ethan's potential, he would have never asked him to leave.

Elissa's heart sank when she saw the smile on Patrick's face.

She should have killed that boy when she still could. Ethan was wealthier and more influential than the Lester family now. He wouldn't bother acquiring their property, for his assets surpassed theirs. She couldn't bear to watch him, an illegitimate child, grow right before her eyes.

"Damn it!" Ritchie angrily stomped his foot.

He threw the remote and stormed out of the room.

Elissa followed him out to the garden. "Things have gotten out of hand. We should get rid of Ethan!"

Ritchie's head throbbed. He looked at Elissa and scoffed. "Do you think he is still a loser whom we could mess around and get away with it? He is now Brandon Larson — the CEO of the Larson Group!"

"So what? Just because Ethan has another identity, doesn't mean we should just give up. The Larson Group and the Lester family are enemies. The only solution is to get rid of Ethan." Elissa fisted her palms as anger coursed through her veins.

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After a week, Ethan and Janet returned from Europe.

Seacisco had grown quite warm by then.

As soon as the two of them stepped foot outside the airport, countless reporters swarmed around them.

"Mr. Larson, when did you and your wife fall for each other?"

"Why was your wedding so out-of-the-blue? Are you two expecting a child?"

"May I know what Mrs. Larson does? Our source said that she's an employee of your company. Was it an office romance?"

The reporters bombarded them with a barrage of questions.

Covering half of Janet's face with the scarf, Ethan held her in his arms protectively. His cold gaze swept across the sea of reporters and he didn't say a word.

Perhaps it was because Ethan's face was bone-chillingly cold that the reporters didn't dare to ask any scandalous questions.

When they made it home from the airport, Janet couldn't hold her curiosity at bay any longer. "Ethan, I noticed that although our marriage is a trending topic, all the media's reports on me are simple and objective. They were never judgmental with me. Did you put any pressure on the media?"

Ethan put his suitcase down and began to sort out the luggage. "It's their job to report the truth. I just reminded them that."

With a sweet smile on her face, Janet suddenly walked over and threw her arms around Ethan's neck. "Honey, I want to go back to work."

While she had already resigned from the Larson Group, she hadn't found a new job yet.

And she had no plans of becoming a full-time housewife.

Ethan's heart instantly softened when Janet called him honey.

He slipped his arms around her waist and pulled her close. "What do you mean? You want your job back? Or do you want me to support your search for another job?"

Swirling her finger on his chest a few times, Janet said in a pouty tone, "I don't want to go back; I don't want to work for you either."

In a word, she didn't want to rely on him.

Ethan understood what she meant. He pondered for a while. "In the design industry in Seacisco, the biggest and the best two companies are the Larson Group and the Lester Silk Fabric. You can't join Lester Silk Fabric of course."

He held Janet even tighter and said possessively, "You're not leaving Seacisco either. I refuse to be in a long-distance relationship."

Leaning against Ethan's chest, Janet smiled and said, "Then give me advice."

A thought occurred to Ethan and he suggested that Janet open her own studio. With his help, she didn't need to worry about reputation or clients.

But she didn't think she was experienced enough to be an independent designer, nor did she want to rely on Ethan to develop her career.

So she decided to talk to Tiffany about it.

Tiffany was surprised when Janet came to her for help.

After all, Janet was already the Mrs. Larson. Tiffany doubted there was anything in this world Brandon couldn't give to her.

"Wait until I get off work. I still work for your husband, remember? I can't just sneak out and have dinner with you," Tiffany whined jokingly on the phone.

She was a professional and drew a firm line between work and personal affairs, a line she refused to cross.

“Okay. I’ve booked a table in the French restaurant downstairs. Focus on your work first. I’ll see you later,” Janet said with a smile.

After tidying up at home, Janet headed to the restaurant and waited patiently for Tiffany.

When she and Ethan had visited Paris, she fell in love with French cuisine.

Just as she was scanning the menu and thinking about what to order, a voice interrupted her thoughts.

“Try the foie gras. This restaurant is known for it. I myself find it the most delicious dish in the whole world.”

The woman’s voice was lively and crisp, sounding very youthful.

