

The Mbahsb 91

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 91

Seacisco had extreme climatic conditions. It had scorching hot summers and cold winters.

The fruit store near their apartment sold iced watermelon juice. The refreshing scent of the fruit wafted in the air.

Janet bought two cups of juice and went home.

She was still thinking about Brandon's messages.

As Janet walked into the house in a daze, she saw Ethan standing on the balcony, picking up dried clothes from the line. His hair swayed with the gentle breeze, and a few strands covered his bright eyes.

"What's wrong? You look preoccupied." Ethan sat on the sofa and put the pile of clothes beside him. His droopy eyes made him look indifferent and lazy. His magnetic voice snapped Janet out of her thoughts.

A pang of guilt settled in her heart when she met his gaze.

Janet felt she had to tell him the truth. After all, she didn't do anything wrong.

"I've been thinking about my company's CEO, Brandon Larson." Janet's brows furrowed as if it were something important.

Ethan picked up a cup of watermelon juice from the table, inserted the straw into it, and brought it to Janet's mouth, "What?"

After taking a sip of the juice, Janet turned her phone on and showed Ethan the conversation between her and Brandon.

"I think he is being too nice to me. It doesn't look like a professional conversation at all. That's not how a CEO talks to his employees."

Ethan drank the juice whilst reading the conversation. He scrolled down the screen and read the messages.

Although Ethan had sent all the messages, he had to read the conversation. Otherwise, Janet would doubt him.

He was glad that Janet had told him the truth.

Ethan felt she was a righteous woman and a good wife who would never cheat on him with a wealthy man for personal gains.

"Well, it seems normal to me. Why don't you just accept what he has given you? Brandon is an influential person. I'm sure he'll be able to help you in case you encounter any problems."

Ethan leaned back on the sofa, and his hair rubbed against Janet's neck. "Honey, you smell so good."

He couldn't speak ill of Brandon, for it was equivalent to cursing himself.

Janet frowned and studied his face. "Is this how you really feel?"

Ethan's reaction surprised her.

She had always felt the man was jealous and possessive, but he seemed strangely calm now.

"Husbands usually get upset and angry when they find out other men are trying to hook up with their wives. Why are you so calm about it?" Janet was confused.

Something seemed fishy. Ethan had never reacted this way.

"I think it's pretty obvious that Brandon's up to something," she added.

Ethan was smart enough to understand the intention behind a message. Janet felt he, too, must have sensed the conversation didn't seem normal but couldn't understand why he was strangely calm about it.

"He just wants to help you, doesn't he?" Ethan shrugged as if it were no big deal.

Although he didn't think he had done anything wrong, he could sense Janet's unease. He sat up straight and turned to look at Janet, who was staring at her feet.

A frown lined Ethan's forehead. He wanted Janet to ask Brandon for help if she encountered any problems. After all, he was Brandon.

Janet bit her lower lip and fell silent.

She didn't expect Ethan to take Brandon's side.

His reaction both confused and upset her.

He had kissed and hugged Janet. Now, another man was showing strange concern towards her. But Ethan dismissed it as normal behavior.

'Perhaps I'm not as important to Ethan as I had thought,' she wondered.

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 92

"All right. Forget it then." Janet stood up and picked up her clothes from the sofa.

"What's wrong with you?" Ethan frowned and grabbed her wrist.

The drastic change in her reaction surprised him.

"Nothing." Janet withdrew her hand from his hold.

She decided to remain calm and not reveal her emotions.

Janet had married Ethan only for her old maid's medical expenses and didn't have any expectations from him. Divorce was always an option in case he found out she wasn't Jocelyn, the woman he was supposed to marry.

But still, knowing that Ethan didn't care about her made her heart sink with disappointment.

Perhaps she had unknowingly gotten attached to him since they had become intimate.

"You are not allowed to touch or kiss me anymore. We are just a nominal couple, Ethan. If you dare to touch me again, I will move out of this house." Janet was not in the mood to talk to Ethan anymore.

Ethan's brows furrowed, and his face darkened. "Did I say something wrong? I'm sorry if I did."

He never got the chance to make love to her, and now she wasn't even allowing him to touch her.

"You didn't do anything wrong. I'm fine." Janet stepped back to keep a distance from him. Then, she returned to her room, hiding her disappointment.

