

The Mbahsb 671

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Charis closed her eyes and took a deep breath. She had always been a decisive person. She quickly made up her mind, chose the path with the least fire, and rushed out.

As soon as she ran towards the fire, she felt as though her skin was melting off her bones. Her lungs were filled with thick smoke, suffocating her.

Charis was still a long way from the nearest exit. She quickly made her way across the sea of fire, her skin blistering under the extreme heat. Soon, the smell of burning fabric filled her nose. Then there came an excruciating, burning pain.

Charis let out an ear piercing scream. Glancing over her shoulder, she found that her back was on fire.

But she didn't have the time to care. She could only keep running.

Gradually, she used up the last of her strength, and her consciousness began to blur from lack of oxygen. Pain consumed every part of her body, and it even hurt to breathe.

Fortunately, all the props and furniture in the haunted house had been burnt to ashes, so there weren't that many obstacles in her path. She was getting closer and closer to the exit.

Finally, she heard the noise of the crowd gathered outside. Charis felt that her heart was about to stop beating from the pain, but she continued to run in the direction of the noise through sheer willpower.

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Charis wanted to see what was going on, but she couldn't peel her eyes open. It was as though her eyelids had been glued shut.

Just then, Charis felt a burst of freezing cold liquid being splashed on her body. Unable to hold on any longer, she passed out on the spot.

Countless firefighters surrounded the haunted house, trying desperately to put out the fire.

Because it was the night of Halloween, many tourists had flocked to the amusement park and the fire attracted a wave of onlookers.

Everyone craned their necks to watch the fire devour the haunted house. Just then, a woman on fire rushed out the front door. She looked as though she was being burned alive, a sight too horrible to behold.

"Oh, my God! Is she still alive?!"

The onlookers were all shocked and instinctively took a few steps back. Some even whipped out their phones to take photos, whereas the parents covered their children's eyes with their hands to prevent them from seeing such a horrific scene.

When the firefighters saw the flame-engulfed person rush out of the establishment, they immediately pointed the hose at her to extinguish the fire on her body.

Fortunately, the fire on Cheris's body was put out, but she was already burned beyond recognition. She looked like a scorched object in the shape of a human. Right after being hosed down, she collapsed to the ground and passed out.

The helicopter took Janet to an area a safe distance from the haunted house.

As soon as Janet disembarked, she rushed toward the haunted house.

She rushed headlong into the crowd and made her way to the periphery of the haunted house. She looked around but didn't see any sign of Brendon.

Janet became anxious. She grabbed an onlooker's arm and asked urgently, "Did you see a tall man in a black windbreaker just now?"

The passer-by shook his head. "No, but there was a woman on fire who ran out of the haunted house just now."

Janet felt as though her soul had left her body. She took two steps back and looked blankly at the burning house in front of her.

She and Brendon were separated inside the haunted house just now. She had managed to escape, but what about Brendon?

Was he still trapped inside?

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Janet immediately brushed the thought away.

She knew that Charis would never hurt Brandon. Charis must have arranged for the staff to immediately take Brandon outside after they had been separated.

Janet also knew that given their circumstances, he would never come back for her even if he knew that she was trapped in that blazing fire.

Things were different now. Brandon was no longer someone who would do something stupid for her sake.

Even so, Janet couldn't shake the sense of foreboding looming over her. She took a deep breath and continued asking around. "Have you seen someone coming out of the haunted house just now? Please think about it carefully. Male, about a head taller than me, very handsome but aloof?"

"No, we didn't see anyone like that. Go ask someone else. We just happened to be passing by." The person looked impatient, so Janet didn't insist anymore.

She didn't give up, though. She shifted her attention to the other onlookers and asked them one by one.

Finally, she came across a young couple who seemed to have a clue about Brandon.

"I think I saw the man you're referring to! When the staff told us to evacuate because of a fire, he rushed back inside without a second thought. The staff didn't get to stop him, and my boyfriend even joked that he must be an idiot who couldn't even tell where the exit is." The woman glanced sideways at her beau before adding, "In my opinion, he ran back inside to get someone important. Maybe his wife, or a child— Hey! I'm not done talking!"

Janet was already sprinting back to the haunted house before the woman could finish her words.

