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Janet had just returned to the White family home. Johanna didn't want her to go back to Seacisco so soon, so she vehemently insisted that Janet stay in Barnes.

"I'm going back to the company for work tomorrow. If you're bored, you can go shopping with Lila. She has many friends in Barnes. This is the supplementary card of my credit card. You can buy whatever you'd like." Before Johanna made her way to the company, she gave a card to Janet to use as she pleased.

"Thank you but no, I can't accept this. You have bought me innumerable things." Janet felt embarrassed to accept such a grand gesture.

Johanna pressed the card into Janet's hand and hugged her again, feeling reluctant to leave. "You're being too polite with me. Well, I really have to go now. I'll give you two the time to bond with each other today."

Lila was positively green with the jealousy that consumed every fiber of her being. She had been longing for a supplementary card for as long as she could remember. However, no matter what methods she tried to employ, Johanna didn't agree to it. Now Janet had made little to no effort yet she was gifted the card. How could Lila not envy her?

Lila had a catch-up date with her best friends to enjoy afternoon tea. She had no desire whatsoever to take Janet along with her. However, since Johanna had asked her specifically to do so, she had no choice but to let Janet tag along.

The place they patronized was a restaurant in a five-star hotel. The desserts of this hotel were well-known, which made it a popular place for many wealthy ladies to spend their leisure time.

"Lila! You're finally here! Do you know how long have we been waiting for you?" As soon as Lila and Janet entered the restaurant, a woman in a sexy slip dress with leopard print pattern stood up and waved to beckon them over.

Lila quickly walked over and kissed the woman on the cheeks. She smiled and asked, "What made you stay abroad so long?"

When the woman was about to speak, she saw Janet standing behind Lila. She raised her eyebrows and smiled, "Who is this? Why don't you introduce her to us?"

Lila took a glance at Janet. She walked behind her and introduced her to her best friends, "This is my sister, Janet White. You must have heard of her in the newspapers."

Of course, these women knew full well who Janet was. They had read the news about her in the newspaper over and over again.

Lila led Janet to their seats to sit down.

The young ladies made conversations with Janet from time to time about some mind-numbingly boring topics.

From these conversations, Janet could tell that these young ladies were all from rich families and had no ambition to strive to make progress. They lived a comfortable life and were waiting for their parents to arrange husbands for them in the future.

As for Lila, she only took a swivel-chair job in White Group for formality purposes. As for whether she went to work or not, that was wholly up to her mood.

Lila and her best friends kept talking about luxury, designer brands and entertainment. Janet couldn't get a word in edgeways, nor did she have an interest in joining their superficial chat.

"Janet, I heard that you came from Seacisco. It's one of the most developed cities in the country. Are there any interesting places in particular in your opinion?" A short-haired woman suddenly changed the topic.

However, before Janet could say anything, Lila cut in, "Janet grew up in the Lind family in Seacisco. But my mother tells me that the Lind family is declining and that it can't even be considered a wealthy family any longer. Besides, Janet had been raised in the countryside by an old maid when she was young. Before she came here, she was an ordinary employee in a company. I don't think she knows much about Seacisco."

Lila's best friends were daughters of plutocrats. They all had studied abroad, so they naturally looked down upon Janet who came from a small town.

After chatting for approximately ten minutes, they realized that Janet and they were not in the same social rank. They didn't talk to her anymore and deliberately alienated her from the rest of their conversation.

Janet felt unbothered by their behavior. Originally, she didn't like to spend time with these ladies in any event. Since no one talked to her, she just sat quietly and enjoyed the tea and desserts.

"How about we go to the Hermes store? Just now, the saleslady told me that the new bags I ordered the last time was finally here and available now." After the afternoon tea, these rich ladies got to their feet with the plan to go to the shopping mall.

Janet didn't move. She looked at the colorful macaroons on the table and said, "The desserts here are simply scrumptious. I would like to spend more time here. I will pack some for Mrs. White later."

Lila and her friends didn't want to take Janet with them in the first place. Now that Janet requested to stay, it was just what they wanted and suited them absolutely perfectly.

Janet spent the whole afternoon in the restaurant. When it was almost time for dinner, she went home with desserts packed up.

After that, when Lila asked her to go shopping and have a meal with her friends, Janet refused her suggestion firmly.

Johanna felt strange. When she came back home from work these days, she saw Janet staying at home and not going anywhere to socialize.

On the other hand, Lila didn't return home until midnight.

One day, when Lila came back from the bar, she bumped into Johanna who was in the kitchen to get herself some water.

"Why have you come home so late yet again? Where is Janet? Didn't you take her with you?"

Upon hearing what Johanna said, Lila's eyes filled to the brim with tears and threatened to overflow. She glanced at Johanna and said nothing.

Johanna frowned slightly, "Lila, what's the matter?"