Ethan could tell that Janet was upset about something. He had a keen intuition as a businessman, but he couldn't understand what was going on in his wife's mind and what was bothering her.

Ethan felt dejected. How could she deprive him of the right to kiss her?

He had just leaned on Janet's shoulder but didn't do anything to offend her.

They had made out countless times in the past, and she had never resisted it. 'What's with the sudden change in her attitude?'

He couldn't figure out what was on her mind.

Janet came out of her room during dinner. A faint smile graced her face, but it was not as genuine as a few days ago.

Ethan felt upset and confused. The growing distance made him uncomfortable.

Later that night, he called Garrett. The phone rang several times before it got connected.

"I'm busy right now. What's the matter? Can't you check the time before calling me?" Garrett grunted in frustration. He could hear the wind from the other end of the line and assumed Ethan was standing on the balcony.

"I have something to ask you. After that, you can carry on with whatever you're busy doing." Ethan was standing on the balcony with a bottle of beer. His dark eyes stared into the distance.

The apartment was near the beach. The salty air filled his nostrils. It was refreshing, yet the confusion seemed to gnaw his heart.

"Fine. Go ahead. You just got married, and it's making all of us restless. Gosh, it's annoying." Garrett scratched his hair as his desire to have *** died in an instant. He patted the woman on his bed and listened to what Ethan had to say.

After listening to the entire story, Garrett burst out laughing.

"Congratulations! Your wife cares about you too."

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 93

The frown on Ethan's face deepened. He became even more confused.

"I don't quite get it. Explain what you mean clearly." He took a sip of the beer and stared blankly at the sea of lights in a distance.

Garrett shook his head and narrowed his eyes. "I think you deserve it. You are married, but you still behave like a bachelor. It's appalling that you don't even understand a woman's behavior. Listen to me. Your wife just told you that some men are making advances at her. A normal husband would get jealous and ask questions about these men, but you just waved it off. You didn't show care. What do you expect her to think? She's unhappy because of your nonchalance. She thinks you don't care about her. Doesn't her unhappiness show that she cares about you and how you feel about her? Dude, you need to learn how to interpret the signals women give!"

Everything dawned on Ethan at this moment. He leaned against the railing and smiled brightly. His side profile was so handsome.

It gladdened his heart to know that this was why she was displeased.

"I just hope that she can ask Brandon for help when necessary. That means they have to become close first. What should I do now?"

After pondering for a while, Garrett replied, "Well, you can't possibly get jealous of yourself. In the end, you would at least prove to your wife that you genuinely love her. I'm sure she would be happy when her feelings are reciprocated. I'm not supposed to be teaching you this. Your relationship with her is hopeless if you can't do it without any help. Man up!"

In a low voice, he continued, "You have turned me into your marriage counselor. I'm helping you build your marriage for free, but you will reap all the benefits in the end."

Garrett knew Ethan well. He saw him as an opportunist right from their high school days.

Ethan chuckled and waved his hand playfully. "What are friends for? Anyway, I will give it a try."

"Keeping secrets can cause a strain and even destroy a marriage. You can't just keep her in the dark forever. When are you going to reveal your true identity to her?" Garrett asked seriously.

Ethan was silent for a moment.

"You have a point there, Garrett. But I can't tell her just yet," he finally replied.

"Why? Are you afraid that she will be in danger? I have to admit that your family is a mess. Even I am wary of them." Garrett tut-tutted with a fake shiver.

"How is the task I gave you coming along? Hope you are monitoring them well?" Ethan stared down at the beer bottle in his hand.

The cold night wind blew. The trees swayed from side to side and their leaves rustled. At this time, the clouds darkened. It indicated that there would be a heavy downpour soon.

"Your two brothers? Nothing is up with them. They haven't done anything suspicious recently. But you have to be wary of your father. He always keeps a close watch on us. It seems like he's smelling something fishy and we would be found out if care is not taken."

"Okay, I'll keep that in mind."

"Are you really not going to tell her the truth? I think you owe her that, buddy," Garrett queried further.

