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Janet didn't know what had happened.

She was so engrossed in the movie that she didn't notice when the ceiling started to shake. The next thing she knew, she was lying flat on the floor of the aisle underneath Ethan as the ceiling collapsed. To her horror, something heavy fell on Ethan and she heard a loud noise.

Then it was pure chaos. The room fell into darkness. She could hear people's screams and cries for help and Ethan's heavy breathing.

"Ethan, are you hurt?" she asked urgently.

A faint smell of blood wafted in the air.

Janet had no idea if it was Ethan's or someone else's.

Having been hit just now, Ethan had rolled down the stairs. Janet's voice trembled as she fumbled for Ethan in the darkness. "Ethan?"

She knew that he must've gotten hurt. She could hear his low, pained moans in the darkness.

However, after a few deep breaths, it became deathly silent. Janet couldn't hear anything from the direction where Ethan was.

Janet wanted to rush to his side, but a ceiling frame had inadvertently caged her.

When she tried to stand up, her head hit the slate, causing a flurry of concrete powder to fall all over Janet's face.

"Ahem!" She inhaled the powder and couldn't stop coughing.

It was pitch black and she could barely see her hand in front of her. As she tried to get a feel for her surroundings, Janet concluded that the collapsed ceiling had fallen on top of the rows of seats, trapping them inside the aisle.

"Hello? Is anyone else there?" She shouted at the top of her lungs.

Although there weren't many other people watching this movie, she recalled at least a dozen other movie-goers in the cinema.

But now, it was eerily quiet. The cries for help just now had stopped.

Perhaps the fallen ceiling had knocked them out.

Without thinking too much, Janet continued to crawl ahead.

"Ouch!" Pain shot up from her knees. Janet winced and fumbled forward, trying to navigate with her palms. Finally, she touched something that felt like knitted fabric. It had to be the dark blue sweater that Ethan wore today.

“Ethan! Ethan, can you hear me?” Janet tapped him, but she received no response. He must have passed out.

The smell of blood in the air was more intense now that she was near Ethan. When she reached out to touch his arm, her fingers sank into something sticky and warm.

Her mind went blank. Suddenly, panic seized her.

She took a few deep breaths, trying to calm herself down. Then she placed her hand under Ethan’s nose to see if he was still breathing.

After a few seconds, she sighed in relief.

She could still feel a faint breath coming from his nose.

Next, Janet pressed her ear against Ethan’s chest. She could hear his heart beating.

He was alive!

Gritting her teeth, Janet hastily wiped the blood on her knees with her hands. Then she retraced her steps back to her seat, hoping to find her phone and bag in the rubble.

When the ceiling collapsed just now, the chandelier had fallen along with it. Consequently, the floor was covered in broken glass. Janet tried her best to avoid them.

Now she only hoped her phone wasn’t smashed to bits. She had been texting Johnny throughout the movie, so her phone wasn’t inside her bag.

Janet managed to make it back to her seat. She fumbled around in the darkness, searching for her phone. Finally, she found it under a pile of dust.

The screen had been cracked, but the phone itself was still functioning.

She immediately dialed 911. “I’m in Sherwood Cinema and the ceiling has just collapsed. Please, we need your help.”

After giving the 911 operator all the details, she called the hospital.

Then, all she could do was wait. Seconds felt like minutes, and minutes felt like hours.

Suddenly, she heard the sound of falling stones.

“Help! Is there anyone here?” she shouted desperately.

Although there was no response, soon she heard noises from outside. It sounded like somebody was trying to dig a hole into the fallen ceiling.

Finally! They were going to be saved!

Janet was optimistic. She never even considered that digging through the rubble would take a lot of time. Moreover, this was the biggest cinema in Seacisco.

She waited anxiously. Several hours passed. The sound of digging outside continued, but she could tell that it was still far away from where she was.

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The air was thick with dust.

Janet licked her chapped lips.

It had been several hours since the ceiling collapsed. She had turned off her cellphone to save its battery. She only turned it on to check the time occasionally.

Last she checked, it was already eight o'clock in the evening. She and Ethan had arrived at the cinema at around two o'clock. Six hours had passed.

Her stomach kept grumbling, reminding her of how hungry she was.

She was used to having meals on time, so naturally, she was quite hungry by now.

