

## The Mbahsb 581

### [Chapter 581](#)

Hearing this, Garrett suddenly snorted. He took Laney's hand and squeezed it. "We're both human, aren't we? What? It's not like you're an alien or something. So why can't we be together?"

Laney withdrew her hand and glared at him angrily. "I'm serious, Garrett. You know what I meant."

"Why do I have to marry a girl from a rich family?" Garrett insisted, pinching her chin playfully. "When Ethan married Janet, she didn't know she was from a rich family yet. Laney, I won't take that for an excuse."

But Laney shook her head stubbornly. "That's different. Ethan was also just a poor man, a bastard son of the Lester family. They were equals. Later, when everyone found out that he was also Brandon Larson, Janet was criticized and judged by everyone. The criticism didn't stop until she was proven to be the daughter of the White family. But me? I am just an ordinary woman. I don't secretly have rich parents. In fact, I lost my parents when I was a child, and I have nothing but my fighting skills." Hearing this, Garrett suddenly snorted. He took Laney's hand and squeezed it. "We're both human, aren't we? What? It's not like you're an alien or something. So why can't we be together?"

Laney withdrew her hand and glared at him angrily. "I'm serious, Garrett. You know what I meant."

"Why do I have to marry a girl from a rich family?" Garrett insisted, pinching her chin playfully. "When Ethan married Janet, she didn't know she was from a rich family yet. Laney, I won't take that for an excuse."

But Laney shook her head stubbornly. "That's different. Ethan was also just a poor man, a bastard son of the Lester family. They were equals. Later, when everyone found out that he was also Brandon Larson, Janet was criticized and judged by everyone. The criticism didn't stop until she was proven to be the daughter of the White family. But me? I am just an ordinary woman. I don't secretly have rich parents. In fact, I lost my parents when I was a child, and I have nothing but my fighting skills."

Throughout her career as a bodyguard, she had worked for a lot of rich families and had witnessed how couples would fall apart due to a gap in social status.

"I just don't think this will work. Besides, I've gotten used to living a carefree life. I don't think I can become a noble lady. It's just not for me."

Laney's reasoning took Garrett by surprise.

But even he couldn't deny that what she said made sense.

Thus, he fell silent, at a loss for words.

Because he knew that what she said was true.

It'd be really difficult for them to get together. For starters, his parents would never agree to their union. And Garrett actually had always had a good relationship with his family. If he had to choose between his family and his love, it was unlikely he'd recklessly pick the latter...

Seeing that Garrett was speechless, Laney smiled bitterly. She knew what was on his mind.

Seeing that Garrett was speechless, Laney smiled bitterly. She knew what was on his mind.

Seeing that Garrett was speechless, Laney smiled bitterly. She knew what was on his mind.

She patted on his shoulder and said softly, "Then, that's it. I have to go now. Bye."

\*\*\*\*\*

When Laney got back home, she found Greg sitting on the sofa, waiting for her.

"Laney, I can explain," he said immediately. "I was just scared, okay? You saw those guys! There's no way I could've beat them."

Laney sneered and headed straight to the bedroom. Seconds later, she came out with his luggage and threw it outside the front door. "Get out! I'm only letting you live for the sake of our past friendship. But don't you dare show your face again!"

## [Chapter 582](#)

Greg shrank away from Laney, but he didn't make a move to leave.

Seeing this, Laney flew into a fit of rage. She started rolling up her sleeves as she stomped towards him. "Will you leave on your own or will I have to throw you out?"

Seeing the fierce look on her face, Greg was scared out of his wits and jumped up from the sofa at once. Then, without looking back, he ran out the door.

With Greg gone, Laney's apartment felt especially quiet. She sighed and turned to close the door. But before the door could click shut, someone from outside stuck their foot in the gap to stop it from closing.

Laney thought that Greg had come back. Gritting her teeth angrily, she swung the door open and was about to throw her fist at Greg's face when she saw that it was Garrett standing at the door.

"Why are you here?" Laney frowned in surprise. "Anyway, I'm sorry for leaving in a hurry just now. I wasn't able to thank you properly yet."

Then, she bowed her head solemnly and said, "I've saved you once, but you've saved me twice. You are a Harding; one life of yours is certainly equal to two of mine. I suppose that makes us even."

Garrett didn't say anything. Laney straightened up and looked at him as she continued, "You seem fine. Plus, you came here so fast, so one of your men must've driven you here, right? So he can also drive you to the hospital. And if you don't think I'm being sincere enough now, I can formally thank you another day. Now please excuse me for I have to go out."

With that, she went back inside her apartment, grabbed her bag and keys, closed the door behind her, and left, ignoring the expression on Garrett's face.

As Laney was walking away, Garrett followed her. Greg shrank away from Laney, but he didn't make a move to leave.

Seeing this, Laney flew into a fit of rage. She started rolling up her sleeves as she stomped towards him. "Will you leave on your own or will I have to throw you out?"

Seeing the fierce look on her face, Greg was scared out of his wits and jumped up from the sofa at once. Then, without looking back, he ran out the door.

With Greg gone, Laney's apartment felt especially quiet. She sighed and turned to close the door. But before the door could click shut, someone from outside stuck their foot in the gap to stop it from closing.

Laney thought that Greg had come back. Gritting her teeth angrily, she swung the door open and was about to throw her fist at Greg's face when she saw that it was Gerrett standing at the door.

"Why are you here?" Laney frowned in surprise. "Anyway, I'm sorry for leaving in a hurry just now. I wasn't able to thank you properly yet."

Then, she bowed her head solemnly and said, "I've saved you once, but you've saved me twice. You are a Herding; one life of yours is certainly equal to two of mine. I suppose that makes us even."

Gerrett didn't say anything. Laney straightened up and looked at him as she continued, "You seem fine. Plus, you came here so fast, so one of your men must've driven you here, right? So he can also drive you to the hospital. And if you don't think I'm being sincere enough now, I can formally thank you another day. Now please excuse me for I have to go out."

With that, she went back inside her apartment, grabbed her bag and keys, closed the door behind her, and left, ignoring the expression on Gerrett's face.