He felt that the problem would be easier to solve if Ethan opened up to his wife soon. 'Two heads are better than one. There's nothing like having the support of your wife.' He felt this way because Ethan had been trying to solve this problem for a long time. If he wanted to come clean only after he took care of everything, it would take quite a while.

"No, I don't want her to get involved in this matter. I'm still at loggerheads with my family. They already know that I married her. Ethan's just an illegitimate child to them and they don't take me seriously. Things would become harder for her and she would be in grave danger if I reveal my identity to her and officially make her Mrs. Larson. I don't want her to be caught in the middle before I solve the matter about my mother," Ethan responded calmly.

He closed his eyes for a while and then opened them again. The wind blew back the separate dark wisp of hair, revealing his shiny forehead.

"Okay, I get it. I won't bring up that topic again." Garrett sighed.

Afterward, he said with a giggle, "I wish you can win the beauty's heart as soon as possible. I'm rooting for you!"

"Thank you. You can have a long vacation once I succeed." Ethan chuckled. His eyes were void of any coldness at this moment.

He opened the glass door and entered the room. As soon as he shut the door, the sound of the howling wind and rustling leaves was no more. The lights in the room had already been turned off, and the moon was covered by clouds. Only the dim light of street lamps outside flooded into the room.

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 94

Ethan put down his phone and lay on the sofa. He was lost in thought for a long time before he dozed off.

The sound of cooking utensils clunking together in the kitchen woke him up the next morning.

He stood up and stretched his body. While yawning, he looked at the kitchen with misty eyes.

A woman was standing there in a thin and long white dress that covered her legs down to her ankles. He stared at her in a daze for a long time.

"Ethan, don't stand here. You're in my way," Janet said in a lukewarm tone, blinking her big watery eyes.

Ethan cleared his throat and made way for her. Scratching his head, he asked, "Do you need my help with anything?"

"No, I don't need any help. I'm not making breakfast for you. If you are hungry, you can eat out," she replied with a poker face.

'Humph! You have no feelings for me, but you have been eating all the delicious breakfast I made. I'm not your maid, so don't expect any more meals from me!' she thought to herself.

Janet walked to the fridge and took out two eggs. The oil sizzled in the pan as she cracked the eggs. Shortly after she drizzled some black pepper on her fried eggs, a pleasant aroma filled the kitchen.

Ethan took a deep breath and his shoulders slouched. Without uttering a word, he sulkily went to the bathroom to freshen up.

He was naturally not a romantic man, so he didn't know the sweet words to say or the best gift to get her. 'She's still angry with me. What do I do now?' he pondered while brushing his teeth.

An idea suddenly popped up in his head when he spat out the foam in his mouth. He smiled faintly, staring at his image in the mirror.

When he returned to the living room, he saw that Janet was eating breakfast slowly. She didn't even look up at him, as if he was invisible.

"Are you free this weekend? There's a part-time job that pays this much. Are you interested?" As Ethan spoke, he pulled out the chair beside her and sat down slowly.

Janet swallowed the bread in her mouth quickly when she saw him open up all five fingers of his right hand. With her eyes opened wide, she asked, "Five grand?"

Since they had been married for some time, Ethan knew a little about her. She loved making money. A job offer that paid that much was something she could never refuse.

Sure enough, Janet set aside the displeasure she felt about his actions last night. She wiped her mouth quickly. Although her expression was still indifferent, her face wasn't as cold as before. "What kind of part-time job is it?" she finally asked.

A smile tugged at the corners of Ethan's mouth after he heard her response. He picked up a piece of toast from her plate and took a bite. "Well, it's a painting job. The owner of the convenience store where I work is decorating his new house. He needs a wall painting. I saw your works before, so I thought you would be perfect for the job."

Ethan had seen Janet's paintings. Although she majored in fashion design, painting was one of her foundational courses. Her artistic skills were also very good.

It was at this moment that Janet finally noticed that he had been taking big bites off her toast. She frowned and queried him angrily, "Ethan, I said I didn't make breakfast for you. Why are you eating my toast?"

"Chill, it's no big deal. Just take this as a reward for telling you about the job. Besides, you are my wife. Sharing is caring!" Ethan stuffed the last quarter of the toast into his mouth and smiled at her playfully.

Janet's heart skipped a beat when she saw his handsome smile. She wanted to draw the line between them, but he only got closer to her with every effort she made.