"Mom, you made it sound like I am the one in the wrong. Janet is at home. I ask her to go out for fun with me, but she refuses every single time."

She spoke as if she had been completely wronged by her mother. She continued, "Mom, I always have this gut feeling that Janet doesn't like me very much."

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Johanna looked into Lila's eyes meaningfully.

"I could see that Janet was quite nice to you. Did you happen to misunderstand her?"

Lila felt wronged right then. "I have no idea what happened. My best friends and I went shopping together with her. We treated her very considerately. I don't know why that happened."

Johanna knew Lila very well. Though she was a little spoiled, with regard to morals, Johanna thought she and Beal had taught her a great deal.

"Well, it's getting late, why not go upstairs and have a rest first? I'll deal with this matter." Johanna didn't bother asking any more questions. She decided she would talk to Janet first.

The next morning, when Janet woke up, the servants were preparing breakfast in the kitchen. In Seacisco, she had the habit of getting up early in the morning.

Johanna returned to the house from a morning run outside. Sweat was pouring off her body. The habit of morning exercise gave her a perfect figure even though she was nearly fifty years old.

"Good morning, Mrs. White." When Janet saw Johanna walk in, she nodded at her.

Even though Johanna and Beal were her biological parents, Janet still felt a little awkward around them and could not make herself call them Mom and Dad for now.

"Mom" and "Dad" were both unfamiliar and awkward phrases to her still. When she lived with the Lind family, she seldom called Bernie and Fiona Dad and Mom.

Wiping the sweat off her forehead, Johanna was startled. "I'm not your boss, why are you still calling me "Mrs. White"?"

She then glanced over at the empty table, covered her stomach with her hands, and winked at Janet. "Breakfast has yet to be served. Why don't we go to the kitchen to check? You haven't had the chance to try my cooking, right? Just to let you know, I cook delicious eggs and bacon."

Janet nodded with a smile on her face, feeling a warmth flood through her heart. Like a little child, she followed Johanna into the kitchen.

Janet watched as Johann cracked the eggs into the sizzling pan. Soon, the kitchen was filled with the aroma of fried eggs.

Johanna then put the bacon in as she asked rather casually, "Why did you stay in instead of going out with Lila to have some fun? You're not friends with anyone in Barnes. It's good for you to go out and forge new friendships."

The aroma of the bacon had a way of intoxicating Janet. But hearing Johanna's question, Janet knew that she couldn't tell Johanna directly that she didn't like Lila's friends. She simply smiled and replied, "I've been searching for jobs on the recruitment website recently. I've grown used to working, so I want to continue focusing on my career. Also, I feel a little flustered when I'm out with Lila the whole day."

In fact, Janet was telling Johanna the truth. She wasn't in the mood to hang out with Lila every day.

She began working after graduation and had grown accustomed to it. If she suddenly stopped working, she would feel useless and abandoned by the world.

Johanna turned off the stove and looked at Janet for a very long time.

This daughter of hers was just like her.

Johanna was relieved to hear what Janet said just now.

Johanna herself was a powerful woman, but Lila was spoiled as a princess and couldn't bear to live a hard life. Lila happened to be average in ability and was not all that ambitious. They had long stopped expecting Lila to achieve anything in regard to a career. Anyway, there was no need for Lila to inherit the family business. They just wish her happy and healthy.

Knowing now that Janet was so ambitious, Johanna was really happy to learn that.

"I know that you majored in fashion design and was working as a fashion designer in Seacisco before. I've seen your work and found that you are indeed a very talented designer. If you need money or any connections, you can tell me at any time. Our family also has dealings in the fashion industry." Johanna clutched Janet's hand tightly and patted it twice. "You're really like me when I was younger."

"Thank you. If I need anything, I'll tell you."

After that, Janet turned her attention back to the eggs and bacon in the pan. It just smelled so good.

Janet didn't think too much about her conversation with Johanna.

However, Johanna obviously did.

She made up her mind to let her daughter establish a business in the fashion circle of Barnes, so that was what she was working on.

Two days later, Johanna received the news that a high-end party was going to be held in the fashion circle soon. She received the invitation and went to the party with Janet and Lila, hoping with all her heart that Janet could make a smashing debut within the fashion design circle of Barnes.

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When Janet saw the invitation Johanna had handed to her with her own eyes, she had no choice but to admit that her mother was indeed a decisive person.

“Mrs. White, to be honest, I haven’t yet decided whether I’ll be working in Barnes or not.” Holding the invitation in her hand, Janet didn’t know whether to laugh or cry in response.

After all, she had to take a lot of people into consideration, especially Hannah and Ethan.

Johanna had her own master plan. She secretly hoped that Janet would stay with her in Barnes for the rest of her life. Besides, the White family was wealthy enough to support Janet.

However, judging by the reluctance on Janet’s face, Johanna surmised that she must have been thinking about Brandon, the man in Seaisisco.