As Laney was walking away, Gerrett followed her.

Sensing this, Laney stopped in her tracks, but she didn't look back. Her voice was full of impatience. "Are you planning to follow me everywhere? Don't make me yell at you."

Then, without giving Gerrett a chance to respond, she bolted.

Gerrett wanted to chase after her, but stopped on a second thought.

Laney kept on running, regardless of not knowing where she was going. She only slowed down when she was sure that Gerrett hadn't followed her. She took a deep, shaky breath, and a lump formed in her throat.

She buried her face in her hands as tears began to roll down her cheeks uncontrollably.

Was it strange that she felt so sad even though technically nothing had happened between them?

\*\*\*\*\*

When Janet received the phone call from Laney, she instantly sensed that something was wrong. Laney's voice was unusually calm. "Hey, Janet, are you free? Would you like to go out for a drink with me?"

"Sure. Just give me the address of the bar and I'll be there soon." Janet could tell that something was on Laney's mind. Being a devoted friend that she was, she said goodbye to Ethan, who had just stepped out of the shower, and went straight to the bar.

It was still early, so the bar was relatively quiet and the performers were still warming up onstage.

Laney sat at the counter and ordered two bottles of whiskey.

Eyeing the bottles, Janet felt that Laney was really going all out this time. One bottle of this brand alone was already quite expensive.

“This must’ve cost you a one months’ salary, right?” Janet sighed warily.

Even before she came here, she had already guessed that the issue must’ve had something to do with Garrett.

Laney smiled bitterly as she poured herself a glass. Before Janet could stop her, she downed it all in one gulp.

Laney smiled bitterly as she poured herself a glass. Before Janet could stop her, she downed it all in one gulp.

Laney smiled bitterly as she poured herself a glass. Before Janet could stop her, she downed it all in one gulp.

It took half a bottle of alcohol before Laney finally opened up to Janet about what had happened that day.

Janet stayed quiet and listened to the whole story without interrupting.

She was well aware of the torture of being in a relationship with someone who was worlds away from her in terms of social status. If the White family hadn’t announced that she was their daughter, she doubted she’d have been able to handle the pressure of being with Brandon Larson. It was really hard and really painful.

Unlike Ethan who came from a broken family, Garrett still had both his parents and he was loyal to his family.

It would’ve been difficult for him to choose between his family and Laney.

“I think you did the right thing. At least walking away now is less painful than spending the rest of your life struggling.” After pouring herself a glass of whiskey, Janet clinked glasses with Laney and said with a grin, “Let’s get hammered tonight.”

Laney’s face was already flushed by then. She was so drunk that she cried in a slurred voice, “Okay! Let’s get hammered!”

Then, the two girls drank. As Laney put her glass down, tears welled up in her eyes again.

Seeing this, Janet patted her on the back, not knowing how to comfort her friend. After all, she knew there was nothing she could say or do, for it was Laney’s life and she had to make the choice herself.

The only thing Janet could do was drink with her in solidarity.

[Chapter 583](#)

After finishing the entire bottle of liquor, Laney was totally plastered. She couldn't support herself and had to lean over the bar counter, muttering drunken gibberish. "I don't need a man. I have friends. That's more than enough. Isn't it good to be single and free? Why would I want a man?"

Listening to her drunken ramblings, Janet didn't know how to respond. She carefully draped a coat over Laney's shoulders and patted her on the back. Then she caught a glimpse of the man sitting in a booth near them.

The dim light in the bar illuminated Garrett's face, exposing the complex emotions in his eyes.

He was looking at Laney in pensive silence.

After hesitating slightly, Janet nodded at Garrett in greeting.

She had no idea he had followed Laney there.

Laney suddenly reached out and tugged Janet's sleeve. "Hey, why'd you stop? Let's have another round. Didn't you say you'd get hammered with me?"

"Okay, okay. Let's drink." Janet turned around and continued to pour whiskey for Laney as if she hadn't seen Garrett.

Perhaps Laney had sensed Janet's hesitation. She craned her neck and turned to look in the direction Janet was facing just now. "What were you looking at just now? Did you see a hot guy? I want to see him, too!"

"I wasn't looking at anything. Come on, let's drink," Janet said quickly, wanting to stop her. After finishing the entire bottle of liquor, Laney was totally plastered. She couldn't support herself and had to lean over the bar counter, muttering drunken gibberish. "I don't need a man. I have friends. That's more than enough. Isn't it good to be single and free? Why would I want a man?"

Listening to her drunken ramblings, Janet didn't know how to respond. She carefully draped the coat over Laney's shoulders and patted her on the back. Then she caught a glimpse of the man sitting in the booth near them.

The dim light in the bar illuminated Garrett's face, exposing the complex emotions in his eyes.

He was looking at Laney in pensive silence.

After hesitating slightly, Janet nodded at Garrett in greeting.

She had no idea he had followed Laney there.

Laney suddenly reached out and tugged Janet's sleeve. "Hey, why'd you stop? Let's have another round. Didn't you say you'd get hammered with me?"

"Okay, okay. Let's drink." Janet turned around and continued to pour whiskey for Laney as if she hadn't seen Garrett.

Perhaps Laney had sensed Janet's hesitation. She craned her neck and turned to look in the direction Janet was facing just now. "What were you looking at just now? Did you see a hot guy? I want to see him, too!"

"I wasn't looking at anything. Come on, let's drink," Janet said quickly, wanting to stop her.

But she was too late. Laney had already seen the man Janet was looking at just now.

Garrett stood out amongst the crowd. Maybe it was because the rest of the people in the bar were pretty bland-looking, or maybe it was simply because Garrett was outstandingly handsome that Laney's eyes were drawn to him almost instantly.

After the two locked eyes, Laney quickly withdrew her gaze. She staggered to her feet, picked up her things, and grabbed Janet's arm. "I don't want to drink anymore. Let's go."

However, before they could leave, Garrett suddenly reached for Laney's hand and said gently, "You're drunk. Let me drive you home."