"Do you have any copies of your previous work? Give me some of them so I can show my boss at work today."

Pouting her lips, she went to her room. She brought back her previous paintings a few seconds later. "Here you go. This is the collection of my works. Hope this will do?"

"Yeah, it will. I need to head to work now." Ethan picked up the collection and scanned through the paintings. He then stood up and put on his black jacket while staring at her with a playful glint in his black eyes.

Later in the afternoon, Janet received a call from him.

"What's the matter? I'm still at work," she whispered directly into the speaker and glanced at her colleagues.

"Well, I just called to give you feedback. My boss likes your paintings. Instead of an artistic piece, he wants you to paint his wall this coming weekend. The price is double the one I told you about this morning. Would you be free this weekend?" Ethan's calm voice wafted into her ear from the other end of the line.

'Ten thousand dollars just to paint a wall? That's huge. I would be a fool if I turned down such an offer!' she thought quickly.

"Yes, I can do it this Sunday," she replied without hesitation.

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 95

The weather was very sunny that Sunday.

Janet waited impatiently at the bus stop. She had looked down at her phone several times.

Just when the long-awaited bus arrived, she heard a roar of an engine. A dazzling black Vyrus suddenly halted in front of her.

Ethan pushed up the glass visor of his helmet. His high nose bridge was revealed first, followed by his alienated eyes. He looked so dashing even though he was just wearing an ordinary black T-shirt and loose jeans.

He threw a helmet to Janet.

"Get on the motorcycle."

After she caught the helmet, she stared at the luxury motorcycle for a while before putting on the helmet reluctantly. She then asked, "Whose motorcycle is this?"

Janet had seen this motorcycle in an automobile magazine before. It costs a whopping amount of money that she could never make even if she worked tons of jobs for the rest of her life.

"I borrowed it from a friend. My boss's villa is a little far from here. It's in the suburbs. I'll take you there."

Janet sat on the motorcycle uneasily.

"Let's go!" Ethan cast a glance at his wife and then put down the glass visor of his helmet.

Janet held onto Ethan's T-shirt tightly.

Ethan rode the motorcycle at a high speed. The wind blew violently past her ears and ruffled her hair. All the road noises soon faded away.

Before now, Janet had associated the riding of motorcycles with rogues. This was because most of them rode recklessly and the roaring sound of the engines always disturbed other commuters on the road. However, this wasn't the case for this particular motorcycle. The engine only made a humming sound.

"Ethan, why is there no loud noise?" she asked blankly.

"Are you talking about the sound of the engine?"

Ethan abruptly stopped to wait for the traffic light to turn green. It was so sudden that Janet's breasts bumped into his back because of the inertia. He looked back at her and smiled.

"My dear wife, do you see me as one of those numerous hooligans that disturb the peace of this city with their roaring motorcycles? This one has a silencer. I don't want to constitute any nuisance on the road."

The Vyrus belonged to Garrett and it was the kind of motorcycle used for serious racing.

With her face blushing, Janet inched backward and tightened her coat.

The rest of the ride wasn't bumpy. When they arrived at the so-called boss's villa, Ethan led her to the front door.

Unbeknown to Janet, this villa was owned by her allegedly poor husband. It wasn't decorated because he had never lived there.

"Welcome!" A woman who looked about forty years old answered the door at the first ring. She introduced herself as the wife of Ethan's boss and guided them into the villa.

"Hello, ma'am. What style of wall painting do you want for this villa?"

The wall the woman pointed out wasn't so wide. Thus, Janet calculated that she could finish painting it today.

"Nothing too complicated. Just make it simple but unique. It should be in grey. I would settle for any style that you choose to paint the rest." The woman took a sip of tea and glanced at Ethan. She then continued, "I've already bought the buckets of paint and the tools you would need. I'm going shopping with my neighbors later. You just take your time."

She left after showing Janet the buckets of paint and all the tools.

'Let's get to work!' Janet charged up herself. She was only free on weekends, so she decided to finish the painting today.

She first tied up her hair into a ponytail. Then, she rolled up her sleeves and put on an apron. She mixed the paint skillfully and began to paint.

"Aren't you going back to work?" she asked curiously after sensing that he was still there.