When Janet looked up, her eyes met that of a beautiful girl in a white dress. She had long, dark hair that hung over her shoulders. Her outfit and accessories were all from designer brands, and she was carrying two Hermes shopping bags. The Cartier necklace resting on her clavicle twinkled brightly.

After hesitating for a few seconds, Janet smiled politely. “I’m sorry, Miss. I don’t think we’ve met.”

“Who I am is none of your business. Are you Janet, Brandon’s wife, from the news?”

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What an arrogant tone!

The girl standing before Janet was indeed beautiful, but her voice dripped with arrogance and contempt.

Janet put the menu down and rested her chin on her hand. “Yes, I’m Janet. If you want something from me, at least tell me your name. Otherwise, I won’t know how to address you.”

The girl pursed her lips and raised her chin slightly. “Heard of Mooney Mart? It’s a national chain supermarket owned by my family. Other than the famous Lester family and the Larson Group, our company is the biggest and most well-known.”

Jesus!

This girl was too silly.

She had given Janet so much information—but still not her name.

Janet’s smile faded away. “I’ve heard of Mooney Mart, but I still don’t know your name, Miss.”

“I’m... I’m Cindy Mooney of course!” Cindy didn’t like Janet’s expression. Was she mocking her?

No one in the world dared to mock her, the daughter of the Mooney family.

Janet smiled again and turned to the waiter. “Foie gras, please. Good for two people.”

Noticing that Janet seemed completely disinterested in her, Cindy asked bluntly, “May I sit with you?”

Without waiting for an answer, she plopped down on the seat opposite Janet.

It was clear that she still had a sense of superiority as she stared at Janet with disdain.

“You’re Brandon Larson’s wife. What’re you wearing? Your clothes look very cheap.” Cindy shook her head and clicked her tongue in disgust. She didn’t think her words were impolite at all because in her household, she grew up saying whatever she wanted to say. “There are dozens of popular families in Seacisco, but I’ve never heard of the Lind family. What’s your background, Janet? How did you meet Brandon?”

Janet shifted in her seat uncomfortably. She didn’t know the woman sitting across her that well, nor did it look like Cindy had anything to do with Brandon. Despite this, Cindy brazenly interrogated Janet.

Judging from her words and tone of voice, Cindy seemed to be saying that Janet was too ordinary to be with a man like Brandon.

Not wanting to waste her breath on her, Janet said dismissively, “I have no reason to answer you, Miss Mooney. Thank you for your dish recommendation, but if there’s nothing else, please leave now. I’m expecting a friend.”

Cindy didn’t give a damn. She firmly believed it was fate that she ran into Janet today. No media outlet would reveal Janet’s specific identity, shrouding Brandon’s wife behind a veil of mystery.

“Cancel on your friend and have dinner with me today. Tell me, how long have you been with Brandon? And how did you get him to fall in love with you?” Cindy asked persistently.

Sometimes even the servants who worked for her family couldn’t stand her, let alone Janet, who didn’t even know her.

“Maybe it’s because I don’t talk nonsense to annoy others, or maybe it’s because I’m more beautiful than most women,” Janet answered in a casual tone, mirroring Cindy’s arrogant manner.

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“Excuse me, but who do you think you are? How dare you talk to me like that?!” Cindy instantly flew into a rage from the humiliation.

She sneered and looked Janet up and down carefully.

Well, even she had to admit that Janet was indeed a very beautiful woman. Her skin was fair and delicate, and her features were refined. She could’ve drawn anyone’s attention with her eye-catching beauty.

Cindy bit her lower lip and her eyes flashed with anger.

The girl sitting opposite her was arrogant and annoying, but she hadn’t gone too far yet. She was clearly another rich princess spoiled by her family, so Janet didn’t want to waste her breath and argue with her anymore.

But Cindy had taken Tiffany’s seat. Where would Tiffany sit when she arrived?

Thinking about this, Janet glanced at her phone to check the time. It was time for Tiffany to get off work.

“Oh, hello. Who’s this? Did you invite someone else to dinner?” Speaking of the devil, Tiffany approached their table and looked at Cindy questioningly.

Janet looked at Cindy and said impatiently, “Miss Mooney, my friend is here. Can you go now?”

When Cindy saw the domineering woman standing next to Janet, she snorted with disdain, gathered her things, and left in a huff.