But Laney pushed him away. Her legs were a little weak, so she staggered a little. "I don't need you to take me home. You already know that I'm drunk, so why do you still offer me a ride? What do you expect to happen, huh?"

Janet hurried to Laney's side and shook her head at Garrett. "She doesn't want to see you for now. Don't worry. I'll take her home."

Garrett didn't try to insist. Janet hailed a taxi and then helped Laney in.

The second Laney got back to her apartment, she slumped over her bed, murmuring something incoherent.

Janet was worried about Laney. After tucking her in, she texted Ethan, telling him that she would stay the night at Laney's place.

The following morning, Laney woke up with a splitting headache. Her grumpy expression, coupled with her pale, chapped lips, made her look even more depressed.

The following morning, Laney woke up with a splitting headache. Her grumpy expression, coupled with her pale, chapped lips, made her look even more depressed.

The following morning, Laney woke up with a splitting headache. Her grumpy expression, coupled with her pale, chapped lips, made her look even more depressed.

"Laney, you don't look so good. Do you want to go back to bed and sleep some more?" Janet had gone out to get breakfast. When she came back and saw the listless Laney, she was genuinely worried.

Laney rubbed her aching temples and said dismally, "No, I'm fine."

Janet set a cup of coffee in front of Laney and said, "Time heals all wounds. Do you want to go on a vacation? Maybe what you need is a change of environment."

Laney sipped on her coffee and grimaced, still feeling the effects of the liquor. "Do you have the time to go with me?"

Janet smiled. "I can ask for a vacation leave. Besides, I haven't been that busy lately."

Laney fell silent and proceeded to drink her coffee.

Just then, Janet's phone rang. Looking at the caller ID, she excused herself. "I need to take this. Think about it, okay?"

It was from Ethan. The second the call connected, he said in a low, melancholic voice, "Grandma's sick. We have to go back to Seacisco today."

#### [Chapter 584](#)

Janet had no choice but to rush to Seacisco with Ethan. While she was worried about Laney, Nora's health was more important.

On the plane back to Seacisco, Janet pondered over the situation.

"At your grandmother's birthday party last year, she looked radiant and energetic. How could her health have declined so quickly?" As Janet thought about the warm old lady, she couldn't help but feel sorry for her.

Although they hadn't talked often, she could tell that Nora was the most sensible Lester.

Ethan loosened his tie and leaned back in his seat. He held Janet's hand and closed his eyes wearily. "She's getting old. It's normal for old people to get sick. Besides, the Lester family has been facing a lot of problems recently, which couldn't have been good for her health."

Janet nodded. Leaning against his shoulder, her eyelids gradually grew heavy. She had been so busy looking after the drunk Laney through the night that she didn't get to sleep much.

Hearing the sound of her steadied breathing, Ethan opened his eyes and looked out the window.

Recently, the business world in Seacisco had gone into turmoil because Ethan had been openly attacking the Lester Group's businesses. Joining hands with the Whites had doubled the strength of the Larson Group. Not even Patrick's, Seth's, and Ritchie's combined strength could fight against them. Janet had no choice but to rush to Saacisco with Ethan. Whila sha was worriad about Lanay, Nora's haalth was mora important.

On tha plana back to Saacisco, Janat pondarad ovar tha situation.

"At your grandmother's birthday party last yaar, sha lookad radiant and anargatic. How could har haalth hava daclinad so quickly?" As Janat thought about tha warm old lady, sha couldn't halp but faal sorry for har.

Although thay hadn't talkad oftan, sha could tall that Nora was tha most sansibla Lastar.

Ethan loosanad his tia and laanad back in his saat. Ha hald Janat's hand and closad his ayas waarily. "Sha's gattin old. It's normal for old paopla to gat sick. Basidas, tha Lastar family has baan facing a lot of problams racantly, which couldn't hava baan good for har haalth."

Janat noddad. Laaning against his shouldar, har ayalids gradually graw haavy. Sha had baan so busy looking aftar tha drunk Lanay through tha night that sha didn't gat to slaap much.

Haaring tha sound of har staadiad braathing, Ethan opanad his ayas and lookad out tha window.

Recently, the business world in San Francisco had gone into turmoil because Ethan had been openly attacking the Larson Group's businesses. Joining hands with the Whitas had doubled the strength of the Larson Group. Not even Patrick's, Seth's, and Ritchie's combined strength could fight against them.

Moreover, the news that Elissa was a cold-blooded murderer had spread like wildfire, which had damaged the reputation of the Lester family. It didn't take long before the share price of their company plummeted.

Ethan was only worried about how he'd explain all this to Nora.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the Lester family home, after waiting for a long time, Patrick finally heard the sound of a car pulling to a stop outside.

Soon, Ethan strode inside the house hand-in-hand with Janet. Patrick stood up and went straight to the stairs, gesturing at them to follow. "Your Grandma has been waiting for you for a long time."

Ethan followed Patrick up the stairs. When they were about to reach Nora's room, Patrick suddenly stopped and turned to warn his son seriously. "Don't say anything that you shouldn't say in front of her. Your Grandma's health has been rapidly declining. We haven't even told her what you've been doing to us."

Ever since Ethan openly declared war on Patrick, Patrick completely resented him.

If Nora hadn't asked specifically for Ethan to come back and see her, Patrick wouldn't have even called Ethan.

Ethan had nothing to say to Patrick, so he simply nodded.

His attitude only served to make Patrick even angrier. He had to take a deep breath to calm down. Finally, he put on a fake smile and opened the door. "Mom, look who's here! It's Ethan!"

Moreover, the news that Elissa was a cold-blooded murderer had spread like wildfire, which had damaged the reputation of the Lester family. It didn't take long before the share price of their company plummeted.

Nora was lying in bed, her face as pale as a ghost. Several nurses were standing by the bed. Her eyes had been closed, but when she heard that Ethan had come back, she slowly peeled them open and raised her hand at him with a smile. "Ethan, you are home."

Ethan approached her and held her hand gently. "Grandma, I heard that you wanted to see me."

Nora smiled. However, she was so weak that she fell asleep after exchanging a few words with Ethan.