"No, I took the day off. Let me help you here. I can pass you whatever paint you need." Ethan took off his jacket and squatted beside the paint buckets.

"Thank you, but there would be no need for that. I can do it myself."

Janet wanted to be left alone, but she didn't drive him away either. She just concentrated on painting. She didn't even bother to rest for a while.

Some hours later, the sun began to set and the dark rays fell into the room through the window. Everything became orange. It also warmed up Janet's skin a little.

She stopped painting and swung her right arm which was already aching at this time. When she looked back, she saw that no one was on the sofa.

It seemed that Ethan had left.

Janet pouted her lips and lowered her head dejectedly. A second later, she let out a laughter of self-mockery. 'Janet, you are such a fool. Were you expecting him to wait until you were done? Weren't you the one who declined his help? Tsk-tsk!'

A strange noise suddenly came from the door. She looked up and saw that Ethan was standing there with some takeout bags in his hands. There was an inexplicable glint in his eyes and a warm smile on his face.

"Were you looking for me? Anyway, I went to get dinner. You have been painting for a long time. I'm sure you must be tired and hungry by now. Come down and eat first."

"Oh, you are still here. I thought you already left," Janet commented indifferently in a bid to hide her joy. She averted her gaze and continued to paint despite her aching arm.

Ethan smiled without saying anything. He just opened all the takeout bags and set the table.

The soup was steaming, and the desserts had a strong creamy fragrance.

"Hey, come and eat. You need to rest and refuel your energy. I'll help you paint while you are at it," Ethan said as he walked to her and grabbed the brush.

It was easy for him to do so because he was taller than her. He raised the brush high when she tried to take it back. She saw his perfectly sculpted jaw as she looked up. The closeness of their bodies gave her butterflies.

At this moment, Janet had no choice but to go and eat quietly.

While munching on the food, she stole glances at him as he painted.

'How does this man feel about me?

Does he love me? Sometimes he behaves indifferent, but other times, he's so caring like a loving husband. Gosh! How can someone be so hard to read?' she pondered.

Janet had a small appetite, so she didn't eat much. Ethan later wolfed down all the leftovers as if he hadn't eaten for a week.

At nine o'clock in the evening, the so-called wife of Ethan's boss returned to the villa and immediately checked the work Janet did.

An deep frown appeared on her face as soon as she set her eyes on the wall.

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 96

Noticing the woman's unhappiness, Janet cautiously asked, "Ma'am, are you not happy with the work?"

The woman sat cross-legged on the sofa with a grumpy look on her face. She glanced at the painting on the wall and snorted coldly. "I don't like the colors. Didn't I ask you to keep it simple? Why have you made it so fancy and complicated? And the patterns here don't match the style of my villa. I don't understand what you were thinking. I didn't ask you to fill in random colors. My villa is going to be occupied soon. You're delaying us from moving in."

Janet explained anxiously, "I have painted according to your requirements. The colors are white and gray, which compliments your villa style. Ma'am, if you're dissatisfied with any aspect of the design, I can change it for you."

The woman sitting on the sofa took a sip of coffee and glanced at Ethan, who was standing beside Janet. Her stomach clenched with anticipation.

She didn't know if she had gone too far.

The girl in front of her was the wife of her boss, while she was a mere employee who was called to act in the play. If she weren't arrogant enough, she wouldn't be able to achieve the desired result. Meanwhile, if she were too arrogant, she feared Ethan might take it personally and get offended.

It was like walking on thin ice.

The man frowned and witnessed everything, without uttering a word.

"How can you change it? I don't like it one bit, and it doesn't meet my requirements. How are you going to change that? Your portfolio looked excellent. I never expected you to do such a terrible job. Now I wonder if the previous works you'd done earlier are authentic or not. It makes me think if you had really drawn them by yourself. This is a disaster! I don't know what to say. Get out of here!"

The woman pointed at the painting on the wall and continued to indicate non-existent faults on purpose. She looked dissatisfied, exhibiting all her acting talent.

Enraged, Janet began to pack her things. "No one has ever suspected the authenticity of my work. If you are not satisfied with my painting, you better find someone else."

"Of course, I'm going to find someone else!" The woman angrily pointed at the door. "Get out now!"