How could Brandon risk his life in such a big fire?

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Janet stopped at the entrance and tried calling him first.

She tried again and again, but he never answered. No one else emerged from the burning establishment, either.

Janet was beside herself with worry. She wanted to throw herself into the fire and look for him, just as he had done for her.

"Hey, young lady! Do you want to die?" The people around her cried out just as she was about to lunge forward. They reached out and pulled her back. "Don't you see the fire raging in front of you? You won't even get a few feet inside without getting burned!"

"No, you don't get it. Please let me in! My husband is still inside!" Janet struggled against their hold.

They didn't understand! The man she loved might be trapped in there, suffocating, burning... And it was all because of her.

Janet was shaking at this point. She was barely hanging on to her sanity.

"Calm down, miss. Leave this to the firefighters. Do you see? They're working hard to put out the fire and get everybody to safety. They will definitely save your husband. Don't worry." A kindhearted stranger stroked Janet's back in a gesture of comfort.

Another person chimed in. "That's right; it's too dangerous to get involved right now. Just be thankful that you are safe."

Janet slumped on the ground, numb to her surroundings. She held her phone tightly and stared at its screen.

"Get the helicopter to hover over the haunted house and search for Brandon," she instructed the people sent by the White family. "Call me as soon as you spot him!"

The helicopter ended up making two rounds in the area, still to no avail.

Brandon was trapped in the fire, and there was nothing she could do. Janet's fingers were trembling uncontrollably. She could barely see through the tears that had welled up in her eyes. She knew that she was on the verge of collapse, but she refused to give in before hearing news of Brandon.

Just then, she felt a tug at her shoulder as the woman beside her yelled, "Look, look! Another person just ran out!"

Janet's head shot up. She saw a telltale figure dashing out through the back entrance of the haunted house.

The man discarded the thick coat he had been holding over his body. His face was smudged with soot, but he still looked as handsome as ever. He was coughing violently as he drew closer.

Janet's tears finally streamed down her cheeks. She could feel her blood rushing through her veins like little bolts of lightning. She scrambled to her feet and met Brandon halfway, holding him before he fell on his knees.

It wasn't until she felt the steady rhythm of his heartbeat under her palm that she allowed herself a sigh of relief. And then, she let loose and wept like a baby.

Brandon tried to reach out to wipe her tears. "Don't cry. It's all right. I'm all right."

But Janet only cried even louder. It took her a while to calm down. "Brandon," she sniffed. "Why did you do that? Why did you come back inside?"

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Brandon tried to reach out to wipe her tears. "Don't cry. It's all right. I'm all right."

But Janet only cried even louder. It took her a while to calm down. "Brandon," she sniffed. "Why did you do that? Why did you come back inside?"

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For a brief moment, Brandon had thought he would die in there. He already saw his life flash before his eyes.

Fortunately, he was nowhere near the point of origin of the fire, so he had time to gather his bearings. After looking around, he found a back door and was able to escape.

He threw his arms around Janet and held her tightly, burying his face in her hair, taking in her scent.

When Brandon looked up at her again, his eyes were as bright as stars. "I don't know either. Anyway, what's important is you're okay."

Indeed, even Brandon himself couldn't answer this question.

Why did he rush back in? Towards the fire, no less.

The second Brandon learned that the fire started in the same area Janet was, he feared for her life.

At the time, he wasn't thinking.

It was as though his body had a mind of its own. Before he knew what was happening, he was already running in the direction where he and Janet separated.

He had no idea why his body reacted that way. It was as if sheer instinct dictated that he must protect Janet from any harm.

"Help me up." Taking a deep breath, Brandon put his arm around Janet's shoulder and braced himself to stand up.

Janet supported him carefully. Wiping away her tears, she asked, "Why didn't you answer the phone? I was so anxious that I almost rushed back into the fire to look for you." For a brief moment, Brandon had thought he would die in there. He already saw his life flash before his eyes.

Brandon took out a scorched phone from his trouser pocket. There was a big hole on its screen.

"My phone got burned in the fire, so I didn't even receive your call. I couldn't find you anywhere, and the fire kept spreading, so I had no choice but to retreat first."