The popcorn Ethan had bought was now mixed with dust and pieces of the ceiling.

She picked out the clean popcorn and ate it to calm her angry stomach.

The coke had also spilled. The brown liquid was all over the floor.

“There’s a bit left!”

Janet’s eyes lit up. She was lucky. There was a bit of coke left in the cup.

Using the light from her phone, she crawled back to Ethan.

There was a huge slab of slate on Ethan’s body. One side of the slab had pierced into his body. Blood trickled down along his body, forming a pool of blood on the ground.

His wound was covered with dust and rubble. The space under the seat was too narrow, so Janet couldn’t reach him. She wanted to check his wound, but she couldn’t see it clearly.

Fearing that Ethan would lose too much blood, Janet held his jaw and tried to pour the coke into his mouth.

Ethan was unconscious. The coke she poured simply spilled out from the corner of his mouth.

“Honey, can you hear me? If you can, please drink...” Janet was choked with sobs. Tears rolled down her cheeks uncontrollably.

Ethan’s wound was still bleeding, and there was nothing she could do to stop it.

Ethan seemed to hear what Janet said. He frowned and struggled to peel his eyes open.

He raised his hand slowly, wiped away Janet’s tears, and said with difficulty, “Don’t cry.”

When Janet saw that his eyes were open, she immediately pressed the cup of coke to his lips.

“I don’t know when the rescue team will come. Honey, just hold on, okay?”

A faint smile tugged at the corners of Ethan’s lips. Only then did Janet notice how pale his lips were. She couldn’t tell if he had heard what she said just now. Soon, he closed his eyes again.

Janet sniffed, stroked Ethan’s eyebrows, and wiped the dust off his face.

Time passed. Janet didn’t know when, but she had fallen asleep.

She woke up to the sound of digging around her.

She glanced at her phone. It was already early morning of the next day.

Suddenly, a beam of light shot out in the darkness. Janet had to shield her eyes from the strong light.

“Miss, are you okay?” A rescuer asked warmly, reaching out his hand towards her with a flashlight.

“Please save my husband first. He’s trapped down here.” Tears welled up in her eyes. She refused to let them save her first.

The rescue team obliged. Several men lifted the huge slab of slate off of Ethan’s body.

Only then did she see a deep gash on Ethan’s back. It looked really bad.

His torn clothes exposed the scars caused by the fire, and now the new wound marred his skin.

Covering her mouth, Janet looked away, a lump forming in her throat.

His old wound healed not long ago, and now there would probably be a new scar. Thinking of this, Janet couldn't hold back her tears anymore.

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The ambulance's siren echoed across the night, its red and blue lights flashing.

Janet sat in the back, holding Ethan's hand tightly. She wasn't badly injured, save for some small cuts and bruises on her knees.

Ethan, on the other hand, had a serious wound on his back. It hadn't stopped bleeding, and he hadn't woken up yet.

Beal and Johanna rushed to the hospital.

"Oh, my God! Are you okay, Janet?" As soon as Johanna heard that the cinema collapsed, her heart practically stopped in her chest. It got worse when she couldn't get through to Janet. So it was a great relief when she saw her dear daughter safe and sound.

Beal was also on the verge of breaking down. He looked Janet up and down carefully and wanted to have her examined twice. "Have another MRI scanning maybe. What if you have internal injuries?"

Johanna nodded in agreement. "Your father's right. Let's have you checked again."

Tears welled up in Janet's eyes. "I'm fine, Mom and Dad. It was Ethan who got badly injured. He hasn't woken up yet."

Just then, a nurse came in and put Ethan on an IV drip. Seeing that Janet's eyes were swollen from crying, she tried to comfort her. "Don't worry, Miss. The doctor said that this gentleman's wounds aren't as bad as they look. He'll be fine."

Hearing this, Janet calmed down a bit. "Thank you. How're the others from the cinema?"

The nurse checked the papers on her clipboard and sighed slightly. "You two were the luckiest. The collapse caused heavy casualties. The ceiling fell right on top of your row, killing the two people sitting next to you. Everyone else was injured, some worse than others. If it weren't for your husband, you two would have been crushed in an instant."

Hearing this come from the nurse, Beal and Johanna exchanged glances. They finally knew that it was thanks to Ethan that Janet was alive.