Janet’s eyes flickered with annoyance as she watched the girl leave.

Tiffany put down her bag, took off her coat, and sat on the seat Cindy had been sitting on just moments earlier. “What’s wrong? What happened? Who was that girl?”

Making sure that Cindy had left the restaurant, Janet told Tiffany how the girl had provoked her for no reason.

“Oh, I see how it is. Initially, you were married to Ethan Lester—an ordinary, unknown man. But now, you’re married to Brandon Larson, the CEO of Larson Group. Do you know how intimidating this title is? Brandon is young, promising, and rich. Many rich families have tried to get him to marry their daughters, but he was too aloof. He showed no interest in being with anyone, nor did he show any interest in getting married. All the women who hoped to marry him eventually had to give up.” After such a lengthy explanation, Tiffany found herself thirsty. She gulped down a glass of water and then continued, “Yet now, he announced out of the blue that he’s married, and his wife is not from a prominent family. It’s unheard of—it’s like breaking the barrier between social classes. Naturally, those rich families feel that they’ve been robbed by you.

Janet sighed. “It was stupid of Cindy to outright provoke me, and I can deal with a small fly like her. But, my worry is that she’s not the last one. I think I’ll encounter a lot of similar situations in the future.”

Tiffany smiled at her knowingly. “It’s good that you know that. Since you can’t change your fate, you have to learn to embrace it.”

With knitted brows, Janet rested her chin in one hand and mulled over things carefully.

After a long while, she finally said, “Ethan—I mean Brandon has announced to the public that I’m his wife, but they don’t seem to be okay with it. Because Brandon is an excellent man, people think he should’ve married someone from the same social status. Now that he’s married to me, an ordinary woman, everyone’s in disbelief. I guess I can see where they’re coming from. It’s true that I don’t deserve Brandon in terms of ‘social rank’. But I can’t change where I came from.”

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“Don’t belittle yourself. One can’t change where they came from. Besides, rich and powerful families didn’t start out rich and powerful. You’re a talented designer. What you need to do is to work harder. Soon, the public will acknowledge and accept you—whether they like it or not.” Tiffany waved her hand dismissively.

Just then, the waiter came to serve black truffle, foie gras and a bottle of aged wine.

Swirling the glass of red wine in her hand, Tiffany’s eyebrows shot up in surprise. “This is expensive. Is Mr. Larson paying for it?”

Janet shook her head. “My money is mine, and his money is his. I just wanted to thank you for all of your help. I doubt I’d be where I am today without you.”

Tiffany clinked her glass against Janet's and smiled leisurely. "You don't have to do this. I didn't do much."

Sipping her wine, Tiffany nodded in satisfaction. "But I won't say no to a bottle of Lafite. So, what's the real reason why you invited me to dinner? Ask away."

Rubbing her fingers, Janet smiled sheepishly. "Okay. Well, here's the thing. I want to be an independent designer."

Hearing this, Tiffany pursed her red lips. "Has it been a year since your graduation?"

This question made Janet's heart sink to her stomach.

"No. It has only been ten months." Janet was so nervous that her palms started to sweat.

Generally speaking, becoming an independent designer was no easy feat. Except for those extremely talented, no one in their right mind would be arrogant enough to open their own studio within a year of graduating. It was expected that they gain experience from working in a company for a few years before going independent.

Tiffany fell silent for a second. "That's a little tricky. Experience is important for a designer. Plus, it's somewhat an insult to those experienced designers if you become a successful independent designer at such a young age."

After a while, she smiled gently. "If it were up to me, I wouldn't see it that way. You're clearly a talented designer and I'm sure you had a lot of ideas even back in college. But my experience tells me that it's still early for you to set up your own studio. What if you work for another design company to gain experience first?"

Hearing this, Janet's expression was complicated.

"It seems that you have something on your mind, Janet." Tiffany saw through her immediately. "Mr. Larson doesn't want you to work for anyone else, am I right? That's so macho of him."

"No, it's not that. Rather, he doesn't want me to work outside of the city. A long-distance relationship is not for us. If I had the chance, I'd want to go to Barnes. But Seacisco is in the south and Barnes is in the far north. It will not be easy for us to see each other in the future," Janet explained dejectedly.