Upon seeing this, a lump formed in Janet's throat.

Although none of them said it out loud, they all knew that it would be unlikely for Nora to make a full recovery this time.

After Nora had fallen asleep, Ethan and Janet turned to leave.



When they reached the stairway, Ritchie happened to come home drunk. He had just gone upstairs and leaned on the railing to support himself.

When the three of them passed by each other, Ritchie suddenly sneered and cursed, "You damned bastard!"

Ethan looked at him coldly.

The alcohol gave Ritchie unprecedented courage. He flew into a rage and grabbed Ethan by the collar. "Don't you dare look at me! You shameless bastard! How dare you come back!"

### [Chapter 585](#)

Ethan glowered at Ritchie, his eyes looking frigid, and said, one deliberate word at a time, "Why not? I'll destroy this place sooner or later."

"What the hell did you just say? How dare you stand up to me?" Ritchie's eyes widened with indignant fury. The alcohol made his cheeks bright crimson. He loosened his grip on Ethan's collar and looked around, seemingly looking for something.

Ethan straightened his collar. He did not want to lower himself to Ritchie's scummy level.

When he was about to go downstairs, he suddenly heard a roar from behind him. "You go burn in hell!"

Ritchie picked up a vase from the shelf in the corridor and smashed it against the wall. The glass scattered all over the ground like confetti. The other half of the vase was left intact in Ritchie's hand but the edge was dangerously jagged.

All color drained from Janet's face. She looked at Ethan and shouted in warning, "Honey, watch out!"

With a sharp fragment of the vase held in his hand as a weapon, Ritchie rushed at Ethan and was about to plunge the makeshift dagger into him.

Janet tried to stop him but failed dismally.

People in the living room downstairs didn't really know what was happening initially, but when Janet had screamed, they were all startled. Everyone ran over in horror, but there was no time to stop Ritchie. Ethan glowered at Ritchie, his eyes looking frigid, and said, one deliberate word at a time, "Why not? I'll destroy this place sooner or later."

"What the hell did you just say? How dare you stand up to me?" Ritchie's eyes widened with indignant fury. The alcohol made his cheeks bright crimson. He loosened his grip on Ethan's collar and looked around, seemingly looking for something.

Ethan straightened his collar. He did not want to lower himself to Ritchie's scummy level.

When he was about to go downstairs, he suddenly heard a roar from behind him. "You go burn in hell!"

Ritchie picked up a vase from the shelf in the corridor and smashed it against the wall. The glass scattered all over the ground like confetti. The other half of the vase was left intact in Ritchie's hand but the edge was dangerously jagged.

All color drained from Janat's face. She looked at Ethan and shouted in warning, "Honay, watch out!"

With a sharp fragment of the vase held in his hand as a weapon, Ritchie rushed at Ethan and was about to plunge the makeshift dagger into him.

Janat tried to stop him but failed dismally.

People in the living room downstairs didn't really know what was happening initially, but when Janat had screamed, they were all startled. Everyone ran over in horror, but there was no time to stop Ritchie.

Ethan was quick on his feet and hastily retreated when he saw this. He shoved Ritchie away to avoid the sharp vase fragment that he was wielding.

Ritchie had rushed forward too fast and because he was drunk, he wasn't steady on his feet. When Ethan defensively shoved him away, he lost his balance. He stumbled and fell down the stairs before he could cry out for help.

He rolled to the bottom of the stairs and lay there motionlessly.

"Ah! Mr. Ritchie!"

As the servants in the living room shouted, the servants upstairs also hastily ran downstairs.

"Help! Mr. Ritchie fell down the stairs!"

"He is bleeding profusely. He doesn't look like he's breathing!"

Hearing the commotion, Patrick came out of Nora's room with a long face. "What's wrong? Why is there such a ruckus out here? Mrs. Lester needs rest. Can't you keep the noise levels to a decent volume?"

A servant pursed her lips momentarily then cried out, "Sir, Mr. Ritchie was pushed down the stairs by Mr. Ethan!"

Patrick's face turned pale with fright. He rushed downstairs to check on Ritchie, who was lying seemingly lifelessly on the ground.

He held Ritchie up and asked desperately, "Ritchie, can you hear me?"

Ritchie's eyes were closed and it was clear he had lost consciousness. Patrick shouted at the servants, "What are you waiting for? Call an ambulance!"

Ethan was quick on his feet and hastily retreated when he saw this. He shoved Ritchie away to avoid the sharp vase fragment that he was wielding.

The servants hurriedly made phone calls.

Furiously, Patrick turned to Ethan who had just come downstairs. He raised his hand and wanted to slap Ethan. "How could you do this to your own brother?!"

Ethan grasped Patrick's wrist and shook it off. He then said impatiently, "You'd better discipline your own son first."

Patrick trembled with anger, but he didn't continue to fight with Ethan. He turned around and went to check on Ritchie's condition again.

It was not until then that Janet came to her senses. She held Ethan's arm and looked him up and down nervously. "Honey, did you get hurt?"

Looking at the father and son, Ethan patted Janet on the back of her hand and slightly shook his head.

He walked away from the scene with Janet and phoned the police.

Seeing the indifferent look on Ethan's face, Patrick was enraged beyond words. "How dare you?! Ritchie's your brother! If anything happens to him, your grandmother won't let you go, let alone me!"

Ethan looked into his father's eyes and said coldly, "He wanted to stab me. Everyone present can testify for me. If I hadn't pushed him away, he would have fatally stabbed me. Besides, I don't have a brother."

### [Chapter 586](#)

A few minutes later, police cars and an ambulance pulled in front of the Lester family's home.

EMTs rushed in to carry Ritchie into the ambulance on a stretcher. Patrick also followed them into the back of the ambulance.

Before shutting the door behind him, he looked at Ethan sullenly, with unfathomable emotion brewing behind his eyes.

The police immediately set out to check the surveillance footage. Ethan had briefly explained that Ritchie attempted to kill him, so he had merely acted out of self-defense.

It was not difficult to prove what he said. Patrick was always wary that someone would try to break in and steal top secret documents from his home, so he had installed security cameras everywhere in the villa, except for the bedrooms.