In the blink of an eye, Johanna's attitude toward Ethan changed completely. Instead of being indifferent, she asked with great concern, "When will he wake up?"

The nurse smiled apologetically and shook her head. "We can't say for sure. But don't worry. The doctor said he's fine, so he's not in any fatal danger."

At this time, the door to the ward swung open.

With her bag in her hand, Lila rushed in with a worried expression. "I heard that the cinema collapsed. How's she? Is she okay?"

Just as Lila was about to play the role of a caring sister in front of her parents, her eyes landed on the person lying in the bed. It was Ethan, not Janet.

Beal looked up calmly and replied, "Janet's fine. Ethan saved her."

Janet glanced at Lilo and smiled before turning back to look after Ethan.

Lilo froze for two seconds before snapping back to reality.

"Oh, I'm so happy to hear that Janet's fine. If anything happened to her, I don't think Mom and Dad would've been able to cope with it." As she spoke, Lilo approached Johanna timidly. "I was scared to death when you called me. I immediately cancelled the party with my friends and rushed here."

Johanna took Lilo's hand and smiled softly. "It's good that you care about your sister. Sit down and get some rest. You're out of breath."

"Nothing's more important than Janet's safety," Lilo said sweetly, but deep in her heart, she was a little disappointed.

When Lilo received the phone call from Johanna, informing her that Janet was involved in an accident, at the moment, no thought occurred to her.

Wouldn't it be great if Janet died?

That'd make her the only daughter of the White family again, and her life would be as good as it used to be.

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Dazzling sunlight streamed in from the window. The ceiling was snow-white and spotless. The smell of disinfectant in the air was strong.

"I think he's awake!" Ethan heard Johanna's excited voice.

Then, he heard Beal's voice. "I'll call the doctor. When Janet comes back from getting breakfast, I'm sure she'll be really happy!"

The doctor came minutes later. He took out a small flashlight and checked Ethan's pupils.

"He's awake, which means that he'll be fine. As for when he should be discharged from the hospital, it'll depend on the wound's rate of recovery."

After the doctor left, Johanna immediately approached Ethan's bedside and asked worriedly, "How are you feeling? Are you in pain? If you feel any discomfort, I'll call our private doctor to check on you again."

Ethan couldn't believe his ears. Did he suffer from a head injury as well? Why did his mother-in-law suddenly care about him?

Before he could say anything, Beal handed him a glass of water. "I bet you're thirsty. Here's some water."

Ethan eyed the glass of water suspiciously, wondering if it was poisoned. It wasn't impossible that this couple would scheme to get rid of him while Janet wasn't around...

“Beal, you’re scaring him.” Noticing the suspicion on Ethan’s face, Johanna pulled her husband’s hand away from Ethan. Then she cleared her throat and said, “Thank you for saving our beloved daughter. In a way, it’s like you saved the two of us. Now that we’ve finally reunited with Janet, we’d be destroyed if she was taken away from us.”

Although Johanna still put on airs, Ethan could tell that she was being sincere. It seemed that they were really ready to accept their son-in-law.

Wondering if this was all an illusion, Ethan had to close his eyes and gather his bearings.

He wouldn’t relax until Janet came back.

“Dad, Mom, come and have some breakfast. I’ll take care of...” With a tray of food in her hands, Janet walked in and looked at Ethan first even though she was talking to her parents.

When she saw that he was awake, her eyes lit up and she broke into a huge grin.

After Beal and Johanna left, Ethan narrowed his eyes suspiciously and mused, “Your parents were so mean to me before. Why are they so kind to me all of a sudden?”

Janet peeled the lid off of the take-out bowl, and the delicious aroma of chicken soup wafted in the air.

“When you were still unconscious, they found out that you had saved me. My mother looked at you under a new light. It was as if you were her own son,” Janet added in a half-joking tone. She scooped up a spoonful of soup, blew on it, and guided it to Ethan’s lips. “You were knocked out for a whole night. The doctor said that you must eat more to replenish your energy.”

With his deep gaze fixed on Janet, Ethan’s lips parted slightly to accept the spoonful of soup. Then he patted her thigh and said in a low voice, “Totally worth it.”

Janet chuckled and shook her head helplessly. “You’re hurt, so be careful. My mother’s right outside. If she sees you misbehave, she will get angry again. It wasn’t easy for you to earn their favor, and you’ll have to keep earning it.”