He was a good-looking fellow, but Johanna wasn’t fond of him at all.

“I didn’t say that you have to work in Barnes, but it would be good for you to expand your connections. Barnes may not be as fashionable as Seaisisco, but it’s a developed city with a healthy ecosystem of experienced designers to learn and gain knowledge from.” Johanna showed a gentle smile on her face.

Unwilling to disappoint Johanna, Janet eventually agreed to attend the party.

At the party, Janet followed Johanna around the hall, meeting all the big shots from the fashion circles because she wasn’t quite familiar with the designers in Barnes.

“This is Mr. Smith. He is the chief designer of the project of redefining women’s clothing that has been popular all over the country recently.” Johanna was elegant and unhurried, while Janet complimented her with her gracious and refined temperament.

Lila was looking for an opportunity to humiliate Janet. Since she used to rub shoulders with Barnes’ upper class, Lila had several friends at this party. Mostly daughters from rich families who had graduated from famous design schools abroad.

“Mom, Janet has just graduated. Don’t you think it’s too soon for her to talk with these experienced designers who have been in the fashion industry for decades?” Lila whispered to Johanna.

Lila pretended to be concerned, but deep down inside, she was just waiting for Janet to make a fool of herself and get laughed at by these famous designers. After all, in her opinion, Janet was just a novice, unworthy of public appreciation.

Perhaps then Johanna would come to regret bringing Janet to this party in the first place.

“I trust her,” said Johanna calmly and firmly.

Lila's heart sank almost immediately. After all, Johanna had never talked about her with such pride and certainty.

That realization irked her even more.

Mr. Smith, the renowned designer, was a very arrogant man who despised people who tried to win him over with flatteries.

If it weren't for Johanna, he wouldn't have spoken to Janet, but after spending a few minutes with her in conversation, he realized that Janet had a profound passion for designing. "I remember seeing your work at Seaisco Fashion Week not too long ago."

"I am honored and delighted to hear that. After all, I'm just a newcomer with still so much to learn," Janet answered in a natural manner.

"The smooth fabric was a good choice. It emulated the fluidity of the wind, incisively and vividly." Mr. Smith raised his eyebrows and clinked glasses with Janet.

Suddenly, all eyes were on Mr. Smith and Janet. As they became the focus of the party, everyone walked up to them and joined them in conversation.

Meanwhile, standing in the corner with her fists clenched in anger, Lila watched in awe as she didn't expect things to work out so nicely for Janet.

How could this be? How?

It looked like Janet had all the famous designers, the chief editors of various fashion magazines, and the founders of brands eating from the palm of her hand.

Lila gritted her teeth to stop herself from screaming.

Janet was thriving amongst all the talented people around her and yet Lila couldn't even understand what they were talking about.

With pride in her eyes, Johanna said, "When I see Janet, I feel like I am looking at my younger self."

Lila felt bitter in her heart.

It suddenly dawned upon her that she wasn't as good as Janet.

Everything about her was superficial, but Janet had real ability and talent.

Janet wasn't intimidated by all those big shots and was actually wise enough to control the whole conversation.

Janet was a quiet woman who didn't talk much, but she could express her ideas brilliantly when it came to something she was good at.

Lila was utterly disconsolate.

She also noticed one more important detail.

In the past, handsome men would flock to her since she was the daughter of the White family, but tonight, there wasn't a single man who came up to talk to her.

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Johanna was relieved in her heart to see that Janet and the other designers were getting along well. She said to Janet, "I'll go say hi to Mrs. Blake now."

Lila was ignored in the meantime.

At this sort of fashion party, people usually chatted together in groups. At just a glance, Lila appeared to be isolated and she looked a little embarrassed.

Everyone walked past her and proceeded to ignore her.

After all, the White family announced that Janet was their biological daughter, which immediately turned Lila into a joke.

With a glass of wine clutched in her hand, Lila sat there rather awkwardly.

She used to be popular at all the parties, but now, she was sitting alone on a bench.

As she sat there, she caught sight of a familiar man.

Levi Glyn had been one of her craziest admirers.

The Glyn family started from scratch, engaging in the real estate business. Originally, Lila looked down upon them, but no one was willing to talk to her right then. And she didn't want to be made into a joke here.

With a glass of wine in her hand, Lila made her way up to Levi with a smile on her face and said, "Levi, what a nice surprise to see you here. I thought you didn't like such parties."

If this was in the past, Levi would have felt overjoyed that she wanted to talk to him.

However, hearing her words now, Levi turned around and said in an indifferent voice, "My dad asked me to come here. He said Mrs. White would show up today."

Lila smiled and said, "Yeah, my mom likes these sorts of events. She usually has a lot of time on her hands."

Hearing her words, Levi only gave her a perfunctory answer. He simply took a sip of the red wine in his glass and turned his head to check out Janet.

"Enjoy yourself. I'll go talk with them now. Please excuse me." After having said that, Levi made his way toward Janet.