It was clear from the footage that Ritchie was about to stab Ethan with a fragment of the broken vase. Ethan managed to dodge and pushed Ritchie away, which was how Ritchie tumbled down the stairs.

Ethan went to the police station to make his statement, and he was kept there for the time being.

Janet was worried sick. Before Ethan had left with the police, she asked, "Shall I call Garrett? I think Ritchie's seriously injured."

Ethan comforted her calmly. "Go back to our house and get some rest. There's no need to call Garrett. I'll take care of it myself." A few minutes later, police cars and an ambulance pulled in front of the Lester family's home.

EMTs rushed in to carry Ritchie into the ambulance on a stretcher. Patrick also followed them into the back of the ambulance.

Before shutting the door behind him, he looked at Ethan sullenly, with unfathomable emotion brewing behind his eyes.

The police immediately sat out to check the surveillance footage. Ethan had briefly explained that Ritchie attempted to kill him, so he had merely acted out of self-defense.

It was not difficult to prove what he said. Patrick was always wary that someone would try to break in and steal top secret documents from his home, so he had installed security cameras everywhere in the villa, except for the bedrooms.

It was clear from the footage that Ritchie was about to stab Ethan with a fragment of the broken vase. Ethan managed to dodge and push Ritchie away, which was how Ritchie tumbled down the stairs.

Ethan went to the police station to make his statement, and he was kept there for the time being.

Janet was worried sick. Before Ethan had left with the police, she asked, "Shall I call Garratt? I think Ritchie's seriously injured."

Ethan comforted her calmly. "Go back to our house and get some rest. There's no need to call Garratt. I'll take care of it myself."

\*\*\*\*\*

In Seacisco's best hospital, Patrick kept pacing back and forth restlessly in the corridor that led to the operating room.

When Seth arrived and saw Patrick, he asked with concern, "Dad, how is he?"

Patrick rubbed his aching temples and murmured, "We won't know until the operation is over."

Seth helped Patrick to the bench. Then, he leaned against the wall, fidgeting with the ring on his finger agitatedly.

Two hours later, the doctor came out of the emergency room and called Patrick and Seth into his office.

"The patient will live—"

"Wonderful!" Patrick exclaimed with a sigh of relief.

The doctor pursed his lips and continued gravely, "The patient will live, but his neck was severely damaged, compromising the nerves in his spine. It's very likely that he will be paralyzed for life."

Patrick felt like he was riding an emotional roller-coaster. When he heard what the doctor had to say, he nearly passed out on the spot.

Seth hurried to help his father, while asking the doctor politely, "Is there any treatment?"

The doctor sighed. "Currently, the local medical tech is limited, so I cannot promise anything for sure. But if it's financially possible for you, I suggest you contact some foreign experts in this field."

\*\*\*\*\*

In Seacisco's best hospital, Patrick kept pacing back and forth restlessly in the corridor that led to the operating room.

By the time Patrick came out of the doctor's office, he seemed to have aged ten years.

Although Ritchie was by no means an excellent son, he was still Patrick's own flesh and blood after all. And now the poor boy was disabled.

Patrick felt caught between a rock and a hard place. If it were anyone else who had hurt Ritchie, he would've done everything in his power to put the assailant in jail. However, the assailant was none other than Ethan, who was also his son.

"Dad, are you going to let Ethan get away with this?" Seth asked, as though he could read his father's mind.

With a long face, Patrick said, "He's also my son."

"But Ethan has never treated me and Ritchie as his brothers. And Ritchie has suffered too much. If he finds out that you let this slide, he'll only be sadder." As Seth spoke, there was a flash of resentment in his eyes.

He didn't have any affection for Ethan, despite them being brothers.

These days, the Lester family and the Larson Group had been battling fiercely. Deciding to take matters into his own hands, Seth immediately hired the best lawyers, preparing to sue Ethan.

#### [Chapter 587](#)

When Ethan was taken to the police station, Janet contacted his lawyer, prompting him to come as soon as possible.

"Sir, the Lester family is suing you." As soon as he arrived at the police station, the lawyer handed the file to Ethan.

Ethan looked through it and sneered coldly. "I didn't expect them to take action so quickly."

"Seth is the plaintiff. He's suing you on behalf of his brother under the charge of intentional injury. The hospital has provided the prognosis, which points to Ritchie's paralysis as a result of falling down the stairs." The lawyer systematically handed the materials and photos to Ethan.

Ethan didn't even bother to go through them and tossed all the papers on the table. In an almost leisurely tone, he simply said, "You know what to do."

The lawyer understood immediately. After gathering all the files, he bowed slightly and left to get to work.

In fact, a week ago, Ethan had called his lawyer to inform him that he would receive a lawsuit sometime soon, so the lawyer was already prepared for this moment.

After he left, Ethan kept silent.

In fact, he had been expecting all of this.

A week ago, Ethan secretly asked his subordinate, Luis, to take charge of a project and contact Ritchie. Because the Larson Group was pulling some strings, the Lester Silk Fabric didn't receive any orders in the past month. At the chance of getting a new project, Ritchie accepted it without hesitation. He and Luis

were in frequent contact because of this so-called project and often shared meals to discuss the cooperation.

On the day of the accident, Ethan had instructed Luis to ask Ritchie out for dinner. Luis was good at getting people to drink, and that was precisely what he did with Ritchie.

After getting plastered, Ritchie decided to get a room in the hotel. When Ethan was taken to the police station, Janet contacted his lawyer, prompting him to come as soon as possible.

"Sir, the Laster family is suing you." As soon as he arrived at the police station, the lawyer handed the file to Ethan.

Ethan looked through it and sneered coldly. "I didn't expect them to take action so quickly."

"Sath is the plaintiff. He's suing you on behalf of his brother under the charge of intentional injury. The hospital has provided the prognosis, which points to Ritchie's paralysis as a result of falling down the stairs." The lawyer systematically handed the materials and photos to Ethan.

Ethan didn't even bother to go through them and tossed all the papers on the table. In an almost laisurly tone, he simply said, "You know what to do."