Ethan coughed and glanced at the door to the room nervously. Then, he became serious. “The ceiling of the cinema wouldn’t just collapse for no reason. Did they release an official statement regarding the incident?”

Janet continued to feed him, but the light in her eyes dimmed slightly. “The matter’s still under investigation. There’s no conclusive results yet. Mom told me that it was newly built, so the ceiling couldn’t have collapsed unless there was a major construction flaw. So it’s all rather suspicious.”

“It was no accident,” Ethan said in a low voice, an imperceptible ruthlessness flashing in his eyes.

Somebody had caused the roof to collapse, just like how somebody had started the fire downstairs their apartment before.

The incident was so serious that it caused a sensation. As long as Ethan investigated it thoroughly, he would find out who was behind this.

In the following days, Ethan stayed in Barnes for his recuperation. Meanwhile, he tasked Garrett with the investigation of this matter secretly.

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"I am not your servant! How could you still order me around while you're not even in town?" Garrett complained on the phone.

He was under the impression that after Ethan left, he could enjoy a good holiday. However, despite being all the way in Barnes, Ethan still enslaved him.

Ethan rubbed the spot between his eyebrows and said seriously, "This accident might have something to do with the Lester family. I'm in Barnes now, plus I'm injured. I can't do this myself."

"Fine. I'll send someone to investigate it now," Garrett said reluctantly.

After hanging up, Ethan asked the man standing outside the door to come in.

"Mr. Larson." The man bowed slightly to show his respect.

"So what happened?" Ethan cut straight to the chase, his expression darkening.

"Someone did something to compromise the ceiling, so it collapsed."

"Go on."

"I believe that the 'accident' was directly aimed at you and Mrs. Larson. At the time, several of my men were stationed in the corner of the cinema. The ceiling collapsed so suddenly that we didn't have the time to rush in and save you."

The man glanced at Ethan with fear in his eyes and swallowed. "In order to get to you, whoever's behind this was willing to sacrifice innocent people, which means they're both powerful and cold-blooded."

Ethan pressed his fingertips against his temple and sighed. "I'll ask my people in Seacisco to take care of it."

Soon, Garrett called Ethan with the investigation report.

"Indeed, it's the Lester family behind all of this. Lester Silk Fabric was the biggest investor of that cinema." After a moment's hesitation, Garrett couldn't hold himself back. "Your family is clearly determined to kill you. They even go as far to destroy a building they invested in and hurt countless other innocent people. How are you going to fight back? You can't just let them walk all over you! Otherwise, who knows what horrible ideas they will come up with again to get rid of you?"

Truth be told, Ethan had already guessed that only Elissa would be willing to do such a reckless thing.

But trying to kill him in the cinema—and injuring innocent people in the process—crossed the line.

Elissa had caused a great commotion in an effort to kill him. She would've been fine if her murder attempt was successful. But because Ethan had survived, he was determined to make Elissa pay for her crime.

"Elisso's digging her own grove." Ethon narrowed his eyes and sneered coldly.

Garrett raised his eyebrow dubiously. "You're fighting back, are you? This is more like it! Damn, I'm just excited!"

Talk of the collapse of a newly-constructed cinema exploded on the Internet.

This collapse was different from the fire accident in Seacisco before. The large number of casualties this time had attracted the attention of the relevant departments. Even the local government started investigating the matter.

In Seacisco, Garrett had been paying close attention to this case. "Aren't you going to make a move?"

His eyes flashing dangerously, Ethon replied, "I just want them to go through hell before I pushed them even deeper down the abyss of despair."

Later that day, Ethon made public all the information and evidence he had gathered. As one of the victims, he cooperated with the relevant departments in their investigation. He also joined hands with other victims and their family to call for justice on the Internet.

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In the Lester family's home in Seacisco.

Elissa had just smoked two packs of cigarettes and the whole room was filled with smoke.

When Ritchie walked into the room, he felt choked by all that smoke.

"Mom, it's dinner time." He lifted his hand and fanned the smoke away from his face. After that, he could make out that Elissa was sitting on the edge of the bed, smoking yet another cigarette.

"What does the news say? What's your father's attitude like?" Elissa's fingers shook and her face was in the shadows, so there was no way to see the expression on her face.