She didn't want to be separated from Ethan, but she didn't want to be dependent on him either.

Tiffany shook her head and sighed. "You managed to marry a rich man yet you still have a lot of things to worry. Men are indeed the stumbling block to a woman's career."

Janet was amused by her opinion. She looked at Tiffany carefully.

Tiffany was beautiful and sexy, but she always seemed to cast aside worldly desires and lived independently.

She was a tough woman. She was professional and capable and it was as though she didn't need a man at all. Nobody knew whether she was born like this or it was because of something she had experienced.

The two of them proceeded to have a nice dinner. Finally, it was time to say goodbye.

Before getting in the taxi, Tiffany turned around to warn Janet, "This is no small matter. You two had better discuss it and make things clear as soon as possible."

"You're right. I'll see what I can do. Be careful on your way back." Janet waved goodbye to Tiffany.

When she got home, Janet was preoccupied with thoughts on how to discuss her predicament with Ethan.

Ethan was wearing a dark blue suit and tie, looking tall and mature. With his shiny leather shoes, he was the epitome of a cold, meticulous CEO.

When he saw her come in, Ethan wrapped his arms around her waist and kissed her on her cheek. "It's good you're back in time. There's a charity party tonight. Let's go there together."

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"Did you just say a charity party? Is it being held by the Larson Group?" Putting away the coat she had just pulled off her body, Janet thought it over for a few seconds and then added, "But I don't have an evening dress for such an occasion. When you were Ethan, it was no big deal for me to wear my usual dress to attend a formal event. But today the situation happens to be very different. You're Brandon Larson now. If I underdress, it will go on to be a huge disgrace to you."

In fact, Janet didn't want to go at all. If she went to the party, she'd have to face those who looked down at her.

After adjusting his tie, Ethan asked in a very gentle voice, "Didn't I buy you a custom-made dress before? If it's not something you like, I'll ask my assistant to send over a few more for you to choose."

Ethan quietly looked at Janet for a few seconds and as if sensing her thoughts, he touched her hair and asked her, "Don't you want to go to the party? A distinguished guest from Barnes will be there. Joanna White happens to be a famous philanthropist in Barnes. I want to introduce you to her."

With a sweet smile on her face, Janet leaned her head against Ethan's shoulder and said, "I nearly forgot about the dress you gave me. Wait a minute; I'll go get changed."

After that, she walked into the room and put on the dress.

She knew in her heart that Ethan had good intentions for doing this. He wanted to bring her to such important occasions to emphasize and consolidate her position. Sooner or later, she had to adapt to such things.

After putting on her dress and fixing her makeup, she headed to the party with Ethan.

The charity dinner just got started. This event was totally different from any party that Janet had attended before. This kind of charity dinner was obviously on a higher level than the other events.

Everyone here was refined and talked properly.

"Mr. Larson, it's good to finally meet you." Two men in tuxedos, who were about fifty years old, made their way over with huge smiles on their faces.

When talking to them, Brandon was not as level-headed as he was to other people. Perhaps they were business partners. The three of them talked together rather casually for a while. The atmosphere seemed to be relaxed and pleasant.

Janet sat on the side and enjoyed the desserts and champagne quietly. At this moment, several middle-aged rich ladies came over to talk to her.

“Mrs. Larson, do you like sweets?” a rich lady in a fitting dress and curly hair asked with a smile on her face, staring at the plate resting in Janet’s hand.

After a short pause, Janet nodded with a slight smile. The desserts here were indeed very delicious and at the same time, she was not that much of a fussy eater.

“Booth’s Cake is way better. Mrs. Larson, please go try it when you have the time. Its taste is much better than these cheap desserts they serve here.”

These rich ladies proceeded to exchange glances with one another.

“In fact, it matters very little whether the dessert is cheap or not. If one never gets to see the world and thinks that these are already good stuff, then that will be the real joke here.” The rich lady flipped her hair and turned to look at Janet with a thoughtful look on her face. “I heard that Mrs. Larson graduated from a local design school.”

Tiffany was right. Cindy wouldn’t be the only one who didn’t like the fact that Janet married Brandon.

These rich ladies mocked her one after the other. They pretended to act like they cared about Janet, but in fact, they were ridiculing her in a way that said that she didn’t deserve to be Brandon’s wife.