After taking a few steps toward the door, Janet stopped in her tracks, turned around, and glared at the woman. "I will go! But you have to pay me the money first!"

"You've ruined my wall. I haven't asked you to compensate for it yet. What makes you think I'd pay you for wrecking my wall?" the woman snapped venomously. "If you don't leave right now, I'll ask the security guards to drive you away."

The woman picked up her phone, pretending to make a phone call while she was mourning in her heart.

She wondered if she had gone too far. After all, fighting with the CEO's wife was a dangerous thing to do. 'Gosh, why is he asking me to do such a terrible thing!'

At that moment, Ethan stepped forward and protectively stood beside Janet. "It looks like you're happy with the painting. You are deliberately trying to find faults just so that you don't have to pay the money."

The woman snorted. "Do I look like someone who can't afford to pay for this stupid painting? I said I'm not satisfied. Don't you understand that?"

Ethan gently held Janet's arm and glared at the woman. "If you don't pay as per the agreement, I'll make you regret it."

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 97

The woman was petrified.

She didn't know what to do. Although she knew the CEO was just acting, he looked frightening.

"Who do you think you are? Fine, I'll pay you!" The woman took out her wallet from her bag and handed all the money she had already prepared to give to Janet.

Without saying a word, Janet took the money and carefully counted it.

The woman looked at her and sneered. "You don't need to count it. I wouldn't cheat over such a small sum of money."

Just then, they heard someone open the door.

"What's going on? Why the noise? I could hear you quarreling all the way from the front yard."

A man in his forties walked in. Janet suspected he had used hair gel and makeup to look older for some reason.

The woman sprang to her feet and quickly rushed over to the man.

"Honey, you're finally back. What kind of employee do you have! He just threatened me a while ago," the woman complained as tears filled her eyes.

The middle-aged man was none other than Ethan's male subordinate. He had specially gone to the salon to have his hair done so that he could pay justice to the role.

Ethan was his boss. Today, he finally had the chance to be his boss — even if it was in a play Ethan had arranged.

He was thrilled about it.

"What's going on, Ethan?" The man threw his bag on the table and glared at him. "How dare you threaten my wife? You are fired!"

Ethan seemed calm. He glanced at the couple in front of him and pulled Janet to the door. "If you want to fire me, then go ahead."

The man gritted his teeth and shouted after Ethan to show that he was angry. "Let's wait and see! I will make you suffer!"

Ethan seemed indifferent. He grabbed Janet's hand and walked out of the villa.

It was already dark outside. The stars dazzled in the night sky.

After walking a few steps forward, Janet stopped in her tracks and looked back at Ethan, who had also stopped behind her.

"You shouldn't have stood up for me. You have offended your boss. What are you going to do now?"

Janet couldn't help but worry about Ethan.

He didn't have a good educational background and was an illegitimate son. Now, he even lost his job. She feared the Lester family would despise him even more.

Besides, Ethan's boss had even threatened to make him suffer. 'What if he takes his revenge?' she thought, shuddering with fear.

Ethan had fought with his boss for her.

Janet let out a weary sigh.

"It doesn't matter." Ethan shrugged nonchalantly.

She was more worried than him.

Janet looked at him, her watery eyes burning with annoyance. "How could it not matter? What if he gets back at you?"

She sighed, and her shoulder slumped with dejection. "It wasn't a big deal. You didn't have to stand up for me."

Ethan stopped and looked at her. His deep eyes bore into Janet's face. The light from the street lamp flooded over him, accentuating his towering frame.

"It was my business too. I couldn't watch others bully my wife. Don't worry about it. You don't have to feel guilty."

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 98

How could Janet not feel guilty?

Although Ethan seemed casual, he treated her like a princess. If she planned to leave him for some reason one day, the pain would feel excruciating as if someone had ripped her heart right out of her chest.

The wind whistled in the night. Janet lowered her head and tried to get hold of herself.

"I could have handled it on my own, Ethan." Her voice drifted with the wind.

She had always been alone and fought her own battles.

Ethan walked up to her, and Janet saw his yellowing canvas shoes.

She looked up, and her gaze met his enigmatic eyes.

Ethan smiled and gently stroked his hair. "You have a husband now. It's different."