Ritchie scratched the back of his head and then said, "Several families of those hurt have taken banners to protest under our office building. Dad is still at the company currently. It's most likely that he has snapped because of this."

After hearing that, Elissa's hand suddenly trembled and the ash tumbled to the floor.

"Did he say anything at all?" All of a sudden, she opened her eyes wide and turned to look at Ritchie in panic.

Ritchie's face darkened visibly. He lowered the volume of his voice and asked, "Mom, were you behind this?"

Even though he had his doubts, he hadn't been able to confirm them yet.

Elissa swallowed nervously. She was very anxious now and was willing to tell Ritchie the truth.

"I was the one behind it. I even used our men. I thought we would succeed in getting rid of Ethan this time. As long as he's dead, even if the authorities wanted to investigate this matter, with the Lester family's connections, we could sort things out and shift the blame to the constructors. We could arrange it so that it looks like an accident,"

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Elissa said as cold sweat poured from her forehead.

She had been keeping a close eye on this matter the whole time and knew that investigation had just begun.

Ritchie became anxious almost at once. He clenched his teeth tightly and said, "Mom, do you have any idea how serious this matter is getting? I get it you want to get rid of Ethan, and so do I. But the truth is Ethan didn't die and he's now even helping the police with the investigation! The government and the public have attached great importance to this matter and they won't stop any time soon. These days, those hurt in the incident keep showing up at our company, protesting. This means they know that the Lester family has something to do with the accident! This happens to be no small matter. I heard that a total of more than a dozen audience members and staff was injured or even died in the accident!"

Ritchie said, "If this happened in Seacisco, we could probably do something about this and get away with it. But no, this happened in Barnes! Mom, what in the world were you thinking?"

The Lester family had a lot of power in Seacisco, but not in Barnes.

Now that Ethan had reported the Lester family to the police, the police thought they were persons of interest now.

In a panic, Elissa made her way out of her room and went down the stairs anxiously. Seeing that there was no one downstairs, she shook from head to toe with fear again. "Why isn't your father back yet?"

Ritchie followed her downstairs and answered, "Dad should still be at the company. This matter has kept him busy for the past few days."

During the entire dinner, Elissa was feeling listless.

Just as she was feeling tortured by news updates, the sound of a car engine came from outside.

A few minutes later, Patrick walked in with his suit jacket in his hands, looking clearly exhausted.

Elissa made her way up to him uneasily and wanted to take the suit jacket from him. "Patrick, why are you back so late?"

Patrick angrily glanced at Elissa and suddenly it looked like he had snapped. He threw the suit jacket at her face and said, "Bitch! Were you the one who sent people to kill Ethan?"

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The suit jacket, with a strong smell of nicotine, was thrown at Elissa's face, and the huge force forced her to take a few steps back.

Frightened by Patrick's fury, Ritchie immediately retreated and hid in the kitchen.

As the patriarch of the Lester family, Patrick was intimidating and domineering.

Elissa was so scared out of her wits that her heart seemed to have stopped in her chest. She clutched Patrick's suit jacket tightly and fell to her knees.

"It was me." Elissa knew that she couldn't hide it anymore, so she admitted to her crime.

Time seemed to stand still. The room fell deathly silent.

Patrick strode over to her and slapped her across the face without warning.

The servants who were cleaning up the table nearly jumped at the loud sound and quickly scurried out of the room like mice.

Shocked, Elissa gingerly touched her swollen cheek, where a red palm print gradually appeared.

“Elissa, you’re a terrible woman! Even after so many years, you haven’t changed at all!” Patrick roared at the top of his lungs. “Ethan is still my son. Even if I never liked him, I’ve never thought of killing him! Moreover, he’s the president of the Larson Group now!”

Patrick glared at Elissa, gnashing his teeth in anger.

He had known for a long time now that Elissa was not a kind person. Ever since she had married into the Lester family, she had done a lot of things behind his back, but he had always turned a blind eye to them.

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“I knew you didn’t like Ethan. I didn’t care what you did to him in the past. But now, he’s not just Ethan Lester. He’s also Brandon Larson! Did you ever stop to think about the consequences you’ve brought upon the Lester family?” Patrick continued to berate the woman.

Whatever Elissa had done in the past didn’t endanger the interests of the Lester Group.