Brandon raised his hand and pinched Janet's cheek lovingly. The latter couldn't help but stick out her lower lip like an annoyed child. Only then did he suddenly look her up and down. "Are you hurt anywhere?"

"No, no, I'm fine. I escaped as soon as I saw the fire." Still pouting, Janet couldn't help but turn her face away. This unexpected flirty behavior from Brandon made her blush.

"Smart." With a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth, Brandon let her go. Seeing that Janet was safe and sound, he finally let out a sigh of relief. "I thought you were near the point of origin? How'd you manage to escape?"

Janet averted her gaze guiltily. She couldn't tell Brandon that she had been prepared in case of any emergency. "The fire wasn't too severe at the time. I covered myself with my coat and ran out," she answered perfunctorily.

Brandon nodded and straightened out his shirt. Only then did he realize that he was covered in cold sweat.

Brandon felt it strange. He hadn't been with Janet that long, yet he had risked his own life and rushed into a burning establishment for her. Why was he so worried about this woman?

Janet looked at Brandon quietly. He lowered his head and didn't say anything. She didn't know what was on his mind.

But he had rushed into the fire to save her. Obviously, he cared about her.

Janet was secretly delighted. It was like a rainbow after a storm. Finally, her efforts paid off! But she still didn't know why Brandon treated her like a stranger in the first place.

Biting her lower lip, Janet cautiously started to say, "Brandon, there's something I've been meaning to ask you..."

Brandon looked at her expectantly, waiting for her to speak.

Just as Janet opened her mouth, a loud creaking sound came from above her head.

Janet looked up and saw that the flames had climbed onto the roof of the haunted house. The tip of a tower on the roof was leaning precariously to the side, about to fall.

She and Brandon were standing right next to the haunted house. With the horrific sound of a crack, the tip of the tower snapped and plummeted towards the ground they were standing on!

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The falling tower looked like a meteor on fire. Janet screamed and subconsciously pushed Brandon away without hesitation.

Then she spread out her arms and stood in front of him to protect him from any falling debris.

Everything happened in the blink of an eye. A blistering heat wave swept over as the tip of the tower smashed into pieces on the ground, sending burning debris flying in all directions. It was like a magnificent firework in bloom.

But it was the most deadly firework in the world.

While the tower didn't land on top of the two people, it did smash into the ground violently, sending burning shrapnel in all directions, many of which struck Janet's back.

But she was too focused on protecting Brandon to notice.

It wasn't until she was sure that Brandon was fine that she felt a burning sensation on her back.

She turned her head and to her horror, saw that the clothes on her back was on fire!

Terrified, Janet let out a blood-curdling scream.

"Don't move!" Brandon reacted quickly, wrapping his arms around Janet and forcing her to roll around on the grass with him. Soon, the flames were extinguished.

"Are you hurt?" Staring intently at the woman in his arms, Brandon didn't realize how anxious his voice sounded.

He raised a trembling hand and gingerly tried to lift the hem of Janet's burnt top, but Janet stopped him quickly. The falling tower looked like a meteor on fire. Janet screamed and subconsciously pushed

Brandon away without hesitation.

"I'm fine." Janet didn't want Brandon to worry about her, but her voice was shaky and she clearly wasn't fine. The cold sweat on her forehead and paleness of her face betrayed her true situation. She wasn't okay at all.

The sudden "fireworks" caused the crowd to panic. The onlookers around screamed and dispersed hurriedly like mice.

The firefighters rushed over, put out the remaining fires on the ground, and began to evacuate everyone in the amusement park.

Brandon helped Janet up. He also took this as an opportunity to lift her shirt gently to check her injuries.

Fortunately, Brandon had reacted fast enough just now. The burns on Janet's back weren't too severe. But it was still red and swollen, covered in nasty blisters.

"Don't look... It's ugly." Janet almost cried out in pain when Brandon lifted her shirt, but she managed to grit her teeth and didn't make a sound. She didn't want to show the man any weakness.

But Brandon saw right through her. He couldn't understand why she was still pretending to be strong.

Indescribable, complex emotions surged in his heart. They had nearly died just now, but Janet risked her life to protect him, completely disregarding her own safety.

As a result, she got hurt, but she didn't want him to see her cry.