The lawyer understood immediately. After gathering all the files, he bowed slightly and left to get to work.

In fact, a week ago, Ethan had called his lawyer to inform him that he would receive a lawsuit sometime soon, so the lawyer was already prepared for this moment.

After he left, Ethan kept silent.

In fact, he had been expecting all of this.

A week ago, Ethan secretly asked his subordinate, Luis, to take charge of a project and contact Ritchie. Because the Larson Group was pulling some strings, the Laster Silk Fabric didn't receive any orders in the past month. At the chance of getting a new project, Ritchie accepted it without hesitation. He and Luis were in frequent contact because of this so-called project and often shared meals to discuss the cooperation.

On the day of the accident, Ethan had instructed Luis to ask Ritchie out for dinner. Luis was good at getting people to drink, and that was precisely what he did with Ritchie.

After getting plastered, Ritchie decided to get a room in the hotel.

"Why not go home instead?" Luis put down his glass and squinted at Ritchie curiously.

"My brother said that Ethan's coming home to see Grandma today. If I go home, all hell will break loose. The less trouble, the better." As Ritchie rambled on drunkenly, he stood up to leave.

Luis smiled meaningfully. "He's just a bastard child. Why are you so afraid of him? If you don't go back and teach him a lesson, he'll probably think that you're a coward."

The drunken Ritchie couldn't stand such provocation. He kicked the chair nearby furiously and roared, "How could I be afraid of a bastard like him?"

Then, he stormed off angrily.

Seeing that Ritchie had fallen right into his trap, Luis texted Ethan to say that Ritchie was on his way back home.

As expected, within half an hour, Ritchie stumbled into the Lester family villa, reeking of alcohol.

Ethan then said those words on purpose to provoke Ritchie. Goaded by the alcohol and his anger, Ritchie attempted to kill Ethan but was instead pushed down the stairs by the latter.

\*\*\*\*\*

After Seth filed the case against Ethan, his lawyer told him that this would be a tricky case to win. After all, there was surveillance footage that proved that Ritchie was the one who started the fight.

"Although Ritchie is indeed a reckless fool, he wouldn't do such a stupid thing. Besides, I warned him beforehand not to come home because Ethan would be there. It just doesn't add up..." Seth's eyes flashed.

He knew that this couldn't be a mere coincidence. In his eyes, this seemed more like a setup.

The lawyer smiled bitterly. "Even so, we don't have any evidence, and the fact remains that Ritchie tried to attack Ethan first. Don't worry. There are still a few days before the trial. We'll try our best to build our case."

"Why not go home instead?" Luis put down his glass and squinted at Ritchie curiously.

Seth doubted he would win, but he didn't want to give up so easily.

However, Ethan didn't leave any trail of clues. Seth couldn't find a single shred of evidence to prove that this so-called "accident" was thought out.

At last, on the day of the trial, the jury arrived at a verdict that it was Ritchie who tried to attack Ethan with a sharp weapon, which was life-threatening to Ethan. Thus, in an act of self-defense, Ethan pushed Ritchie away, causing the latter to fall down the stairs. Ethan's countermeasures didn't necessarily cross the line, and his actions were entirely justifiable. In a word, Ethan was announced to be not guilty.

"I'm not convinced." Seth stood up and talked back to the judge.

"Then submit your request to the supreme court for a second trial." After saying that, the judge left the courtroom.

Outside the courtroom, Ethan happened to run into Seth.

Still wearing his signature gentle smile on his face, Seth approached Ethan and whispered in a low voice, "What a perfect plan! Don't think that I can't see through your tricks, Ethan. Just wait and see."

Ethan hadn't had much contact with Seth since he was a child, but he never had a good impression of him. He always felt that Seth was a two-faced person.

"I don't know what you're talking about." After saying that, Ethan walked past him without looking back.

Seth did as the judge said and lodged an appeal for a retrial. However, the Supreme Court upheld the original verdict and denied his request.

In the end, Ritchie was forced to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair, while Ethan got away with it scot-free.

### [Chapter 588](#)

Patrick was well aware that Seth was competing with Ethan.

In the business world of Seacisco, news that the Lester brothers had been fighting against each other had spread like wildfire, which put Patrick in a dilemma. He refused to pick a side and simply hoped that his sons would stop fighting.

Ever since Seth and Ethan started fighting, Seth had come home less and less frequently. One day, Patrick was surprised to bump into him at home.

"Are you still busy fighting the Larson Group?" Patrick asked grimly.

Seth shrugged off his coat and put it aside. There were dark circles under his eyes, but he still wore that same gentle smile, which made him look approachable. "Dad, don't worry. I'll handle this."

But this only served to make Patrick feel even more worried. "You have to be careful with Ethan. We all underestimated him before. He has already taken down Elissa and Ritchie. I have a feeling that he won't stop until our entire family is in ruins."

Frowning, Seth stood up and walked to the stairway. Before going upstairs, he glanced back at Patrick and said indifferently, "Dad, even if he really is on a warpath, you still underestimate the Lester family. We took root in Seacisco generations before Ethan was even born. You're just intimidated by Ethan. Go back to your room and get some rest while I teach that brat a lesson." Patrick was well aware that Seth was competing with Ethan.

In the business world of Saacisco, news that the Lastar brothers had been fighting against each other had spread like wildfire, which put Patrick in a dilemma. He refused to pick a side and simply hoped that his sons would stop fighting.

Ever since Seth and Ethan started fighting, Seth had come home less and less frequently. One day, Patrick was surprised to bump into him at home.

"Are you still busy fighting the Larson Group?" Patrick asked grimly.

Seth shrugged off his coat and put it aside. There were dark circles under his eyes, but he still wore that same gentle smile, which made him look approachable. "Dad, don't worry. I'll handle this."

But this only served to make Patrick feel even more worried. "You have to be careful with Ethan. We all underestimated him before. He has already taken down Elissa and Ritchie. I have a feeling that he won't stop until our entire family is in ruins."