But things were different now. The Larson Group was a force to be reckoned with and could easily topple the Lester family.

Cradling her stinging cheek, Elissa glared at Patrick with hatred.

Her eyes were so sharp, they could’ve pierced through Patrick.

She had never been hit by anyone before in her whole life. How dare he slap her in the face?

She too came from an affluent family in Seacisco.

When she married into the Lester family, Patrick was just the owner of a small, developing company.

If it weren’t for her family’s support, could he have achieved what he had today?

“Patrick, how dare you hit me?!” Elissa flew into a rage. “He’s just a bastard! He shouldn’t even have been born! How dare you blame me now? If you hadn’t fooled around with all those women back then, there wouldn’t even be a Brandon Larson today! The Lester family would’ve been even more powerful!”

Patrick was so angry at the woman’s arrogance that he rolled up his sleeves to deliver another slap across her face.

“Ah! How dare you hit me again?! I’ll kill you, Patrick Lester!”

Elissa’s face was red and swollen from Patrick’s slaps. She shrieked and raised her hands to scratch Patrick’s cheeks.

Regardless of their noble image, the couple fought each other in the living room like two barbarians.

Hearing the commotion, Ritchie poked his head out of the kitchen. When he saw what was going on, he sprang into action to protect Elissa.

“Dad, what the hell are you doing?” he cried, standing in front of his mother.

Patrick didn’t reply. Instead, he punched Ritchie square in the face. Ritchie tumbled backward from the impact.

“You dumbass! You think I don’t know that you’re also a part of this? You stupid fucking idiot! You have no wits! You’ve learned nothing but filthy tricks from your mother!”

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“What? I know nothing about it! Don’t involve me!”

Ritchie protested.

“How dare you talk back to me?!” Patrick was so angry that he slapped Ritchie across the face. “I’ve spent a fortune for you to study abroad. And this is the thanks I get?”

This was the second beating Ritchie had received today.

He was a grown man and felt utterly humiliated.

“Damn it! Damn you! I already told you that I have nothing to do with it! It’s all mom’s fault!” Ritchie couldn’t hold himself back anymore and spat on the ground angrily. “You sent me abroad because you were afraid that I would end up in some shitty community college and disgrace the whole family! You think I don’t know that? You’ve always been ashamed of me! You’ve always thought that Seth and Ethan were way better than me! You’ve always wanted to beat me up, right, Patrick Lester?”

Ritchie finally gave vent to all his pent up feelings over the years.

Patrick stomped his foot angrily. He hated it when people tried to go against him. In his eyes, Ritchie was just trying to piss him off. “How dare you?! I’ll beat the crap out of you!”

He was so angry that his face turned as red as a tomato. He looked around the room until his eyes fell on a mop. He grabbed it and raised it above his head, poised to hit Ritchie.

But Ritchie acted fast. He jumped up and ran around in the living room.

“Mom! Help me! He’s trying to kill me!” Ritchie hid behind Elissa like a little child.

Elissa gritted her teeth and dodged Patrick’s advances. She roared irritably, “Patrick Lester! What the hell are you trying to do? Do you want to break up this family?”

Just as Patrick was about to swing the mop, the phone in the living room suddenly rang.

Amidst the chaos, the boldest of the servants went to answer the phone.

“Hello, Lester residence. You want to speak with Mr. Lester? I’m afraid he’s... Busy right now.” The servant glanced at Patrick, who was about to hit Ritchie with the mop. The caller seemed persistent so she handed over the phone to Patrick, her body trembling slightly. “Sir, it’s your assistant.”

Patrick was in a fit of rage. He snatched the phone from her impatiently and spat into the receiver, “What?”

“The police have caught several of our men. The man who was sent to kill Ethan is among them,” the assistant reported anxiously. “Sir, we have to get him out of there. If the police followed this lead, they’ll trace it back to the Lester family soon. We have to stop them!”

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The assistant was so anxious that he raised his voice. Patrick heard his words loud and clear.

Ritchie, Elissa, and Patrick all froze in place with a look of horror on their faces.

Ritchie cursed, “Fuck! Ethan moved really fast! Mom, we’re in trouble now!”

Elissa’s face turned ghastly pale. She tugged at Patrick’s arm and asked desperately, “What should we do now?”