What a silly woman!

"Janet, you have to learn to protect yourself first."

Upon hearing what he said, Janet looked up at him and met his cold and distant eyes.

She suddenly felt as though her heart was wrenched. When she saw the reproachful look on his face, the tears that she had been holding back almost burst out on the spot.

How could he say that to her? She just saved his life!

Turning her face away silently, she didn't want to look at Brandon anymore.

Only then did Brandon realize that he could've come across as too cold just now, but he didn't know how to salvage the situation. He could only fall into silence as well.

After what felt like an eternity, the suffocating atmosphere between the two was broken by the sound of an ambulance's siren.

The paramedics carefully carried Janet to the ambulance, and Brandon followed them. Janet quietly looked at Brandon, who was sitting next to the doctor, shoulder to shoulder. His face was still cold.

At that moment, she missed the old Brandon more than ever.

The old Brandon would've held her in his arms, doing everything in his power to comfort her. However, everything she missed about the old Brandon was gone. Now, only indifference remained in this new Brandon's eyes.

How did things turn out like this?

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Janet had a ton of questions, but she couldn't utter a single word. She could only turn her face away from Brandon, silently wiping the tears from her eyes.

As soon as Janet was wheeled into the ward for treatment, Brandon informed Beal and Johanna.

Johanna couldn't remember how many times Janet had been hospitalized over the past six months.

She felt both sorry and worried for her daughter. Naturally, she wasn't planning to be nice with Brandon any longer.

The doctor was carefully treating Janet's back. Standing in the corner of the room, Brandon's eyes were fixed on the numerous blisters on Janet's smooth skin. Finally, he couldn't help but ask, "Will it scar?"

Brandon bit his lower lip tightly. He'd never forgive himself if Janet's skin scarred as a result of her protecting him.

The doctor replied honestly, "There are two areas here with second degree burns. There'll be traces left, more or less."

After a long silence, Brandon looked at Janet again and murmured hoarsely, "Thanks for saving me."

It was the first time that Brandon had thanked Janet so sincerely.

But she didn't like it.

He treated her too distantly. Janet had a ton of questions, but she couldn't utter a single word. She could only turn her face away from Brandon, silently wiping the tears from her eyes.

For a moment, Janet didn't know what to say. They were husband and wife. There was no need for him to be so formal with her.

She forced a smile, but there was a trace of sadness in her eyes. "You're welcome. When our apartment was on fire, you also protected me. You still have a burn scar on your back. Now we're even."

Hearing this, Brandon's expression immediately darkened and a trace of confusion flashed in his eyes. He seemed to want to say something, but stopped on second thought.

What apartment? What fire? When did that happen? He didn't remember anything about it.

When Janet saw the confusion in Brandon's eyes, the smile on her face stiffened.

Soon, the doctor finished bandaging up Janet's wounds. After he left, she took a deep breath and finally asked, "Strange. Why did you have such a weird expression just now? I can't help but get the feeling that you've forgotten everything about our past. Brandon, if you don't think you're getting anything out of this marriage, just say so. I won't hold you back. You don't have to do this to me."

Janet spoke in a seemingly casual tone, but the thought of breaking up with Brandon made her heart tighten.

Brandon averted his gaze hesitantly. After a while, he finally spoke up, albeit with difficulty. "Something happened to me..."

"Yeah, I'm not stupid. I can tell that you've changed. In fact, it's like you're a completely different person. Are you still not going to tell me what happened?" Resting her head on the pillow, Janet stared at him and said in a tired voice, "Brandon, I'm not a mind-reader. The longer you keep the truth from me, the crazier I get. It's only a matter of time before I crumble."

Brandon's expression softened. Janet had risked her life to save him. Wasn't she worthy of his trust?

Sitting next to the bed, Brandon looked into Janet's eyes, as though searching for answers. Finally, he said in a low voice, "You're not stupid. It's just... Whatever happened to me sounds crazy. Even I can't believe it myself. When you were lost at sea, they said I suddenly passed out in one of the search-and-rescue ships. It turned out I had a high fever and was incredibly ill. When I woke up again, I couldn't understand my surroundings. Charis told me what had happened. Then I realized that I had lost my memory of the past two years."