Frowning, Seth stood up and walked to the stairway. Before going upstairs, he glanced back at Patrick and said indifferently, "Dad, even if he really is on a warpath, you still underestimate the Lester family. We took root in San Francisco generations before Ethan was even born. You're just intimidated by Ethan. Go back to your room and get some rest while I teach that brat a lesson."

Patrick wanted to say something but stopped on a second thought. He knew that Seth was too prideful to listen to him.

The following day, Patrick went to Barnes again. He wanted to talk to Ethan.

When the receptionist informed Ethan that Patrick was waiting for him downstairs, Ethan calmly said, "Kick him out of the building."

He had nothing to say to Patrick.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the battle against the Larson Group, Seth had lost several times. He was beginning to get frustrated.

Seth had never encountered any setbacks since he was a child. After all, he was the most excellent Lester in his generation.

He was always a step ahead of ordinary people. But now, he was losing miserably to Ethan. He couldn't protect his family nor their business from Ethan's blows.

As time went on, he began to have a sense of crisis. If things went on like this, the Lester family's power would dwindle and they would soon be no match for Ethan. At this rate, it was only a matter of time before Ethan destroyed them once and for all.

Moreover, the reason why Patrick was so afraid of Ethan was that the Larson Group was growing stronger and stronger every day. As if that wasn't enough, Ethan also had the support of the White family, which made him unprecedentedly powerful. He wasn't sure they stood a chance against him if things went on like this.

Patrick wanted to say something but stopped on a second thought. He knew that Seth was too prideful to listen to him.

Frowning, Seth racked his brains for a solution. He needed to find a way to instantly strengthen the Lester family in a short period of time—and the only way to do that was forge an alliance with another influential family through a marriage.

The union between the Larson Group and the legendary White family had affected half of the enterprises in Barnes and Seacisco, rendering Ethan nearly invincible.

But who among the Lesters could get married on such short notice? Unfortunately, the divorce procedures between Patrick and Elissa hadn't been completed yet. Ritchie was single, but he was a disabled man now and there was no way any woman from a prominent family would agree to marry him.

Sinking into his leather chair, Seth lit a cigarette sullenly.

All of a sudden, he let out a cold sneer and stubbed out the cigarette in the ashtray.

Just then, his phone on the table suddenly started to ring. He ignored it and didn't pick it up until his phone buzzed again with a new message. Glancing at the screen, he saw that it was the daughter of the Walker family, Julia.

"Seth, are you still in Seacisco? I want to see you."

### [Chapter 589](#)

Upon seeing the message, Seth frowned slightly.

He had almost completely forgotten about this woman already.

Julia was the eldest daughter of the Walker family. When Seth came back to Seacisco a month ago, he held a party with his friends. At that party, Julia had asked for his phone number.

Seth was the most outstanding Lester in his generation, and ever since he took over the family business, many young ladies wanted to get close to him.

But Seth never gave them the light of day. Moreover, he was married, and if he was ever caught cheating on his wife, the reputation of the Lester family would be affected.

However, the Walker family's wealth and power was growing fast now. After all, they were one of the first enterprises to start implementing e-commerce in their business in Seacisco.

Seth reread Julia's text. He knew exactly what was on her mind.

Although he didn't hold a grand wedding back then, it was no secret to all that Seth was married.

Even though Julia knew that he was a married man, she still came at him.

Women from the Walker family were really bold and reckless.

Unfortunately, Seth and his wife, Tasha Jarvis, had been married for years. Although he didn't really love her, as they had only gotten married for the sake of their families' mutual interests, he wasn't interested in having an affair with other women either. All Seth cared about was his work.

So, whenever Julia asked him out during the past month, he neither refused nor went. He simply ignored her.

Upon seeing the message, Seth frowned slightly.

He had almost completely forgotten about this woman already. Upon seeing the message, Seth frowned slightly.

He had almost completely forgotten about this woman already.

Julia was the eldest daughter of the Walker family. When Seth came back to Seacisco a month ago, he held a party with his friends. At that party, Julia had asked for his phone number.

Seth was the most outstanding Lester in his generation, and ever since he took over the family business, many young ladies wanted to get close to him.

But Seth never gave them the light of day. Moreover, he was married, and if he was ever caught cheating on his wife, the reputation of the Lastar family would be affected.

However, the Walker family's wealth and power was growing fast now. After all, they were one of the first entrepreneurs to start implementing e-commerce in their business in San Francisco.

Seth read Julia's text. He knew exactly what was on her mind.

Although he didn't hold a grand wedding back then, it was no secret to all that Seth was married.

Even though Julia knew that he was a married man, she still came at him.

Women from the Walker family were really bold and reckless.

Unfortunately, Seth and his wife, Tasha Jarvis, had been married for years. Although he didn't really love her, as they had only gotten married for the sake of their families' mutual interests, he wasn't interested in having an affair with other women either. All Seth cared about was his work.

So, whenever Julia asked him out during the past month, he neither refused nor went. He simply ignored her.

That was his way of doing things.

However, the Walker family was far-sighted enough to know that e-commerce was the future. Moreover, they were one of the most powerful families in the entire country. In Seth's eyes, their help might come in handy one day. Therefore, he had never rejected Julia with harsh words, lest he offend her and potentially lose the Walker family's support one day.

So Julia's message this time gave Seth an idea.

He quickly sent her the address of a restaurant. "I've already booked a table. See you there at six o'clock."

Julia replied seconds later. It seemed that she was waiting for him to text her back. "Okay, see you there."

Seth put his phone aside and rubbed the spot between his eyebrows. Things were looking up.

\*\*\*\*\*

In a Michelin-starred restaurant, Julia had arrived first.

She checked herself out in her compact mirror and frowned. After applying a little more lipstick, she finally smiled in satisfaction.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting." Seth arrived in a brown windbreaker over a white shirt and tie and a vest, making him look particularly casual yet put-together.

"It's okay. I just arrived, too." Flustered, Julia blushed and lowered her head in embarrassment. She wondered whether Seth had seen what she was doing just now.

With a faint smile, Seth handed the menu to Julia and winked. "Ladies first."