Lila was startled, to say the least.

After that, she could make out Levi enthusiastically introducing himself to Janet, "Miss White, I'm Levi Glyn, the eldest son of the Glyn family. It just so happens that we live in the same neighborhood. I heard that it's your first time in Barnes. If you're feeling bored and want to hang out, you can call me at any time. I'm very familiar with the city."

Levi wore the same warm smile he used to give Lila once.

Lila's heart sank in her chest.

She figured that he changed his attitude toward her because she was no longer known as the daughter of the White family. Everyone who had originally wanted to fawn over her had turned to Janet.

Lila trembled so hard that she almost couldn't hold her glass.

This was the first time that she had experienced just how snobbish people could be.

At the same time, she was feeling very resentful toward Janet.

She bit her lip so hard that it bled.

All this should've belonged to her, but now, it had all been taken away by that Janet!

While she was burying herself in hatred, Janet was talking happily with all the designers and celebrities.

In less than ten minutes, a lot of people were gathered around Janet, who didn't even seem to notice it herself.

They all looked at her with flattering smiles on their faces.

"Miss White, if you need cloth for any of your designs, my company can provide them for you at any time," a clothing supplier said right away when he heard that Janet was a fashion designer.

The CEO of a clothing design company said to her, "My company has the very best pattern makers in the world. Miss White, you can borrow them at any time."

Janet knew that this was all because she was now known as the biological daughter of the White family.

"All right, I'll contact you if I need anything," Janet answered with a pleasant smile.

Suddenly, a scream sounded out from the crowd, "Look over there! He's here!"

Everyone looked over to where that person was pointing at, including Janet.

The door of the banquet hall was opened from the inside by the staff members.

The light was a bit dim, but the man who had just walked in appeared very eye-catching. Everyone couldn't resist but fix their eyes on him.

The man, who was wearing a black suit, looked both elegant and handsome at the same time. A faint mole could be seen on the bridge of his nose and he had charming eyes with the slightest hint of indifference in them.

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"Oh, my God! Did he actually, seriously come back?"

"I thought an international designer of his standing would usually live abroad. The last thing I expected was that he would come back to Barnes."

Janet had only seen the man everyone was talking about on the cover of fashion magazines and in news articles before.

Like everyone around her, she was very familiar with this highly famous figure.

Draco Wesley.

He was one of the most influential fashion designers in the entire world.

He was a genius when it came to the art of design. His name had been famous for many years now. Practically everyone had more or less heard of him.

He represented the glory of being a successful designer.

When Janet was in high school, she had read an interview he had given. He pursued fashion design as if it was the light of his life and had never given up on it.

At that time, he was still a young man in his twenties. His eyes glowed with sheer ambition and certainty whenever he talked about design.

Janet peered at him and found that the years had given him a gentler and calmer aura than he had when he was a young man. He looked much more mature and composed now.

In just six years, her idol had become the titan of the fashion industry, a force to be reckoned with.

At the age of thirty-two, he had his own fashion brand, W Marks. He had achieved so much in fashion design.

In addition to being famous in the fashion industry, he was born into a rich family, and he was handsome and charming. He undoubtedly played the role of Prince Charming in innumerable women's fantasies.

Janet covered her mouth. She had looked up at him for many years, and finally, she could meet him in person. She had trouble putting her mixed feelings into words now.

"Mr. Wesley!" All the women at the party swarmed around him, like bees flying around a beautiful flower.

"Mr. Wesley, can we still manage to obtain reservation for your new collections? I failed to make one, the items were too hot."

"Mr. Wesley, can we take a picture with you?"

Looking at the crowd with a gentle smile, Draco said, "Of course."

Janet stood there, hesitated for just a moment and looked at Draco.

It was a rare opportunity for her to meet him. She wanted to say hello to him and ask him some questions about design.

Just when she was about to walk over, several women from the rich families who had had afternoon tea with her before, Lila's besties, pushed her unceremoniously away.

“Miss White, please get out of the way! Don’t block our way!”

“There is plenty of room here,” Janet looked at them and said, absolutely disgruntled. “I wasn’t in your way.”

A short-haired woman pushed her aside and said impolitely, “We were just kindly reminding you not to squeeze in. Mr. Wesley won’t be attracted to ordinary women.”

She added in a tone dripping with haughtiness, “There are a lot of excellent women who admire him. You, of all people, don’t stand a chance.”

With a frown, Janet clenched her fists and said unhappily, “I wasn’t trying to...”

As soon as she spoke, Draco looked over and their eyes met.

Suddenly, the light of the crystal chandelier seemed to become brighter.

Draco’s eyes lit up and a smile stretched across his handsome face.

“Sorry, everyone. Excuse me.”

With an apologetic smile, he walked through the crowd and made a beeline towards Janet.

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Draco stood in front of Janet. He was much taller than she had expected, and had a rather affable expression, though it didn’t make him any less manly.