“Yes, I am a designer.” Janet tried her best to stay calm.

“Designing isn’t in demand right now. Besides, all those famous designers graduated from prestigious foreign universities. Our domestic design schools here aren’t very good.”

“Mrs. Kane, is it true that your daughter is studying fashion marketing at UCIA?”

With a proud expression on her face, Mrs. Kane replied, “Yes, she’ll graduate in one year. She met Mr. Larson before and said that she wanted to work as an intern in Larson Group after she returned. Now, there’s no chance for that anymore.”

Mrs. Kane let out a long sigh and then went on to say, “You have no idea how excellent my daughter is. She went to study in a foreign country alone at the age of fifteen. Many rich young men are pursuing her, but she only likes mature men.”

With a faint smile on her face, Janet acted like she didn’t understand what Mrs. Kane meant. She was feeling so angry and aggrieved that she couldn’t even taste the dessert in her mouth.

“What are you girls talking about? It appears to be something funny.”

At this time, a middle-aged woman in a royal blue V-necked evening dress walked over toward them. She was noble, low-key, and elegant all at once. She had a graceful and elegant appearance, with an

easy-going and calm aura emanating from her. Her long black hair was held up on her head by a black wooden hairpin.

When those rich ladies caught sight of her, they became restrained and courteous right away. “Good evening, Mrs. White. We’re just chatting with Mrs. Larson here.”

The middle-aged woman had a friendly smile on her face. She glanced over at Janet, appearing stunned for a few seconds, and then asked with a gentle smile on her face, “You’re Janet, right?”

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Janet was still hung up on the ladies’ sarcastic remarks that she didn’t notice the woman approaching her.

Johanna had to wave her hand in front of Janet’s face before the latter came back to her senses.

Janet blinked at Johanna, at a loss for words.

She looked familiar for some reason.

But Janet couldn’t figure out where they had met before, so she decided to brush off the thought.

Thinking that Johanna was about to mock her just as the others had done, Janet squared her shoulders and lifted her chin. “Hello. Can I help you with anything?”

She held her breath and braced herself for the inevitable. What sort of abuse was she going to hear this time?

“It’s very nice to meet you. My name is Johanna White, and you may call me Mrs. White just like everybody else.” The woman stretched out her hand, her eyes gleaming as she peered at Janet with obvious curiosity.

Johanna had noticed Janet the moment she had entered the room, mainly because she had the same eyes as her husband.

As for Janet, she was rather taken aback by the distinct lack of hostility. It was a breath of fresh air after what she had just experienced.

She set her plate down and reached out to shake Johanna’s hand. “Hello, Mrs. White,” she said with a polite nod and an apologetic look.

So, this was the Mrs. White that Ethan had mentioned earlier.

Upon closer inspection, Janet finally realized why this elegant woman looked so familiar—she saw that same face in the mirror every day. Johanna White looked just like her.

“You caught my attention when you came in just now,” Johanna said with a smile. Before either woman knew it, she had already clasped Janet’s hand between both of hers. “Are you a native of Seacisco? I’ve grown very fond of the local cuisine. Can you give me a few recommendations?”

Johanna was genuinely amiable and didn’t put on airs, unlike the other rich ladies in attendance. She had a gentle aura that inspired the confidence of the people around her.

“Oh, there’s a restaurant near my school that sells the best lamb stew in town,” Janet replied instantly. “This is the perfect season to have a hearty lamb stew I think.”

Seeing that Janet seemed to be in good terms with Johanna, the other women had no choice but to back down. They stood to the side and exchanged pointed glances, not daring to interrupt the other two’s conversation.

Johanna finally turned to them after a while, though her expression was not as warm as when she had been speaking to Janet. “It’s cold out here, ladies. Why don’t you come with us to the lounge inside?”

The White family was one of the most prominent lineages in Barnes. Each generation had studied abroad and gone on to become notable figures in their respective field, and some of them had even held important positions in the military. Needless to say, Johanna was a key player in society, and everyone pandered to her at every chance they got. And since she was courteous toward Janet, the women had to keep themselves in check, lest they inadvertently offended Johanna.