Ethan's broad chest blocked the wind as he stared into her eyes.

"Let's go back. It's late,"

Janet said in a hushed voice. His words both confused and touched her. She turned around and continued to walk forward.

Ethan followed Janet and caught up with her.

The cicadas chirped in the quiet summer night.

All of a sudden, Ethan felt something touch his finger. He looked down and saw Janet clasp his finger.

A smile tugged at the corners of his lips, and his face softened. He gently held her hand and caressed her fingers with his thumb.

"I really want to kiss you. Can I?" Ethan's voice was thick with lust as he stared at her supple lips.

Janet's eyes widened. She didn't know what to say to him. She felt his actions proved his affection for her.

Janet's ears turned red. "Why are asking me that?" she murmured shyly.

Ethan shook his head in amusement. Janet had just told him that he couldn't touch her without her permission.

Ethan leaned toward her. He kissed her lower lip and gently licked it. Janet moaned in the back of her throat.

He nibbled on her lip, making her eyes flutter close. As soon as Janet's mouth parted, Ethan lifted her in his arms. She involuntarily wrapped her legs around his waist and rested her head on his chest.

His chiseled, muscular body made her heart stutter.

Janet couldn't dodge. Ethan didn't let go of her until they were breathless.

"Aren't you going to get the motorcycle?" Janet's face flushed as she rested her face against his chest, hearing his heartbeat. She licked her swollen lips and smiled to herself.

"No need. My friend will come and get it himself." Ethan shrugged. His magnetic, playful smile made her heart skip a beat. Janet couldn't take her eyes off him.

Garrett would have no choice but to get the Vyrus himself.

Ethan pecked the corner of her lips again. "Your lips taste like strawberry. I like it. It's just so sweet."

It was almost nine when they got home.

As soon as Janet entered the apartment, she rushed into the bathroom to shower.

Ethan was checking his phone on the sofa in the living room. Just then, the male subordinate who had played the role of his boss sent him a message.

“Boss, what should we do with the painting on the wall?”

“Why bother asking?” Ethan typed impatiently. They obviously had to keep the painting.

Meanwhile, the bathroom door opened.

Noticing that she had forgotten to take the bath towel, Janet decided to tiptoe to her room to get it.

A football game was playing on the TV. The commentator’s intense voice muffled her footsteps, so Ethan didn’t notice her.

When Janet walked past behind him, she caught a glimpse of Ethan’s phone and saw someone asked about the painting on the wall in a respectful tone.

Janet stopped. Her face darkened as she finally understood what had happened.

“Ethan!” Ethan jerked up in shock when he heard her high-pitched voice.

He didn’t expect Janet to come out of the bathroom so soon, so he subconsciously hid the phone behind his back upon hearing her voice.

But seeing the fury in her face, Ethan immediately realized it was too late.

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 99

Janet weakly slumped on the sofa.

The window was open, and her long hair billowed with the wind. She sighed and closed her eyes.

Moments later, she turned to look at Ethan, her gaze cold and aloof. “What the hell is going on, Ethan?”

Everything had been a hoax.

She was so touched when Ethan stood up for her. But she felt like a fool now.

“I can explain.” Ethan quietly glanced at his phone. Although he looked calm, he was burning with rage inside. He was mad at his subordinate for ruining his perfect plan.

‘Damn it! What a stupid, useless man!

Why did he have to send a message about the painting now?’

“No need! I clearly saw everything. You had joined a few people and performed a drama to deceive me. Janet sneered.

Ethan was startled.

He rubbed his brows and blew out a loud breath. He didn’t want to reveal his guilt.

Janet had caught him red-handed, and Ethan didn’t dare to deny it. He sat up and looked at her innocently. “Yes, that was a setup. It was a rented villa.”

Janet crossed her arms over her chest. “Do you think I’m a fool?” She was seething with rage.

She took a deep breath to control her rage. "What the hell were you thinking? Do you have too much money to spare? It was a stupid thing to do."

"I just wanted you to be happy." Ethan squatted in front of Janet and held her knees. "Don't be mad at me. I'm sorry," he said intently.

Janet shook her head and stood up, intending to leave.

Ethan grabbed her shoulders, and the two fell onto the sofa.