“Excuse me, Miss. Are you Janet Lind, the designer who participated in the first show of Seacisco Fashion Week?” He had to duck his head slightly as he spoke to her, if only to avoid looking arrogant and self-important. He was so tall that Janet seemed petite beside him, despite her average height.

She flushed at his question, both surprised and embarrassed. “You’re right, Mr. Wesley. But Lind is no longer my last name by now.”

Draco’s face broke into a smile, his eyes curving into tiny rainbows. “I see. I finally get to meet you, Miss White. You’re a lot cuter than I imagined.”

“What do you mean, Mr. Wesley?” Janet asked, visibly confused.

“You see, I paid close attention to your designs at the Seacisco Fashion Week. I really liked them, but for some reason, they were suddenly removed from the selection. I was abroad at the time, so I naturally had no idea what went down. A friend told me later that you were involved in a plagiarism scandal. How did it go, by the way? Has the matter been solved?”

Janet tilted her head curiously. “I wonder, Mr. Wesley, why aren’t you asking me whether I did plagiarize another designer’s work or not?”

“A plagiarized work will never be able to earn my appreciation in the first place,” the man said firmly.

“Are you sure about that?” This time, Janet’s surprise turned up a notch.

Draco chuckled gleefully. “How interesting you are, Miss White. I happen to have a very discerning eye. Besides that, I also have a phone, which allowed me to read about the press statement released by your company.”

The two of them chatted amicably, completely unaware that the people around them were staring.

Draco was easy and pleasant to talk to. Janet felt the tension slowly leave her body.

“Ah, you look more relaxed now,” Draco said with a smile, as if he had meant to ease her worries all along.

“Well, I’m actually not used to this, socializing with the upper-class elites, so I’m sure my stress is justified,” Janet joked.

“Are you still working for Larson Group, then?”

Janet shook her head. “I quit because of some... personal issues.”

Draco immediately perked up. “Have you taken a new offer elsewhere?”

“I haven’t decided yet, to be honest. A part of me wants to run my own studio, but I can’t help but feel intimidated. I think I should continue as an employee for now and gain more experience. God knows I need it if I’m to thrive in the industry.” Janet sighed wistfully just as the warm, soft light fell on her delicate face. It lent her an innocent and youthful glow.

Draco didn’t hesitate to put his offer on the table. “How about joining my studio? You can work as my assistant and get all the experience you need. You’ll be free to leave once you think you’re finally ready to set out on your own.”

Janet gaped at him in disbelief. “Mr. Wesley, I—Are you kidding me right now?”

Her head was buzzing from the sudden and ludicrous opportunity that fell on her lap.

Draco’s studio was a much-coveted post for all young designers who wanted to make a name for themselves. Janet had never even dreamed of setting foot in that hallowed place.

“Does it look like I’m kidding?” Draco teased, though there was an unmistakable serious edge to his voice.

Janet took a couple of seconds to process his words, and then she grinned. “Not at all. I’ll be more than happy to work for you. It’s every designer’s dream.”

After hearing her exclamation, the young socialites nearby glared at Janet in shock and envy.

“Great! How about starting next week?” Draco was already taking out his business card and handed it to Janet.

She was over the moon. Having no reason to refuse this once-in-a-lifetime chance, Jane nodded and promised to be at his studio the following week.

Johanna saw it all unfold from the sidelines. She walked up to Janet as soon as Draco left and whispered, "Lucky you! It's a good thing to be in Mr. Wesley's good graces. You're definitely headed for a bright future."

But there was another side to Johanna's elation over Janet's promising prospect. After all, if Janet worked for Draco, then she wouldn't be coming back to Seacisco any time soon.

Lila felt conflicted as she watched Johanna and Janet whispering and giggling among themselves.

Although Johanna didn't express any dissatisfaction toward her, the woman was obviously very proud of Janet.

And Lila had to admit that Janet was truly brilliant, more so than herself.

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Janet was still in high spirits long after she had arrived home. She lay in bed and stared at Draco's business card, turning it over and over between her fingers. Then, out of the blue, Ethan's glum face flashed in her mind.

It suddenly occurred to her that she had been too busy recently to go on video calls with her dear husband. Janet wasted no time remedying that.

As soon as the video call connected, Ethan's scowling face appeared on her screen. "Have you finally remembered that you left your husband here in Seacisco?" he complained.

"I'm so sorry, honey," Janet immediately apologized. "My mom has been taking me to parties and getting me to meet the local socialites. I get so tired that I pass out as soon as I come home."

Ethan snorted at that and rolled his eyes. "You don't think about how I would feel, do you? You don't care about me at all."

It looked like he was becoming a very clingy and needy husband.

Janet had no choice but to cajole him with everything she got. She even talked sweet nothings to him for several consecutive minutes, until she finally noticed the corners of his lips twitching.