The mother’s and son’s reaction gave Patrick a headache. He hung up the phone and said through gritted teeth, “This is all your damned fault. This isn’t over!”

Then he stormed out and slammed the door behind him.

When Patrick left the house, Elissa’s knees buckled from underneath her and she collapsed to the ground in exhaustion.

[Chapter 479](#)

It was dawn of the following morning when Patrick came back home.

His face was ghastly pale, as though he had aged ten years over the span of one night. His shirt was also creased all over.

He dragged his tired body to the living room and sank into the sofa.

Elissa and Ritchie had been waiting for him to come home.

They exchanged glances. Ritchie went to the kitchen to fetch a glass of water for his father. “How’d it go, Dad?” he asked anxiously.

Patrick ignored the water. He rubbed his temples and sighed heavily. “Ethan has found out about our secret force. We’ll have to sacrifice it for the sake of the bigger picture.”

Hearing this, Ritchie and Elissa looked at each other and all the color drained from their faces.

The Lester family's "secret force" was cultivated by Patrick when they first came to Seacisco. It took care of the nasty, under-the-table deals in the dark. It had been there for the Lester family for at least two decades.

With a cold, stony expression, Patrick stood up and declared, "From now on, you two have little to no power in the Lester family. You'd better behave yourselves from now on!"

After saying that, Patrick stormed out of the room and slammed the door.

Elissa and Ritchie were speechless.

Elissa sat on the sofa wordlessly, looking dispirited.

She was in deep trouble this time.

In the hospital in Barnes, Ethan had just gotten off the phone.

His eyes landed on the TV, which was broadcasting news about a gang being sieged by the police.

"It's been really dangerous lately. This sort of thing has been happening every day. I heard that the cinema collapsed because it was blown up by gangsters as well." Holding a basin of warm water, Janet strode in and fixed her eyes on the TV.

Ethan pointed the remote at the TV and turned it off. "There'll always be bad guys," he said lazily.

What he didn't tell Janet was that he was the one behind the destruction of the Lester family's secret force, which was a major blow to Patrick. The Lester family patriarch had failed to salvage what he had built over the last two decades. He was weak now.

A trace of imperceptible contempt flashed in Ethan's eyes.

But it was a pity that he was cooped up in the hospital and couldn't deal with the Lester family himself. His subordinates were doing most of the work. If it were up to him, he'd have liked to see the desperate look on Patrick's face.

Janet shrugged and proceeded to put the basin on the bedside table. She dipped a towel in it, wrung out the excess water, and then strode over to Ethan to wipe his arms.

"The doctor said that you can leave the hospital in around two or three days."

When Ethan turned to look at Janet in front of him, the gloom in his eyes instantly disappeared. He asked dotingly, "What else did the doctor say?"

Before Janet could reply, a voice came from the door.

"He said that you should exercise more instead of lying in bed all day long." With a big grin on his face, Garrett strode in. "Janet, he's lucky he has you here taking care of him."

He put bags of tonics on the table and looked Ethan up and down inquisitively. "Mr. Larson, it's only been a few days but it seems you've gained weight."

Ethan glanced at him fiercely.

Back when he was in Seacisco, he had been missing Janet like crazy and had lost a lot of weight.

Garrett chuckled and shook his head. Suddenly, he looked out the door and shouted, "Are you planning on standing there all day, Laney?"

Hearing this, Laney walked in and shot him a death glare. Then she smiled and handed a gift basket to Janet. "I've brought some tonics for you. They're good for your health."

Suddenly, Janet felt as if she had returned to Seacisco, with all her dear friends around her.

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She accepted the gift graciously.

Ethan and Garrett proceeded to talk about work in the ward, whereas Janet and Laney headed out to buy some food for lunch.

"So what're you up to now?" Janet looked at Laney carefully. She found that her old bodyguard was wearing light make-up and lipstick. Laney looked lovely.

"After everyone found out Ethan's true identity, I didn't have to be your bodyguard anymore. Since you moved to Barnes, there was no reason for me to stay with the Larson Group. Garrett joke that if I remained jobless, no man would want to date me. So he recommended me a job as a trainer," Laney explained.

The truth was that Garrett had specifically asked her to become the chief coach of Pole Shadow, a secret force cultivated by Ethan himself. At least it was safer than being a bodyguard.

Janet smiled and said sincerely, "That's good."