Janet's face reddened with rage. She quickly grabbed her clothes in fear. Ethan's dark eyes bore into hers; he looked frightening. "Do whatever you want, but please don't ignore me."

"You are crazy!" Janet shouted as she tried wriggling out of his hold. "Don't touch me! You tried fooling me. What makes you think I'd listen to you?"

Before she could utter another word, Ethan wrapped her into a tight embrace.

His body trembled, for he couldn't control his emotions anymore.

Ethan was an influential personality in the business world. People feared him. However, his voice broke when he spoke. "Don't be afraid. I won't do anything to you without your consent. I just want to talk to you. Can you please listen to me?"

He knew Janet was unhappy but didn't know what to do to make her feel better.

"I just want you to know that I care about you a lot. If you don't like what I just did, I'll try something else next time. Anything for you. From now on, I will listen to your every word. A few days ago, when you told me about Brandon, I knew it was my fault that it appeared I didn't care. Trust me when I say I do care about you. Scold me, beat me, do whatever you want to vent your anger, but please don't ignore me. I've never been with anyone before, and we are newly married. This is all new to me. I'm bound to make mistakes. Correct me if I do something wrong, but don't just turn your back to me. I want to be a better man — a better husband for you."

Ethan stared into Janet's eyes. Their faces were inches apart. The intensity of his gaze trapped Janet.

Ethan's shaggy air gently brushed against her face, emanating a faint peppermint fragrance. The macho man now looked vulnerable in front of her. Janet could tell that he meant every word.

The Mysterious Billionaire and His Substitute Bride - Chapter 100

Autumn was just around the corner. The wind was blowing outside, making the clothes on the balcony sway violently.

Janet pursed her lips and looked away.

"Get up first. Then we'll talk, I promise." She tried pushing him away. Her nose almost brushed against his.

"No. You will run away." Ethan held her tighter and looked into her eyes. "You can't leave without giving me an answer tonight."

Janet pinched his arm.

Her anger had almost subsided.

She could tell that Ethan had no experience in love, but he was willing to take an effort and change himself for her. It meant he truly cared about her.

However, Janet didn't want to forgive him easily. She rolled her eyes and looked away. "Forget it. I will spare you this time. Don't make such a stupid mistake again. It cost us both money and time. Now, let go of me. There is still hot water running in the bathroom. I need to shower."

Ethan's gaze slowly drifted to Janet. He nodded and reluctantly let go of her.

However, his heart sank as soon as she stepped away from him. It felt as if something was missing.

Ethan immediately grabbed Janet's hand and pulled her back.

"Ah! What are you doing? We have arrived at an agreement, haven't we?" Janet squealed as she lost her balance and slumped in his arms.

Ethan pursed his lips as he raked his eyes across her face. The soft light seemed to outline his handsome features. He looked like a hunter waiting to catch his prey.

"I want to kiss you."

Before Janet could respond, he quickly cupped her cheeks and bit her lip.

Even though he looked cold and aloof, he was really good at pretending to seem innocent.

He was more dangerous and powerful than the others, but Janet hadn't realized it yet.

Ethan nibbled her bottom lip and pried her mouth open with his tongue. She wrapped her legs around his waist.

The howling winds stopped blowing, and the room was quiet as if time had stopped still. Only the rustling of clothes and their soft moans were audible in the quiet night.

"To my room?" Ethan's voice was thick with lust. He gently trailed his fingers against Janet's lips and tucked a sweaty strand of hair behind her ear.

Before Janet could answer, Ethan kissed her earlobe, picked her up, and carried her to his room.

The kiss was so intense that it left Janet dazed and breathless. Her face had turned red. She bit his shoulder as her eyes rolled up in ecstasy. She didn't know what to do.

Ethan pinned her on the bed and kissed her passionately. It seemed as if Ethan had complete control over her body and emotions.

"Ethan, wait..." Janet felt weak and limp as she sensed his hands reaching under her clothes.

"Shh... Don't say anything, and don't think about anything. Leave everything to me." Ethan's low, magnetic voice made her body tremble. It felt as if he had cast a spell over her.

Wrapping her arms around Ethan's neck, Janet responded to his passionate kiss. She sucked his tongue as he thrust it into her mouth.

Ethan took off his jacket as he straddled above her.