"By the way, I have some good news."

She told him about Draco's job offer.

And just like that, Ethan's face darkened all over again. This time, he looked even more sullen and cross.

"You... Are you really planning to work for him?" He spoke through gritted teeth as he tried his best to rein in his jealousy.

Janet's parents had spirited her away with no regard for Ethan's opinion, and he was still mad about it.

In addition, he was all too familiar with Draco, what with the man being a reputable icon in the fashion industry. Ethan had also seen photos of Draco before. The latter did have a pretty face, though Ethan thought he looked rather effeminate.

While it would do wonders for Janet's career to work at Draco's studio, it certainly wouldn't do her bereaved husband any good.

"Mr. Wesley is a genius in design. I look forward to learning a lot from him." Janet's voice had instinctively turned an octave deeper in the face of Ethan's displeasure.

In the end, he closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "I won't stop you from achieving your dreams, but... It's just that, we've only just been married, and you're already making plans to live apart from me. For how long are you going to leave your husband all alone?"

Janet gave him a tight and apologetic smile. "For now, it looks like I'll have to stay in Barnes for a while. Why don't you come over, honey?"

And so, Ethan dropped all his work and flew straight to Barnes.

He yearned for his wife so much that he could barely hold himself together. He was starved of her, both physically and emotionally, and he feared that if they stayed apart any longer, someone might snatch her away from him.

Early the next morning, Janet woke up to a call from Ethan.

"I'm at the door."

"It's only six o'clock," Janet yawned. "You're way too early, honey." She stretched and got dressed, and then hurried over to open the door.

Ethan found himself frozen in place when their eyes finally met. He had been missing that bright, loving gaze day and night.

Janet yawned again and ran a hand over her face. Clearly, she was still sleepy. "It's still dark outside," she muttered, smacking his chest playfully. "Why are you here at this godforsaken hour?"

Ethan blinked at her in disbelief. "Do you even know how long it's been since we've seen each other in the flesh?" he grumbled.

He looked deflated and angry at the same time. Janet thought it was cute. She hooked her arm around his and smiled up at him. "Of course, I remember. It's almost been a week. I missed you so much, honey."

For sure, Ethan also missed her like crazy.

But he was a mature professional who always remained unflappable even in the worst circumstances. He had no business losing his composure so easily. Ethan calmed himself before asking in a nonchalant voice, "Really? I don't feel it at all."

With a knowing smile, Janet pulled at his tie and stood on tiptoe to plant a kiss on the corner of his lips. "What about now?"

Ethan sighed to keep himself from grinning like an idiot. "Nope."

Janet pinched his cheek. "Don't push your luck, Mr. Lester."

He chuckled as his hands slowly went around her waist. Ethan leaned close, and the next thing Janet knew, he was pressing her against the door and ravaging her mouth.

"Ahem!" There suddenly came a loud cough, interrupting their passionate embrace.

Janet pulled away from Ethan away and looked behind him.

Beal and Johanna stood there, staring at them with unreadable expressions on their faces.

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With a slight blush of her cheeks, Janet cupped her face and murmured, "Mom, Dad, it's..."

These days, she eventually grew accustomed to calling Beal and Johanna Dad and Mom.

As if nothing had gone down, Ethan turned around and greeted politely to them, "Good morning, Mr. and Mrs. White."

What he really wanted to do was strangle himself. His actions earlier must have left a bad impression on Beal and Johanna. Furthermore, when they kissed just now, he even stuck his tongue in her mouth!

Beal and Johanna didn't really like him to begin with. Their faces darkened when they witnessed how he kissed their daughter just now.

"You're in a public space." Johanna looked at Ethan up and down with displeased eyes.

Janet was such a sweet girl while he was a bad influence on her.

"Well, come inside first so we can talk." Johanna didn't look very happy, but she knew she couldn't let Ethan just wait out here.

After they walked inside, Ethan proceeded to sit upright on the sofa.

As soon as Janet walked into the house, Beal asked her to come into the kitchen with him to help him make breakfast. She kept looking in the direction of the living room.

"Stop looking. Your mother will do her best to not give him a hard time." Beal washed the vegetables and smiled gently at his daughter.

Janet bowed her head down and said guiltily, "I wasn't really looking."

Inside the living room.

Johanna said in an aggressive voice, "We just found our daughter who has been missing for the past twenty some years. We want her to stay with us for a while longer to bond as a family. What do you think about that?"

"Of course, I can understand," said Ethan with a smile on his face.

At this time, Lila was yawning as she headed down the stairs.

She glanced at the man, who was sitting downstairs in the living room. Her heart seemed to be hit by something huge and it seemed to have stopped beating for a few seconds there. Her face turned red unconsciously.

She had seen Janet and Brandon's wedding on TV before and she didn't feel anything back then. She admitted that Brandon was indeed a very handsome man, but at that time, she was still the daughter of the White family. She didn't feel inferior to him during that time.