The two fell silent for a while. Suddenly, Janet poked Laney's arm and teased, "It seems that Garrett cares about you a lot. I heard he's been single for a while now. That's not like him."

"Single? I doubt it. He's probably just gotten good at hiding it." Laney shrugged indifferently.

It seemed Laney didn't have any special feelings for Garrett. Janet then decided not to say anything more.

Before Ethan was discharged from the hospital, Beal and Johanna came to visit him several times. Their attitude towards him had changed a lot. Every time they came, they looked genuinely concerned about him.

After leaving the hospital, Ethan went straight back to Seacisco. He had been in Barnes for too long, and work had piled up in the Larson Group.

[Chapter 480](#)

Now that Ethan had recovered and was back in Seacisco, Janet's life was back on track as. She went to W Marks Studio to work as she had promised Draco.

W Marks Studio was a three-story house located in Barnes' high-tech zone.

The house itself was nestled in a quaint garden surrounded by lush green plants. Beautiful flowers of all colors adorned the garden, making whoever passed it by feel at ease and happy.

As soon as Janet stepped foot in the yard, she heard merry laughter from inside.

"She's here!"

"Oh, my God! She's gorgeous!"

"I thought that all the talented designers were chubby women with glasses. But she's slim and I don't see any glasses!"

Janet made her way up the steps and pushed the door open nervously.

As soon as the door swung open, party crackers went off, followed by streamers falling like snowflakes.

"Welcome on board!" a chorus of voices sounded. There were more than twenty smiling faces in the room on the first floor. On the table were all kinds of snacks, flowers, and cakes.

Janet was surprised and had no idea how to react.

All of a sudden, a tall woman with shoulder-length curly hair and light makeup approached her. The woman's smile was very infectious, making the people around her feel welcome. It was also her most charming feature. Despite wearing only a simple white dress, she looked authoritative yet warm.

"Mr. Wesley is busy drawing upstairs. He didn't have the time to come down, so he asked me to receive you on his behalf. It's nice to meet you, Janet. I'm Rosa Pierce, one of Mr. Wesley's assistants."

The smiling Rosa shook hands with Janet and led her to meet everyone. "From now on, Janet will be our third design assistant. Let's give her a warm welcome."

"Hello, everyone. Pleasure to meet you all." After Janet gave a brief self-introduction, the office was filled with thunderous applause.

Janet surveyed the sea of smiling faces until somebody caught her eye.

The woman's skin was pale, as though she rarely went out under the sun. What caught Janet's eye was the fact that the woman wasn't smiling, unlike the rest of her peers. In fact, she seemed indifferent and alienated.

Rosa followed Janet's gaze and led Janet to the woman. "This is Elizabeth Perry, another design assistant of Mr. Wesley."

Elizabeth looked Janet up and down and nodded without saying anything.

Janet managed to put on a faint smile.

However, she could tell that the arrogant-looking Elizabeth was going to be difficult to get along with.

Rosa spent the whole morning showing Janet around, explaining to her what everyone did in the studio. She was like a ray of sunshine, enthusiastic and friendly. The people in the office clearly were fond of her, and they would tease her from time to time.

“The people in our studio are all very friendly, but we won’t sugarcoat the fact that we’re no strangers to overtime.” Rosa winked at Janet. “Let me tell you a secret. Mr. Wesley likes to talk about work with us just when we’re about to leave from work. Although he looks gentle and amiable, he’s a devil when it comes to the work. He is so harsh and strict that many colleagues have broken down behind closed doors.”

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Janet was a bit taken aback. “I had no idea. I was under the impression that Mr. Wesley doesn’t like talking that much.”

With a mysterious smile, Rosa patted Janet’s shoulder and said knowingly, “You’ll see it for yourself in the future. Well, that’s the end of the tour. I have to get to work. I still have a lot of drawings to submit.”

After taking Janet to her seat, Rosa turned around and briskly walked away.

Janet devoted herself to her new job.

She soon realized that what Rosa said was true. Draco was very demanding. He immediately turned down Janet’s first design.

“Scratch it. The style and color are too vulgar.” Draco didn’t even look up at Janet as he spoke.

With a pale face, Janet took her drawing out of the office and began to revise it. She didn’t finish until midnight.

Over the next few days, Janet was too busy to even take a break.