Julia shyly took the menu from him. She was a little surprised that he had showed up. Seth had always been indifferent to her, and he seldom answered her calls or texted her back. She had been disappointed for a long time because of this.

But now, here they were, in a restaurant together.

Seth wasn't in the mood to flirt with her. After all, he was indifferent when it came to women. The only thing that could make him excited was the idea of power and money.

And right now, the only thing on his mind was the need to defeat Ethan. As long as he thought about that he had the chance to trample him under his feet, he was trembling with excitement.

Since Julia liked him so much, surely she'd be open to the idea of marrying him. If they could join forces, he would have the Walker family's help and support, which would finally make him a match for Ethan.

Seth touched the silver ring on his ring finger absentmindedly. His wife's family used to be a prominent one in the country. However, it was pretty much down and out now. The Jarvis family failed to keep up with the ever-changing business trends, and in Seth's eyes, they had already lost the game completely.

Throughout the course of the meal, Seth was more enthusiastic to Julia than before.

Julia was delighted. Soon, she grew bold and started to rub his shin with her foot under the table.

#### [Chapter 590](#)

Because the Lester family lived in Seacisco, in order to deal with them, Ethan now often stayed there, and so did Janet.

On the days Ethan didn't go to the office, he stayed in the study at home. It was as though he was always in a never-ending video conference.

Holding a tray with a cup of coffee and a plate of pastries, Janet knocked on the door lightly. "Honey, may I come in?"

"Of course." Ethan's voice was low. He was scolding his subordinates just now, and there was still a trace of anger in his eyes.

Ever since he declared war on the Lester family, he had been on edge every day, always on the verge of snapping. Only when Janet was around did he have a smile on his face.

"The servant told me that you haven't had dinner. I make some chicken soup, and I can bring it to you later." After setting the coffee on the table, Janet put a biscuit into Ethan's mouth and pouted. "If this keeps up, your body will break down."

She tugged at Ethan's wrinkled shirt and narrowed her eyes at him disapprovingly.

Ethan looked back at her in silence. Then he stood up, leaned his back against the desk, and pulled her into his arms. Swallowing the biscuit, he then kissed her on the lips. "I never told you off when you were working nonstop."

Janet almost rolled her eyes, but stopped when she saw that there seemed to be something off about Ethan. He looked restless, like a bloodthirsty beast out to hunt his prey. Because the Lester family lived in Seacisco, in order to deal with them, Ethan now often stayed there, and so did Janet.

Bacausa tha Lastar family livad in Saacisco, in ordar to daal with tham, Ethan now oftan stayad thara, and so did Janat.

On tha days Ethan didn't go to tha offica, ha stayad in tha study at homa. It was as though ha was always in a navar-anding vidao confaranca.

Holding a tray with a cup of coffaa and a plata of pastrias, Janat knockad on tha door lightly. "Honay, may I coma in?"

"Of coursa." Ethan's voica was low. Ha was scolding his subordinatas just now, and thara was still a traca of angar in his ayas.

Evar sinca ha daclarad war on tha Lastar family, ha had baan on adga avary day, always on tha varga of snapping. Only whan Janat was around did ha hava a smila on his faca.

"Tha sarvant told ma that you havan't had dinnar. I maka soma chickan soup, and I can bring it to you later." Aftar satting tha coffaa on tha tabla, Janat put a biscuit into Ethan's mouth and poutad. "If this kaaps up, your body will braak down."

Sha tuggad at Ethan's wrinklاد shirt and narrowad har ayas at him disapprovingly.

Ethan lookad back at har in silanca. Than ha stood up, laanad his back against tha dask, and pullad har into his arms. Swallowing tha biscuit, ha than kissad har on tha lips. "I navar told you off whan you wara working nonstop."

Janat almost rollad har ayas, but stoppad whan sha saw that thara saamad to ba something off about Ethan. Ha lookad rastlass, lika a bloodthirsty baast out to hunt his pray.

"Honey, I'm worried about you." Wrapping her arms on his neck, Janet started to kiss him back, deepening the kiss.

Soon, Ethan's palm slid from her waist to her buttocks.

It wasn't until the both of them were out of breath that Ethan finally let Janet go. He lowered his head, resting his forehead on hers. "I'm fine. I'm going to succeed."

In his deep voice was a strange mix of calmness and madness.

Fearing that Ethan would fall into an irredeemable pit of hatred, Janet hugged him anxiously. "Tomorrow is Saturday. Let's go out on a date, okay? We haven't hung out for a long time."

"But I have work..." Ethan started to say.

Janet pouted like a spoiled child. "I don't care! You have to go out with me. The Larson Group won't be destroyed with you gone for one day."

\*\*\*\*\*

In the end, Ethan had no choice but to go with Janet to the beach.

“Look! It’s a beautiful day!” Janet exclaimed happily. Wearing a bikini and a straw hat, she faced the beautiful sun and sea and took a deep breath.

Ethan raised his hand to block the dazzling sunlight. Looking at the crowded beach, he couldn’t help but frown. “We should go to my private beach.”

Janet sat down on a folding beach chair and sunbathed happily. The wind was blowing, whipping at her hair.

“No, thanks. I like it here. The crowd is what makes this place so lively.”

Ethan frowned unhappily, but he had no choice but to sit down with her.

It was already summer, which explained why the beach was crowded with tourists. Adults lounged around and swam. Children played in the sand and then they cried because the tide would wash away their sand castles.

Seeing the children wipe away their tears and proceed to build another sand castle, Ethan couldn’t help but smile.

“Wow. Mr. Larson, the man who has been depressed for a week, is finally smiling.” Cupping Ethan’s cheeks, Janet made him look at her. Grinning from ear to ear, she kissed him hard on the lips and murmured, “It’s a sight to behold.”

The smile on Ethan’s face became brighter. He did feel much more relaxed and his mood was nowhere near as heavy as it had been.

Later that afternoon, Janet was so tired that she threw herself onto the bed as soon as they returned to their hotel room.

Ethan climbed on top of her and kissed her gently, but his hands moved fast. In a matter of seconds, he took off her bikini.