She had originally thought that her future husband would be someone equally as excellent as Brandon, or someone even more excellent than him.

But Lila was very clear now that with her current situation, there was no way someone like Brandon would want to marry someone like her.

Janet used to be a nobody. How in the world did she manage to marry such a rich and handsome man? Why was she so fortunate?

Lila didn't dare to show her emotions on her face. She forced a smile and headed down the stairs. "Mom, why are you up so early?"

"I just went grocery shopping with your father this morning. The help asked for a day off today. Your father said he would cook for today. He's in the kitchen with your sister right now." Johanna simply

sipped on her tea and answered without even bothering to look at Lila.

Lila had a smile on her face and didn't say a word. Even though she was talking to Johanna just now, she had her eyes fixed on Brandon.

He really was handsome.

Even in the suit, she could feel that he must have a good body. When she looked into his eyes, she was captivated by him. He looked just like a king.

Sure enough, people would usually only fall for the things that were unobtainable to them.

With envy in her eyes, Lila glanced over at Janet, who was busy cooking in the kitchen.

She wasn't really outstandingly beautiful, so how could she land someone like Brandon?

The resentment in her heart was growing stronger and stronger and she was no longer in the mood to look at Brandon anymore. She clenched her teeth tightly and made her way into the kitchen. "Dad, let me help as well."

Ethan was going to stay at the White family house and planned to head back on Sunday night.

After breakfast was over, Janet took Ethan to see her bedroom.

As soon as she walked into the room, she felt someone holding her waist from behind.

Ethan proceeded to hold her waist with one hand and lock the door with the other. He then threw her on the bed.

With an unnatural flush of her cheeks, Janet pushed him away and said, "It's daytime and my parents are downstairs right now."

What was he thinking? He had acted like a well-mannered gentleman in front of Johanna just now while everyone was downstairs. And now he turned into a savage beast!

The two of them were in such close proximity to each other that they could feel the other's body temperature.

Ethan's Adam's apple bobbed in his throat and he felt his body growing hotter and hotter. He placed his hands into Janet's jeans and could feel her delicate skin underneath them.

He took off his light gray wool shirt and showed off his muscles.

His eyes darkened visibly. He rubbed his cheek against Janet's own and asked, "Don't you want to do it?"

They hadn't had sex for an entire week. Ethan really missed her a great deal.

Janet's legs were clamped tightly shut. Underneath her underwear, she was all wet.

She glanced over at the closed door and paused for a few seconds. After that, she lifted her hand and poked Ethan's muscles. "You have to keep quiet. I don't want my mom to hear us."

Ethan kissed her on the cheek and caressed her breasts. His voice grew hoarser with lust. "Yes, ma'am. I have no objection with that."

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Ethan pushed the crotch of her panties to the side and slid his fingers into her folds, rubbing and stroking her soft flesh.

Janet bit her lips, but that didn't stop a long moan from escaping. Her waist lifted involuntarily from the bed, even as she clutched the covers beneath her.

"Good girl," Ethan rasped and pressed two wet kisses on her cheek. He pulled back and straightened before unzipping his trousers and discarding them to the floor. Then, he hooked his fingers on the waistband of both her jeans and underwear and pulled them off her in one swift motion.

Janet shivered from the cold, but Ethan was immediately above her, pressing his hard member against her slick wetness.

He rubbed against her until she was dripping down to her thighs; then he slowly pushed inside. She was so tight that he had to pause and take a deep breath to keep himself from losing control.

A faint stabbing pain accompanied Ethan's thickness as it entered her. Janet had the vague feeling of being stretched apart, and she couldn't help but gasp at the sensation. Ethan grabbed her by the calves and braced himself before burying his entire length into her.

"Ah! Ethan..." Tears welled up in Janet's eyes, while Ethan groaned in ecstasy. She could feel him throbbing inside her, as well as his pulse travel from where they were connected to every inch of her body.

Ethan hiked her legs up and wrapped them around his waist, then he leaned close and captured both of her wrists with one hand, pinning them over her head. His other hand cupped Janet's jaw, prompting her lips to part for a deep, hot kiss.

He ravaged her mouth until he felt her relax and loosen around him. Only then did he start moving, pulling backward and plunging back in. She seemed to grow tighter with each thrust—or maybe it was he who was growing larger—but he kept thrusting, and she kept swallowing him up.

Ethan's cock glistened in the dim light of the room. As he picked up his pace, their combined fluids slid down her tender flesh and soaked the sheets.

Janet's back arched upward. Ethan kept pounding into her, his face pressed against the shell of her ear, his short, hoarse grunts filling the air. He pulled back a little to release her wrists. She immediately wound her arms around his neck, leaving a trail of red fingerprints on his broad shoulder as she held on for dear life. With his hands now free, Ethan cupped her breasts and squeezed. He played with her nipples with his thumbs, alternating between flicking them and rubbing them in lazy circles.

