

Wife Mask 331

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Once they were safely outside, Hugh couldn't hold back his frustration. He grumbled to Aron, "Honestly, I never imagined Mr. Evans could be this shameless. But Elliana? She's on a whole different level."

Aron shot him a cold, warning look, clearly uninterested in engaging.

Undeterred, Hugh turned to Myles, desperate for someone to commiserate with. "Myles, how long do you think Mr. Evans can keep acting this crazy?"

Myles just glared, his voice flat and final. "Fuck off."

Shut down once more, Hugh's head hung low while he made his way back to Aron, wordlessly sulking. His position beside Myles and Aron was sliding downhill, leaving him completely exasperated.

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Matthew answered, "Nothing so far. We've gone through all the shops around here—nothing's out of ordinary."

Elliana instructed, "Don't make any moves yet. Just keep an eye on him. No one tips him off."

Matthew fired off his reply. "Got it. While we were watching Victor, we noticed at least three other groups tailing him, too. No clue who they are yet."

Elliana stole a glance at Cole, her mind spinning with questions. Was it possible one of the mysterious groups shadowing Victor had ties to Cole? If she wanted answers, she'd have to dig through Cole's private files—whatever secrets he was hiding, they were tangled up with Victor, and she had no intention of letting the trail go cold.

Trust between them had never come easily. Even now, with their relationship on the surface, total honesty remained out of reach. Cole would never lay all his cards on the table for her, and she had secrets of her own she'd never be able to confess. They were both creatures of shadow and half-truths, and some of the secrets they carried would stay locked away forever, even though they were husband and wife.

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Hugh couldn't contain a laugh. "Have those women lost all sense?"

Aron shook his head. "They really think a stunt like this is their ticket to the top. These trends have a way of backfiring in the worst ways."

While the two shared their skepticism, Helga Garza, the imposing head of the secretarial department, marched into view. Shock flashed across the men's faces as she approached.

Around the office, Helga's reputation as a stunner was practically legend—her runway-ready figure, striking features, and glossy hair never failed to turn heads. Impeccable suits and heels made her the center of attention wherever she walked. Even Aron and Hugh, who claimed they were immune to workplace crushes, often found their eyes following her.

No one was prepared for Helga's transformation this morning. Wild, untamed hair framed her face, which was smeared with streaks of dirt, and her outfit looked as if she'd pulled it from a laundry basket. She looked more like someone who'd survived a tornado than the department's fashion icon.

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Not bothering to look up, Cole reached for the file, scrawled his name across the bottom, and pushed it back in her direction—all without blinking.

Helga accepted it with a tight grip, but the way her lips flattened said enough. His indifference had clearly struck a nerve.

Determined not to walk away empty-handed, Helga pivoted. "Mr. Evans, we'll be placing a new order for staff uniforms soon. Got any preferences?"

Eyes still on his papers, Cole dismissed her with a flat reply. "You handle it as you see fit. If you can't make the call, ask Myles."

She hovered near his desk, clearly out of professional reasons to stay but unwilling to walk off just yet.

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Wesley appeared sharp and impeccably groomed, the type who probably aced every interview in his life. A quick scan of his credentials revealed a glittering academic record from a world-renowned university. Elliana's instincts flared-this guy had to be the elusive "Jody."

Armed with her new lead, she turned to Cole, the gears in her head already spinning. "Darling, other than Myles, Aron, and Hugh, do you have any other old friends working at the Evans Group?"

Cole barely looked up, still hammering away at his Laptop, his attention divided between a dozen urgent emails. "Plenty of my relatives are here. Why do you ask?"

She kept her tone breezy but pressed on. "I mean anyone outside your family. Old friends, maybe?"

Cole flicked his eyes toward her and then returned to his screen with a faint smile. "The cybersecurity director's an old classmate of mine. We've known each other since elementary school."

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At the height of lunch rush, the room buzzed with energy, chatter ricocheting off glass and tile as employees laughed and dug into their meals.

That was, until Cole and Elliana stepped inside. Just as Myles had feared, the entire cafeteria froze, conversations dying mid-sentence. Heads snapped around. Wide-eyed staff stared in silent panic, as if a single misstep might cost them their jobs. Even the employees behind the serving counter fumbled, hands trembling so badly that a spoon nearly clattered to the floor.

Most days, Cole was practically a ghost-only the top execs ever saw him in the flesh. For the rest of the staff, catching a glimpse of their CEO was like spotting a celebrity at the annual gala and never again. So when Cole strolled in today, wife on his arm, the entire cafeteria seemed to hold its breath in disbelief. Whispers rippled through the crowd, tension crackling in the air.

A senior executive rushed over, all nerves and forced composure. "Mr. Evans, is there anything you need?"

Cole didn't even blink. "Just grabbing Lunch with my wife. Everyone can relax." With a dismissive flick of his wrist, he brushed off the formality.

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Cole let out a small chuckle. "Then how about I send Myles with you?"

She shook her head again. "I just want a moment alone. Don't worry, I'll be back soon. Let's nap together later."

Cole nodded and left.

As soon as she was alone, Lance came storming over, his face dark. He sat across from her, full of spite. "Elliana, who do you think you are, walking around like you belong? You really think you fit in at the Evans Group?"

Elliana replied coolly, "Why wouldn't I? I married Cole in a ceremony arranged by your grandfather, flew in on a private jet, and became Mrs. Evans fair and square. If you have a problem with that, take it up with them. Don't come here looking for drama."

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Just thinking of River lit up Lance's face.

River was a legend in the world of AI. Back in college, Lance had looked up to River more than anyone. His professors, seniors—everyone saw River as a genius. River was the god of AI research in their eyes.

But River was hard to reach, like a star in the sky. Lance, still young in the field, never had the chance to meet River. If he ever did, he'd give anything for even one conversation. If River ever took him in as a protégé, it would be the biggest honor of his life.

With that thought, Lance sighed deeply and left the cafeteria.

After finishing her showdown with Lance, Elliana headed upstairs to find Cole. She had purposely sent Cole away to give Lance the chance to confront her. Now that it was done, it was time to move forward with her plan. First, she had to put Cole to sleep. While he napped, she would use the time to get closer to Wesley and infiltrate the Evans Group's network. With her plans set in motion, she took the CEO's private elevator straight to his office.

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Elliana quickly let go. "Then sleep well!"

He gave her one last look full of mock resentment. "Don't leave before I wake up. If I open my eyes and you're gone, there will be consequences."

After a beat, he added, "If you misbehave, I will spank you."

Elliana stifled a giggle. "Okay, Coley. I'll be good. I won't leave until you wake up."

Cole didn't reply. A few moments later, his breathing turned deep and steady—he was asleep. His injuries had mostly healed, but his body still needed rest.

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As she expected, Jody-the system's watchdog-was nowhere to be seen.

Elliana glanced at Wesley, passed out on the couch. Her heart did a little happy flip. It seemed her hunch had been right. Wesley was Jody. With him knocked out, no one would catch her sneaking into the Evans Group's system.

Just as she was about to reach the company's core database, Jody popped up out of nowhere.

Elliana froze. Her fingers hovered over the screen. She quickly looked at Wesley. Still fast asleep. Deeply out. Alas! Another wrong guy she had knocked out. She sighed in frustration.

Just then, Jody pinged her. "Hey, afternoon vibes." Already annoyed, Elliana snapped back. "Vibes, my ass." "Ha, chill."