It was the early days of spring, and the floor-to-ceiling windows of the lounge opened to the garden. Despite the lack of snow, the cool, refreshing scent of winter still lingered in the air.

“You know Seacisco so well. Have you lived here since you were a child? May I ask who your mother is?” Johanna was usually reserved, but she was inexplicably interested in Janet. Aware that she might be crossing a line, she smiled kindly at Janet and assured her, “It’s all right if you don’t tell me. I know it’s a little abrupt and may not exactly be appropriate. Just forget I asked.”

The matter of her family background was a sensitive issue for Janet, so she was grateful for the other woman’s consideration.

But she sensed no malice from Johanna, so after a moment’s hesitation, Janet decided to answer her question. “I was adopted by the Lind family. As for my biological parents, I’m sorry, but I’m afraid I have no idea who they are.”

Her voice instinctively quieted down as she spoke, and the words fell heavy between them.

Johanna’s face immediately changed. A mix of complicated emotions flashed across her eyes. “Are you saying that you’re adopted?” she asked urgently, as if to confirm a crucial truth.

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Johanna suddenly got overly emotional, which had a way of overwhelming Janet, who then said in a gentle voice, “Yes, it’s true. I was adopted by the Lind family.”

Tears started to well up in Johanna’s eyes. She patted Janet’s shoulder and went on to ask, “How did the Lind family adopt you?”

Janet shook her head. Her memory of it was long gone.

Besides, she didn’t want to recall such sad memories from her childhood, so she had been deliberately avoiding thinking about what happened in the past.

At the same time, Johanna had nothing to do with her. Why was she asking so many questions? Janet was feeling a bit confused about what was going on.

“Mrs. White, if there’s nothing else you’d like to talk about, I have to go now.” Janet thought that there was no more need to say anymore to a stranger.

More tears welled up in Johanna’s eyes. Her hope, which had been long lost, was now back again.

She clutched onto Janet’s hand and smiled lovingly at her. “I’m sorry, Janet. I must’ve scared you just now. I was being too overly emotional.”

Seeing this, Janet proceeded to sit down again and said in a resigned tone, “I can’t remember what happened that day in the past clearly. I’ll have to think it over.”

She tried her best to recall the past. She had no idea why this lady suddenly burst into tears, but she had a feeling she might feel better if she told her something.

“I don’t know exactly where it was they found me. But I’ve heard my adoptive father say that I was picked up by an acquaintance of his in Barnes. At that time, there had been an earthquake that turned the whole city into chaos. Many people were seriously hurt, leaving behind a lot of orphans and I happened to be one of them, I suppose. That friend of theirs heard that they wanted to adopt a child. That was why he sent me to them.” After having said that, Janet was lost in thoughts.

She had never even talked about this with Ethan before, but now she was telling it to a woman she had just met for a few minutes.

Hearing this, Johanna’s face turned extremely pale and her whole body shook. She covered her face and suddenly burst into tears, unable to hold in her excitement.

Janet had no clue what was going on. She patted her on the shoulder and tried to comfort her, “Mrs. White, what’s the matter?”

Johanna took out a handkerchief from her bag in her hand and proceeded to wipe her tears. She looked up at Janet again with a serious expression on her face and said while sobbing at the same time, “Twenty-three years ago, when my daughter was born in the hospital, there was an earthquake. It was such a chaos and I mistakenly took someone else’s daughter home. Over the years, my husband and I have always been looking for our real daughter but never managed to find her. Not long ago, I saw on the news of your marriage with Brandon Larson. I noticed that you look a lot like my husband and me, so I came here to see you.”

Janet was shocked and didn’t know how to feel.

She looked at Johanna with a faint smile on her face and said, “Maybe this is just a coincidence. Things like this happen in the world.” Johanna wiped away her tears.

After that, she argued, “I didn’t make a mistake. I just knew it. I’ve been having a familiar feeling ever since I saw you. Families are linked by blood, you know? I believe that. I really think that we’re family.”

Janet also had the feeling that Johanna was familiar and kind.

From what Johanna said, that might be true. After all, everything from her age, appearance, and her story all matched that of Johanna’s daughter.

Noticing the panic and hesitation in Janet's eyes, Johanna held her quivering hand and asked cautiously, "Janet, would you like to undergo a paternity test with us?"