"Oh..." Janet gasped. They became a panting, writhing mass of intertwined limbs. The air above them soon became thick and heavy with their mingled breaths. Janet felt trapped in a never-ending web of pleasure, though she wasn't entirely sure she wanted to escape it.

Her head fell to the side as another wave of raw bliss washed over her, and her gaze fell on the window.

Spring was almost upon them. Outside, small, delicate buds were appearing on the withered trees. A few birds were perched on the branches, eager for the warm season to begin. Janet briefly wondered if they were sparrows or swallows... She couldn't tell from this distance.

But before she could mull it over further, Ethan took her chin again and turned her toward him for another torrid kiss. His fingers splayed out on the width of her neck as the rocking of their bodies grew more urgent.

Janet trembled at the force of it all, and Ethan chose that moment to put his palm on her lower abdomen, just below her navel. The next time he thrust into her, he simultaneously pressed down, causing her to clench even more tightly around him.

"Ah! Don't... Ethan..." The next thing Janet knew, ripples of pleasure took over her body, wringing a scream out of her mouth. She felt herself burst into a million little pieces before falling back to the ground. She collapsed against the pillows, quivering and spent.

She might have passed out for a second there, but Janet didn't really care. Ethan thrust into her one last time, shooting his hot semen inside her with a throaty, drawn-out growl.

Janet's eyes fluttered open and met his wild gaze. His lust was nowhere near slaked, and it showed in his face. She opened her mouth to say something, but his large hand came over her eyes and forced them closed. He shifted their legs in a different position, then proceeded with another round of his passionate onslaught.

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By the time Janet woke up again, it was already the next day.

When she went downstairs, Johanna immediately rushed to her side, worry written all over her face. “I heard that you didn’t come downstairs for lunch and dinner yesterday. Are you not feeling well?”

Johanna and Beal had gone to work after breakfast yesterday, so the servants must’ve informed them.

Indeed, Janet didn’t feel well—between her legs.

Her eyes flitted to the man who was sitting on the sofa as though nothing had happened. Sighing subtly, she put on a smile and explained, “I’m fine, Mom. I just get drowsy this time of year.”

“Drowsiness is not a good thing. I’ll take you to the hospital this afternoon.” Johanna frowned worriedly.

Janet had just made a random excuse, but she didn’t expect Johanna to take it so seriously.

Just then, Ethan stood up from the sofa and grabbed her arm. “Mrs. White, we’re planning to watch a movie this afternoon. Janet’s a fan of the leading actress in it.”

At first, Johanna wanted to talk them out of it, but on second thought, she let them go. Pursing her lips unhappily, she snapped at Ethan, “Fine. Take good care of her.”

It seemed like she really wasn’t fond of her daughter’s husband.

In fact, Janet wasn’t planning to watch a movie. Ethan had just come up with an excuse on the fly.

But when they walked up to the cinema, a poster of a thriller film caught her eye.

The poster looked very dreamy, full of artistic direction. She had heard about the movie on social media before. When she watched the trailer on the screen outside the cinema, she was even more intrigued.

“We’re already here, so we might as well watch a movie,” Janet suggested, linking her arm in Ethan’s.

Ethan glanced at the poster she was staring at and whispered, “I have a private cinema in my villa in Barnes.”

In his villa, they could do whatever they wanted. The mere thought made Ethan swallow.

However, Janet didn’t seem to get what he meant. She dragged him into the cinema stubbornly and said, “But I like watching movies with other people!”

Ethan couldn’t help but burst into laughter.

Fortunately, this was a thriller, and there were very few guests in the cinema.

With a tub of popcorn and a cup of coke in his arms, Ethan sat in the back row with Janet.

Janet had her eyes glued to the screen attentively whereas Ethan’s mind was elsewhere. He put his hand on her thigh and stroked it gently. Today, Janet was wearing a gray knitted dress and a black silk stockings.

At this moment, he just wanted to tear the stockings apart and rip them off.

Feeling a slight tickle on her thigh, Janet glanced at him and whispered, "We're watching a movie. Get your hand off of me."

Ethan turned a deaf ear to her words. At the climax of the movie, the hero and the heroine began to kiss passionately on the big screen. Ethan reached for Janet's hand expectantly, waiting for a kiss from her.

Just as he was about to whisper something, there was a slight sound that came from the ceiling of the cinema. It sounded like something was loosened.

Ethan raised his head vigilantly.

Sure enough, the ceiling above them started to shake violently, causing the lamps to sway dangerously from side to side.

"Janet, watch out!" Ethan quickly pulled Janet out of her seat and they both lay low on the aisle. Gritting his teeth, Ethan flung his body on top of hers to protect her from under him.

With a gut-wrenching bang, the ceiling of the cinema collapsed, and everything around them suddenly fell into darkness.

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